

World Health Organization (WHO)

Background Guide Topic:

Promoting Mental Well-Being in a Post-Corona World



Director's Note

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Japan Metropolitan Model United Nations conference 2022! My name is Miho Ando and I will be serving as the director of the World Health Organization council. It is an honour to chair this year's Beginner I committee, and I sincerely hope that your time at the conference will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

As a student at Senzoku Gakuen, my experience in Model United Nation began five years ago. Back then, I lacked the skills and knowledge required to fully participate in and thus enjoy the discussions held at the conference. It is for this rudimentary grasp of MUN which I possessed as an amateur that my first impression of MUN turned out to be far from enjoyable. However, my negative perception of MUN underwent a major shift at an in-school conference in my second year as a junior. At the conference, I was fortunate enough to receive support from a senior student who encouraged me to make a bold speech without overly worrying about the eyes of the other delegates -- an act that I had never dared to take as a rather passive member of the MUN club up to this point. Having given a determined speech and receiving positive attention from other countries, I came to realize the thrill of MUN one can gain by simply being confident. In this way I was introduced to the fun world of MUN.

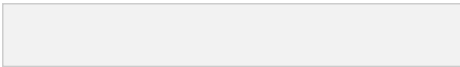
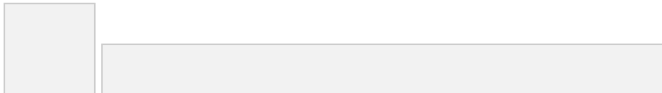
Participating in large MUN conferences can at times be daunting with a group of experienced delegates who attempt to dominate the discussions. Whilst these people may be the most vocal ones, I can assure you from my experience that they are not necessarily the most wise ones. It is not about speaking the most but indeed about speaking with confidence, even if it is only once. Making mistakes is absolutely fine too; it is the Chair's duty to support delegates of all levels, not to tell them off!

My final advice to you all is simple: do your research and speak with confidence. In the end, it is all about the basics.

All three chairs of this committee look forward to a conference jam-packed with new discoveries and enduring memories. We wish you all the very best of luck!

Sincerely,

Miho Ando, Director
World Health Organization
Senzoku Gakuen Model United Nations Club
Japan Metropolitan Model United Nations 2022



Introduction of the Committee

Founded in 1948, WHO is the agency of the United Nations responsible for international health. The work of WHO is strictly based on the basic principles of the right to health and well-being for all people, as defined in the WHO 1948 Constitution. The WHO is dedicated to promoting health, keeping the world safe, and serving the vulnerable worldwide while leading global efforts to expand health coverage.

Key Terms

Mental health¹

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities to cope with the normal stresses of life, to work productively, and to make a contribution to his or her community. Mental health is an integral part of health which is more than the mere absence of mental disorders and disabilities.

Anxiety

Anxiety is “an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes like increased blood

¹WHO. (2018 May 30). *Mental health: strengthening our response*. Retrieved July 24, 2021 from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>

pressure.”² Anxiety can also develop into anxiety disorder which is not merely a temporary worry or fear and can involve symptoms that interfere with daily activities such as job performance and relationships. ³

Depression⁴

Depression is “a common mental disorder, characterized by sadness, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, feelings of tiredness and poor concentration”.

Suicidal ideation

Suicidal ideations are “thoughts about or a preoccupation with killing oneself, often as a symptom of a major depressive episode”. ⁵

Current Situation

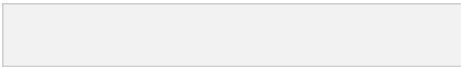
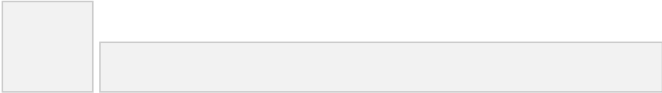
In 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all members of the United Nations. Goal

² *Anxiety*. (2021). Anxiety - American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/topics/anxiety>

³ *NIMH » Anxiety Disorders*. (n.d.). Anxiety Disorders. Retrieved August 29, 2021, from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders>

⁴ WHO. (n.d.). *Key terms and definitions* WHO/Europe. Retrieved July 30, 2021, from <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/mental-health/data-and-resources/key-terms-and-definitions-in-mental-health#depression>

⁵ *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. (n.d.-b). Suicidal Ideation. Retrieved August 29, 2021, from <https://dictionary.apa.org/suicidal-ideation>



3 of the SDGs is to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages,” making mental health and well-being a key aspect of creating a world of peace and prosperity.⁶ In target 3.4, promoting mental health and well-being is recognized as a priority for sustainable development. The United Nations has used suicide mortality rates to measure the progress that the world has made in terms of promoting mental health. From 2000 to 2019, there was nearly a 30% decline in the global suicide rate. In 2000, there were 13.0 deaths by suicide per 100,00 population. In 2019, this number decreased to 9.2 deaths per 100,00 population.⁷

Although the suicide rates are declining, nearly one million lives are lost to suicide every year. This equates to one suicide every forty seconds. Despite this shockingly large number, less than 2% of the global median health budget was allocated to mental health in 2017.⁸ Poverty, compromised education, gender inequality, ill-health, violence, and other global challenges are all contributing factors to poor mental health.⁹

⁶ THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development (The United Nations) <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

⁷ Goal 3 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs (The United Nations) <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal3>

⁸ Mental health (World Health Organization) <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mental-health>

⁹ Mental Health and Development (World Health Organization)

The World Health Organization conducted a survey on suicide prevention in 2013 across 157 countries with 90 responses. The survey revealed that 55 of the participating countries perceived suicide as a serious public health concern. 28 of the responding countries had adopted a comprehensive national strategy or action plan.¹⁰ As of July 21st, 2021 the number of countries that report having a national suicide prevention strategy has increased from 28 to 38.¹¹

Case Studies

Subtopic I: Sexual and Gender Minorities

The World Health Organization recognizes that groups who experience discrimination have a high suicide rate. Sexual and gender minorities, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people is one example of these vulnerable groups.¹² Sexual and gender minorities are at an even

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/mental-health-and-development.html>

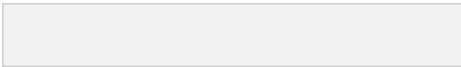
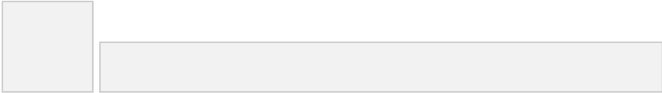
¹⁰ Preventing Suicide: A global imperative (World Health Organization)

http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/131056/9789241564779_eng.pdf?sequence=1

¹¹ Preventing Suicide: A global imperative (World Health Organization)

http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/131056/9789241564779_eng.pdf?sequence=1

¹² Suicide (World Health Organization) <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide>



greater risk now due to the pandemic. They make up a large portion of those who are poor, experiencing homelessness, and don't have access to healthcare. Additionally, the pandemic had a detrimental effect on industries that people of the LGBT community were more likely to work in, such as food service, retail, public sector education and grooming.¹³

Under such circumstances, the mental health of sexual and gender minorities is at stake. Taking steps to reinforce the protection and promote the well-being of these groups is crucial to ameliorate mental health in a post-Corona world.

The United States

A survey conducted in 2015 showed that amongst students in Grades 9-12, 42.8% of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students experienced suicidal ideation. This is a significantly larger number compared to 14.8%, the percentage of heterosexual students who experienced similar thoughts. Additionally, 29.4% of gay, lesbian, or bisexual students attempted a suicide in the twelve months leading up to the survey, as

¹³ THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF LGBT PERSONS (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/SexualOrientation/ImpactCOVID19LGBTpersons.pdf>

opposed to the 6.4% of heterosexual students.¹⁴

Sexual and gender minorities often experience institutional, interpersonal, and individual pressures due to the negative social attitudes they experience due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. These stressors can lead to a decline in one's mental state, leading to severe mental health concerns.¹⁵

Sexual and gender minority adults who experienced high levels of family rejection have a higher chance of suffering from substance abuse, sexual risk behaviors, and suicide attempts. On the contrary, sexual and gender minority adults who were accepted by their families have greater self-esteem and are at a lower risk of depression, suicidal ideation, and substance abuse.¹⁶

¹⁴Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12— United States and Selected Sites, 2015 (US Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/ss/pdfs/ss6509.pdf>

¹⁵ Ending Conversion Therapy: Supporting and Affirming LGBTQ Youth (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma15-4928.pdf>

¹⁶ Ending Conversion Therapy: Supporting and Affirming LGBTQ Youth (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)



Germany

In May of last year, Germany's parliament passed a bill which banned conversion therapy for minors under the ages of 18, as well as for those above the legal age whose consent was obtained through deception, threat, and coercion. ^{17 18}

Conversion therapy aims to change people's sexualities from gay, lesbian or bisexual to heterosexual, and from transgender or gender diverse to cisgender. Such practices are built on the belief that one's sexual orientation or gender identity is something that can and should be changed. These 'treatments' often include psychotherapy, medication, or faith-based practices. ¹⁹ A UN Expert claimed that, "Practices known as 'conversion therapy' inflict severe pain and suffering on lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender-diverse (LGBT) persons, often

<https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma15-4928.pdf>

¹⁷ Act to Protect against Conversion Treatments (Federal Ministry of Health)
<https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/en/press/2020/conversion-treatments.html>

¹⁸ Germany passes law banning 'gay conversion therapy' for minors (BBC News)
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-52585162>

¹⁹ Report on Conversion Therapy (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights)
<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SexualOrientationGender/Pages/ReportOnConversiontherapy.aspx>

resulting in long-lasting psychological and physical damage.”²⁰

Although Germany received criticism for limiting the age of which gay conversion therapy is prohibited, it still remains as one of the fifteen countries in the world to prohibit such procedures. ²¹

Spain

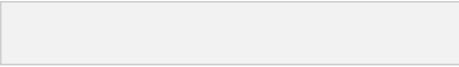
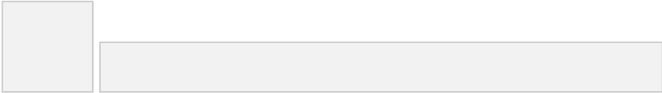
On July 3rd of this year, 24-year old Samuel Luiz was beaten to death outside of a nightclub.²² It is suspected that his assailants had homophobic motives due to the homophobic slurs they used against Luiz, as well as the fact that Luiz was homosexual. This sparked outrage in Spain, and led to street protests on a large scale. ²³

²⁰ UN expert calls for global ban on practices of so-called “conversion therapy” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights)
<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26051&LangID=E>

²¹ Conversion Therapy bans in National Legislations around the Globe (National Center of Biotechnology Information)
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33395666/>

²² Protests in Spain against suspected LGBTQ hate crime (NBC News)
<https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-news/protests-spain-suspected-lgbtq-hate-crime-rcna1347>

²³ Spanish police arrest fourth suspect in fatal beating of Samuel Luiz (El País)
<https://english.elpais.com/spain/2021-07-09/spanish-police-arrest-fourth-suspect-in-fatal-beating-of-samuel-luiz.html>



In 2005, Spain became the third country to legalize same-sex marriage. This granted same-sex couples the rights to adopt children, inheritance, and tax benefits. Moreover, the principle of non-discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation have been incorporated into Spanish laws. These laws include, asylum protection, employment, health, education, State Security Forces and Corps, personal data, communication, and penitentiary regulations.²⁴

Despite these efforts, 278 out of 1076 cases of hate crimes reported by police in 2019 were motivated by bias against gender and sexual minorities, making it the second leading motivator after racism and xenophobia.²⁵ This puts gender and sexual minorities in vulnerable positions, which can lead to a decline in one's mental state.

Subtopic II: Social Equity

Happiness is closely linked to social equality and community spirit, according to the World Happiness Report²⁶. This section

²⁴ SPAIN LGBT GOOD PRACTICES (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Discrimination/LGBT/Res_27_32/Spain.pdf

²⁵ Spain | OCSE - ODIHR - OSCE Hate Crime (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) <https://hatecrime.osce.org/spain>

²⁶ Helliwell, John F., Richard Layard, Jeffrey Sachs, and Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, eds. 2020. World

introduces several cases of how social equity can be considered as a contributing factor to mental health instability in people from various countries.

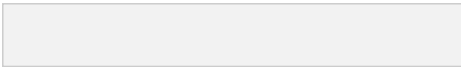
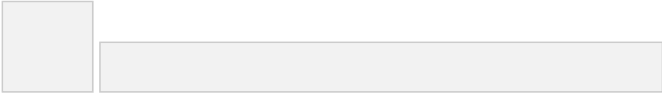
Denmark

According to the World Happiness Report,²⁷ Denmark is the second happiest country in 2021, scoring 7.646 out of 10. Denmark also ranked 6th in growth domestic production (GDP) per capita, slightly lower than the United States, which ranked 5th. Danish people pay some of the highest tax rates in the world; the lowest possible income tax rate in the country is 39.86%, which ranked the highest in the world. Some citizens even pay up to half of their salary. Most Danes, on the other hand, are satisfied with this rate considering what they get in return.

In Denmark, the majority of healthcare is provided free to the patient. University students pay no tuition and are given a grant to aid with living expenses while they are enrolled. The cost of child care is subsidized. In addition, the elderly are given pensions and are frequently visited at home by caretakers.

Happiness Report 2020. New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network

²⁷ World Population Review. (2021). Happiest Countries In The World 2021. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/happiest-countries-in-the-world>.



Moreover, when it comes to diagnosing mental illnesses like bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, Denmark utilizes the ICD-10 manual from the World Health Organization. If the patient's primary care physician suspects they have a serious condition, they will be referred to a specialist center- in Copenhagen, the Psykiatriens Centrale Visitation For Voksne in sterbro – for further diagnosis and treatment referral ²⁸. Since these healthcare options are mostly provided free to the citizens, it is less challenging to see psychiatrists regardless of their incomes.

India

WHO stated that India's mental health burden is 2443 disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) per 100 000 population, with a 21.1 age-adjusted suicide rate per 100 000 population. Between 2012 and 2030, the economic loss related to mental health disorders is predicted to be USD 1.03 trillion. ²⁹ India's suicide mortality rate marked the highest among the world in 2019: 381 suicidal deaths per day.

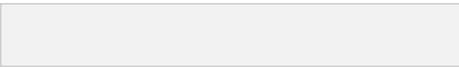
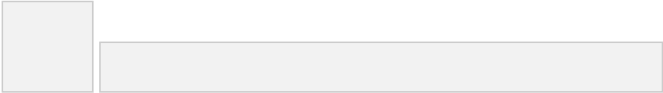
²⁸ Redohl, S. (2021, July 9). Depressed in Denmark: How to find a therapist in the 'world's happiest country.'
<https://www.thelocal.dk/20210709/depressed-in-denmark-how-to-find-a-therapist-in-the-worlds-happiest-country/>.
²⁹ World Health Organization. (n.d.). *Mental health*. World Health Organization.
<https://www.who.int/india/health-topics/mental-health>.

Furthermore, India is 144th on the World Happiness Report; 3.57 out of 10. Despite being the world's fifth largest economy, India has only spent 0.05 percent of its annual healthcare budget in recent years. The amount spent on mental health is around 33 paisa (0.004 USD) per mental health patient, while 150 million people require urgent care ³⁰.

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated India's mental health crisis. Loneliness and isolation has caused the elderly population to be diagnosed by mental disorders such as depression, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorders and dementia. Within the young population, on the other hand, the lack of educational and employment opportunities are the contributing factors of the ongoing issue. ³¹

However, a huge portion of India's population still lacks access to mental health services. The social stigma often causes people to reject seeing a psychiatrist or

³⁰ Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. (2017, October 31). *National Mental Health Programme*. DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF HEALTH SERVICES.
https://dghs.gov.in/content/1350_3_NationalMentalHealthProgramme.aspx.
³¹ Krishnan, M. (2021, May 19). *India's COVID crisis takes toll on mental health*. DW.COM.
<https://www.dw.com/en/indias-covid-crisis-takes-toll-on-mental-health/a-57582565>.



visiting a mental health hospital. Due to language barriers and the lack of education, most news and social media coverage of mental health concerns does not benefit the majority of the Indian population. Other significant obstacles include unequal access to mental health care, economic inequality, and a shortage of qualified mental health professionals.³²

South Korea

Although South Korea has been well known for its glamorous and happy K-POP music culture, the country has marked the highest suicide rate and hospitalization rate regarding mental health, among the 37 OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries³³ for almost 13 consecutive years. In 2019, South Korea's suicide rate was 26.9 cases per 100,000 population; roughly 36 people per day, and one person every 40 minutes commit suicide. In addition, suicide is sadly the number 1 cause of death among young populations. According to studies, the

³²Sarkar, S. (2021, April 27). *COVID-19 has exacerbated India's hidden mental health pandemic*. IndiaBioscience. <https://indiabioscience.org/columns/opinion/covid-19-has-exacerbated-indias-hidden-mental-health-pandemic>.

³³ Denyer, S., & Kashiwagi, A. (2020, November 30). *Japan and South Korea see surge of suicides among young Women, raising new questions about Pandemic stress*. The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/japan-suicides-pandemic-women/2020/11/28/0617e3a2-fdbd-11ea-b0e4-350e4e60cc91_story.html.

biggest reason for teenage suicide in South Korea is the academic pressure, whereas unemployment and economic difficulty is for those in the 20s and 30s.³⁴

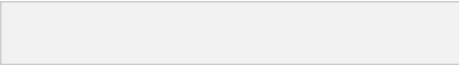
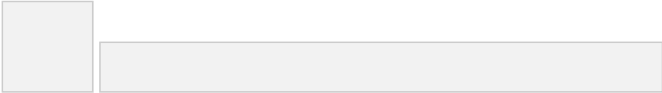
“[South] Korea's consumption of antidepressants is 1/3 of the average of OECD countries. That means there's still a high barrier to getting mental health treatment here,” says psychiatrist Se-Hoon Shim of Soonchunhyang University Hospital³⁵.

South Korea has higher suicide rates among elderly compared to other OECD nations and this is thought to be because the South Korean social security system was underdeveloped for a long time. In the 1970s, a financial crisis overtook South Korea, causing roughly 2,000,000 people to lose their jobs, and many of whom are currently senior citizens, making elderly coverage a serious issue in the country. The government's slow response to this unemployment issue accelerated the inequality within the country. It was 1999 when South Korea finally introduced its universal pension coverage system.

Therefore, since the elderly only paid for a

³⁴ Korea Now. (2021, March 13) *Why South Korea has high suicide rates* YouTube. <https://youtu.be/lkx0T9wMWXg>.

³⁵ Korea Now. (2021, March 13) *Why South Korea has high suicide rates* YouTube. <https://youtu.be/lkx0T9wMWXg>.



short time for the system, many of them are only able to receive a small amount of pension, and some of them are not even eligible to receive any³⁶.

The South Korean government led by president Moon Jae-in, on the other hand, approved 'the National Suicide Prevention Action Plan (2018-2022)³⁷' in 2018, aiming to reduce the number of suicide cases in the country by 50% by 2022. Additionally, one of the largest South Korean online platforms, NAVER, closed its comment sections for entertainment and sports related topics in order to prevent online slandering, which is a contributing factor of mental health issues.³⁸

The suicide rate especially among young women has increased by 4.8% in the city of

³⁶ wowKorea. (2021, July 8). <W解説>高い自殺率が続く韓国、背景には何か? = 昨年には日韓の対策センターが意見交換. wowKorea. https://www.wowkorea.jp/news/newsread_image.asp?imd=306379&numimg=1.

³⁷ Government of the Republic of Korea. (2018). *WHO MiNDbank: More Inclusiveness Needed in Disability and Development*. 자살예방_국가_행동계획 (National Action Plan for Suicide Prevention) 2018. <https://www.mindbank.info/item/6785>.

³⁸ KYODO NEWS+. (2021, July 31). *Olympic athletes pained by online bashing, mental health care sought*. Kyodo News+. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/07/13be0e90b1a9-olympic-athletes-pained-by-online-bashing-mental-health-care-sought.html>.

Seoul. According to Joo-Ji Young, deputy head of the Seoul Suicide Prevention Center, the city's suicide prevention hotline has received a record number of calls since the pandemic began, while the number of people attempted suicide nationwide increased 10% in the first eight months of the year, according to the Health Ministry.³⁹

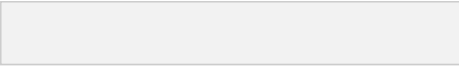
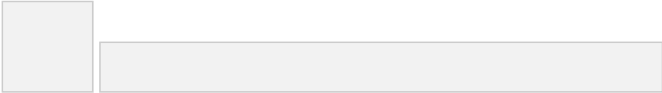
Subtopic III: Children and Adolescents

The WHO recognizes childhood and adolescence as a critical stage in life for mental health. Especially adolescence (10-19 years) is a crucial period for developing and cultivating both social and emotional habits which are essential for mental well-being.⁴⁰

Despite the importance of childhood and adolescence when it comes to developing the basis for mental well-being, mental health conditions account for 16% of the global burden of disease and injury in

³⁹ Simon Denyer, A. K. (2020, November 30). *Japan and South Korea see surge of suicides among young Women, raising new questions about Pandemic stress*. The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/japan-suicides-pandemic-women/2020/11/28/0617e3a2-fdbd-11ea-b0e4-350e4e60cc91_story.html.

⁴⁰ *Adolescent mental health* (2020, September 28). World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>



people aged 10-19 years.⁴¹ Being one of the leading causes of illness and disability among adolescents, mental conditions such as depression can cause adolescents to become vulnerable to social exclusion, discrimination, educational difficulties, risk-taking behaviours, physical ill-health, and human rights violations.

Moreover, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has affected and changed the lives of many young people, depriving them of opportunities needed to promote psychological well-being. Surveys have also revealed that the emotional well-being of children with mental health disorders such as autism has significantly deteriorated amid lockdowns.⁴² Further, the rapid speed at which the world is changing as seen in movements such as globalization and digitalization is altering the future into an increasingly unpredictable one; this may also be contributing to the escalation of depression and anxiety among young people and thus the decline in their mental

⁴¹ *Adolescent mental health* (2020, September 28). World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>

⁴² Lepper, J. (2021, February 3). *Autistic children facing mental health crisis during lockdown, charity warns*. CYP Now. <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/article/autistic-children-facing-mental-health-crisis-during-lockdown-charity-warns>

well-being. The WHO is eager to provide support for all children and adolescents who suffer from mental health conditions and guide them towards the achievement of mental well-being.

Lebanon

In Lebanon, an estimated 488,000 school-aged Syrian refugee children (3-18 years) are currently registered by the UNHCR.⁴³ This forced displacement resulting in the loss of homes, belongings, and opportunities for education has made a great negative impact on the refugee children. A research conducted by Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center in 2015 reported that although most refugee children did not directly experience trauma-inducing experiences, they had either witnessed or indirectly heard of the incidents.⁴⁴ This has resulted in the children's development of symptoms associated with trauma as well as the consequences of one third of the children frequently feeling sad, nervous, or anxious. A study has also identified that an alarming

⁴³ *Education* (n.d.). UNHCR Lebanon. Retrieved July 29, 2021, from <https://www.unhcr.org/lb/education>

⁴⁴ *Insights into Syrian Refugee Children's Mental Health Status & Coping Mechanisms - Lebanon* (2016, February 4). ReliefWeb. <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/insights-syrian-refugee-children-s-mental-health-status-coping-mechanisms>



41% of adolescent Syrian refugees has thought about committing suicide.⁴⁵

Currently, Lebanon is facing its worst economic crisis in decades with high levels of inflation and currency devaluation. The world bank has mentioned that the crisis “could rank among the world’s three worst since the mid-1800s in terms of its effect on living standards”.⁴⁶ In the midst of this uncertainty and instability, the mental health of children are facing increased risk due to severe anxiety and stress. Further, the Beirut explosion which occurred in August 2020 is said to have put the mental health of children among the casualties under serious threat. Many are likely to be suffering from anxiety, sleep-terrors, and sleeplessness.⁴⁷ Long-term consequences will also be faced should proper support for these children be neglected.

⁴⁵DeJong, J., Sbeity, F., Schlecht, J. et al. *Young lives disrupted: gender and well-being among adolescent Syrian refugees in Lebanon*. *Confl Health* 11, 23 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-017-0128-7>

⁴⁶ Hubbard, B. (2021, July 17). *As Lebanon’s Crisis Deepens, Lines for Fuel Grow, and Food and Medicine Are Scarce*. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/05/world/middleast/lebanon-economic-crisis.html>

⁴⁷ *Beirut’s children are likely to suffer from anxiety, night terrors – Save the Children - Lebanon* (2020, August 7). ReliefWeb. <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/beirut-s-children-are-likely-suffer-anxiety-night-terrors-save-children>

The Covid-19 pandemic has further accelerated the worsening of the children and adolescent’s mental well-being in Lebanon. National lockdown measures have boosted the prevalence of psychological disorders among children including anxiety, depression and stress. Approximately 83% of the families reported a change in the behaviour of their child during the lockdown, and 40% of refugee adolescents aged 15 to 18 reported that the pandemic is damaging their mental health status.⁴⁸ The income loss and school closure triggered by the pandemic has aggravated child abuse and violence, leaving devastating effects both short-term and long-term on the mental health of the children.

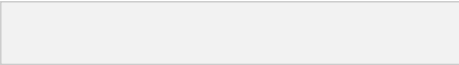
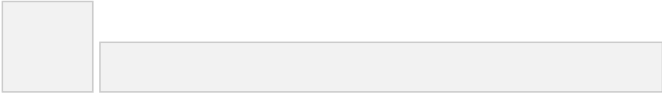
Japan

Although physical health of children in Japan is not a significant issue, the mental well-being of children in Japan falls well behind other developed countries.

According to a UNICEF study⁴⁹ released on

⁴⁸ Ibrahim And Farhat, S. T. (2021, July 15). *Global Health Institute | The Impact of COVID-19 on Syrian Refugee Children’s Mental Health, Access, and Retention to Education in Lebanon*. AUB Global Health Institute. <https://ghi.aub.edu.lb/ghiblog/the-impact-of-covid-19/>

⁴⁹ *Worlds of Influence: Understanding what shapes child well-being in rich countries* (n.d.). (C)2021 Wwww.Unicef-Irc.Org - UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti. Retrieved July 24, 2021, from <https://www.unicef-irc.org/child-well-being-report-card-16>



September 8 2020, Japanese children had the second worst rated mental well-being out of the 38 nations studied. One reason that can be suggested for the undeveloped mental health care support for children and adolescents in Japan is the age composition of the population. Children and adolescents ages 18 and under account for 16% of the nation's population compared to 22% in the UK, making the Japanese population one of the oldest in the world.⁵⁰ As a result, the Japanese social welfare system -- including mental health care systems -- is centered around geriatric care rather than care for the children and adolescents.

Lack of training and workforces for the mental health of children and adolescents in Japan is also a challenge faced by the nation. Within Japan, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP) has been considered a subspecialty of psychiatry and pediatrics, depriving the CAP of opportunities to become a formally established speciality.⁵¹ As of 2017, there existed neither

standardized training programs of CAP nor any national guidelines for CAP training.

The number of suicides committed by elementary, junior high and high school students in 2020 in Japan further reflects the lack of support for children and adolescents in the field of mental health. According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the number of school-age suicides in Japan hit a record high of 499 in 2020, showing a sharp increase from 339 the previous year.⁵²

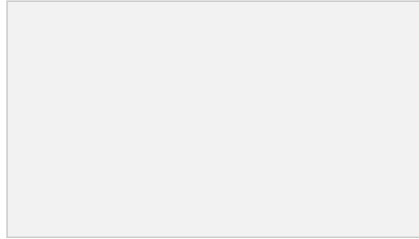


Figure 1: Number of school-age suicides in Japan has hit a record high in 2020

Moreover, a survey conducted online in 2020 involving 344 high school students revealed that 30% had experienced symptoms of moderate to severe depression. The outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic has made the encouragement of mental well-being for children and adolescents in

⁵⁰ Sakanoa, M., & Snowden, N. (2018, July 18). *Paving the way for the future of child and adolescent mental health in Japan* PubMed Central (PMC). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6074641/>

⁵¹ Tateno, M., Inagaki, T., Saito, T., Guerrero, A., & Skokauskas, N. (2017). Current Challenges and Future Opportunities for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in Japan. *Psychiatry investigation* 14(5), 525–531. <https://doi.org/10.4306/pi.2017.14.5.525>

⁵² Saori, Y. (2021, July 27). *Japan's child suicide crisis*. NHK WORLD. <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/backstories/1672/>



Japan a much more urgent and unavoidable path to take.

Netherlands

The mental well-being of children in the Netherlands ranks first out of 38 developed countries, according to a report released by UNICEF in 2020. In fact, young people in the Netherlands have been reported to be among the highest levels of mental well-being since the start of the 21st century.

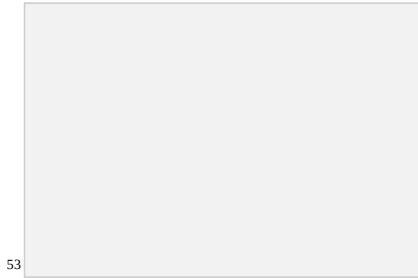


Figure 2: Ranking of Child mental well-being by UNICEF

In the Netherlands, general practitioners (GPs) play a substantial role in the care of child and adolescent health. Almost all citizens are registered in general practices close to the community, and the majority of children and adolescents visit their GP at

⁵³ De Looze, M.E., Cosma, A.P., Vollebergh, W.A.M. et al. Trends over Time in Adolescent Emotional Wellbeing in the Netherlands, 2005-2017: Links with Perceived Schoolwork Pressure, Parent-Adolescent Communication and Bullying Victimization. *J Youth Adolescence* 49, 2124–2135 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-020-01280-4>

least once a year.⁵⁴ This designation of GPs as the gateway to mental health care enhances the identification and treatment of child mental health problems in times of need. However, GPs could not have made a positive contribution to the care of children's mental health had it not been for the various initiatives introduced to the country. One initiative was the implementation of Youth Welfare Work Offices in 2005. Another was the opportunity offered to the GPs to consult secondary health care professionals, stimulating the cooperation between primary and secondary mental health care.

Past Actions

The first step taken by the United Nation regarding mental health⁵⁵ was in 2008, when the WHO Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) was introduced. mhGAP aims for the expansion of services for mental, neurological and substance use disorders in countries, especially those in the low- and middle-income categories⁵⁶. Since 2008, this has been introduced to treat

⁵⁴Zwaanswijk, M., van Dijk, C. E., & Verheij, R. A. (2011). Child and adolescent mental health care in Dutch general practice: time trend analyses. *BMC family practice*, 12, 133. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2296-12-133>

⁵⁵ World Health Organization. (n.d.). *Scaling up mental health care* World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/activities/scaling-up-mental-health-care>.

⁵⁶ World Health Organization. (n.d.). Introduction to mhGAP.



persons suffering from mental disorders such as depression, schizophrenia, and epilepsy in over 100 countries.

Furthermore, in 2010, WHO launched its first mhGAP Intervention Guide, focusing on expanding services for mental health in low-resource settings⁵⁷. The guide aims to lessen gaps such as regional, economical, and racial disparity regarding mental health, by developing human resources to provide mental health care in non-specialized health settings. The guide is based on the globally accepted principle, “No health without mental health,” and provides specific assessments and management guides of major mental disorders. Although this introduces specific advice for developing countries with few mental health treatment resources, it leaves the rest of the world in the dark.

Moreover, WHO launched the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020 on May 27, 2013, addressing the global community to provide guidance for national action plans, such as the response of social and other relevant sectors as well as promotion and prevention strategies⁵⁸. The major difference between the mhGAP and

this Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan is that the former focuses on providing health care in low-resource settings, whereas the latter targets the global community.

In order to achieve equity, this action plan acknowledges that mental health is a crucial factor in people’s health and underlines the significance of universal health coverage and prevention based on the life course approach.

In addition to the two actions mentioned above, WHO published a report, accelerating the prevention of suicide caused by mental health disorders. “Preventing Suicide: A global imperative” is the first report published by the United Nations regarding suicide prevention, encouraging and supporting authorities to develop and strengthen a comprehensive suicide prevention strategy as a public health approach⁵⁹. The report provides a global knowledge foundation on suicide and suicide attempts as well as actionable recommendations to move forward in suicide prevention based on their current resources and environment.

⁵⁷ Ozawa, H. (2015). (rep.). *mhGAP 介入ガイド* (pp. 1–124). World Health Organization.

⁵⁸ World Health Organization. (2013, May 27). Comprehensive mental health action plan 2013–2020 .

⁵⁹ World Health Organization. (n.d.). *Preventing suicide: A global imperative* World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564779>.

