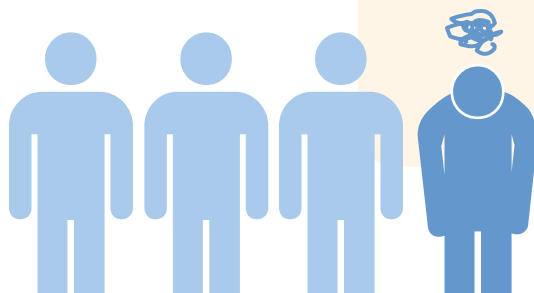




POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH, AN ALLY FOR LIFE

Mental Health: A Resource to Preserve

In recent years, the fear of being infected by the COVID-19 virus, the upheaval of daily habits, concerns about weight and appearance, climate change, and disruptions in social life are among the factors that accentuate psychological distress within the population, particularly among young people. In fact, **nearly a quarter of high school students perceive their mental health as fair or poor**¹. Additionally, the presence of symptoms of anxiety and depression tends to increase from the age of 12, reaching one in two

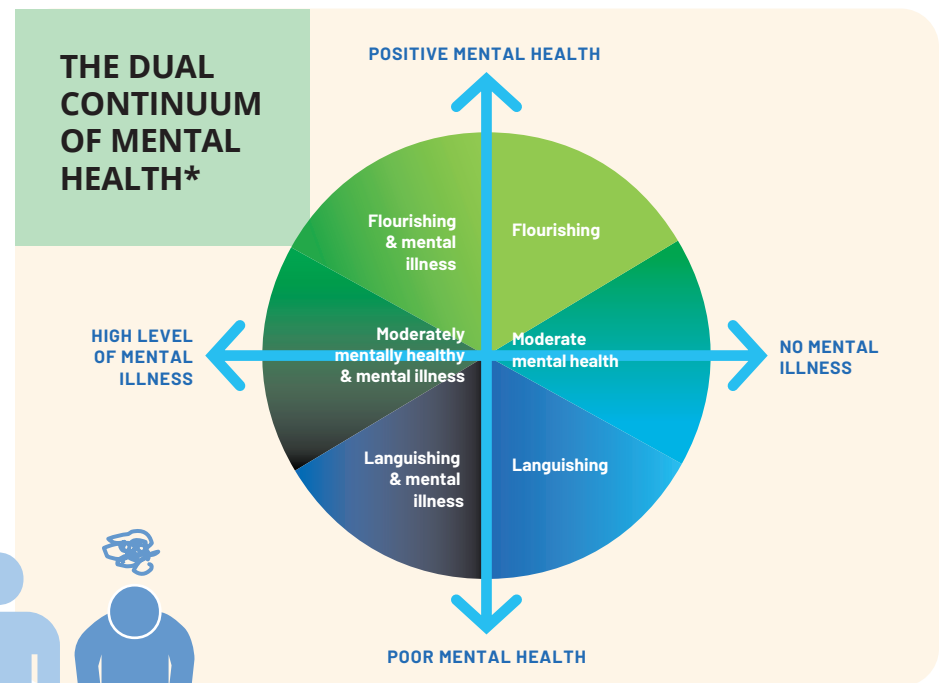


adolescents by the age of 16 and stabilizing around 20 years old². Finally, the rise in hospitalizations for suicide attempts among adolescents underscores the state of suffering in which some young people find themselves³. This decrease in self-evaluated mental health is evident across all age groups of the population⁴. These alarming data indicate that investing in promoting **positive mental health** and thereby preventing the onset of psychological disorders in all Quebecers is an urgent matter.

What is positive mental health?

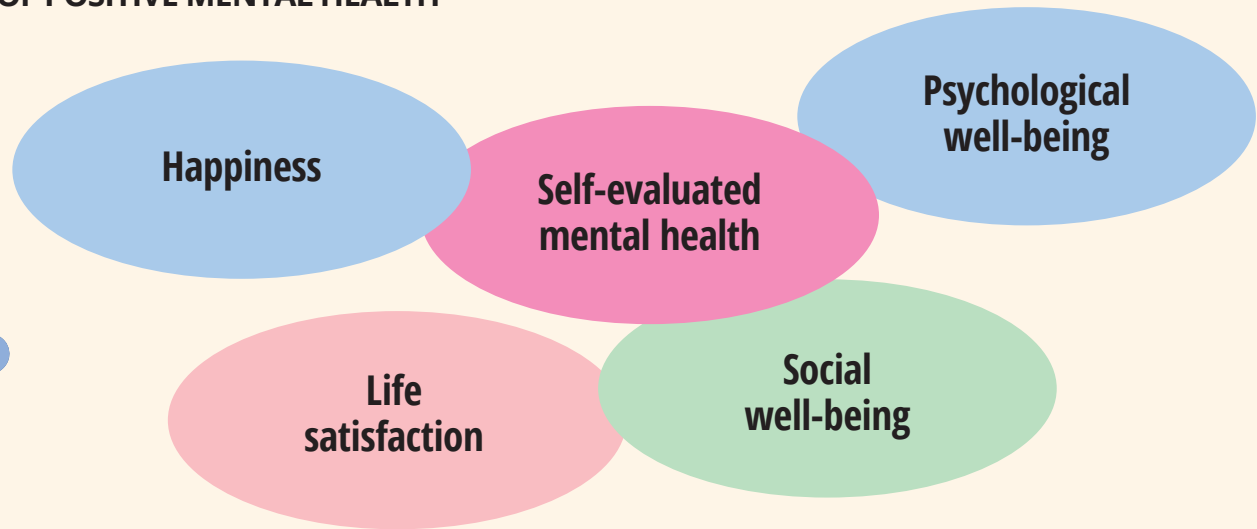
Good psychological health is not limited to the absence of mental health disorders. Indeed, positive mental health is defined as «**a state of well-being that allows us to feel, think, and act in a way that enhances our ability to enjoy life and meet the challenges we face**»⁵. Thus, this concerns both our emotional well-being and our ability to thrive in society.

As a result, a person affected by a mental health disorder may still experience moments of happiness and have **flourishing mental health**. Conversely, the opposite is also true; an individual without a diagnosed mental health disorder may have difficulty appreciating life or navigating certain challenges due to **languishing mental health** (see Figure⁶).



*Taken from the Référent ÉPANOUIR®, 2022

DIMENSIONS AND DETERMINANTS OF POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH



Socio-demographic characteristics

- Age
- Sex
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Socio-economic status
- Etc.

Individual	Family	Community	Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience • Control • Adaptation • Violence • Spirituality • Health status • Physical activity • Positive childhood experiences • Substance use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family relationships • Parenting style • Health status • Household composition • Income • Substance use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community involvement • Social network • Social support • School environment • Work environment • Social and built environment of the neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inequality • Political participation • Discrimination and stigma

Life trajectory





The portrait of young Quebecers in terms of positive mental health

Recent data indicates that **only 47% of Quebec highschool adolescents exhibit a flourishing level of mental health compared to 77% in the general Canadian population**^{7,8}. These figures are concerning. The absence of flourishing mental health is a risk factor for psychological disorders⁹ and physical health problems¹⁰.

Environments supportive of positive mental health

Positive mental health is a state of holistic well-being that can be achieved by the entire population, provided that living environments (family, school, community, work, etc.) are conducive to flourishing mental health. Thus, the promotion of positive mental health can be accomplished by various stakeholders from a variety of environments¹¹. To achieve this, it is important to work upstream on its various determinants, at the individual level (e.g., lifestyle habits), family level (e.g., family relationships), community level (e.g., social support), and societal level (e.g., stigma and discrimination)¹². Therefore, it is necessary to support efforts at all stages of life, starting from childhood and adolescence to influence positive development by building environments conducive to flourishing mental health.

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