



HIR Wellness Institute

www.HIRWellness.org/

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Chapeau

The Pact for the Future stands as a visionary framework, acknowledging the multifaceted challenges faced by societies worldwide. Rooted in the principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this document is a call to action to address the pressing need for mental health healing and justice in the face of complex and intergenerational traumas, stressors, health, and social inequities. Recognizing that mental health justice is a cornerstone of community wellbeing, our recommendations within the Pact focus on integrating trauma and healing-informed mental health practices, policies, procedures, processes, and governance to be considered within all chapters and sustained global growth and peace.

HIR Wellness Institute is a survivor and women-led organization that provide free and accessible mental health care to Indigenous and underserved survivors of violence. One of our therapeutic programs is our Daughters of Tradition group that was developed to reimagine the systemic impact of mental health youth groups. Seeking to address complex and intergenerational traumas, stressors, and social injustices needed to mend community wellbeing from gender-based traumas, including sexual assault, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and human trafficking (sex and labor). This approach to mental health care is critical in bridging the systemic gaps and eliminating the barriers to help-seeking, secrecy, and silencing that further disenfranchise invaluable life-saving resources and relational networks.

Prevention, promotion, and intervention are interwoven to strengthen a safety-net of support, familiarity, and rapport with mental health professionals, advocates, and cultural advisors. This includes the different ways their mental health is impacted by family stressors, school, or peers, personal trauma, or adversities but also by *Persistent Toxic Systems and Environments™*. This is a term coined and developed by our CEO and Founder, Lea S. Denny, to look at everyday environmental traumatic or stressful events that negatively impact one's mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health outcomes. This is repeated and regular exposure to toxic surroundings and systems that are felt, seen, heard, and interpreted by the individual as inescapable barriers or hardships.

Mental health is more than an individual experience that can be reduced to symptoms of distress. It is a collective wounding that impacts their families and communities intergenerationally, and the environmental systems that they live. We propose the inclusion of our leadership and representatives from Daughters of Tradition to be part of the Summit for the Future. Our group is ready and hopeful to contribute to the dialogue, insights, storytelling, and expanding of their relational network with global youth ambassadors, delegates, and world leaders. We believe that our participation in the Summit of the Future will amplify Indigenous girls' youth voices and promote the visibility and representation. When our group speaks, they bring their ancestors' wisdom, communities' teachings, and their solutions forward.

Click the links below to learn more about our Daughters of Tradition group and see them in action!



Chapter I. Sustainable development and financing for development

To amplify mental health, a holistic approach is needed for sustainable development that integrates mental health considerations into all aspects of policymaking. This includes allocating funds for mental health programs within broader sustainable development initiatives. By acknowledging that mental health is integral to overall prosperity, we ensure that no one is left behind in the pursuit of global sustainable goals.

The health of a community impacts individuals' mental health. The economic impact of mental health worldwide is estimated at 16 trillion dollars. ***Mental health crisis is a major risk factor to economic disenfranchisement, displacement, and injustices.*** From unemployment, homelessness, to increased societal vulnerabilities, mental health is not a personal problem, it is a global one.

"There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in."

– Desmond Tutu.

According to the World Health Organization in 2019, over 970 million people in the world are living with a mental health disorder, and in 2020 initial estimates have seen approximately a 28% increase, respectively, amongst anxiety and depression disorders. This accounts for 1 in 8 people worldwide who live with a mental health disorder. In the United States, 21% of adults have experienced a mental health condition, and individuals or groups who come from the global majority community are at greater risk for disenfranchised mental health issues. In the United States, 1 in 5 adults have a mental health diagnosis. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the United States, and the overall number of deaths by **suicide increased** 2.6% from 2021 to 2022.

This stark reality emphasizes the urgent need for an integrated approach to sustainable development that prioritizes mental health. As we focus on financing for development, it is essential to earmark resources specifically for mental health programs, ensuring that the well-being of individuals is not overshadowed by economic or infrastructural goals. Allocating funds to mental health initiatives is an investment in the resilience and vitality of communities. It is not merely about erecting buildings or establishing economic initiatives; it is about fostering environments that promote the mental health and well-being of every individual, laying the foundation for a society that is truly sustainable.

Chapter II. International peace and security

Mental health healing is intrinsically linked to peace and security. The Emergency Platform, as defined, must be strengthened, fortified, and respond effectively to the mental health challenges arising from complex global shocks. International cooperation, under the auspices of the UN, should prioritize mental health support in post-conflict regions, ensuring that communities can rebuild their physical infrastructure and the bio-psycho-social-cultural-communal well-being of their members.

The impact of conflicts on mental health is profound and enduring. Individuals and communities affected by historical trauma, racial trauma, human trafficking (sex and labor), genocide, race-based trauma, and gender-based trauma often experience exacerbated mental health challenges during and after conflicts. The Emergency Platform, designed as an international response to complex global shocks, must be equipped to address the nuanced mental health needs arising in post-conflict scenarios.

Enhanced international cooperation is essential to adequately respond to complex global shocks, and the UN is the only organization with the reach and legitimacy to convene at the highest level and galvanize global action. Therefore, in the context of mental health, the Emergency Platform should be fortified to incorporate specialized mental health interventions in its response mechanisms. This includes the deployment of mental health professionals and the integration of culturally sensitive practices to address the diverse mental health needs of affected populations.

Recognizing mental health as a fundamental component of post-conflict recovery ensures a more comprehensive and holistic rebuilding process. Mental health support should not be relegated to the sidelines but should be seamlessly integrated into the broader framework of rebuilding communities. This involves acknowledging the specific traumas experienced by different populations, including historical trauma, racial trauma, human trafficking (sex and labor), genocide, race-based trauma, and gender-based trauma, and tailoring interventions to address these unique mental health challenges.

Recognition of these specific traumas ensures a more targeted and effective allocation of resources, tailoring mental health programs to the unique challenges faced by individuals and communities affected by these historical injustices.

In addition to physical reconstruction, the healing of mental wounds is central to establishing sustainable peace.

Chapter III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation

The Global Digital Compact should be harnessed to promote mental health in the digital age. Through the establishment of guidelines that prioritize user well-being, we can prevent the misuse of digital technologies for mental health harm. Information Integrity, within the digital landscape, should prioritize human rights and multi-stakeholder collaboration to ensure that online platforms contribute positively to mental health access and support.

In an era dominated by digital technologies, the impact on mental health is undeniable. The constant barrage of information, the pressure to conform to societal expectations, and the prevalence of online spaces as platforms for social interaction all contribute to the mental health landscape. The Global Digital Compact, with its emphasis on an open, free, secure, and human-centered digital future, provides a strategic entry point for integrating mental health safeguards. The compact should include specific guidelines for digital platforms that prioritize user well-being and safety. This involves mechanisms to prevent the misuse of digital technologies that can lead to mental health issues, such as cyberbullying, online harassment, and the spread of harmful content.

Moreover, Information Integrity within the digital landscape should be guided by human rights principles and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Defining the guidelines and practices of information on digital platforms contributes to a healthier online environment, reducing misinformation and the potential harm it can cause to mental health. This includes robust measures to prevent the spread of harmful content, online discrimination, and the amplification of traumatic experiences, ensuring a digital landscape that fosters mental health rather than harm.

Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

Youth Engagement is pivotal in addressing mental health challenges. Young people, as drivers of societal change, should be actively involved in shaping mental health policies. Initiatives that empower youth to advocate for mental health, climate action, racial justice, and gender equality contribute not only to their well-being but also to the overall mental health resilience of communities.

The mental health landscape is particularly impactful on the younger generation, who navigate an evolving world fraught with challenges. Youth Engagement in mental health policies is not just a necessity; it is an imperative for building resilient and informed societies. Young people, as agents of change, bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas that affect their generation.

Our recommendation is to create platforms for meaningful Youth Engagement in mental health policymaking and networking. This involves establishing youth-led initiatives that focus on mental health awareness, destigmatization, and advocacy. By actively involving young people in shaping mental health policies, we tap into their unique insights and lived experiences, ensuring that solutions are relevant and responsive to the evolving nature of mental health challenges.

Furthermore, initiatives that empower youth to advocate for mental health, climate action, racial justice, and gender equality contribute not only to their well-being but also to the overall mental health

resilience of communities. The interconnectedness of these issues underscores the need for holistic approaches that address the broader societal determinants of mental health. By amplifying the voices of young advocates, we foster a culture of mental health consciousness that permeates communities and institutions.

Chapter V. Transforming global governance

Beyond Gross Domestic Product, we advocate for a paradigm shift in measuring progress that includes comprehensive metrics for mental health outcomes. By incorporating mental health indicators into global governance frameworks, we align policy decisions with the needs of people and planet. A New Agenda for Peace, focusing on collective action and conflict prevention, is indispensable for maintaining mental health stability in regions affected by historical traumas and ongoing social injustices.

In the realm of global governance, our approach should extend beyond economic indicators and encompass the broader spectrum of human well-being, including mental health. We advocate for a paradigm shift that incorporates comprehensive metrics for mental health outcomes. ***This requires moving away from a purely economic perspective and recognizing the intrinsic value of mental health in assessing the progress and prosperity of societies.***

Our recommendation is to integrate mental health indicators into global governance frameworks. This involves the development of standardized metrics that measure the mental health status of populations, the effectiveness of mental health policies, and the prevalence of mental health disparities. By incorporating mental health into the criteria for evaluating progress, we ensure that the well-being of individuals becomes a central consideration in policy decisions.

Peace is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of conditions that foster well-being, rest, belonging, purpose, and conscious decision making. A New Agenda for Peace, focusing on collective social action, improving mental health care access, increasing relational health, and developing trauma-informed practices, policies, and procedures for school-age students and their families towards conflict prevention, is **indispensable for maintaining community mental health and stability**. Particularly, this is critical in regions affected by wars, historical traumas and ongoing social injustices.