



# MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEMS PLANNING

identifying the essential  
mental health components  
your project will address  
within a broader context



## mental health systems planning

Once you have identified the final profile of your program participant, along with the specific mental health challenge you are addressing, it's time to plan your contribution to the mental health ecosystem. Even if there are not many mental health care providers or programs in your community, this exercise will help you plan for where you begin, how you might grow, and when you will look for opportunities to collaborate.

A functioning mental health system has 3 key components:

- 1) Detection and treatment
- 2) Promotion and prevention
- 3) Training and capacity building

While it is very difficult to address each of these components at one time, you should be able to categorize your project under one of them. As you grow, you may find opportunities to address the other components, whether by expanding your functions or partnering with others.

A strong Mental Health Systems Plan will begin with one component for your initial pilot, and identify possible steps to contribute to the rest of the system over time. This exercise will help you do exactly that. Remember that some of your ideas and plans can be saved for the next five to ten years.

## instructions

**Step 1:** Begin with writing a quick summary of the program participant or community member that represents the type of person you aim to serve. You can draw this directly from the Final Persona Development worksheet.

**Step 2:** Take a tour of each of the three components. What ideas do you have for helping your Persona access care, based on each category? You may want to do this brainstorming with your team, using a whiteboard and sticky notes to generate ideas. Or, if you already have a clear idea of what you are building, imagine how that project may fit in any of the three categories. If you have a treatment program planned, how might you involve others in promotion or prevention? Where might you train or build capacity in this area?

**Step 3:** Reflect on the ideas you've generated in each category. Which ones are most exciting to you? Which feel doable? Which will you focus on now versus save for later?

Remember that you may also want to consider which of these components will give you access to contributors, volunteers, or customers. Which will address the pain point most directly?



related tools: mental health problem definition, final persona development, issue mapping, mental health model canvas



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Summarize your final persona here. What challenges are you aiming to address?

How might you address these challenges through your programs? Where might your initiative fit in the broader landscape of the mental health system?

**Promotion & Prevention:** helping participants and their families understand the challenge, and develop ways to cope and promote wellbeing

**Detection & Treatment:** identifying this problem in your community and increasing access to care

**Training & Capacity Building:** expanding your impact by helping your peers, stakeholders, and fellow leaders also address this challenge

Which ideas would you like to try first? Which ones will you save for future initiatives or partnerships?