

## **Life is Beautiful**

Many have seen the film *La Vita e Bella* (Life is Beautiful) and many still admire the depth of the story and the personalities portrayed in that film. However today we are not here to discuss the film but borrowed the title of such an amazingly striking piece of art.

How is your outlook of life? Maybe you are a grandparent or an elderly person or maybe you are a parent of a newly wed or maybe you are single or still in your youth, or you might still be a child? As a person in society you might look around you in wonder and worry at all that you see happening today or at what you hear from family and friends. You might have no option but to worry at the future of our society. But are you seeing the reality of our society or is it the only fraction that you are receiving, making you think that it is the only reality?

## **Staying positive**

Problems are always around, addictions are still a struggle and new difficulties seem to be always emerging. However this is not always the case. Having a bad day does not rule out the better ones. Yet, it's that dull day that stays vivid in our memory! There might be persons struggling with addictions, however there are many who have managed to take control over their addiction. There are persons around us who have very strong values in their lives and try to live accordingly by taking care of how they invest their priorities in life and how they take care of themselves and those around them.

## **What if you have struggles?**

There are still struggles in life, but looking at what is positive in your life will help you face the hardest days. However sometimes we need help. The most important thing is to choose wisely and stay as informed as possible about available services. Aġenzija Appoġġ within the Foundation for Social Welfare Services operates a 24-hour Supportline 179 where you can phone and be directed for help.

## **From personal experience**

As a social worker by profession, I have seen something very valuable work in people's lives. When a person who is struggling makes a daily choice to look at things in a positive way, to start appreciating people, to start to realize that nobody is perfect but there is a lot of good in many and that there are small moments in which one can say 'life is beautiful', at that decision the person already feels much better. I can only say that if you want love, give love first, if you want respect, give respect first and do this without expecting much of others.

## **Initiatives by Sedqa's Prevention Services**

Sedqa's Prevention Services seek to meet different areas in society: primary, secondary and post-secondary schools; parents; different groups and entities in the community; and also people at the workplace. In each of these areas different interventions are provided, such as educational programmes, exhibitions, talks and alternative leisure activities.

## **We love kids**

Throughout the summer months, Sedqa Prevention Services are offering sessions through the SkolaSajf programme in eight primary schools. This is a great opportunity for us to keep in touch with the students whom we meet during the scholastic year. skolaSajf helps these students in developing further their skills, in their interaction with others, while also empowering them in group work, while building on what they achieved throughout the scholastic year. We enjoy seeing them coming to Skola Sajf with so much energy and enthusiasm!

Sedqa offers its programmes both in primary and in secondary schools throughout the scholastic year with professional personnel specializing in the areas of addiction. The programmes in primary schools offer interactive sessions for children to learn important life skills. These life skills programmes are being delivered through the use of interactive CDs for children of different ages.

Additionally, the Sedqa Prevention programmes for secondary schools are now also incorporating new topics such as technological addiction as one of the topics discussed, due to the emerging needs of the students.

### **Hand in hand with teachers**

Just at the start of the summer holidays, Sedqa offered an in-service course for teachers and facilitators through the Education Department. This was a great opportunity which brought us and the educators working closely together. This training initiative also served as a platform where teachers voiced their opinions about prevention in schools while we could provide them with necessary information regarding substance abuse.

The course consisted of informative and interactive sessions about: Building a sense of community within the classroom; Stress management, Computer addiction; and Binge drinking.

The content delivered focused on topics that the participants might encounter in the classroom through the students' and their parents' lifestyle. The course aimed to apply the topics to classroom experiences and environment. The teacher as an acting role model for the students was discussed in depth. A discussion about binge drinking concluded that the teachers often meet children who relate being exposed to alcohol abuse through village feasts or other summer activities.

If you are a teacher or facilitator, we hope to see you next year at the yearly In-Service course offered by the prevention service of Sedqa.

### **Drink in Style - MOCKTAILS (non-alcoholic cocktails)**

Another recent initiative, this time coordinated by the Community section of Sedqa's Prevention Services, has been launched with the aim of promoting non-alcoholic drinks to the general public, particularly young people. The project consists of Mocktails Training Courses being delivered to young people who will be committed to promote this alternative within the communities they come from. The content of the course includes tips on how to make and present mocktails in an attractive manner where the participants receive a hands on experiences to create new mocktails whilst given feedback by a qualified lecturer and the rest of the participants.

The positive response of young people towards this project so far shows that there is a great need to invest in such opportunities. In order to address this need Sedqa is

offering the opportunity to groups of young people to organize more of the said training within the community, following which the participants are encouraged to promote alcohol-free beverages through public events.

### **Meet you at your workplace**

Prevention at the place of work focuses on raising awareness on substance abuse at the workplace, through its programme called S.A.F.E. - Substance Abuse-Free Employees programme. This programme focuses on the introduction or review of the company's Drug and Alcohol Policy and the training of managers/supervisors and employees on substance abuse prevention. The S.A.F.E. programme also provides a functional referral system to Sedqa's care services for employees that might be abusing of substances at the place of work. This programme consists of four phases. Ideally, each workplace would go through all the phases, however, the programme is designed to enable an enterprise to host one phase or more without going through the whole programme. These include: Awareness, Training sessions, Informative sessions and policies and procedures

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**For more information on Agenzija *sedqa* visit [www.sedqa.gov.mt](http://www.sedqa.gov.mt) or call on 2388 5110. Agenzija *sedqa* forms part of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services which also incorporates Agenzija APPOĠĠ [www.appogg.gov.mt](http://www.appogg.gov.mt) and Agenzija SAPPOR [www.sapport.gov.mt](http://www.sapport.gov.mt).**