



DÁT² Psy Help

harm reduction team

*free volunteer help services
at parties and festivals*

 facebook.com/psy.help.team

SozialMarie 2019 application

Project description

DÁT2 Psy Help (Hungary): Harm reduction at parties and festivals

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The DÁT2 Psy Help volunteer team attends musical events of the “goa/psytrance” subgenre to support party people in maintaining their physical and mental wellbeing. The ideological basis for our activity is *harm reduction*, i.e., to minimise the negative consequences of party-related risky activities by information, awareness, and various practical methods. We distribute fresh drinking water, vitamins, minerals, salty snacks and glucose – all for free – and as our speciality, we provide drug information and psychological help to the party people. Our harm reduction activity is thus aimed at a previously little-considered target group that nevertheless includes young people who regularly attend the events of this new electronic musical subgenre by the tens of thousands.

Our helping activity is partly related to the social problem of drug use; it is well known that the consumption rate of legal and illegal psychoactive substances is significantly high among visitors of electronic dance music events. In this scene, new problems emerge due to the constant change of “disco drugs”, the appearance of New Psychoactive Substances (“designer drugs”) in the local scenes, and the change of alcohol consumption habits. In the case of illegal drugs, there is no reliable information available on their purity, ingredients, dosing, and interactions, hence drug users may occasionally get into unexpected and uncomfortable, difficult mental and emotional states that may last for many hours. In such situations – e.g., new substances and/or accidental overdoses – find both the users and the medical or ambulance staff unprepared; inappropriate handling of these cases may result in mental traumas, unnecessary hospitalisations and medications, and criminal consequences. The on-site handling of hallucinogenic, psychedelic drug-related difficult experiences (“bad trips”) by intense personal care is a complex crisis intervention process, which requires specially trained helpers.

In order to answer these challenges and to solve the above problems, our team uses prepared and trained volunteers, who are carefully selected in terms of their psychological suitability to perform both client- and teamwork. We provide support for bodies and minds personally at parties and festivals, as well as in the digital domain. Our vision is about establishing and spreading a conscious, informed, and moderate “Partyface 2.0” mentality, for which we have already taken steps in the last few years by our domestic and international collaborations. As the only Hungarian

member of the European harm reduction umbrella organisation NEWNet, we have worked together with teams from abroad at several summer festivals (in Croatia, Netherlands, and Spain). Our community self-help harm reduction activities have already been mentioned in two professional journals, and at numerous international conferences in the field of social work. By transferring our practical knowledge we have also trained five similar party service teams throughout Europe (in Finland, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Austria, and Lithuania). In the future, we wish to augment this training activity within the framework of further regional collaborations. As within the digital domain, we plan to develop our long-time provided Ecstasy pill database (daath.hu/Eki.php) into an actual "Partyface 2.0" smartphone application, in order to provide harm reduction hints and real-time drug information – e.g., warnings about the latest dangerous drugs – for possibly thousands of partygoers. Our future plans include also the provision of lectures and trainings on the topics of drug information and human rights advocacy, as well as the organisation of experience sharing and psychological integration circles both for our team members and for the wider party community.

For sustainability, the previous activity of DÁT2 Psy Help has been decidedly without using money at all. Since its starting in 2013, our team functions as an informal group of friends: all of us do the volunteer helper's work as private persons in our free-times. The team is being run by three experienced coordinators who started the project as long-time members of the local party scene. All coordinators, team leaders and team members are volunteers, and do not get any extra compensation for their activities. The costs of the freely distributed goods are reimbursed by the party organisers, but we do not ask for salaries or fees. The reason for this policy is because offering a pay service for party organizers would have greatly hindered the spread of the ideology of party harm reduction in Hungary. One of the goals of self-organization is to show that the efficiency of volunteer work does not depend on monetary resources, but it is a function of our time, energy, and caring aimed at the members of our community. As problematic drug use is atypical to our target group, we do not have high hopes of financing our project by governmental and local health and social grants. Despite some offers, we do not want to involve corporate sponsorship into the project; we do not wish to relate our helping activities to any kind of commercial activities.

In the lack of known, similar, previous initiatives in Hungary, we can boldly state that due to the social inclusion of our target group, our project is uniquely and innovatively "grassroot"-style within the field of voluntary social work. The acceleration of our activity – in terms of both quantity and overwhelmingly positive reception – is posing new challenges for us. Our future plans – including domestic and foreign trainings, network building, international collaborations, and digital developments – cannot be realised any more by self-financing it as a "hobby", due to the geographical distances involved. Regarding this situation – and in the lack of other monetary sources – we look forward to be able to use the potential financial possibilities kindly offered by SozialMarie.

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