

Modum Bad is a psychiatric hospital in Norway for parents with mental illness, based on 12 week social medicine family treatment approach. Our school, therefore, has students aged 5 - 15 years. We function as a regular school with a small student to teacher ratio, working closely with parents and therapists at the hospital.

To strengthen students' school and life skills, we have created a structured program with themes in mental health and social competence. We call this class "Me & Others" and have sessions with the mixed 5-15 year old age groups three times a week, with the following rotation of Adapted Aggression Replacement Training (AART), Social Perception Training (SPT) and classes with psychologists / therapists. All employees are certified AART and SPT coaches.

We do the following rotation throughout the school year:

6 weeks of AART

5 weeks of SPT

2 weeks of topics related to mental health.

In AART, we choose a new current skill for the students every week and have a joint lesson for all the students with an introduction to the skill, three demonstrations (one for the youngest, one for the middle ones, and one for the oldest students) and we make mind maps of situations where one needs to use the skill. The rest of the training is done in smaller age-mixed groups, in the classroom, out in the schoolyard or in, for example, the music room. We focus on that skill in all situations we are in with the students. Anger Regulation is trained in the same way, in a more compressed form, with several topics per training. Moral Reasoning is practiced in small groups with social stories from their everyday lives. We focus on perspective taking, strength-based focus and training in problem solving. The strengths are also used in most other subjects (ie cross-curriculum), such as writing about the individual strength in Norwegian and English.

SPT is trained two times per week, and in the third Me & Others session we play the "Hi"-board game which is a game where we practice putting emotions into words. We focus on the topics in SPT in all contexts with the students. In classes in mental health, there are psychologists / therapists who teach topics such as emotions, mental illness, my boundaries, my family, etc.

Regardless of the time constraints, staff feel that they have provided a great program and families are pleased with the knowledge they take home to strengthen their lives.

Tutte Mitchell Olsen is the Director of the Modum Bad school. As well, she is a competence advisor at the Academy of Sciences, and had, for a number of years, worked as a university lecturer at the former Center for Social Competence at Diakonhjemmet University College, with teaching and supervision assignments at home and abroad. She is a program developer, has been a contributor to textbooks and manuals and is the leader of PREPSEC Norway.