May, 2020

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Blueprint Group
INTRODUCTION

The BluePrint Group is a global joint advocacy, communications and learning coalition consisting of over 750 representatives of governments, international organisations, NGOs, academia and the private sector. The group was formed to encourage greater global collaboration on mental health advocacy, communications and learning, and to enable anyone with a professional interest in mental health and/or in health policy to have a means to link up with others who share this interest.

COVID-19 and mental health updates and resources

United Nations Secretary General launches COVID-19 and mental health policy brief

Two weeks ago the United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, released a United Nations Policy Brief on COVID-19 and the Need for Action on Mental Health. The brief was released with a video from the UNSG and a video from civil society leaders, including some BluePrint Group members. In his video, the UNSG stated that “Mental health services are an essential part of all government responses to COVID-19. They must be expanded and fully funded. Policies must support and care for those affected by mental health conditions, and protect their human rights and dignity. Lockdowns and quarantines must not discriminate against those with poor mental health. As we recover from the pandemic, we must shift more mental health services to the community, and make sure mental health is included in universal health coverage. The United Nations is strongly committed to creating a world in which everyone, everywhere, has someone to turn to for psychological support. I urge governments, civil society, health authorities and others to come together urgently to address the mental health dimension of this pandemic. And I call on governments in particular to announce ambitious commitments on mental health at the upcoming World Health Assembly.”
Following on from this, the World Health Organisation released a statement echoing the UNSG’s call for investment in mental health. It quoted Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the WHO, saying “The impact of the pandemic on people’s mental health is already extremely concerning. Social isolation, fear of contagion, and loss of family members is compounded by the distress caused by loss of income and often employment.”

The United Nations Refugee Agency also released a statement urging for the prioritisation of mental health support in coronavirus response. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, was quoted as saying “COVID-19 is not just a physical health crisis but it is now also triggering a mental health crisis. While many refugees and internally displaced people are remarkably resilient and are able to move forward despite having experienced violence or persecution first-hand, their capacities to cope are now being stretched to the limit. We are now receiving reports of increasing mental health issues and needs among those displaced. Fear of infection, confinement and isolation measures, stigma, discrimination, loss of livelihoods and uncertainty about the future are all contributing factors.”

**World Health Organisation Resources**

As a mental health network, we are committed to actively sharing information on how to address the mental health consequences to this outbreak, including potential for individual and wider spread anxiety. As BluePrint Group members, we would like to share with you the resources available from the World Health Organisation who are the UN agency with the global leadership role in responding to the outbreak. *(For full list of WHO resources see here)*

- [Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak](#) (This document is continually updated and versions will be uploaded to that link.)
- [IASC MHPSS Briefing note on COVID-19](#): Includes messaging for specific populations. Available in Chinese and Arabic (at the bottom of the link)
- [Doing what matters in times of stress: an illustrated guide](#)

**Resources from BluePrint Group members**

For full list of BPG member resources see here.

- [Analysis of COVID-19 Related Funding for Mental Health](#), United for Global Mental Health.
- [Minds United for Mental Health Campaign](#), War Child.
- [CopingWithCOVID webinar series from the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, in partnership with the World Health Organisation and UNICEF](#). The aim is to provide young people genuine people with a platform for genuine connection amid uncertainty, encouraging them to field their questions to the experts from UNICEF and WHO, generate mental health awareness among young people, and strengthen demand for integrated mental health and psychosocial interventions. Webinar recordings are available for session one, two and three.

- [Videos on emotional and mental wellbeing](#), Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy India. (multiple languages available including Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Konkani, Kannada & Malayalam)
- [How understanding your biotype can help you unlock your mental health during a pandemic](#), Centre for Precision Mental Health and Wellness, Stanford School of Medicine.
- [Early Childhood Focused COVID-19 Resources](#), Early Childhood Development Action Network.
- [COVID-19 and Dementia policy paper](#), Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI)
- [Mind the Gap Campaign and Resources](#), Human Rights in Mental Health-FGIP.
  - [Joint Position Statement on Equality and Equity in COVID-19](#)
  - [Position Statement FGIP on COVID-19 on mental health](#)
  - [Guidelines for directors of residential care settings](#)
  - [Guidelines for clients of residential care settings](#)
- [Mandate Health Empowerment Initiative COVID-19 Support](#)
- [Waves for Change COVID-19 response](#)
- [Stories from the field: Providing mental health and psychosocial support during the COVID 19 pandemic](#), MHIN blog series. Including:
  - [COVID-19 and family mental health: SPANS’ preparedness and response plan in Zimbabwe](#)
  - [BasicNeeds Pakistan: Supporting mental health in under-resourced communities during COVID-19](#)
  - [Staff support during COVID-19: MHPSs initiatives from Miri General Hospital, Malaysia](#)
  - [Mental Health support for migrants in Trinidad and Tobago](#)
  - [Technology as an ally and barrier: supporting older adults in Ecuador and Spain during COVID-19](#)
  - [Empowering parents: support for children with severe intellectual disabilities in Cape Town](#)
- [Mental health and COVID-19: change the conversation](#), The Lancet Psychiatry.
- [Grief and bereavement during COVID-19](#), Public Health England
Webinar Series

Every Tuesday (09:00 EST; 14:00 BST; 15:00 CET; 15:00 SAST; 18:30 IST.) BPG members will join other global experts, policy makers and those at the frontline in the response to discuss the latest evidence and impact of COVID-19 on mental health and how to address it.

Sign up to the seminar series. Questions please contact COVID19seminars@unitedgmh.org.

All recording of previous webinars can be found here:
6. Mental Health & COVID-19 Beyond Face to Face: Digital and Other Ways to Provide Mental Health Service Delivery and Support. Webinar recording here, notes here.
7. Mental Health & COVID-19 People in vulnerable situations: protecting people in institutions, older people, and other groups - see the recording here, and notes here.

Upcoming topics include:

- **JUNE 2 - Mental health & Children, Youth and Carers**
  Speakers will include UNICEF, WHO and civil society organisations on the front line of engaging communities and individuals.
  Confirmed speakers: Zeinab Hijazi, UNICEF; Chiara Servilli, WHO; Aimee Wade, youth campaigner, Belize; Josiah, youth campaigner, New Zealand

- **JUNE 9 - Mental Health & Human Rights at the time of COVID19**
  Speakers will include Dainius Puras, Special Rapporteur on Right to Health, Human Rights Watch and academics researching this topic.

To sign up to any of the webinars above please follow this link, if you have any questions please email covid19seminars@unitedgmh.org.

BluePrint Group updates

BluePrint Group Calls

The May BluePrint Group call notes are available here and recording of the call is available here. The June call will be held as a webinar, which can be accessed through your computer via this link. Please note if you would like to see the full list of participants on the call, you must join the call via the go to webinar app on your computer or phone. If you would like to contribute an item to the call agenda please email us.

Details of the next few calls are available below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call Type</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Register link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June call</td>
<td>Tuesday 9th June, 4pm BST</td>
<td>Register here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July call</td>
<td>Wednesday 8th July, 2pm BST</td>
<td>Register here</td>
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<tr>
<td>August call</td>
<td>Wednesday 5th August, 2pm BST</td>
<td>Register here</td>
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Advisory Board

The BluePrint Group Advisory Board elections were held for the Eastern Mediterranean regional position with voting open from Friday 15th until Friday 22nd May. Brigitte Khoury was elected to the position of Eastern Mediterranean regional representative, full voting breakdown available here. She joins the other constituency members and permanent seats on the board. Full terms of reference for the board can be found here. Congratulations to the newly elected board! We’ll update the membership soon on the board’s first meeting.

Coffee conversations

Looking for a new way to network with fellow BPG members? Sign up to our coffee conversations and be paired at random with another BluePrint Group member, so that you can have a video call and learn more about your colleagues work.

Keep up to date with the BluePrint Group by joining our LinkedIn group:
This group is an informal way of connecting and interacting with BPG members. Please feel free to post useful articles, blogs that you have written, or any other helpful insights. Join via this link.
**BluePrint Group Working Groups**

You can join any working group by registering here.

**Youth Group:**
Over the past couple of months we have finalized on the Terms of Reference and have a draft of a number of action steps for the group to work on for the next year.

Below are some of the key takeaways:

**PURPOSE of the Youth Subgroup**
The subgroup will seek to undertake and promote specific activities relating to child and youth mental health as agreed by the members of the group but especially fitting into the overall purpose of the BluePrint Group.

The subgroup will:

- Be open to any members of the BPG with a special interest in child and youth mental health
- Focus on specific issues identified by the group pertaining to child and youth mental health
- Facilitate the sharing of information and knowledge around child and youth mental health organizations, programs and activities
- Facilitate collaboration and coordination between groups who share common interests

**Next Steps:**
Taking into account the youth group meeting in Kenya and the first call of the BPG Youth Subgroup in April, these are the most commonly recurring points of interest that fit into the overall tenets of this group:

**Overarching Interest:** Input and elevate the overall BPG Child and Youth Subgroup into key events, discussions, and decisions of the larger BPG.

- Youth Engagement Guidelines (also useful for other existing groups within the BPG)
- Youth Engagement Group (A key ask by young people in Kenya)

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**Financing group:**
The BPG Financing Working Group has concluded its opening consultation on how the Working Group should run and what the focus on efforts should be in 2020. All of the feedback is being compiled and a draft terms of reference and 2020 plan will be circulated to the Working Group soon. The Working Group has also appointed Mathew Mutiso, Founder Director, Nanga, Kenya, as the Co-Chair of the Working Group alongside James Sale, Policy, Advocacy and Financing Manager, United for Global Mental Health.

**Humanitarian group:**
The Humanitarian group have a call planned for Thursday 28th May at 3pm CET. During the meeting, they will discuss the following agenda points:

- Coordination with IASC MHPSS RG
- Updates
- #MindsUnitedforMentalHealth campaign
- COVID-19 Policy brief
- UNSG Policy Brief and Speak your Mind Open Letter
- Information/activities from members

Please join using this link.
Global Moments

World Health Assembly Wrap Up

In the run up to the 73rd World Health Assembly, the UN Secretary General called on member states to include mental health in their COVID-19 response plans. During the WHA, we were encouraged to see a number of member states and Non-State Actors refer explicitly to the need to include mental health in the COVID-19 response. What’s more, the number of statements explicitly mentioning mental health increased significantly from last year (22 to 33 statements), despite the limited length of statements by participants and the overwhelming desire of most of them - if not all - to call for equitable access to a COVID-19 vaccine (which dominated the comments).

The Netherlands led the way among member states, calling for a strong, unified response to COVID-19, and in particular on mental health and psycho-social care. Canada highlighted the continued need to address mental health and wellbeing, stating ‘no one should suffer in silence’. Iceland demonstrated their vision by speaking of the necessity to monitor the impact of the pandemic on people’s mental health and wellbeing.

Sierra Leone, recalling their experience of Ebola, stressed the need to provide psychosocial support during the pandemic. Sweden called for uninterrupted and affordable access to essential health services, including mental health, with the leave no one behind global commitment being tested like never before. And Portugal continued its role as a champion for human rights and mental health reiterating the intrinsic link between them.

A growing number of civil society organisations called for governments to act on protecting the right to good mental health, and to fully integrate mental health services into COVID-19 global and national responses. The number of Non-State Actors (NSAs) who mentioned mental health increased from 12 in 2019 to 16 this year.

"Mental health impacts of the virus must also be considered, including the effects of isolation and loneliness, fear, anxiety, depression, domestic violence and substance misuse."
- International Union for Health Promotion and Education

"We call on WHO to support member states to....support physical activity and promote good mental health in order to avert longer term health crises and support resilience to this and future pandemics."
- World Obesity Federation

Civil society rightly highlighted vulnerable populations who require specific mental health protection and support such as children (International Pediatric Association, World Vision International), older people (HelpAge International, Alzheimer’s Disease International), healthcare professionals (International Council of Nurses, The International Hospital Federation, International Pharmaceutical Students’ Federation), all front line workers, and in particularly women (Public Services International, International Women’s Health Coalition), and all people with psychosocial disabilities who are at particular risk (Sightsavers).

The profound effect COVID-19 is having on people’s mental health was made clear to the WHA by the International Association of Suicide Prevention: ‘[the] pandemic may lead to an increase in suicidal behaviour due to the development or exacerbation of known risk factors for self-harm such as mental ill-health, social isolation, entrapment, grieving, loneliness, hopelessness, unresolved anger, stigma, unemployment, financial strain, domestic violence, and excessive alcohol consumption.’

For more information see the BluePrint Group event list.
Open Letter on Mental health

The open letter to global leaders calling for governments to integrate mental health into all COVID-19 responses was launched last month, powered by Speak Your Mind. The letter calls on governments urgently step up to the **PROTECT** the right for all to good physical and mental health and **SCALE** up additional support especially for those most at risk of mental ill health during the pandemic including health care workers and other first responders, those economically impacted, COVID-19 survivors, and society’s most vulnerable. The letter will signal to governments, the world over, that civil society, business leaders and other influencers want them to make mental health a priority. Over 900 people have signed including the likes of Kenneth Roth, the Executive Director of Human Rights Watch; Sir Ian Cheshire, Chairman of Barclays Bank UK; Pohiva Tuionetoa, the Prime Minister of Tonga; Henrietta Fore, Executive Director of UNICEF; Richard Curtis, Stephen Fry, Zak Williams, and many others. You can see the full list of signatories and further information about the open letter [here](#).

You can also follow the conversation at #TimeToInvest and @gospeakyourmind.

#MindsUnitedforMentalHealth

The #MindsUnitedforMentalHealth initiative led by War Child and supported by the BPG Humanitarian Working Group aims to initiate and facilitate a meeting to discuss the corona response agenda for the most vulnerable children and families, including protection and psychosocial support. To frame the purpose of the initiative, the group prepared a fact sheet. You can help disseminate the message of the thought leaders by sharing the messages of the videos in the social media toolkit we prepared.

Philanthropy: a crucial actor in global mental health report

Despite the rising burden of disease and costs in low- and middle income-countries, mental disorders attract few resources. With governments often under economic pressure, external actors could offer opportunities to unlock additional resources. A new publication from the London School of Economics and Political Science presents novel analyses of philanthropic contributions for mental health in 156 low- and middle-income countries between 2000 and 2015 and identifies challenges and opportunities for increasing their impact for sustainable financing for mental health.

Also available, a [visual blog](#) and an [infographic](#) providing a visual summary of the publication. For further information: Valentina Iemmi v.iemmi@lse.ac.uk

Caregiver Mental Health Knowledge Sharing Series

This global initiative - facilitated by Food for the Hungry and funded by the Eleanor Crook Foundation and the USAID Office of Food for Peace was launched last month. This Knowledge Sharing Series aims to connect practitioners, researchers, advocates, funders, and other stakeholders interested in the mental health of children’s caregivers and its impact on psychosocial, health, nutrition, and food security outcomes. Members of the Community of Practice will collaborate to: Promote the exchange of knowledge, evidence, and resources between stakeholders on caregiver mental health, Identify opportunities for increased attention to and funding for integration of mental health interventions into health and nutrition programming; and Drive future research and implementation to fill current gaps. Please visit [www.caregivermentalhealth.org](http://www.caregivermentalhealth.org) or email caregivermentalhealth@fh.org to find out more and to get involved.
Opportunities for members

Grand Challenges Canada is seeking a Learning Platform to support their Global Mental Health innovators.

The Global Mental Health Learning Platform/Youth Support Platform will be responsible for providing non-financial support to the portfolio of Global Mental Health innovators funded by Grand Challenges Canada. The successful platform team will work to accelerate and track the impact of the community of innovators, while providing technical support to enable individual projects to work towards and achieve sustainable impact at scale. Further details can be found [here](#). Bids are due June 2, 2020 at 5:00PM EST

The Department of Psychiatry at the University of Oxford are leading a research project to train young peer supporters to help others during the COVID-19 crisis.

With partners at YouthEra, McPin and Imperial College London, they will deliver co-designed online peer support training for young people. They will explore the impact of the training on their mental health and wellbeing, and their sense of control and agency in this challenging time. This project has been developed in conjunction with young people, and the Department’s Young Person’s Advisory Board will work as our partners throughout the project.

Please feel free to share the following resources with your networks. The recruitment materials can be accessed [here](#) and more information about the study can be found at: oxneurosec.com/peersupport. The team at the University of Oxford are looking for young people aged 16 -18 years old, who live in the UK, are fluent in English, and interested in being trained to support their peers. Please contact the study lead Dr Gabriela Pavarini (gabriela.pavarini@psych.ox.ac.uk) or the wider research team at peer.support@maillist.ox.ac.uk for further information.

BluePrint Group Members

- The BPG is continuing to grow and diversify, you can see the full list of members [here](#).
- This month we have had 34 new members join, with 3 new countries; Greece, Iran, and Mauritius. The BPG now has members based in 66 countries.
- Over the next few months we will be working to continue to diversity BPG membership, in particular from under-represented regions. If you can put us in touch with potential new members please [let us know](#) or share this link: [http://eepurl.com/gumkeP](http://eepurl.com/gumkeP)
Welcome to new members

The BluePrint Group now has over 750 members. Anyone can sign up to the group via this link. A full list of our members is available here.

Welcome to new members from:

- AIM Youth Mental Health
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American University of Beirut
- A.S. Watson Group
- CAJED
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Care Quality Improvement Ltd
- CorStone
- Emmanuel Hospital Association
- Foundation d’Harcourt
- Frontline AIDS
- Greek Association of Alzheimers Research
- Institute of Social Work
- IPFAR
- IRC
- Johnson & Johnson
- Liberty University
- Medvarsity Online Ltd
- Mercer University
- MSF
- NHS
- Nouvelle Clinique du Bon Pasteur and Clinique Darne
- Olympic Refugee Foundation
- Partners In Health
- Queensland Mental Health Commission
- Resilience 40
- Ten percent Africa
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Windsor