



Resources for Supporting Mental Health

Among Young People
in Spain



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 Spain



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.

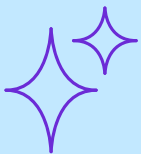


This reference guide was developed by Youth Ambassador Sabela Martínez as a part of the Youth Leadership Programme. The document is a product of co-creation, researched and drafted by Youth Leaders with the guidance and editorial oversight of Mental Health Europe. The views and content expressed reflect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

WHERE YOU CAN FIND SUPPORT

If you feel overwhelmed, anxious, lonely, or unsure where to turn, support is available. Many organisations in Madrid and surrounding areas provide free or low-cost support, including information, peer groups, counselling, and community activities. Most services aim to be accessible, confidential, and supportive, especially for young people and families.

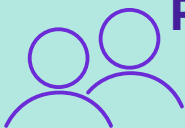
Disclaimer: The following links and helplines were gathered with the best care possible, however, as these are third-party services, we cannot guarantee their quality or that they remain accessible after the release of these documents.



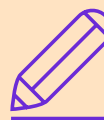
**Youth-Focused /
Youth-First Spaces**



**Identity /
Community-Specific
Support**



**Peer & Community
Mental Health
Associations**



**School-Based
Support Pathways**



**Support for Specific
Mental Health
Challenges**



**Directories / "Find
More Support"
Hubs**

SAFETY & CRISIS: WHAT PEER SUPPORT CAN AND CANNOT DO

Peer support can help you feel heard, share your experiences and figure out the next steps. However, it is not an emergency service.

- ➔ Emergency / immediate danger: **112** (Spain/EU emergency number).
- ➔ If you have suicidal thoughts or you're worried about someone: **024**, which is Spain's "Línea de atención a la conducta suicida" (Ministry of Health). It provides emotional containment via active listening and can recommend contacting health services or refer to **112** in emergencies.
- ➔ Another resource: Teléfono de la Esperanza (Madrid / national), for emotional support and crisis listening via a non-profit network. **914 59 00 50** (Madrid) / **717 00 37 17** (national); web resources via their site.

HOW TO ACCESS SUPPORT (PRACTICAL)?

- ➔ If you want to start with a low-pressure option: pick a peer group or mutual-aid space and message the contact to ask: "When do you meet? Is it a drop-in? Do I need to register?"
- ➔ If you need to talk today (but it's not a medical emergency): call Teléfono de la Esperanza.
914 59 00 50 (Madrid) / **717 00 37 17** (national)
- ➔ If it's urgent or includes suicide risk: call **024** (or **112** for immediate danger).





Youth-Focused / Youth-First Spaces



Youth & Mental Health Project (ALUSAMEN)

A community space in Madrid for young people (up to 30) that focuses on mutual support and wellbeing. The project organises workshops, sports, leisure activities, and community initiatives to create a supportive environment where young people can talk openly about mental health.



Peer & Community Mental Health Associations



Asociación Salud Mental Madrid Norte (AFAEM-5)

A community organisation in northern Madrid that supports people with mental health issues and their families through rehabilitation programmes, peer support, and social inclusion activities.



Moratalaz (AFAEMO)

A local association in the Moratalaz district that runs family education programmes, including the “Family School”, and organises community activities that promote mental health awareness and recovery.



Family & Friends of People with Mental Illness (AFAEP)

A family-led organisation that provides guidance, psychoeducation, and respite support to relatives and friends of people experiencing mental health difficulties.



Association of Family Members and People Affected by Mental Health (AFASAME)

An association supporting individuals and families through peer support, accompaniment services, and community activities that promote social inclusion.



Association for Aid, Health, Hope and Life (APASEV)

An organisation promoting wellbeing by offering psychoeducation, healthy-lifestyle initiatives, and community support for people experiencing mental health issues.



Health & Mutual Aid Association (ASAM)

A mutual-aid association organising peer support groups, training opportunities, and employment-related activities that encourage recovery and social participation.



Mental Health Association (Henares Corridor) (ASAMEC)

A regional association that supports people and families through wellbeing workshops, peer support groups, and community initiatives that address mental health stigma.



Association for Health and Alternative Lifestyles (ASAV)

A community organisation that promotes mental wellbeing through peer support, volunteering, and inclusive activities for groups such as young people and women.



Health and Life Association of the Northwest Sierra of Madrid (ASAVI)

A local association in the Sierra Noroeste area supporting recovery through peer groups, rehabilitation activities, and community engagement.



Mental Health Association Madrid East (ASME)

A regional association that promotes recovery and mental health awareness through peer support groups, volunteering opportunities, and community initiatives.



Psychiatry and Life Association

An organisation providing psychoeducation and peer support for people experiencing mental health issues and for their families.



Support for Specific Mental Health Challenges



Spanish Association for Support in Psychosis (AMAFE)

This Madrid-based association specialises in supporting people experiencing psychosis and their families through psychoeducation, family guidance, and recovery-oriented support programmes.



Madrid Association for Help and Research of Borderline Personality Disorder

This organisation raises awareness about borderline personality disorder and provides information, psychoeducation, and support for individuals and families affected by the condition.



Anxiety and Depression Support Association (AMTAES)

This mutual-aid association supports people experiencing anxiety and depression related challenges by organising peer support groups and activities that promote recovery and social connection.





Identity / Community-Specific Support



LGBTIQ+ Community Support (COGAM)

This organisation provides orientation and support services for LGBTIQ+ young people, including online and in-person guidance and peer activities. They also host **ConVIHviendo**, a mutual-aid group for LGBTIQ+ people living with HIV.



School-Based Support Pathways

Peer Support Programme – Community of Madrid (Alumnos ayudantes)

Some schools run peer-support programmes where trained students help prevent bullying, support classmates, and improve the school environment.

➡ To access the programme, ask your school tutor or guidance counsellor if your school participates.



Directories / “Find More Support” Hubs



Spanish Confederation for Mental Health

A national network of mental health associations that provides updated information about organisations, peer-support initiatives, and resources across Spain.



KEY INSIGHTS



PEER SUPPORT AS A LOW-BARRIER ENTRY POINT

For many young people in Madrid, peers are often easier to approach than professionals. Peer-to-peer spaces - whether in schools, youth centres, campuses, or online - allow young people to share their experiences and feelings in a familiar and safe environment. No referrals are needed, and these settings help reduce stigma while fostering trust and accessibility.

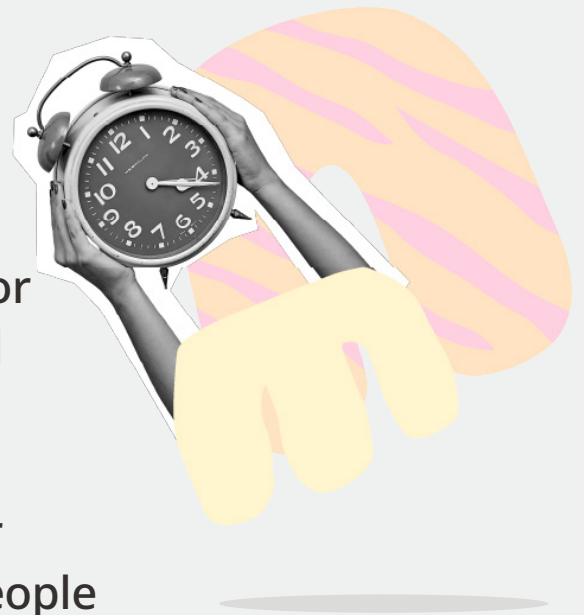
DIGITAL CHANNELS INCREASE REACH AND ACCESSIBILITY



Online chat, Discord, DM, and other digital formats provide a “first step” for young people who might feel anxious or unable to visit services in person. These tools allow teens and young adults to connect with peers or trained facilitators at flexible hours, extending support to those with mobility constraints, busy schedules, or social anxiety.

COST AND TIME CONSIDERATIONS MATTER

Support is most effective when it is free or low-cost, with minimal waiting times and flexible access. Short, drop-in sessions, evening or after-school availability, and multiple formats (one-on-one, groups, or online) make it more likely that young people will seek help before problems escalate.



CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC FIT REDUCES BARRIERS

Programs led by peers from similar cultural, linguistic, or social backgrounds are easier for migrant or multilingual youth to navigate. Feeling understood and included increases engagement and decreases stigma associated with seeking help.



WHY THIS MATTERS: MENTAL HEALTH CONTEXT IN SPAIN



CURRENT TRENDS

The most commonly registered problems in primary care are:

- ➔ Anxiety disorders: 111.3 per 1,000
- ➔ Sleep disorders: 87.3 per 1,000
- ➔ Depressive disorders: 49.3 per 1,000 (with a growing trend over 2016–2023)

THE MOST COMMON MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

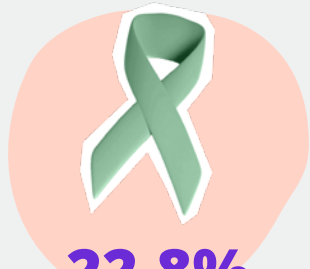
18.3% increase
in anxiety disorders

17.4% increase
in learning disorders

13% increase
in sleep disorders

Recorded prevalence per 1,000 inhabitants among youth under 25 in Spain. Growth shown from 2016 to 2023.

In a 2022 national study (La situación de la salud mental en España), led by Confederación Salud Mental España and Fundación Mutua Madrileña:



22.8%

report lived experience of mental health problems



18.9%

currently take psychotropic medication



26.2%

are currently seeing a mental health specialist



44.9%

report worry as the most common emotional response

Suicide-related risk is significant:

14.5%
report suicidal ideation or attempt

Among young people aged 18-25
31.8%
report ideation/attempt

30.7%
report self-harm

Young people link their distress to self-demand and pressure, difficulties achieving goals, insecurity about the future, and challenges managing unpleasant emotions.



HOW THE PUBLIC SYSTEM WORKS (AND WHERE IT GETS STUCK)

UNIVERSAL COVERAGE & DECENTRALIZATION

Spain has a universal, tax-funded system. Mental health care is delivered within Spain's public Sistema Nacional de Salud (SNS), which provides coverage to the large majority of residents (the report describes the SNS as the core public system and reports population protected/covered through its registries).

It has a highly decentralized governance (major territorial variation). Health policy and service organization are largely implemented by the Comunidades Autónomas. Financially, regional administrations carry the main burden of public health spending (the report quantifies this at 91.2 % of public health expenditure financed by administrations). This decentralization typically translates into different entry points, waiting times, and service configurations across territories - relevant for mapping "what exists" in Madrid versus elsewhere.

ACCESS BOTTLENECKS

Primary care functions as a key gatekeeper for mental health pathways (referrals, first-line support).

In 2024:

- ➔ **70.0% waited more than one day for a GP appointment**
- ➔ **Average wait time: 8.7 days**

Delays at this "front door" can slow down help-seeking, especially for young people in distress.

ECONOMIC BARRIERS

Economic barriers exist, with gender and age gradients. While Spain reports relatively low "could not afford" indicators compared to some EU peers, the report still finds that **2.8% of the population could not afford mental health care in the last 12 months.**

Among 25–34-year-olds: 5.9%.
Among women aged 25–34: 7.5%



HOW IS THE GOVERNMENT ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH?



Quick context! Spain's Ley General de Sanidad (Ley 14/1986) frames mental health care as part of the general health system, explicitly oriented to community-based provision and coordination with social services (prevention, psychosocial problems, rehabilitation and social reintegration).



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At national level, the **Estrategia de Salud Mental del SNS 2022–2026** sets the overall direction for mental health policy. It focuses on prevention, early detection, suicide prevention, community-based care, and protecting people's rights.

The **Plan de Acción de Salud Mental 2025–2027** continued this work and introduced a national Mental Health Commissioner (established in December 2023) to strengthen coordination and prioritisation. An earlier action plan (2022–2024) was approved with dedicated funding of €100 million to support implementation.



At regional level, the Government of Madrid has its own **Plan Estratégico de Salud Mental y Adicciones 2022–2024**, which guides mental health services in the Comunidad de Madrid. It also has a **Plan de Prevención del Suicidio 2022–2026**, designed as a multisectoral strategy led by the regional health authority.

Across all these policies, common priorities include prevention, early identification of mental health difficulties, improving access to support close to where people live (through community and primary care services), and better coordination between health, education, and social support systems.

GAPS THAT MATTER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN MADRID

These are the gaps that typically matter for a youth-friendly, low-barrier mapping in Madrid (peer/community supports, “easy to reach” access points), grounded in the sources below:

- ➔ Madrid has faced sustained growth in waiting lists for specialist consultations and procedures (general system pressure), which tends to translate into slower access for mental health referrals as well. This is not a mental-health-only indicator, but it is a practical barrier for youth trying to enter care through the public pathway.
- ➔ Evidence coming out of Madrid’s clinical psychology professional/academic ecosystem points to limited staffing levels and uneven deployment across hospital and outpatient settings (SERMAS), which aligns with the broader national picture of high demand (anxiety/sleep/depression dominating recorded need).



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 infosheet is part of the Youth Leadership Programme and focuses specifically on Madrid, Spain. 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.



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