Knowledge Transfer Program 2019

“in Our Hand” - Self Management Course

ISRAEL - MALTA

REPORT

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“Self-management program – getting to know how to bring it to Israel and implement it within association”.

**Background**

Since 2016 we had a dream to construct a self-management course for members of our association, The Israeli association for RMDs patients "Mifrakim Tz'eurim". On September 2018, our CEO heard a lecture by Mrs. Mary Vella, the president of ARAM Malta, and the rest is history.

We approached PARE through AGORA for the Knowledge Transfer Program Grant and got approved in February 2019.

The need to develop such a course came from conversations with members of the association, as well as posts and discussions in the Facebook groups. Concerns, fears and uncertainties about how to live a "normal" life with a chronic illness and with its flares.

The Israeli association for RMDs, Mifrakim Tz’eirim, is celebrating this year (2020) its 10th anniversary.

We are committed to help children, youth, adults, and elderly with different kinds of Rheumatoid Arthritis as well as their families, and to support them in their daily challenge of preserving movement, hope, and mobility.

The association assists the various Rheumatoid Arthritis patients and gives them support and tools, which they can utilize on a personal level as well as the familial one.

It is the association's goal to increase public awareness to the illness and its daily effects on the patients, expand the knowledge and spread information about the illness, patients' rights, and treatment innovations. Also, the association promotes the accessibility of a variety of treatments and advanced medications for the patients.

The association holds conferences, seminars, lectures, and social activities for patients and their families, support groups all over the country (on demand and according to a minimum number of participants), and its representatives take part and represent it in national and international conferences.

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Collaboration

ARAM, Malta:

ARAM has been trained to carry out the self-management program through AGORA in Amsterdam. We have also worked with Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate in the Ministry of Health, Malta, to plan and deliver the first pilot program. The program was adapted to the Maltese language and culture. Written resources can be shared as well as the experience in planning and delivering the program in Malta over the last two years.

Israel in Malta:

On May 2019, the CEO and another member from the Israeli association went on a 7-day education program to Malta. The final aim was to become familiar with the program of the Maltese course.

The program in Malta included:

1. Meeting the people responsible for the development of the course. Ms. Mary Vella, the president of ARAM and Dr. Mariella Borg Buontempo, consultant in public health medicine at the Ministry of Health
2. 2-day workshop:
   a. Details and course curriculum.
   b. Presentations about all related aspects: communication, loss, unhelpful emotions, managing fatigue, self-talk (negative, positive), health-related nutrition, pain cycle, over / under activity, pacing).
   c. Tips on arranging the learning materials.
   d. Printed dossiers and PowerPoint presentations containing recommended relevant material such as: guidelines, ground rules, balancing life, the self-management triangle, personal goals, exercise, what is Arthritis, SMART, helpful distractions, right nutrition, evaluation and follow-up.

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3. Meetings with:
   a. ARAM board members.
   b. Rheumatologist MD, physiotherapists, occupational therapy teams at Mater Dei hospital.
   c. Clinic nurses and health center social workers, regarding the work with chronic patients.
4. Taking part in a local event in Dingli Lecture about the Flora and making food from nature, emphasis on cooking for people with RMDS.
5. Site-seeing of Malta.

Back to Israel:

We returned with many insights, set up a management team to build a pilot from the content we brought and additional topics we found appropriate for us. The Pilot was held with 10 participants and was a success. The timetable was 4 hours a day, once a week, for 8 weeks.

After many team meetings, we came up with a syllabus for the pilot course that contained materials from Malta (which we adapted to the Israeli environment), AGORA platform, and other materials we found appropriate to Israel, here are examples and highlights from the Malta materials and the combination of adapted materials:

- Introduction of the course facilitator and the participants, as well as the guidelines.
- What does have RMD’s mean to you?
- Balancing life
- Self-management triangle
- Goals
- SMART
- evaluation and follow-up.
- Communication
- Loss
- Unhelpful emotions
- Managing fatigue

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✓ Self-talk (negative, positive)
✓ Health nutrition
✓ conversation
✓ pain cycle
✓ Over activity / under activity
✓ Pacing.

Other examples we added to our syllabus:

✓ Introduction game, pairs’ games, coffee break, relaxing and breathing, exercises.
✓ Associations “game” - What did the disease do to me?
✓ Opening in every session - reminder of the last meeting, sharing emotions from a previous meeting and the week between the meetings.
✓ What is pain (the difference between pain and suffering, Circle of Pain, positive magic circle.
✓ Clearing.
✓ Lecture by rheumatologist and Eye-level conversation
✓ Sessions with nutritionist, physical therapist, NLP mentor, a medical psychologist and a yoga structure.
✓ Feedback (on-line) after each session. It gave us the opportunity to learn and adjust the next sessions, if needed.
Report by ARAM - Israel Visit to evaluate how the Self-Management Course was conducted to be implemented.

Mary Vella, President of ARAM and Trainer of Self-Management on Rheumatoid Arthritis and Chronic diseases, together with Dr Mariella Borg Buontempo, who is consultant in public health medicine and a trainer of Self-Management Courses on Chronic diseases who works at the Health Promotion and Disease Directorate in the ministry of Health in Malta and is an honorary consultant to ARAM, made a three (3) day visit to Israel to evaluate how the Self-Management Course was conducted by Mifrikim Tz’eirim association and delivered to their groups of young people and older people living with Arthritis conditions. The visit took place between 10th -13th December 2019.

10th Dec - We departed from Luqa International airport in Malta. Since we had an early flight it was decided that we will stay at the hotel to rest and meet again in the evening for dinner and to meet the Chairperson- Mrs Hily Wollach and other members of the Mifrikam Tze’irim association to talk and discuss the next day schedule.

11th Dec 2019 - After breakfast we were picked up by Michal Nudel the CEO of Mifrikam Tze’irim association to take us to the Bnai Zion Medical Centre, which is one of 3 hospitals in Haifa to meet the Head of Rheumatology - Professor Gleb Slobodin. A very nice young specialist, who welcomed us to his office where we discussed the situation of the Arthritis patients in Haifa and how they are monitored; the switching of biologics and how many patients are suffering from Arthritis in Haifa and how the rheumatological service is set up in Haifa. We got to know that the medical situation in Haifa is remarkably similar to Malta and they also lack doctors for the great demand for RMDs patients. We finally discussed the Self-Management course how important it is for patients and if it there is a promise for collaboration with the state. There seemed a very good collaboration with the patient association and a good response that in the near future this could be done. We also met the specialist nurse who takes care of the arthritis patients and explained her role with the arthritis patients and the rehabilitation service that is offered. Like all main hospitals it was very busy.

Later, the day, we met two other lovely ladies, Mrs Idit Danziger from an outer town who came purposely to meet us from Tel Aviv and Ms Ronit Shapira, also came from another
city (nearby Haifa). Unfortunately, we missed Ms. Orli Dinelton who visited Malta and was the first Course facilitator as she was away on the days of our visit. These tutors were involved in the Self-management Course. We exchanged ideas over a small snack before going to the Technion (Israel Institute of Technology) to watch the presentation of the Mifrikam Tze’rim Self-Management course translated for us in English. The Self-management Course they have formulated is very well constructed and delivered. We noticed how creative they were and how they adapted the course specifically to their group especially for the young group. We also took in some new ideas from their course especially on how we could recruit the young patients which has been a big challenge for ARAM and how we can then adjust our Self-Management course for these young patients. They added different topics which fit their young group of patients. They have adapted very well the holistic nature of the course and adapted it to their culture and availability of local resources. This was done in a very professional manner and we were very sure that their course proved to be very successful and with this in mind they will surely progress successfully in the future.

In the evening together with the CEO- Ms. Michal Nudel, and the Chairperson - Ms Hily Wollach met for a farewell dinner and to meet another rheumatologist specialist - Prof. Izhak Rozner and his wife, a very humble couple. The Professor also works at Bnai Zion Medical Centre. It was a very enjoyable evening.

For ARAM this was our first exchange of Transfer of Knowledge program with another country and this proved very successful. We are very pleased that we could share our knowledge with other countries and also to learn from them. We thank the CEO and Chairperson of Mifrikam Tze’rim association for their hospitality and for welcoming us for this short visit.

The visit in Rosh Hanikra
Implementation and Next steps

- Reviewed the pilot course:
  - Examined the content.
  - Drew conclusions and improved the syllabus.
- A face to face follow-up meeting (4 months latter) was changed to a zoom meeting, because of COVID-19. The feedbacks were remarkable. The 10 participants of the course let us know that they are using almost all the tools we gave them at the course, and furthermore, it helps them during this strange period of COVID-19 on its daily basis.
- Finish writing a course portfolio (due July 2020).
- Open 2 courses in October 2020. (One of which was scheduled for April 2020, but unfortunately, due to the pandemic COVID-19, had to be postponed).

Long-term goals

- Identify course trainees who can mentor a course themselves (from the pilot and the 2 courses ahead).
- 2021:
  - Open courses.
  - Train the trainee course.
  - Start building an academy for self-management in Israel.
  - Share our course with other associations.
  - Bring the opportunity of the academy to the Health department.
**Measurement and risks**

The first course, pilot, took place in 2019. The aim was 75% completion rate of participants who started the program. The outcome was 100% completion rate of participants.

The risk was - Lack of financial or human resources to plan and carry out the program:

- The management team built the course for several months voluntarily (all members of our association).
- Some of the lecturers lectured voluntarily.
- We managed to receive some donations to administrative issues.

**Summery and thanks**

This opportunity to make a dream come true and build such an important course is something that happens once in a lifetime. We are incredibly grateful to AGORA, PARE, ARAM and all the kind people who took part in this project.

Thank you for giving us this wonderful opportunity.

- Mrs. Mary Wella, President of ARAM Malta.
- Dr. Mariella Borg Buontempo, consultant in public health medicine at Ministry of Health.
- AGORA board.
- PARE, EULAR KTP.
- Our great course management Team and all the lecturers.
- Prof. Gleb Slobodin, our medical supervisor.
- The chairwomen of Mifراكim Tz’eirim, Mrs. Hily Wollach That allowed her CEO to make the dream come true.
Appendix – Pictures from the visit in Malta

Malta visit - Demonstration of Paraffin Bath Treatment at Mater Dei hospital

2-day workshop

local event in Dingli
Appendix – Pictures from the visit in Israel

Breakfast after a long way from Malta to Israel.

Bnai-Zion hospital, meeting with Prof. Slobodin

Meeting with the Israeli facilitators
Appendix – Pictures from the Israeli pilot

Folders and tag names for the students

Explaining about “Breakthrough”

Study by working in pairs