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## Mental Health and Wellbeing Requires Global Advocacy and Awareness



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In 1992, the World Federation of Mental Health created World Mental Health Day. It is a day dedicated to raising mental health awareness, so that people experiencing mental illness are more likely to receive the support they need to live better lives.

While the pandemic exacerbated several risk factors for mental ill-health including loneliness, unemployment and economic stressors, it continues to take its toll, fueling short- and long-term stresses.

Prior to the pandemic, an estimated one in eight people were experiencing at least one mental health issue. Unfortunately, estimates have risen in anxiety and depressive disorders by more than 25%.

At the same time, mental health providers are struggling to meet the rise in demand.

Several key challenges are responsible for widening the treatment gap for mental health conditions including the lack of health personnel, unavailability of interventions and services, and lack of investment in mental health services. These problems are particularly prevalent in low- and middle-income settings.

In addition, increasing social and economic inequalities, conflicts and violence, disease outbreaks, and climate change are impacting whole populations, and limiting improvements in their well being.

Commitment to improving mental health care must be strengthened, so that quality services and support are made to be more accessible and affordable. As the World Health Organization [WHO] explains, "We must deepen the value and commitment we give to mental health as individuals, communities and governments and match that value with more commitment, engagement and investment by all stakeholders, across all sectors" (WHO, 2022).

Stigma continues to play a large role in preventing access to the right care. However, World Mental Health Day is an opportunity to increase awareness of mental health so that our collective understanding grows, and so that we can all exercise our right to seek the proper care we need. The more accepting we are about our rights to protect mental health, the more funding that gets allocated into research and in improving mental health services.

Should everyone come together to advocate for better mental health care, then everyone might have "an equal opportunity to enjoy mental health and to exercise their human rights; and where everyone can access the mental health care they need" (WHO, 2022).

Source: [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int/mental-health)

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