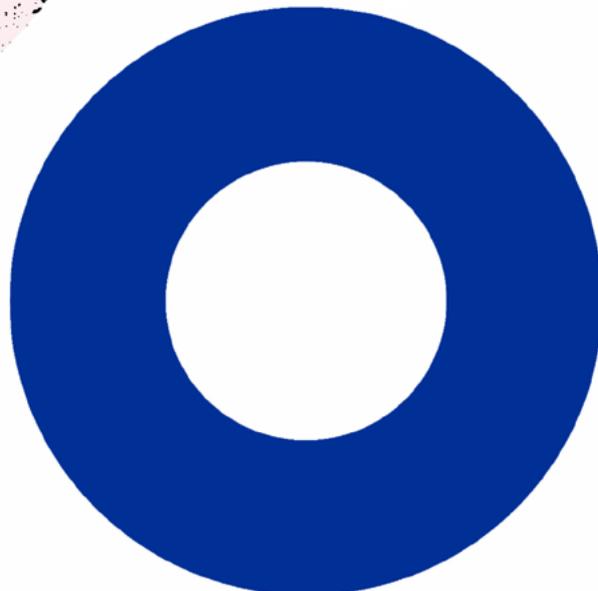


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MÓW SŁUCHAJ WSPIERAJ



**Summary - Analysis  
of the ways of reaching  
audiences and distribution of  
content and materials  
promoting mental health  
protection of children and  
adolescents among teachers,  
parents and guardians.**



## Description: Agnieszka Siennicka, expert

The analysis made use of the results of an online survey, prepared with the use of the Google Forms application. Parents and individuals working with children were provided with a link to this application. Sixty individuals between the ages of 29 and 64 were asked to express their opinions, with a distinction made between those whose interactions with school-age children or adolescents were related to professional responsibilities (“professionals”) and parents of school-age children or adolescents (“parents”).

Both groups, in other words all participants in the study, confirmed that they had an interest in the topic of children’s mental health. In addition, both groups stated that the principal sources of knowledge they made use of when looking for information specifically about health were specialized websites, online forums or professionals they were acquainted with.

An important point to note is that as many as 24 individuals were unable to recall the name of any campaign related to the mental health of children and adolescents. Three said the topic was too serious to use online sources for. It can also be inferred that such campaigns lack the necessary level of promotion to increase their visibility and strengthen trust in this type of source. For this reason, future efforts should be preceded by market research so as to analyse how health campaigns may be promoted and who could serve as an authority figure for such an important, yet difficult, subject of child and adolescent mental health.

The survey participants listed nine sources from which they derive knowledge, with two sources listed more than once. These were:

- \* *The Empowering Children Foundation (Fundacja Dajemy Dzieciom Siłę)* – the strengths of which are not only its 30-year history, but also the diversity of its activities, its wide range of content and large scale of activities, and thus its significant results, such as Standards for Child Protection.
- \* Mutyzm.org – an association working on a number of levels, such as a website that includes publications and own research, a social-media-based support group which has gathered a community of over 5000 online users, cooperation with experts, meetings, webinars, conferences and media contacts.

The analysis also took into account the Norwegian report, whose message can be considered universal: it is crucial to disseminate knowledge about child and adolescent mental health, not only locally, but also nationwide. It is likewise important to involve health professionals, traditional media and the Internet. Free access to initiatives, prepared and tested regarding their level of merit, will help to shape social attitudes and habits towards the care of the mental health of the youngest in society.

Examples of projects meeting such criteria have included, among others: *VIP and VIP Partners*, *“Everyone has mental health”* and the *Olweus programme*, where school staff and students were taught what problems count as mental-health issues. The Norwegian report emphasizes the need to classify the mental health needs of children and adolescents so that activities may be tailored to the specific area in which they will be performed.

Several obstacles were noted which may present a hindrance to the implementation of such a project in Poland. As there is no data on the effects of any previous campaigns, there are therefore no results which can be relied upon. The budget can be an additional constraint, depending on whether the campaign works on a mass level or in personalized way. For example, the Norwegian program *COMPLETE – Dream School and Attendance Team*, in which a group of mentors supported students individually in the educational process, was implemented with the aid of a large budget.

The conclusions of the survey should be analysed, taking also its limitations into account, namely the number of individuals surveyed. A larger number of participants would definitely expand the conclusions of the analysis.

The survey revealed that the topic of the mental health of young children is of interest, not only for professionals working with children, but also for parents. Among the sources of knowledge, both reliable, specialized sources, and unverified ones, such as online forums, were indicated. More than 30% of the respondents stated that they could not recall the name of any healthpromotion campaign. The others pointed to several sources, of which only two were indicated more than once.

To design an effective campaign, it is first necessary to conduct research so that the most relevant channels can be chosen, and to analyse what kinds of support parents and caregivers of children and adolescents need in terms of mental-health knowledge. This study should be conducted with experts in the fields of education, developmental changes, and child

and adolescent mental-health problems, as well those with skills in designing the research process itself.

On the basis of this analysis, the optimal, most promising activities will be selected, with a range that will be strengthened, not only by promotional activities, but also by an educational campaign which shapes the appropriate attitudes regarding the mental health of the youngest in society.

Mental health is an extremely broad and difficult topic. Each disorder, or even deviation from the standard, is taboo, a reason to feel shame, and can also lead to stigmatization. This makes the project for a public-health campaign seem ever more necessary.

Additionally, there is a lack of trust in the healthcare system in Poland. Improvements should also be applied to online forums, which in their current form are unreliable and full of unverifiable advice

