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联合国儿童基金会

携手为儿童



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ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

THE ISSUE

Supporting the mental health and well-being of adolescents is critical for fostering individuals as they transition from childhood to adulthood. This transition lays the foundation for healthy and productive lives.

Children in China are facing increasing stress and competition at school, high parental expectations, and rapidly changing socio-economic conditions. Mental health conditions are a major burden of disease for adolescents in China. According to a recent national study of mental health, almost 25 per cent of adolescents reported feeling mild or severe depression. It is estimated that at least 30 million children and adolescents under 17 years of age in China struggle with emotional or behavioural problems.

The COVID-19 epidemic has also led to adolescents and young adults feeling more isolated, anxious, and concerned about their schooling and career prospects. Compared to adults, young people tend not to seek help for mental health problems due to fears about confidentiality and public stigma; peer pressure and a desire to be self-reliant; and a lack of awareness of mental health problems and mental health services.

UNICEF is working with health services, the education sector, families and adolescents to get young people the mental health and well-being support that they need.

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UNICEF'S KEY MESSAGES

Prevention of mental health problems is more cost-effective and leads to better health and well-being outcomes than treatment alone.

Building on the progress achieved so far, UNICEF is working towards three objectives:



Supporting the integration of mental health services into the primary health care system.



Making sure that when additional care is needed, psychological counselling services are covered by universal health insurance, so that access to care is equally affordable for families.



Empowering adolescents and young people through peer support to develop skills to help each other and reject stigma.



UNICEF is working with adolescents to share the message that:

- It is OK to be not OK – everyone faces challenging times when it comes to mental health and well-being.
- There is a lot that adolescents can do to help themselves, and help each other, maintain their mental health:
 - Reducing stigma around the issue, particularly for those who are seeking help
 - Sharing how they are really feeling with people they trust
 - Forming peer support groups and networks to promote skills, awareness and acceptance about mental health issues while reducing stigma.
- There are resources and services available when mental health care is needed for young people.



UNICEF's messages to parents:

- Children in China are increasingly facing stress, which affects their mental health. Parents need to start a conversation with their children about mental health.
- It is critical that parents help children identify issues and seek support when needed.
- Be aware of adolescents' needs for information and safe platforms for discussing sensitive topics, such as bullying, academic stressors in school, and substance use.
- Develop skills to engage with adolescents around sensitive issues and have the confidence to communicate with their children on these issues.