

# A focus on prevention

**P**alatinat region braces itself/you: roads to resilience' is a Palatinat initiative for the promotion of preventive approaches beyond the healthcare system. Strategies based on prevention improve the population's mental health. Nevertheless, prevention programmes constitute less than 7% of the overall health system cost in Germany. With regard to the treatment of mentally ill persons with complex needs, we have now decided to think in a radical new way: our idea is to strengthen resilience on different social levels such as the individual, families, enterprises and communities.

The ability to advance personally in times of crisis and not to be broken by these challenging events, to be able to cope well with changes and with the ups and downs of life – this is what is known as resilience. Resilience is of utmost relevance both for individuals and organisations.

## Resilience

At an individual level – i.e. the strengthening of an individual's mental resistance – resilience is a key aspect of the services provided by the Pfalzlinikum für Psychiatrie und Neurologie – AdöR (Service Provider for Mental Health). Around 30,000 people are treated and cared for at their 12 locations annually, either as inpatients, in day clinics, or as outpatients. In order to boost their mental health on a long term basis and to counteract any further increase in mental illnesses, the main focus of the efforts has to be on prevention. The preventive fostering of individual resilience will therefore play a central role.

Above all, however, there is need for action in the fostering of organisational resilience. Technological advances, growing market dynamics, or ageing workforces are just a few examples of megatrends that may trigger crisis situations and which are cropping up in organisations such as companies or administrations at an ever more rapid pace. Such situations almost invariably call for rapid and comprehensive change to ensure a company's survival.

We also have to think about ways to improve resilience on the level of the community, where people live too. These three levels are crucial in establishing a powerful and sustainable prevention strategy.

## Salutogenesis

For this, we have brought together experts from different institutions in the field of science and practice (sociologists, anthropologists, economists, pedagogues, psychiatrists, communication scientists, ergonomists and so on) in order to promote salutogenesis at community level through the thematic fields of work/school/leisure (instead of



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pathogenetic approaches on which the health system has mainly focused so far).

The foremost requirement for this purpose is preliminary, comprehensive communication research aiming at the identification of stigmatising attitudes and their replacement by new relevant information (by means of metaphors, for example). It is only sound knowledge of how communication works, or does not work, that offers the possibility of establishing a broad knowhow of resilience promoting factors and framework conditions amongst citizens.

The results are reflected in a binational project with a similar, newly founded initiative ('Blackpool Better Start') in Blackpool, UK.

With this concept we also tread new paths when designing the context of health communication.

The 'Palatinat region braces itself/you' initiative as a socio-ecological and multi-agency approach is aimed at building networks for 'knowledge mobilisation', establishing action alliances and learning platforms and various projects to be presented using the example of resilience in enterprises and resilience promoting programmes in schools and on the community level.



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