

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)

10 October 2021

English only

Statement by the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ) on World Mental Health Day 2021.

On this World Mental Health Day, the Advisory Council on Youth welcomes the campaign “Mental health care for all: Let’s make it a reality” led by the World Health Organization and underlines the need for accessibility of mental health services.

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to their community¹. Mental health is multidimensional and goes far beyond the absence of mental disorders. In line with the understanding of mental health's effects on well-being, we should treat mental health as a regular and natural part of health services. Failing to nurture mental health and to provide accessible and quality treatment where needed can have detrimental consequences for the lives of individuals and communities.

In the past one and a half years, the COVID-19 pandemic caused an increase in anxiety and depression levels among young people worldwide as a result of social isolation and stress related to economic uncertainty². The situation has been particularly detrimental to those young people with pre-existing mental health conditions, many of whom already have difficulty in accessing adequate health care services. Because of increased pandemic-related pressure on health care providers, these young people are at even greater risk of being unable to get the assistance needed.

At the same time, due to overburdened health systems as a consequence of the pandemic, a WHO survey conducted in mid-2020 clearly showed that services for treatment of mental, neurological and substance-use disorders had been significantly disrupted during the pandemic³. However, we should note that the availability and accessibility of mental health services was scarce before the pandemic too.

In this light, the Advisory Council on Youth supports global efforts to scale up the quality and accessibility of mental health services at all levels⁴.

As states parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – which clearly recognises the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (Art. 12) – **46 of 47 member states of the Council of Europe have committed to the well-being of young people and must intensify their work to ensure that mental health services are available, accessible, acceptable and of good quality.** Along these lines, member states must commit to normalising the recourse to mental health support both proactively and reactively.

Don't know where to start? Want to know more? Here is where to look:

[Mental Health Europe](#)

[Euro Youth Mental Health](#)

[Global coalition on youth mental health](#)

[Feantsa](#) (mental health in the context of homelessness)

[Youngminds](#)

Find a helpline in your country: <https://www.mhe-sme.org/library/youth-helplines/>

Global helpline for children & resource material for adults who want to help:

<https://www.childhelplineinternational.org>

The opinions expressed in this statement are those of the Advisory Council on Youth and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Council of Europe or its member states.