

# Transforming mental health care

ESTONIA

## EPW core priorities and flagships

Moving towards universal health coverage  
The Mental Health Coalition 🇪🇪

## WHO collaboration

Technical guidance  
Country cooperation strategy

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Estonia prioritized mental health in its public health agenda. Realizing that greater numbers of people needed access to essential services, the country collaborated with the Regional Office to strengthen its mental health and psychosocial support systems.

WHO's expertise has been instrumental in developing the national mental health action plan, organizing psychological first aid training for first responders, and adapting materials such as the *Doing what matters in times of stress* guide for refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. WHO also facilitated the establishment of a national mental health and psychosocial support coordination group, bringing together key stakeholders to ensure a unified and effective response to public mental health challenges. This collaboration is building a more integrated mental health system to ensure everyone receives the support they need.

### The impact

The Regional Office's partnership with Estonia has trained over 200 public health professionals. A national suicide prevention plan is also in development, while the WHO Mental Health Gap Action Programme has expanded the reach of mental health services by integrating them into PHC settings. Additionally, awareness campaigns and community-based initiatives are reducing stigma around mental health struggles, empowering individuals to seek help and support earlier.

### Lessons learned

- Continuous cooperation with stakeholders is vital for sustained progress on mental health issues.
- Integrating mental health into broader health systems requires buy-in across all areas of government.
- Training and capacity-building at the community level are crucial for effective mental health support.
- WHO's research materials are a valuable resource to guide health policy planning.

### Donors and partners

Government of Estonia; National Institute for Health Development; Estonian Red Cross; European Commission; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; International Organization for Migration



Estonia and the Regional Office are collaborating to build a more integrated national mental health system.  
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“Continuous cooperation between WHO and the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs has significantly improved our mental health response capabilities.”

Ms Anne Randväli, Head of the Mental Health Department, Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonia

### What's next?

Estonia plans to further integrate mental health services into PHC and strengthen community-level support, including in humanitarian contexts. Mental health will remain a priority consideration in all government policy decisions.