

### Mental Well-being System for a Non-violent Thai Society

The 16<sup>th</sup> National Health Assembly, having considered the report on the Mental Well-being System for a Non-Violent Thai Society<sup>1</sup>:

**Worries** that the situations of mental health problems and violence in Thailand are intensifying and amplifying. This in all age groups, particularly children and youth, are at risk of mental health problems. However, the country does not yet have a system in place that can provide sufficient and suitable services and access to people, even though mental health is a basic human right for all.

**Realizes** that Thai people have increased awareness about mental health problems. They have become aware of the importance of mental health and talk about it in public more than ever before. People work together to use knowledge and develop innovations to promote mental health care in different ways. However, they lack support and connections to steer their projects in the right direction.

**Realizes** that there is an increasing number of mental health professionals. Skilled and experienced mental health professionals are much needed. However, they lack role clarity and opportunities in relation to their jobs, and personnel system management is still poor.

**Acknowledges** that Thailand has policies and legislation regarding mental health. This includes the Mental Health Act B.E. 2551 (2008) (and the Revised Edition No.2 B.E. 2562 (2019) ,and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Charter on the National Health System B.E. 2565 (2022). The legislation contains guidelines and mechanisms on mental health at a national level, but they appear to be insufficient and do not cover the needs of all age groups.

**Realizes** that the tasks of promoting mental health and developing the mental well-being system don't belong to any one person or group. The system is related to all people in society. Mental well-being system development requires collaborative efforts from the government sector, the private sector, and the civil society.

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<sup>1</sup> The document on the 16th National Health Assembly / Main 1

*Appreciates* the Department of Mental Health, as the lead government agency, and relevant health care units for their hard work and efforts, despite facing challenging circumstances and resource limitations.

*Appreciates* Chiang Mai Health Assembly, Nakhon Sawan Health Assembly and Nong Bua Lamphu Health Assembly. They serve as pilot models for dialogue and development of mechanisms for the mental well-being system for a non-violent Thai society at the local level.

*Agrees* that the concept of a mental well-being system will lead to health equity for stable and sustainable development. The system aims to boost mental health for all the population regardless of whether they are sick. The idea is also wide in scope and covers both the individual and societal levels. More importantly, it also links social, economic, environmental and cultural systems. All in all, the mental well-being system is a critical way of building a non-violent Thai society.

**Hereby, adopts the policy statement**

Violence in Thailand has continued to increase in intensity, while the number of violent incidents is also on the rise. All forms and dimensions of violence are intricately linked to and affects mental health and wellbeing. Building a “non-violent Thai society” that allows people to enjoy well-being and encourages society to develop mental health sustainability requires a “mental well-being system”.

The system is interconnected with all units and levels of society. It involves developing personal skill sets for people’s best mental health, behavioral and lifestyle adaptations, treatment, designing and developing policies on par with relevant international standards to ensure that no one is left behind, and for people of all age groups, particularly children and youth, to have mental well-being.

Besides, the system shall be based on the guidelines on mental health promotion and prevention, screening, treatment and rehabilitation as well as the social and commercial determinants of mental health. It shall be carried out in a proactive and decentralized manner to ensure non-stigmatized access to the population. Also, it shall be accessed through the stepped care of the system’s mechanisms to conform to the way of life, culture and the community context with high regard to rules, commitment as well as national and international agreements.

**The key contents of the policy statements are as follows:**

1. The mental well-being system contains several interconnected mechanisms at different levels (see diagram 1).

1.1 A home mechanism which is driven by the family and group of friends armed with knowledge and skills in accordance with positive psychology and empowerment principles. The family and friends are the primary unit that promote and supports mental well-being of every person.

1.2 A community and society mechanism, including educational institutions and offices, can be mobilized by multidisciplinary personnel including psychologists specializing in different areas, psychological and mental wellbeing practitioners, social workers, community leaders, volunteers, religious leaders, teachers, influencers, media outlets, businesses, security officers, people who recover from and thrive after mental health challenges, and relevant groups of people. These groups of people should be equipped with competencies, skills and tools, as well as have budget, professional standard and qualifications, the social structure and conditions that facilitate the work. Having said that aims to build the mechanism that provide mental health promotion and treatment to all groups of the population conveniently and fast, as well as cater suitably to different lifestyles, settings, and environments. On top of that, the mechanism has clear roles and responsibilities in supporting mental health policies and services in the mental well-being system of the country.

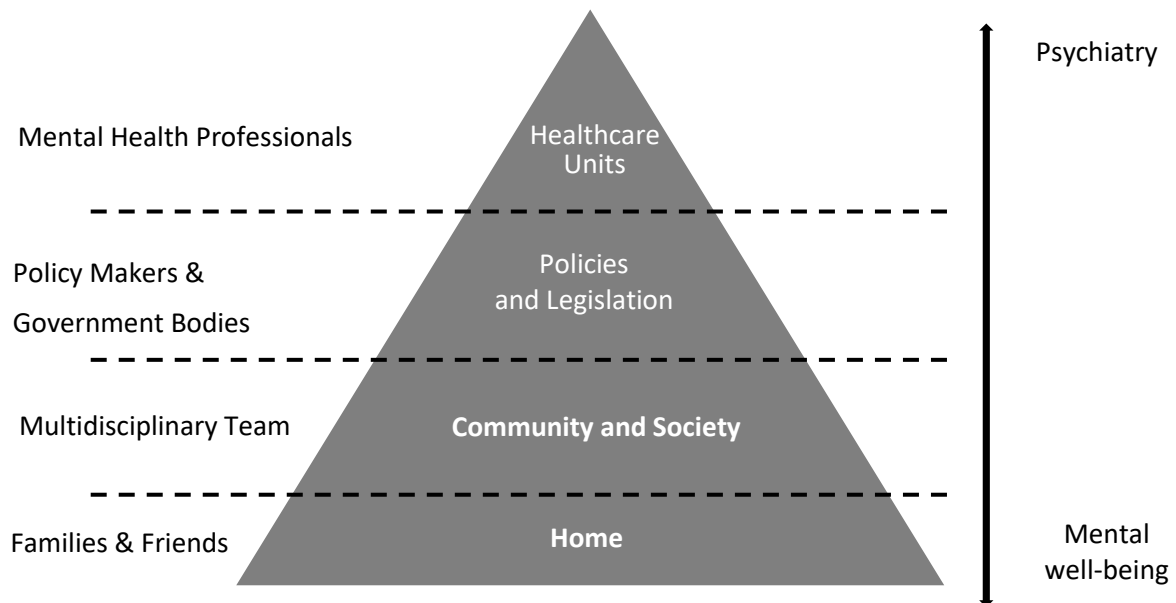
1.3 A policy and legislation mechanism at national and local levels that are interconnected, coordinated, participatory, and facilitative. They shall promote collaboration with other state and non-state mechanisms based on participatory governance, co-investment creation and a sense of ownership. This mechanism is a key unit for good healthcare services. Consequently, the policies and legislations shall be developed based on comprehensive psychiatric practice and mental well-being guidelines.

1.4 A mental health care service mechanism at national and local levels which can be mobilized by personnel, organizations, services and innovation based on psychiatric principles. This mechanism involves quality workforce, budgets, information and technologies that are sufficient, suitable, sustainable, and inclusive.

2. It shall develop innovation in communication for promoting mental health for all age groups in an efficient and participatory manner. Communication should be empathy-driven, reduce discrimination and stigma as well as not reproduce or ignore violence.
3. It shall develop ways of thinking, searching for, understanding and generating basic data including characteristics of the mental well-being of people of all age groups who have different needs. Also, it shall identify factors and levels of mental health risks which can be used as reference points for designing the system, measures, guidance and culture of mental health care and promotion based on different needs, that are applicable to organizations of the government sector and the private sector.
4. It shall set up certain measures specifically for groups of people who are prone to be victims of violence and carry mental health risks or for vulnerable populations. This can be achieved by:
  - 4.1. Prioritizing and investing in the development of a good social structure and environment for children and youth that allow them to grow and thrive, as well as have good mental health and quality of life. Break the cycle of violence in a participatory manner.
  - 4.2 Promoting mental health and healing emotional pains of the vulnerable population including children, youth, women, LGBTQIAN+, the disabled, people who are accessible to lethal weapons and prisoners, as these vulnerable group have a chance or potentiality to close to violence and have increased risk of mental health problems. It's also important to set up specific measures on mental health care and promotion for the vulnerable who have special wants and needs. Developing certain mechanisms to deal with victim mentality is also of paramount importance.
5. It shall upgrade and empower national and local coordination units working on mental health promotion. This includes the National Mental Health Commission, the Coordinating Sub-Committee on enforcement of Mental Health Act B.E. 2551 (2008) at the provincial level and Local Health Boards to name a few. The work shall be carried out systematically backed by research studies and continuously supported by funds. Talks and dialogues

shall be also arranged to promote inclusion and ensure long-term mental wellbeing system development.

6. It shall promote the development of mental health literacy in daily life through an educational curriculum, work system and lifelong learning. This can serve as a “net” that can support and nurture the mental health of people and ensure that their mental wounds have not passed the point where it is too late. The net can also protect and strengthen their mental health. It is important that the mental well-being system supports the existing national mental health care services and is in line with the national mental health policies. In other words, having the mental well-being system as public policy is instrumental in developing a non-violent Thai society.



**Diagram 1** Mechanisms of the mental well-being system for non-violent Thai society

**The resolution of the National Health Assembly.**

1. To adopt the policy statement and the key contents of the statement on the mental well-being system to make a non-violent Thai society possible.
2. To report the progress in the implementation of this resolution and the up-to-date situation analysis to the 19<sup>th</sup> National Health Assembly.