

Summer 2016

# NEWSLETTER

## 2nd START NOW Newsletter



## Update

The first START NOW groups have been completed successfully. Currently six groups in Switzerland, five groups in Germany (two in Aachen and two in Frankfurt) and three groups in the Netherlands are involved in the project. In total 60 girls from over 12 welfare institutions have taken part in the study.

Background information and additional materials for caretakers and welfare institutions are provided on our home page: <http://www.femnat-cd.eu/professionnals/login-trainer-start-now/>

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### Sites: 2. Frankfurt am Main

The Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Psychosomatics and Psychotherapy (CAPPP) is open for children, adolescents and their parents in the greater Frankfurt area who are in need of psychological support. We have four wards for youth aged 12 years and older and two wards (inpatient and semi-inpatient care) for children below age 12 (inpatient and semi-inpatient care). We additionally offer a broad range of outpatient treatment options. We collaborate closely with schools, youth welfare institutions and forensic institutions. In order to continuously gain more knowledge about various psychiatric disorders in childhood and adolescence, the CAPPP has a large multidisciplinary research department. Using this knowledge we constantly improve and increase our spectrum of treatment.

Therefore it is a great success to be able to conduct the START NOW project, which is part of a multi-center study on children and adolescents

with conduct problems. This study, named "FemNAT-CD", is being carried out in 17 research institutions in eight European countries and is coordinated by Prof. Freitag, director of the



Anka Bernhard, Dipl.-Psych.;  
Anne Martinelli, M.Sc. Neuro  
Science;  
Katharina Ackermann, M.A. Päd.  
PhD students in the EU-wide  
FemNAT-CD study

CAPPP at the University Hospital Frankfurt. The START NOW project, developed and led by Prof. Stadler in Basel, is being conducted by the Frankfurt team together with youth welfare institutions in and around the Frankfurt area. Katharina Ackermann is the main contact person in Frankfurt for all

interested welfare institutions and conducts the project together with her colleagues, Anka Bernhard and Anne Martinelli (all PhD students in the FemNAT-CD study). They are supported by their research team of psychology students.

The highly experienced therapists and skills group leaders, Ms. Kopp, Ms. Friendländer and Mr. Wörner, conduct the trainings with Ms. Ackermann, supervise group sessions and assist the research team.



Prof. Christine M.  
Freitag

Director of  
Department of Child  
and Adolescent  
Psychiatry,  
Psychosomatics and  
Psychotherapy at the  
University Hospital  
Frankfurt and PI of the  
EU-wide FemNAT-CD  
Study

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### Youth welfare institutions

Large institutions such as Caritas Frankfurt, the Albert Schweizer Kinderdorf Hessen, the Johannesstift Wiesbaden and the Diakonisches Werk Würzburg and their highly committed caretakers are enthusiastic about the START NOW manual and Emma's stories out of the workbook.

Frankfurt's second group, the **Albert Schweizer Kinderdorf Hanau (ASK Hessen)**, with girls out of two residential groups, is an independent youth welfare institution. Their focus is on a systemic method of support for children, adolescents and their families in difficult living situations. Along with outpatient and semi-inpatient options, inpatient possibilities such as residential living groups, are offered. Both living groups which took part in START NOW are located in and near Hanau and provide nine places each. The team consists of highly committed caretakers and pedagogues. Together with their colleagues Mrs. Triebisch and Mrs. Ritter, the group leaders Mrs. Conrad and Mr. Becker have conducted the START NOW group and one-to-one sessions. In the following they report their experiences:



At the end of last summer, we heard that we were selected to take part in the START NOW study. We and also the girls were very happy about this. Now it was time for some preparations. For this we participated in an intense two day training, in which we worked through the program's Manual and Workbook and practiced the sessions ourselves. These were interesting experiences and increased our confidence that this project would positively affect our girls. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2015 the group began with its first session. We started with five girls out of two living groups. In a quiet room we made ourselves comfortable with chocolate, fruit

and tea. The weeks passed and START NOW became a fixed part of our schedule – every Monday at 4 pm it was START NOW time. The girls began on their own to prepare something special to eat for each session. Some sessions were a great success: the girls worked very hard on their issues and reflected on the topics. Others were more difficult to handle: here it was hard for the girls to concentrate and the sessions didn't seem to want to end. Active games such as "das kotzende Känguru" (the spewing kangaroo) were especially helpful and fun. At the beginning it was hard for the girls to participate in tasks which focused on distance and closeness. Only after a few sessions it was possible to get closer to each other and the group leaders. We noticed great development in quiet mindfulness tasks,

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as well. At the beginning the girls giggled and laughed, but near the end it was natural to concentrate in silence. The time point at what we started, however, turned out to be tricky. In addition to START NOW session preparation and the “Life exercises” (individual sessions), there was Christmas time. Next time we would start at another time point.

Our girls surpassed themselves. It was a great experience to get in touch with the girls on this level and to experience how they developed themselves further within a few months. The study offered many new possibilities to work skillfully together with the girls. Questions could also be answered during the “Life exercises” and individual examples discussed. It became clear that our girls could understand many connections and now it is our aim to implement this in our daily routine. We will try to implement parts of the START NOW in our daily work, because it was shown to be absolutely worth it.



For further information on FemNAT-CD, please visit our website:

<http://www.femnat-cd.eu>