



Supported Education Resource Scan (SERS)

3.4 List of Available/Required Resources inside and outside the HE Institutions: resource scan and social map

Abstract

What?

Inventory of the available support (services) inside and outside the educational organization, both formal and informal.

Why?

To have an overview of all available support, so the Supported Education professional can help the student with psychiatric problems find the support (services) he/she is in need of to remain at school.

Who?

The Supported Education staff list and all available support (services).

When?

At the start of a Supported Education program. Updates should be made on a regular basis.

Where?

Supported Education office.

How?

To help students with psychiatric problems to find the support services they are in need of to remain at school, we have developed a tool, the resource scan. The resource scan can help you to list possible forms of support, inside and outside the educational organization, both formal and informal.

In this document you will also find the outcome of a European resource scan conducted by the four partners of the ImpulSE project. It is an overview of general types of support. Per country there will be specific resources.

Resource scan

This is an exercise to introduce you to concepts essential to the resource scan. Just as this has been adapted from other uses (i.e., SECAG), you may use the ideas behind it for any planning process. Please feel free to abbreviate as necessary. In the context of developing a Supported Education program, these are the instructions.

1. The students with psychiatric disabilities you are serving have to be at the center of the scan. Write this in the circle.
2. Each of the boxes around the page indicates an organization, service, program, agency, individual or entity which is or could be supportive to students with psychiatric

disabilities.

3. Those who are or could be supportive are known as resources. Please write their names in the boxes.

4. Mark the most critical resources (top three to five).

5. Write on the incoming (towards you) arrows what you could reasonably expect to receive from each critical resource. If you are extremely persuasive, write what you hope to receive.

6. Write on the outgoing (towards the resources) arrows what you expect the students with psychiatric disabilities will have to do to get access to this resource.

7. After you have done this by yourself, repeat the process, but this time, talk to each of the potential resources to find out if your assumptions were accurate. Update your resource scan.

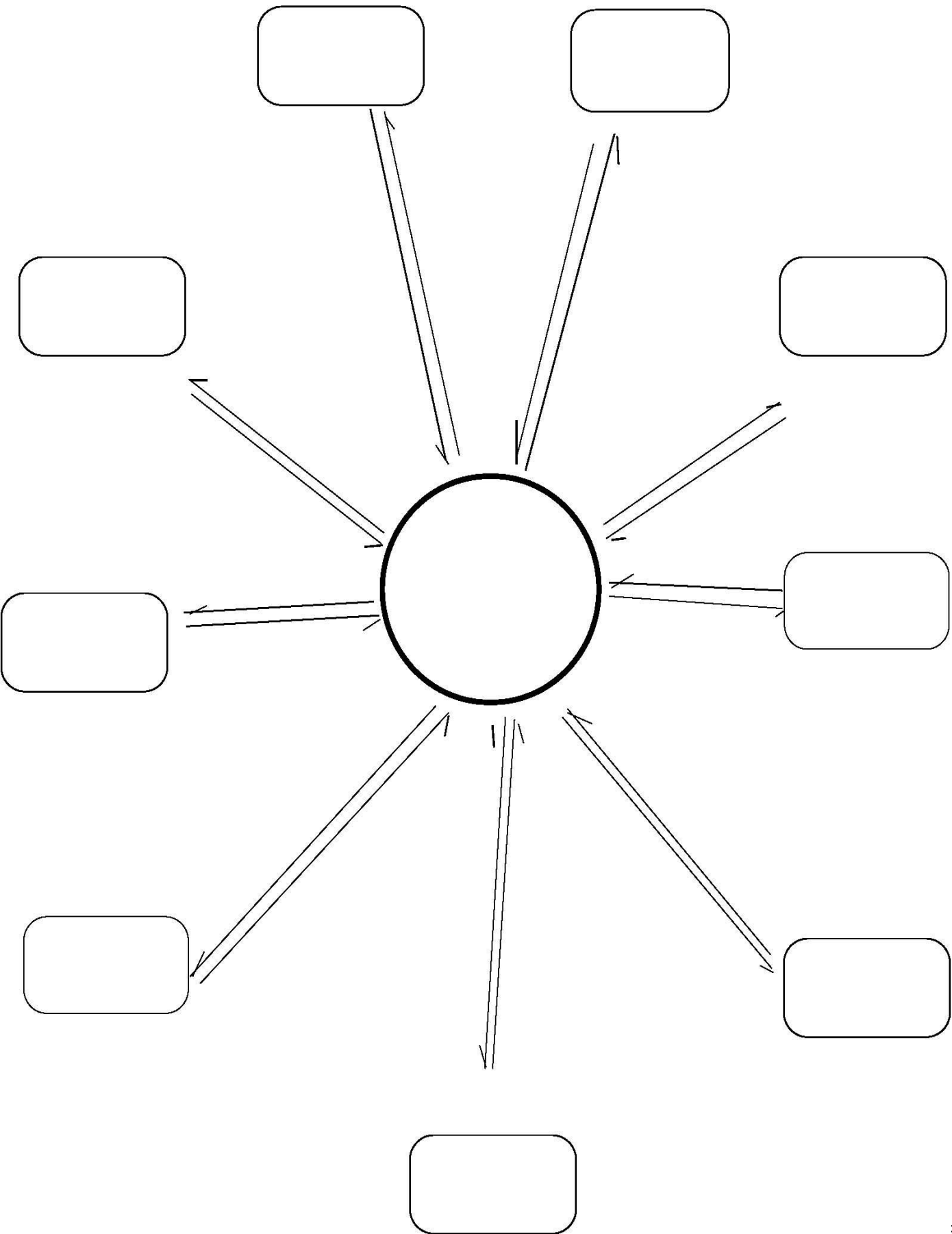
8. If you discover additional resources, add them to the process.

9. List and describe the resources in more detail.

You can find resources within:

- Educational settings
- Mental health care settings
- Consumer organizations
- Family organizations
- Social security organizations
- Vocational organizations
- Community organizations
- Others

Resource map



Resources within education¹

Overview

	Within education	Outside education
Formal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive educational staff members • Teachers/tutors • Student psychologist • Information outlet Disability services • Student union • Study advisor • Remedial teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Education center of expertise • Telephone helpdesk • General practitioner (GP)/school doctor • Self-employed psychologists • Mental health services • National disability organizations • Finances
Informal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellow students • Peer support group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-help groups • Family • Friends • Study buddy project • Patient and consumer organizations

Table 3.1. Overview of resources

Formal

Supportive educational staff members

Secretarial staff, library staff, and administrative staff often know students quite well. The contact with these staff members is often different from contact with teachers or tutors. The degree to which supportive educational staff members have contact with students depends on their task interpretation and their personality. Friendly support from these people can help you to feel better, but when you experience severe psychiatric problems, contact with a doctor or specialized social worker might be necessary.

Teachers/lecturers/tutors

Besides an academic role, teachers and tutors also have a more general supporting role. Many students discuss their personal problems with them. This can be helpful because it can be good to talk to someone, but also because the teacher or tutor can give advice concerning the consequences of the problem for their study. However, students do have to realize that teachers and tutors are not mental health practitioners. Moreover, they are often very busy, so the degree to which they can give support with severe psychiatric problems is limited. Nevertheless, it can be helpful if a student keeps his teacher/tutor informed about the

¹ The situation and existence of listed resources may differ in particular countries.

situation. They can give suggestions about other support services or even arrange appointments straight away.

Student psychologist

When less specialized forms of support are insufficiently helpful, it might be good to get help from a psychologist who is connected to the educational organization (not every educational organization has a student psychologist). This psychologist can often do a lot himself, but he can also refer the student to other social workers as necessary.

Disability services

Some educational institutions have student disability services in place. At first, these services were aimed more at physical disabilities than at psychiatric disabilities. Slowly, the focus on the latter is growing. Usually, a disability service does not offer therapy, but more practical help with the solution of problems. The focus of this help is on:

- support for the individual
- realization of adjustments to the educational environment

Support for the individual might consist of discussing problems; the availability of a computer to ease the application of study competencies; someone to take notes during class; someone to help the student to actually go to school; or someone to negotiate with teachers in order to achieve that the student gets more time for his exam, for instance.

Changes in the educational environment might be the availability of a quiet environment; the possibility of a part time study; or the availability of a silent room to take an exam.

Student union

Student unions often offer students confidential and free advice about, for instance, debts, housing, and problems related to study and administration. Often, students can come to a student union any day during office hours. Students get help with exploring the possible support services and information about other resources that are available to them. Some student unions have a special workgroup of students with a disability.

Study advisor

At many schools, study advisors are present who give support when there are problems during the study. Often there is a study advisor who specializes in students with a disability. With certain matters, one can also go to a study advisor or tutor. If possible, it is wise to get in touch with these staff members prior to the start of the study.

Remedial teaching (organized, or by a classmate)

Remedial teaching tailors remedial intervention plans to a student's specific needs. It makes use of one-on-one instruction, small group instruction, written work, verbal work and computer-based work. Help is offered to students who need (pedagogical/didactic) assistance.

Informal

Fellow students

Support from fellow students, whether they are friends or not, might help. It might concern students who go to the same classes or who live in the same house and have probably already noticed that something is going on. It is possible that a fellow student has his own thoughts about what you should do in order to solve your problems. Sometimes, this opinion contradicts your own. It can also be that you don't want to share certain things (disclose) with an interested fellow student. Confidentiality is not guaranteed. Sometimes a student with problems is afraid to burden a fellow student because he thinks that the other has enough problems on his mind. Sometimes, fellow students spontaneously make themselves available as supportive volunteers. They can offer valuable support; however, when the need is too great, specialized help is needed.

Peer support group

A peer support group offers mutual support when studying with psychiatric problems through, for instance, the exchange of experiences, giving mutual support and study tips. Reciprocal contact is often a source of recognition, acknowledgement, support and information for many students with psychiatric problems. A peer support group is a place where understanding and support, on top of the daily hassles, are central. By exchanging experiences and supporting and advising each other, you help yourself and each other to become stronger and more resilient for the future and to leave the past behind you. A peer support group helps because:

- the transfer from a therapeutic situation to 'normal' college life can be huge.
- you often have questions and insecurities that you wish to discuss with peers.
- you experience in the peer support group that you are not alone.

Resources outside education

Formal

Telephone helpdesk

Telephone helplines offer the possibility of having a confidential conversation with someone when other services are not available (at night and during weekends). If desired, the caller can remain anonymous. Sometimes it can help to discuss your problems in this way. The helpline can also give you information and advice about other support services.

Self-help groups

Self-help groups are organizations in which people who are experienced with similar problems offer help. The support can be related to depression, sexual abuse, addiction, eating disorders, etc. You can discuss your problem and learn how others have coped with a similar problem.

General practitioner (GP)/school doctor

The GP or school doctor is not only there for severe physical or psychiatric problems. They are open to other life problems as well. Most doctors are willing to discuss any problem

a patient brings to the table. Most of the time, you can see a doctor at short notice. Everything you discuss is, of course, confidential. A possible advantage might be that this professional has nothing to do with school.

Students are sometimes afraid that, when they go to a doctor with their problems, they are left with a file that says that they have a psychiatric disability. Yet even when such a diagnosis is made, there are sufficient safeguards that this information remains confidential.

It is likely that much suffering can be prevented by calling for help quickly when in psychiatric need. When more specialized psychological or psychiatric help is needed, the doctor can make a referral to other professionals. Doctors can also give general information and referrals to self-help groups. Besides, a doctor can prescribe medication to counteract fear, depression, insomnia, etc.

Mental health services

Mental health services support and treat people with mental disorders (mental illness or mental health difficulties) in the community, if possible, or in a psychiatric clinic or hospital if necessary. The array of (community) mental health services varies depending on the country in which the services are provided. The services may be provided by government organizations and mental health professionals in the form of psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, psychiatric nurses, social workers and occupational therapists.

Self-employed psychologists and other practitioners

Self-employed practitioners are not free, but sometimes they are partially or totally reimbursed through health insurance. These practitioners operate following different approaches. The focus might be on:

- connecting experiences from the past with current experiences.
- giving attention to established thought and behavior patterns.
- working with problem solving techniques.

Sometimes a practitioner might combine several approaches. Often, the relationship between the client and the practitioner determines the success. So, if you are not satisfied with the approach of a practitioner, don't be afraid to try another one. Among the social practitioners there are, unfortunately, some with spurious qualifications: it is a good idea to ensure that the professional is professionally recognized.

National disability organizations

These are centers of expertise supporting and stimulating the community integration of people with disabilities. There are specific disability organizations supporting young adults with a disability to study successfully in postsecondary education at the study of their choice. They signal what is important to the students, translating their questions into possibilities that an educational institution might offer in order to bring about a change in mentality. They develop instruments to help both students and educational institutions to solve problems. They are also a service and information point for educational institutions. Such an organization answers questions about support from the educational institutions and provides courses to enhance the expertise at the institutions.

Finances

When you study as a student with a disability, there are many benefits that you can apply for. Below you'll find an overview of the possible arrangements and benefits.

Student loan

Does a student have a study delay because of incapacity to work or special circumstances? In some cases, this student might apply for a special benefit. Usually, the student has to apply for this benefit together with and after consultation with the student advisor.

Disablement Assistance Act for Handicapped Young Persons

The Disablement Assistance Act for Handicapped Young Persons is an act for people who became handicapped or chronically ill at a young age and who need help with finding and keeping a paid job. In different countries, this Act has different names. Disabled young persons can apply for a benefit if they are not able to work or do not earn enough money with their job.

The focus of such an Act is mostly on finding and keeping a job, not on education. Legislation and regulation concerning studying with a disability changes on a regular basis.

NGO (social services)

NGOs provide individualized long-term help or support in the form of Supported Education, social rehabilitation, supported employment, sheltered housing, meaningful day activities and information. Concerning education, NGOs could provide general support to help students reach their goals—dealing with practical issues, assistance and escort, negotiating with institutions, the daily regime, study, living, finances, coordination of other resources, recommendation of subsequent services, support to family and relatives, feedback, and psychological support.

Peer support

Peer support refers to initiatives where colleagues, members of self-help organizations and others meet as equals to give each other support on a reciprocal basis. Peer support is distinct from other forms of social support in that the source of support is a peer, a person who is similar in fundamental ways to the recipient of the support; their relationship is therefore one of equality. A peer is in a position to offer support by virtue of relevant experience: he or she has "been there, done that" and can relate to others who are now in a similar situation. Peer support is a key concept in the recovery approach and in consumer-operated service programs. Peer support in education refers to students with psychiatric disabilities supporting each other and challenges the associated stigma and discrimination in educational institutes.

Informal

Family

For support with their psychiatric problems, students often go to their family first. Family members know you well, are interested, can show empathy and understanding, and

can reassure you. However, they can also have an opinion with which you disagree. It is also possible that you do not want to share everything with your family.

Sometimes one's problem is related to the family situation and therefore it might be better to talk to an outsider about this. You have to decide for yourself what your family can offer you in your specific situation.

Friends

When students go through difficult times, friends form a valuable and frequently used source of support. They know the student and his situation, and they can reassure him and show understanding. However, sometimes you need more than your friends can offer. They might be too closely involved and have their own opinion about what you should do. Sometimes you do not want to tell everything to your friends, and confidentiality is not guaranteed. Sometimes one is afraid to ask too much from friends, and sometimes one's friends have enough of their own problems on their minds.

The above certainly does not mean that you ought not to go to your friends for advice. Research has shown that openness in friendships has a positive effect on your psychological health. However, you need to consider what you discuss with your friends (disclose) and to what degree you want to make use of their support.

Study buddy project

A study buddy project uses volunteers (students) who want to be a buddy for (future) students who, for whatever reason, cannot make it on their own. A study buddy is a student who likes to help a fellow student with his study for one part of one day each week. It is about studying together, discussing together how best to plan the study, and drinking coffee together in the canteen. It is important that both parties like to be together and find it useful.

Patient and consumer organizations

In most countries, there are national and regional patient/consumer platforms (RPCPs). These regional platforms consist of local patient/consumer organizations and departments from national patient/consumer organizations. These platforms aim at the representation of interests, providing information for consumers, offering a complaints service, and promoting quality.

Mental health care client platforms are part of these RPCPs. These client platforms are a bundle of interest groups of and for people who are hindered or limited in their everyday social functioning due to psychiatric, psychosocial and/or addiction problems. In a client platform, client organizations, family organizations and client councils in mental health care work together to improve the position of the person who asks for help and his social environment. One section of these client platforms is a question and health information point on mental health: this is a central information outlet with a broad spectrum of information about mental health. Students with psychiatric problems can also make use of this information to find their way through the many available services and possibilities. A client platform serves a broad target group—that is, with their activities and work, they do not make a distinction according to what psychiatric complaint, problem, illness, diagnosis, disability or handicap a person has.