
Workshop: Youth participation in youth mental health and well- being

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Mental Health and Well-being

WHO Regional Office for

Europe



Presentation overview

1

Youth mental health and well-being in the WHO Europe:
status, challenges

2

Engaging young people to drive solutions

Question: What are we talking about when we talk about youth mental health?

Mental health has intrinsic value

- Have positive relationships
- Contribute to communities
- Get a sense of belonging
- Empathize with others

- Deal with stress
- Adapt to change
- Adopt new ideas
- Make complex choices
- Understand and manage emotions

CONNECT



FUNCTION



- Apply cognitive skills
- Gain an education
- Earn a living
- Make healthy choices
- Learn new skills

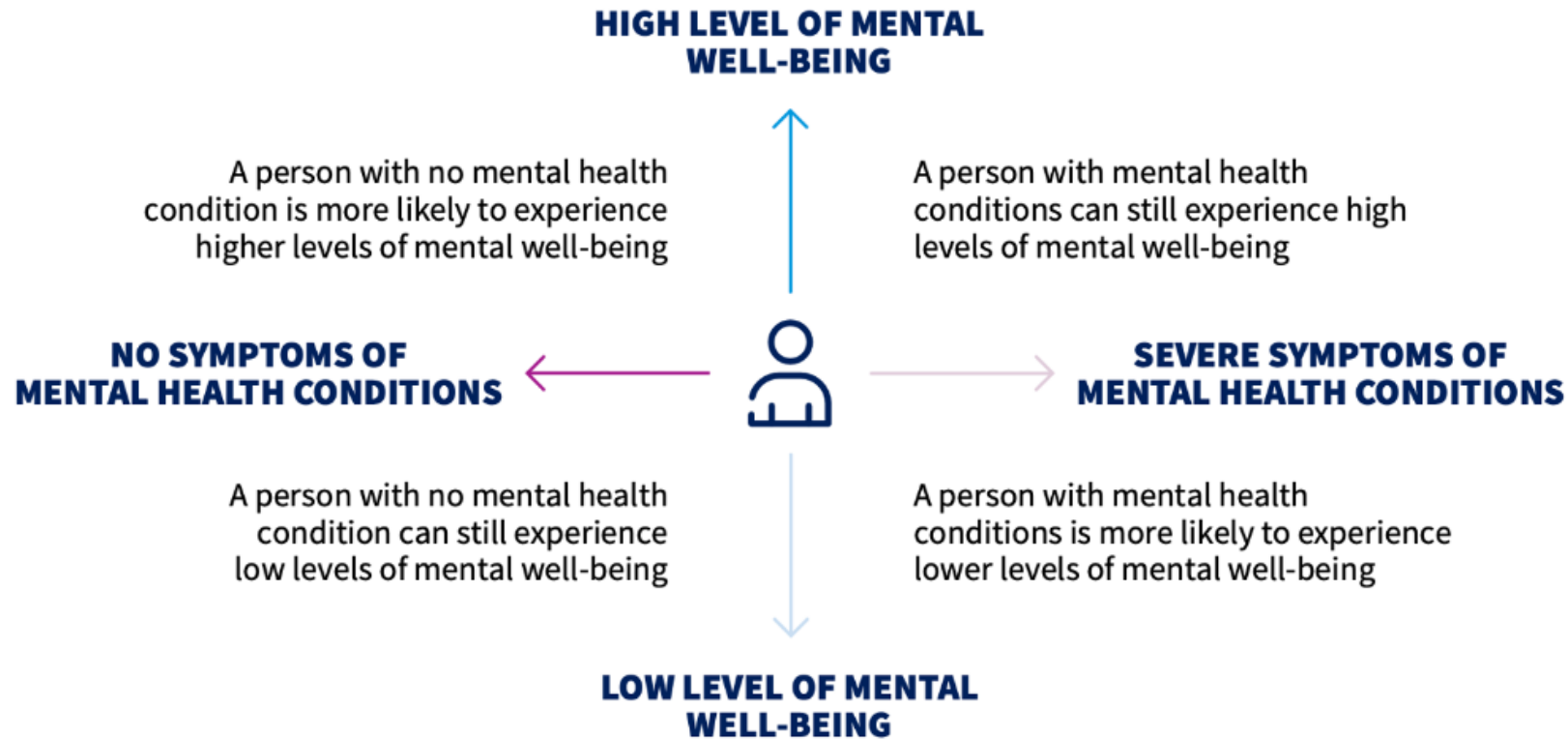
COPE



THRIVE



- Realize our own abilities
- Feel good
- Find purpose in live
- Think about our well-being and that of others



Source: Tudor, 1996 (17).

Thriving

Surviving

Struggling

Not coping

Shifting focus for mental health sector over time

Management of disease
MH in Primary Care
Deinstitutionalization
Upholding human rights
Addressing mental health stigma



Mental health promotion, primary prevention
Addressing risk factors, determinants
Concept of well-being
Mental health as 'everyone's business'
Focus on **youth mental health and well-being**

Why prioritize youth mental health?

The burden of poor mental health is high

1 in 8 young people aged 0-19 yrs in Europe live with a mental health condition
Suicide is the **leading cause of death** amongst 15 – 29-year-olds



The consequences of poor mental health are great

Untreated mental health difficulties in young people can impact social, educational and occupational development, impacting outcomes across the life course



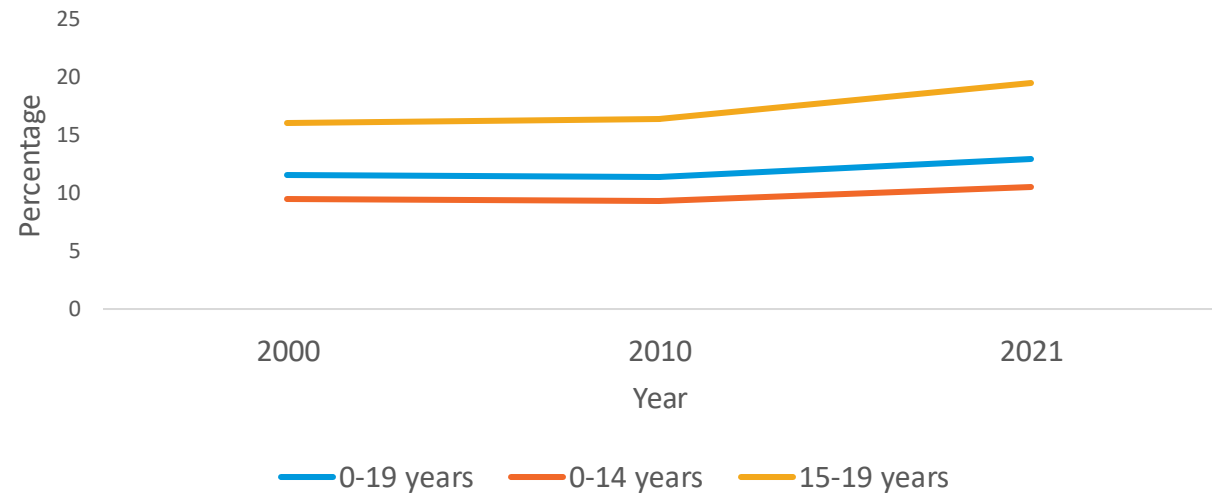
Investment in youth mental health pays off

It improves well-being and quality of life and has long-term economic benefits, reduced costs to public services and increased potential for future earnings.
Every dollar invested in adolescent mental health yields an estimated **US\$24 return** over 80 years.



Prevalence of mental health conditions is increasing

Percentage of children and adolescents living with mental health conditions in the Region in the year 2000, 2010 and 2021 by age group



- Prevalence of mental disorders has increased between 2010 and 2021 across all age groups
 - Over 3% increase for 15–19-year-olds
- Anxiety disorders most common, followed by ADHD, conduct disorders and depressive disorders
- Prevalence of substance use disorders has remained stable

Mental well-being is in decline across multiple indicators

Life satisfaction, self-rated health, and social support declined since 2018, while health complaints increased.

Over 40% of adolescents feel pressure from schoolwork.

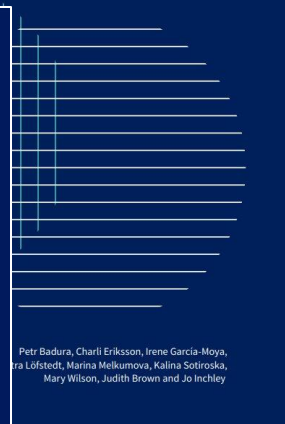
16% of adolescents report being cyberbullied at least once or twice in the past 2 months.

1 in 5 adolescents report a lack of support from either family or friends.

1 in 4 girls at age 15 report feeling lonely.



European Region

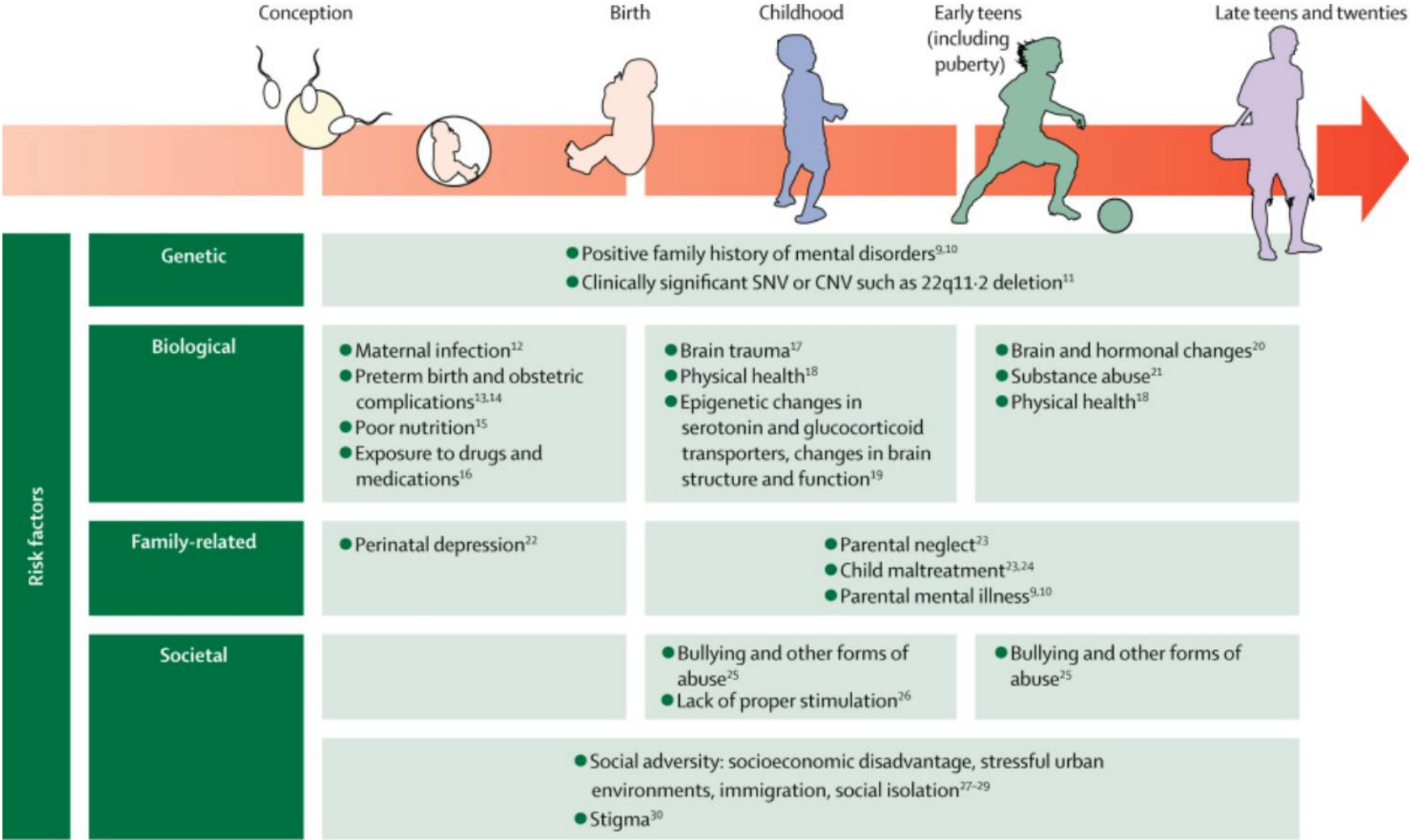


Demand and unmet need is high

- Demand for specialist services has risen exponentially in many countries since COVID-19
- Wait times for mental health services can be > 1 year for specialist assessment and treatment
- One in two young people (15–24-year-olds) report unmet mental healthcare needs



Traditional and emerging determinants



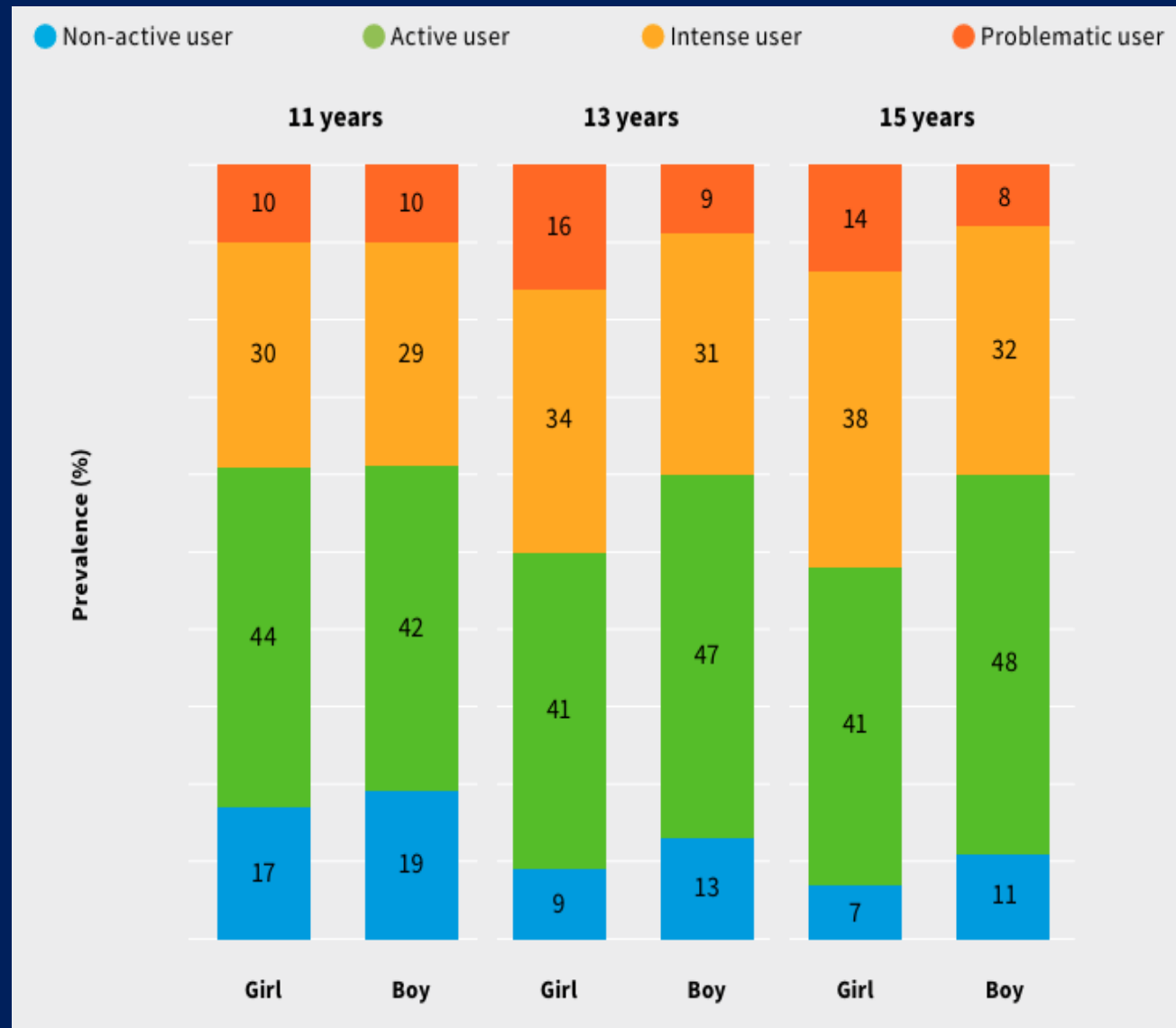
Impact of digital determinants

- 1 in 10 adolescents show signs of problematic social media use
- 36% report constant contact with friends online
- 22% report gaming at least 4 hrs p/day
- **Social media and digital technology use associated with range of risks and harms** - depression, suicidality, lowered well-being, poor sleep, reduced physical activity



World Health Organization

European Region



Social media use: Four categories by age and gender, HBSC average

How can young people be part of the solution?



Youth participation and engagement =
**“the process of engaging young people
in the institutions, issues and decisions
that affect their lives”**

Youth engagement and participation in mental health

Various forms:

- Advocacy, advisory, activism, decision-making
- Civic engagement activities in research or policy-making settings

Various levels of engagement:

- Passive consultation
- Collaborative
- Active, youth-led, co-creation

For different outcomes:

- Improving quality, acceptability, appropriateness of programmes and policies
- Increasing ownership and buy-in of youth stakeholders
- To empower and build capacity of youth participants, uphold rights



A critical component of the pan-European Mental Health Coalition

- Purpose to act as a **support mechanism for implementation of the WHO European Framework for Action on Mental Health**
- Structure for **exchange between diverse members** with shared interest in driving change
- Serves as platform for **peer learning and networking**
- **Allows coordination of advocacy efforts** amongst Coalition members



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF YOUTH

day 1



Generating problem statements





Youth Engaged for Mental Health



Youth engaged for **mental health**

A framework for youth participation
under the WHO Pan-European
Mental Health Coalition



VIDEO

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/d7pstpm3ev9mlg2us4ezh/Youth-participation-documentary_full.mp4?rlkey=tioynxtp7hvi5yl3lacrz7ud&dl=0

Our vision is for **active, meaningful engagement** of a **broad and diverse range** of young people in all activities;

Where the process of co-creation leads to **better informed** and **more impactful responses** to youth mental health that consider the **reality and experience** of young people;

To improve the **environments and systems** young people navigate, and ultimately **improve young people's mental health and wellbeing** across the European Region.



Diverse, Inclusive, and Accessible

We will work in ways which enable the diversity of needs, experiences, and preferences of young people across Europe to inform the work of the Coalition, acknowledging that significant and inequitable barriers to engagement exist for many young individuals and particular groups.



We will do this by:

- providing flexible ways for young people to be involved, accounting for differences in skillsets, abilities, resources, and interests;
- facilitating multiple forms of participation at different levels of intensity – including for example verbal, written, art, music, virtual, in-person or anonymous methods;
- providing easy to read, and accessible documents free of jargon and overly technical language;
- providing fair and transparent remuneration for young people's time and expenses for travel, accommodation, and food costs;
- implementing less formal, inclusive dress codes for in-person activities to reduce access barriers; and

Transparent

Work with young people will be open, honest, and realistic, providing clear information regarding purpose, expectations, and outcomes of their involvement so they can make informed decisions about their potential support needs.

We will do this by:

- providing clarity through written and verbal communication in accessible language – of roles, deliverables, and responsibility expectations related to any activities being undertaken;
- providing clarity regarding the scope and purpose of activities and information/inputs will be used, and the ways that contributions will be acknowledged;
- providing opportunities (appropriate to the context) for feedback during and after activities, and providing updates to those involved on the work progress;
- recognizing the contributions of those involved in participation and
- creating transparent, fair processes for communicating about youth participation both internal and external to WHO.

Engaging

Participation will be responsive to individuals' strengths, needs and interests in order to build and sustain young people's motivation to participate. Activities will provide young people with a positive experience and encourage ongoing involvement.

We will do this by:

- leveraging social media and other communication platforms to maintain regular and dynamic communications with young people;
- using interactive formats and approaches for meetings, workshops, or other group activities, including art-based and creative approaches for participation;
- providing documents, resources, and materials in easy-to-read formats which avoid jargon; and
- being flexible, regularly reviewing progress and adapting to the needs of young people as required.

“ A feeling of impact is primarily felt through knowing your work is acknowledged, transformed, built upon, or addressed with feedback or approval. ” – Dion, young Coalition member



Actions for implementation

- ❑ What role can young people play?
- ❑ What role can Coalition members play?
- ❑ What role can WHO play?

What role can young people play?

- Actively contribute to the creation of participation spaces, processes, and outputs.
- Help to expand Coalition membership by communicating about the Coalition in their networks and online spaces.
- Provide peer support to other young Coalition members.
- Share their experiences and ideas for services and policies in mental health.
- Share feedback and inputs from their own communities and spaces where appropriate.
- Give feedback on how youth participation activities are experienced and how they could be improved.
- Co-develop resources/research resources ideas.
- Challenge professionals.

What role can Coalition members play?

- Listen to what young people have to say.
- Be respectful of young people and the experience they bring.
- Be curious – ask young people what they think.
- Include and invite young people into discussions, try to engage those who are quiet by asking if they want to share their opinion.
- Advocate for youth engagement and participation in their own organisations and networks.

What role can WHO play?

- Be accountable for implementing and updating the Framework as required.
- Create mechanisms for monitoring implementation, gathering feedback on youth participation processes and activities, and evaluating outcomes.
- Advocate internally for greater investment in meaningful youth participation across all programme areas.
- Assess and take steps to reduce any potential harms for those who participate.
- Identify and address the organisational barriers that exist to implementing youth participation activities.

Good youth participation encourages the growth of young people, as opposed to keeping them stagnant for systemic reasons, and not for reasons relating to their own motivation, competencies or preparedness.” – Dion, Coalition member

Putting young people at the centre of designing a method of working with young people is key to developing an approach that works. Often young people feel unheard and tokenistic, this is a way to reduce that feeling and give them power to make decisions that affect their peers for their benefit with them in mind.” – Anna, young Coalition member

Our co-creators



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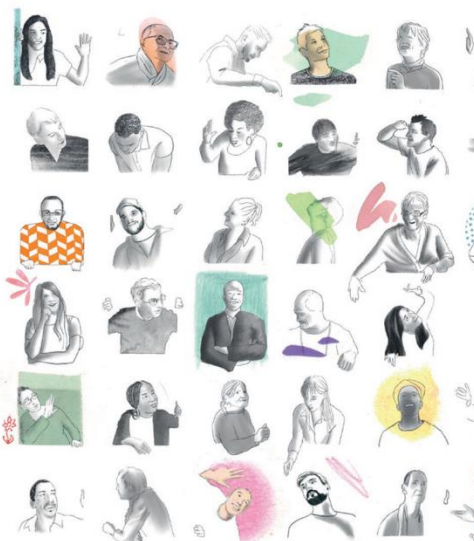
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“ *This (framework) is needed because we need a different way of doing things. A way where young people feel welcomed to effectively contribute to the work they are co-creating. In order for things to work there needs to be a strategy with steps on how to engage young people. It also has to be inclusive.*” – Inês, young Coalition member

Sustained impact



Mosaic toolkit to end stigma and discrimination in mental health



Addressing the digital determinants of youth mental health and well-being

POLICY BRIEF



Quality standards for child and youth mental health services

For use in specialized community or outpatient care across the WHO European Region



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Development of methods for WHO quality standards for child and youth mental health services to improve quality of care and patient safety in the WHO European region

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Thank you



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