



# Students with mental health problems and disorders: teacher's help in continuing education and the importance of genuine, professional attitude in the help process

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# Adolescent Psychiatry Unit - APU



Intensive Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Unit



## Population of students in APU

- Diverse group of **students with mental health problems**: depression, anxiety, psychosis, BPD, etc.
- Age: 16 to 19.
- In treatment programme from three weeks to three months.
- Attend different schools and programmes in secondary education.





## Mental health and school work

- Mental health problems have a **negative impact on school work and study.**



How will I  
continue my  
schooling?



## Students in APU and hospital school

- **Multidisciplinary medical team in APU** decides about inclusion in hospital school (sets purpose, follows progress).
- **Hospital school** is part of a comprehensive treatment and recovery.  
Students are included in:
  - **additional professional assistance - APA,**
  - individual teaching assistance in general education subjects.



## Students with mental health issues

- Slovenian legislation - children with special needs.
- When planning, we need to take into account:
  - student's current health state,
  - psycho-physical abilities,
  - learning abilities,
  - current school situation,
  - special socio-cultural circumstances of a student.

Plan of APA for each student is set individually.



- Important principle: treatment first, schooling second.



## Additional professional assistance - APA

- Purpose: to help students overcome deficits, learning difficulties, learning lags, etc.
- Carried out individually by one teacher of educational sciences.
- Each student has 2-3 hours of APA per week.
- Goal: to help and support students in continuing school work/education (in cooperation with medical team and student's home school).





## Most common school related problems of students in APU

- Longer absences from school, lags in learning material.
- Low motivation for school work and learning.
- Attention and concentration problems.
- Problems in the field of self-regulation of learning: planning, setting priorities, persisting in learning, etc.
- Less developed learning habits, strategies and learning methods.
- Specific learning difficulties: dyslexia, dyscalculia, deficits in other areas of learning.





## Course of APA

- Conducting an interview/conversation with a student (obstacles).
- Planning and organizing school work (what comes first, subjects...).
- Pursuance of a plan:
  - gaining and strengthening learning condition,
  - observing the student in the learning process.
- Evaluating progress, academic achievements.



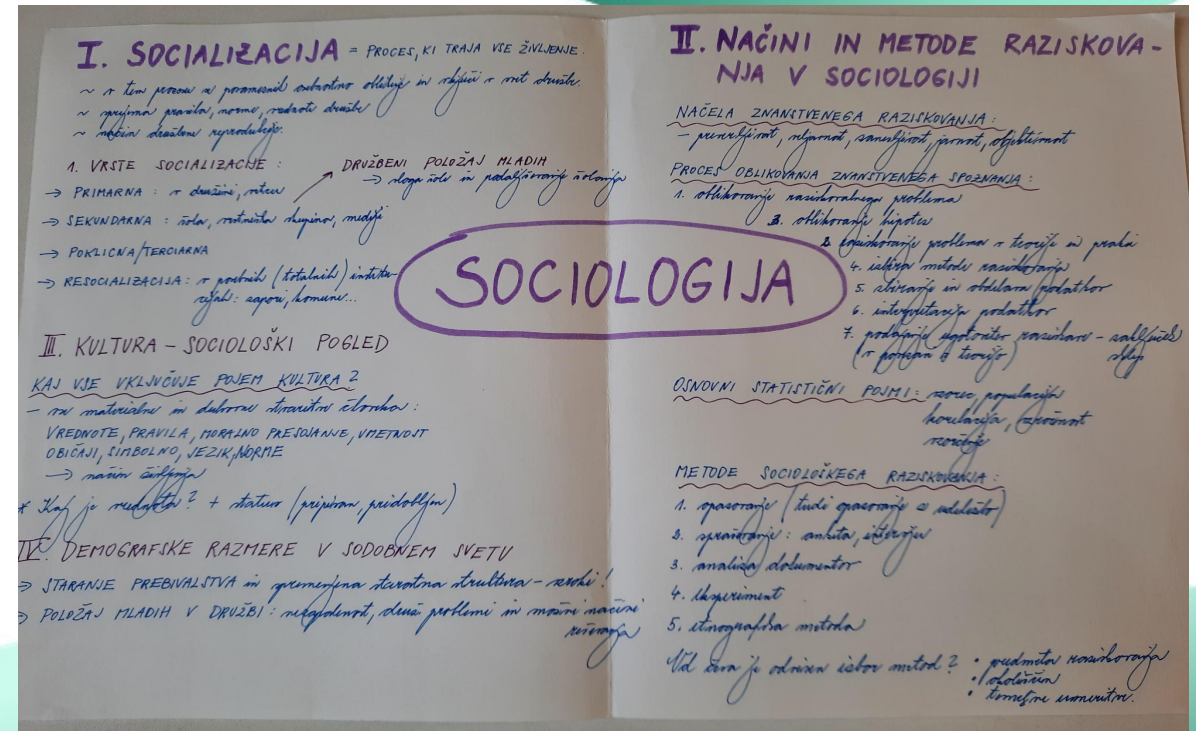
## Most common activities with students

- Organization and time planning of school obligations.
- Identifying and overcoming (specific) learning difficulties.
- Promoting motivation and persistence (humour helps 😊).
- Preparation and use of learning aids.



# Activities with students

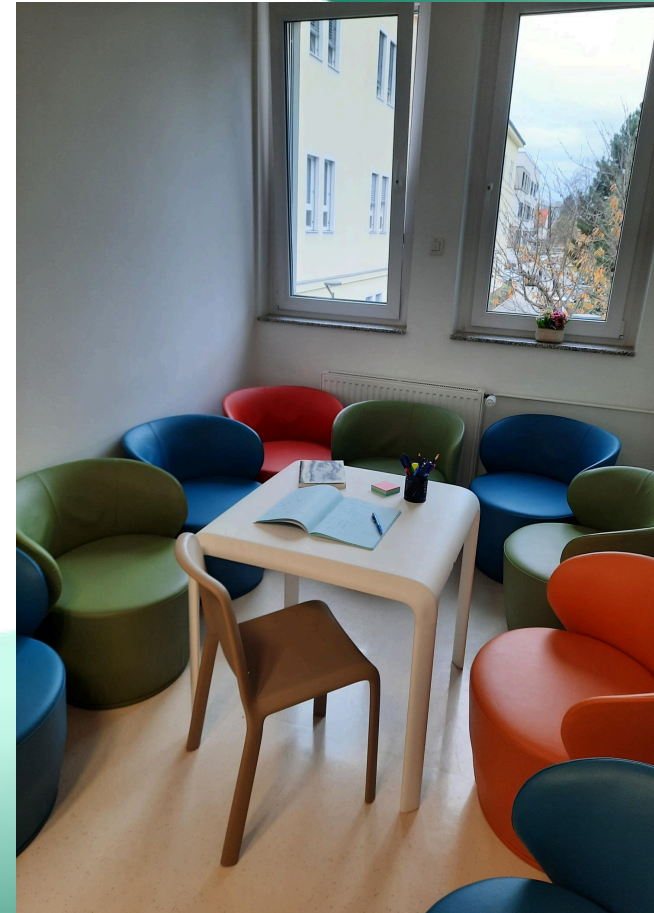
- Learning and consolidating subject material.
- Determining the student's strong and weak areas.
- Developing skills to overcome school-related difficulties.
- Developing learning skills for independent school work.





## Importance of the teacher-student relationship

- Mutual respect.
- Creating a relationship of trust.
- Open communication and dialogue.
- Student activity in the help process.







## Is APA effective?

- No empirical study has been conducted so far.
- In APU 50 – 60 students are included in APA every school year.
- 95 % of students continue their education at their home school after completing treatment.
- Students' progress after their treatment is concluded is not monitored.



## Also important for help process

- Team work and communication.
- Flexibility: not everything goes according to plan, adapting.
- Realistic expectations.
- Danger of therapeutisation of the pedagogical process.
- Maintaining the professional autonomy of a teacher.



Thank you for your attention.

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