



P R E S S R E L E A S E

With Joint Forces against Depression and Suicidal Behaviour

EU co-funded “EAAD-BEST” project comes to an end and thinks ahead

26/02/2024 | This event is open to all **professional stakeholders** interested in promoting or implementing **community-based interventions targeting depression and suicide prevention**. The attendance is **free of charge**.

EAAD-Best Final Event

Date: 4th March 2024

Location: Brussels, SQUARE convention centre, 2 rue Ravenstein, 1000

The purpose of the **EAAD-Best Final Event** is to share lessons learnt from three years of successful implementation of community-based interventions and to **encourage others in joining or starting new regional activities**. The meeting’s agenda includes workshops to discuss concrete steps on how to implement the 4-level intervention at a regional level and how to scale it up to a nationwide network. **The event is open to all audiences:** civil society, like-minded research consortia, NGOs, associations, policymakers, mental health professionals, patients’ organisations, etc.

The aim of the **EAAD-Best project** is to improve care for patients with depression and to prevent suicidal behaviour in Europe. During the three-year project period, a community-based intervention, the **4-level approach**, has been established in **16 new regions** across countries. Overall, **more than 100 training sessions** for health care professionals and community facilitators have been conducted with over **4000 attendees**. About **800 new guides** for the **iFightDepression® tool**, a self-management online tool for people with milder forms of depression, were trained and certified, and more than **750 new users** started working with the tool.

More than 300 million people are suffering from depression worldwide¹, which reduces their life expectancy by approximately 10 years. Each year **more than 700,000 people take their own life worldwide²** and the number of attempted suicides is estimated to be about 20 times higher. Depression and, to a lesser degree, other mental disorders are the main cause of suicidal behaviour³.

¹ Chodavadia, P., Teo, I., Poremanski, D., Fung, D. S. S., & Finkelstein, E. A. (2023). Prevalence and economic burden of depression and anxiety symptoms among Singaporean adults: Results from a 2022 web panel. *BMC Psychiatry*, 23(1), 104. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-023-04581-7>

² WHO (2023). WHO policy brief on the health aspects of decriminalization of suicide and suicide attempts. Geneva, Switzerland.

³ Favril, L., Yu, R., Uyar, A., Sharpe, M., & Fazel, S. (2022). Risk factors for suicide in adults: systematic review and meta-analysis of psychological autopsy studies. *Evidence-based Mental Health*, 25(4), 148–155. <https://doi.org/10.1136/ebmental-2022-300549>



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Agenda and Registration

The agenda of the event and the registration form can be found on the project's website: <https://eaad-best.eu/final-event/>

Press contact / Offer for interviews

The members of the EAAD-Best consortium are available for giving interviews in advance of the event. Possible interview partners are:

- Prof. Ulrich Hegerl, President of EAAD, German psychiatrist and chairman of the German Depression Foundation, Senckenberg Distinguished Professorship at Goethe University
- Prof. Chantal van Audenhove, Principal Investigator at LUCAS KU Leuven (Center for Healthcare Research and Consulting)
- Piotr Toczynski, Principal Investigator at Maria Grzegorzewska University
- Rainer Mere, Project Manager at the Estonian-Swedish Mental Health and Suicidology Institute

Please contact the EAAD coordination centre to arrange an online call: contact@eaad.net



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BACKGROUND

About the EAAD-Best project

The EAAD-Best project funded by the 3rd EU Health Programme started in 2021 and will run until March 2024. It has the two overarching aims to improve care for patients with depression and to prevent suicidal behaviour in Europe by:

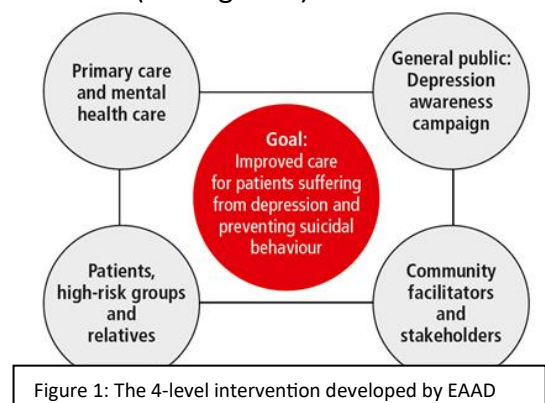
- transferring the community-based 4-level intervention concept of EAAD to new regions and countries in Europe and
- promoting the international uptake of the iFightDepression®-tool, an internet-based self-management tool for patients with depression.

Additional objectives of EAAD-Best include reducing stigma, improving health literacy, and encouraging help-seeking behaviour.

EAAD's 4-level Intervention

EAAD's 4-level intervention combines the two partly overlapping aims of improving care for people with depression and preventing suicidal behaviour. It is a community-based intervention involving simultaneous activities at 4 different levels (see Figure 1):

- **Level 1:** Training of General Practitioners and other health professionals concerning diagnosis and treatment of depression as well as suicidality.
- **Level 2:** Addressing the general public with e.g. a professional public relation campaign. Key messages are: Depression is a real disease; Depression can affect anyone; Depression has many faces; Depression can be treated.
- **Level 3:** Training of community facilitators (such as geriatric care givers, priests, pharmacists, police, journalists) concerning recognition and handling of depression and suicide risk.
- **Level 4:** Information, psychoeducation and support of self-help for patients with depression and their relatives.



In a systematic review by an independent research group, the 4-level model has been identified as the most effective community-based suicide preventive programme⁴. EAAD's 4-level intervention is the most broadly implemented and best evaluated approach in suicide prevention globally.

⁴ Linskens, E. J., Venables, N. C., Gustavson, A. M., Sayer, N. A., Murdoch, M., MacDonald, R., Ullman, K. E., McKenzie, L. G., Wilt, T. J., & Sultan, S. (2022). Population- and community-based interventions to prevent suicide. *Crisis*, 44(4), 330–340. <https://doi.org/10.1027/0227-5910/a000873>

