

Kick-off Event – COVID Cluster Public Health

Building mental health resilience during times of COVID-19

Background

After two years of a global pandemic, the world is faced with new challenges. With prolonged lockdowns, travel restrictions, financial losses, job cuts and the uncertainties of when and if life will return to normal, **mental health problems** are on the rise. There are families who grieve the loss of their loved ones, employees losing their jobs, businesses shutting down and children who suffer from lockdowns.



During a high-level **WHO summit** in July 2021 also, ministers and experts recognized the mental health impact of COVID-19 as a high priority and called for more investment in this area. They even went so far and recommended to place mental health support at the heart of the post COVID-19 social and economic recovery agenda.

Municipalities are key players in fighting the spread of the virus and managing the overall health situation. Consequently, mental health issues are rising among municipal employees, citizens, civil society activists who are psychologically affected by the pandemic. The question is, what can be done on the municipal level and how resilience can be furthered.

Kick-off event

We are pleased to announce the kick-off event on **“Building mental health resilience during times of COVID-19”** on **29th September 2021** from **15.30 to 17.30 CEST (Berlin time)**. The event takes place in our [Connective Cities Community](#).

The event is designed with urban practitioners and for the practical work in the municipalities. The following topics can be discussed:

- What are the municipal challenges in the area of mental health, why is the topic relevant?
- Which mental health interventions in the municipalities can be recommended? What can be done with little resources?
- What can be done in the municipalities to mitigate the mental health consequences of the pandemic?
- How can the target groups be reached, when mental health is considered a taboo for some people?

Speakers:

- **Mr. Stefan Wagler** (Psychologist, Psychotherapist i.t., board of directors of Association of Contextual Behavioural Science German Chapter, trainer for community mental health approaches and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy [ACT]) will provide an introduction into the topic community based approaches for mental health and how social resources can be used for supporting mental health.



- **Ms. Myriam Brunner** (department head) from the Municipality (Landkreis) of Karlsruhe in Germany will focus on how to assure mental health services for refugees during COVID-19 and beyond - resources and challenges in municipal practice -
- **Dr. Aisha-Nusrat Ahmad**, teaching at the Frankfurt University of Applied Science and formerly at the International Psychoanalytic University Berlin as well as extensive project experience in fragile contexts such as Afghanistan and Iraq, will present strategies and ways how to deal with mental health issues.

Results of our first international survey on mental health for municipalities will also be presented.

Follow-up workshops

During the kick-off workshop, municipal practitioners can bring in and discuss their questions and challenges.

Depending on the individual interests and demands, we can organise 2-3 follow-up workshops. In these two hour-sessions selected topics can be discussed more in depth. With the support of experienced consultants and experts, there is the possibility to share individual challenges, discuss possible solutions and learn from others. Ideally, new solutions for mental health services will be identified. This can be e.g. how to address specific target groups, or how to design concrete programmes or interventions on the municipal level.

Municipality representatives, health, mental health practitioners and social workers are highly encouraged to participate. Interested actors from the private sector, civil society and academia are also welcome to participate.

The event will take place in **English**, with translations into **German, Spanish, and Arabic**. The detailed agenda will be provided shortly and can be accessed at the [Connective Cities Community](#).

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us:

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