

New project to prevent burnout in professionals supporting autistic people

Mental health and care professionals who support autistic people play a vital role in enabling inclusion, wellbeing and quality of life. However, many professionals in autism services face constant emotional demands, high workloads and limited organisational support. These pressures place staff at significant risk of burnout, affecting their health, job satisfaction and ability to continue working in the sector. Burnout also undermines the quality, continuity and reliability of support received by autistic people.

The newly launched Erasmus+ project PreBurn aims to respond to this growing challenge by focusing on burn-out prevention and early mental health support. Rather than placing responsibility solely on individuals to cope with stress, the project addresses the everyday realities of working in autism support and the wider organisational and policy conditions that contribute to burnout. In doing so, PreBurn fills an important gap between individual wellbeing initiatives and the need for structural change within services.

PreBurn's response to a growing challenge

PreBurn will provide practical support that professionals can use in their daily work. Through a dedicated training programme and a digital self-training tool, staff will be supported to recognise early signs of burnout, reflect on their own wellbeing and access realistic strategies to protect their mental health. These resources are designed to be flexible, accessible and grounded in real working environments, recognising time pressures and varied professional roles.

The project will also support organisations and decision makers by developing clear policy recommendations. These will focus on improving working conditions, strengthening support structures and addressing organisational practices that contribute to long-term stress and staff turnover. By doing so, PreBurn aims to help employers create healthier and more sustainable working environments.

Meet our partners

PreBurn is delivered by a European partnership bringing together expertise in autism, mental health, professional training, disability rights and policy development. The project is coordinated by Stichting VU in the Netherlands, with partners including the Child and Adolescent Center and Autism Association Larissa in Greece, the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities in Belgium, the Asociación de Padres de Personas con Autismo in Spain, and Stichting Disability Studies Nederland in the Netherlands.

Early steps in the PreBurn journey

The project partners have now initiated work on the first phase of the project and met in Athens, Greece on 9 and 10 March 2026 to coordinate, plan and lay the groundwork for research and development activities. The partnership is working towards delivering the first project outputs by the end of the year, marking an important milestone in the implementation of PreBurn.



The project runs from 1 November 2025 to 31 October 2028.



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