

Course "Certified training in the EMDR method"

Activity 14

06.09.2021 - 10.09.2021

As part of their profession, police officers can find themselves in situations where their lives or health are endangered. These are situations that can cause psychological trauma in some cases and to some police officers. Victims of crime are also exposed to trauma. Psychologists working for the Police of the Czech Republic provide care to both police officers and victims of crime.

Psychotraumatology is a field that deals with the prevention and reduction of the consequences of experienced trauma. Like any other field, traumatology is evolving. Recently, a number of new science-based approaches to working with trauma have emerged. These are based on neurobiological knowledge, i.e. it is based primarily on how individual brain structures and other parts of the nervous system work and cooperate in the processing of traumatic memories and experiences.

Therefore, in the week 6 to 10 September 2021, the first psychologists from the Police of the Czech Republic took part in a training course at the Spiritka facility in Prague, which summarized new perspectives on psychotraumatology based on neurobiological findings. The whole course was funded by Norwegian grants and was included in the educational program package "Increasing police competence in preventing and combating crime, strengthening communication skills with the public and awareness of human rights".

The first run of the course was attended by 15 psychologists working in various parts of the Police of the Czech Republic, who were trained by domestic and foreign lecturers. The second run of this course is expected to take place next year for another group of psychologists in the Czech Republic. The purpose and goal of the course was to master both the neurobiological approach and individual methods of working with a traumatized person. These can now be used by trained psychologists in their practice.

During the course, psychologists learned in more detail about the Somatic Experiencing® approach, which is used to handle with stress and the somatic problems that stress and post-traumatic stress bring. Similarly, the Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) method, designed to alleviate the discomfort that accompanies memories of a traumatic event through bilateral stimulation of a client, is considered one of the most effective at work with war veterans.

In addition to training in neurophysiology and psychotraumatology, psychologists of the Czech Police have mastered the basics of specific techniques and procedures (so-called protocols) for working with traumatized clients, which are intended for various situations in various stages of post-traumatic care. It is important to say that the effectiveness of each of the techniques that psychologists have become familiar with is not only verified by scientific research, but these techniques have already been put into practice in some armed forces. The Israeli Model 6C, used to treat a traumatized person, was very inspiring for psychologists of the Czech Police. The model was originally created in the Israeli army, it is accredited by the Israel Ministry of Health and it is now used by both the US and German armies. The TIR (Traumatic Incident Reduction)

method is intended for the preparation of persons who are not psychologists and who, after training, are able to effectively treat a person who has undergone a potentially traumatic situation. Psychologists have also learned about the Tension and Trauma Release Exercise TRE®. It is a unique method of working with the body, where a series of simple physical exercises can relieve stress without the need to verbalize stress topics.

The course was not only highly professional, but mainly unique in that it brought police psychologists a substantial expansion of knowledge in the field in terms of modern approaches. It provided psychologists with a comprehensive overview of new but proven methods that are already introduced in practice of security and rescue services. In addition, it contained detailed information on how and where to further educate and develop in this area. Both the Police of the Czech Republic, which acquires better equipped psychologists with knowledge and skills, and trained psychologists, whose professionalism is growing, will benefit from the course. Above all, however, the traumatized themselves will benefit from the course, because the quality of care provided to them will increase.