



CoR IRGHW meeting: “Towards a European Strategy on mental health”
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Towards better mental health across Europe: MHE advocacy efforts & key EU policy developments

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About Mental Health Europe

Largest independent European network organisation representing people with mental health problems, their supporters, service providers, care professionals, human rights experts.

73 members organisation, 30 European countries.

Our mission

Promote positive mental health, prevent mental health problems, improve mental health care.

Our vision

A Europe where everyone's mental health and wellbeing flourish across their life.



Mental health and its determinants

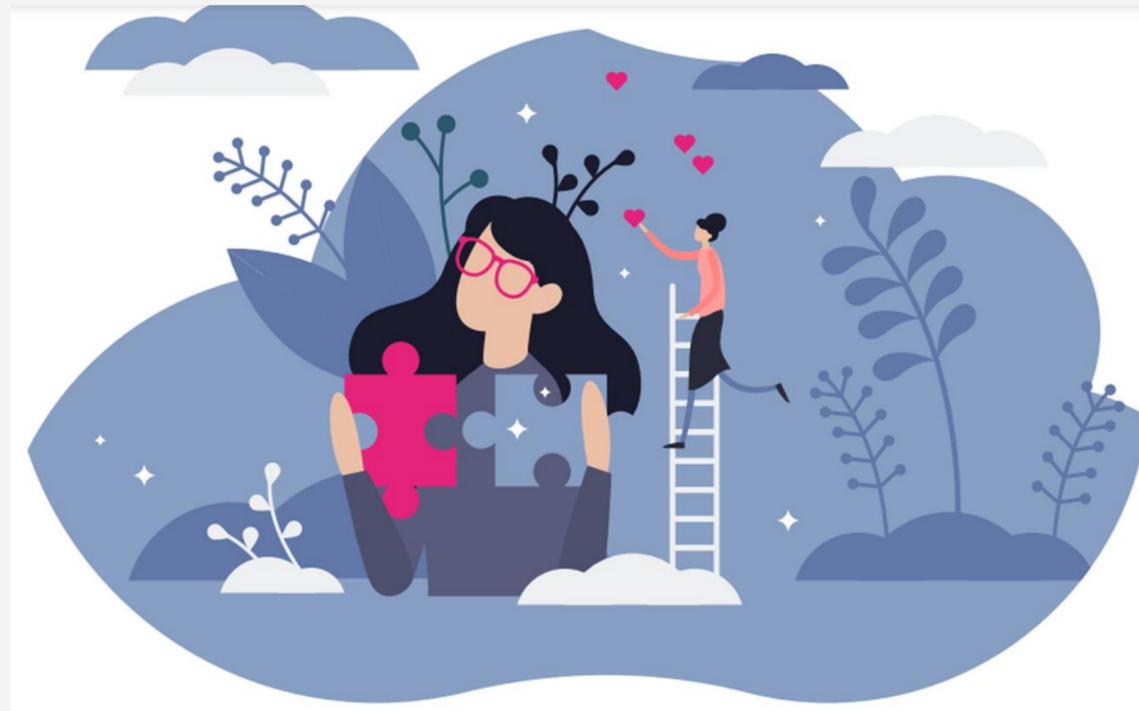
Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community.

Mental health is more than the absence of mental health problems. It exists on a complex continuum.

Mental health is shaped by life events and socio-economic and environmental determinants.

Risk factors

Poverty, unemployment, exposure to violence and war, inequality, environmental deprivation



Protective factors

Positive social interactions, quality education, decent work, safe neighbourhoods and community cohesion

Risks occurring during developmentally sensitive periods are particularly detrimental.

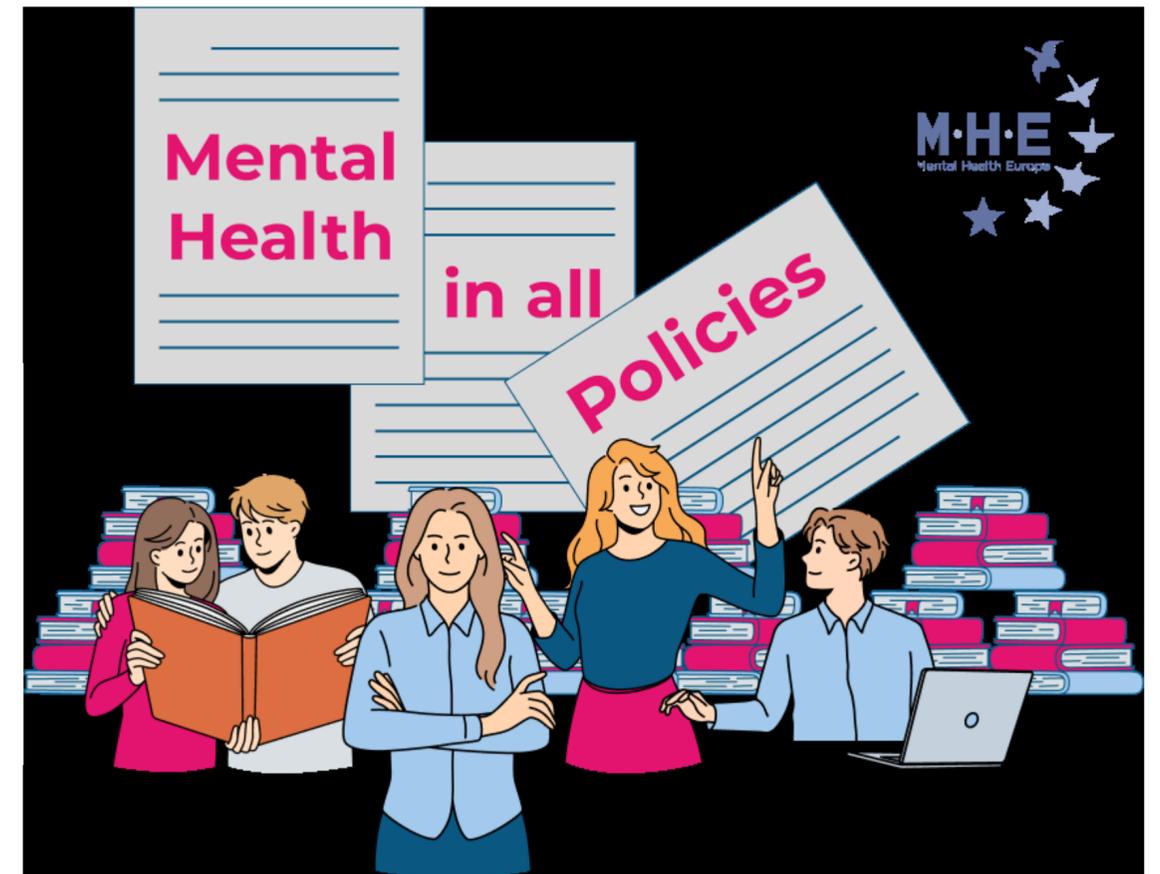
About half of the mental health problems affecting individuals in adulthood have their onset during adolescence

Mental Health in All Policies

A comprehensive understanding of mental health and its determinants encourages and supports EU countries to adopt a mental health-in-all-policies approach.

It entails a **shift in the focus: from diagnosis and treatment to prevention.**

Reshaping the determinants of mental health often requires action beyond the health sector and so promotion and prevention programmes should involve the education, labour, justice, transport, environment, housing, and welfare sectors.



Why mental health in all policies?

Mental health is a basic human right.

Promoting good mental health also makes economic sense.

“The total (direct and indirect) costs of mental ill-health is over EUR 600 billion – or more than 4% of GDP – across the 28 EU countries”. (OECD)

Higher levels of mental wellbeing are associated with lower productivity loss or costs caused by sick leave. Improvements in mental wellbeing may generate a positive return on investment in the very short term.*

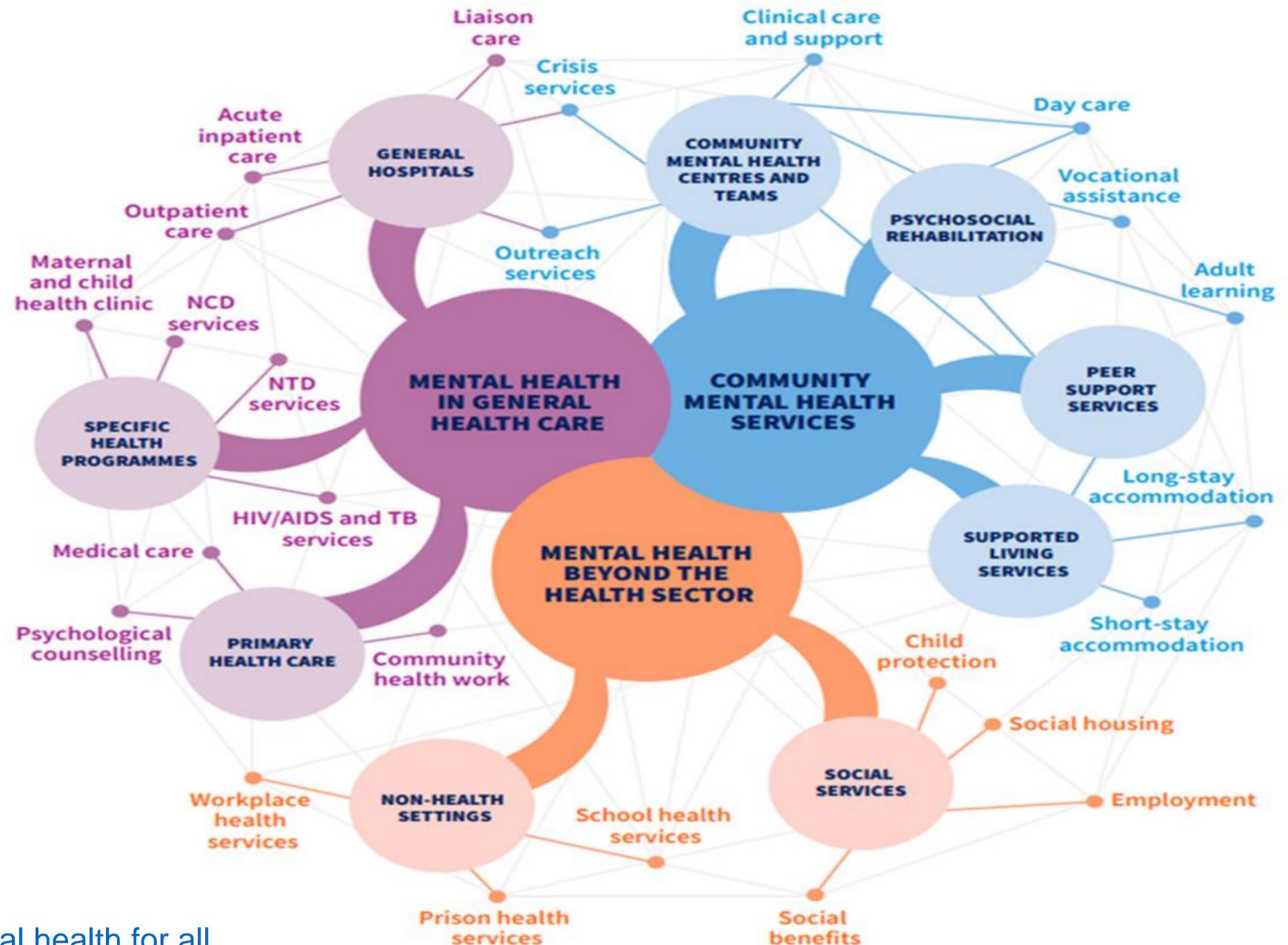
Win-win situation:

mental health promotion and prevention bring benefits also in fields other than health.

Mental Health Care services

- Community-based
- Integrated for a holistic support
- Respectful of human rights (no coercion, no forced treatment)
- Co-created with people with lived experience

Model network of community-based mental health services



The time to act is now!

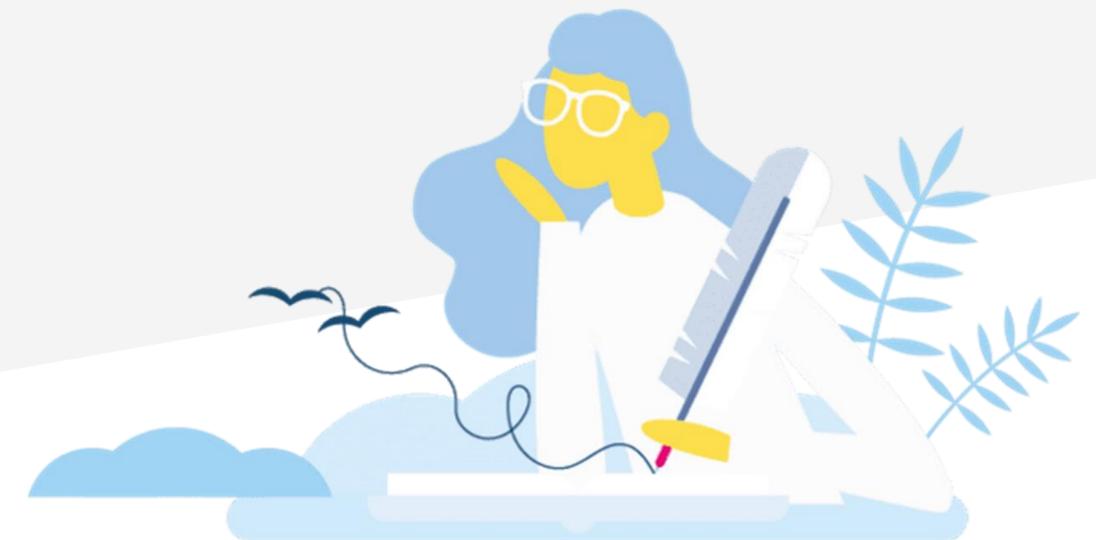
Covid-19 pandemic

- Importance to act on protective factors, in order to build resilient societies.
- Vulnerable groups need tailored actions.
- Mismatch offer of mental health services and needs → innovative solutions needed

The incidence of mental health problems among people aged between 15 and 24 has doubled in most European countries during the COVID-19 pandemic. Young people have been 30% to 80% more likely to experience depression, anxiety and loneliness than adults. (OECD, 2021)

War in Ukraine

- Importance to strengthen the capacity of education, social protection and other workforces to address the mental health impacts of the wider crisis.



Policy developments at EU level

EC President announcement of a new Initiative on mental health

“We should take better care of each other. And for many who feel anxious and lost, appropriate, accessible and affordable support can make all the difference.”

Ursula von der Leyen



“We need to take urgent, ambitious and coordinated steps to protect the mental health of our citizens, especially for the most vulnerable amongst us. For children, for the elderly, for young people, for those who are suffering in silence, who do not have a voice.”

Stella Kyriakides
European Commissioner for Health



Healthier Together: Non-Communicable Diseases Initiative



MHE call for an intersectional EU mental health strategy

Psychosocial model of understanding mental health

A human rights-based approach to mental health

Accessible, high-quality, recovery-oriented mental health services in the communities

Co-creation with experts by experience

Breaking the stigma



A comprehensive, intersectional strategy, with budget, benchmarks, indicators, monitoring.

The Strategy should complement actions at national, regional and local level.

We all have a role to play!

Mental health is not an individual issue. It is societal.

It requires actions at all levels and in all policies.





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