At the request of the WHO Regional Director for Europe, a technical advisory group (TAG) was established in February 2021 to provide advice and guidance to Member States of the WHO European Region and other interested parties on the key mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to suggest critical actions to be taken by national authorities in response.

The TAG has produced the following recommendations for Member States:

- **General population and communities**
  - Promote and enable access to culturally adapted, evidence-based interventions for mental health and psychosocial support through digital and other means, including interventions to increase resilience and help people cope with stress and loneliness.
  - Promote, support and embed psychological support initiatives in the workplace, and provide occupational and/or financial support to those prevented from or not working, or in the process of returning to work.
  - Address the social determinants of mental health, including poverty, unemployment and socioeconomic inequalities, through targeted actions to provide financial support to households in or at risk of impoverishment as a result of income loss or unemployment, including sickness absence payments for those temporarily unable to work.
  - Monitor changes in mental health at population level through valid, standardized and comparable measures and instruments.

- **Vulnerable groups**
  - Promote, communicate and increase access to socioemotional learning, educational support for learning loss and mental health and psychosocial support in schools and universities, and provide more community support for adolescents and young adults.
  - Promote and enable access to mental health and psychosocial support for individuals directly affected by COVID-19 disease.
  - Develop, communicate and put in place emergency preparedness guidance for people with disabilities and in long-term care, and ensure continued access to, and facilitated provision of, quality care and support.

- **Mental health services**
  - Strengthen and develop mental health and psychosocial support services as an integral component of preparedness and response to, and recovery from, COVID-19 and other public health emergencies.
  - Ensure mental health services are legally, operationally and financially safeguarded, and oversee the scaled-up provision of person-centred, community-based services that include innovative modalities of care.

- **Health- and social-care workforce**
  - Ensure safe, fair and supportive working conditions for frontline health and care workers, including through the provision of appropriate protective equipment, revised pay and conditions, and access to mental health and psychosocial training and support.
  - Provide mental health workers and frontline responders with capacity-building opportunities and training in preparedness and response to infectious disease and other public health emergencies, basic psychosocial skills and other tools to mitigate the psychological impacts of COVID-19, both for their clients and themselves.