

## Lahendus.net – web based counselling for young people

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## VOLUNTEERS

- voluntary student initiative since 2001 – launched by Estonian Psychology Students' Association
- ~ 30 volunteer students from 3 universities where psychology is taught according to an accredited study program
- at least 2nd year students
- have passed counselling-related subjects for at least 10 credits (15 ECTS)

## THE LOCAL CONTEXT

- increasing rate of mental health problems
- lack of mental health specialists at the countryside regions
- 95% of the Estonians in age group 15-29 use the Internet daily (source: Statistics Estonia, 2007)
- Internet counselling is accessible - less geographical, financial and time restrictions
- Internet environment anonymity encourages to seek help
- utilising the resources of voluntary motivation
- effectiveness of peer to peer counselling

## GOALS

- mental and behavioral disorder prevention among the youth
- practical experience and preparation for the future profession
- receiving information about actual youth problems
- co-operation with other organizations and professionals

## CLIENTS

- since Nov 2001 - almost 8000 registered users, over 65 000 letters exchanged; nearly 700 000 visitations
- target group 10-29; majority of the clients between 15-35
- few clients over 40
- 3/4 female, 1/4 male
- 2/3 of clients have never sought prior help
- most of them find the project via internet links

## WEB ENVIRONMENT

- specially developed software for counselling and conversation archiving
- internal mail-exchange system
- client-regulated privacy level
- visitors have access to reading materials and can browse the database of mental health services
- first contact-seeking is replied within 72 hours; in a recurring conversation - answer within 5 days

## MAIN ISSUES

- Relationship concerns
- Loneliness, lack of social contacts
- Social anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Depression, suicidal thoughts
- Problems with eating and weight
- Financial problems and career concerns
- Alcohol and substance abuse
- Concerns about a friend or a family member

## TRAINING & SELF DEVELOPMENT

- 3 counselling trainings per year
- Regular supervision sessions in Tallinn and Tartu

### Supervisor

- Tiina Kütt – psychologist and family therapist from the Children and Youth Counselling Centre of West-Estonia



