

The evidence base for mental health promotion across the lifespan

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What is mental health?

A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. WHO 2015

Mental health is more than absence of mental health problems



What is mental wellbeing?



- Happiness
 - (Hedonic wellbeing)
- Life satisfaction
 - (Evaluative wellbeing)
- Sense of meaning
- (Eudaimonic wellbeing)

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

Self-rated
mental health Happiness Life
satisfaction Psychological
well-being Social
well-being





**Mental wellbeing
is a determinant of
physical health and
longevity**

The social determinants of mental health are linked to sustainable development goals





EU MENTAL HEALTH POLICY PATHWAY

2005

Green Paper for Mental Health -“Improving Mental Health of the population. Towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union”

2008-2011

The European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being

2011

Adopted Council Conclusions -“The European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being: results and future actions”

2013

The EU framework on mental health

2013-2016

The Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being

2015-2018

The EU Compass for Action on Mental Health and Well-being

2020

Council decision on **EU Mental Health Strategy**

2022

EU Commission **initiative for mental health**

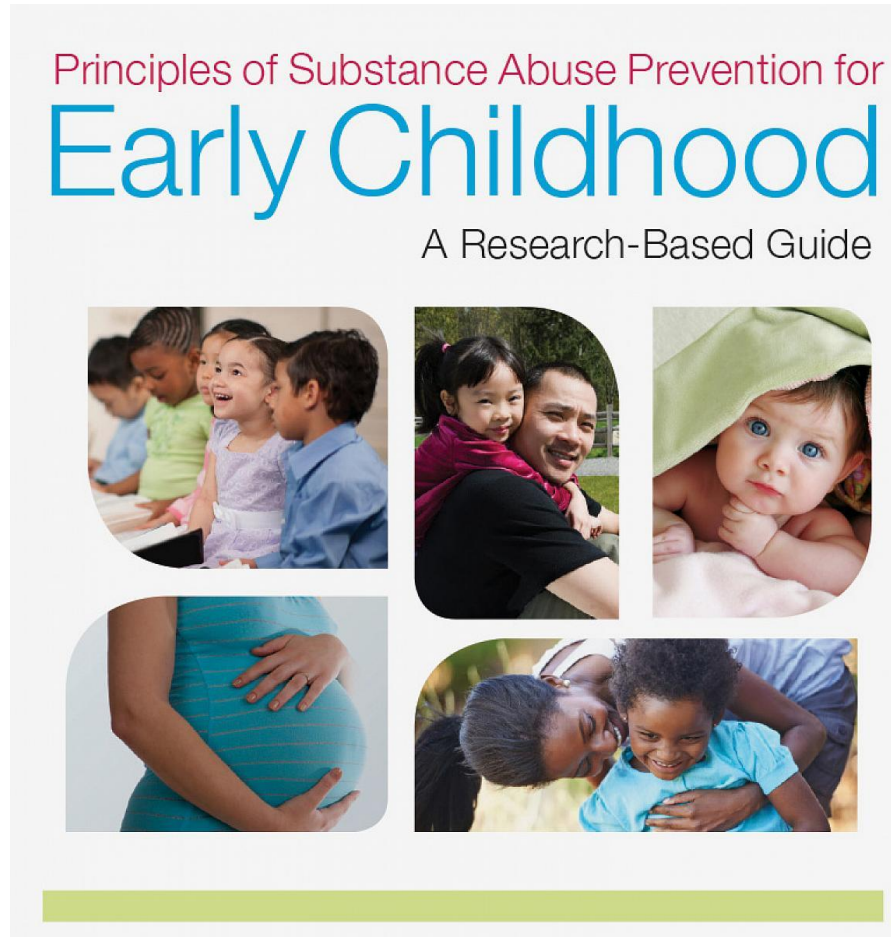
Mental health is shaped early in life

A photograph of two young children. The child in the foreground is a young girl with light skin and blue eyes, wearing a white knitted hat with a pink bow and a dark jacket. She is looking upwards and to the right with a slight smile. The child in the background is a young boy with light skin, wearing a blue knitted hat with white text and a light-colored jacket. He is looking towards the camera with a neutral expression. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Where and how we are born, grow, live, work and age
determines our mental health

NIH/NIDA: A child's first eight years are critical for substance abuse prevention

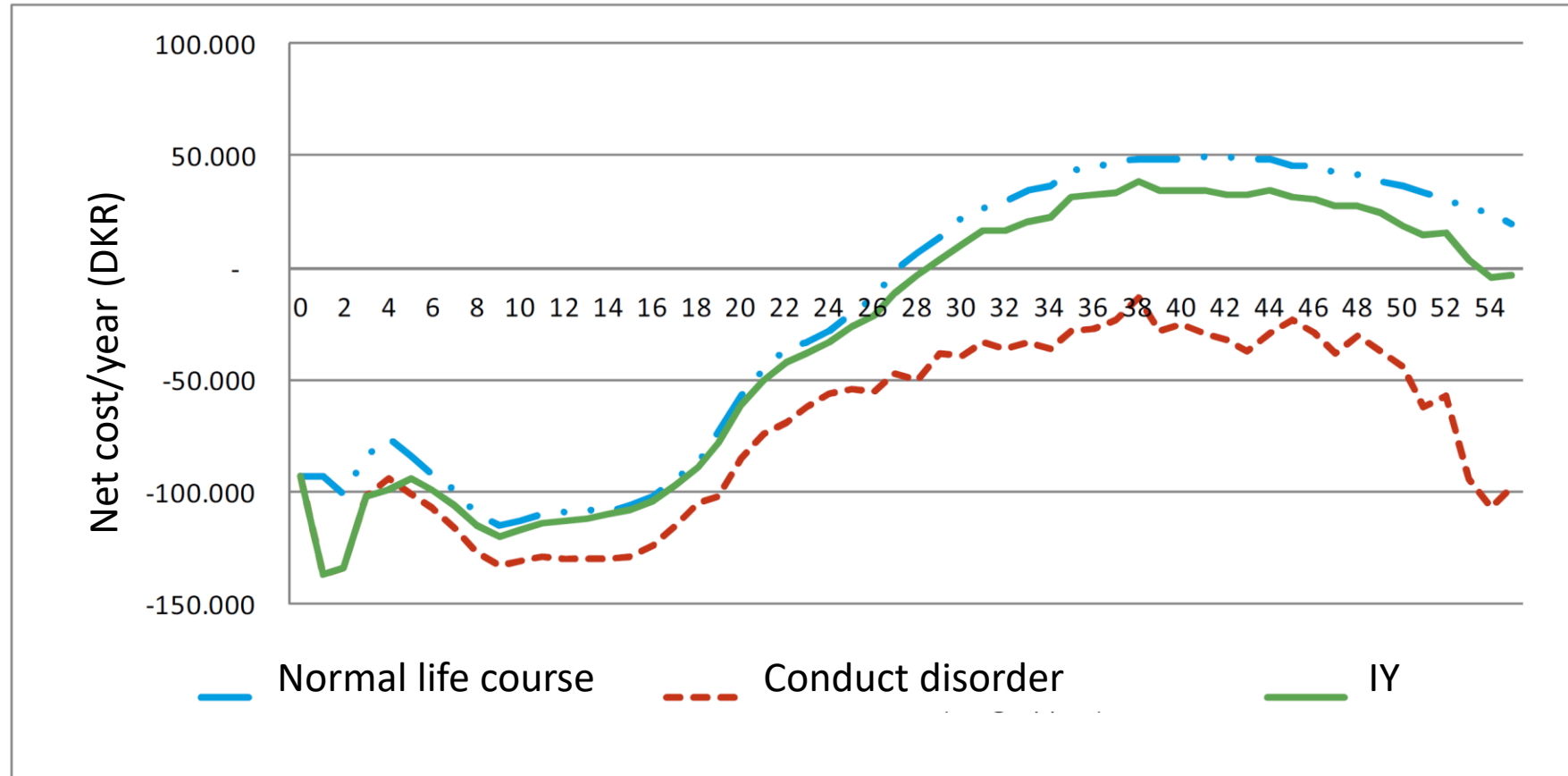
“There is strong evidence that a stable home environment, adequate nutrition, physical and cognitive stimulation, and supportive parenting can lead to good developmental outcomes.”





Evidence-based practice: Parenting support

Parenting support enables financial contribution to society



Ministry of social affairs and integration, Denmark 2012

**Intergenerational
transmission of
mental health
problems can
be stopped
in adult mental
health care**

Risk of mental disorders in the offspring
of parents with mental disorders is reduced by 40% by
preventive interventions

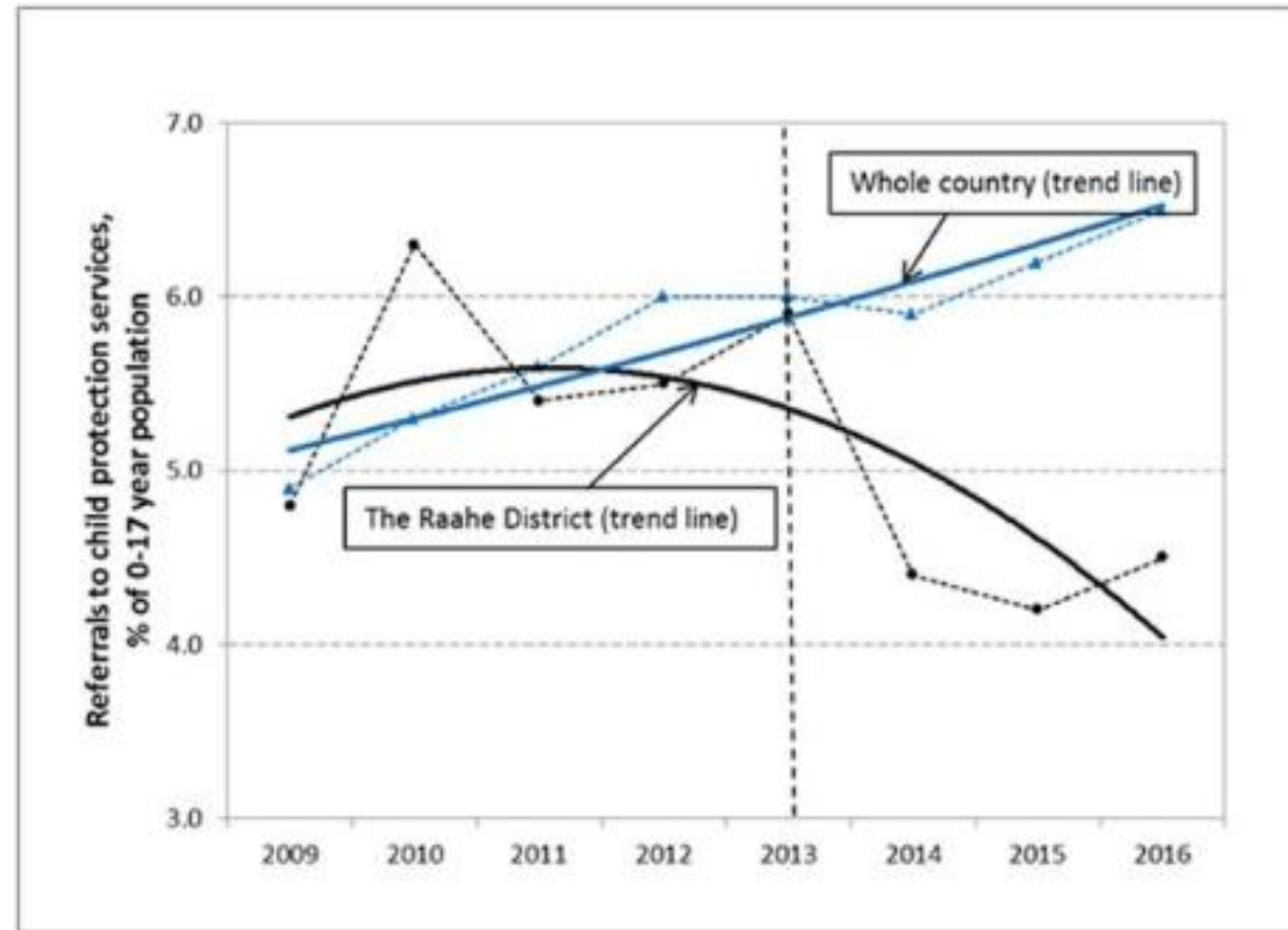
Case Finland: The Let's Talk about Children intervention

- A nationwide development programme supported by the government
- Implemented in specialist mental health services, reception centers, prisons, schools and kindergartens
- Let's Talk about Children –intervention:
- Identifying strengths and vulnerabilities
- Double action: positive impact on parents and child and transformation of services towards child-centred, empowering services
- Support for the child in everyday environment



mieli.fi/letstalk

The "Let's Talk about Children" reduces number of child protection cases



Niemelä et al. Front Psychiatry 2019



Evidence-based practice: School-based mental health literacy

Socio-emotional learning

- Emotional skills
- Problem solving skills
- Interaction skills
- Mindfulness
- Healthy living skills
- Friendship skills



EVIDENCE-BASED SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS

- Socio-emotional learning
- Anti-bullying programmes
- Prevention of behavioural problems
- Whole-school approach
- Teacher training programmes
- Strong evidence of effectiveness
 - Strong effects on socio-emotional skills
 - Small to medium effects on emotional well-being
 - Evidence of reduction of depression, aggression, impulsiveness and antisocial behavior

Kuosmanen et al. 2019

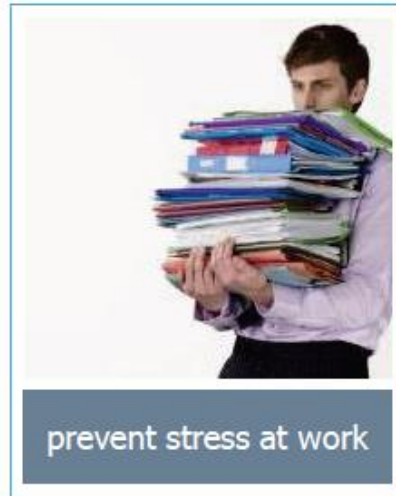
Finnish school system core curriculum

- Good results in OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (*Pisa*)
- Integrated comprehensive school – virtually no special schools
- 12 years of mandatory school
- Low school drop-out rate (0,46 % do not finish 9-year comprehensive school)
- Mental health supports educational achievements
- Promoting mental health is seen as a core task of the school system
- Mental health is incorporated in all aspects of the curriculum in year 1-6
 - healthy habits (sleep-wake cycle)
 - understanding your own strengths
 - knowing your feelings
 - how to build friendships
 - how to solve problems in human relations.
- in year 7-9 mental health is a module in health skills (which consists of 3 courses, altogether 114 lessons)

Evidence-based practice: Work place mental health promotion



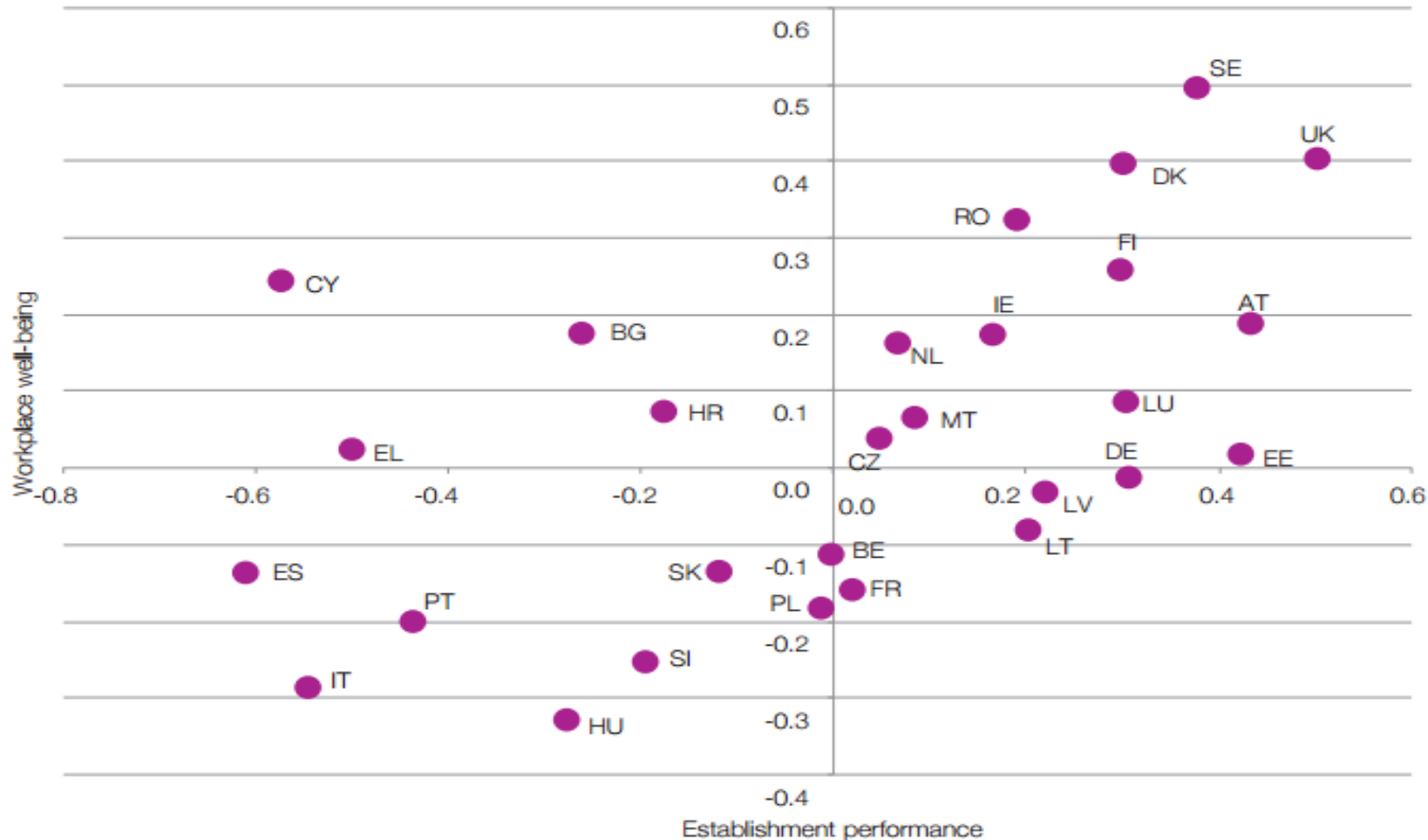
3 central fields of action



enterprises & **external stakeholders**



Company performance and workplace wellbeing: indices by country



Note: Both scales are presented in standardised units (z-scores), with zero values on the horizontal and vertical axes representing average scores for all establishments.

Source: ECS 2013 - Management questionnaire.

Source: Eurofound Third European Company Survey 2015

EVIDENCE BASE FOR WORKPLACE INTERVENTIONS

- 14 systematic reviews show moderate effectiveness of workplace interventions

Wagner et al 2016, Int J Occup Envir Med

- A systematic review and meta-analysis of universal workplace interventions for prevention of depression (9 RCTs, mostly CBT-based interventions) show a small positive effect

Tan et al 2014, BMC Med

Work place mental health promotion

- Perceived psychological safety
- Social support by peers
- Control of work
- Manager support
- Perceived righteousness and equal treatment

Tan et al 2014 BMC Med, Wagner et al 2016 Int J Occup Envir Med

Going upstream: Structural determinants of mental health

Poverty
Gender inequality
War and conflicts
Social exclusion
Income inequality



Successful mental health actions build on intersectoral collaboration

A shift in focus from
late curative
measures to
promotion and early
prevention



Thank you!

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