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# Competencies in Mental Health Promotion (MHP)

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Le temps des  
**concordances**

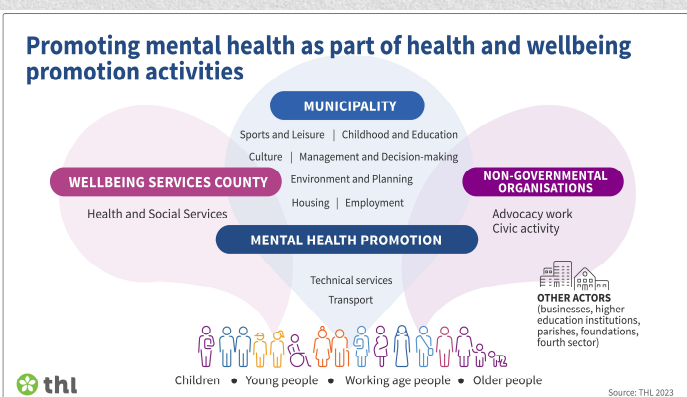
## The importance of promoting mental health and wellbeing

- ▶ Reframing the challenge of improving mental health
- ▶ Paradigm change:
  - mental health is an integral part of health
  - focus on positive mental health and wellbeing
  - population wide approach – strategies for creating the greatest mental health gain for the greatest number of people**-> a health promotion approach**
- ▶ MHP is concerned with **strengthening protective factors** for good mental health, enhancing **supportive environments** and enabling **access to skills, resources and life opportunities** that promote the mental health and wellbeing of individuals and populations
- ▶ Mental health is created and develops in **people's daily living environments and actions** - the responsibility for mental health and wellbeing extends across all sectors of society

## MHP frameworks for Action

- ▶ International policy frameworks (e.g. WHO 2013, 2022; OECD 2023) - the essential role of mental health in achieving health for all
- ▶ **Whole-of-government approach**
  - mental health in all policies approach – cross-sectoral responsibility for addressing the social determinants of mental health and addressing mental health inequities
  - priority for more than the mental health/health sector – policy coherence
- ▶ **Whole-of-society approach**
  - multisectoral partnerships identifying and creating synergies to promote and enhance mental health and wellbeing -> flourishing society
  - engaging new actors from across diverse sectors such as: childcare, education, welfare, community, youth services, media, arts and culture, sports, urban planning, local authorities, environment, economic and social policies
- ▶ **participation of all of government and the wider community in creating the conditions for positive mental health and wellbeing**

## National Mental Health Strategy and Mental health promotion in Finland



National Mental Health Strategy and Programme for Suicide Prevention 2020-2030:

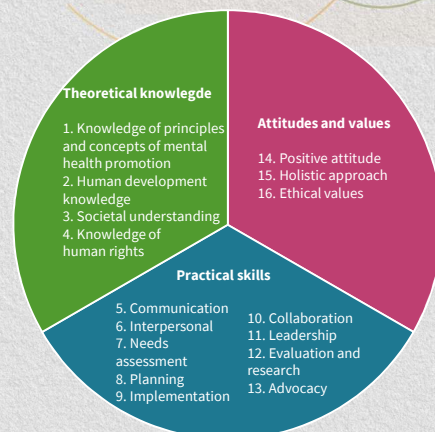
- Mental health promotion must be taken on **several different levels using multidisciplinary approaches**.
- Includes intersectoral mental health promotion policy.
- Supported by Inter-Ministerial working group

## A trained workforce is needed for the advancement of MHP

- ▶ Effective public mental health policy and practice call for a trained workforce that is competent in mental health promotion and delivering on improved mental health
- ▶ There is a need for skilled professionals to plan and implement decisions, actions and research that strengthen and support mental health and wellbeing
- ▶ Systematic information on what competencies are needed for mental health promotion practice has been lacking

## Mental Health Promotion Competencies

- ▶ Study on Mental Health Promotion Competencies in the Health Sector in Finland
- ▶ Research question:
  - What knowledge, skills, attitudes and values are needed in mental health promotion actions?
- ▶ Qualitative study:
  - development process via focus groups, questionnaire survey, Delphi survey
  - professionals from mental health, health and social care, health promotion, MHP experts, non-governmental organisations, higher education, research, experts by experience
- ▶ **16 main competencies** and **56 subcompetencies** identified
- ▶ Divided into 3 category domains:
  - Theoretical knowledge**
  - Practical skills**
  - Attitudes and values**



\*Reference: Tamminen et al. (2022) *Mental health promotion competencies in the health sector – what knowledge, skills, attitudes and values are needed in mental health promotion actions*. Data brief 19/2022. Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, Helsinki. <https://www.julkari.fi/handle/10024/144199>

# Theoretical knowledge

Main competencies	Subcompetencies
<b>1. Knowledge of principles and concepts of mental health promotion (MHP)</b>	1.1 Knowledge of the concept of positive mental health, resilience, and the importance of strengths, resources, and protective factors 1.2 Knowledge of supportive living conditions and environments 1.3 Knowledge of the concept of mental health 1.4 Knowledge of the risk factors of mental health 1.5 Knowledge of effective methods, practices and tools for MHP
<b>2. Human development knowledge</b>	2.1 Knowledge of MHP aims and activities according to the life course approach 2.2 Knowledge of the psychological and physiological human development
<b>3. Societal understanding</b>	3.1 Understanding how society works and how to influence on it 3.2 Understanding the factors that support and challenge mental health in society 3.3 Understanding the significance of different sectors and their role in MHP 3.4 Understanding the influence of political decisions on wellbeing and on MHP
<b>4. Knowledge of human rights</b>	4.1 Knowledge of equality, justice and appreciation and respect for others 4.2 Knowledge of cultural differences and similarities and their significance to MHP work

# Practical skills

Main competencies	Subcompetencies
<b>5. Communication skills</b>	5.1 Mastering different communication methods, including verbal and written communication, as well as technological communication methods 5.2 Providing information on factors and activities related to MHP 5.3 Influencing positive and supportive attitude towards mental health, and reducing stigmas
<b>6. Interpersonal skills</b>	6.1 Mastering interaction skills when working with various stakeholders 6.2 Considering others with appreciation, respect and empathy taking into account the views and values of others and using them as a starting point for working 6.3 Mastering group and bilateral work as well as different guidance methods
<b>7. Needs assessment skills</b>	7.1 Assessing client/stakeholder needs while utilising different methods, tools and indicators 7.2 Engaging clients/stakeholder groups with needs assessment as well as setting and monitoring objectives and actions 7.3 Monitoring mental health with different indicators and indicating the effectiveness of MHP 7.4 Recognising and supporting components of positive mental health and client's/stakeholder group's strengths and resources and supporting those 7.5 Recognising risk factors of mental health
<b>8. Planning skills</b>	8.1 Planning objective-oriented MHP actions and interventions 8.2 Utilising available resources with planning 8.3 Engaging clients/stakeholder groups and other players when planning and developing activities 8.4 Developing new innovations, methods and tools
<b>9. Implementation skills</b>	9.1 Implementing effective MHP methods and interventions 9.2 Providing objective-oriented and targeted MHP actions to and with clients/stakeholder groups as well as part of wider MHP 9.3 Monitoring systematically the planned actions
<b>10. Collaboration skills</b>	10.1 Working in partnership with others beyond organisations, sectors and disciplines while planning and developing MHP actions 10.2 Networking and creating partnerships and utilising different networks 10.3 Working in partnership with clients/stakeholder groups 10.4 Enabling and utilising peer support (experts by experience) in MHP activities
<b>11. Leadership skills</b>	11.1 Leading and supporting MHP actions in practice and in different levels from client work to population level actions 11.2 Guiding systematically objective-oriented and knowledge-based MHP and its actions 11.3 Utilising scientific knowledge in decision-making, in both the health sector and other sectors
<b>12. Evaluation and research skills</b>	12.1 Seeking scientific knowledge to support MHP work and utilising research-based effective interventions 12.2 Mastering different evaluation and research methods and indicators 12.3 Studying and evaluating MHP planning, implementation and impact
<b>13. Advocacy skills</b>	13.1 Influencing by networking and working with different sectors 13.2 Marketing MHP and MHP actions to other stakeholders and players 13.3 Influencing decision makers, decision-making and policies at different levels 13.4 Lobbying for resources needed for MHP actions

## Attitudes and values

Main competencies	Subcompetencies
<b>14. Positive attitude</b>	14.1 Working with an open-minded attitude in MHP actions with different people, population groups and cultures 14.2 Inspiring, encouraging and motivating people 14.3 Recognising and utilising possibilities and resources and strengths 14.4 Renewing and improving ways of working with courage in order to promote and support mental health
<b>15. Holistic approach</b>	15.1 Seeing the client/stakeholder group holistically with strengths and limitations, supporting their own expertise and agency 15.2 Working in a multisectoral and multidisciplinary manner in MHP activities 15.3 Taking into account the biological, psychological, social, spiritual and societal factors that affect mental health 15.4 Promoting client-oriented operating culture
<b>16. Ethical values</b>	16.1 Respecting human rights and strengthening equality 16.2 Acting in an equal manner and respecting differences 16.3 Making human rights visible and realised in MHP actions

## Collaboration and partnership skills in MHP competencies

### 10. Collaboration skills

- 10.1 Working in partnership with others beyond organisations, sectors and disciplines while planning and developing MHP actions
- 10.2 Networking and creating partnerships and utilising different networks
- 10.3 Working in partnership with customers/target groups
- 10.4 Enabling and utilising peer support (experts by experience) in MHP activities

### ► Themes of intersectoral collaboration and partnership work in MHP competencies:

- common aims
- communication and language
- trust, commitment and determination
- resources, leadership, membership structures
- working processes

\*Reference: Tamminen N, Solin P, Barry MM, Kannas L, Kettunen K. (2022) Intersectoral partnerships and competencies for mental health promotion: a Delphi-based qualitative study in Finland, Health Promotion International, 37, 1. Published 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daab096>.

# Implications for MHP workforce development

## ▶ EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- resource illustrating the competencies required in MHP work
- instrument to enhance education and training programmes & guide curriculum and degree planning
- e.g. Mental Health Promotion online course for professional on THL's online training platform (open access)
- e.g. IUHPE MHP-Global Working Group (GWG) Mental Health Promotion Knowledge Competencies

## ▶ WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- assist in identifying training needs of professionals
- self-assessment tool in mapping competency and professional development needs
- support for planning work tasks and job roles in MHP
- level of competency required may depend on the role of the professional - e.g. working in a leadership role vs a more client-oriented role

## ▶ RESEARCH

- examine the MHP competencies in a real practice setting
- e.g. Participatory action research: "Strengthening the capacity, competencies and cooperation in promoting mental health in wellbeing services counties"
- describe the MHP competencies, roles and tasks needed in MHP in the wellbeing services county in Finland
- create an ecosystem modeling describing cooperation and collaboration structures for MHP in the county
- research collaboration between THL, Tampere University of Applied Sciences, University of Jyväskylä and the Wellbeing Service County of Southwest Finland (Funded by the Finnish Work Environment Fund 2023-2024)

Thank you!

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## Moving forward – How to advance MHP capacity and MHP actions

- ▶ Creating cross-sectoral partnerships and alliances in MHP
  - via joint planning, funding and projects; research partnerships
- ▶ Networking
- ▶ Peer support and peer training, study visits/peer learning
- ▶ Joint workshops, seminars and conferences
  
- ▶ Including MHP in education and training programmes
  - for students in vocational education and training, and in higher education
    - \* diverse disciplines (e.g. health and social services, public health, child care, education and guidance, youth work, sport, occupational health)
  - for professionals across diverse sectors
    - \* health and social care, education, community, youth services, sports, arts and culture, occupational health, environment, housing
    - \* utilise online courses and training to allow wide participation and workforce improvement

Thank you!

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