Responding to new mental health needs in workplaces, schools and society - GAMIAN-Europe

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Responding to new mental health needs in workplaces, schools and society

- COVID-19 pandemic has taken an enormous toll on people's mental health around the world.

- the mood of the population has been badly affected by lockdowns and restrictions on freedoms and this made it harder for people to work and participate in society.

- We need to turn our attention to what we can do to support people as they adapt to life in a COVID-normal world.

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- Increasing **mental health burden and needs** were reported as direct and indirect consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- National lockdowns challenge the delivery and access to mental health treatment and care.
- Strategies to meet mental health needs **rely heavily on timely and adequate responses** by:
  - strengthened mental health governance and systems,
  - availability of services, virtual platforms, and
  - appropriate capacity-building for service providers.
- **Short and medium-term strategies** focused on supporting community-based mental health networks and telemedicine for high-risk populations.
- Opportunities for **long-term mental health** reform entail strengthening legal frameworks, redistribution of financial resources, and collaboration with local and international partners.

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- Mental health and psychosocial support have been identified as a priority area in the COVID-19 response.
- The pandemic has generated specific needs that require appropriate actions, including:
    - implementing virtual interventions,
    - orienting capacity-building toward protecting users and health providers,
    - strengthening evidence-driven decision-making,
    - integrating mental health and psychosocial support in high-level mechanisms guiding the response to COVID-19.

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- To have a publicly available plan about "**management of future pandemics**" would be "very helpful" for the personal recovery (46%) - this policy option was the most supported across genders, ages, places of residence, and socioeconomic circumstances.

- A few other policies in terms of mental health support were rated as "very helpful" by more than 30% of respondents:
  - "Access to face-to-face counselling with a mental health professional" and
  - "My GP asking me about my mental health"

- support for community organisations.