

# OECD Mental Health Performance Framework



**Mental health:** *a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.*

## OECD Mental Health Performance Framework

Good mental health is a fundamental part of good health, and a pre-requisite for people to lead productive, fulfilled lives. Despite this, provision for mental health remains inadequate, with many people unable to get the treatment and support they need. The good news is that mental health is a growing national and international priority. More and more citizens, governments, leaders, academics and celebrities are speaking up about mental health, how important it is to protect and promote good mental health, and prevent and treat mental ill-health.

In 2017, OECD Health Ministers emphasised that interventions to prevent, treat, and manage mental health are woefully insufficient. Ministers highlighted that there were gaps in policies for mental health, as well as failures to apply policies that are well-established as effective. Ministers underscored the need to identify the relative strengths and weaknesses in mental health systems and services across countries, and to look for examples of policies and practices that can improve mental health, as well as areas where further research is needed. To address these gaps in knowledge and understanding, OECD Health Ministers asked the OECD to benchmark mental health performance.

In 2018, the OECD convened more than 40 mental health experts from across OECD countries, constituting a diverse group of stakeholders with a wide range of experiences and perspectives. These policy makers, experts-by-experience, thought leaders, academics, business and union representatives, clinicians and civil society advocates came together to answer the question "when it comes to mental health, what matters?" Through a day of animated discussion, these experts determined six key principles of mental health performance. They agreed that a high performing mental health sector:

1. Focuses on the individual who is experiencing mental ill-health;
2. Has accessible, high-quality mental health services;
3. Takes an integrated, multi-sectoral approach to mental health;
4. Prevents mental illness and promotes mental wellbeing;
5. Has strong leadership and good governance;
6. Is future-focused and innovative.

The experts also defined a number of sub-principles, which set out in more detail what constitutes good performance in each of these areas. Together, the six principles and the sub-principles make up the OECD Mental Health Performance Framework.

### Did you know?

The total costs of mental ill-health are estimated at 3.5 – 4% of GDP.



# Key principles of mental health performance

## Principles

A high-performing mental health system:

1. Focuses on the individual who is experiencing mental ill-health

Individual-centred care should:

- Ensure the individual feels they have ownership of their own care;
- Be respectful and inclusive of the individual, carer (where relevant), and family;
- Ensure care and treatment is tailored to individual needs and preferences;
- Be culturally, age and gender appropriate;
- Empower the individual to realise his or her own potential and contribute to society.

2. Has accessible, high-quality mental health services

Accessible and available high-quality services should:

- Be evidence-based;
- Be developed close to the community;
- Be provided in a timely manner;
- Account for and respect the unique needs of vulnerable groups;
- Ensure continuity of care;
- Deliver improvement of individual's condition;
- Be safe.

3. Takes an integrated, multi-sectoral approach to mental health

An integrated, multi-sectoral approach should:

- Pursue a 'mental health in all policies' approach;
- Ensure physical health needs are met;
- Involve social protection systems that promote recovery and encourage return to work or education;
- Enable front line actors to connect individuals to appropriate services.

*For far too long, our attitude towards people with poor mental health has been at best, to ignore their problems. At worst, we stigmatise their suffering. Poor mental health is not a sign of weakness... We need to initiate a 'new order of things'... we have failed people with poor mental health for too long. They deserve better, and we cannot afford the old status quo.*

Angel Gurría, OECD Secretary-General

## Sub-Principles



## Did you know?

More than one in six people in European countries are living with a mental health problem.

Half of us will experience mental illness in our lifetime.

### 4. Prevents mental illness and promotes mental wellbeing

Good prevention and promotion policies should:

- Reduce the rate of suicide;
- Ensure mental health literacy;
- Make schools mental health-friendly environments that build resilience;
- Ensure that workplaces foster good mental health;
- Enable front line actors to recognise and respond to mental distress;
- Make it easy for individuals to seek help.

### 5. Has strong leadership and good governance

Good leadership and governance for mental health should:

- Make mental health a high-level national priority;
- Reduce stigma around mental illness;
- Invest in delivering a high-performing mental health system;
- Prioritise efficient and effective distribution of resources;
- Promote equity geographically, between population groups, and between mental disorders.


### 6. Is future-focused and innovative

A future-focused and innovative approach should:

- Ensure all services are based on best available evidence;
- Invest in mental health research;
- Promote innovative solutions to mental health challenges;
- Build mental health workforce capacity for future generations;
- Deliver care and services in the most effective and efficient way;
- Build strong information systems for mental health.

## How will the OECD Mental Health Performance Framework be used?

The OECD Mental Health Performance Framework will be a tool for understanding mental health performance, and will form the basis for benchmarking based on comparable international mental health measures, across OECD countries:

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1. Development of an OECD Mental Health Performance Framework
  2. Collection of indicators to measure performance in each domain of the OECD Framework
  3. Systematic mapping of policies using the OECD Framework

The Framework will form the backbone of the OECD Mental Health Performance Benchmark which will be published, along with a compendium of good policies that can improve performance, in mid-2020. The Framework can also guide other national and international stakeholders in their thinking about mental health performance, for example when designing new policies or strategies, assessing performance, undertaking research, or designing data collections. Designed by experts from more than 20 countries, the Framework is pertinent for all OECD countries, and beyond.

## Find out more

[Health at a Glance Europe 2018: Promoting Mental Health in Europe. Why and How?](#)

Mental health problems affect more than one in six people across the EU. Greater efforts to promote mental health and prevent mental illness are needed to improve the lives of millions of Europeans and contribute to stronger economic and employment conditions.

[Children & Young People's Mental Health in The Digital Age - Shaping The Future](#)

Being online and using social media have become an integral part of 21st century lives, but the omnipresence of digital technology has fuelled concerns about the impact on children and young peoples' mental health. This policy brief looks at these concerns, and provides recommendations for managing the impact of the rapid take-up of digital technologies and social media.

[OECD Patient-Reported Indicators Survey \(PaRIS\) Initiative](#)

Health systems know very little about whether the health care delivered improves people's well-being and their ability to play an active role in society. To address this gap, the Patient-Reported Indicators Survey (PaRIS) Initiative aims to develop international benchmarks of health system performance as reported by patients themselves, and includes a focus on collecting the experiences and outcomes of users of mental health care services.

[OECD Recommendation of the Council on Integrated Mental Health, Skills and Work Policy](#)

The OECD has developed a set of policy guidelines for an integrated approach to address the impact of mental health problems on health, education, employment and social outcomes, which reflects the fact that tackling mental ill-health of the working-age population is a key issue for labour market and social policies in OECD countries, as well as for health systems.

[Making Mental Health Count: The Social and Economic Costs of Neglecting Mental Health Care](#)

Despite the enormous burden that mental ill-health imposes on individuals, their families, society, health systems and the economy, mental health care remains a neglected area of health policy in too many countries. This report argues that there is still a long way to go to make mental health care that achieves good outcomes for people with severe mental illness a reality.

Mental Health at the OECD  
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