WIMUN **SINGAPORE** 2025

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

MENTAL HEALTH AND YOUTH

Simulation: World Health Assembly

Welcome to WIMUN Singapore 2025,

We are very pleased to introduce you to the most authentic simulation of the United Nations in the world; and hope to contribute to your understanding of the Organisation, its mandate, and its critical role in global affairs.

Through a series of pre-conference webinars that will be offered and documents – like this resource guide – we aim to educate you not only about the global issues on the UN agenda, but also about the ways and means through which those topics are discussed, debated and negotiated by real UN diplomats.

This resource guide will provide you with a head start in doing research to gain a deeper understanding of the global issue that you will be discussing and the actions that the government you have been assigned recommends that the international community should take to address this issue. To make the research process a bit easier, the resource guide has been divided into sections and sub-sections to assist you in researching these two components. We strongly recommend you to give a careful look through the sources listed below so that the interaction with your peers is as exciting as possible.

We wish you all the very best in this journey of learning!

World Health Assembly

Childhood and adolescence are critical stages of life for mental health. This is a time when rapid growth and development take place in the brain, particularly in areas related to decision-making, impulse control, and emotional regulation, which can increase susceptibility to mental health disorders. Children and adolescents acquire cognitive and social-emotional skills that shape their future mental health and are important for assuming adult roles in society.

The quality of the environment where children and adolescents grow up shapes their well-being and development. Early negative experiences in homes, schools, or digital spaces, such as exposure to violence, the mental illness of a parent or other caregiver, bullying and poverty, increase the risk of mental illness.

Mental health is increasingly recognized as a major cause of illness and disability among young people, affecting their ability to lead productive lives and impacting their overall well-being. Several factors contribute to this, making mental health a critical concern for this age group.

Mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders (e.g., ADHD) are among the leading causes of illness and disability in young people. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), half of all mental health conditions start by age 14, and three-quarters by age 24 . These conditions can severely impact a young person's ability to function in daily life, affecting their education, relationships, and future opportunities. Worldwide, 10% of children and adolescents experience a mental disorder, but the majority of them do not seek help or receive care. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death in 15-19 year-olds. The consequences of not addressing mental health and psychosocial development for children and adolescents extend to adulthood and limit opportunities for leading fulfilling lives.

WHO supports Member States in the development and implementation of various strategies that aim to promote mental health provide comprehensive mental health care for children, adolescents and their families.

Key components of this approach are described in the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030 that emphasizes the importance of ensuring that strategies and interventions cater to the needs of youth at all stages of development. Central to this approach is the provision of mental health care services across various sectors in community-based settings that are youth-friendly and accessible, particularly in schools, communities, and primary care environments.

Additionally, a recent resolution adopted by the 77th session of the World Health Assembly, WHA 77.3 (2024), has highlighted the crucial role of mental health and psychosocial well-being in the survival, recovery, and daily functioning of those impacted by crises and the need for mental health support in humanitarian and crisis situations, ensuring that young people affected by conflict, natural disasters, and other emergencies receive the psychosocial assistance they need.

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

World Health Assembly (cont.)

Early intervention within schools and communities is identified as crucial for addressing mental health issues among youth to mitigate the prevalence of mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse to promote mental health and well-being for all, to prevent and mitigate the prevalence of mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse for those at-risk, reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.

The Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030 also recognizes that the social determinants of mental health, such as poverty, violence, and family instability, significantly impact youth.

Policy and advocacy are also critical components in improving mental health outcomes for youth. The promotion of mental health requires policies that prioritize the needs of young people. Governments need to be urged to allocate sufficient resources and funding for youth mental health programs. These initiatives align with the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan's advocacy for the development and implementation of national policies and strategies that adhere to international human rights standards and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Finally, Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030 stresses the importance of strengthening community and family support systems as essential for the mental health of young people. It encourages initiatives that engage families and communities in supporting youth mental health, including providing resources and training for parents, teachers, and community leaders to recognize and effectively respond to mental health issues in order to create a supportive environment for the mental health of youth.

Key Points and Main Issues

To be well-prepared for a simulation of the World Health Assembly on the topic of Mental Health and Youth, delegates need to understand the global burden of mental health issues, the barriers to care, and the impact of social, cultural, and technological factors on youth mental health. Furthermore, they should be ready to discuss innovative solutions, policies, and international cooperation that address the unique challenges faced by young people. By focusing on prevention, early intervention, and advocacy, delegates can propose comprehensive strategies to improve mental health outcomes for youth worldwide.

[Please note that for statistical purposes, the United Nations defines 'youth' as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years which may differ from how other Member States or UN entities define this term.]

1. Global Prevalence of Mental Health Issues Among Youth

- **Statistics:** Mental health disorders account for 16% of the global burden of disease and injury among children and youth aged 10–19. Common issues include depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicide, with suicide being the fourth leading cause of death in this age group.
- **Geographical Differences:** Youth in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) may experience higher rates of mental health disorders due to lack of resources, conflict, poverty, and exposure to violence. However, mental health issues are rising in high-income countries too, particularly due to social isolation and academic pressures.
- **Discussion Focus:** Explore why mental health conditions are widespread among youth, what factors contribute to the increase, and how different regions are affected. Be prepared to address the economic burden of untreated mental health issues and the long-term impact on societies.

Key Points and Main Issues (cont.)

2. Stigma and Barriers to Accessing Care

- **Stigma:** Cultural beliefs often stigmatize mental health, discouraging young people from seeking help. Stigma may be worse in conservative societies, where mental illness is seen as a sign of weakness or a family's dishonor.
- **Awareness and Misconceptions:** Many youth and their families may not recognize the symptoms of mental health conditions or understand that effective treatment exists.
- **Barriers:** In some countries, mental health care is underfunded, and there is a shortage of mental health professionals. High costs, long waiting times, and the lack of youth-friendly services further limit access.
- **Solutions:** Propose ways to reduce stigma through public awareness campaigns, mental health education in schools, and engaging influencers or celebrities who can reach young audiences. Explore ways to improve mental health literacy, so families and communities better understand the signs and treatment of mental health issues.

3. Access to Mental Health Services

- **Limited Services:** Globally, only a small fraction of youth with mental health conditions receive the care they need. Many young people face barriers to accessing mental health services due to stigma, lack of awareness, insufficient services, or financial constraints. Ensuring that mental health care is affordable, accessible, and youth-friendly is essential. In low-income countries, many lack access to even basic mental health services. In high-income countries, services exist but are often insufficient or difficult to access.
- **School-Based Interventions:** One solution is to increase mental health services within schools, making it easier for youth to access care where they spend much of their time. Counseling services, peer support groups, and mental health education in schools can help.
- **Community-Based Models:** In areas where formal mental health services are lacking, community-based approaches can fill the gap. Training community health workers or establishing mobile mental health units can help reach underserved populations.
- **Discussion Focus:** Propose ways to make mental health services accessible, particularly in remote or rural areas. The role of telemedicine and digital health platforms should be considered, especially given the success of online counseling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools, communities, and online platforms can also play a key role in providing mental health support and early intervention services.

Key Points and Main Issues (cont.)

4. Integration of Mental Health into Broader Health and Social Services
- **Discussion Focus:** Mental health should be integrated into general health care and social services to ensure a holistic approach to youth well-being. This includes training healthcare providers, teachers, and social workers to recognize and address mental health issues.
- **Solutions:** Governments and organizations need to invest in mental health infrastructure, including community-based services, to provide comprehensive care that meets the diverse needs of young people.

5. Social Media and Technology
- **Positive Impact:** Social media platforms can provide support networks for youth dealing with mental health issues, connect them to resources, and reduce stigma. Apps and online platforms also offer mental health screening tools and counseling services.
- **Negative Impact:** On the flip side, social media can contribute to cyberbullying, self-esteem issues, and social isolation, which are linked to anxiety and depression. The constant pressure for online validation can also harm mental well-being.
- **Solutions:** Explore ways to harness technology for mental health, such as through mental health apps, online support communities, and digital counseling services. Additionally, consider how governments and tech companies can regulate harmful online content and promote healthy social media use.

6. Social Determinants of Mental Health
- **Poverty and Inequality:** Young people living in poverty are more likely to experience poor mental health due to stress, limited access to healthcare, and exposure to violence or trauma. Addressing poverty, inequality, and lack of education is essential to improving mental health outcomes.
- **Discrimination and Marginalization:** Minority groups, including LGBTQ+ youth, ethnic minorities, and refugees, are more vulnerable to mental health disorders due to discrimination and marginalization.
- **Solutions:** Propose policies that address the social determinants of mental health, such as better education, housing, and social safety nets, that can contribute to better mental health outcomes. Consider specific interventions targeting marginalized groups, including creating safe spaces and implementing anti-bullying policies.

Summary of important information and main issues (cont.)

5. Innovation and Technological Solutions
- **Plastic Alternatives:** There is ongoing research into biodegradable plastics, compostable materials, and plastic alternatives that could replace traditional plastics.
- **Cleanup Technologies:** Various organizations are working on ocean cleanup technologies (e.g., The Ocean Cleanup project), but these are still limited in scope. How feasible are these technologies as a supplement to prevention strategies.
- **Microplastic Capture:** Technologies aimed at capturing microplastics from wastewater, stormwater, and industrial effluents are in development. These could prevent microplastics from entering the oceans.

6. Regulatory and Policy Approaches
- **Plastic Bans and Regulations:** Many countries have implemented bans on single-use plastics, such as plastic bags, straws, and polystyrene containers. How effective are these bans?
- **Taxes and Levies:** Some countries impose taxes or levies on plastic products to discourage their use and raise funds for environmental initiatives. For example, the plastic bag levy in Ireland dramatically reduced plastic bag usage.
- **National Action Plans:** Some countries have adopted national action plans to address marine plastic pollution through a combination of legislation, public awareness campaigns, and private sector engagement to finance new waste management infrastructure and innovative recycling technologies, negotiate regulations and agree on incentives to encourage a shift to innovative product redesign and sustainable packaging .and test new approaches to plastic waste reduction.

7. Public Awareness and Behavioral Change
- **Raising Awareness:** Public awareness campaigns play a crucial role in reducing plastic consumption and promoting sustainable alternatives.
- **Consumer Behavior:** Shifting consumer behavior toward sustainable consumption and recycling practices is key to reducing plastic pollution. How can policy and awareness campaigns incentivize responsible consumption?

Summary of important information and main issues (cont.)

7. Youth-Friendly Mental Health Policies

- **Mental Health Policies:** Governments often neglect to include youth-specific provisions in their mental health policies. Call for policies that provide youth with access to care, protect their mental health rights, and integrate mental health programs for youth into broader education and healthcare systems.
- **School Programs:** Schools are critical to addressing mental health. Programs that teach emotional resilience, social skills, and stress management can reduce the risk of mental health problems in youth. Mental health literacy should be part of school curricula to reduce stigma and encourage students to seek help.
- **Discussion Focus:** Call for governments to adopt or strengthen mental health policies with a focus on youth, ensuring that mental health care is available through schools and other social services and propose involving youth voices in the creation of these policies. Mental health stigma remains a significant barrier to young people seeking help. Public awareness campaigns, education programs, and open discussions about mental health are needed to reduce stigma and promote a culture of understanding and support. Youth leaders and influencers can be powerful advocates for mental health, helping to normalize conversations about mental well-being and encourage their peers to seek help when needed.

8. Mental Health and COVID-19:

- **Pandemic Impact:** The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on youth mental health, leading to increased rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide. Factors like social isolation, loss of family income, and uncertainty about the future have contributed to this.
- **Post-Pandemic Recovery:** The pandemic has highlighted the importance of mental health preparedness in public health emergencies. Future plans should ensure mental health services are integrated into responses to crises like pandemics.
- **Discussion Focus:** Consider the lessons learned from COVID-19 regarding youth mental health and propose strategies for mental health resilience in future crises. This can include telehealth for mental health, emergency hotlines, and mental health support in schools.

9. Cultural and Gender Considerations

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Mental health is viewed differently across cultures. In some cultures, discussing mental health openly may be taboo, and traditional healing practices may be favored over formal mental health care.
- **Gender Differences:** Mental health issues manifest differently between genders. Girls may be more prone to anxiety and depression, while boys may experience under diagnosis or express distress through aggression or substance abuse.
- **Solutions:** Explore ways to create culturally sensitive mental health programs, considering local beliefs and practices while promoting effective care. Additionally, consider ways to address the gender dimensions of mental health, discussing tailored approaches for boys and girls.

10. Role of International Organizations

- **WHO:** The World Health Organization (WHO) sets global guidelines and provides technical assistance to countries working to improve youth mental health. WHO's Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2020 outlines global strategies, including increasing access to care and integrating mental health into education systems.
- **UNICEF:** UNICEF supports youth mental health through programs that focus on adolescent well-being, especially in conflict zones and among vulnerable populations.
- **Discussion Focus:** Think about actions your government would like the international organizations to take to promote youth mental health globally as well as as ways that countries can collaborate with them to improve mental health outcomes. Additionally, think about specific actions that your government would like the WHO Director-General to take to increase the support and technical assistance that WHO provides to Member States to strengthen mental health services for youth around the world.

11. Call to Action and Youth Involvement

- **Youth Participation:** Youth themselves are vital in shaping mental health policies and advocacy. Engaging youth in discussions, allowing them to share their experiences, and involving them in decision-making ensures that solutions are relevant to their needs.
- **Youth-Led Initiatives:** Encouraging peer support programs and youth-led awareness campaigns can be powerful tools in breaking down stigma and supporting mental health.
- **Solutions:** Propose ways to ensure youth participation in policymaking, including creating youth advisory boards in government health departments or supporting student mental health organizations.

[Remarks by UN PGA at the Event on Mental Health of Children and Young People: How Can We Do Better?](#)   2024

Summary: At a United Nations event on the mental health of children and young people in April 2024, the President of the General Assembly (PGA) made remarks that included the following topics: investing in mental health, involving children and young people, protecting human rights, eliminating stigma, leveraging digital technologies and addressing the mental health crisis in conflicts. The PGA highlighted the particularly acute mental health crisis for children in conflicts and humanitarian emergencies, such as in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, and Haiti.

[Strengthening mental health and psychosocial support before, during and after armed conflicts, natural and human-caused disasters and health and other emergencies (WHA resolution 77.3)](#)   2024

Summary: This WHO resolution recognizes in the preambular section the toll that armed conflicts, natural and human-cause disasters and health and other emergencies have had on the mental health of children and youth, who are disproportionately at risk of experiencing traumatic events that disrupts their cognitive, social and emotional development. In the operative section it calls for a number of actions to reduce the suffering of children and adolescents and increase support for mental health and psychosocial services. WHA resolution 77.3 is a followup to the Political Declaration that was adopted by the Executive Board in 2023 (see next link).

[Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) (UNHRC)](#)   2024

Summary: The term 'mental health and psychosocial support' (MHPSS) refers to any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being or prevent or treat mental health conditions. MHPSS is not confined to a single sector but requires a multi-sectoral approach with involvement of partners in health, education and protection (community-based protection, child protection and Gender-based Violence [GBV]).

Mental health of adolescents   2024

Summary: This WHO webpage provides a general introduction to the mental health of adolescents with an emphasis on mental health determinants, emotional, behavioural and eating disorders, suicide, early detection and treatment and what WHO is doing to assist governments in responding to the health needs of adolescents.

Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, and mental health   2023

Summary: This Political Declaration preceded and led to Resolution WHA 77.3 (see above). While mental health is not the only focus of this declaration, it is an important element. There is a section of the Declaration that provides statistics and an update on progress made towards achieving mental health-related Sustainable Development Goals and the impact of COVID-19 on disrupting progress improving mental health. It also introduces the The UNICEF and WHO Joint Programme on Mental Health and Psychosocial Well-being and Development of Children and Adolescents and lists the countries that have joined the Programme (Bhutan, Colombia, Egypt, Guyana, Jordan, Maldives, Mozambique and Papua New Guinea). If you have been assigned one of these countries, you should further explore how your country is involved in this programme.

How school systems can improve health and well-being: topic brief: mental health   2023

Summary: This policy brief emphasizes the role of mental health in supporting the achievement of educational goals and how interventions can be amplified through a school-focused approach.

OFFICIAL UN RESOURCES (CONT.)

WHO Policy Brief on the health aspects of decriminalization of suicide and suicide attempts — 2023

Summary: The WHO Global Mental Health Action Plan aims to reduce global suicide mortality rate by ⅓ by 2030. Unfortunately, suicide and suicide attempts remain illegal in 23 countries worldwide. This reports cites evidence on the harmful effects of such laws, and the need for decriminalization of suicide and suicide attempts globally.

Report of the second meeting of the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Mental Health, Brain Health and Substance Use — 2023

Strengthening Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in UNHCR: Annual Report 2023 — 2023

Summary: This report outlines some of the major milestones achieved by UNHCR towards ensuring the mental health and well-being of refugees in 2023. This includes multi-sectoral monitoring with indicators on the number of people who have received Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services.

World Mental Health Report — 2022

Summary: The World Mental Health Report describes the status quo and principal drivers of mental health at the global level and suggests several foundations for change, restructuring and scaling up mental healthcare services.

UNICEF and WHO joint programme on mental health and psychosocial well-being and development of children and adolescents
2022

The UNICEF and WHO Joint Programme on Mental Health and Psychosocial Well-being and Development of Children and Adolescents aims to reduce suffering and improve the mental health of children and adolescents in countries targeted under the joint programme by 2030, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals set forth by the UNDP.

Mental Health at Work
2022

Summary: This is a policy brief jointly released by the ILO and WHO that calls for global action to address mental health at work. It describes practical strategies for governments, employers and workers in the public and private sectors, and also emphasizes on minimizing occupational psychosocial risks in the workplace.

Manual on Community-based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies and Displacement
2022

Summary: This manual released by the International Organization for Migration aims to facilitate MHPSS experts and managers in designing, implementing and evaluating mental health and psychosocial support services for displaced populations in humanitarian settings.

The Global Coalition for Youth Mental Health (UNICEF)
2022

Summary: The Global Coalition for Youth Mental Health, aims to reduce stigma and raise awareness, advocating for government action, boosting investments in mental health, and promoting mental health support in workplaces.

LIVE LIFE: An implementation guide for suicide prevention in countries   2021

Summary: LIVE LIFE is WHO's contribution towards the creation of comprehensive national suicide prevention strategies. The multipurpose guide can be used by countries with or without an existing suicide prevention strategy, national or local centres and community stakeholders involved in suicide prevention, mental health and addiction counseling.

Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030   2021

Summary: The 66th World Health Assembly adopted the WHO's Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020 in May 2013. In 2019, the action plan was extended until 2030 by the 72nd World Health Assembly. Then in 2021, the 74th World Health Assembly endorsed updates to the action plan. The updated Plan includes specific strategies to improve adolescents' mental health and addresses the need for prevention and treatment of youth at risk as well as universal coverage for mental health services.

Guidelines on mental health promotive and preventive interventions for adolescents   2020

Summary: This guideline provides evidence-based recommendations on psychosocial interventions to promote mental health and reduce self-harm and other at-risk behaviors in adolescents. It aims to strengthen health and education systems whilst informing policy development across all sectors and services.

UN RESOURCES (REGIONS OR MEMBER STATES)

Adolescent Health Dashboards   2023

Summary: Country profiles covering a wide range of demographic indicators as well as what national policies and plans to support adolescent development have been developed. Check to see if your country has a strategy or plan for adolescent mental health and if it does try to find it on the Internet.

Mental Health Atlas of the Americas 2020   2020

Summary: The WHO Mental Health Atlas is the best-known and most comprehensive resource for information on mental health resources globally. It aims to provide up-to-date information on the existence of mental health services and resources, including mental health policies and legislation, financing, the availability and utilization of mental health services and human resources, and mental health promotion and prevention. This 2020 edition of the Mental Health Atlas of the Americas, based on data from 2018 to 2020, is an important compilation of information on mental health systems. Many of the countries that have been assigned have profiles in the Atlas.

Asia Pacific

STRENGTHENING MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND SERVICES for children and adolescents in East Asia and Pacific Region: Thailand Country Report: (UNICEF)   2024

Summary: This report provides an overview of the mental health and psychosocial challenges and recommendations for strengthening the mental health system in East Asia and the Pacific.

World Mental Health Day: Mental Health is a Universal Human Right   2023

Summary: A statement issued by the WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia on the need to recognize mental health as a universal human right, entitled to all, regardless of location, occupation or identity.

Asia Pacific (cont.)

[Promoting mental health and well-being deserves our undivided attention and long-term investment A joint Op-Ed by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, WHO](#)   2021

Summary: A joint op-ed by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, and WHO highlights the urgent need to address mental health issues in Bhutan, where suicide has become one of the top six leading causes of death. The average number of suicide cases increased from six per month between 2009 and 2013 to eight per month between 2018 and 2020. Additionally, reported cases of mental and behavioral disorders rose from over 4,200 in 2017 to 6,858 in 2020. Despite these alarming trends, the annual budget allocation for mental health programs, including suicide prevention, has remained under 3.5 million Nu, accounting for just one percent of the Ministry of Health's budget. The article emphasizes that promoting mental health and well-being requires a comprehensive approach involving government, society, and individuals throughout their lifespans. Key focus areas include parenting, educational settings, primary health and community-based interventions, poverty alleviation, crisis response, and resilience building. The authors advocate for a national forum to facilitate coordinated, sustained actions and increased investment in mental health services to effectively address these pressing challenges.

[Australia's youth: Mental illness - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#)   2021

Summary: This survey found that a significant number of children and adolescents experience mental health issues.

Asia Pacific (cont.)

UNICEF report spotlights on the mental health impact of COVID-19 in children and young people   2021

Summary: UNICEF's flagship report, "The State of the World's Children 2021: On My Mind," highlights the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of children and young people in India. Launched on October 5, 2021, by India's Health Minister Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, the report reveals that children have faced unprecedented challenges, including witnessing widespread suffering and enduring prolonged isolation due to school closures and social distancing measures. These experiences have led to increased feelings of anxiety and uncertainty among the youth. A UNICEF and Gallup survey conducted in early 2021 across 21 countries found that only 41% of Indian young people aged 15-24 believe it is beneficial to seek support for mental health problems, compared to an average of 83% in other countries. This reluctance to seek help underscores the need for greater awareness and destigmatization of mental health issues in India. UNICEF emphasizes the importance of integrating mental health education into school curricula and strengthening support systems involving parents, families, and communities to address these challenges effectively.

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Africa

Mental Health: A right for all (WHO Africa-Angola)

2024

Summary: This article is about an event organized by the Angolan Ministry of Health on the mental health situation in Angola. The event offered an opportunity for journalists, digital influencers and specialists from the different institutions to exchange experiences and learn about the problem of mental health in Angola. It emphasizes the importance of mental health as a fundamental human right. It underscores the need for inclusive mental health policies and services to ensure that all individuals, especially those in marginalized communities, have access to necessary mental health care.

Taking stock of children's mental and psychosocial wellbeing in Ethiopia during COVID-19 (UNICEF)

2020

Summary: This report highlights the significant mental health challenges children and young people faced during the pandemic in Ethiopia.

Latin America and the Caribbean

MENTAL HEALTH AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
2023

Summary: This study estimates the economic impact of mental health conditions (MHC) among adolescents and young adults in Latin America and the Caribbean. MHCs, including neurological disorders, substance use, and self-harm, have grown significantly, causing a loss of 0.22% of the region's GDP in 2019—up to US$49 billion. Gender patterns vary, with boys more prone to diagnosed disorders and girls to psychological distress. The study calls for better data to guide mental health policy and support youth in the region.

Unprecedented decline in mental health among Dutch teenagers during pandemic raises concerns
2023

Summary: A recent study from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) reveals a significant decline in the mental health of Dutch teenagers between 2017 and 2021, with girls being particularly affected. Emotional issues among secondary school girls rose from 28% to 43%, while behavioral problems, hyperactivity, and attention deficits increased among both genders. The study also noted rising online bullying, reduced positivity about friendships and teacher relationships, and intensified school-related stress, with 45% of secondary students feeling significant academic pressure in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic is believed to have exacerbated these trends, amplifying existing societal pressures.

Additionally, previously declining trends in smoking and alcohol consumption among Dutch teenagers have plateaued, with high rates of alcohol use and binge drinking among 15- and 16-year-olds. Conducted every four years since 2001, the HBSC study—led by Utrecht University, the Trimbos Institute, and the Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau—aims to identify key areas for improving youth well-being in the Netherlands.

Latin America and the Caribbean (cont.)

Generation Unlimited: the Well-being of Young People in Grenada FACT SHEET
2021

Summary:The "Generation Unlimited: The Well-being of Young People in Grenada" fact sheet highlights several mental health challenges faced by Grenadian youth, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has disrupted various aspects of life, posing significant risks to education, employment, and mental well-being, especially among vulnerable youth. Experiences such as academic failures, parental discord, and difficulties in securing employment can have lasting impacts on young people's mental health, affecting their overall well-being and future prospects.

Additionally, the fact sheet underscores the role of poverty in exacerbating mental health issues. In 2016, 38% of Grenada's population lived in poverty, with 51% of children aged 0-17 and 18% of adolescents aged 10-19 affected. Growing up in poverty can hinder educational performance, increase unemployment risk, and lead to risky behaviors, all of which can detrimentally impact the physical, emotional, and social development of young people, thereby heightening their vulnerability to mental health challenges.

Mental health and psychosocial well-being support case study: Ecuador (UNICEF)
2021

Summary: This case study highlights how mental health and psychosocial well-being services are integrated into the education system of Ecuador.

Latin America and the Caribbean (cont.)

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 2021 **2021**
On My Mind: Promoting, protecting and caring for children's mental health: Regional brief Latin America and the Caribbean (UNICEF)

Summary: This report provides a regional perspective on the state of children's well-being in Latin America and the Caribbean, focusing on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors affecting children and adolescents in the region that includes two case studies of Peru and Mexico.

Europe

WHO EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION ON MENTAL HEALTH 2021–2025 — 2022

Summary: The WHO European Framework for Action on Mental Health (EFAMH), covering the period 2021–2025, sets out a response to current mental health challenges arising from the negative impact that the COVID19 pandemic has had on population mental health and well-being. The EFAMH provides a coherent basis for increasing efforts to safeguard mental well-being as an integral element of COVID-19 response and recovery; to counter the stigma and discrimination associated with mental health conditions; and to advocate for and promote investment in accessible quality mental health services.

Paving the way for quality mental health care in Ukraine (WHO) — 2021

Summary: Ukraine approved a new National Mental Health Action Plan to improve mental health care across the country. The plan integrates mental health services into general health care and emphasizes the development of community-based mental health teams.

The Mental Health Burden Affecting Europe's Children (UNICEF) — 2021

Summary: This article summarizes actions European institutions and governments need to take to address the suicide rate among European youth which is the second leading cause of death among youth in Europe.

Statements

Remarks by Member States at the Event on Mental Health of Children and Young People: How Can We Do Better?   2024

Summary: At a United Nations event on the mental health of children and young people in April 2024, the following Member States made statements on this issue: Qatar, Canada, Mexico, Indonesia, Kuwait, South Africa, Grenada, Poland, Ukraine, Bahrain, Japan, and Singapore. Even if your country did not make a statement at this event, these speeches can give you a good idea of what real diplomats say when speaking about mental health and youth.

Statements submitted by Member States and other participants at the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly   2024

Summary: During the 77th Session of the World Health Assembly, Member States discussed mental health under agenda item 11.2 ("Follow-up to the political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases"). If you are representing one of the following countries (Finland, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Portugal, Iran, Lebanon, Netherlands, Egypt, Jordan, Slovakia, UAE, Kenya, Grenada, Tunisia, Estonia, Bahrain, Iraq, Latvia, Oman, UK, Qatar, Pakistan, Germany, New Zealand, France, Sweden), you will find a statement by the European Union speaking on behalf of all countries in the EU and a statement by Lebanon speaking on behalf of the Eastern Mediterranean region in the first column under Committee A, which is titled "Items 11.1, 11.2". Search these statements for references to mental health. In addition, individual statements made by Grenada and the Dominican Republic on this issue are provided below. These are good examples of what real ambassadors say during Committee A meetings and could be useful to helping you write your own statement that you will have a chance to deliver during the General Discussion segment of the simulation.

Statements (cont.)

Agenda Item 11.2: Follow-up to the political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases   2024

Summary: This is Grenada's statement on agenda item 11.2 that contains many comments on mental health. While these comments are general, they can be applied to the mental health of adolescents. Compare this statement with the one delivered at the Event on Mental Health of Children and Young People listed above.

DECLARACIÓN DE LA REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA EN RELACIÓN A LA COBERTURA SANITARIA UNIVERSAL, SEGUIMIENTO A LA DECLARACIÓN SOBRE PREVENCIÓN Y CONTROL DE LAS ENT Y SALUD MENTAL/DECLARATION OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC REGARDING HEALTH COVERAGE UNIVERSAL, FOLLOW-UP TO THE DECLARATION ON PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NCDs AND MENTAL HEALTH   2024

Summary: The country position of the Dominican Republic on agenda item 11.2 ("Follow-up to the political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases") of the World Health Assembly's 77th session. The list of countries aligned with this declaration include: Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, China, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

Children's Mental Health   2023

Summary: A useful fact sheet by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on commonly asked questions in children's mental health.

Statements

35th Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting Ministerial Statement

2023

Summary: A statement issued at the 35th Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting with the theme 'Getting universal health coverage in the Commonwealth on track for 2030' recognizes the importance of integrating primary healthcare, mental healthcare and digital healthcare technologies to achieve UHC.

ASEAN Plus Three Leaders' Statement on Cooperation on Mental Health Amongst Adolescents and Young Children

2021

Summary: Declaration by ASEAN countries on mental health adopted at 24th ASEAN Plus Three Summit. It encourages Asia-Pacific countries to strengthen universal health coverage further by ensuring basic mental health care services and psychosocial support that are affordable and accessible and calls for more collaboration between Asia-Pacific countries, that aim to address mental health issues, particularly amongst adolescents and young persons. Anyone who has been assigned one of the 11 countries that are members of ASEAN can use this declaration to help define your country's position on child and adolescent mental health.

East Asia Summit Leaders' Statement on Mental Health Cooperation

2021

Summary: A statement issued during the 16th East Asia Summit under Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN chairmanship encouraging member states to advance regional and international cooperation on mental health through existing ASEAN-led platforms and mechanisms, aside from implementing the WHO Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan.

Political Groups

Tracking framework for the implementation of the Commission Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health   2024

Summary: Tracking Framework released by the European Commission to provide regular updates on the implementation of actions from the 'Communication on a comprehensive approach on mental health' adopted in June 2023.

Youth Mental Health Toolkit On 5 Emerging Issues in Africa (African Union)   2022

Summary: The goal of this #ICanSurvive toolkit is to address the mental health challenges faced by African youth, stemming from the continent's complex social, political, and economic context. These challenges were identified through extensive engagements, including town hall meetings, community visits, consultations, and surveys, involving over 50 000 young people across Africa and the Diaspora in 2022

Regional Groups

PAHO

[A New Agenda for Mental Health in the Americas: Report of the Pan American Health Organization High-Level Commission on Mental Health and COVID-19](#) **2023**

Summary: This report published by the WHO Pan American Health Organization discusses unmet mental health needs in the Americas, which have negative impacts on human health and far-reaching socioeconomic consequences. This lack has been exacerbated by the recent pandemic, necessitating urgent action and intervention.

[Promotion Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools](#) **2023**

Summary: This Handbook published by PAHO is primarily for educators, to help them learn about mental health issues and better support them in educational environments.

[Policy for Improving Mental Health](#) **2023**

Summary: This document presents a policy to guide and support member states of the WHO Pan American Health Organization to improve mental health as a means towards advancing health and socioeconomic development in the region.

[CD60/9 - Strategy for Improving Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in the Region of the Americas](#) **2023**

Summary: Published by the 60th Directing Council during the 75th Session of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas, CD 60/9 details a strategy for improving mental health and suicide prevention in the pan-American region.

Regional Groups (cont.)

EMRO

Mental Health and Substance Abuse   2024

Summary: Provides an overview of key tools and guidance for the Eastern Mediterranean Region to help you respond to the rising burden of mental health and substance use disorders in the Region, which is largely accounted for by the prevailing emergency situations.

Intercountry Meeting to Scale up Action on   2023
Mental Health in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Summary: Summary of the discussions that took place at the intercountry meeting to scale-up action on mental health in Cairo, 2023. This includes updates in the Eastern Mediterranean regional framework and a review of the progress made by member states thus far.

Integrating Mental Health in Primary Health   2023
Care

Summary: Another publication by the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office that sets the context for integration of mental health services in primary healthcare.

Mental Health in Schools: A Manual   2021

Summary: A manual released by the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office that discusses strategies to provide holistic mental health support and promote psychosocial development in schools.

Regional Groups (cont.)

EURO

A comprehensive approach to mental health   2024

Summary: Provides an overview of what the European Commission is doing to put mental health on par with physical health by introducing 20 flagship initiatives.

Youth Engaged for Mental Health   2023

Summary: Published by the WHO Pan European Mental Health Coalition in response to repeated requests from youth members to be involved in the creation of policies that directly affect them.

WHO European Framework for Action on Mental Health 2021-2025   2022

Summary: Regional Framework for the WHO European Region, designed to support Member States in creating national strategies, plans and social policies on mental health, strengthening political advocacy and encouraging regional cooperation.

Regional Groups (cont.)

SEARO

Community-based mental health services in the WHO South-East Asia Region — 2024

Summary: Published by the WHO South-East Asian Regional Office after the adoption of the Paro Declaration in 2022 and the subsequent WHO SEARO Mental Health Action Plan, this report details the importance of mental healthcare in community-based settings and the progress made thus far.

Transitioning from Long-stay Services to Community Mental Health Networks: Towards Deinstitutionalization in the WHO South-East Asia Region — 2024

Summary: Based on the contents of the Paro Declaration and the WHO SEARO Mental Health Action Plan, this document discussed the possibilities of transitioning from long-stay services to community care, encouraging deinstitutionalization and mitigating the stigma associated with institutional care.

Deinstitutionalization of people with mental health conditions in the WHO South-East Asia Region — 2022

Summary: Psychiatric hospitals have been long-associated with human rights violations and poor treatment. Deinstitutionalization has gained traction in recent years, supported by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This report details the progress made in the WHO South-East Asian Region.

Regional Groups (cont.)

SEARO (cont.)

Mental Health in the South East Asia Region   2022

Summary: Provides links to country profiles on mental health in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Indonesia along with other resources on this topic.

WHO SEA Regional Collaborative Framework for Coordinated Response to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in Emergencies   2021

Summary: A technical document published by the WHO South-East Asian Regional Office that serves as a guiding tool for member states to ensure access to mental health and psychosocial support services during times of emergency.

Prevention of Drug Use in Schools   2021

Summary: An evidence-based guide published by the WHO South-East Asian Regional Office that documents the implementation of drug-use-prevention interventions in schools.

Every Life Matters: Understanding Suicide and its Impact   2021

Summary: An illustrative book published by the WHO South-East Asian Regional Office that highlights myths and facts about suicide, and provides important messages on suicide prevention.

Regional Groups (cont.)

SEARO (cont.)

Voice of the Children: Alcohol in the Eyes of the Young — 2019

Summary: A unique advocacy brief by the WHO South-East Asian Regional Office that details the harmful effects of alcohol on physical health, emotions, families and relationships. It also highlights the association between alcohol and risk-taking behaviors in youth, such as DUI, violence, self-harm and suicide.

Mental Health Status of Adolescents in South East Asia: Evidence for Action — 2017

Summary: Mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety in adolescence may lead to behavioral problems in the future. The failure to recognize and treat such conditions poses a serious public health issue in South East Asia, especially in the context of SDG 3.4 and 3.5. This publication serves as an evidence base to facilitate informed policy and further action by the WHO South-East Asian Regional Office.

WPRO

Regional Framework for the Future of Mental Health in the Western Pacific 2023–2030 — 2023

Summary: Provides a vision of the future of mental health in the region. This Regional Framework was designed to support Member States in creating national strategies, plans and social policies on mental health, strengthening political advocacy and encouraging regional cooperation.

Regional Groups (cont.)

AFRO

Urgent action needed to accelerate mental health progress in African region
2024

Summary: Provides overview of progress made in improving mental health services as well as the challenges that remain to be addressed.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Mental, Neurological and Substance Use Services
2020

Summary: A report published by the WHO African Regional Office on the impact of COVID-19 on mental, neurological and substance use services, concluded from rapid assessment results in the region.

NON-OFFICIAL RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

A Global Flourishing Study Finds That Young Adults, Well, Aren't   2025

Summary: A major new international study has found that young adults today are less happy and less fulfilled than previous generations. Traditionally, happiness across life has followed a U-shaped curve—high in youth, dipping in midlife, and rising again in older age. But this pattern is changing.

Data from the Global Flourishing Study, involving over 200,000 people in 20+ countries, shows that young people aged 18–29 are struggling more than older adults with happiness, mental and physical health, sense of purpose, relationships, and financial stability. The trend was especially stark in the United States.

Experts say young adults today face high levels of stress, loneliness, and pressure, and spend less time in community and social settings than previous generations. They're also more affected by global challenges like climate change and political division. While older adults in many countries still report increased well-being with age, young people are not flourishing, raising concerns about how societies are supporting their mental and emotional health.

Researchers plan to continue tracking this trend through 2027 to better understand the causes and potential solutions.

Progress Report on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Activities within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement   2024

Summary: A follow-up report to the 2019 and 2021 Red Cross Red Crescent movement-wide mental health and psychosocial support surveys.

Position Statement on Promoting Health and Protecting Vulnerable Populations from Social Media and Online Harm   2023

Summary: Position statement released by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the largest professional membership society for psychiatrists worldwide, detailing its views on the protection of vulnerable populations from harmful social media and online engagement.

NON-OFFICIAL RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC

Why are mental health issues rising among young people?   2023

Summary: Youth Talks - an initiative for and by the youth, empowering them to actively promote their voices on a global scale - examines why mental health issues among youth are increasing. In the course of answering this question it also provides answers to: what is mental health. It discusses the growing prevalence of mental health issues among youth, contributing factors, signs and symptoms, the importance of early intervention, and the role of support systems.

Position Statement on Police Interactions with Children and Adolescents in Mental Health Crisis   2022

Summary: Position statement released by the American Psychiatric Association, the largest professional membership society for psychiatrists worldwide, detailing its views on the safety and protection of children and adolescents against undue police force and the effects of such interactions on mental health.

Position Statement on Mental Health Impact of Public Health Emergencies on Young People   2021

Summary: Position statement released by the American Psychiatric Association, the largest professional membership society for psychiatrists worldwide, detailing its views on the impacts of public health emergencies on the mental health of young people.

Position Statement on Immigration, Children, Adolescents, and their Families   2021

Summary: Position statement released by the American Psychiatric Association, the largest professional membership society for psychiatrists worldwide, detailing its views on the negative mental health impacts of immigration and the need for psychosocial support for migrant children.

Position Statement on Sexual Harassment — 2021

Summary: Position statement released by the American Psychiatric Association, the largest professional membership society for psychiatrists worldwide, detailing its views on the various impacts of sexual harassment on mental health.

Compendium Report: Good Practices in the Council of Europe to Promote Voluntary Measures in Mental Health Services — 2021

Summary: Report published by the Council of Europe on practices to promote voluntary measures in mental healthcare and support services in member states.

World Economic Forum Youth Mental Health — 2020

Summary: This publication focuses on developing global strategies to address youth mental health through early intervention, rapid access to care, and engagement of young people in mental health policies

Physical activity and exercise in youth mental health promotion: a scoping review — 2020

Summary: The study provides an overview of the global prevalence of mental disorders among children and adolescents. It reviewed data from various sources and identified a high prevalence of mental disorders among children and adolescents worldwide.

Road to Recovery: Responding to Children's Mental Health in Conflict — 2019

Summary: A briefing paper published by Save the Children International which sets the scale of mental health effects on children living in conflict zones and the role of education in responding to them.

Asia-Pacific

Hidden struggles: the surprising mental health crisis among Japan's youth — 2023

Summary: It details the mental health crisis among youth in Japan due to academci pressure, social norms, bullying and a lack of independence.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Australia: A descriptive analysis between 2015–16 and 2019–20 — 2023

Summary: This study provides an analysis and commentary on child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) in Australia. The results indicated that child and adolescent inpatient admissions had the highest cost per patient day but lower rates of significant improvement and higher 14-day readmission rates than other ages. The authors suggest that these findings could be due to increased complexity in treating young people and call for further research as to the reasons for these treatment shortfalls.

Adolescent mental health in China requires more attention — 2020

Summary: This article published by Lancet identifies the need for greater attention to be given to Adolescent mental health in China.

Asia-Pacific (cont.)

Five Years of Fear and Loss: The Devastating Impact of War on the Mental Health of Yemen's Children 2020

Summary: Report published by Save the Children International on the impact of Yemen's civil war on the mental health of children in the region.

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Africa

Mental health problems in Somalia after decades of humanitarian crises: a qualitative exploration of perceptions and experiences 2024

Summary: This paper provides a qualitative exploration of perceptions and experiences of mental health problems in Somalia after decades of humanitarian crises in order to develop an evidence-based, effective, equitable, and humane programme for mental health in the country. While the study is focused generally on the Somali population, the majority of participants (68.1%) were younger than 35 years. The results highlight how armed conflict is taking a toll on the mental health of Somali people, especially on the children and the young people.

Africa (cont.)

Prioritizing children's mental health amidst Sudan's humanitarian crisis: policy recommendations for immediate action

2023

Summary: This paper contains policy recommendations for immediate action to prioritize children's mental health amidst Sudan's humanitarian crisis. Crucial strategies include enhancing healthcare accessibility for children and their caregivers, promoting education, and improving household living conditions. The paper also recommends partnerships with local non-governmental and humanitarian organizations to implement public health programs effectively.

Adolescent mental health research in Tanzania: a study protocol for a priority setting exercise and the development of an interinstitutional capacity strengthening programme

2021

Summary: The study aims are twofold: first, to identify gaps and priorities in adolescent mental health research in Tanzania and second, to identify gaps in capacity needed to deliver this research agenda, which will inform the development of a national research capacity programme to address these gaps. This research highlights the critical role that research plays in the development of adolescent mental health policies.

Mental health and psychosocial well-being among adolescents in Tanzania

2021

Summary: A report focused on the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing among adolescents in Tanzania. This report is focused on identifying the key drivers of mental ill-health and psychosocial well-being among two subgroups of adolescents

Americas

Kids' mental health is in crisis. Here's what psychologists are doing to help

2023

Summary: In addressing the complex and growing mental health needs of the youth population, this report focuses on the current strategies being adopted to address the youth mental health crisis.

Data and Statistics on Children's Mental Health

2023

Summary: This web page published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides data and statistics on children's mental health in the United States.

Mental Health Disparities: Mexico's Struggle to Bridge the Gap

2023

Summary: This webpage summarizes the results of a survey conducted for World Mental Health Day that uncovered a notable discrepancy in mental health awareness and accessibility in Mexico.

Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools: An Action Guide for School and District Leaders

2023

Summary: An action guide designed for school and district authorities on the best methods to promote mental health and well-being in schools, published by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Americas (cont.)

Youth and Young Adult Peer Support Expanding Community-Driven Mental Health Resources   2022

Summary: With increasing stressors among youths, this plan was created to address the current youth mental health crisis. It covers the challenges and opportunities in youth and young adult mental health, the importance of peer support and lived experience leadership, a comprehensive approach to youth peer support, and key considerations to make a difference in supporting mental health services.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report: 2011-2021   2021

Summary: This report published by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides the most recent surveillance data and 10-year trends on risk behaviors and experiences related to adolescent health and well being among high school students in the United States.

AAP-AACAP-CHA Declaration of a National Emergency in Child and Adolescent Mental Health   2021

Summary: Joint declaration endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Children's Hospital Association on the soaring raated of mental health challenges in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Europe

A Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health: Progress So Far

2024

Summary: A fact sheet about the 20 new flagship initiatives mentioned in the 'Comprehensive approach to mental health' adopted by the European Commission in June 2023.

Russian adolescent mental health in 2002, 2015 and during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021

2022

Summary: This study examined changes in adolescent mental health and substance use in Russia between 2002, 2015 and during the pandemic in 2021.

Eastern Mediterranean

Trapped: The Impact of 15 Years of Blockade on the Mental Health of Gaza's Children

2022

Summary: Report published by Save the Children International on the impact of life-threatening situations and 15 years of blockade in Gaza on the mental health of children in the region.