

# GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Orygen, in Australia, is partnering with the World Economic Forum to put youth mental health on the global agenda for the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos 2020.

Consistent with the World Health Organization definition of mental health,<sup>1</sup> the project takes the point of view that being mentally healthy involves the individual being able to function (such as work/study) to achieve their full potential, cope with daily stress, be involved in their community and live their life in a satisfying way.<sup>2</sup> Mental ill-health is a collection of experiences that mean an individual is not functioning at their best, and affects the way they think, feel and act.<sup>3</sup> The project defines youth as being between 12 and 25 years. This is the period of life when most mental ill-health has its onset.

The purpose of the project is to develop three products:

- a global framework for youth mental health care
- an investment framework that will take into account differences between high, middle and low resource settings
- an advocacy toolkit to support local communities make the case for investment in youth mental health within their own regions.

On the basis of a large literature review and face-to-face consultations with young people, families, clinicians, economists, policy makers and others from North and South America, Asia, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Africa the project has developed a draft framework model. The framework is based on eight principles of youth mental health:

- Rapid, easy and affordable access
- Youth specific care
- Awareness, engagement and integration
- Early intervention
- Youth partnership
- Family engagement and support
- Continuous improvement
- Prevention

Each of these principles is operationalised through a range of practices. Although the exact practices used to operationalise a principle will vary with the local context.

Because the framework has to have the capacity to be flexible across myriad settings, local factors are crucial. These could include culture, funding, political will, popular will, existing infrastructure and availability and skill level of workforce among many possible others. The principles need to be operationalised in the context of these local factors. The result of this local operationalisation of the general principles should be youth mental health care that is ambitious and innovative within the constraints of the local context.

The locally operationalised youth mental health model needs to work with the existing health system, at whatever level that that exists in each setting, as well as work with existing youth facing agencies such as schools, sporting groups, police and other welfare agencies.

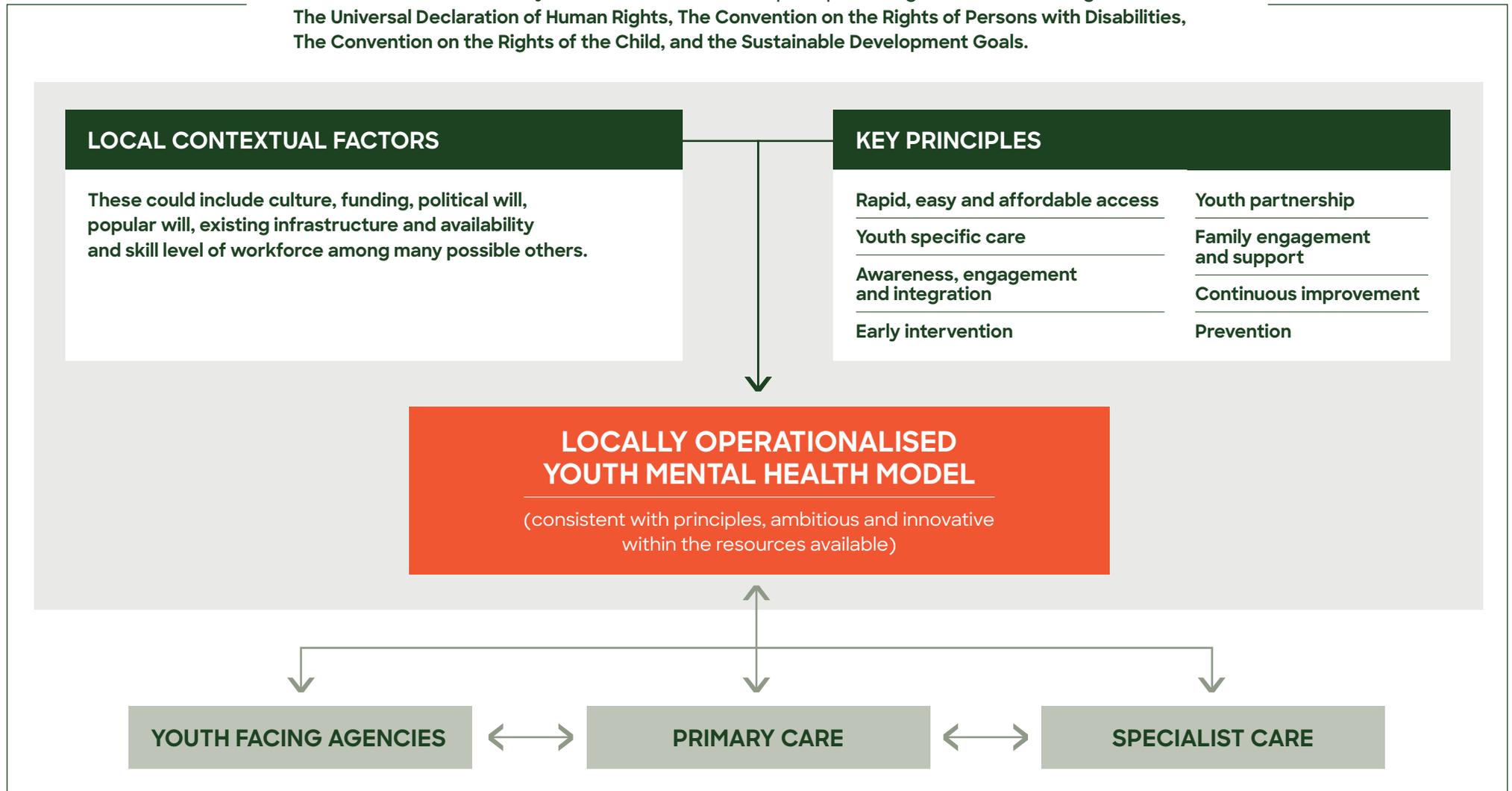
The framework will continue to be refined on the basis of consultation until late 2019 to allow time for final production for presentation in Davos in January 2020.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental\\_health/en/](https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/)

<sup>2</sup> headspace. What is mental health & mental illness? Factsheet 2019; <https://headspace.org.au/assets/Uploads/19-What-is-mental-health-headspace-fact-sheet-PRINT.pdf>, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> headspace. What is mental health & mental illness? 2018; <https://headspace.org.au/young-people/what-is-mental-health/>, 2019.

The youth mental health framework assumes an environment in which it is safe to seek help for mental illness. Such an environment is likely to be consistent with the principles and goals of the following:  
**The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, The Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Sustainable Development Goals.**



## Examples of practices that operationalise each principle, bearing in mind that this will depend on local contextual factors.

### Rapid, easy and affordable access

No referral required

Low physical or geographic barriers

Low or no cost barriers

Low stigma setting

Create awareness of service

Mapping of referral pathways

Simple means of contact

### Youth specific care

Holistic care including functional recovery

Guidelines for youth practice with consideration of developmental stage

Evidence informed, individually tailored interventions

Broad consideration of individual's context

Youth specific services

Consultation with youth about service environment

Developmentally appropriate transitions into and out of care

Inclusive environment

Shared decision making

Utilising technology

### Awareness, engagement and integration

Stakeholder mapping and engagement

Develop relationships with stakeholders

Education of community

Education of referrers

Integration across services and systems

Anti-stigma measures

Advocacy

Cross sector partnerships

### Early intervention

Development and use of screening tools

Active community partnerships

High-risk group awareness

Community outreach

Training

Community setting

Community education

Crisis intervention for suicide risk

Examples of practices that operationalise each principle, bearing in mind that this will depend on local contextual factors.

### Youth partnership and engagement

Youth empowerment

Youth advisory group

Shared decision making

Workforce training

Co-design

Peer workers

### Family engagement and support

Psychoeducation

Family therapy

Family support

Self-care

Family peer workers

### Continuous improvement

Workforce development and training

Supervision

Needs-based programs

Auditing systems

Young person and family feedback

Clinical governance

Change management

Evaluation informing improvement

Utilise technology

Map needs before developing program

### Prevention

Health promotion

Anti-stigma measures

Suicide prevention

High-risk group focus

Addressing social determinants