



OPPORTUNITY

22

SCOPE **WITHIN REACH**

UNCERTAINTIES

Systems, Values

MEGATRENDS

Future Humanity

TRENDS

Community-based Solutions
Community Engagement & Volunteerism
Human–Human
Longevity & Vitality
Mental Health

SECTORS IMPACTED

Agriculture & Food
Automotive, Aerospace & Aviation
Communication Technologies & Systems
Consumer Goods, Services & Retail
Data Science, AI & Machine Learning
Digital Goods & Services
Education
Health & Healthcare
Immersive Technologies
Materials & Biotechnology

What if neighbourhoods were key to accessible mental health?

CIRCLE UP

Community-based mental health support groups provide an informal and accessible option for adults to seek and share mental health concerns, reduce stigma, create social support, and foster social cohesion.





WHY IT MATTERS TODAY

Mental illness can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, location, income, social status, race, or religion.⁵²⁸ Barring spikes in mental health conditions caused by crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic, one in eight people around the world live with a mental health disorder⁵²⁹ and one in four receive treatment for anxiety.⁵³⁰ In a survey conducted worldwide, nine out of ten people believe mental health is as important as, if not more important than, physical health,⁵³¹ but barriers that people face, such as bias and stigma, mean they often hesitate to seek help.⁵³² Depression is particularly prevalent, and mental disorders worldwide result in one in every six years of life being lived with a disability.⁵³³ A mental health disorder becomes a disability when it lasts a long time and hinders meaningful participation and engagement in everyday life and society.⁵³⁴

Around the world, low-income countries face a shortage of mental health staff, with fewer than 1 per 100,000 people compared to over 60 in high-income countries.⁵³⁵ The number of mental health workers in high-income countries already highlights the need for more professionals, a similar case is seen in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, indicating a global challenge. While obtaining accurate data on mental health in the MENA region is challenging because of under-reporting, lack of diagnosis, or low awareness,⁵³⁶ the 2020 WHO Mental Health ATLAS reports 50 workers per 100,000 in the UAE suffering from mental health problems, followed by Lebanon with 42 workers per 100,000 people, Bahrain and Qatar with less than 30 workers per 100,000, Kuwait, Oman, and Saudi Arabia with less than 20 per 100,000 people each, and Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco with less than 6 per 100,000 each.⁵³⁷

Peer support, which can be considered as a form of mental health service, plays a crucial role in mental health⁵³⁸ as peers often provide access to additional services such as legal help, housing or food⁵³⁹ while also making an impact on the effectiveness of mental healthcare.⁵⁴⁰ While the effectiveness of peer support for adolescent (14–24 years) mental health care requires further study,⁵⁴¹ in a survey in the US, 81% of respondents (adults) were interested in getting access to mental health services through an online peer support community,⁵⁴² and the Alliance for Rights and Recovery (formerly the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS)) found an average reduction of over 43% in inpatient services for clients receiving peer support.⁵⁴³



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There is growing demand for more mental health funding at the community level.⁵⁴⁴ Beyond that, self-supporting community support groups that partner with mental health professionals and take place within walking or accessible distance enable adult residents to develop personal and community social capital for mental health. This, in turn, increases resilience and fosters a willingness to seek additional help when mental health challenges move beyond unemployment, stress, anxiety, and general day-to-day related mental health challenges towards a diagnosable medical mental disorder that is treatable or managed with medicine.⁵⁴⁵

BENEFITS

Communities globally foster safe spaces for sharing mental health experiences, enhancing health and social bonds, reducing stigma, and building resilience.

RISKS

Group membership may deter some from seeking vital medical treatment, risking harm and potentially worsening their condition. Community members' privacy is not guaranteed and may become a barrier to reducing stigma.

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9 out of 10

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