

## Mental hygiene

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### Please briefly describe the initiative.

The Mentalna higijena (Mental hygiene) project was launched in 2022 in response to the growing mental health challenges among children and adolescents in Croatia. The project's main tool is the web platform [www.mentalnahigijena.hr](http://www.mentalnahigijena.hr), which provides a wealth of educational and engaging content aimed at supporting young people in the area of mental health.

The initiative is rooted in concerning national statistics. According to UNICEF's 2021 State of the World's Children report, 12% of children and adolescents in Croatia aged 10-19 struggle with mental health issues, and WHO data reveals that 80% of them do not receive the necessary help. These figures, coupled with the stigma surrounding mental health, show that children often carry their worries and fears in silence due to fear of mockery or judgment.

Our goal is to create a safe, engaging, and educational space where young people can seek advice and comfort. In cooperation with Brave telephone, we produced over 70 educational videos, conducted workshops in the four winning schools and created educational digital questionnaire on mental health in cooperation with Go2Digital, which was completed by over 35,000 people from October to December 2023. The questionnaire remains active, and the results will provide valuable insights for the project's continuation. Also, we developed a creative concept that conveyed the importance of mental hygiene through lovable characters, with clear messages and content adapted to their interests.

This initiative directly aligns with Wiener osiguranje's mission of fostering worry-free living. By addressing mental health issues early, we aim to help future generations live healthier, more peaceful lives, free from untreated mental health challenges. The Mental hygiene project reflects our commitment to the well-being of the community and our dedication to making a meaningful, long-term impact on society.



## What were the benefits?

The Mental Hygiene project delivered significant benefits by addressing the pressing social issue of mental health among children and adolescents in Croatia. One of the key achievements was raising awareness and providing essential support to this vulnerable and often overlooked group.

Through our platform, we involved children through educational workshops in schools and through meet-up and we also raised awareness through an online platform with brand ambassadors who share the values of the project and the children also follow them through quiz.

By opening a dialogue among professionals, educators, parents, and children, we emphasized the importance of early intervention and mental health care. This inclusive approach fostered community engagement and highlighted the mental health challenges young people face, establishing the project as a socially responsible initiative focused on enhancing societal well-being.

Moreover, the active involvement of children in the campaign was crucial. By including them in workshops, discussions, and creative content development, we not only empowered them to take control of their mental health but also sparked a broader societal conversation. This engagement resonated with the media, resulting in an above-average number of media mentions that amplified the project's message and raised public awareness of the youth mental health crisis.

Overall, the project underscored our commitment to social responsibility, with a clear focus on supporting vulnerable groups. It demonstrated that meaningful, sustained change can be achieved by aligning corporate values with a deep understanding of community needs, particularly in supporting the mental well-being of future generations.

## Who were the main stakeholders involved?

In addition to Wiener osiguranje, which developed this initiative as its largest CSR project to date, the main stakeholders involved include the expert partner NGO Hrabri telefon (Brave Telephone), one of the largest organizations in Croatia providing help and support to abused, neglected, and other children in need, operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Science and Education and the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family, and Social Policy. Other key stakeholders are the creative agency Señor, the digital advertising agency Go2Digital, and the digital agency iProspect.



## What were the major learnings and challenges you had to overcome?

The main learnings and challenges we encountered during this project centered around effectively reaching Generation Z and Alpha, whose short attention spans and difficulty maintaining interest posed significant obstacles. A key challenge was not only to capture their interest in consuming educational content but also to actively involve them in dialogue about mental hygiene - a topic that is neither naturally close to them nor comfortable to discuss. In collaboration with experts from Brave Telephone, we produced over 70 educational videos and articles addressing the issues most commonly brought to their attention by children and young people. The communication style was carefully tailored to resonate with the target audience.

Another significant challenge was selecting the right media and formats to ensure that our messages reached the intended audience. We adapted the content to align with trends on platforms like TikTok and carefully chose influencers who would be relevant to children and young people.

While it was challenging to encourage deeper participation, we successfully created a space for open dialogue and active involvement through workshops, contests, and interactive questionnaires. This approach resulted in strong interest and engagement from our target audience.

## Going forward, what are your plans to further develop the project?

Moving forward, we will continue our efforts to further open the dialogue on this important topic. Key activities include creating educational materials, such as the "I've Got a Feeling" journal, and expanding media initiatives to promote existing content. Additionally, we plan to develop a new advertising strategy for the project by incorporating new channels and partners to provide additional knowledge and support to children and young people.

*Are you interested in exchanging with Anja? Please feel free to contact her!*

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