



Resources for Supporting Mental Health

Among Young People
in Germany



Youth Leadership
Programme

HOW TO NAVIGATE THIS RESOURCE GUIDE

How to Find Psychotherapy in Germany



Need to know how the German mental health system works? This guide breaks down how to find a therapist, what the different types of support mean, and explains your rights to privacy and confidentiality.

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



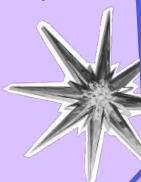
Curious about the mental health landscape in your country? Find out what young people actually need most and the biggest challenges to getting help.



Mental Health Context in Germany



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 Mental Health Advocates Cinja Gluch, Lea Dietzfelbinger, Maren Mitterer, and Paul Fiedler as a part of the Mental Health Europe Youth Leadership Programme. The document is a product of co-creation, researched and drafted by youth mental health advocates 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 advocates.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND SUPPORT

Feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or lonely? That's okay. You don't have to figure it out by yourself.

There are many services that offer free or low-cost support made for people your age. Whether you want to talk to someone one-on-one, connect with others who get what you're going through, or just find something to do and people to be around, there's something out there for you. These services exist to support you, no questions asked.

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.



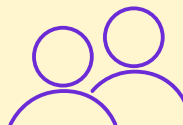
**Crisis, Emergency
& Immediate
Support**



**Youth Helplines &
Live Counselling**



**Anonymous Online
Counselling for
Youth**



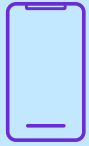
**In-Person
& Student
Counselling**



**Online
Overviews of
Support Services**



**Social Media
Resources**



Mental Health Apps



Regional & Topic-Specific Support



Podcasts



How to Find Psychotherapy in Germany



Crisis, Emergency & Immediate Support



Emergency Number

112: Germany's nationwide emergency number for urgent situations requiring immediate assistance.



Telefonseelsorge

116 123: Free, anonymous 24/7 helpline offering emotional support and crisis counselling for anyone experiencing distress. Support is available via phone, chat, or email.



Krisenchat

Free, anonymous text-based counselling service specifically for young people under 25, offering support from trained counsellors via chat.



MuTeS Muslimisches SeelsorgeTelefon

030 443 509 821: Muslim Counseling Hotline
– Free counselling service offering anonymous emotional and spiritual support, open to everyone regardless of religion, gender, or background.



Youth Helplines & Live Counselling



Nummer gegen Kummer

116 111: Free and confidential helpline offering emotional support and advice for children and young people via phone or online counselling. This number is available from **Monday to Saturday from 2PM to 8PM.**



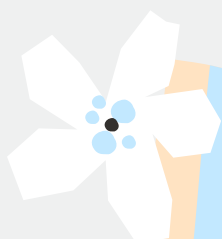
Neuhland

030 873 01 11: Free and confidential crisis counselling for young people experiencing emotional distress or suicidal thoughts. The number is available from **Monday to Friday from 9AM to 6PM.**



Helpline Ukraine

0800 500 225 0: Telephone counselling service providing support in Ukrainian and Russian for children and adolescents affected by war, displacement, or crisis. This number is available from **Monday to Friday between 2PM and 5PM.**





PEER4U

Free and anonymous chat counselling for young relatives of people experiencing mental illness. It is available on **Monday from 5PM to 10PM, on Tuesday and Friday from 7PM to 9PM, on Wednesday and Thursdays from 6PM to 10PM.**



Nightlines

Peer-led telephone support service for university students offering confidential conversations with trained student volunteers. Availability of this service varies according to each city.



Anonymous Online Counselling for Youth



JugendNotmail

Free anonymous online counselling platform for young people under 25 offering email support and themed chats with trained counsellors. Live chats are available on **Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 6PM to 8PM, and themed chats every Monday from 7PM to 8:30PM.**





KidKit

Online counselling platform supporting young people aged 10–21 from families affected by addiction, mental illness, or violence.



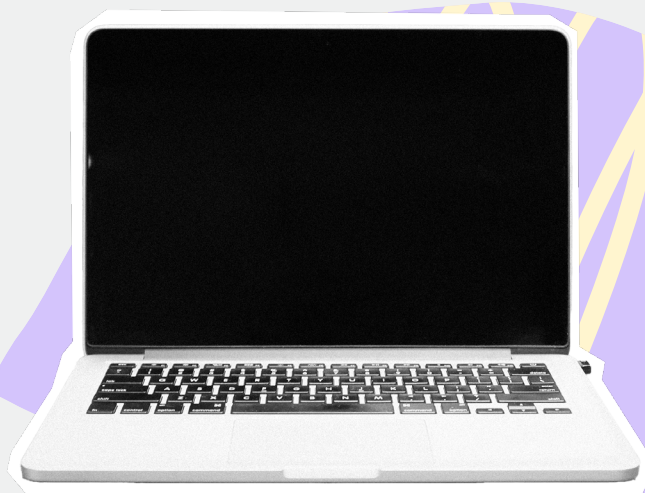
U25 Deutschland

Free confidential email counselling service for young people under 25.



Virtual Support Talks (Redezeit für dich)

Online platform offering scheduled virtual support conversations with trained volunteers.





In-Person & Student Counselling



Telefonseelsorge Local Centres

Free confidential in-person counselling services available in multiple German cities including Berlin, Bremen, Bochum, Bonn, Duisburg, Erlangen, Frankfurt am Main, Freiburg, Hamburg, Karlsruhe, Mannheim, Mainz, München, Nürnberg, Saarbrücken, Stuttgart, Trier, Wiesbaden, and Würzburg.



University Psychological Counselling Services

Psychological counselling services available at many German universities through student service organisations ([Studierendenwerke](#)), providing confidential support for students experiencing academic or personal difficulties.



Nightlines University Network

Peer-led telephone services available for university students in cities including Aachen, Bamberg, Berlin, Bielefeld, Bochum, Dresden, Frankfurt, Freiburg, Göttingen, Greifswald, Halle, Heidelberg, Karlsruhe, Köln, Konstanz, Leipzig, München, Münster, Osnabrück, Passau, Potsdam, and Regensburg.





Online Overviews of Support Services



Between The Lines

Online platform providing an overview of mental health counselling services for young people in Germany, including chat, phone, and email counselling options.



Youth Life Line

Online resource page listing additional counselling services and crisis support options for young people in Germany.



Social Media Resources



@kliniken_psychiatrien_kjps

Unofficial Instagram page providing an overview of inpatient psychiatric clinics for children and adolescents in Germany, including first-hand recommendations and information organised by region and specialisation.



Mental Health Apps



Headspace

Meditation and mindfulness app offering guided exercises for stress reduction, sleep improvement, and emotional wellbeing.



7Mind

German mindfulness and meditation app providing structured courses designed to support relaxation, focus, and mental wellbeing (€3–15 per month).



KrisenKompass

Suicide prevention app developed by Telefonseelsorge that helps users recognise warning signs, document emotions, and access crisis support contacts.



Podcasts



Lebensmutig Podcast

Podcast exploring personal recovery journeys and the role of self-help groups in mental health support.



“Es braucht das ganze Dorf”

Podcast series where psychologists and young people discuss different mental health topics and lived experiences.



Regional & Topic-Specific Support



Krisendienste Bayern

0800 655 3000: Crisis counselling service offering telephone support and local crisis intervention across Bavaria.



Berliner Krisendienst

030 39 06 31 0: Regional crisis service offering immediate psychological support for people experiencing acute distress in Berlin.



Jugendberatung Digital der Stadt Köln

Free confidential online counselling service for young people up to 27 offering chat, email, and video counselling.



Juuuport

Online peer counselling service supporting young people experiencing cyberbullying or problems related to the internet and social media.



QueerSupport (Lambda Peersupport)

Peer counselling service providing support for LGBTQIA+ young people through trained peer supporters.



Hilfetelefon Gewalt gegen Frauen

116 016: Nationwide 24/7 counselling service providing confidential support and information for women affected by violence. Friends and family members who want to support someone affected can also reach out. Free chat and email counselling are also available.



Rosa Strippe

0234 19446: Counselling service providing support for LGBTQIA+ individuals, including coming-out counselling and crisis support. Available **Monday to Thursday from 4PM to 8PM.**





Männerhilfetelefon

0800 123 9900: National Helpline providing confidential support for men who have experienced violence. Available **Monday to Thursday from 8AM to 8PM and Friday from 8AM to 3PM.**



Info Telefon Depression

0800 33 44 533: Specialised helpline offering information and guidance for people experiencing depression or supporting someone affected by depression. This number is available on **Monday, Tuesday, and Thursdays from 1PM to 5PM and Wednesday and Fridays from 8:30AM to 12:30PM.**



FIDEO

Moderated online forum focusing on depression where young people can exchange experiences and receive guidance in a safe online community.





How to Find Psychotherapy in Germany (Practical Guide)

This guide provides general information to help you navigate mental health services in Germany.



Federal Chamber of Psychotherapists (BPtK)

Information portal explaining how psychotherapy works in Germany and how to find a therapist.



Medical Service

116 117: Nationwide medical on-call service that provides advice for non-urgent health issues and can help arrange therapy appointments.



Therapie.de

One of the largest therapist search databases in Germany allowing users to filter therapists by location, therapy type, language, and specialisation.



Psychotherapiesuche

Online directory helping users locate psychotherapists across Germany.



MindDoc

Digital mental health platform offering online psychotherapy and self-help programmes.



DGKJP Clinic Finder

Online search tool helping users locate psychiatric clinics for children and adolescents across Germany.

UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT TYPES OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Mental health treatment in Germany can take different forms depending on your needs and the severity of symptoms.

- ➡ **Psychotherapy** – Usually involves regular sessions (often around 50 minutes once per week) with a licensed psychotherapist to work on emotional, behavioural, or psychological difficulties.
- ➡ **Group Therapy** – Therapy conducted in a small group of participants guided by a therapist. This can provide shared experiences and peer support.
- ➡ **Day Clinics** – Treatment programmes where patients attend therapy, counselling, and activities during the day but return home in the evening.
- ➡ **Psychiatrists** – Medical doctors specialised in mental health who can diagnose conditions and prescribe medication if needed.

➔ **Psychiatric Clinics** – Inpatient facilities providing intensive treatment in open, semi-open, or closed settings, typically during severe mental health crises or when outpatient therapy is not sufficient.

➔ **Psychosomatic Clinics** – Specialised clinics that treat conditions where physical symptoms are closely linked to psychological or social factors. These programmes often involve longer stays and multidisciplinary therapy approaches.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS IN THERAPY

➔ **Confidentiality from Age 14** – In Germany, therapists are generally bound by full professional confidentiality towards young people aged 14 and above, including in relation to parents.

➔ **Exceptions in Emergency Situations** – If there is a serious and immediate danger to life or safety (known as a “justifying emergency”), therapists may disclose confidential information in order to prevent harm.

➔ **Protection in Cases of Violence or Abuse** – Mental health professionals may inform authorities or child protection services if they identify abuse, mistreatment, or serious threats to a child’s wellbeing.

In situations of acute suicide risk or serious threats to others, therapists may also inform family members, authorities, or the police in order to prevent harm.

KEY INSIGHTS

MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES? YOU'RE FAR FROM THE ONLY ONE.

More and more young people in Germany are dealing with mental health challenges, like stress, anxiety, or feeling down.

Studies show that:



1 in 6

young people face issues that seriously affect their daily lives



63%

say they're not doing well mentally

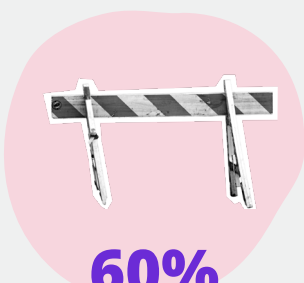


while only **7%** feel truly happy

➔ That's a huge gap between how people feel and the support they're getting.

FEELING IGNORED? YOU'RE NOT IMAGINING IT.

A lot of young people say their concerns aren't taken seriously. In a big survey of 3,417 teens and young adults (ages 14–25):



60%

felt dismissed when talking about their mental health

This hits even harder for girls and non-binary folks, showing how stigma and lack of understanding still get in the way.

SCHOOLS AREN'T TEACHING ENOUGH ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH.

Even though mental health is a big deal:



young people say they don't know enough about it.

Schools and unis could be helping way more. Most young people actually want to learn about this stuff there, but right now, they're not getting what they need.

WHERE DO YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH? MOSTLY SOCIAL MEDIA.



turn to platforms like Instagram or TikTok for info



by friends



from TV/movies



learn about it in school.

That's a problem, because while social media can be helpful, it's not always reliable.

WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE ACTUALLY WANT TO KNOW?

The interest is huge. **86% want to learn more about mental health**, especially:



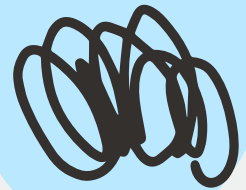
50%

Want to understand emotions



46%

Want to build self-confidence



45%

Want to deal with stress



41%

Want to recognise mental health conditions



41%

Want to prioritise wellbeing



41%

Want to cope with pressure

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Too many young people in Germany are struggling but feel like no one's listening.

The good news? There's a strong desire to learn and get better support. If schools, social media, and services step up, young people can get the tools they need to understand their feelings, find help, and feel heard.



38%

Want to learn about access to therapy and support

Bottom line: Your mental health matters. You deserve support, and you're not alone in wanting it.

MENTAL HEALTH IN GERMANY



Mental health is something that affects all of us: how we feel, how we learn, how we connect with others, and how we deal with the ups and downs of everyday life. In Germany, mental health is recognised as a serious public health issue, but the way the system is set up can sometimes make it hard to get the support you need, especially when you're young.

HOW COMMON ARE MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES?

You're not alone if you're struggling. Anxiety and depression are among the most common challenges young people face today, and experts who work with young people in Germany describe them as so widespread they've almost become normalised. Eating disorders are also a growing and serious concern. Experts we spoke to describe this as one of the most alarming trends right now, with young people affected at increasingly early ages. Addictions, from substances and to online behaviours are also rising across the board.



WHAT DOES THE GERMAN HEALTHCARE SYSTEM OFFER?

Around **88% of people in Germany are covered by statutory health insurance** (called Gesetzliche Krankenversicherung or GKV), which covers most mental health services, including outpatient psychotherapy. This means that if you have public health insurance you are legally entitled to mental health support. Most young people are insured through their parents or their own employment.

Germany allocates 13% of its GDP to healthcare, one of the highest proportions globally, **with over 10% of that directed toward mental health**. However, having insurance doesn't always mean getting help quickly. One of the biggest barriers young people face is long waiting times for therapy. It can take months to get an appointment with a psychotherapist.



Key challenges in Germany's mental health system include an **overemphasis on inpatient services and poor coordination between inpatient and outpatient care**. One expert we interviewed put it bluntly: *the system is better at treating serious crises than offering early, accessible support*; the kind that would actually help most young people before things get worse.

LEGAL PROTECTIONS AND YOUTH SERVICES

Several sections of the German Social Code (Sozialgesetzbücher) provide services for children, young people, and legal guardians, but these services are not always well-coordinated or easy to navigate. Youth social work (Jugendsozialarbeit) is funded at national, regional, and local level as part of regular child and youth services, and is specifically dedicated to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with specific needs, including mental health problems.

WHAT ABOUT DIGITAL TOOLS?

Digital tools are increasingly being used to fill gaps in the system. Podcasts can be useful, as they go deeper than social media and give a more realistic picture of what mental health challenges actually look like. Some apps (for sleep, stress, daily support) can help too, though research on which ones actually work is still catching up. There are many free digital counselling services that provide immediate support via chat.

However, no mental health app has been approved as a certified medical device specifically for young people in Germany, which means that while many apps exist, they have not been officially evaluated for safety and effectiveness for your age group.

Experts caution against using AI chat tools as a replacement for human support: They tend to be overly encouraging and can give people a false sense of having dealt with something when the underlying issue is still there.

After all, AI chatbots generate responses that, while appearing human, are based purely on probabilities and they are unable to identify connections or context. It's always important to check whether any tool or app you use is trustworthy.



HOW IS GERMANY ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH?

Germany is taking steps to improve mental health support but there's still a long way to go, especially for young people.



THE HONEST PICTURE FROM EXPERTS

We spoke to people who work closely with young people on mental health in Germany, and they were candid: the system often feels like a lottery. In theory, you have access to help. In practice, whether you actually get the right support depends heavily on where you live, how persistent you are, and, too often, luck.

One recurring theme was the lack of any triage or sorting function in the system. There's no central place you can go and have someone properly assess what you need and guide you to the right kind of support. Whether that's urgent therapy, a group programme, a self-help network, or just some structured prevention. Instead, young people and their families are left to navigate a fragmented landscape largely on their own, often at the exact moment when they have the least capacity to do so.



PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY

Both experts we spoke to emphasised that **mental health prevention doesn't get enough investment**. Sport, creative activities, and community connection are consistently shown to protect mental health, yet these are often the first things cut from school timetables or local budgets. As one expert put it: *if I had the money, I'd spend so much of it on simply bringing people together.*

Youth centres can play a valuable role here as accessible, low-threshold spaces where young people can connect. But they're inconsistently funded, often closed during school holidays when young people need them most, and tend to lose their appeal around age 15–16 unless they actively adapt their offer.



AWARENESS AND RESEARCH

Germany has a national Mental Health Action Week ([Woche der Seelischen Gesundheit](#)) each year from October 10–20, with events across the country aimed at reducing stigma and spreading information. Germany's first nationwide participatory mental health research project, KOMMIT, invited people with lived experience to shape the research agenda, taking people's actual experiences seriously. One expert note of caution: awareness isn't always straightforward.

One interviewee pointed to research suggesting that education focused on mental illness can sometimes increase diagnosed rates without improving wellbeing and emphasised the importance of talking about mental health and resilience, not just disorders.



Similarly, while social media coverage of mental health can reduce stigma, it can also trivialise serious conditions or lead to self-diagnosis based on content that doesn't reflect most people's reality.



THE BIGGER PICTURE

Germany is part of a wider European push to take mental health more seriously. Thirty-one countries have recently committed to integrating mental health into all areas of policy, from schools and workplaces to housing and justice systems, following a landmark summit on mental health ([WHO](#)).

Still, big gaps remain: long therapy waiting lists, limited mental health education in schools, and a system that can feel hard to navigate when you're young and don't know where to turn. That's exactly why projects like this one matter; created by young people, for young people. Knowing what's out there, what you're entitled to, and where to find support is a powerful first step.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Bottom line: Your mental health matters. You deserve support, and you're not alone in wanting it.



ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Youth Leadership Programme is funded by the **Rare Impact Fund** to amplify the voice of young people within Mental Health Europe and beyond, fostering a movement of youth mental health advocates who drive cultural and social change. By transforming the narrative around mental health, youth advocates 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 advocates 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 was created by young people for young people as part of Mental Health Europe's Youth Leadership Programme and focuses on Germany. It aims to map youth-friendly mental health tools, resources, and support services in Germany to help them find accessible support that is non-judgmental and easy to reach - especially in moments when life feels overwhelming or too difficult to manage alone.



@mentalhealthyouthleadership

rare impact fund



Mental
Health
Europe

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- ➔ YEP – Stimme der Jugend (2025). Mental Health Jugendbericht
- ➔ Wiegand et al. (2025). Mental health services in Germany – Structures, outcomes and future challenges.
- ➔ World Health Organization. (2025, June 16). With 17% of people in the region living with a mental health condition, 31 countries commit to integrating mental health into all policies.

