

Organization profile: Society for Psychological Assistance (SPA)

The Society for Psychological Assistance (SPA) is the leading non-profit, non-governmental, membership based mental health organization, based in Zagreb (Croatia) founded in 1993. The mission of SPA is to help alleviate the suffering of traumatic stress survivors, provide psychological and psychosocial assistance to individuals, families, groups and communities in distress through a range of individual, family and group interventions. SPA is a regionally recognized resource for training care providers in various services, research, project evaluation, publishing and organizing professional conferences.

SPA members are mental health professionals with extensive experience in providing comprehensive psychosocial assistance. They serve people in need without regard to gender, race, ethnicity or religious affiliation. During the war in Croatia (1991-1995) and beyond, SPA developed and provided comprehensive community-based psychosocial assistance in collective refugee centres and outreach in post-conflict communities. Since 2003, it operates the *Modus*, Child, Adolescent and Family Community Center in downtown Zagreb serving about 300 clients per year. The services include individual and group psychological support, counseling and therapy, and mental health outreach prevention activities.

SPA has pioneered several innovative services that became a national standard: psychological crisis interventions after major community incidents (1995), supervision (2003), treatment of perpetrators of domestic violence (2005).

Ongoing training and consultancy is provided to governmental services, local communities, NGOs and professionals in the helping disciplines. A range of training courses have been completed by over 4,000 care-providers in Croatia, Sweden Norway, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia, Russia, Ingushetia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Colombia. SPA is often invited to evaluate intervention projects.

SPA has published 17 professional books in Croatian, English, Macedonian, Albanian and Russian languages. Students of the helping disciplines spend time learning and working with SPA.

SPA has organized eight international conferences: Trauma Recovery Training: Lessons Learned (Zagreb, 1997); Health and Human Rights (Cavtat, 2002), Current Approaches to Psychotrauma (Zagreb, 2004); Challenges of Supervision in South East Europe (Opatija, 2004), 10th European Conference on Traumatic Stress (Opatija, 2007); 15th European Conference of Social Psychology (Opatija, 2008), Coping & Resilience Conference (Cavtat, 2009), Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (Zagreb, 2017), as well as three national conferences on supervision (Opatija, 2006, 2008, 2013).

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