THE CLIMATE - MENTAL HEALTH NEXUS: HOW A WELL-BEING APPROACH CAN PROVIDE LESSONS FOR WIN-WIN POLICIES

19 SEPTEMBER 2023
8:45AM - 12:45PM (PDT)
INTELLECTUAL HOUSE,
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
The University of Washington acknowledges the Coast Salish peoples of this land, the land which touches the shared waters of all tribes and bands within the Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations.
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EarthLab
Novel, equitable & actionable environmental science & knowledge

Community Partners
Governments, Tribes, Businesses & Nonprofits
How to Make Societies Thrive?
Coordinated approaches to promote mental health and well-being

The Climate – Mental Health Nexus
19 September 2023

Intellectual House
University of Washington, Seattle
The Climate—Mental Health Nexus: How a well-being approach can provide lessons for win-win policies

Broader context:

➔ Why are we here today?

➔ What do we hope will be the outcomes of this meeting?
OECD Centre for Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE)

— Who we are —

OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES
Focus on:
- **people** rather than the economic system
- **outcomes** (for current well-being) and **long-term resources** (for future well-being)
- both **averages** and **inequalities**
- both **objective** and **subjective** aspects

### CURRENT WELL-BEING

**Key dimensions**
- Income and Wealth
- Work and Job Quality
- Housing
- Health
- Knowledge and Skills
- Environmental Quality
- Subjective Well-being
- Safety
- Work-life Balance
- Social Connections
- Civic Engagement

**How we measure them**
- Averages
- Inequalities between groups
- Inequalities between top and bottom performers
- Deprivations

### RESOURCES FOR FUTURE WELL-BEING

**Key dimensions**
- Natural Capital
- Economic Capital
- Human Capital
- Social Capital

**How we measure them**
- Stocks
- Flows
- Risk factors
- Resilience
Mental health is a topical and cross-cutting issue

Mental health plays a central role in people’s lives

- Rise of mental distress across OECD countries during COVID-19
- Impact of mental health conditions pre-dates COVID
- Positive mental health as explicit policy target

We see renewed calls for (mental) health in all policies approaches, but challenges remain

→ coalition building across sectors is limited, intersectoral task forces given little authority, lack of M&E, general resource constraints

In all countries with comparable baseline data, the share of the population at risk for depression rose sharply in 2020

Share of people at risk of depression

Applying a well-being lens to population mental health

**BETTER DATA FOR PREVENTION & PROMOTION**
How can we improve the quality and availability of comparable data on population-wide mental health status?

**WELL-BEING & MENTAL HEALTH CO-BENEFITS**
What are the interlinkages between mental health and people’s economic, social, environmental and relational experiences?

**INTEGRATED APPROACHES IN PRACTICE**
What are lessons learned from innovative mental health initiatives across OECD countries?
People with mental distress far worse in every dimension of well-being

Well-being Deprivations for those at risk for mental distress, those not at risk & overall population average

OECD 26, 2013 & 2018

Step 1: Associations and causal pathways

- The natural environment shapes our mental health.

- **Clean air**, access to **green and blue spaces** and more **time spent in nature** are all associated with better mental health outcomes.

- Exposure to **pollution** – both air and noise – is harmful to mental health outcomes via biological and behavioural pathways.

- **Climate change** and its implications – **biodiversity loss**, increasing **extreme weather events** – harms mental health and has given rise to new forms of ill-health.

Step 2: Identifying win-win policies

**Intervention 1**
Ecotherapy and green social prescribing
*Health care, environment and conservation, urban planning*

**Intervention 2**
Green, connected cities to promote mental well-being
*Urban planning, environment, transport, sports and culture*

**Intervention 3**
Strengthening government service systems, including mental health services, to better respond to climate disasters and foster resilience among the population
*Emergency response, health care, social policy, environment, housing, urban planning*

**Intervention 4**
Highlighting the hidden costs of climate change through innovative environmental accounting and well-being cost benefit analyses
*Budgeting, health care, environment, urban planning, transport, housing, social policy*
**How do mental health initiatives around the OECD...?**

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<th>REALIGN: WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH</th>
<th>REDESIGN: WELL-BEING DETERMINANTS FOR PREVENTION AND PROMOTION</th>
<th>REFOCUS: EMPHASIS ON POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH</th>
<th>RECONNECT: BUILDING BROAD PARTNERSHIPS</th>
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<td>Western Australia, Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Norway:</td>
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<td>New Zealand:</td>
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<td><strong>Act Belong Commit (the ABCs of Mental health) Programme</strong></td>
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<td>Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission (Te Hiringa Mahara)</td>
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<td>Western Australia:</td>
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<td><strong>Western Australian Mental Wellbeing Guide</strong></td>
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<td>Programme for Public Health Work in Municipalities</td>
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<td>Canada:</td>
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<td><strong>Mental Health Promotion Innovation Fund &amp; Positive Mental Health Surveillance Indicator Framework</strong></td>
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<td>“It’s about life” Proposal for the new National Policy for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention</td>
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<td>Finland:</td>
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<td><strong>National Mental Health Strategy and Programme for Suicide Prevention 2020-30</strong></td>
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<td>Public Service Boards &amp; North Wales Public Service Lab and Insight Partnership</td>
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REALIGN
Whole-of-government approach, across sectors and levels of government

→ Multidimensional frameworks can provide the mandate for agencies to contribute to common goals

→ Implementation plans that address intersectoral collaboration can support delivery

→ Sufficient resources – both time and money – are needed for success and relationship building

→ New ways to align: independent oversight agencies; strategic grantmaking for broader well-being work at the local level
Many strategies have a participatory element.

Knowledge brokering is essential to share learnings.

The depth of partnerships matters for impact.
The Centre for Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE):
https://www.oecd.org/wise/

Our work on well-being and mental health:

Register for:

Further questions:
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