



Ministry of
Social Affairs and Health

'Implementing a Systems Approach to Mental Health Promotion: From Policy to Practice' – Mental Health Promotion in Finland

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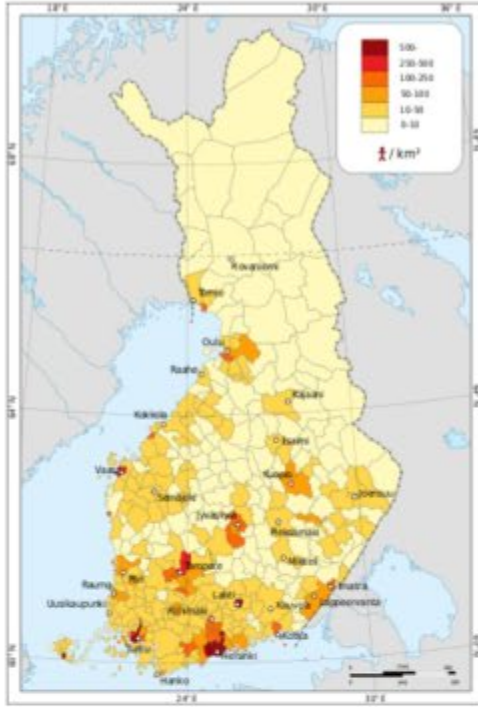
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Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

13.6.2024



Area: 338,424 km²
Population: 5,549,807
Density: 16 / km²



**Population
(5,549,807)**

**Regions
(19)**

**Municipalities
(309)**

**Wellbeing Services
Counties
(22+1)**

- Eight-largest country in Europe
- Most sparsely populated country in the European Union
- Parliamentary republic of 309 municipalities, and one autonomous region, the Åland Islands
- Over 1.4 million people live in the Greater Helsinki metropolitan area, which produces one third of the country's GDP



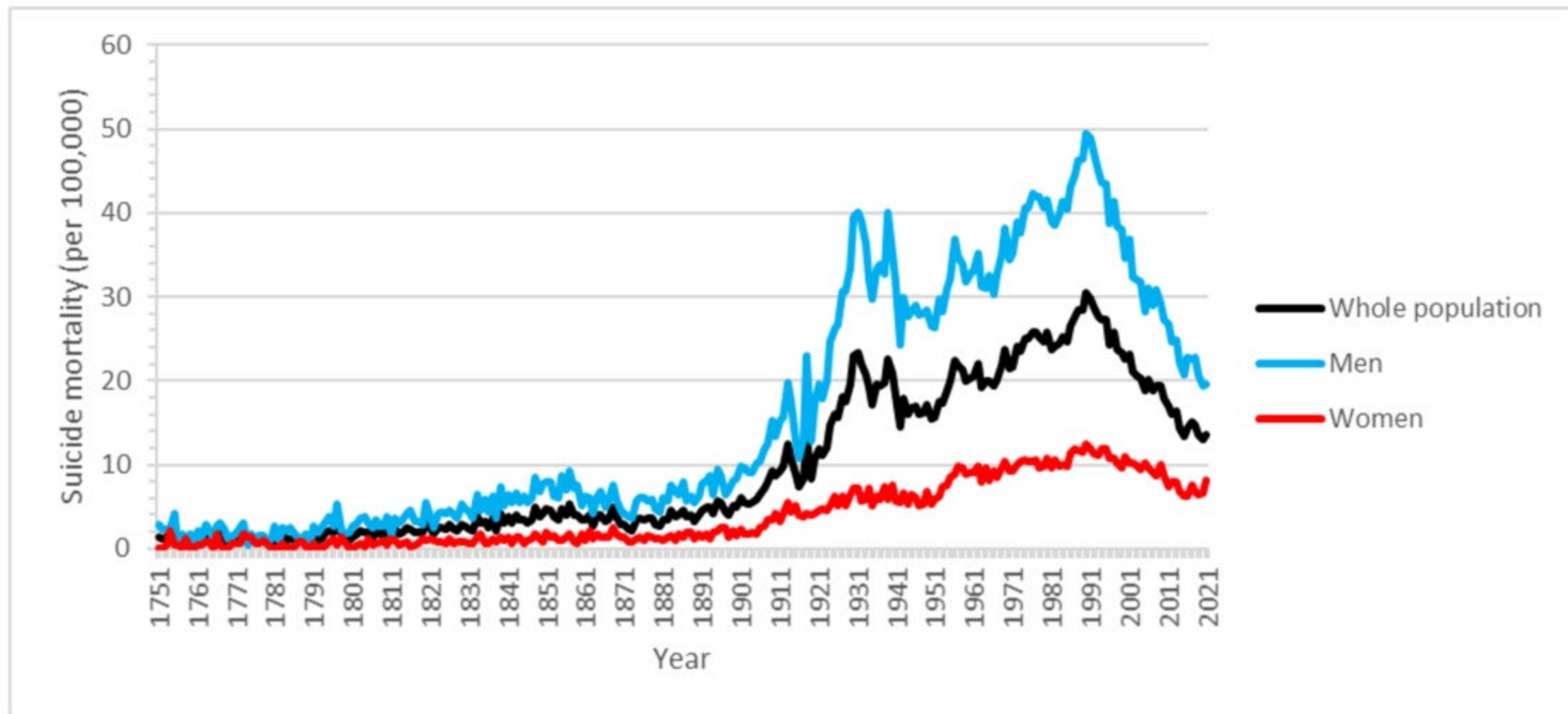
The development process of promoting and preventing mental health work in Finland has been slow



- The main emphasis has been on development of services and structures. According to the report of the national Audit Office of Finland (2009) the main focus will continue to be on treating disorders at the expense of prevention.
- Even though **the mental Health Act** prevention is emphasized, so mental health services are mainly targeted at those already ill or who have symptoms. **The recommendations on the development (2000) and quality of mental health services (2004) and on the development of housing services for mental health rehabilitation patients (2007)** have also supported the targeting of development work towards the development of services.
- **Suicide prevention project (1986-1996)** was probably the most important one focusing on preventive mental health work development process in Finland.
- Source: **National Mental Health and Substance Abuse Plan 2009-2015**

Suicide mortality in Finland 1751–2021

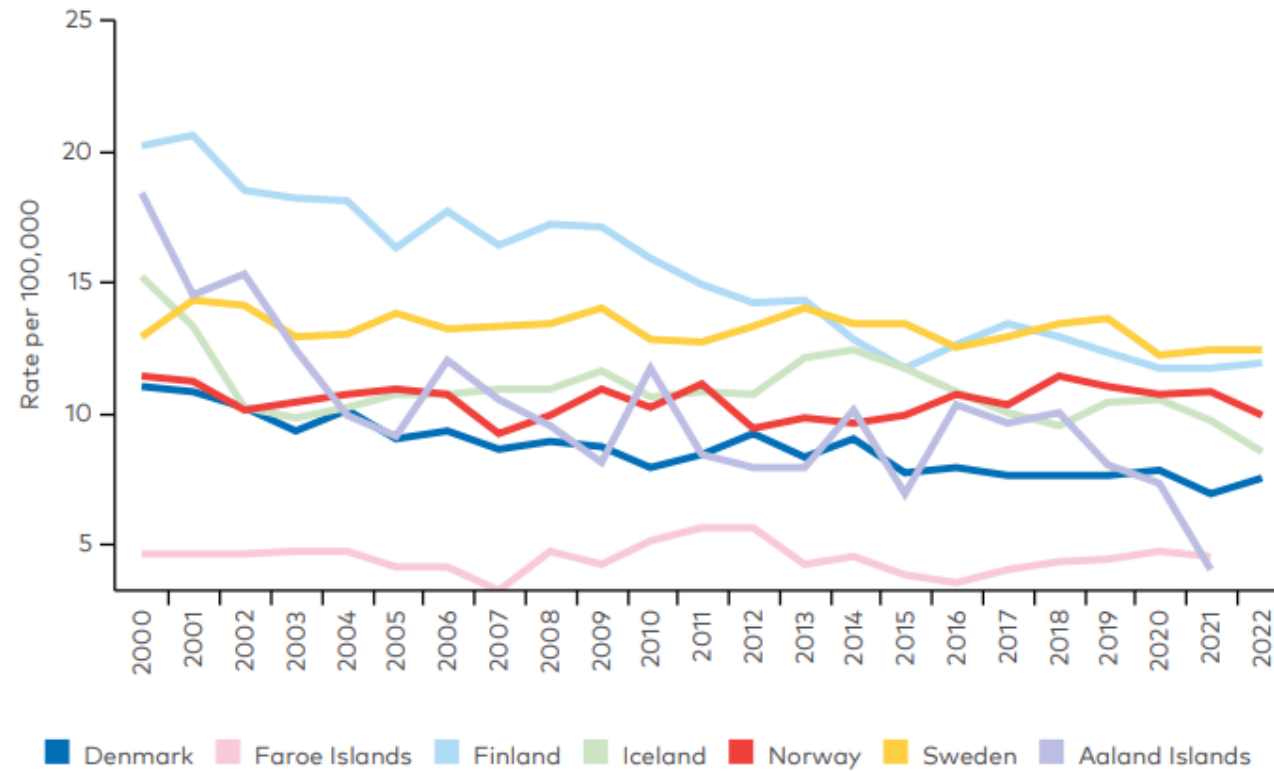
The longest uninterrupted record in the world.





Suicide rates by calendar year

(Prevention of suicide and suicide attempts in the Nordic countries, Nordic Council of Ministers 2024)



Current policy developments and approaches to mental health promotion

National Mental Health Strategy and Programme for Suicide Prevention 2020-2030



**National Mental Health Strategy and
Programme for Suicide Prevention
2020–2030**

PUBLICATIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND HEALTH 2020:15

- Preparation was started by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in 2018
- An expert group was appointed for the preparation of the strategy in August 2018, supported by a separate steering group
- Expert group comprised of 14 members from the service system, NGOs, universities and governmental organizations
- Consultations and open hearings were held throughout the process

Strategy published on February 11th, 2020



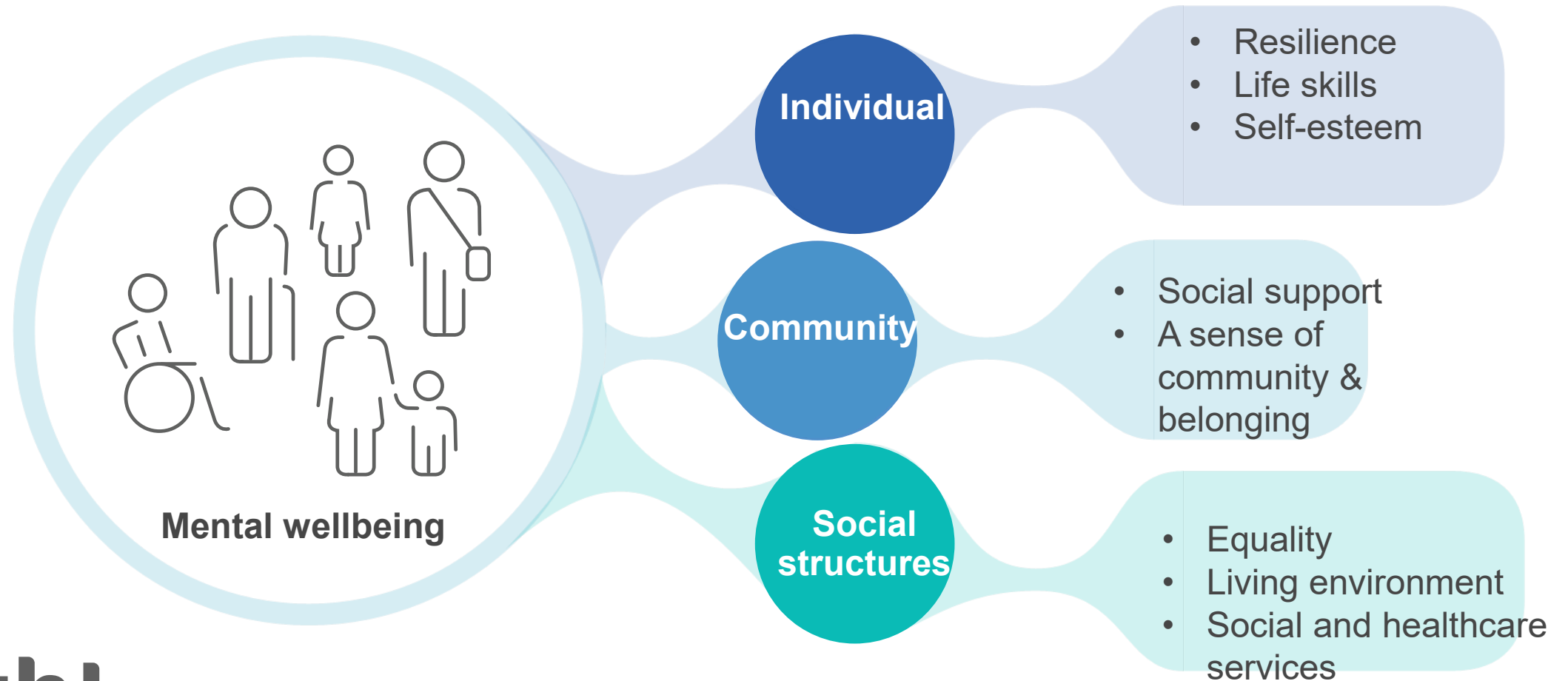
Mental health policy guidelines:

1. Mental health as human capital
2. Mental health for children and young people
3. Mental health as a right
4. Appropriate, broad-based mental health services
5. Mental health management

Suicide prevention programme's areas of focus

1. Awareness raising
2. Impacting the means of suicide
3. Early intervention
4. Supporting risk groups
5. Developing care options
6. Increasing media competence
7. Strengthening knowledge basis and research

Mental wellbeing is built in daily life



thl

Surrounding policy context

Reference: THL 2021

Intersectoral mental health promotion

A strong and committed Finland Programme of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government,

PUBLICATIONS OF THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT 2023:60



- *The measures identified during work under the National Mental Health Strategy 2020–2030 will be continued as part of the Government's measures to promote mental health. Implementation of the Programme for Suicide Prevention will also be continued.*
- The cross-administrative inter-ministerial cooperation group for the mental health strategy was appointed again for this government season.
 - The cooperation group leads a cross-administrative and cross-sectoral policy and measures for promoting mental health.
 - Measures in different administrative branches for mental health promotion will be brought together.
 - Cooperations and open hearings with different organizations and stakeholders is important throughout the process.
- The ***Resolution on mental health promotion*** will be published in the end of this year and then lead to a separate implementation plan.

The mental health strategy and suicide prevention programme is also be implemented in the national Institute for Health and Welfare's projects 2023-2024



- Population-level model for mental health **promotion** (ABC –model).
- **A comprehensive** knowledge base on the availability, quality and effectiveness of mental health services.
- Training for professionals to strengthen mental health services for **children and young people**
- Support will be provided for the implementation of the reformed mental health and substance abuse legislation **to assess the development needs of diverse services and to reduce stigma and discrimination.**
- Measures to **promote mental health** and prevent suicides for groups in the most vulnerable position.
 - Budgeting: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Effective strategies for ensuring sustained leadership and investment



Ministry of
Social Affairs and Health

Strong legislation behind promotion health and wellbeing



- According to the Local Government Act (Finlex) of municipalities are mandated to **promote the welfare and sustainable development** of their inhabitants.
- Occupational Safety and Health Act 738/2002 (Finlex)
- Tobacco Act 549/2016 (Finlex)
- Communicable Diseases Act 1227/2016 (Finlex)
- Act on healthcare and Social Welfare 29.6.2021/612 (Finlex) → promote health and welfare in wellbeing services counties

We must start planning the continuation of the mental health strategy in time



- The point of view has to be the **comprehensive approach of mental health in society and its different sectors and levels** as it's now.
- **Mental health in all policies** – it's important to understand how different political decisions affects to people's mental health; family policy, employment policy, youth policy, education policy, cultural policy, local, national and international policies ext.
- **Mental health has to be seen as a resource that can be supported.**
- It is possible to effectively prevent and manage mental disorders and reduce discrimination and stigmatisation associated with mental disorders.
- **Impacts must be measured and evaluated** – make mental health promotion actions visible and important – local, national and international levels.
- **Ensure resources and budgeting!**
- Learn from others and cooperate.



Promoting of health and wellbeing of the population incl. mental health promotion

Promotion of health and wellbeing in municipalities

Citizens

Municipal councils

Cooperation structures

County councils

Promotion of health and wellbeing in wellbeing services counties

NGOs and other stakeholders

National Mental Health Strategy and other partnership strategies and programmes, government, ministries, inter- ministerial cooperation group

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Thank you!
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