



Marburg
University

Implementing School-Based Mental Health Programs in Europe Since COVID-19:

Digital and Analog Pathways

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Why Mental-Well-Being in Schools Matters (the “why”)

- 1 in 5 children & adolescents in Europe experience a mental disorder (pre-COVID $\approx$ 20 %).
- COVID-19 added stress, isolation, and a surge in anxiety, depression & trauma.
- Schools reach **100 %** of the target age group (5-19 y) – the most efficient place for universal prevention.

What Is Resilience?

Dynamic and multi-dimensional concept (Dray *et al.*, 2017; Liu *et al.*, 2020)

= Ability to successfully **navigate, adapt to, or manage** significant stress or trauma

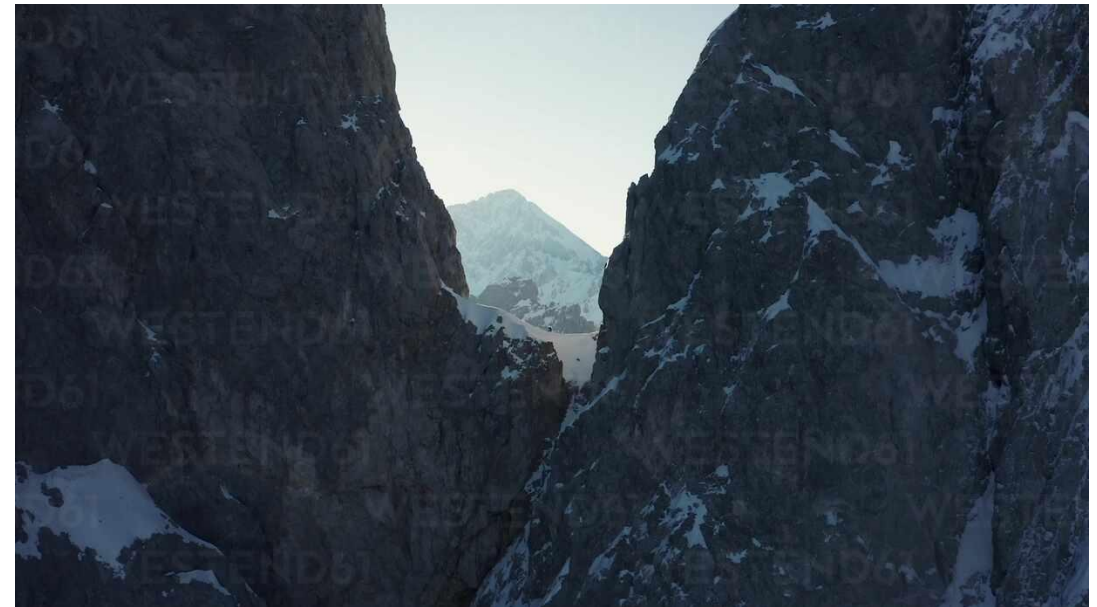
Supported by **personal strengths** and **external resources** from one's life and environment (Windle, 2010)

What Is a “Universal” School-Based Mental-Health Programme?

- **Universal:** offered to *all* students, not just those already identified with problems.
- **Short-term, focused objectives** (e.g., building resilience, emotion-regulation skills).
- **Two delivery modes**
 - **Analog** – face-to-face lessons, worksheets, group activities.
 - **Digital** – apps, web-platforms, video-sessions; can be blended with face-to-face.

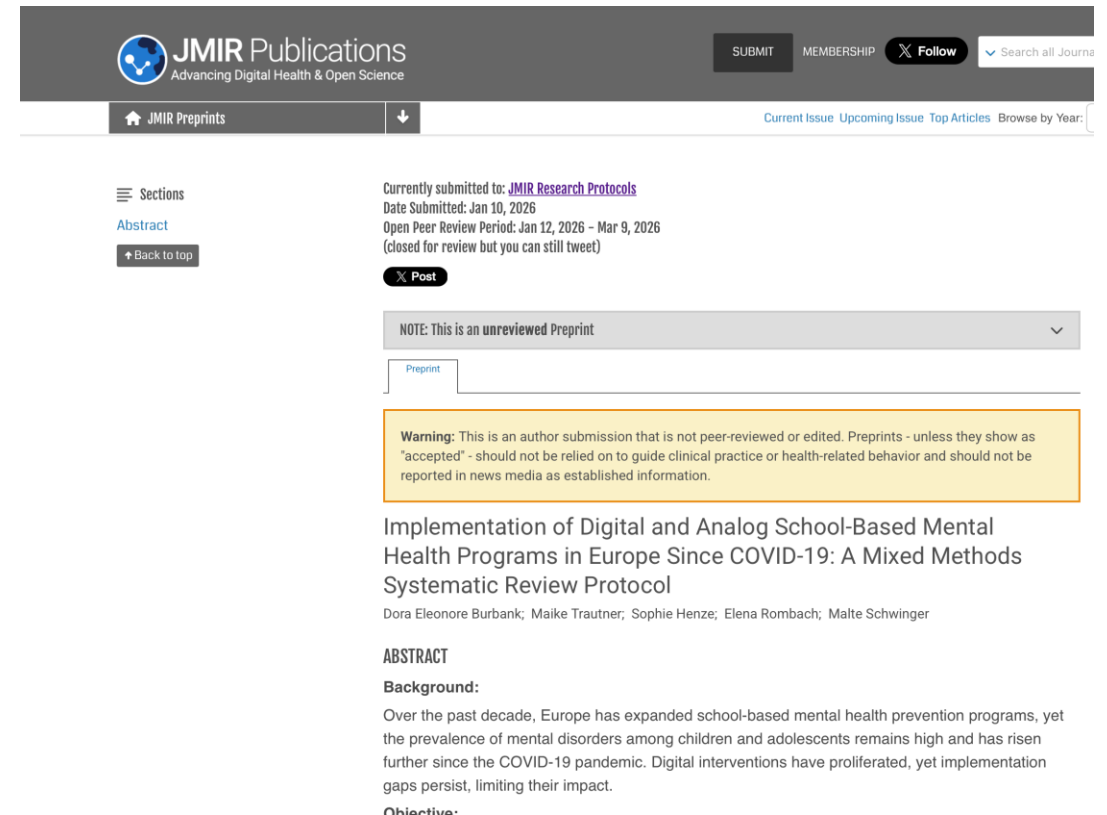
The Implementation Gap (What Goes Wrong?)

- **Research-practice gap:** many programmes are proven effective in trials but *rarely* reach classrooms.
- Common reasons:
 1. **Low fidelity** – teachers change the content unintentionally.
 2. **Insufficient dosage** – too few sessions or too short.
 3. **Poor fit** with school culture or curriculum.
 4. **Lack of resources** (time, tech, training).



How We Studied the Gap (The Review in a Nutshell)

- **Mixed-methods systematic review** (quantitative + qualitative studies).
- **Scope:** Europe, 2020-2026 (post-COVID era).
- **Included:** 614 records (experimental, quasi-experimental, observational, qualitative, mixed).
- **Frameworks used for analysis:**
 - **CFIR** (Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research) – 5 domains (innovation, outer setting, inner setting, individuals, process).
 - **RE-AIM** – Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance.



Key Facilitators (What Helps Success?)



CFIR Domain	Most Frequently Reported Facilitators
Innovation	Clear, user-friendly digital interface; evidence-based content; alignment with curriculum.
Outer Setting	Strong policy support (national mental-health strategies, GDPR-compliant data handling).
Inner Setting	Positive implementation climate – leadership endorsement, dedicated time in timetable, existing tech infrastructure.
Individuals	Teacher self-efficacy & training; student enthusiasm for tech-based activities.
Process	Ongoing coaching, fidelity monitoring, and feedback loops.

Key Barriers (What Stands in the Way?)



CFIR Domain	Most Frequently Reported Barriers
Innovation	Complex or buggy platforms; lack of adaptation for different languages/cultures.
Outer Setting	Data-privacy concerns, limited funding for licences or devices.
Inner Setting	Over-crowded curriculum, insufficient staff time, poor school-wide communication.
Individuals	Low digital literacy among teachers or parents; resistance to change.
Process	No systematic fidelity checks; ad-hoc implementation without coaching.

Quality of Implementation – How Do We Measure It?

- **Fidelity:** % of core components delivered as intended.
- **Dosage:** Number of sessions / total minutes.
- **Quality:** Teacher competence, student engagement, technical performance.
- **Reach (RE-AIM):** % of eligible students who actually participate.
- **Maintenance:** Continued use after the research project ends.



The Role of Digital Environment

- **Advantages** – scalability, 24/7 access, anonymity, data-driven personalization.
- **Critical success factors**
 1. **Device availability** (school computers, tablets, BYOD policies).
 2. **Reliable internet & technical support.**
 3. **GDPR-compliant data storage** (clear consent, minimal personal data).
 4. **User-centered design** – age-appropriate graphics, short modules, gamification.



Practical Steps for Schools (A 5-Step Implementation Blueprint)

Step	What to Do	Who Is Involved
1 Assess Fit	Map programme goals to school priorities & curriculum. Use a short CFIR checklist.	Principal, mental-health coordinator
2 Secure Resources	Allocate time in the timetable, budget for licences, ensure devices & Wi-Fi.	Finance officer, IT staff
3 Train & Coach	Provide a 2-hour hands-on workshop + monthly peer-coaching.	External trainer + lead teachers
4 Pilot & Monitor	Run a small-scale pilot (1-2 classes). Collect fidelity & usage data.	Lead teachers, data manager
5 Scale & Sustain	Refine based on pilot, embed into school policy, plan for annual refresh.	Whole staff, school board

Quick-Start Toolkit for Teachers (What You Can Use Tomorrow)



**RE-AIM
Planning Tool**



CFIR Constructs



**A School's Guide to
Implementation**

Green List Prevention – Evidence-Based Programs for the Healthy and Safe Development of Children and Adolescents

- Number of programs listed: 113
- **Main fields of action:** promotion of psychosocial health, adequate physical activity, and healthy nutrition among children and adolescents, as well as their protection from violence.
- Programs that **aim at structural changes within institutions** in children's and adolescents' living environments are also included.
- The programs can be implemented in **various settings:**
 - families
 - early childhood education/daycare centers
 - schools
 - neighbourhoods and municipalities
 - virtual environments.

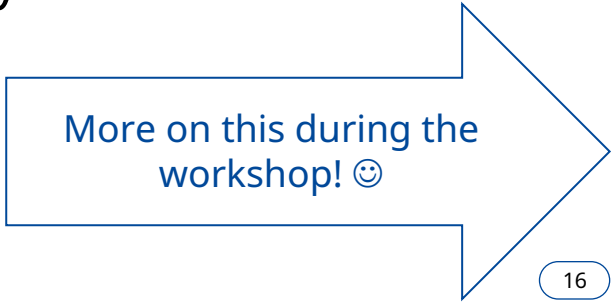


Recommendations for Policy Makers & School Leaders

- 1. Create a “mental-health implementation unit”** within the school (or district) to coordinate programmes.
- 2. Allocate protected time** (e.g., 1 hour/week) for teachers to deliver and reflect on the programme.
- 3. Invest in reliable digital infrastructure** – broadband, device pools, IT help-desk.
- 4. Mandate fidelity monitoring** as part of school quality assurance (e.g., annual report).
- 5. Foster a culture of continuous learning** – share successes, challenges, and data across schools.

Real-World Example (Resilience Promotion with the *Digitale Drehtür*)

- **Country:** Germany (state of Hesse).
- **Program:** 1-day to 6-week blended resilience curriculum (online videos + in-class activities).
- **Facilitators:** Specialised project team to support teachers on-site, dedicated IT support via the platform, teacher training day.
- **Barriers:** Initial low internet speed, platform issues, some teachers felt “over-burdened”, low levels of student literacy
- **Outcome:** Fidelity = ~85 %; Reach = ~92 % of students; Post-test resilience ↑ 0.20 MD.
- **Take-away:** Simple technical fixes, effective teacher support, improvement of lesson plans and questionnaires, lifted implementation scores dramatically.



More on this during the
workshop! 😊

Call to Action – Your Next Steps

1. **Pick one programme** (digital, analog, or blended) that matches your school's needs from the *Green List Prevention*.
2. **Complete the RE-AIM planning tool** (QR code on the last slides).
3. **Schedule a 30-minute planning meeting** with your principal, IT lead, and a teacher champion.
4. **Run a 2-week pilot** with a small extracurricular pupil group.
5. **Report back** at the next staff meeting – share data, celebrate wins, adjust.



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Thank you for your attention.

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Key Papers: Burbank et al. 2026 –
systematic review protocol.

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Page 12: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/-/publication-the-democratic-culture-in-the-digital-environment-a-handbook-for-schools-published>