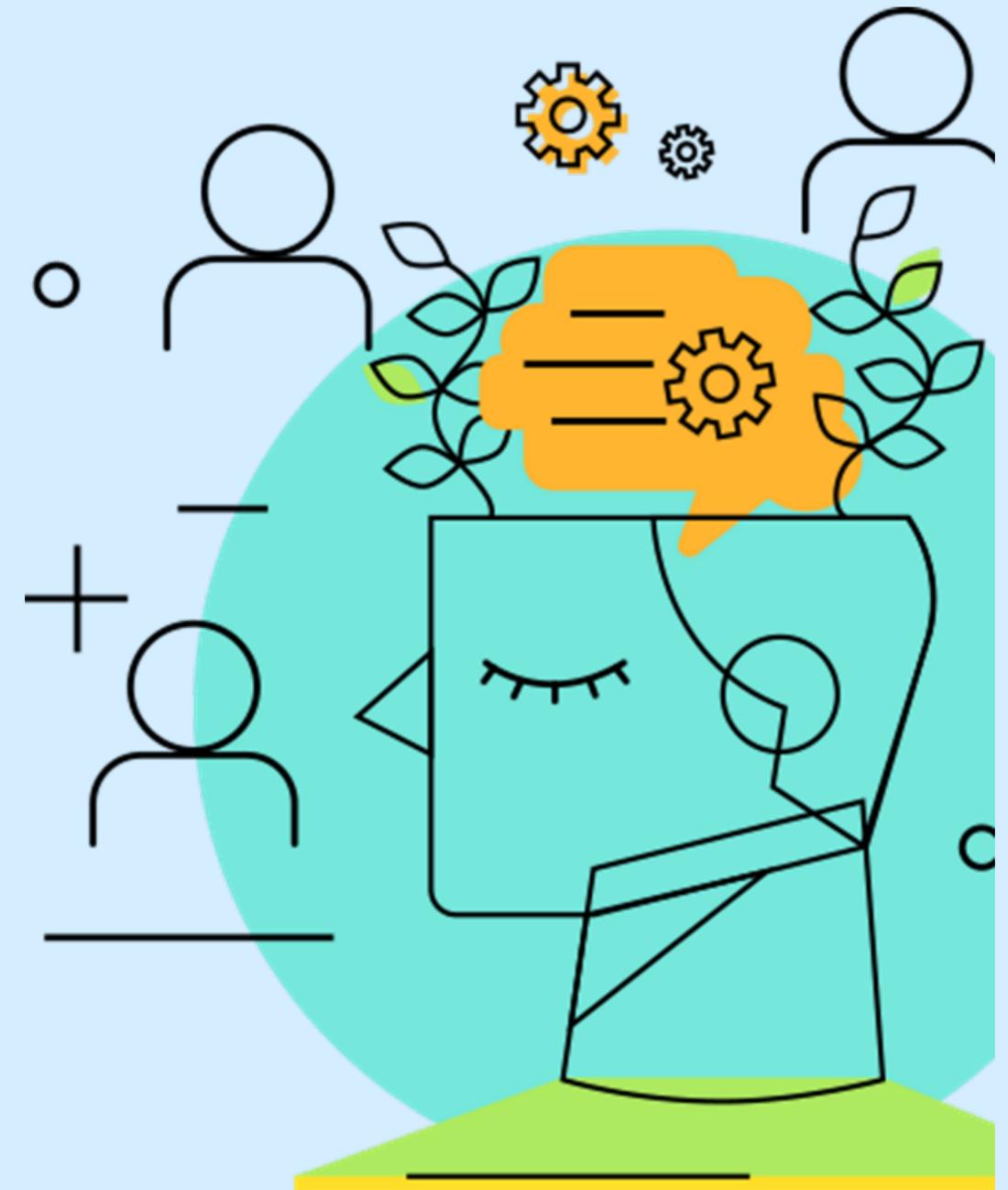


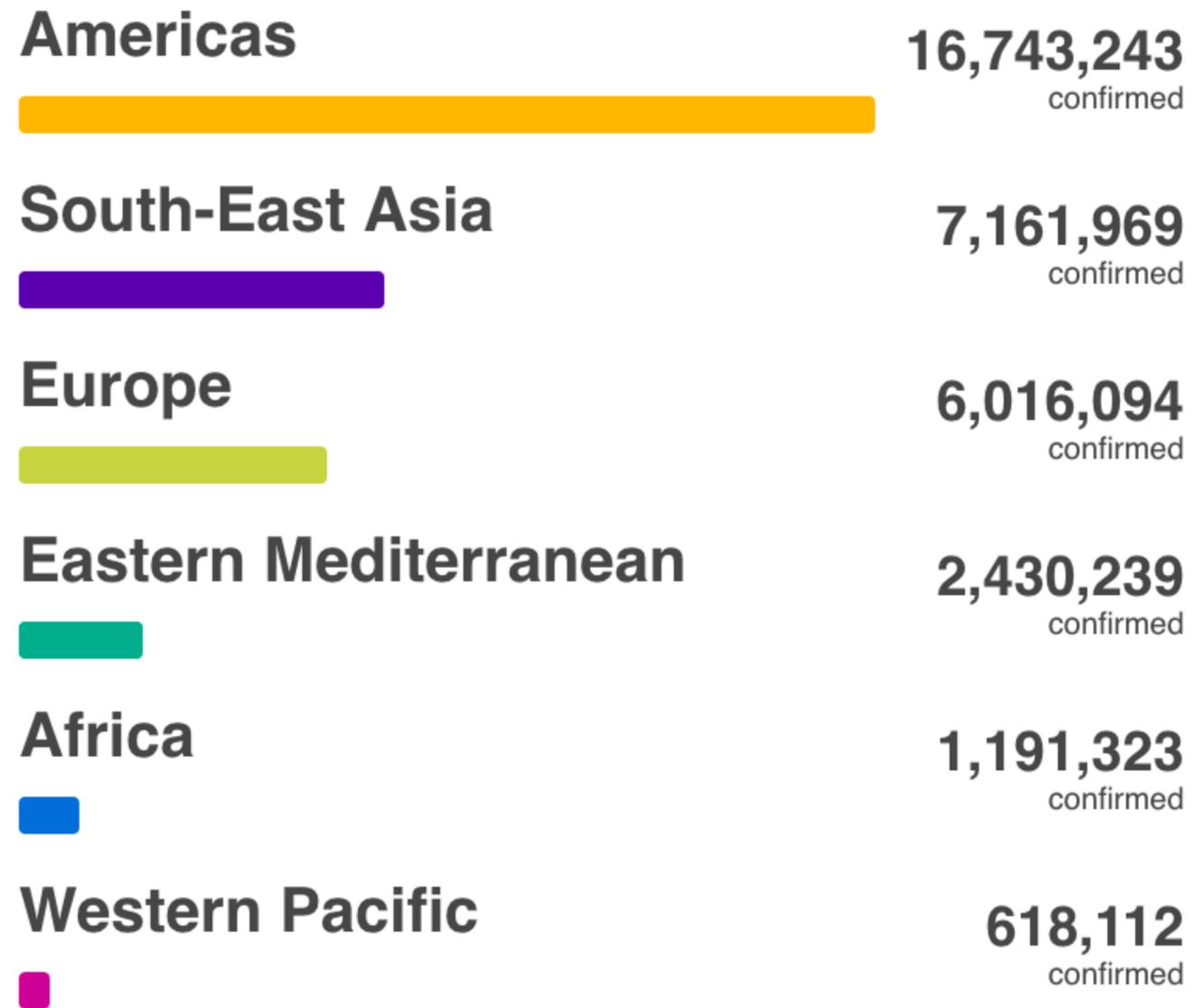


# Public policy responses to address the mental health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence from Latin America

**Matias Irrarazaval MD MPH**  
Director of Mental Health  
Ministry of Health  
Chile

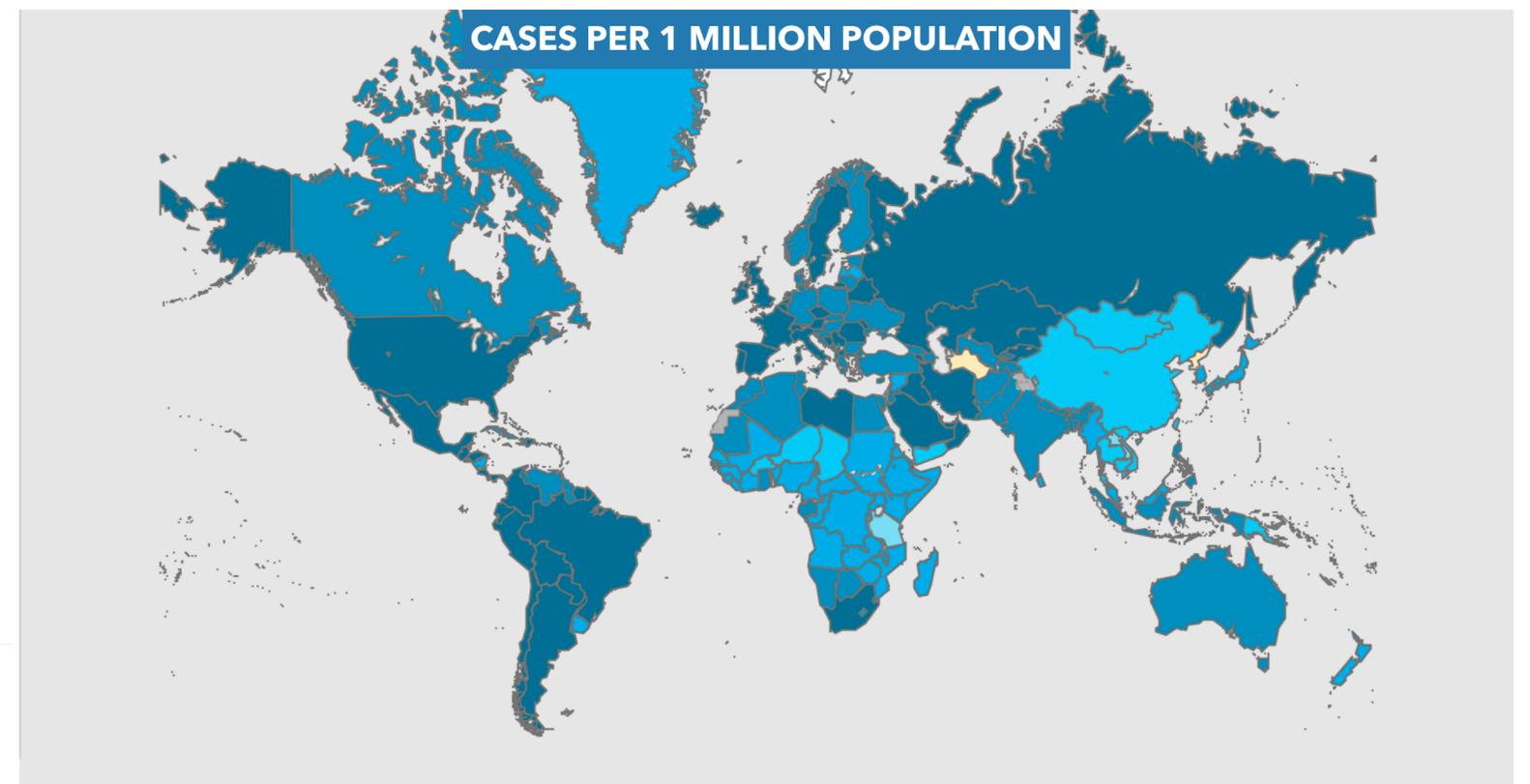
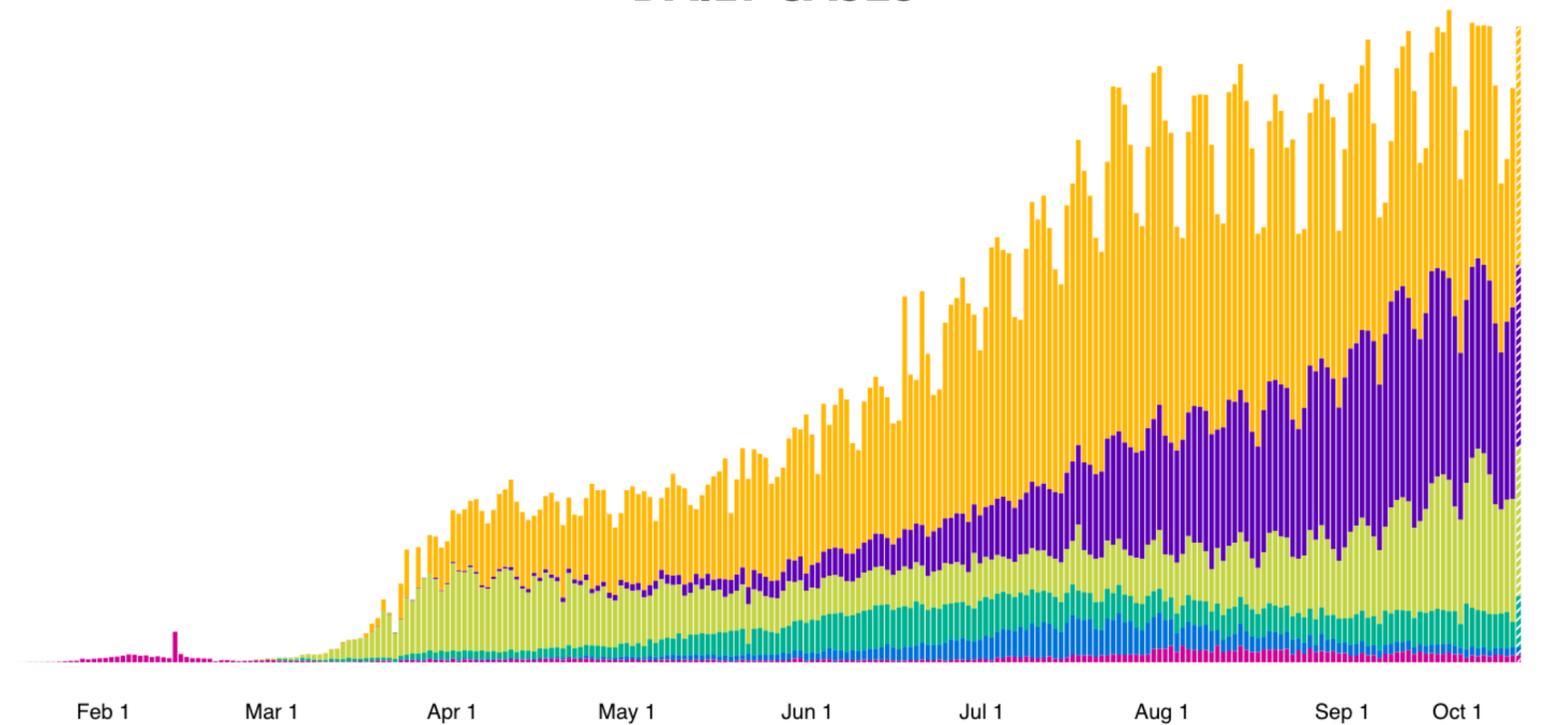


# Situation by WHO Region



Source: World Health Organization

## DAILY CASES



Source: Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization

# MHPSS is recognized by countries as an integral component of their COVID-19 response

3/13



World Health Organization

89%



reported MHPSS as part of their national COVID-19 response plans.

2/3<sup>rd</sup>



of the countries have a multisectoral MHPSS coordination platform for COVID-19 response engaging health, social, education, NGOs and other stakeholders

Only  
17%



of these countries have ensured full additional funding for MHPSS covering all activities.

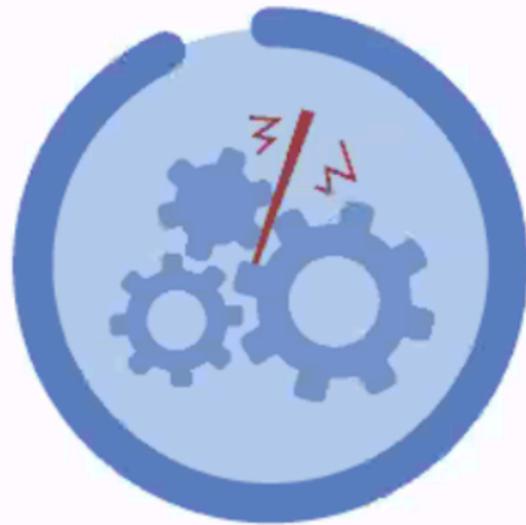
# Situation of mental, neurological and substance use services during the COVID-19 Pandemic

4/13



World Health Organization

93%



of countries reported disruptions in one or more of their services for MNS disorders

nearly  
3/4



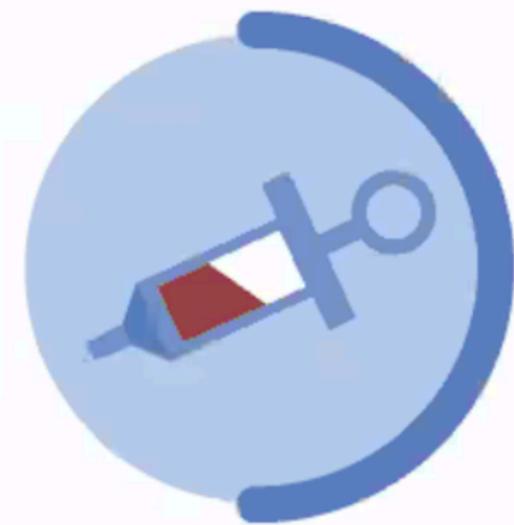
reported at least partial disruptions to school and workplace mental health services

60%



of all psychotherapy and counselling services were partially disrupted

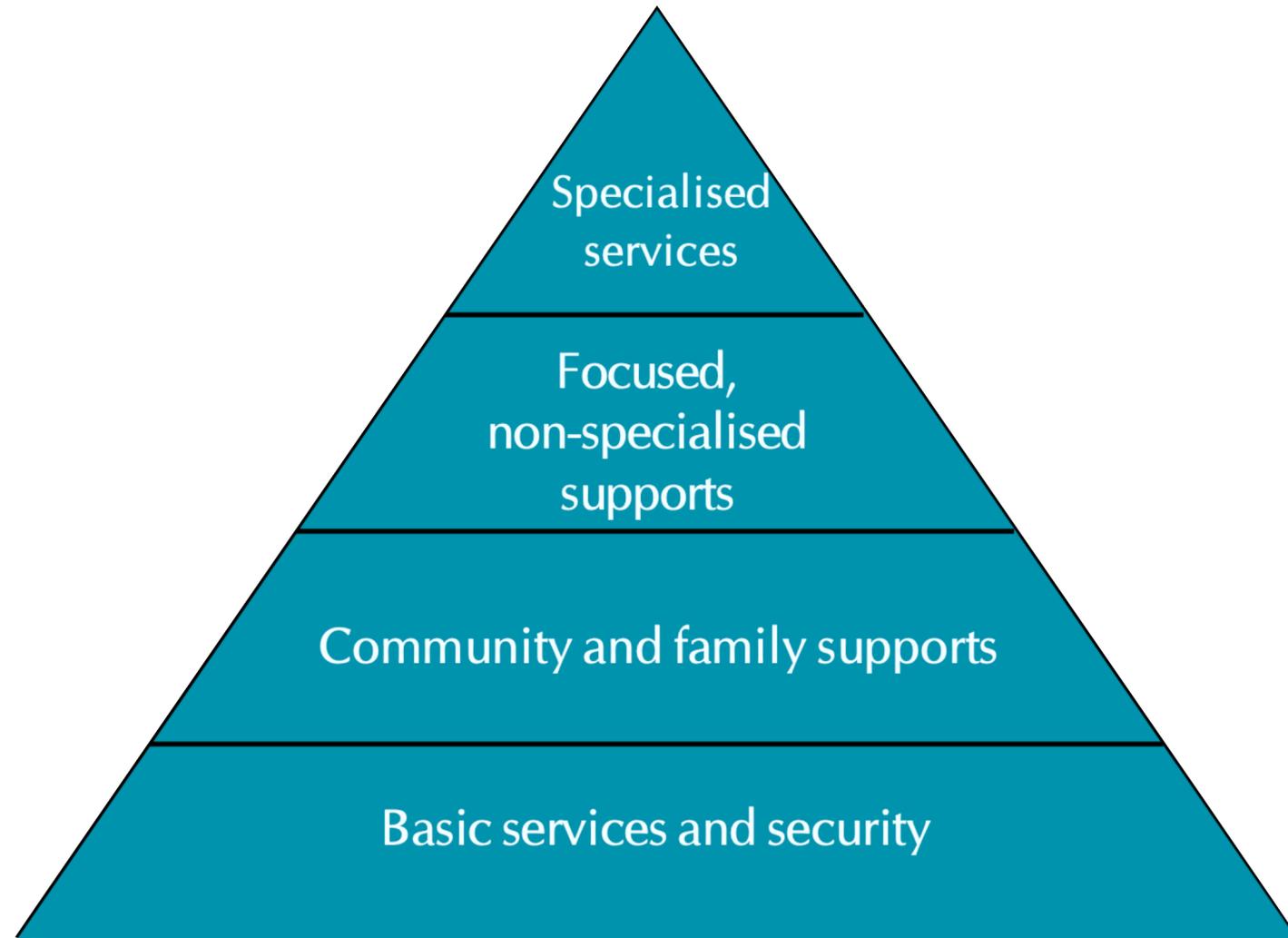
more than  
50%



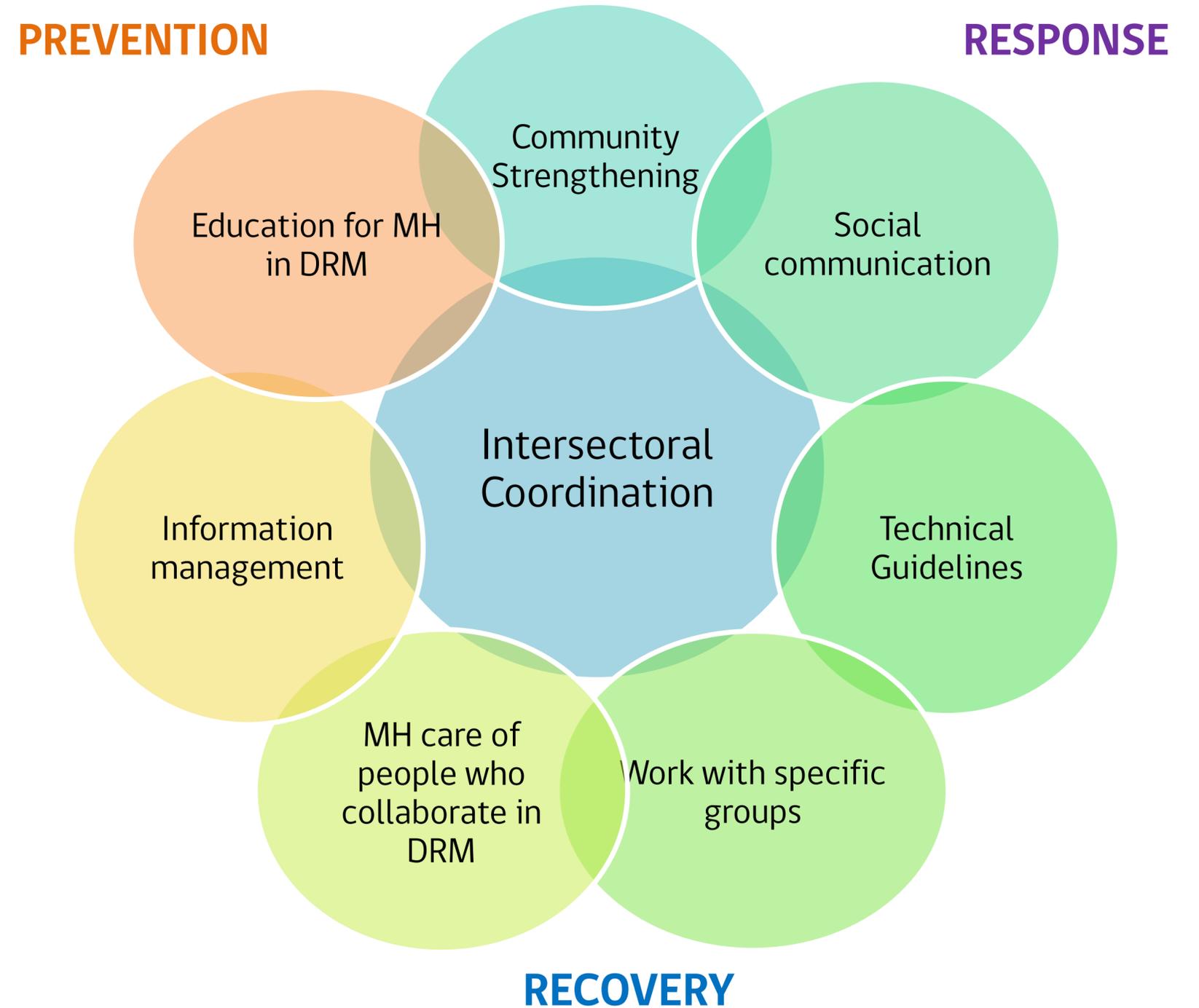
of countries had their overdose prevention and management programmes and critical harm reduction services disrupted



Intervention pyramid for mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies (IASC/WHO)



Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Framework





## SaludableMente (*'Healthy Minds Initiative'*): A Presidential Initiative

**Objective:** to address mental health needs and provide psychosocial support during the pandemic in Chile.

Commissions: (1) Strengthening Health System; (2) Strengthening Community Mental Health; (3) Risk Communication; (4) Healthcare workers and workplace; (5) Alcohol and substance use prevention; (6) Mental Wellbeing Support Service.

31  
PARTICIPANTS

Academic institutions  
Scientific Societies  
Civil society  
Parliamentarians  
8 ministries



# SaludableMente: Adapting Services and Programs

## GOALS

- Whole-of-society approach to promote, protect and care for mental health.
- Extend availability of emergency mental health and psychosocial support.
- Support recovery from COVID-19 by building quality mental health services.

## BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

- Difficult communication about COVID-19 in ways that promote mental health and psycho-social well-being.
- Organizations of patients and PWLE were not invited from the beginning to participate in the advisory group.
- Extra budget was not considered from the beginning.

24  
STRATEGIES

112  
ACTIONS

x5

Increase in  
MH Budget

---

# Considerations

- The mid- and long-term health, economic, and social consequences due to the COVID-19 pandemic are expected to have a lasting, negative effect on mental health.
- This disadvantageous scenario may also provide an opportunity for bolstering mental health reform in the Region as seen in other countries.
- Crisis situations have been seen as an opportunity to change traditional mental health care and build more person-centered systems of care, and to mobilize media attention and make mental health a public health priority.
- More can be, and should be, done for those living in psychiatric hospitals.





# Conclusions

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1. The incredible response is leaving some people behind.
2. An opportunity exists to prepare and transform the system.
3. Focusing on health and mental health care providers is key.
4. The mental health impacts are delayed, complex, and long term.
5. Fostering resiliency is important.





**Ministerio de  
Salud**

**Gobierno de Chile**