

Efus 2025 Security, Democracy and Cities manifesto recommendations on:

Mental Health

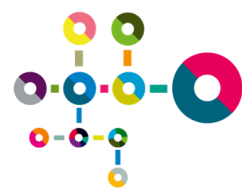
Introduction

In a post-pandemic context, the issue of health and, more specifically, mental health, is more than ever at the heart of the public's concerns. In several European countries, such as Belgium, Estonia, France, Sweden and Norway, the proportion of young people reporting symptoms of depression more than doubled during the pandemic, reaching prevalence levels at least twice those of older age groups. As underlined by the World Health Organisation (WHO), "There is no health without mental health." Indeed, there is an essential correlation between mental health and overall well-being, particularly through the growing recognition of the multiple social and genetic factors that influence psychological health. The absence of this state of well-being can lead to problems not only for the individual, but also for his or her entire environment.

In some cases, untreated mental health problems can lead to risk-taking in terms of individual and collective safety. Local stakeholders note increasing numbers of public disorder incidents are linked to mental health problems. Furthermore, people affected by mental health issues can be victimised (through their risky behaviour or because they are attacked) as do their entourage and broader social environment. Yet another aspect is that feeling insecure in one's town or city can have an impact on people's mental health.

Police officers are not always adequately trained to intervene in situations involving psychological disorders. Elected representatives and professionals in the field are regularly faced with complex, multi-faceted situations - ranging from malaise to violence and critical situations requiring involuntary hospitalisation. Faced with this broad spectrum of problems, it is necessary to adopt innovative, cross-functional approaches within our departments and cooperate with all the relevant players, notably social and educational services, specialised prevention and hospital.

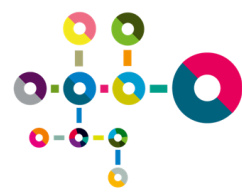
Cities play an important role in facilitating access to care. It is important to integrate mental health issues into local security and crime prevention strategies, while respecting the human rights of people suffering from mental disorders. It is important



that they are not stigmatised.

Recommendations

- Raise awareness among elected officials and other local decision-makers on the importance of mental health and how it is linked to urban security, as well as on the importance of duly training all actors operating in this field.
- Improve inter-knowledge between professionals and the coordination of existing services:
 - Encourage cooperation between different sectors such as psychiatry, addictionology, the social sector, housing, work, the police and municipal authorities.
 - Emphasise the importance of cross-disciplinary action for effective intervention.
- Develop approaches, the culture of players and decision-makers, and specific training for front-line stakeholders and elected representatives/city departments:
 - Develop training for front-line professionals (municipal police officers, mediators, building janitors, etc.) so that they are able to identify disorders at an early stage, and guide or even accompany individuals towards appropriate care.
 - Set up specific training for front-line stakeholders, elected representatives and municipal services to better meet the needs of people affected by mental health problems and dual diagnosis cases (suffering from both mental health and addiction problems); improve intervention methods
- Reinforce specialised resources: Develop young people centres, which are ideal places for detecting and preventing disorders in young people, and strengthen the presence of other professionals involved, such as school nurses.
- Implement mental health promotion initiatives aimed at the general population, to raise awareness of mental health issues, mobilise local residents and reduce the stigmatisation of people with mental health problems.
- Develop training for local professionals (municipal police officers, mediators, building janitors, etc.) so that they are able to identify disorders at an early stage, and guide or even accompany individuals towards appropriate care.



Practices

- City of Montréal's Police Service (SPVM)
"Immersion MTL" is a joint initiative with partners from various sectors to develop an innovative training programme designed to bring police personnel closer to Montreal communities, outside emergency situations.
- First Aid Training in Mental Health - City of Montreuil
Supported by the ARS (Regional Health Agency) and implemented by a psychologist from the Bol d'Air association, this training course has been designed for professionals in contact with the public who have no knowledge of psychiatry (youth workers, educators, reception staff, mediators, building wardens, CPEs at secondary schools, municipal police officers, etc.). Its aim is to mobilise these different players upstream of a crisis, enabling them to identify high-risk situations, establish initial contact adapted to the profile encountered, and provide guidance and support to ensure better care.
- City of Brussels: EMUT project (Équipe mobile d'urgence / Mobile Emergency Team). Training for Brussels police officers and specific procedure for calling in care providers during an intervention involving a person in a psychological crisis.
- The PEGASE scheme in the Gironde region:

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The Programme d'Echanges pour améliorer la Gestion de l'Accès aux Soins en interprofessionnalité (PEGASE) (Exchange programme to improve the management of access to care within the profession) is concerned with the pre-hospital management of psychiatric emergencies. Its aim is to strengthen coordination between the players involved (GPs, private nurses, emergency services, fire brigade, police, medical transport, etc.) to improve patient care in the Gironde region, in particular through training, inter-professional discussion forums and the development of shared tools.



Reference

[Livre blanc pour la sécurité des territoires](#) (FFSU, 2023)