



## Factsheet #1: Defining the Psychosocial Determinants that affect our Mental Health & Wellbeing

Mental health is a fundamental part of being human. It is expressed in our mood, emotions, thoughts, cognition, control and behaviours. Our mental health is in a constant state of flux, influenced by a range of psychosocial and environmental factors as well as health determinants.

### WHO Definition:

**Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right.**

Mental health is not the presence or absence of mental disorders. It exists on a complex continuum, which is experienced differently from one person to the next, with varying degrees of wellbeing, difficulty and distress, and potentially very different social and clinical outcomes.

Mental health issues include mental disorders and psychosocial disabilities as well as other mental states associated with significant distress and impairment in functioning. People with mental health conditions are more likely to experience lower levels of mental well-being, but this is not always or necessarily the case.

### Psychosocial Determinants:

Health, both physical and mental health, can be influenced and affected by different factors, known as 'determinants of health', including economic and social status, education, physical environment, social support networks, gender, genetics and access to and use of health services. These 'psychosocial' factors are both protective in nature and can also pose a risk to poorer health.

### Example of psychosocial factors:

Protection Factors	Risk Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive norms</li> <li>- Opportunities to pursue interests</li> <li>- Social relationships, community and networks</li> <li>- Good physical health</li> <li>- Physical and psychological safety</li> <li>- Good support system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poverty, cost of living and ability to work</li> <li>- Bullying and experiencing prejudice</li> <li>- Lack of supportive relationships, family breakdown, domestic abuse</li> <li>- Injury, infections and health issues</li> <li>- Substance abuse</li> <li>- Lack of social support</li> <li>- Forced displacement and humanitarian emergencies</li> </ul>



## Conclusion:

The natural fluctuation in the functioning of our physical and mental health can become a symptom of bigger challenges or difficulties. This can be when these difficulties affect daily functioning, are longer in duration or severity, and are distressing to the person or those around them. Being able to talk about the stresses and strains that affect our mental health and wellbeing can enable prevention strategies to be put in place and earlier detection of any difficulties, which in turn helps to access support and enable faster recovery.

## About Rare Diseases and EURORDIS-Rare Diseases Europe

Rare conditions are frequently chronic and highly complex. Most people with a rare condition live with disabilities which can be visible, invisible, degenerative, or vary from one day to the next. Evidence demonstrates that PLWRD and their families face serious challenges to their health, their social inclusion and their day-to-day lives, which can have a severe impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

EURORDIS-Rare Diseases Europe is a non-profit alliance of over 1000 rare condition patient organisations from 74 countries that work together to improve the lives of over 300 million people globally living with a rare condition.

The vision of EURORDIS is for a world in which each person living with a rare condition can have a longer and better life, achieving their full potential in a society that values their well-being and leaves no one behind.

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