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Youth Office**

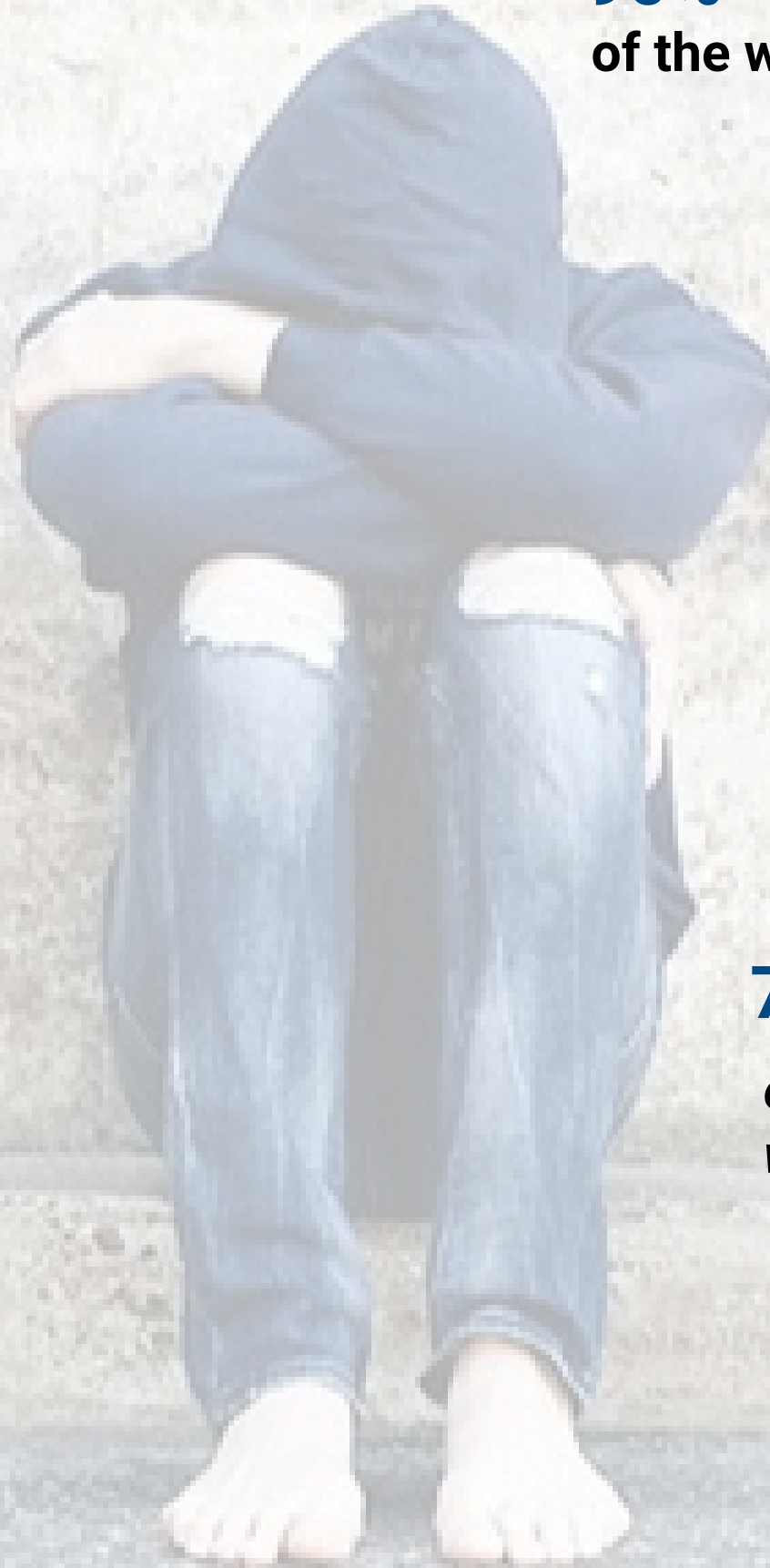
# Youth Mental Health & Well-Being: A UN Perspective

## Defining mental health

*Mental health is defined as a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well, work well, and contribute to their communities*



# Youth Mental Health and Well-Being



**..where the  
UN works**

**90%**  
of the world's adolescents live in low- and middle-income countries.

**<1%**  
*of national health budgets allocated to mental health in low-income countries without treatment options*

**1 per 100,000**  
*ratio of mental health worker to young person*

**75%**  
*of young people with mental health conditions in low and middle income countries without treatment options*

## Challenges to change

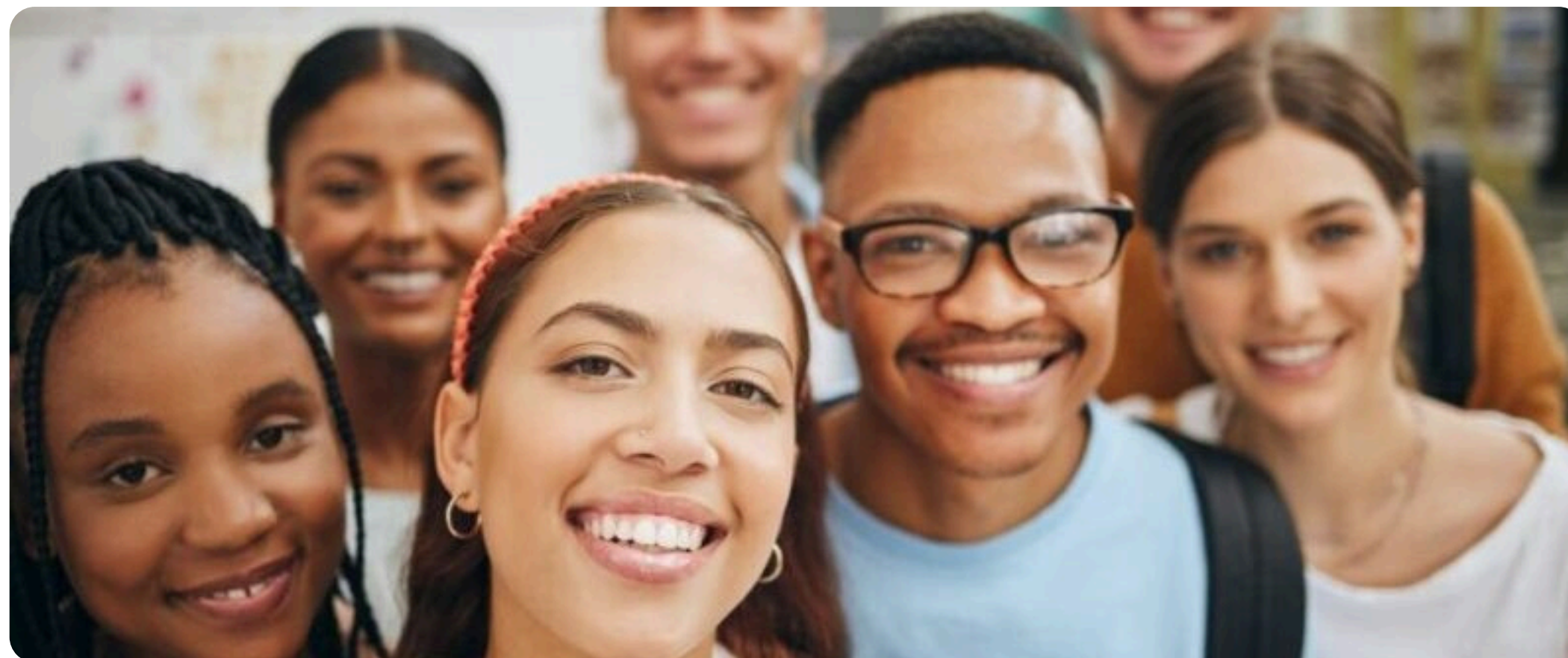
A combination of barriers that limit both access and effectiveness of care.

- Widespread **stigma** and low mental health literacy.
- Critical shortage of **professionals** and youth-friendly **services**.
- **Data gaps** make it difficult to demonstrate impact .
- In fragile and conflict-affected settings, **ongoing trauma** makes progress limited.



## Prevention as solution

- Youth mental health and well-being is deeply influenced by the **environments** in which young people live.
- Promoting and improving their mental health demands tackling the conditions that cause **distress** and building environments for **resilience**.
- Emphasizing the need for **holistic** approaches.





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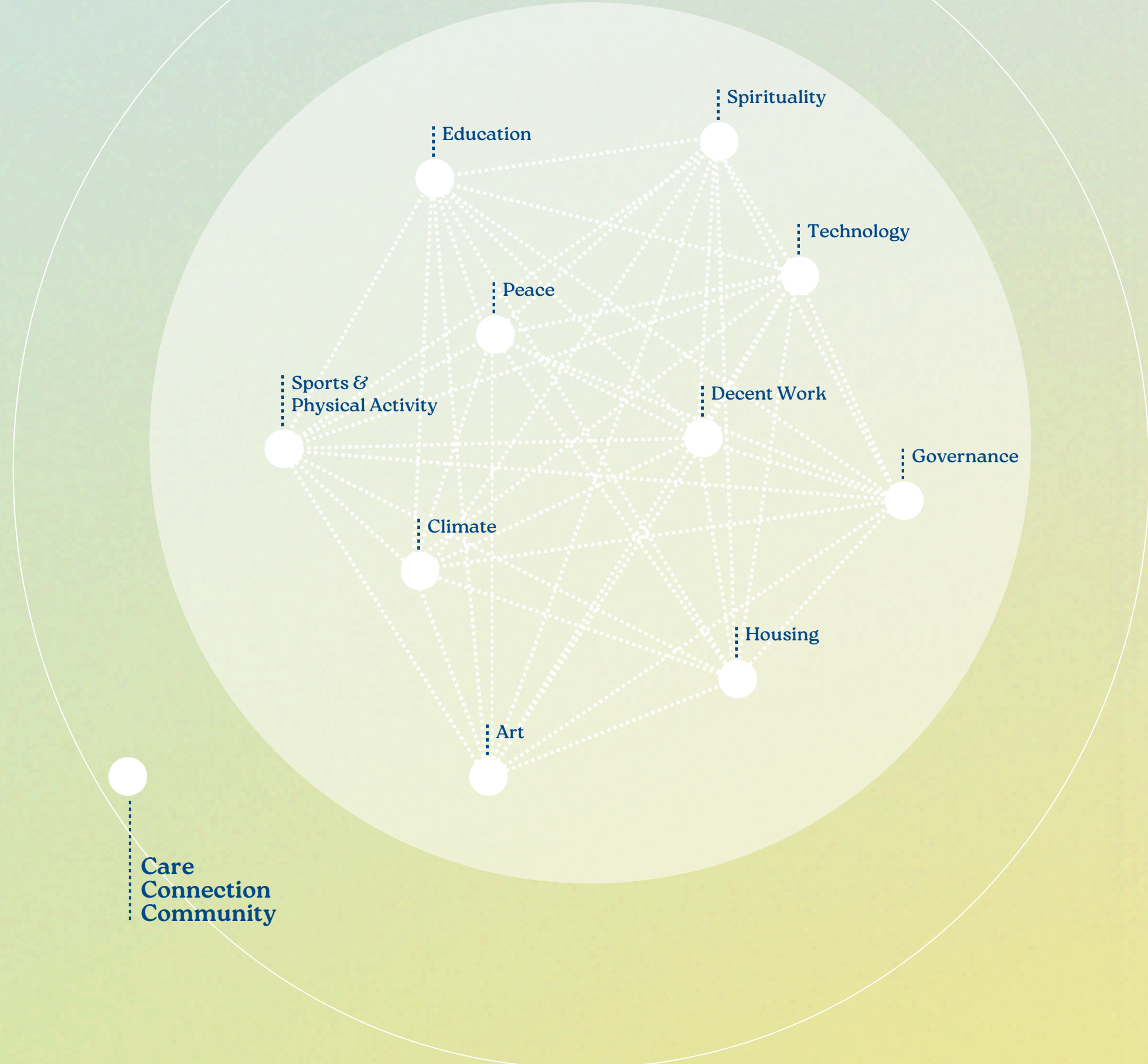
# Youth Mental Health & Well-Being

**FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE**



# An Ecosystem Approach

TREATING SYMPTOMS →  
TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS



Care  
Connection  
Community



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# The UN Youth Office

**AS A CHAMPION OF YOUTH  
MENTAL HEALTH**

**WE Convene**

- > **UN System Collaboration**
- > **Stakeholders**
  - > Member States
  - > Youth-led organizations
  - > Global Mental Health Networks and organizations
  - > Private Sector
  - > Academia

**WE Advocate**

**FROM INDIVIDUAL SYMPTOMS TO TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS**

**WE Act**

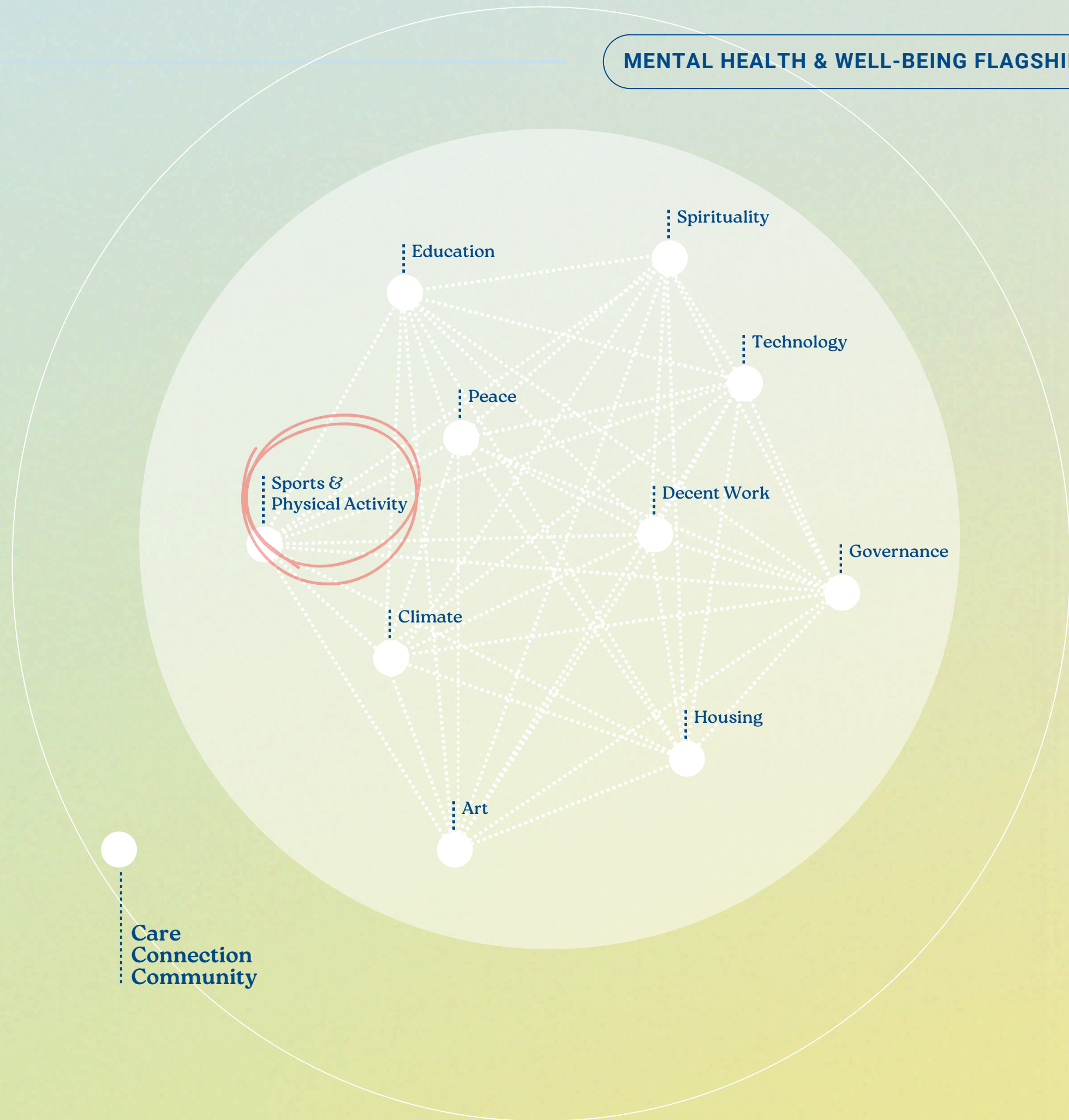
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	<p><b>Arts</b></p> <p><b>heARTS to Mental Health Initiative</b></p>		<p><b>Technology</b></p> <p><b>Cyber Mental Health Initiative</b></p>
	<p><b>Sports</b></p> <p><b>#Sports4MentalHealth Initiative</b></p>		<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p><b>UNYO Youth Compass Flagship initiative</b></p>



# An Ecosystem Approach

TREATING SYMPTOMS →  
TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS



# #Sports4MentalHealth

*Integrates mental health promotion, prevention, and support into sports and physical activity ecosystems, leveraging sport as a powerful platform to foster well-being, resilience, inclusion, and positive youth development across diverse contexts.*

Enhancing collaboration between sports and the UN system to advance youth mental health:

- **For the UN system:** Sport provides a scalable, trusted delivery platform to localise youth mental health, and a valuable advocacy platform
- **For sports organisations:** potential to unlock UN technical expertise, widen their impact (within the framework of SDGs) and use platform for advocacy





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# FOOTBALL FOR MENTAL HEALTH

*UN Youth Office*

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## **#FOOTBALL4MENTALHEALTH**

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- Football offers a platform for **promoting inclusion, dignity and psychosocial development.**
- Its widespread presence across youth spaces makes it an **ideal conduit for mental health promotion at scale.**
- Momentum and attention brought by the 2026 FIFA World Cup.



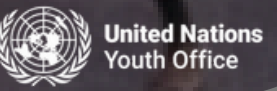
## #FOOTBALL4MENTALHEALTH

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Two pillars of action:

1. ***One World, One Game, One Goal*** : a celebration of sport as a catalyst for youth mental health and well-being
2. **Country activations** - demonstrations of partnerships between UN and Football





#Football4MentalHealth

## *#Football4MentalHealth Country Activations*

- Facilitating **collaborations** between UN Entities, UN Country Teams and Member Associations
- Community-based **activities** co-created with local stakeholders, grounded in the realities, cultures, and needs of each community.
- Coordinating a bottom-up **ecosystem of global action** as powerful entry points for connection, resilience, and emotional health.

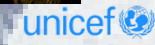


Canada



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# Pilot Country Implementation Proposal



Office of the President of the General Assembly 80<sup>th</sup> Session



Egypt



Qatar

Pakistan

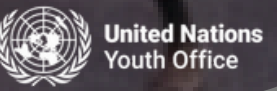


Indonesia



Brazil





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## ***#Football4MentalHealth Celebration***

**One World, One Game, One Goal:** a celebration of sport as a catalyst for youth mental health and well-being

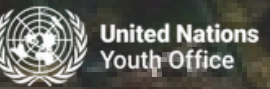
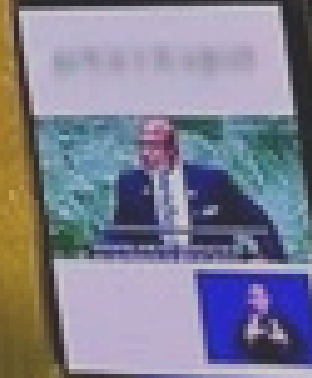
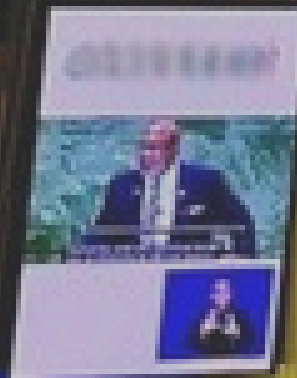
**17 July 2026 at UNHQ, New York** (19 July 2026, FIFA World Cup Final, New York/New Jersey)

Convening young people, partners, and allies as a vital catalyst for the mental health and collective flourishing of youth everywhere.



#Football4MentalHealth

MEETING YOUTH WHERE THEY ARE  
**ONE WORLD, ONE GAME, ONE GOAL**



## PROPOSED AGENDA: FRIDAY, 17 JULY 2026

**10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**  
2.5 hrs

 **ECOSOC  
CR 1**

### **Mental Health Spotlights**

*Showcasing UN and civil society efforts to advance youth mental health and well-being through sport*

**1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.**  
1.5 hrs

 **Garden**

### **Football Tournament & Mental Health Workshops**

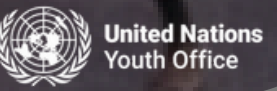
*Where football meets community & conversation on youth mental health and well-being*

**3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**  
3 hrs

 **GA Hall**

### **Football for Mental Health Celebration**

*Mobilizing global leaders, athletes and advocates for youth mental health and well-being*



#Football4MentalHealth

## *#Football4MentalHealth Call to Action*

**Ideas** and connections for collaborations between UN System and sport and football partners.

**Engage** in One World, One Game, One Goal event and the communications campaign.

**Continue** the momentum for sport and football to advance youth mental health and wellbeing to 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup.





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# Thank You

LEARN MORE

[un.org/youthaffairs/youth-mental-health-and-well-being](https://un.org/youthaffairs/youth-mental-health-and-well-being)

