



EPA VIRTUAL GAINING EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME REPORT

On the virtual placement at the King's College London

Realised December 2021 to June 2022

By Khrystyna Shalak

From December 2021 to June 2022 I had a chance to attend the EPA Virtual Gaining Experience Programme at the King's College London under the supervision of Dr. Mariana Pinto da Costa.

The observership placement had a particular academic focus, the essence of which was investigating psychotherapy training among ECPs in Ukraine, and to examine how it is included in psychiatry training. The supervisor helped to develop a strategy for distributing the questionnaire in order to obtain as many responses as possible. The anonymous online survey about psychotherapy training was disseminated among ECPs in Ukraine until January 2022. Due to the start of the war and my relocation, as well of the potential participants, it was decided to stop recruitment to the study. It was difficult to recruit ECPs in Ukraine while a lot of them became internally displaced persons, relocated as refugees to other countries, started to work in the army or were extremely busy with volunteering and supporting the mental health of people in Ukraine.

During this virtual exchange, the primary mode of communication was via Microsoft Teams meetings that took place on Fridays and through emails. During the meetings different research projects were presented by the participants and jointly discussed. Results of the research about psychotherapy training in Ukraine were presented at the last meeting at an academic seminar at King's College London. After the presentation, the supervisor and the other seminar attendees provided detailed live feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the study and recommendations to improve it, making it a unique live critical appraisal experience.



The virtual placement met my expectations and helped me to improve my research skills. It was extremely useful for me because I didn't have a lot of experience in scientific research. I felt welcome at the hosting institution and the contact with the supervisor was great.

However, I hope that in the future it will be possible to provide the programme offline and I'm sorry that I couldn't visit the King's College London due to the quarantine restrictions. It also would be great if the observership for the future participants could include both scientific and clinical parts. Nevertheless, participation in the programme was an important contribution to the development of my career in psychiatry.