



Call for best and promising practices on mental health Towards a Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health

In her 2022 State of Union speech, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, announced “a new initiative on mental health”. In response, the Commission adopted on 7 June 2023 a Commission Communication which promotes a comprehensive, prevention-oriented and multi-stakeholder approach to mental health.¹

The Communication will support the efforts of the Member States addressing the many policies as well as the behavioural, socioeconomic, environmental -and commercial determinants that affect mental health. It calls upon national and regional actors, health and non-health policy sectors and relevant stakeholders to implement this new strategic approach to mental health.

As part of the actions of the Communication, the Commission is **calling for best and promising practices² focusing on mental health promotion, prevention, and early detection and intervention.**

Through this call, the Commission will, in collaboration with Member States, support the implementation of practices to address the key **behavioural, social, environmental, and commercial determinants related to mental health** under the ‘Healthier Together’ initiative, and in response to the new Communication on mental health. The Commission will also support the **development of guidance on early detection and intervention, and the screening of vulnerable groups in key settings, including humanitarian contexts.**

The Commission calls for best and promising practices aimed at, in particular:

- **mental health across policies** (i.e., coordination and consistency of measures among policy areas such as health, education, digitalisation, migration, justice, social services, environment, climate, etc);
- addressing **children and young people’s** mental health and psychological wellbeing, including the impact of health determinants³ and the expanding digital environment³; through whole school policies grounded in knowledge about mental health issues;

¹ A comprehensive approach to mental health (europa.eu)

² A best practice is defined as “a relevant policy or intervention implemented in a real life setting which has been favourably assessed in terms of adequacy (ethics and evidence) and equity as well as effectiveness and efficiency related to process and outcomes. “A promising practice is an intervention that may potentially develop into a best practice.

³ Protecting children from inappropriate digital content, from intrusive harvesting of information and from aggressive online marketing of unhealthy food, beverages, and alcohol and tobacco; promoting a careful use of internet and social media, with safeguards against online child sexual abuse, access to illicit drugs, gambling, cyberbullying, hate speech, disinformation, and excessive screentime and pressure for the digital editing of images; a well-balanced use of gaming, helping to prevent compulsive use and negative effects on daily life.

- improving the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of **vulnerable groups**, including but not limited to, the elderly, cancer patients and survivors, migrant and refugee populations, ethnic minorities, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ people and people with chronic diseases and co/multi-morbidities;
- addressing **links between mental health, inequalities and other key health determinants**; addressing links between mental health, physical health and additional barriers faced by vulnerable groups
- supporting the development and implementation of **prevention** initiatives, including against **depression, anxiety and suicide**, and preventing and mitigating **loneliness and social isolation**; within and across policies;
- developing **early detection, recognition, and intervention strategies** in various settings (home, school, institutions etc); including with the support of innovative digital tools (for example AI-powered tools);
- breaking through **stigma** and tackling **discrimination** around mental health and enabling groups with mental health difficulties to develop agency and voice;
- preventing and reducing mental health issues by **incorporating green living environments** in all life settings (urban environments, hospitals etc.)
- **social prescribing** (a range of non-clinical services to improve health, and mental health in particular, such as sport and physical activity, arts and culture, nature, and green spaces)
- improving the quality and accessibility (waiting times, travelling distance and affordability) of **mental health care** including through digital solutions such as telemedicine;
- providing **multi-disciplinary training**, including re- and upskilling, to health and non-health professionals (e.g. teachers, social workers);
- fostering mental health **globally**.

To support EU Member States in addressing challenges related to mental health, the Commission invites governmental and non-governmental actors to **submit proposals for best and promising practices** via the [EU Best Practice Portal](#) **by Friday 6 October 2023** (midnight CET).

After this date, the European Commission will organise the assessment on the practice proposals received and may **invite the owners of the top-ranked best and promising practices to present them to representatives from EU Member States** during a marketplace event later in 2023. This may lead to joint/wider implementation across the EU funded under the EU4Health programme. Please note that the **owners' active involvement and collaboration is fundamental and expected** for the top-ranked best and promising practices.

Before submitting, please consult the submitter's guide: [Questions and Submitter Guide.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)