

Enhancing mental health pre-service training with the mhGAP Intervention Guide: experiences and lessons learned



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ISBN 978-92-4-000766-6 (electronic version)

ISBN 978-92-4-000767-3 (print version)

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Suggested citation. Enhancing mental health pre-service training with the mhGAP intervention guide: experiences and lessons learned. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020. [Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO](#).

Cataloguing-in-Publication (CIP) data. CIP data are available at <http://apps.who.int/iris>.

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Acknowledgements

WHO would like to acknowledge all experts – many of them from the child and adolescent mental health community – who participated in discussions of potential opportunities for implementation of the mhGAP-IG in pre-service training to improve available mental health services, including for children and adolescents.

Special thanks to Professor Norbert Skokauskas (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NTNU) for developing an advanced draft of this document during his sabbatical year in 2018 while working as a consultant at WHO.

This document has received key inputs from: Professor Myron Belfer (Harvard University), Ashmita Chaulagain (NTNU), Dr Neerja Chowdhary (World Health Organization, WHO), Dr Dan Chisholm (WHO), Carolyn Clausen (NTNU), Dr Tarun Dua (WHO), Professor Anthony Guerrero (University of Hawaii), Dr Fahmy Hanna (WHO), Professor Helen Herrman (World Psychiatric Association, WPA), Dr Afzal Javed (WPA), Dr Mark van Ommeren (WHO), Dr Laura Pacione (WHO/University of Toronto), Dr Shekhar Saxena (WHO), Dr Chiara Servili (WHO) and the UNA (Ukraine, Norway, Armenia) Partnership.

Abbreviations

DALYs	Disability-Adjusted Life Years
LMICs	Low-and Middle-Income Countries
IACAPAP	International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions
NTNU	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
mhGAP	Mental Health Gap Action Programme
mhGAP-IG	Mental Health Gap Action Programme Intervention Guide
MNS	Mental, Neurological and Substance Use
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organization
WONCA	World Organization of Family Doctors
WPA	World Psychiatric Association

Executive summary

The current global mental health burden calls for an expansion of the mental health workforce, including for children and adolescents. The mental health Gap Action Programme Intervention Guide (mhGAP-IG) provides evidence-based guidance and tools for the assessment and integrated management of priority mental, neurological and substance use (MNS) disorders in non-specialized health settings.

This document was designed to inform educators and decision-makers, health and education authorities, professional societies, and students about enhancing the pre-service curriculum with mhGAP-IG materials, which can provide future professionals with the theoretical and clinical knowledge they need. Pre-service education is the learning that takes place in preparation for a future professional role, for example as a medical doctor, nurse or other health worker.

Integration within pre-service training has the potential to serve as a sustainable and cost-effective approach to workforce expansion by providing practical clinical skills to a variety of future professionals, including doctors, nurses, public health professionals, social workers and others, who can all then contribute to the administration of mental health care from their respective professional roles in their communities.

This document advises educators on why the enhancement of curricula with the mhGAP-IG is important and on how to approach implementation. It also provides an opportunity to provide helpful feedback on the use of mhGAP-IG materials in pre-service training.

The document emphasizes that the integration of mhGAP-IG materials within pre-service curricula is not intended to alter these curricula but rather to enhance what is already in place, with each institution approaching the process from an individualized perspective. It includes suggestions for how to integrate the materials, guiding readers through seven potential phases of implementing the mhGAP-IG in pre-service training curricula.

Where possible, educators should consider assessing both the knowledge of and skills in implementing the mhGAP-IG of all students in pre-service training as a requirement for completing their degree.

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