



Helping Adolescents: A new Toolkit for Social Workers as well

The Helping Adolescents Thrive Toolkit

The Helping Adolescents Thrive Toolkit, launched by WHO and UNICEF this month, provides programmatic guidance for people working in the health, social services, education and justice sectors on how to implement strategies for adolescent mental health promotion and protection. The Toolkit covers the legal foundations required for such programmes to succeed, the features of environments that are conducive to the well-being of adolescents, what support should be provided to parents and other caregivers, and psychosocial interventions that work. Tools to guide implementation and examples of programmes already introduced in countries to benefit adolescents, or specific groups of vulnerable adolescents, are described.

Accompanying Comic Book and Teacher's Guide

As part of the Helping Adolescents Thrive initiative, WHO and UNICEF also released a Comic Book and accompanying Teacher's Guide for use by school-based professionals who work with adolescents aged 10-14 years, including teachers, school counsellors, and mental health professionals. These tools can be used for planning and facilitation of classroom activities focused on socio-emotional learning. The whole publication was created from the beginning in collaboration with young people and experts from all over the world. The Comic book refers specifically to adolescents' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and was drawn by a teenager from Kyrgyzstan.

Mental health conditions: a leading cause of illness for adolescents

Mental health conditions are among the leading causes of illness and disability among adolescents, with suicide the fourth most common cause of death in people aged 15-19 years. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the mental health of young people around the world, with heightened isolation and psychosocial distress.

Given that half of all mental health conditions start before the age of 14 years, efforts to prevent the onset of mental health conditions and promote mental health during adolescence are particularly important.

Statement from Bruno Keel, IFSW Representative to the UN / WHO in Geneva

Read more:

<https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/who-unicef-helping-adolescents-thrive-programme>