IS AN EU-WIDE APPROACH TO THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS NECESSARY?

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tasc | Think-tank for action on social change

FEPS | FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN PROGRESSIVE STUDIES

Policy study

❏ Mental health service provision in France, Ireland & Poland, 2020 - 2022

❏ National / European surveys on mental health

❏ Pandemic's impact on service delivery

❏ 33 semi-structured interviews between April-August 2022

The mental health sector …

- ❑ Characterised by low status, stigma & taboo

- ❑ Lacks capacity

- ❑ Workforce in perpetual crisis

- ❑ Focuses on medical/hospital /acute

- ❑ Lacks local/community provision

- ❑ Lack of innovation/research

- ❑ Relative neglect of preventative mental health

- ❑ Conflates wellbeing promotion/ prevention / treatment

- ❑ Lacks targeted support for vulnerable groups

- ❑ Has barriers to access

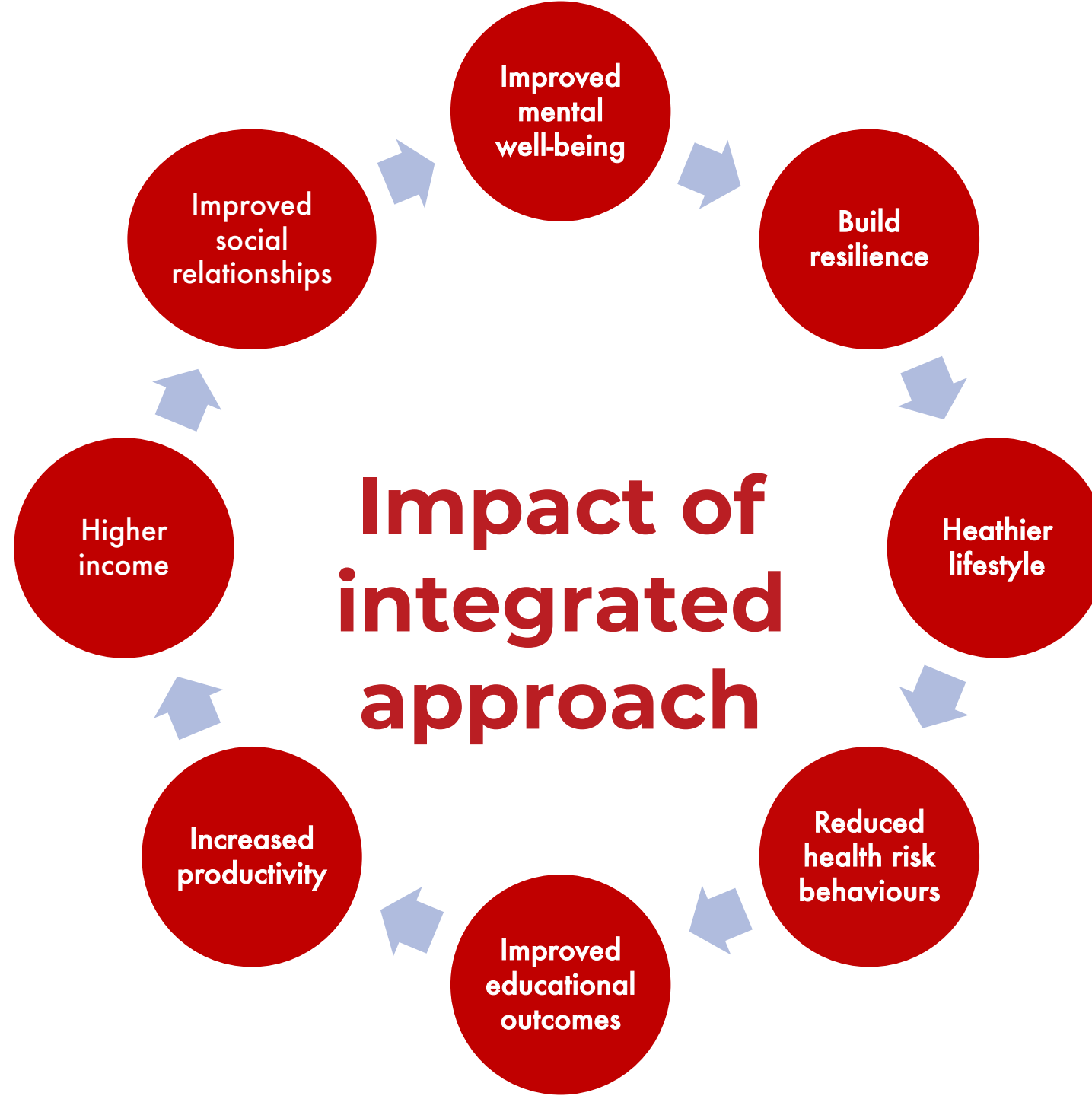- ❑ Fails to respond to social determinants and inequalities

Creating EU-wide consensus on mental health

1. A human right

2. It has value (without recovery, a resilient Europe unlikely)

3. Social determinants are crucial in policy response

4. A collective responsibility of all member states at the centre of government

Social determinants of mental health

Racial discrimination and social exclusion; adverse early life experiences; poor education; unemployment, underemployment, and job insecurity; poverty, income inequality, neighbourhood deprivation; poor access to sufficient healthy food; poor housing quality and housing instability; poor access to health care; inadequate or unequal access to transportation; exposure to violence, conflict, and war in childhood or adulthood; mass incarceration and poor relations between law enforcement and communities; environmental air, water, or land pollution; climate change; sexism and other forms of non–race-based discrimination; and adverse or unsupportive features of the workplace.

(Compton and Shim, 2015)

Impact of integrated approach

- Improved mental well-being
- Build resilience
- Heathier lifestyle
- Reduced health risk behaviours
- Improved educational outcomes
- Increased productivity
- Higher income
- Improved social relationships

Members states want the EU to:

1. Lead on improving public awareness & reducing stigma

2. Set standards, guide and regulate

3. Create and facilitate cross-border exchange of best practice, data-sharing and conduct pan-European longitudinal surveys

4. Target funding e.g. digital innovation, rural areas, vulnerable groups

EU-level guidance on policy

1. Foster collaboration

2. Maintain strategic focus on social determinants/inequalities

3. Make mental health integral to ALL policy

4. Incorporate mental health interventions into mainstream care pathways

5. Develop mental health workforce strategy

6. Nurture mental health 'upstream'

Next EU level steps…

1. Design mental health implementation plans

2. Set up Oversight Committee for member states planning to monitor progress

3. Set priorities and targets for mental health outcomes

4. Develop EU-level governance framework to mimic rapid response to Covid

5. Ensure equity of access/coverage