

TECHNICAL BRIEF

# Integrating psychosocial interventions and support into HIV services for adolescents and young adults

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## Overview

Adolescence, defined as the period between 10 and 19 years of age, is a developmental stage during which many psychosocial and mental health challenges emerge. There is a well-established link between mental health and HIV outcomes. Adolescents and young adults living with HIV typically have additional mental health needs linked to their experiences of living with and managing a chronic illness, along with prevailing stigma and discrimination. Mental health promotion and prevention is thus a critical priority for this group.

Psychological and clinical services for mental health are out of reach for many of the world's adolescents and youth, especially in the countries and settings most affected by HIV. Broader-based interventions have greater potential to reach adolescents and young adults living with HIV at scale and to be tailored to their specific needs. Psychosocial interventions have the potential to support healthy behaviours, bolster mental health and lead to improvements in physical and mental health for this group.

This technical brief seeks to establish the importance of implementing psychosocial interventions to optimize HIV outcomes and support mental health for adolescents and young people living with HIV; to provide evidence included in the recent WHO guidelines to educate on how this can and has been done; and to chart a way forward for the integration of mental health and HIV services for this population. It provides approaches and examples of integration of interventions within health services. This brief also aims to identify emerging best practices and strategic actions to ensure that sustained investments in the health and well-being of this important demographic group can be realized at a pivotal global moment.

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