

ENOC

European Network of Ombudspersons for Children

ENOC

Child and adolescent mental health

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Défenseur des droits
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

Towards an ENOC statement: draft definition



Definition of the World Health Organization (WHO):

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

Mental health is then defined as:

"a state of well-being in which every individual realizes 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 her or his community."

Towards an ENOC statement: draft definition

To complete/improve the WHO's definition, it is proposed to add:

The « **positive** » **aspect of mental health is** a state of well-being in which the individual recognises its own abilities and is able to cope with normal daily stresses in life. Child well-being covers self-esteem, self-control, optimism and the notion of congruency.

Children who are mentally healthy possess the ability to:

- develop psychologically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, spiritually;
- initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying interpersonal relationships;
- use and enjoy solitude;
- become aware of others and empathise with them;
- play and learn;
- develop a sense of right and wrong;
- resolve (face) problems and setbacks satisfactorily and learn from them.

Mental health includes serious and severe psychiatric disorders, psychological distress that corresponds to stressful situations and existential difficulties, and "positive mental health" with the notion of well-being.

Towards an ENOC statement: important issues

- Creation of European indicators to develop a better knowledge of child and adolescents' mental health
- Definition of national and European strategies dedicated to mental health of children and adolescents under 18
- Prevention, awareness and combating stigma in mental health
- Care and inclusive schools
- Community-based support by child health specialists
- Guaranteed rights during hospitalisation
- Specific mental health needs of vulnerable young people to be taken into account

Towards an ENOC statement: important issues

Point 2: Creation of European indicators to develop a better knowledge of child and adolescents' mental health

→ *Proposed list of common indicators:*

- Attempted suicide rates/suicide rates
- The prevalence rate of disorders affecting young people
- The rate of outpatient / inpatient care
- Access to mental health services during and after office hours
- Length of the waiting lists
- Frequency of external control of services
- Medical prescription rates
- Respect of patients' rights (see WHO mental health legislation and human rights checklist)
- Maintenance of education
- Number of people trained in mental health: be it general practitioners, childcare professionals and educational staff
- Number of parental support schemes and number of families benefiting from them

Towards an ENOC statement: important issues

- **Point 7: Guaranteed rights during hospitalisation**

→ Establish a mandatory consent **from the age of 16**, prior to any hospitalisation, and take into account children's opinions as soon as he/she is capable of discernment and in all cases **from the age of 12**.