



# Resources for Supporting Mental Health

Among Young People in the Czech Republic



Youth Leadership Programme

# HOW TO NAVIGATE THIS RESOURCE GUIDE

## Where to find support



Looking for resources to help yourself, a friend, or a family member? You can find various resources, such as helplines, organisations and websites here.



## Key Insights



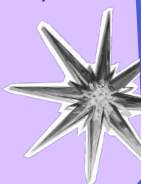
Curious about the mental health landscape in your country? Find out what young people actually need most and the biggest challenges to getting help.



## Mental Health Context in the Czech Republic



What are local laws and support systems? Dive into the current mental health context in your country, see what's working, and, more importantly, what's still missing.



## About the Project



Discover more about the Youth Leadership Programme, funded by the Rare Impact Fund, and how young leaders created this resource in partnership with Mental Health Europe.



**This reference guide was developed by Youth Ambassador Charlotte Thibault as a part of the Youth Leadership Programme.** The document is a product of co-creation, researched and drafted by Youth Leaders with the guidance and editorial oversight of Mental Health Europe. The views and content expressed reflect the national perspectives, contributions, and lived experiences of these Youth Leaders.

# WHERE YOU CAN FIND SUPPORT

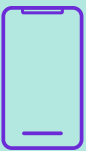
Disclaimer: Please note that the following links and helplines were gathered with the best care possible, however, as these are third-party services, we cannot guarantee their quality or that they remain accessible after the release of these documents.



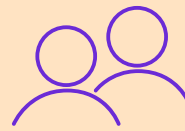
**Crisis Helplines  
(24/7 Support)**



**Information  
Platforms and  
Directories**



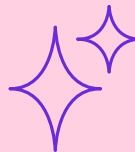
**Online and Chat-  
Based Support**



**Refugee-Focused  
Mental Health  
Support**



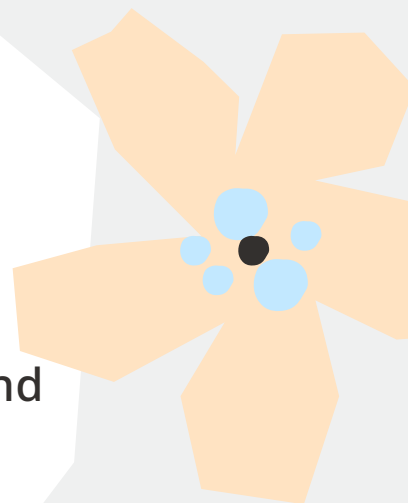
**Prevention  
Programmes and  
Educational  
Initiatives**



**Additional  
Prevention Tools  
and Wellbeing  
Resources**

## THANK YOU

We would like to thank Veronika, former President of EFPSA (European Federation of Psychology Students Associations), for her careful review and valuable feedback on the final version of this document.





## Crisis Helplines (24/7 Support)

### **Linka první psychické pomoci (Cesta z krize)**

**11 61 23**

Free, anonymous support for adults experiencing acute psychological distress, offering immediate emotional assistance and crisis de-escalation.

### **Linka bezpečí (Safety Line)**

**11 61 11**

Free, anonymous support for children and young people (up to approximately 26 years old), providing confidential help for emotional, social, or family-related difficulties.

### **Modrá linka**

**731 19 74 77 / 608 90 24 10**

Offers crisis intervention and psychological counselling via phone, chat, and email, including support in English.

### **Pražská linka důvěry**

**222 58 06 97**

Long-standing helpline offering empathetic listening and crisis support for individuals facing emotional distress or loneliness.

## Anonymní linka pomoci v krizi

**974 83 46 88**

Tailored support for members of security forces and their families dealing with high-stress or trauma-related situations.

## Senior telefon

**800 15 71 57**

Dedicated support line addressing loneliness, mental health concerns, and social issues among older adults and their relatives.



## Online and Chat-Based Support



## Chatová poradna Nepanikař

Provides real-time chat support and practical coping tools, especially for anxiety, panic attacks, and emotional overwhelm.



## Nevypust' duši

Offers educational materials, mental health literacy content, and guidance on when and how to seek professional help.



**help@modralinka.cz**

24/7 email support, including support in English. Particularly useful for people who prefer written communication.



**Prevention Programmes  
and Educational Initiatives**



**Všech pět pohromadě (On My Mind)**

A school-based prevention programme focused on improving mental health literacy among children and adolescents. It helps young people better understand emotions, recognise early warning signs of mental distress, and build coping skills in a school environment.

**University of Hradec Králové – Help Zone  
(2024)**

A virtual support space created in response to university research on student mental health. It focuses on acute crises, mental and physical health, safety, and study-related difficulties, while providing students with immediate guidance, self-help tools, and orientation toward professional services in a confidential digital space.





## Information Platforms and Directories



### **Adresář pomoci (Ministry of Interior)**

Centralised directory listing verified crisis lines, counselling services, and emergency contacts across the Czech Republic.



### **ČAPLD services archive – Poskytované služby – Archivy ČAPLD**

A comprehensive archive of counselling and psychological services, helping users identify available providers, specialisations, and contact points across the Czech Republic.



## Refugee-Focused Mental Health Support



### **Psychological support for refugees (Ukraine crisis)**

Provides targeted information and contacts for displaced individuals needing culturally and linguistically adapted mental health support.

### **Ministry of Interior psychological support resources for Ukrainian refugees**

Central hub for accessing specialised services, including trauma-informed care and integration support.





## **Czech Psychology Network for Global Changes**

Connects refugees with volunteer psychologists offering free or low-cost mental health support, often in multiple languages.



## **UNHCR emotional support and coping resources**

Provides accessible self-help materials and guidance for managing emotional distress linked to forced displacement.



## **Additional Prevention Tools and Wellbeing Resources**

### **Mindfulness and meditation apps**

Support stress reduction, emotional regulation, and resilience through guided exercises, with some apps offering Czech-language support.

### **Online learning platforms such as Coursera**

Offer structured courses on well-being, stress management, and psychological resilience from leading universities.



# KEY INSIGHTS

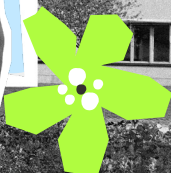
These insights were identified through expert interviews and research on young people's mental health in the Czech Republic, highlighting the structural, social, economic, and environmental factors shaping their experiences.

## EDUCATION AND WORK PRESSURE

School demands, exams, and the transition into work are major stress points. In the Czech Republic, this is often intensified by uncertainty in the job market and reluctance from employers to hire recent graduates. For many, it creates a sense of “needing experience to get a job, but needing a job to get experience,” which can feel discouraging and unfair.



Schools are increasingly recognised as central environments for prevention, with programmes such as “Všech pět pohromadě” focusing on strengthening mental health literacy, coping skills, and help-seeking behaviour among students. This reflects a broader shift toward early intervention within educational settings.



## HOUSING AND FINANCIAL INSECURITY



One of the strongest sources of stress today is housing. Rising prices and limited availability make it extremely difficult for young people to become independent. In many Czech cities, buying or even renting a stable home requires a level of income that is out of reach for a large share of young adults. Combined with general cost-of-living increases, this creates ongoing financial stress and a feeling that long-term stability is difficult to achieve.

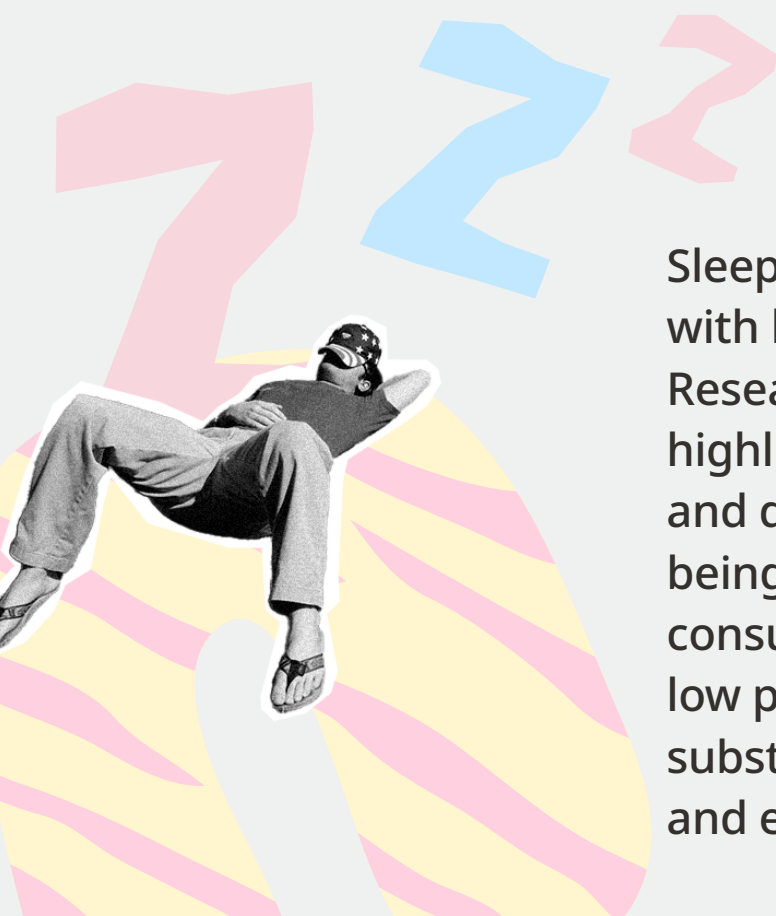
## DIGITAL PRESSURE AND INFORMATION OVERLOAD

Social media shapes how young people see themselves and others, often increasing pressure to “perform” or appear successful. Misinformation can add confusion and anxiety. At the same time, not everyone has equal access to digital tools or a stable internet, which can deepen inequalities.



## LIFESTYLE AND HEALTH FACTORS

Sleep problems are common, especially with late bedtimes and irregular routines. Research such as the HBSC study highlights how sleep, physical activity, and diet all play a role in mental well-being. Unhealthy diets (including high consumption of ultra-processed foods), low physical activity, and alcohol or substance use can further affect mood and energy levels.



# ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS



Many young people experience eco-anxiety - worry about climate change, pollution, and the future of the planet. These concerns can feel constant and out of individual control, especially when environmental problems are highly visible but slow to change.



## FAMILY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Some young people carry multiple responsibilities at once. Young parents may be balancing work, childcare, and even support for elderly relatives. Young mothers, in particular, often face barriers when trying to return to work after maternity leave, including limited part-time opportunities or employer bias against hiring parents of young children.

## GENDER AND INEQUALITY

Mental health challenges can differ depending on gender and social background. Unequal access to services and support can make it harder for some groups to get help when they need it.

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic increased loneliness, anxiety, and disruption in daily life. Lockdowns affected education, social life, and work opportunities, and the effects are still visible for many young people today.

# FEELING STUCK IN SYSTEMS THAT DON'T RESPOND

Beyond individual stressors, many young people describe a deeper feeling of helplessness. Even when they try to act - seek help, work hard, plan ahead - they often face systems that feel slow, fragmented, or unresponsive. Whether it is housing, employment, or mental health services, the gap between problems and solutions can feel very large.

This can create a sense of isolation: you are dealing with multiple pressures at the same time, but there is no clear system-wide change happening fast enough to match the urgency. Mental health services exist, but access can be uneven, and broader structural issues (like housing affordability or job insecurity) are outside individual control.

As a result, some young people feel they are expected to be resilient in a context that does not fully support them to be resilient. This is where mental health becomes not only an individual experience, but also a reflection of how well society is structured to support people in real life conditions.



# UNEQUAL ACCESS TO SUPPORT

Mental health challenges can differ depending on gender and social background. Unequal access to services and support can make it harder for some groups to get help when they need it.

Limited long-term funding and insufficient service capacity continue to restrict access to care, with uneven availability across regions further deepening inequalities.

Monitoring and pilot programmes across different regions highlight persistent regional and socio-economic disparities in access to mental health services, reinforcing the need for more equitable system-level solutions.

## WHY DOES THIS MATTER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Young people's mental health is shaped by a wide mix of pressures - personal, social, economic, and environmental. What often makes these challenges harder is not just the issues themselves, but the feeling of having little control over them, and limited support from the systems around them.

Overall, many of these challenges are not just personal struggles - they are linked to wider systems. When those systems do not adapt quickly enough, it can make mental health issues feel harder to manage and harder to overcome alone.

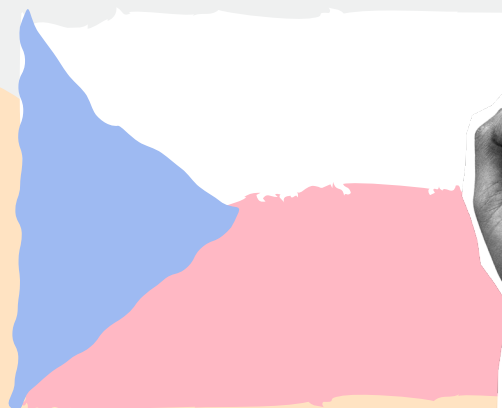


# MENTAL HEALTH CONTEXT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

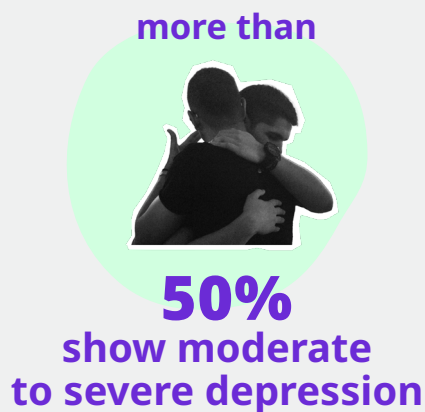
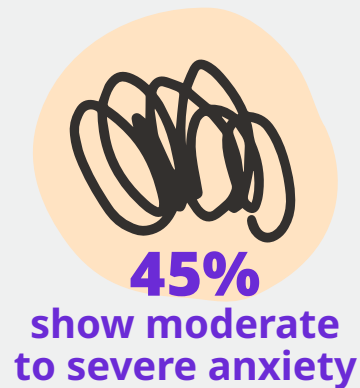
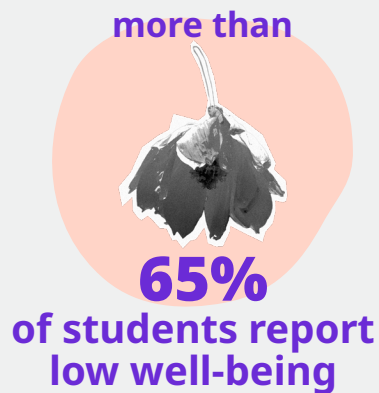
Mental health care in the Czech Republic has changed a lot over time, but the system is still in the middle of a transition. During the communist period, care was mostly based in large psychiatric hospitals. People with mental health issues were often treated in institutions, sometimes for long periods, and had little support to live independently in society. This approach also contributed to strong stigma around mental health issues.

Since the 1990s, things have slowly started to improve. NGOs, professionals, and advocates have pushed for a more human and community-based approach to care—one that helps people stay in their everyday environment rather than being isolated in hospitals. Experts like Jan Pfeiffer have been key in designing reforms that aim to build local mental health centres and provide more accessible, multidisciplinary support.

These efforts are reflected in the Czech Republic's National Mental Health Action Plan 2020–2030, which sets out a shift toward community care and better coordination between health and social services. The goal of this plan is to make support easier to find, prevent mental health problems earlier, and open community mental health centres where people can get help closer to home. The focus on prevention and early intervention has become increasingly important as research continues to show high levels of psychological distress among young people.



A 2023 study coordinated by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) highlighted the growing scale of mental health issues among university students:



These findings reinforce concerns about the increasing psychological pressure experienced by young people and the urgent need for accessible prevention and support services within educational settings.

Even though the National Mental Health Action Plan is ambitious, progress has been slower than hoped because there are not enough mental health professionals and funding is limited.

At the same time, international partnerships - with organizations like UNICEF and the World Health Organization - are helping to strengthen services, especially for young people.



However, progress has been slow and uneven. Many services are still hard to access, especially outside big cities. There is also ongoing confusion between psychiatry and psychology, which can make it harder for people to find the right kind of help. Political instability and the rise of populist narratives have also made it more difficult to secure stable funding and long-term commitment to reforms.

This situation reflects a broader trend across Europe. According to the study “Europe’s mental health crisis: Which country uses the most antidepressants? by Euronews”, the use of antidepressants has been rising in many countries, showing both greater awareness of mental health issues and gaps in support systems. In the Czech Republic, this underlines the need to continue shifting toward more accessible, preventive, and community-based care.



## CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



Getting support for mental health is often not straightforward, and it’s normal that reaching out to a professional can feel difficult. For many young people, this step already requires a lot of courage. At the same time, once help-seeking begins, it is an important and positive first step toward feeling better—even if the process itself takes time.

In the Czech Republic, the mental health system still faces structural limits. Compared with many Western European countries, less funding is allocated to mental health care overall. A significant share of resources is still directed toward psychiatric hospitals, while community-based and local services remain less developed. This makes access to early and nearby support more difficult.

According to the World Health Organization, there are around **30 mental health professionals per 100,000 people in the Czech Republic**. This shortage has direct consequences: waiting times can be long, and it may take weeks or even months to see a psychologist or psychiatrist.



Even when services are available, access is not always simple. Psychotherapy provided by clinical psychologists can be covered by health insurance, but only if the psychologist has a contract with the patient's insurance provider. Because of this, some people are forced to pay out-of-pocket. For students or young adults with limited income, this can become a major barrier.

In addition, many psychologists already have full caseloads, and waiting lists of six months or more are not uncommon, with some professionals no longer accepting new patients.



Beyond system capacity, there is also a knowledge and awareness gap. Research linked to psychiatrist Petr Winkler highlights that mental health literacy in the Czech Republic remains relatively low. Many people do not recognise symptoms or may not realise when they need professional help. Mental health is still sometimes treated as a taboo topic, which can delay people from speaking openly or seeking support early.

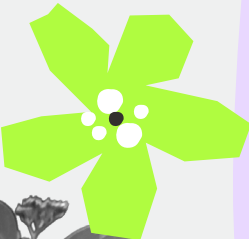
This is why prevention and education are so important. Many experts argue that mental health should be discussed more openly in schools and among peers, so that young people can recognise early signs, feel less isolated, and know where to turn for help.

Overall, while the system is improving, access barriers—financial, structural, and cultural—still make it harder for many people to get timely support.

# CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

The Czech Republic's National Mental Health Action Plan 2020–2030 aims to move the system away from institutional care and toward more community-based and preventative support. The reform focuses on improving coordination between health and social services, strengthening local mental health centres, and making support easier to access earlier and closer to home.

International cooperation with organizations such as UNICEF and the World Health Organization has also supported efforts to improve mental health services, particularly for children and young people.



At the same time, experts continue to highlight the importance of prevention, mental health literacy, and early intervention. **Many initiatives increasingly focus on schools and community settings as places where young people can receive support before difficulties become more severe.**



# WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Overall, the country is moving in the right direction, but it still has a long way to go before mental health services are fully accessible for young people, well-funded, and easy to navigate.

Access barriers—financial, structural, and cultural—can still make it difficult to receive timely support. Long waiting lists, uneven regional access, and limited awareness about mental health continue to affect many young people across the country.

At the same time, there is growing recognition that young people should be involved in shaping the future of mental health support and advocacy. It is important for young people to get involved in advocacy for their rights because it gives them a voice in decisions that directly affect their lives, helps ensure that policies reflect their real needs and experiences, and contributes to building fairer and more responsive systems for the future.

At the European and international level, youth ambassadors such as Veronika Novotná also speak about mental health, helping to bring young people's perspectives into policy discussions and making sure these issues are not overlooked.



# ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Youth Leadership Programme is funded by **Rare Impact Fund** to amplify the voice of young people within Mental Health Europe and beyond, fostering a movement of young leaders who drive cultural and social change. By transforming the narrative around mental health, young leaders will challenge stigma and advocate for tangible support in schools, care settings, and the wider community.

Active participation of young people in policy development and sociopolitical processes is essential for building a just and equitable society where everyone's mental health can thrive. For 2025–2026, the project will focus on implementing various engagement activities led by youth leaders at both European and local levels, with the goal of supporting the mental health of children and young people aged 12–25.

This resource guide is part of the Youth Leadership Programme and focuses specifically on the Czech Republic. It aims to map youth-friendly, low-barrier (peer and community) mental health support offers, helping young people find services that feel accessible, non-judgemental, and easy to reach - especially during moments when life feels overwhelming or too difficult to manage alone.



@mentalhealthyouthleadership

rare impact fund



Mental  
Health  
Europe

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