



Folkhälsomyndigheten

# **Mental Health Among Children and Adolescents – What do we know and what can schools do?**

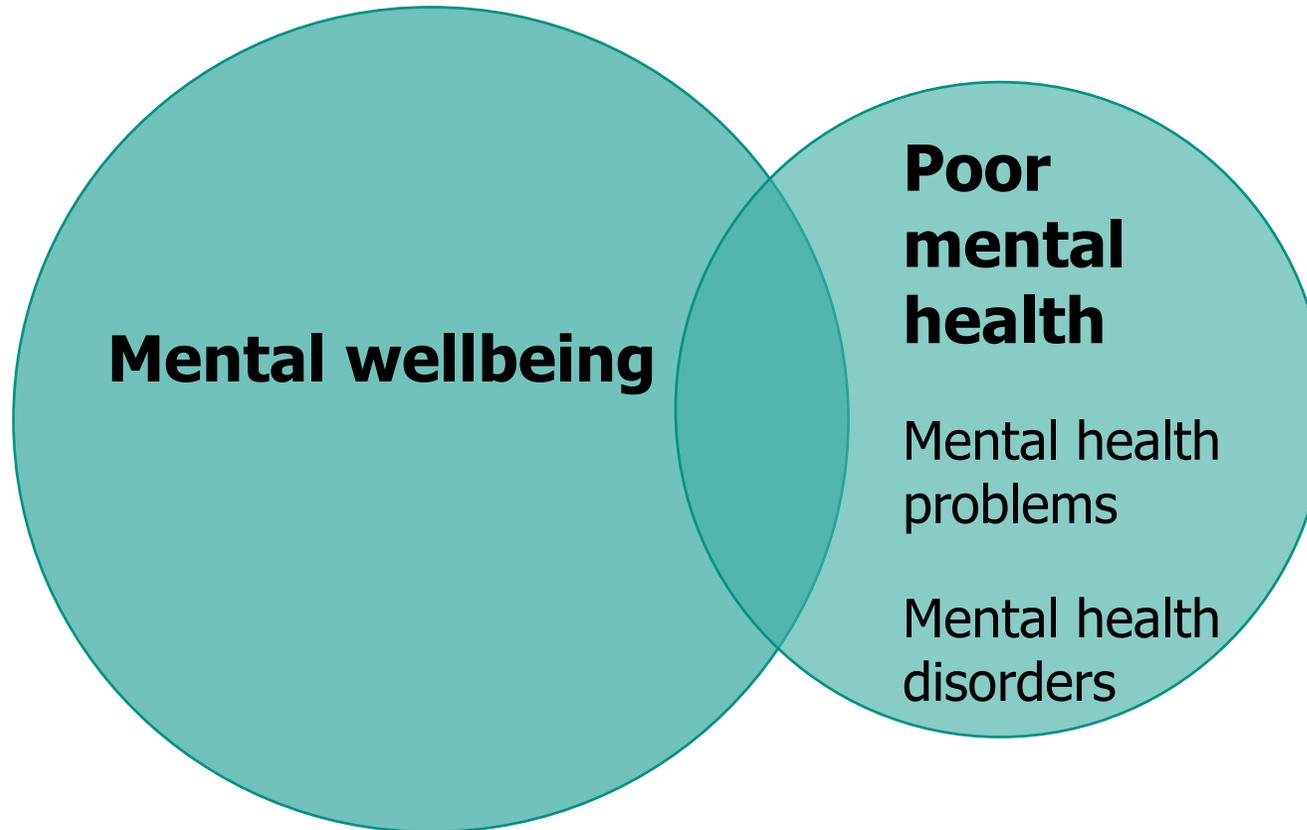
Sara Fritzell, senior analyst, PhD



# Layout

- Intro 10 min:
  - What is mental health?
  - What impacts on mental health?
  - Interventions and programmes
- Discussion 20 min
- Summing up 10 min

# Mental health – an umbrella term



# Mental wellbeing

- How you experience that you are doing and functioning in relation to yourself and your surroundings
- 7/10 girls and 8/10 boys 11 years old have good mental wellbeing.

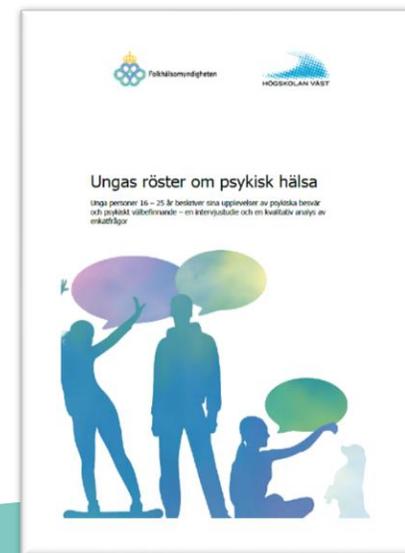
“That is a tough question. To feel well mentally would for me mean that life has a meaning. To not just survive, but to actually also live. [...] to look forward to things, feel calm and not be constantly stressed.”

Girl, 16 years.



# Mental health problems

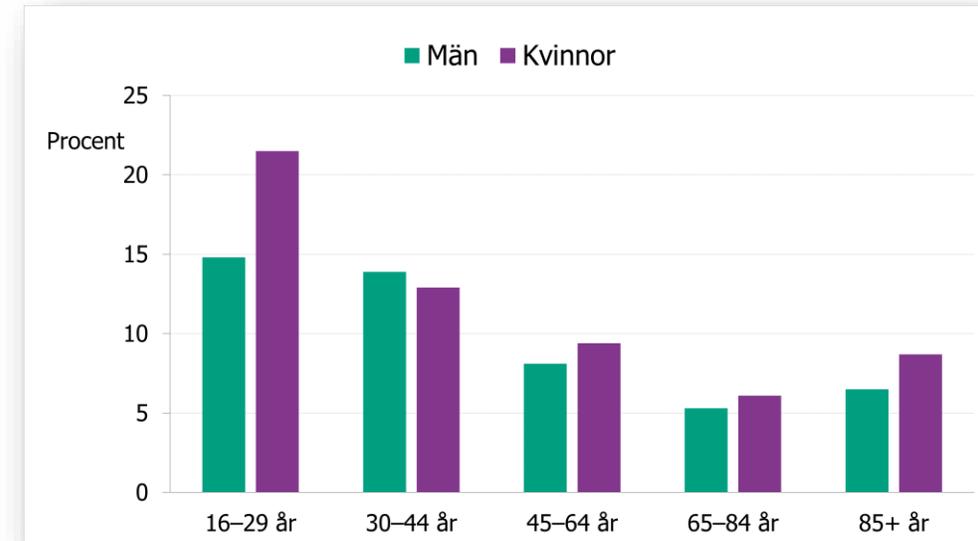
- Feelings like:
  - stress, worry, sadness, grief and anxiety.
- Often normal reactions to difficulties in life
- Can be milder or more severe
- Highest share girls, teenagers and young adults.
- 23% girls 16-29 severe difficulties worry/anxiety



"...it affects so much, it really affects your everyday life, you may have difficulties living like a so called common person, it really affects you so much"  
(Girl, 20 years)

# Mental health disorders

- Clinically significant disturbances in an individual's cognition, emotional regulation, or behaviour.
- Several criteria must be met for a diagnosis of a mental health disorder
- Mental disorders and neuropsychiatric disabilities
  
- Most common diagnoses children and youth: ADHD, anxiety, depression, autism



## What is important for young people?

- That adults dare to ask – and listen
- To get support and help when you need it

## Focus: How can mental health be promoted

Identify risk and protective factor

Identify interventions to affect the factors

What can be done within a national health programme for children and adolescents?

What can be done in different arenas?

2025

2026

april

maj

juni

aug

sept

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nov

dec

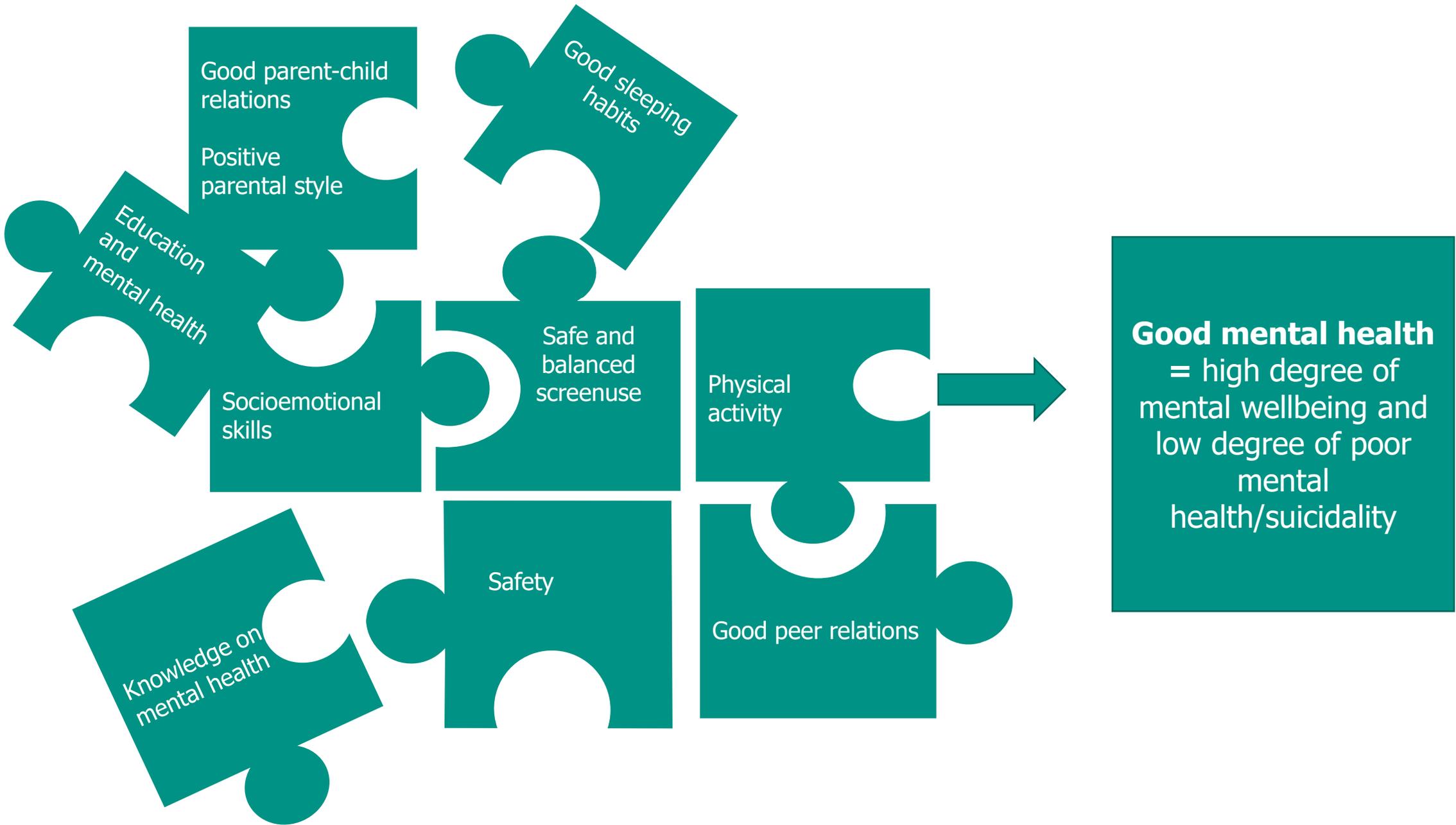
jan

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# Areas of interventions

Good parent - child relations and a positive parenting style

Socioemotional skills

Safety (decreased violence and neglect)

Good relationships with friends

Prevent self harm and suicide

strengthen socioemotional skills and relations

Knowledge about mental health

Good sleeping habits

Physical activity

Safe and balanced use of screens

promote health behaviour and increase knowledge on mental health

# Hearing with professionals in Sweden

- Knowledge from fields of education and health need to be combined
  - Important to strengthen work with socioemotional competencies
  - Easier to integrate programmes in health care settings compared to in schools
  - Whole school approach is preferred.
    - Leadership and governance, a good working environment for teachers and students' are preconditions.
  - Need for a bank of knowledge, what programmes work? How to contextualize? How to cooperate between stakeholders?
-

# How is work with promoting child and youth mental health being done where you work and what should be done?

» Describe the context where you work to the other participants

Discuss:

- How do you work with socioemotional skills and relations, knowledge about mental health or health behaviour today? Do you use any specific interventions or programmes?
- What areas are most prioritized to work with at present?

**Decide:**

- Who takes notes?
- Who is the time-keeper?
- Who will present?

Document the discussion on the post-it. 15 min

Prepare for a 2 min presentation of your discussion.

**Your main messages?**

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# Thank you

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