



## Welcome

to the eMEN Spring newsletter, updating you on our progress and achievements across Europe in digital mental health technologies.

## What has happened so far in 2018?

Each partner is piloting an e-mental health product. The examples below illustrate some of the innovative approaches developing from our studies, which aim to address barriers to the uptake of e-mental health.

We are looking at creative ways of communicating evidence-based policy and research advances, including through our podcast series and

animation. The third year of the eMEN project got off to a great start with three transnational events taking place in February ([Belgium](#)), March ([France](#)) and April ([the Netherlands](#)). If you missed these events, we have many upcoming seminars and conferences that are listed at the end of this newsletter.

Combined expertise has supported our policy work, illustrated below through the case study from Ireland. This shows our coordinated approach to using the product pilots to create an impact in the sphere of European digital mental health. To receive updates on our future activities and connect to e-mental health stakeholders across Europe, we encourage you to [register to join our network](#).

# What are we learning from e-mental health product pilots?

## How can social media communication help test products?

In the second half of 2017, the first phase of the [MIRROR](#) pilot was implemented at Victim Support Netherlands, involving over 10,000 end-users. The MIRROR is a self-help test to take after experiencing a distressing event. It asks questions about PTSD symptoms, resilience and functioning to return tailored feedback with personal advice, including towards taking further steps if necessary.

Close cooperation with the SME/eHealth developer was required to implement the tailored modifications for the pilot. In order to publicise the self-help test to the relevant group, Victim Support Netherlands positioned the app prominently on their own website and initiated a Facebook campaign. Initially, the campaign text was 'In case of distressing events'. The result? Women particularly responded, whereas few men took the test.

The new Facebook campaign 'Real men do not cry' targeted men, who are generally very difficult to reach through completing self-help tests. However, adapting the text to 'Real men do not cry' succeeded! In the end, over 10,000 end-users were reached, with 55% of them being male.

Contact: For further information about this campaign, contact [Elice Sijbrandij](#).

## Heights in 360° VR video on YouTube

The [Expertise Unit Psychology, Technology & Society](#) of Thomas More University of Applied Sciences recently recorded a number of locations of variable height in 360° VR video as a contribution to using virtual spaces to help in the treatment of height phobia. The two Antwerp campuses, Sanderus and National, of Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, were used for scenes. The [13 locations](#) were not chosen randomly, but were selected in the context of an internal pilot study.



Students Hans Vermeulen (internship) and Celine Moeskops (bachelor dissertation) explored how existing exposure therapy for fear of heights could be enriched by low-threshold 360° VR video scenes. These videos are freely available [on the expertise unit's YouTube channel](#). Each video includes a brief description, a height indication and an (estimated) indication of the level of difficulty. The goal is to expand this channel in the future and to also focus on how these and other, additional videos can be used as meaningful additions to the treatment of phobias. You can view the different scenes in different ways: [via PC or smartphone](#), [via Google Cardboard](#), or [via Samsung Gear VR](#).

**Contact:** For more information on this project, feel free to contact [Tom Van Daele](#).

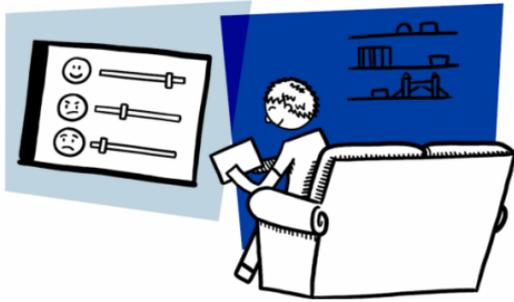
## Using different approaches to pilot an app

Moodbuster 2.0 is developed for people with mild depressive symptoms to be used by internet or mobile app, as both a stand-alone application or in a blended setting. The main goal is to empower users for better self-management. The Mental Health Foundation is conducting a trial in Manchester for people with subclinical symptoms of depression, to look at whether the app is effective in preventing the onset of depression. In Belgium, the focus is on implementation, including which organisations, professionals and clients are willing to work with Moodbuster and how they use it. The trial will be run by Pulso Europe and the research units of Thomas More University of Applied Sciences: Mobilab and the Expertise Unit Psychology, Technology & Society, working with

psychiatric hospitals and clinics. Further details on the pilots will be updated on the eMEN website.

## How are we communicating the concept of using Digital Technology for Mental Health?

Share our animation!



[Our new eMEN animation is now LIVE.](#) The animation explains the concept of e-mental health and how it can help improve our mental wellbeing. We encourage you to share this with your networks, embed it in your website and use it in your presentations.

### Podcasts

eMEN is producing a series of podcasts looking at many different aspects of e-mental health. Follow our page on [Soundcloud](#). The most recent podcast, with Professor Chris Gastmans, Head of the Centre for Biomedical Ethics and Law at KU Leuven, addresses patient-caregiver relationships in an ethical evaluation of e-mental health.

### eMEN events so far in 2018

#### ***Online therapy?! Reflections from Psychodynamic Psychotherapy and Ethical Issues***

The second Belgian event on February 23rd was hosted by [Pulso Europe](#) and [Thomas More University of Applied Sciences](#) in Brussels and welcomed over 70 people.

After an introduction by Hilde Vandenhout, MD (Thomas More), three keynote lectures looked at challenges and opportunities when implementing

technological applications in mental health care. More particularly, the focus of the seminar was inspired by the fact that not all mental health professionals and clients are aware of the opportunities offered by technological applications. They have questions about the product quality, ethics and deontology, but also about the conceptualisation of different forms of therapy and their online applications.

Please see the [eMEN website for a full report on the seminar.](#)

#### ***Active Citizenship and empowerment in community mental health - Participative innovations in France and abroad***

This French conference on 29-30 March 2018 was part of the 5th international meeting of the WHO-Collaborating Centre of Lille. It was attended by more than 500 mental health service users, carers, researchers and SME (small and medium enterprise) representatives from around the world.

The second day was dedicated to the development of new technologies in mental health, their impact on information-accessibility for users and the potential for their empowerment. After a presentation of the objectives and activities of the eMEN project, the morning plenary session addressed the question: 'E-mental health - interest for the user and politico-economic stakes: does it match or not?' A representative from the French national health conference, a mental health service user and a family carer who has developed an e-mental health tool energised the debate. A second plenary session investigated what users and health professionals think about e-mental health, presenting the results of the French study EQUME (Qualitative Study of the Expectations, Needs and Uses of M-Health - eHealth Technology in Mental Health - by All Stakeholders).

Different workshops based on the results of a call for communications included sessions related to e-mental health on the themes of self-help, training and information, expression and exchange, and co-designing for e-mental health.

Please see the [eMEN website for a full report on the conference](#) and links to [event YouTube videos](#).

# How can e-mental health shape European mental health policy?

By looking at the policy context around Europe to engage policy makers, eMEN will have a long-term impact on the potential of e-mental health across Europe.

## Innovation is the only way forward for Ireland's mental health support system

The recent publication of the Children's Rights Alliance's annual report card on Ireland once again highlighted how demand for children's mental health services is exceeding capacity, with more than 7,000 children waiting for an appointment with a primary care psychologist. As the national coalition advocating for better mental health services in Ireland, [Mental Health Reform](#) seeks innovative solutions to this urgent social problem. Digital technology has the potential to be a game-changer in two ways: first, by dramatically increasing the reach of mental health interventions and secondly, by empowering people in the process of their own mental health treatment.

There are a wide range of ways that technology is already being used for mental health support: online or app-based cognitive-behavioural therapy programmes (such as [Aware's Lifeskills Course](#)), self-help apps, telepsychiatry utilising videoconferencing to enable distance consultation, computerised co-decision-making tools that give service users a greater voice in clinical meetings; telecounselling to provide therapy via videochat ([MyMind](#)), online platforms for social prescribing to help GPs refer people to community supports ([Elementalsoftware.co](#)), and the use of virtual reality and gaming technology as part of therapy such as [Pesky gNATs](#).

Digital technology is also already playing a big role in prevention and stigma-reduction in Ireland through educational sites such as [Spunout](#) and [A Lust for Life](#), as well as in peer support through online support groups.

Of course, there are also many concerns about how digital technology, particularly social

media platforms, may be negatively impacting on people's mental health. How can privacy be secured for individuals who avail of digital technology as part of their treatment? How can we ensure that people are protected from harm on social media platforms? A good national policy on eMental Health is vital to ensure that technological developments foster these benefits and empower the individual user, while minimising the risks. That's why Mental Health Reform is working to make sense of this diverse potential through our participation in the eMEN project. Learning from our peers across North West Europe will strengthen the development of Ireland's eMental Health policy. Our participation will also help to ensure that developers' interest in eMental Health is increased and that their efforts fit with the values of Ireland's national mental health policy. In this way, the eMEN project will help mental Health Reform to support the best use of digital technology to boost mental health in Ireland and across North West Europe.

[Read the full version of this article on the eMEN website.](#)

## Upcoming FREE transnational seminars and conferences

Over the life of the project, eMEN will deliver 24 transnational events across Europe addressing e-mental health evidence-based innovations, quality, access and scale.

### 24th May: Edinburgh, UK

**Place-based approaches to the use of digital technologies for mental health.** [Please register online.](#)

### 11th June: Düsseldorf, Germany

**E-mental health implementation: the digital revolution in mental healthcare.** The seminar in Germany addresses implementation issues and solutions of e-mental health for the German healthcare market around research and practice, quality and safety and best practice examples. A certification according to the German CME system has been applied for. Please register at [www.dgppn.de](http://www.dgppn.de).

## **September: Belgium**

**Wearables.**

## **October: Germany**

**e-Mental Health Policy in Europe: developing policy recommendations.**

## **October: Ireland**

## **December: Rennes, France**

**Future developments in e-mental health.**

## **December: London, UK**

**Public Mental Health: the role of digital technologies in preventing mental health problems.**

# **Why not join our transnational network?**

eMEN is an e-mental health project running until November 2019, funded through the Interreg North West European Innovation Programme with a value of €5.36million. The six country partners are led by the Netherlands and include Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland and the UK who together combine diverse technological, clinical, research, and policy expertise.

To sign up for our newsletter and join the long-term network evolving out of eMEN, please fill in the [registration form](#). We welcome invitations to contribute to your event. Further contact information for all the partners is available at [www.nweurope.eu/emen](http://www.nweurope.eu/emen).