

# Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

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- The prevalence of mental health conditions is expected to more than double in a humanitarian crisis
- In conflict affected areas more than one in five suffers from mental health conditions such as depression or anxiety
- Every 40 second someone dies from suicide. Experiencing violence, abuse or loss are strong associated with suicidal behaviour.

Although mental health and psychosocial needs are not always visible, they are nevertheless real, urgent and, in some cases, life-threatening. Mental health conditions are among the leading causes of ill-health and disability worldwide. Yet nearly two-thirds of people with known mental health and psychosocial needs never seek help, due to a lack of access to care and treatment, and the stigma surrounding this issue. In 2019 WHO estimated that more than 80% of people with mental health conditions are without any form of quality, affordable mental health care. At the same time, 800,000 people die due to suicide every year, and it is the second leading cause of death among young people.

Armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies have an immense long-term impact on mental health and psychosocial wellbeing. Rates of mental health conditions increase extensively after emergencies and especially in situations of armed conflict. Psychosocial difficulties increase too when, for instance, people are separated from or lose members of their family or friends, living conditions become very difficult and people are exposed to violence and cannot access assistance. Emergencies affect or destroy community and family resources and undermine personal coping strategies and social connections, which would normally support people. Human, social and economic consequences are long-term and far-reaching and affect entire communities and societies.

Most people show resilience and are able to manage their distress provided that they can activate their personal coping strategies and have access to basic services and external resources, such as the support of their families, friends and community. Early and appropriate mental health and psychosocial support helps prevent distress from developing into more severe conditions. Children face particular risks if their mental health and psychosocial needs are not addressed early. People with severe and/or chronic mental health conditions may find their condition gets worse in certain contexts and they need additional help. However, local mental health and psychosocial support services are under great strain in all contexts or may not exist at all. Even where services and support are available, access may be extremely difficult because of their location, the financial cost, security issues, poor awareness and the stigma associated with mental health.

*This information provided is part of the [2019 RESOLUTION: Addressing mental health and psychosocial needs of people affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies](#).*