

Transforming mental health for the future

Fact sheet: October 2022

Key facts

Good mental health is integral to everyone's well-being. It is essential to unlocking the full expression of human potential, enabling individuals and societies to thrive and flourish.

The Western Pacific Region is facing a **looming mental health crisis** resulting from various social factors. The fallout from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic will drive this crisis, yet all people need to be supported.

Over 215 million people in the Western Pacific suffer from a mental health condition. Yet, current approaches to mental health are leaving too many individuals, families and communities without essential services and support.

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted mental health and well-being, worsening existing challenges while exposing many people to prolonged stress and adversity. The number of people suffering from common mental disorders, such as anxiety and depression, has **increased by more than 25%** since the first year of the pandemic. It has been especially difficult for young people and women.

Limited human resources and chronic underfunding are common obstacles to the integration of mental health into primary health care. Yet, when mental health is integrated into broader health and social policies and services, individuals, communities and societies thrive. As countries work to transform mental health care and embed mental health into daily life, communities must also be placed at the centre.

Since the endorsement of the *Regional Agenda for Implementing the Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2020 in the Western Pacific*, some progress has been achieved. Today, **29 countries and areas have mental health laws and policies in place**. But more work needs to be done to strengthen the mental health workforce and increase advocacy for mental health services and support in order to reduce the growing burden of poor mental health.

Mental health is everyone's business. Promoting mental health beyond the health sector and delivering the full range of health and social services and support is essential for the future of mental health.

WHO response

The new *Regional Framework for the Future of Mental Health in the Western Pacific* aims to promote the highest level of **mental health for all people in the Region**. It calls on Member States, partners and stakeholders to:

- **Refocus** the mental health agenda to include well-being and reaching the unreached through leadership that champions mental health for all.
- **Transform** mental health support and care into a community-based ecosystem of health and social services and innovations, enabled by a well-trained mental health workforce, delivering the full range of necessary interventions, and underpinned by a responsive information system.
- **Embed** mental health into the settings and journeys of daily life by placing the well-being of communities at the centre and engaging partners within and beyond the health sector to help individuals, families and societies thrive and flourish.

Guided by this new framework, WHO is committed to advancing the mental health agenda in the Region and working collaboratively with a network of partners, including mental health experts, collaborating centres and other stakeholders, to support Member States in achieving this bold new vision for the future.



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