



PROFILE

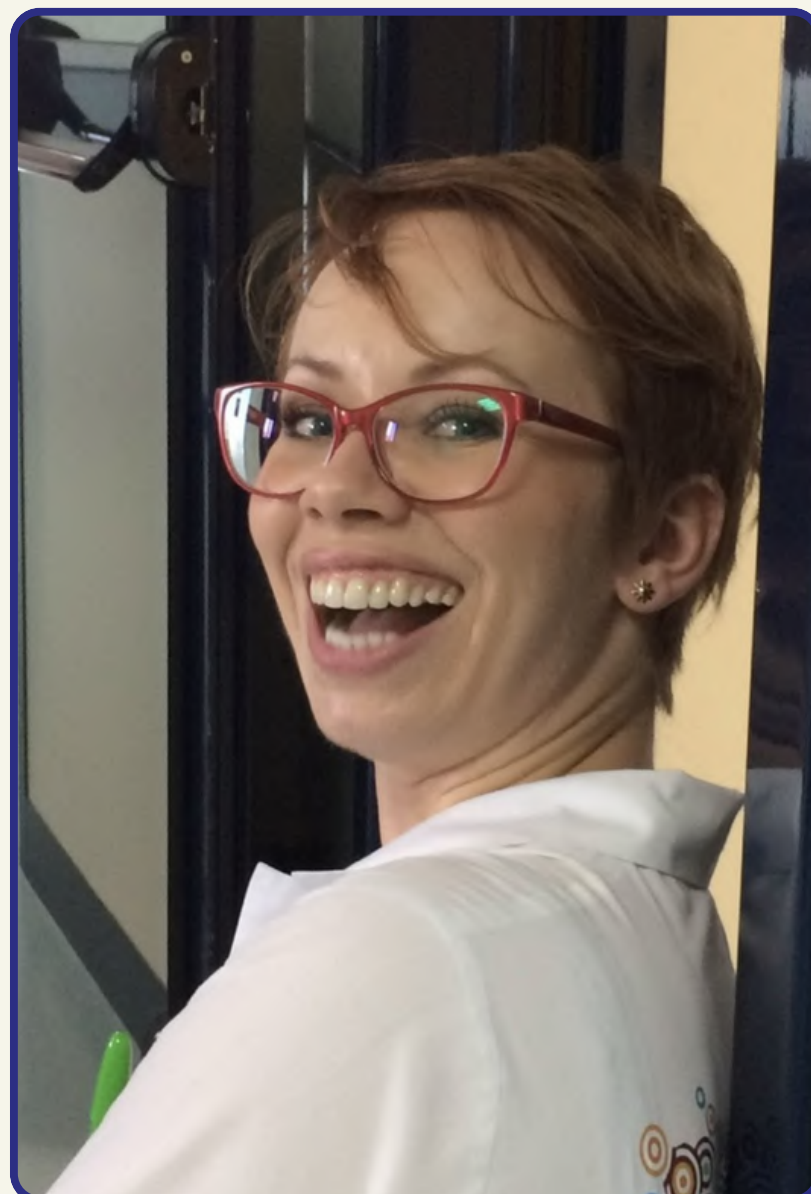
KAROLINA MASLAK

***PsyD Clinical Psychologist, Child and Adolescent
Jungian Psychoanalyst***

**SIOPE Psychosocial Working Group Steering Committee
member since 2022**

WORK AND FOCUS

Karolina Maślak is a clinical psychologist specialised in the field of paediatric oncology and child and adolescent psychoanalysis. Since 2009, Maślak has been collaborating with the Paediatric Haematology and Oncology Unit of the University Hospital Policlinic “S.Marco-G.Rodolico” in Catania, Italy and with NGOs supporting children with cancer and their families.



During her work, she collaborates with multidisciplinary team to promote child-oriented approach during cancer treatment. She believes that acknowledging and respecting child needs is a vital part of cancer care.



A DAY IN THE LIFE

Maślak's main area of focus is pain management and psychosocial support during painful procedures. She advocates a child-oriented, multidisciplinary approach to cancer care.

“Being a psychologist in paediatric oncology is deeply meaningful but also emotionally demanding. Helping children and families navigate fear, grief, and uncertainty, witnessing their moments of strength, connection, and resilience even in the hardest times, is fulfilling but it may lead to compassion fatigue over time.”



A DAY IN THE LIFE

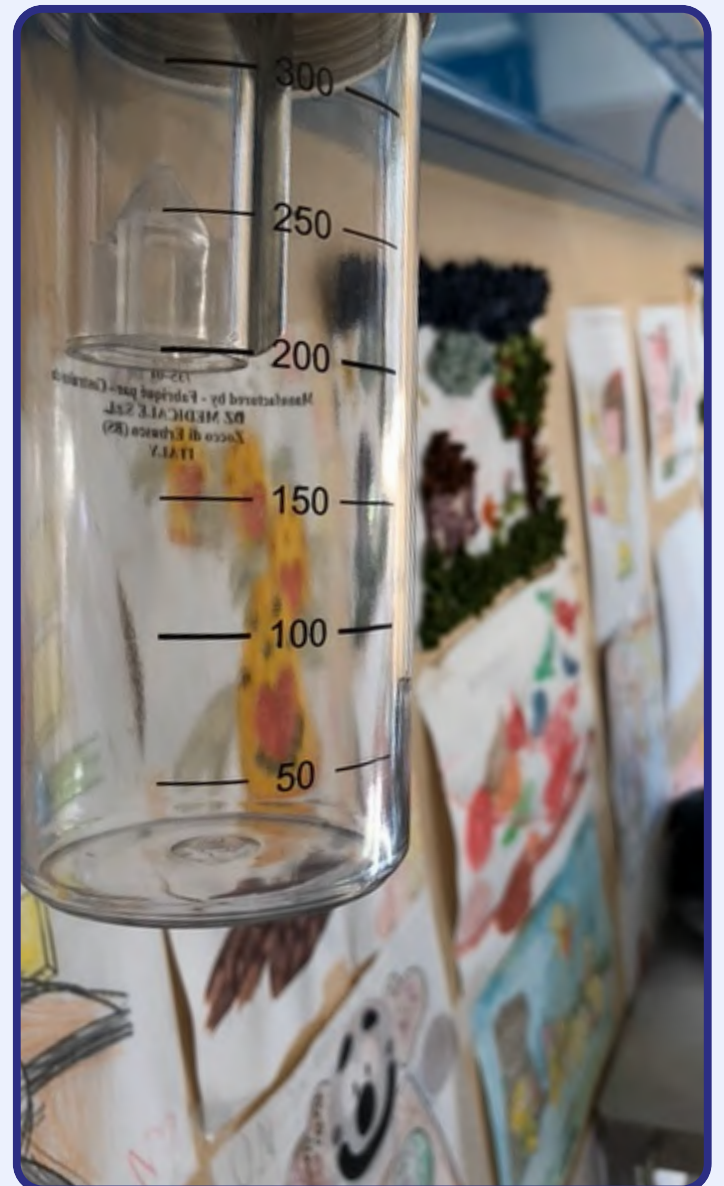
“Holding space for children, parents, and the medical team while managing our own emotions can be overwhelming. Balancing role-related demands and fostering therapeutic relationships within complex healthcare environments is a challenge that we all face. Networking, teamwork, and adhering to psychosocial standards are crucial as well as regular supervision and reflecting practice. Just as we care for others, we must actively care for our own mental health.”



FROM HER PERSPECTIVE

Based on her clinical experience, Karolina notes that while psychologists are often part of interdisciplinary teams in paediatric oncology, the availability and consistency of psychosocial services remain deeply uneven.

“There is still a great lack of adequate psychosocial care in numerous European countries in the field of childhood cancer and the provision of psychosocial support seems to vary significantly across and within European countries. The need to establish Europe-wide standards for psychosocial care in paediatric oncology and guidelines for implementation is imminent.”



SIOPE INVOLVEMENT

Maślak is a member of the SIOPE Psychosocial Working Group Steering Committee and CCI-Europe's Psychosocial Pillar. She contributes to collaborative research and advocacy efforts aimed at standardising psychosocial care across Europe. One such effort includes a major EU-wide grant proposal aimed at setting common standards and developing practical tools for implementation.

“The SIOPE PSWG, with a large group of collaborators from 15 countries, CCIE and SIOPE, has submitted a grant proposal EU4Health Program-CR-g-24-43; The project submitted, IMPACT-EU aims to establish Europe-wide standards for psychosocial care in paediatric oncology and to develop evidence-based guidelines tailored specifically to Europe.”



SIOPE INVOLVEMENT



“IMPACT-EU seeks to create a unified service system for psychosocial support in paediatric oncology, ensuring better and more equal access to care across Europe. The struggle is to adequately address the needs for psychosocial support with disparities in access to psychosocial care.”





Behind every child and family supported through cancer treatment are professionals like Karolina Maślak, who bring compassion, resilience, and advocacy to every stage of care.

During World Health Worker Week, we thank her and all those who tirelessly work to improve the quality of life of young cancer patients across Europe.