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# **Global Model WHO 2024**

COMMITTEE A2

# **STUDY GUIDE**

**MENTAL HEALTH AND YOUTH**

Geneva, Switzerland

October 29 - November 1, 2024

*The Most Accurate Simulation of the World Health Assembly*

Global Model WHO  
Committee A2

## Mental Health and Youth (High School)

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This study guide is designed to help you navigate the topic on Mental Health and Youth as you prepare for the Global Model WHO Committee A2 simulation. Use it alongside the official UN publication that has been provided. The guide includes key questions to prompt deeper thinking, facts to expand your knowledge, and a glossary to clarify important terms. Be sure to consult the page and paragraph numbers listed for each comment to see exactly what section of the document it addresses.

As you read through each section, reflect on the questions provided to help shape your arguments and anticipate counterpoints. The guide also offers insights that can aid in forming well-rounded, innovative solutions during debates. Use this resource to complement your own research and strengthen your overall understanding of the issues

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### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

Page 3, paragraph 1

- How has the COVID-19 pandemic helped highlight the importance of investing in mental health resources?
  - What innovations did the COVID-19 pandemic lead to that have the potential to expand access to mental health services and make mental health, education and social service systems more effective, efficient and equitable?
  - Why are Member States so concerned about the mental health and well-being of millions of children, adolescents, and their caregiver's around the world?
  - Why is it important to include caregivers into action plans dealing with the mental health of children and adolescents?
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## GLOSSARY

### Page 3, paragraph 1

- **Mental Health:**  
WHO defines mental health as a “state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

### Page 3, paragraph 1

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the rates of anxiety and depression among adolescents globally increased by 25%, highlighting the mental toll of social isolation, school closures, and uncertainty about the future.

## GLOSSARY

### Page 4, paragraph 2

- **Child:**  
A child is any person under the age of 18. (The Convention on the Rights of the Child)

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

### Page 5

- Around 1 in 10 of the world’s children and adolescents experience a mental disorder.
- Poor mental health in adolescence can lead to risky behaviors, including self-harm, tobacco, alcohol, and other substance use, risky sexual behaviors, and exposure to violence.
- Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health issue among young people, affecting 7% of children and teens worldwide and that depression is the leading cause of disability in adolescents which affects their ability to work, study or maintain social relationships.
- The interconnection between mental health and disease burden is bidirectional. For example, the physical symptoms of asthma (such as shortness of breath) and the limitations it can place on daily activities (such as avoiding physical activities) may increase the risk of depression in adolescence. At the same time,

depression can make adolescents less likely to use their asthma medications correctly, such as inhalers or controller medications, leading to more frequent and severe asthma attacks. This can result in increased hospitalizations due to poorly managed asthma, and the anxiety related to asthma attacks may worsen depressive symptoms, creating a vicious cycle of poor health.

- Half of all mental health conditions start by the age of 14, but most cases go undetected and untreated and three-quarters of all mental health disorders begin by the age of 24.
- Teens need about 8–10 hours of sleep per night, but many get far less due to academic pressure, social media use, and screen time. Lack of sleep has been linked to increased rates of depression, anxiety, and mood swings in young people.
- Frequent use of social media (more than 2 hours per day) is linked to feelings of loneliness, depression, and body image issues.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Page 5, paragraph 2

Physical activity is a natural way to improve mental health. Exercise increases the production of endorphins (feel-good hormones), and just 30 minutes of exercise can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. And schools that incorporate physical activity as part of their daily routine often see improvements in students' mental well-being and academic performance.

Page 6

LGBTQ+ youth are at a much higher risk for mental health issues due to bullying, discrimination, and social isolation. They are about 3 times more likely to experience anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts compared to their heterosexual peers.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

Page 6, paragraph 1

What are some factors that may put particular groups of children and youth at risk of experiencing mental health issues? How does gender play an important role in determining the type of mental health problems that boys and girls are likely to have? How can this information be used to improve the effectiveness of mental health services?

GLOSSARY

Page 6, paragraph 1

- Adolescence:

Adolescence as the transitional phase of growth and development that occurs between ages 10 and 19. This period is characterized by significant physical, psychological, and social changes as individuals progress from childhood to adulthood.

Page 7, paragraph 1

What are some reasons why the response to mental health problems among children and adolescents has been poor or ineffective? What changes need to be made to improve the quality of mental health services for children and adolescents?

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Page 7

- In low- and middle-income countries, the average number of psychiatrists who specialize in treating children and adolescents is fewer than 0.1 per 100,000.
- Investment in promoting and protecting mental health – as distinct from caring for children facing the greatest challenges – is extremely low. Mental health services are underfunded globally, with many countries spending less than 1% of their health budgets on mental health. This leads to significant gaps in care for young people in need of support.

GLOSSARY

Page 7, paragraph 2

- Intersectoral collaboration:
- The term intersectoral refers to more integrated collaboration among sectors, where sectors work together closely to create joint policies or strategies that address a complex issue. It focuses on cooperation and co-designing solutions across sectors, leading to more intertwined and coordinated efforts.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

Page 10, paragraph 3

- What types of collaborations are needed to accelerate the action for children and adolescents' mental health and psychosocial well-being? What implications does this have for the call to action that you will be drafting in the operative paragraphs of your resolution?

- How can you use this information to guide the recommendations you make in the operative section of your resolution?

## GLOSSARY

Page 10, paragraph 3

- **Multisectoral collaboration:**  
Multisectoral refers to efforts or strategies that involve multiple sectors (e.g., health, education, agriculture, finance, social services) working in parallel towards a common goal or addressing a particular issue. Each sector typically maintains its own responsibilities and activities but contributes to a broader objective. For example, in addressing malnutrition, a multisectoral approach might involve the health sector providing medical care and nutrition counseling, the agriculture sector promoting food production, and the education sector implementing school feeding programs. Each sector contributes separately but towards a common outcome of reducing malnutrition. It often involves coordination across different sectors but may not always require these sectors to work in a deeply integrated or interconnected way.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Page 13

Diet plays a role in mental health. A balanced diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids, fruits, and vegetables is linked to lower rates of depression and anxiety in young people. And processed foods and sugary snacks have been associated with increased symptoms of anxiety and depression.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

Page 13, paragraph 3

Who are the main partners in the joint programme and what role do they play in achieving the programme's desired outcomes?

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

Page 19

Why is a results-based budget important to achieving the goals and objectives of the UNICEF and WHO Joint Programme?

### GLOSSARY

Page 19, left column, paragraph 2

- Results-based budget:  
A budgeting method that links an organization's financial resources to its strategic goals and objectives to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services. Results-based budgets requires regular reviews of the effectiveness of the money that is spent.

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

Page 24-26

What are the core strategies of the UNICEF and WHO joint programme to promote the mental health and psychosocial well-being of children and adolescents? Can any of these strategies be incorporated into the recommended actions that will be included in the resolution you will draft with other delegates?

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Page 26

The earlier mental health issues are detected and treated, the better the outcomes. Programs that focus on early intervention and prevention in schools, such as mental health screenings and counseling services, have been shown to reduce the severity of mental health conditions in youth.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

Page 34

What are some ways the partners of the joint programme intend to monitor its success?

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GLOSSARY

The following word is not in the document provided on Mental Health but is an important concept to understand when researching this topic.

Disease burden:

a way to measure how much a disease affects a population, not just by how many people it kills, but also by how many people it leaves disabled or sick, reducing their quality of life and productivity. The term "disease burden" is used broadly to describe the impact of both physical diseases and mental health conditions like depression, even though depression is not a "disease" in the traditional sense.



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