

## THE EUROPEAN ALLIANCE AGAINST DEPRESSION (EAAD)

The European Alliance Against Depression (EAAD) is an international, non-profit organisation based in Leipzig, Germany with several European members and more than 100 regional network partners.

### Background

Depression is a prevalent, severe and often life-threatening mental health disorder which accounts for around one quarter of all disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) lost in Europe. It is associated with deep suffering and is a huge burden to those affected. Depressive disorders as well as fatal and non-fatal suicidal behaviour continue to be important mental health issues. Because of the close relationship between depression and suicidal behaviour, it is likely that preventive actions improving the care and optimizing treatment for depressed patients results in a reduction of suicidal acts (completed and attempted suicides combined). **The 4-level intervention programme simultaneously aims for a better care for patients with depression and for the prevention of suicidal behaviour.**

The **Nuremberg Alliance against Depression**, a two-year 4-level community based intervention programme has shown a 24% reduction of suicidal acts (completed and attempted suicides combined), compared to a baseline year and a control region. Serving as a model project, this approach has up to now been adopted and implemented in more than 100 regions in Germany and Europe.

The **European Alliance Against Depression** project received funding from the EU from 2004-2008. The main aim was the adaptation, implementation and evaluation of the 4-level intervention programme in various regions in Europe.

Further evidence for this community based approach to target depression and to prevent suicidal behaviour could be provided.

In order to sustain, continue and expand the work and activities from the EU-funded EAAD projects, a **non-profit research organization, the European Alliance Against Depression e. V. (EAAD)** was founded in 2008 by a number of mental health experts from different European research institutions. Moreover, within the EU-funded suicide prevention project OSPI-Europe, this 4-level-approach was further optimized, implemented and evaluated in four European regions (2008-2012).





Fig. 2: EAAD 4-level intervention programme; overview of the approach, which had been implemented in 17 countries during the projects EAAD I and II (between 2004 and 2008) and within the EAAD association (2008 onwards)

## Our Aims

- Improving care and optimizing treatment for patients with depressive disorders
- Preventing suicidality by initiating community-based 4-level intervention programmes
- Implementing the EAAD 4-level intervention programme in different health care contexts
- Supporting interested countries and regions by initiating regional alliances against depression
- Providing information and education to the general public and professionals regarding depression and suicide
- Supporting young researchers
- Conducting research projects and studies targeting depression, interventions and prevention of suicide

## Current Activities and Research

Moreover, the EAAD is partner in various **EU funded research projects** targeting depression and suicide prevention over the next years and is **expanding its network** activities across Europe constantly.



**ImpleMenAll** is a European collaboration towards faster and more effective implementation of eHealth interventions. The project was founded on the notion that implementation of new services and technologies is time-consuming and costly – and often fails completely – not least in the healthcare domain. Solidly based in research, and in a collaboration spanning from all corners of Europe to Australia, the project will construct its answer to this widespread problem.

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**MoodFOOD** (Multi-country cOllaborative project on the rOlE of Diet, Food-related behaviour, and Obesity in the prevention of Depression) will deliver sustainable, evidence-based **nutritional strategies** for the effective **prevention of depression**. A unique approach will be employed integrating epidemiological evidence and a multi-centre prevention trial to unravel the multifaceted links of food intake, nutrient status, food-related behaviour and obesity with depression.

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## iFightDepression®



### Depression Awareness Website:

[www.ifightdepression.com](http://www.ifightdepression.com) aims to provide evidence-based information about depression and suicidal behaviour for the following groups: Broad general public Young people Family and friends Community professionals (media, teachers, religious leaders, police) Health care professionals (general practitioners, pharmacists). The website was re-launched in April 2018 and is available in 12 European languages (status April 2018). More languages will follow in the future. The website consists of various subpages on different depression topics, e.g. information on the causes, symptoms and treatment options of depression. Visitors can take a self-test, provide feedback about the website, find help contact details for their national regions as well as other useful links, a glossary and a download section with region specific material.

**The iFightDepression® Tool** is an internet-based self-management programme for individuals experiencing mild forms of depression. This includes mild to moderate, as well as sub-clinical depression. It is free of charge and is intended to help individuals to self-manage their symptoms of depression and to promote recovery. The tool is used with the support of a trained guiding health professional, e.g. general practitioners, psychotherapists and clinical psychologists.

Both products are administered and disseminated by the EAAD.

## Achievements

The EAAD was awarded the first **European Health Forum Award in 2007** and is furthermore mentioned as an example of successful concept to prevent suicide.

Moreover, the European Alliance Against Depression is mentioned as an effective, multicomponent intervention in the **Suicide Prevention Report of the WHO (2014)**.

## Current Members



To date, the EAAD comprises of 28 members from 25 countries.

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