

Mental health is a key component of the action plan in response to the Independent Child Safeguarding Review. The aim is to implement mental health services in all programmes to prevent abuse, build resilience, and provide immediate support to children, young people or persons who have experienced abuse.



IMMEDIATE ACTIONS & TARGETS

- Provide direct individual mental health and psychosocial support for children, young people and others who have experienced abuse.
- Enhance mental health expertise by strengthening expert networks on a local, regional and global level.
- Use national trainers to improve the skills of local social workers and mental health practitioners.
- Build on the work of the Global Programme Expert Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, based within SOS Children's Villages in Italy.



IN PRACTICE

- In 2019, SOS Children's Villages started the Global Programme Expert Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support. This is a global network of professionals charged with mainstreaming mental health support in our programmes worldwide.
- The expert group implements training, networking and research on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for children in our care, staff, volunteers and communities affected by trauma and adversity.
- The trainings allow staff to carry out both preventive and curative interventions within children's villages and family strengthening programmes.
- In a pilot phase, members of the expert group trained MHPSS staff in six countries in Eastern and Southern Africa and four in Europe. The next step will be to expand to Latin America and West Africa.



OVERVIEW

- Mental health is as important to children's safety and wellbeing as their physical health. SOS Children's Villages emphasizes mental health as a core component of care.
- The Independent Child Safeguarding Review has created greater awareness of the necessity to mainstream mental health support in each SOS Children's Villages programme location.
- Mental health services will be implemented to prevent abuse, build resilience and provide support to children and young people who have experienced abuse.
- The support includes access to mental health professionals who can start the healing process. Today this access does not exist in many countries with higher-risk profiles.
- Local social workers and mental health staff will be continuously trained and certified through a pool of national trainers. Child and youth care practitioners are additionally supported through these trainings.
- The drive to expand mental health services is supported by the Global Programme Expert Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), a joint effort of SOS Children's Villages Italy and the General Secretariat. The expert group focuses on expanding MHPSS for children and youth, caregiver support and stress management, and psychological first aid in emergency situations.