Fighting mental health stigma in the education of Dutch paramedics.

Virginie van Boven, MA
Senior Lecturer, Nurse Practitioner,
HU University Of Applied Sciences Utrecht
Reinier van Arkel groep, The Netherlands
Virginie van Boven, MA
Senior Lecturer, Bachelor Allied Medical Care,
HU University Of Applied Sciences, Utrecht
Nurse practitioner mental healthcare, Reinier van Arkel groep, Den Bosch
The Netherlands
What I would like to share with you:

• Why it is important to improve the education on psychiatry for Dutch paramedics?
• Educational program in our new bachelor study.
• How we fight mental health stigma in the educational program and why that is so important.
Student and patient cases
Improving education for paramedics

• Lack of knowledge
• Duality between physical and mental health care
• Working experience in psychiatry
• Increased need for acute mental healthcare in Dutch society
• Bachelor / post-bachelor degree of education
• Young people with ambition
Improving education for paramedics

2010
Start Bachelor Allied Medical Healthcare (BAMH) at Utrecht University for Applied Sciences
Learning objectives in the course

• Recognizing psychiatric problems (pathology)
• Medication
• Skills for examination and recognition of psychiatric symptoms
• Law and legislation about psychiatry
• Communication skills
• Collaboration in the chain of care
• Stigma, what it causes it and how to decrease it?
Educational activities in the course

- Lectures
- Workshops
- Skills training
- Coaching sessions
- Apprenticeship
- Exam
## Educational activities in the course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lectures</th>
<th>Workshops</th>
<th>Skills training</th>
<th>Coaching sessions</th>
<th>Apprentice ship</th>
<th>Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Educational activities in the course

Lectures
- 1: Introduction, stigma, chain of care
- 2: Anxiety disorders, mood disorders
- 3: Psychotic disorders
- 4: Personality disorders, Eating disorders
- 5: Law and justice
- 6: Suicide prevention and guidelines
Educational activities in the course

### Workshops

- **1:** Acute psychiatric service
- **2:** How to deal with self harm?
Skills training

• 1: Psychiatric examination

• 2: Communication with people with psychoses and/or mania.

• 3: Communication with people with anxiety, panic and depression

• 4: Difficult characters
Educational activities in the course

Coaching sessions

• 2 group sessions
• 2 individual sessions
### Educational activities in the course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lectures</th>
<th>Workshops</th>
<th>Skills training</th>
<th>Coaching sessions</th>
<th>Apprenticeship</th>
<th>Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Apprenticeship**

- 8 day apprenticeship on an acute psychiatric ward or in emergency mental health service.
Educational activities in the course

Exam

- Oral presentation about a patient case and interview in apprenticeship for teacher and students.
- Written report
Educational activities in the course

Course is part of a 4 year program

Repetition

Extra lectures on
- Drugs and addiction
- Dementia
- Brain injury
Course Psychiatry BAMH

- Surprised that mental health is part of the job
- Assumptions and beliefs
Assumptions and beliefs

Self harm = attention seeking / never suicidal

Psychosis = danger

This is not about me or about us

Suicide is an egoïst act

People who use drugs have a weak character

Poor people, let’s be extraordinary friendly!
Fear

- Fear for aggression
- Fear for making wrong clinical decisions
Quality of learning material

- Modern literature and internet sources
- New visions, facts and figures
- Teachers working in the field
Patient perspectives

• Stories of people with lived experience.
Patient perspectives

- Stories of people with lived experience.

Los Years,
Bas Labruyère
Patient perspectives

- Stories of people with lived experience.
Patient perspectives

- Anti stigma campaign material
Patient perspectives

• Anti stigma campaign material

‘I had a black dog, his name was depression’

Teaching methods

• Roll playing with training actors
Teaching methods

- Socratic dialogue
Teaching methods

• Experience psychoses
Feelings and preconceptions

• Own mental health

It’s Student’s Disease!!
Students’ mental health

• Present mental health problems
Students’ mental health

- Prevention PTSD among paramedics
Students’ mental health

• Call in case of problems
Fun and down-to-earth

- Serious attitude versus humour
Fun and down-to-earth

• Risk of exaggeration, no drama
Experiences with the program

• Students’ opinions
• Field
• Teachers experiences and ambitions
Conclusion (1)

- Improvement of the education on psychiatry for Dutch paramedics is important because of their lack of knowledge about psychiatry, the presence of stigma about mental health problems, and changing needs in Dutch society.
Conclusion (2)

- Paramedics influenced by mental health stigma are probably less able to communicate effectively with a patient, recognize mental health problems and offer good clinical care to the patient.

- Paramedics are at higher risk for mental health problems themselves.
Conclusion (3)

- The Bachelor Allied Medical Care of HU University of Applied Sciences offers a specially designed educational program about psychiatry to junior paramedics.

- Fighting mental health stigma among junior paramedics is possible by acknowledging present preconceptions and offer correct information to reduce them.
Conclusions are practice based.

HU University of Applied Sciences will keep on developing this educational program by researching the effects of the program in the future.
Fighting mental health stigma in the education of Dutch paramedics.

Virginie van Boven

virginie.vanboven@hu.nl
Thank you

Virginie van Boven

virginie.vanboven@hu.nl