



# #COLLECTIVE MINDS

## FACILITATION GUIDE



# Index

Page 03

1

## PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

- Who is this guide for?
- What is this guide for?
- Facilitation Kit Components.

Page 06

2

## INTRODUCTION TO #COLLECTIVEMINDS

- Campaign #CollectiveMINDS.
- The game # CollectiveMINDS.

Page 09

3

## MENTAL HEALTH: A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

How we understand mental health.  
Adolescence.  
Psychological Characteristics of Adolescence.  
Mental health issues of adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).  
Dialogue as a first step in addressing mental health issues.  
How to start a conversation about mental health?  
Adults play a critical role in adolescent mental health care.

Page 16

4

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GAME COLLECTIVEMINDS

- Facilitation role: support for the development of autonomy.
- Before you start.

Page 23

5

## REFERENCES

1

## PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

# WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

THIS GUIDE IS AIMED AT ANY TEACHER, FACILITATOR OR PERSON WHO HAS AN INTEREST IN PROMOTING REFLECTIONS ON MENTAL HEALTH WITH ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE, IN ANY COUNTRY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.



**Your role and commitment to this work is instrumental to creating an enriching experience.** By following these guidelines and using the tools provided, you will be trained to guide the game effectively and ensure an environment in which participants can explore and express their thoughts and emotions around mental health, safely.



# 1

## PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

# WHAT IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

**THIS GUIDE SEEKS TO PROVIDE ALL THE NECESSARY TOOLS TO FACILITATE THE GAME "COLLECTIVEMINDS", PROVIDING GUIDANCE TO PROMOTE A SAFE PLAY SPACE, ENCOURAGE LEARNING AND STIMULATE REFLECTION.**

This game encourages adolescents and young individuals to challenge existing stereotypes and biases related to mental health. It serves as a focal point for a regional initiative aimed at inspiring them to actively support the mental well-being of adolescents and young people across the region.

1

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

# FACILITATION KIT COMPONENTS



- 1 FACILITATION GUIDE.
- 2 THE GAME WITH ITS INSTRUCTIONS IN "PRINT AND PLAY" VERSION *(can be printed on any A4 color or black and white printer).*
- 3 VISUAL ASSETS FOR PROMOTING THE GAME ON SOCIAL MEDIA.
- 4 CAMPAIGN VIDEOS.



## 2

## INTRODUCTION TO #COLLECTIVEMINDS

# #COLLECTIVE MINDS

#COLLECTIVEMINDS IS A MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN DEVELOPED BY  América Solidaria AND  unicef IN COLLABORATION WITH ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THE REGION, WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO MOBILIZE ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN TO REFLECT, BREAK THE TABOO AND STIGMAS REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH.



### #CollectiveMINDS seeks:

- Promoting spaces for young people to come together and exchange ideas.
- Informing and challenging adolescents about mental health.
- Promoting the development of skills and habits for enhancing personal mental well-being and supporting people around them.
- Promoting adolescent participation and advocacy to improve access to mental health services and create supportive psychosocial spaces for addressing mental health challenges.

## 2

## INTRODUCTION TO #COLLECTIVEMINDS

# THE GAME

# #COLECTIVEMINDS

THE GAME IS POSITIONED FROM A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH.

Its main objective is that young people and adolescents can reflect and dialogue on hypothetical cases, integrating biographical, biological, cultural and emotional dimensions, in order to devise transformative actions that generate learning about the notions and protective factors of mental health.

## WHAT IS A TRANSFORMATIONAL ACTION?

A **transformational action** is an initiative or strategy that seeks to generate positive change in the environments we inhabit, inviting us to transform our life stories.

**Target audience:** Adolescents and young people between 14 and 25 years of age, (as well as people of any age) from Latin America and the Caribbean.

# WHAT ARE THE DYNAMICS OF THE GAME?

- 1 The game begins with the creation of life stories that, by identifying biographical, biological, cultural, and emotional dimensions, ***represent the situation of a person experiencing mental health issues.***
  - 2 Young people design actions to transform the living conditions that shape the mental health problems of the fictional character in the game. All of this is done collaboratively, using skills, coping strategies, and the joint search for solutions and support.
- The participants report their results on the website:
- 3 **[www.colectivamentelac.org](http://www.colectivamentelac.org)** and thus they will be able to know the gaming experiences of thousands of young people in the region. This step of the game is fundamental for actions to be made visible, promote spaces for advocacy and encourage conversations with decision-makers on the region.

THIS GAME WAS CREATED AND TESTED BY ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM LATIN AMERICA WHO HAVE ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE DIAGNOSIS AND DESIGN OF THE GAME, CONTRIBUTING WITH THEIR IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES ON MENTAL HEALTH.

# HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health encompasses **emotional, psychological, and social well-being, influencing people's thinking, feeling, and behavior**<sup>ii</sup>. It affects a large part of human life, as it comprises important dimensions such as emotional management, decision-making, social relationships, beliefs about the world and oneself. That is why taking care of our mental health is essential to care for and preserve our psychological and physical well-being.

Mental health is not a static state, it exists on a continuum that can include periods of well-being and also periods of distress, most of which do not evolve into a diagnosable disorder. Understanding mental health from this approach allows us to visualize that at different times we are able to enjoy life, but we can also face periods of distress and stress, and even suffer mental disorders<sup>iii</sup>.

To address this subject in depth, it is necessary to understand the human system comprehensively or from a bio-psycho-social approach. And what does that mean? We are composed of our human biology (human body and its functions), the culture in which we operate (relationships, roles, norms, history, politics), our personal life experiences and our emotional world (our thoughts, beliefs, emotions, feelings). As human beings we are multidimensional.

<sup>ii</sup> UNICEF (2022a). Global Multisectoral Operational Framework for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Children, Adolescents and Caregivers in all Areas.

<sup>iii</sup> UNICEF (2022b). No silence or taboo. Let's talk about mental health. Facilitator's manual. Conceptual framework and orientations.

# 3

## MENTAL HEALTH: A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY



This approach includes the entire cycle of prevention, promotion and treatment of mental health, to improve the mental health and psychosocial well-being of children and caregivers. From this point of view, all interventions are presented as community-based, taking advantage of existing individual and community resources and capacities.



### ||

Beyond feeling good all the time, mental health involves skills to navigate different emotions, identify the factors that influence them, and self-regulate in various contexts.

It should be noted that mental health is not restricted to the mere absence of mental disorders; however, everyone, including those without mental disorders, benefits from activities that promote their mental health.

# 3

## MENTAL HEALTH: A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

### ADOLESCENCE

**Adolescence is the phase of life that goes from childhood to adulthood, that is, from 10 to 19 years old**<sup>iv</sup>. It is a unique stage of human development characterized by rapid physical and sexual maturation, in which profound emotional, social and cognitive changes are experienced. This is a fundamental period for learning how to manage emotions and the perceptions they have about themselves, which influence the way they develop their identity.

When it comes to these challenges, it is essential to provide them with care and support, foster their emotional development and mental well-being, and ensure they can access mental health care services. **These measures are critical to maintaining their health and well-being in youth and adulthood**<sup>v</sup>.

#### DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS DURING ADOLESCENCE<sup>vi</sup>

**The search for risk:** A number of aspects linked to our skills and development improve and mature during adolescence, but during this stage the exposure to serious injuries and death is three times higher than in childhood or adult life. Why does this happen? Due to the changes that the adolescent brain undergoes. On the one hand, we will need to experience new things during this time, but on the other hand the exposure to danger usually increases, without being fully aware of this. The search for new sensations, mixed with adolescent impulsivity, added to the tendency to take

<sup>iv</sup> UNICEF (2022a). Global Multisectoral Operational Framework for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Children, Adolescents and Caregivers in all Areas.  
<sup>v</sup> WHO (2021) Adolescent mental health.  
<sup>vi</sup> Siegel, D (2014). Brainstorm. Barcelona: Alba.

risks and the ability to delay rewards will mature, makes a set of explosive characteristics in the adolescent that we should not minimize and it is especially important to guide and support.

**The search for independence:** It is expected that during this stage they will begin to move away from everything that is known and familiar to them. This is what often pushes them to fall into situations that can be harmful to themselves or their environment. The period between the ages of 12 and 24 is loaded with great potential and a powerful constructive role for innovation in areas related to art, technology and music. Stepping away from the known, from the conventional way of addressing issues, enables one to perceive the world from a different perspective. For all this, it will be essential to build a participatory environment that effectively allows these adolescents to express themselves, be heard and find a place where these ideas begin to materialize into something tangible and real.

**The search for transition:** In adolescence there are two major changes. One has to do with changes in the body and emotions. The other has to do with the distance from the adults in charge and the search for acceptance in their peers, with whom adolescents begin to identify. As they move away from the adult world, they begin to socialize with those who are like them. This process is vital to their own survival. Increased social interaction helps collaborate with adolescent desires in a whole new world. What we should never lose sight of is communication between adults and adolescents. That adolescents are going to distance themselves from the adult person is to be expected, that they isolate themselves or close themselves completely is not healthy for anyone. We must then seek to keep adult-adolescent communication open, we must meet and connect despite the challenges that this implies at times.

## MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES OF ADOLESCENTS IN LAC

*Despite the efforts made by governments and communities in the promotion, prevention and mental health care of the younger population, these remain insufficient.*

In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), an estimated 16 million adolescents aged 10-19 are living with a mental disorder. Anxiety and depression account for nearly 50 percent of these disorders<sup>vii</sup>. Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among adolescents aged 15-19 in LAC. It is estimated that 4,178 children and adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 die from suicide in LAC.

## DIALOGUE AS A FIRST STEP IN ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

We find it difficult to talk about what is happening to us, even more so if the feelings are associated with experiences of suffering. We live in a time in which the dissociation of these experiences is promoted, pursuing a utopian happiness, exclusively associated with the pleasant. However, happiness and suffering coexist daily in our lives. Mental health is a topic of interest to adolescents and youth. This interest is reflected in various areas of participation where young people ask for information and tools to learn how to handle situations that are new to them. These experiences in some cases can arouse a lot of

vii UNICEF (2021a). Regional summary: Latin America and the Caribbean. The State of the World's Children In my mind.

# 3

## MENTAL HEALTH: A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

fear, since they may feel misunderstood by the environment and by themselves.

It is essential, then, to enable spaces for conversation, dialogue, removing labels and dismantling different taboos that may exist on the subject. By identifying what happens to us, we can name it, inform ourselves about our emotions and see that we are no longer so alone in our experience. Sharing the pain will make it hurt less.

The purpose of the game is to generate dialogues on mental health as a strategy of collective responsibility and construction to address the mental health difficulties mentioned above.

### HOW TO START A CONVERSATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH?<sup>vii</sup>

While it may be uncomfortable, we must be clear and direct, not avoid difficult questions, and address these issues empathetically without making others feel guilty about their experiences. As challenging as it may seem to talk about these issues, young people often need to be listened to with attention and patience, in order to express themselves freely in a reliable environment.

The person who asks, observes and records should keep in mind that for young people to feel misunderstood by the adult world, added to the little listening they say they receive from it, often arouses shame for what they feel. That is why it is essential not to blame, to enable them to talk about what they do not usually talk about, not to judge or label, to collaborate in breaking down prejudices that are often in the background, causing these issues to become taboo.

<sup>viii</sup> UNICEF (2022b). No silence or taboo. Let's talk about mental health. Facilitator's manual. Conceptual framework and orientations.

## ADULTS PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH CARE

- 1 THEY SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES OF ADOLESCENTS.** It is important to consider that they go through intense emotions and changes in their vision of themselves (identity).
- 2 THEY DO NOT IMPOSE THE VISION OF THE ADULT PERSON THAT FACILITATES THE SPACE.** They give freedom for adolescence to be the protagonist and agent in its own learning.
- 3 THEY PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH AND SELF-CARE.** They do not need to be psychologists or professionals to have essential skills that generate a significant change in mental health.
- 4 THEY ARE SIGNIFICANT FIGURES AND ROLE MODELS.** They positively influence adolescent mental health and the way they learn to care for themselves and their peers.
- 5 THEY ARE GUARANTORS OF SAFE SPACES** for the development of learning and the containment, including referral, of particular cases.

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GAME COLLECTIVEMINDS

# FACILITATING ROLE: SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUTONOMY



## THE GAME: WHY FACILITATE?

From the perspective of the adolescent participation and leadership approach, facilitators play a fundamental role in supporting the progressive autonomy and learning processes of adolescents<sup>ix</sup>. From this idea, they assume a role of dialogue and promotion of positive relationships, learning together from adolescents.

**The facilitation of the #CollectiveMINDS game is fundamental to the achievement of the expected learning objectives and outcomes.**

ix América Solidaria, 2018



## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

The game **#CollectiveMINDS** was created and tested to be played between 4 participants, but as a facilitator, you can adapt the game according to your context. The challenge is for them to develop the actions collectively to win as a team.

### 1 PREPARE THE MATERIAL.

- Calculate the number of decks you need to print considering the number of players.
- Print, cut, and organize the material:
  - 8 Biographist Letters
  - 8 Culturist cards
  - 8 Biologist cards
  - 8 Perceptist cards
  - 17 skill cards
  - Scoreboard
  - Game instructions
- Gather pencils and sheets of paper to draw on.

### 2 READ THE RULES.

Read the game instructions.  
If possible, try playing on your own first.

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GAME COLLECTIVEMINDS

### 3 PREPARE YOUR SPACE.

- Choose a comfortable and safe space for participants to talk.
- Distribute tables and chairs for group work. If they are outdoors, they can carry blankets, cushions, etc.
- Optional: You can play relaxing instrumental music to accompany the game.

### 4 BE PREPARED TO SUPPORT ANY REFLECTIONS AND QUESTIONS THAT MAY ARISE

- Review what could be the main questions that may arise for adolescents. If necessary, share them with your peers or a mental health professional to address them.
- You don't have to have all the answers for the questions. One of the strengths of this game is the ability to collectively find and build answers with adolescents.

### 5 FIND SUPPORT.

- This game can open some topics that need professional support. It is important to prepare to contain, listen and find a place in your community to refer in case of emergency (school, health center, institute).
- If you want to know more about support for adolescents, we suggest the following documents:

-*Psychological First Aid: A Guide for Field Workers.*<sup>x</sup>

-*Sustaining, Caring, Learning: Guidelines for Social Emotional Support in Educational Communities.*<sup>xi</sup>

x WHO (2012).  
xi UNICEF (2021).

## STEP-BY-STEP WALKTHROUGH FOR THE GAME #COLLECTIVEMINDS

### GAME START

- Agree on some agreements of coexistence to create a safe space for everyone to play. For example, respecting turns to speak, or listening attentively and empathetically to the stories of other players.
- Discuss what the game is about and its objectives.
- Read instructions aloud. We recommend doing it step by step (read only one stage of the game at a time).
- Address any questions that may arise about the game.

### GAME PLAY

- 1 **Promote respect** for the agreements of coexistence.
- 2 **Be attentive** especially to those who may need your support.
- 3 **Avoid leading the game.** Instead, you can support and be available to answer questions.
- 4 **Make sure adolescents have a flipchart,** whiteboard, sheet of paper or notebook where they can write the summary sentences.

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GAME COLLECTIVEMINDS

### GUIDANCE FOR ACTIVATING THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE GAME:

DRAWING THE PERSON'S LIFE STORY	TRANSFORMATIONAL ACTION
<p>Adolescents are encouraged to draw at this stage. Remind them that the quality of the drawing does not matter. If the situation calls for it, the instruction can be adapted to integrate other artistic expressions such as writing or theater.</p>	<p>Remind them that actions are created by sages, but executed by a community. Support a reflection on how this could be resolved if it happened in our communities or if other young people acted.</p> <p>Remind them that institutions such as governments, schools or health services can be very supportive in designing these solutions.</p>

## REFLECTIVE CLOSING

### ONCE THE GAME IS OVER, A REFLECTIVE SPACE CAN BE ENCOURAGED. HERE ARE SOME OPTIONS:

- 1 The groups present their experience and what was the greatest learning. Open a dialogue about this.
- 2 Open the reflection with some questions: How is this game connected to mental health? What do we mean by mental health? What factors can affect a person's mental health? How do we relate to this story? What can we do to support or protect the mental health of others? What can we do to promote mental health in our community/school?

## REPORT

### LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH!

At the end of the game, participants will be able to share the transformative actions, learnings and reflections on the website **WWW.COLECTIVAMENTE.LAC.ORG**. They will be able to inspire adolescents from all over Latin America and the Caribbean to collectively address and reimagine mental health.

This step of the game is critical for actions to be made visible, promote advocacy spaces and encourage conversations with decision-makers in the region.

As a facilitator you can assist them in accessing the platform and uploading their transformative actions. It can even be an external motivation to play and finish the game.

### RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS TO FACILITATE THE GAME:<sup>xii</sup>

- Do not judge
- Do not infantilize, let them make decisions and navigate the game and reflections on their own.
- Enable sincere and respectful dialogue at all times.
- Generate spaces for real participation. Listen to them actively, without fear.
- Fear cuts off all communication.
- Keep in mind that they are the protagonists.
- Give space for them to put into words what happens to them.
- Create a safe space for adolescents to talk about their emotions.

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GAME COLLECTIVEMINDS

- Take their concerns seriously, especially when they refer to situations of adolescent suffering.
- Do not underestimate adolescent suffering.
- If it's important to them, that's enough.
- Do not label.
- Keep in mind that adolescents are constantly changing.
- Active listening and provide support.
- Be grateful after adolescent interventions, especially when they share something that worries, bothers, or is uncomfortable.
- In the event that adolescents with disabilities participate in the group, it is necessary to take into account some aspects:

*-If more than one young person with disabilities is part of the group, it is important that they are distributed in different subgroups, to adapt the dynamics.*

*-It is important to note that some or all of the dynamics may take longer than stipulated.*

*-If young people with hearing disabilities are part of the group, access to a sign language interpreter should be provided.*



**América Solidaria (2018), Participación de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes en el marco del Enfoque de Derechos: La mirada de América Solidaria.**

**National Institute of Mental Health. Taking care of your mental health.** Retrieved August 10, 2023  
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/espanol/el-cuidado-de-su-salud-mental/el-cuidado-de-su-salud-mental>

**WHO (2022). Mental health: strengthening our response.** Retrieved August 10, 2023, from  
<https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>.

**WHO (2021). Adolescent Mental Health.** Retrieved August 8, 2023, from <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>.

**WHO (2012). Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers.**

**Siegel, D (2014). Brain storm. Barcelona: Alba.**

**UNICEF (2021a). Regional summary: Latin America and the Caribbean. The State of the World's Children In my mind.** Retrieved August 8, 2023, from  
<https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/28666/file/SOWC2021-Regional-brief-LAC.pdf>

**UNICEF (2021b). Sustaining, Caring, Learning: Guidelines for Social Emotional Support in Educational Communities**

**UNICEF (2022a). Global Multisectoral Operational Framework for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Children, Adolescents and Caregivers in all Areas. UNICEF, New York, 2022.** Retrieved August 8, 2023, from  
<https://www.unicef.org/media/109086/file/Global%20multisectorial%20operational%20framework.pdf>

**UNICEF (2022b). No silence or taboo. Let's talk about mental health. Facilitator's manual. Conceptual framework and orientations.** Retrieved August 8, 2023, from  
<https://www.unicef.org/uruguay/media/8591/file/Manual%20para%20facilitadores.pdf>



This guide was created by América Solidaria Internacional and UNICEF LACRO. Material adapted from the Facilitator's Manual of the "Ni Silencio Ni Tabú" Toolkit for implementing mental health workshops for adolescents and young people, developed by UNICEF Uruguay and the National Youth Institute (2023)



# #COLLECTIVE MINDS

