

Playfield mental well-being



De Ambrassade

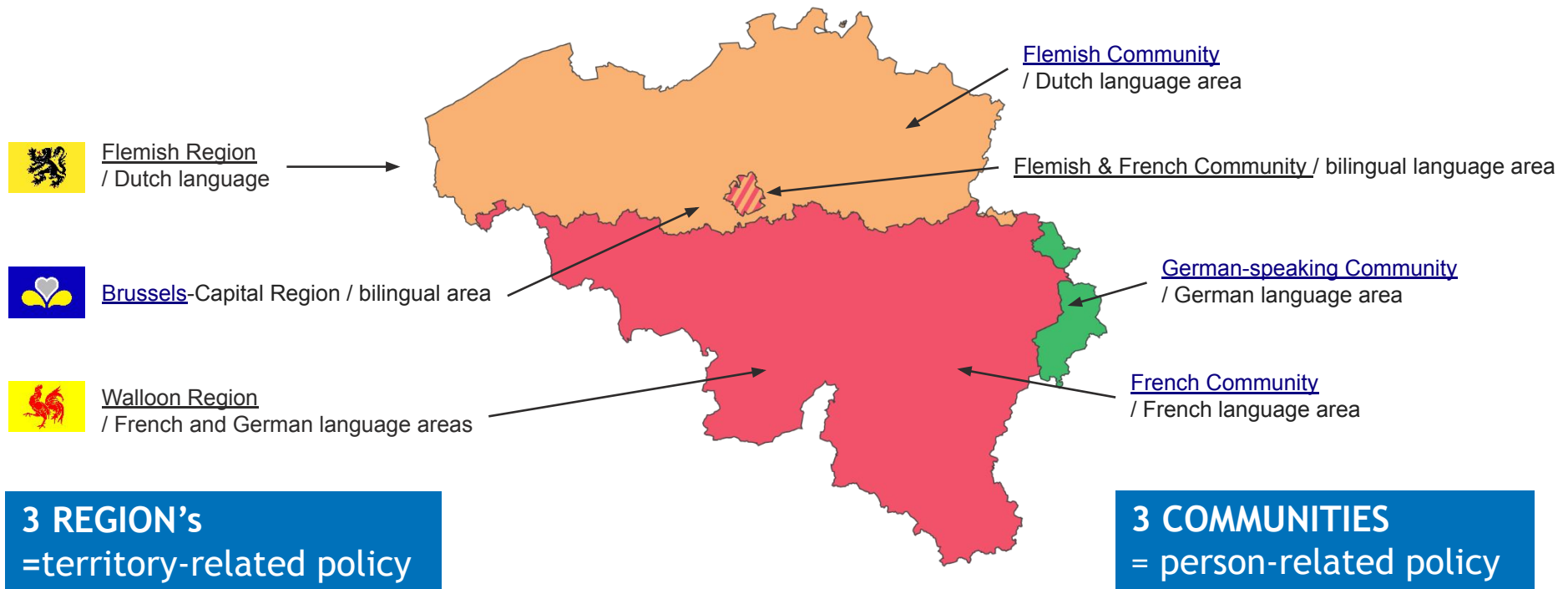
Youthwork in Flanders









Welcome in Belgium



1 FEDERAL STATE (Kingdom)



6 X GOVERNMENTS

Federal level	Federal institutions: Chamber of Representatives, Senate, King		
Regional level	 The Walloon Region	 The Brussels-Capital Region	 The Flemish Region
Community level	 The German-speaking Community	 The French Community	<div>Joint Community Commission</div> <div><div>French-speaking CC</div><div>Dutch-speaking CC</div></div> <div>together with</div>  The Flemish Community
Provincial level	10 provinces (of which 5 in Flanders)		
Municipal level	589 municipalities and public centres for social welfare		

Welcome in Flanders



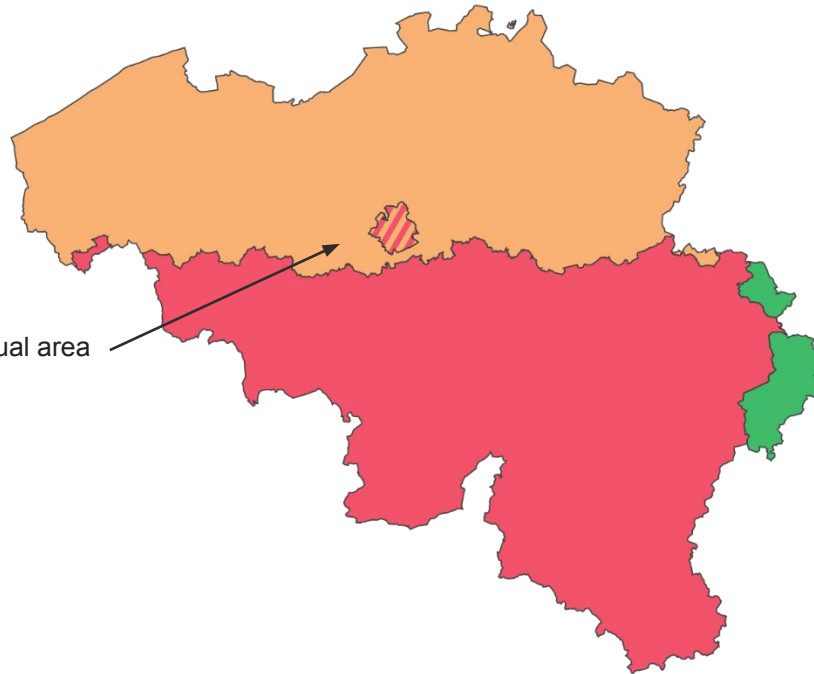
Youth (0-30y) in Flanders & Brussels = 2.300.000



Flemish Region
/ Dutch language



Brussels-Capital Region / bilingual area



Flanders & Brussels
children & young
adults who go to youth
work: 1.000.000

3 Assignments by Flemish law



Supporting Youth Work



Supporting Flemish Youth Council



Coördinating & Producing Youth Info



DE AMBRASSADE
bureau voor jonge zaken

3 Long term goals



Mental well being
of young people



The right for leisure time

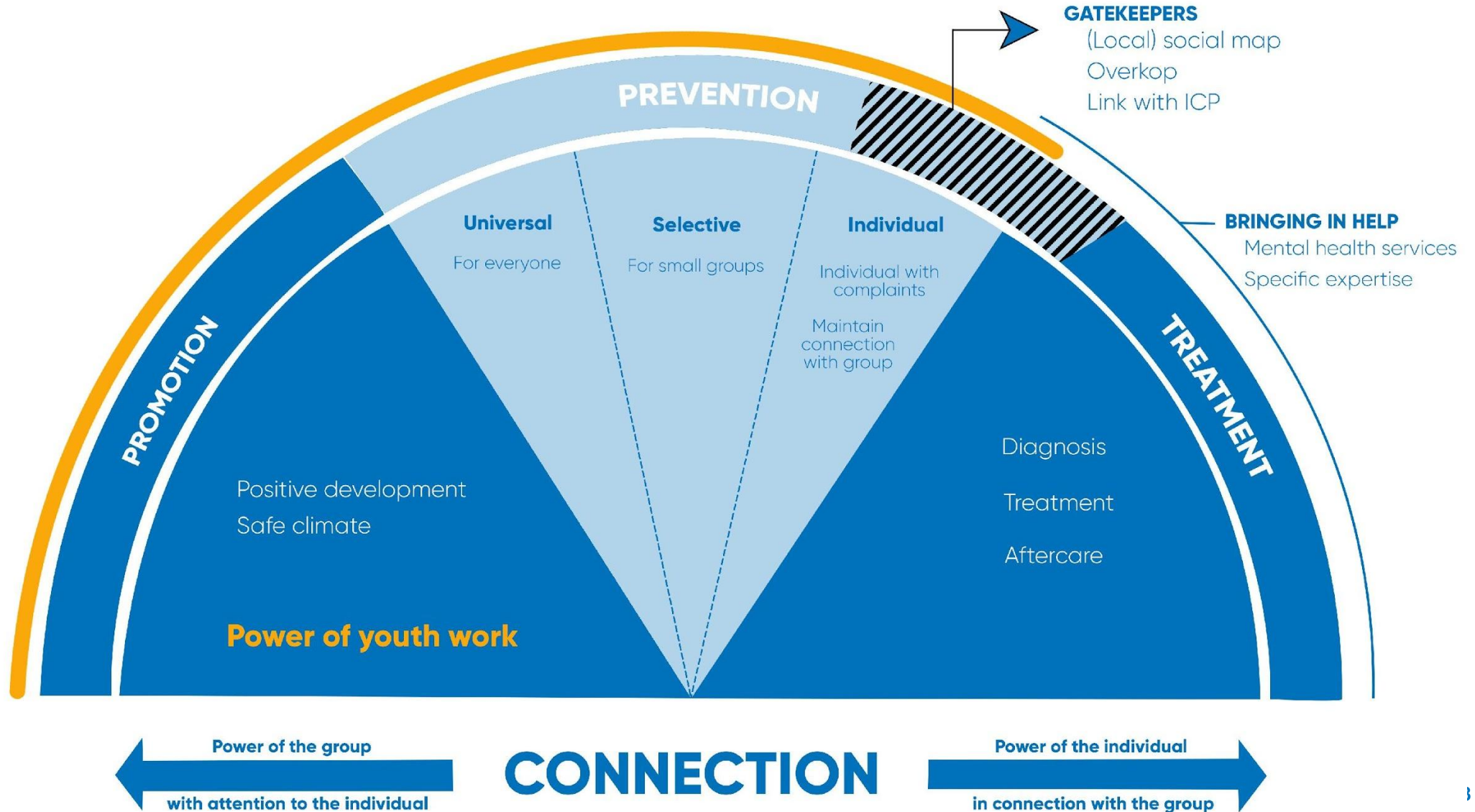


Public space
for young people

Mental Wellbeing



Playfield of mental well-being youth work

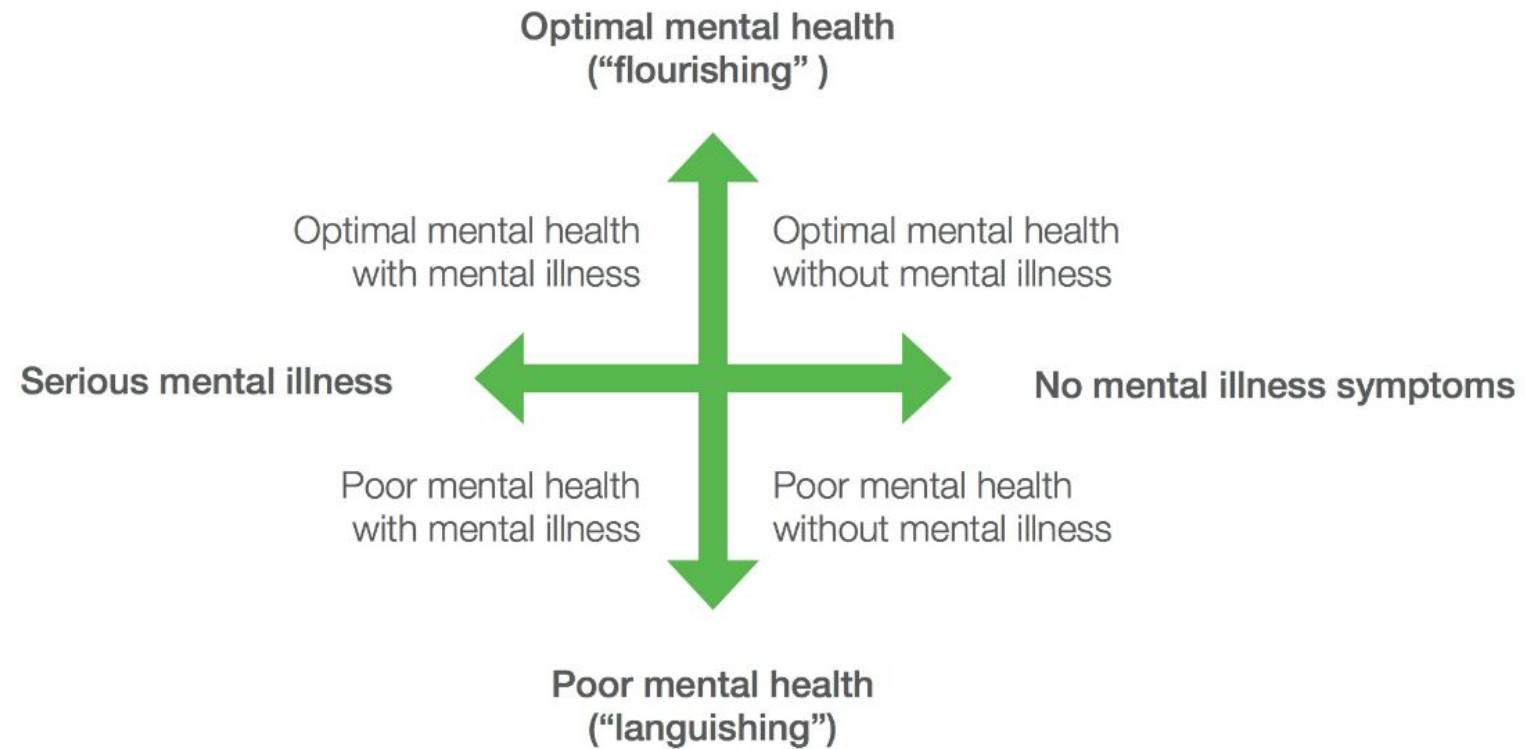


Goals playfield mental well-being – framework

- to give youth work an anchor and a language to formulate *its own mental well-being policy* tailored to your organisation;
- to define the role and responsibility of youth work in the mental well-being of children and young people;
- Build bridges to other sectors (especially well-being);
- Provide examples, concrete tools and support.
- Not everyone should be an expert in everything, but we need to take action!
- *! Professional and non-professional youth workers – background/competences – young volunteers*

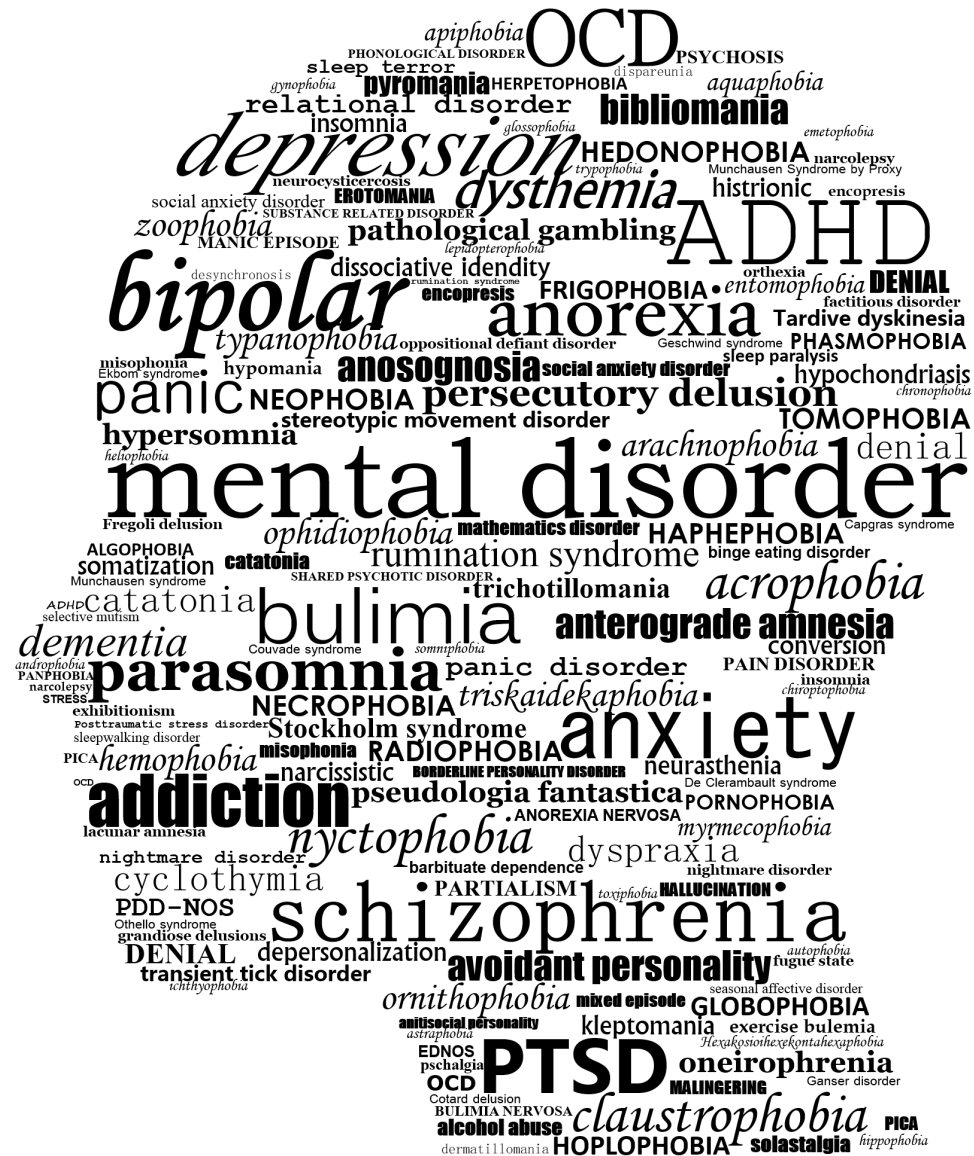
Mental well-being: A common language

Figure 1: Dual Continuum Model of Mental Health and Mental Illness



MacKean, 2011. Adapted from: The Health Communication Unit at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto and Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario; based on the conceptual work of Corey Keyes

Part 1



Part 2



ELEMENTS OF WELLNESS

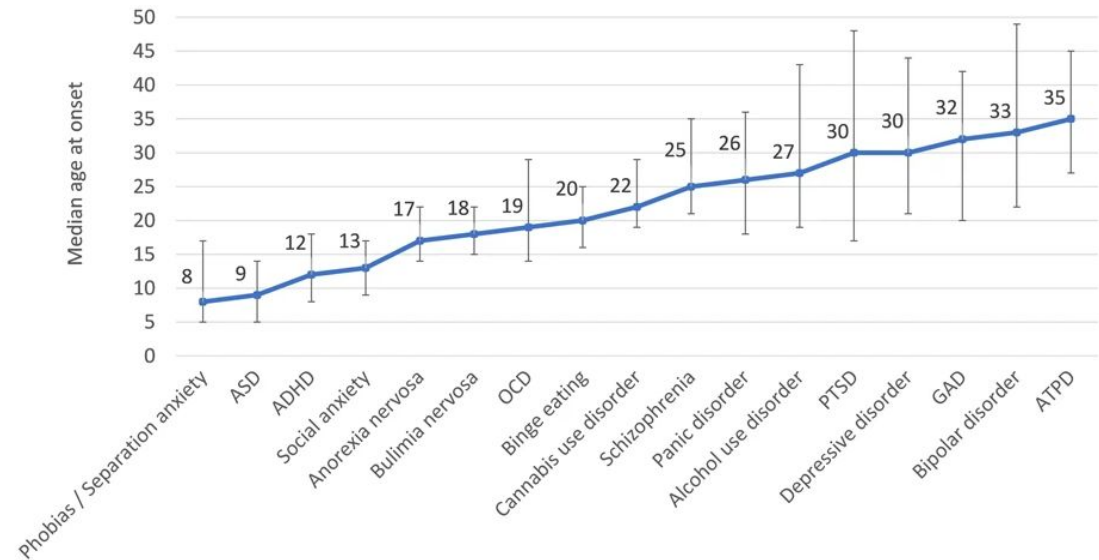
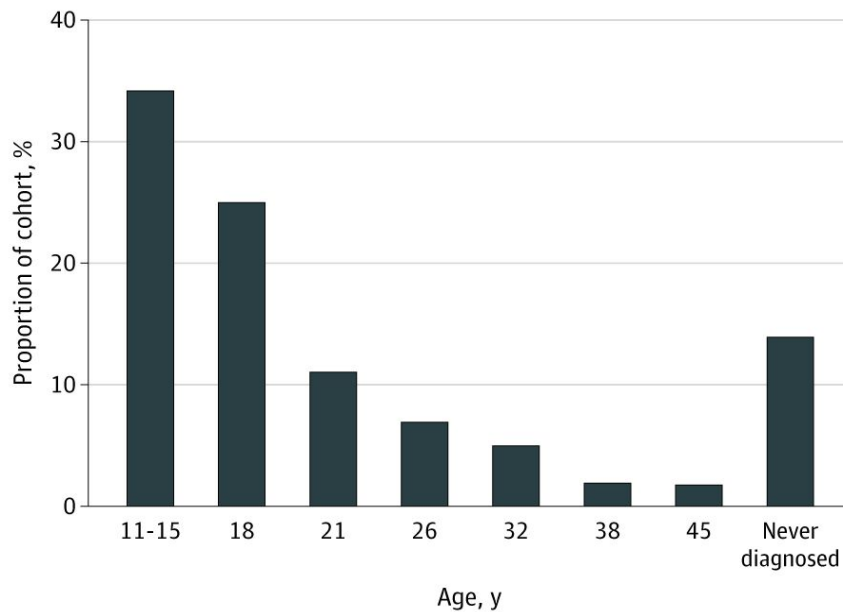


Illnesses/problems develop at a young age

“75 percent of all psychological illnesses develop before the age of 27 years.”

- ZorgnetIcuro ‘De Mythes voorbij’

A Age at first mental disorder diagnosis



Conclusion: the base for mental health is put in your youth!

Prevention mental problems & connectedness

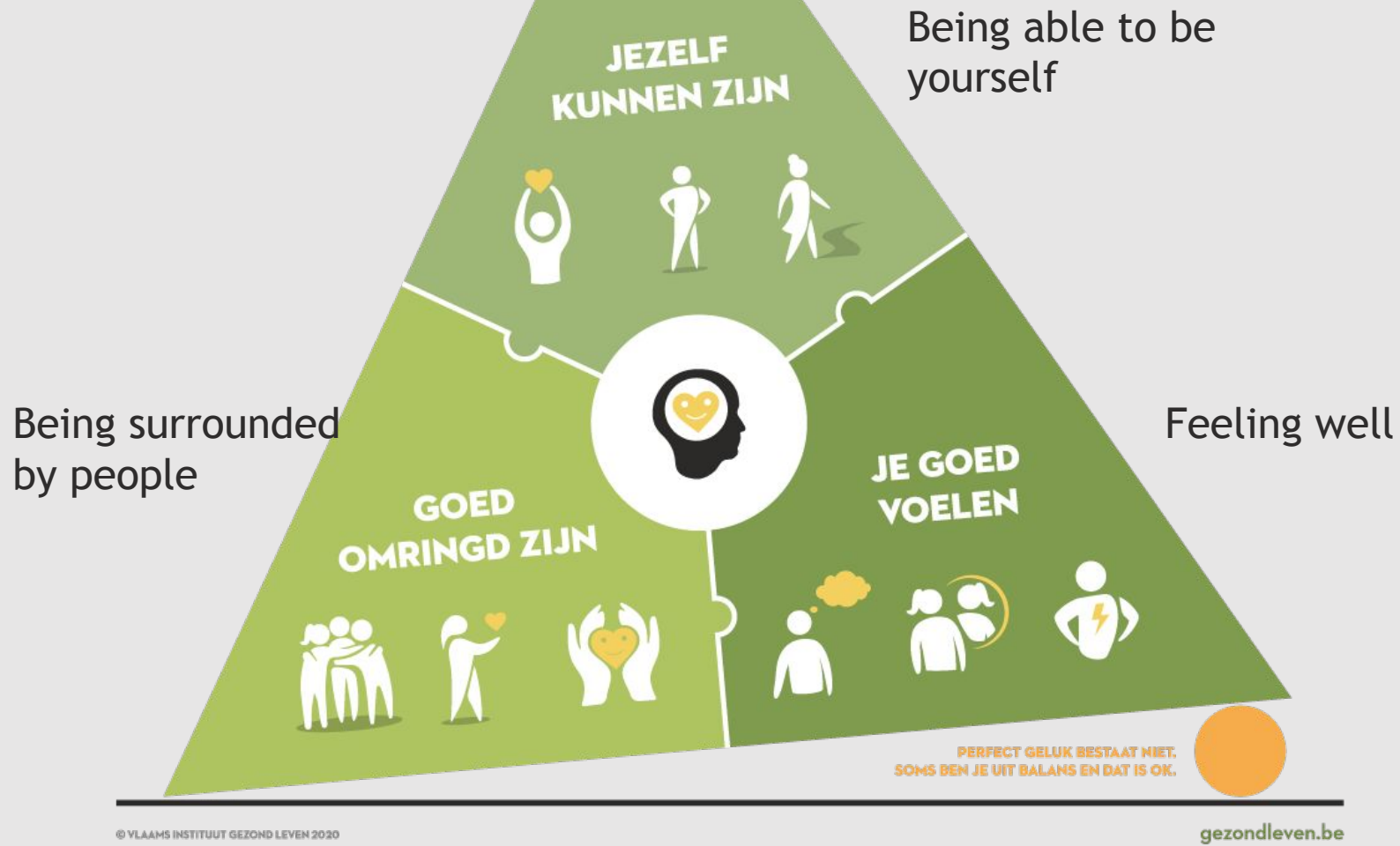
- Ronny Bruffaerts (KU Leuven) & SIGMA studies (KU Leuven)

Base = in your youth

- **Risk factors:** nature (genetic) – nurture (family, school, negative experiences)
- **Protecting factors:**
 - **Connectedness** as important buffer for developing emotional problems
 - **Quality** of relationships vs. quantity of relationships
- ☐ power of youthwork: contribution to mental well being in its essence: Thank you!



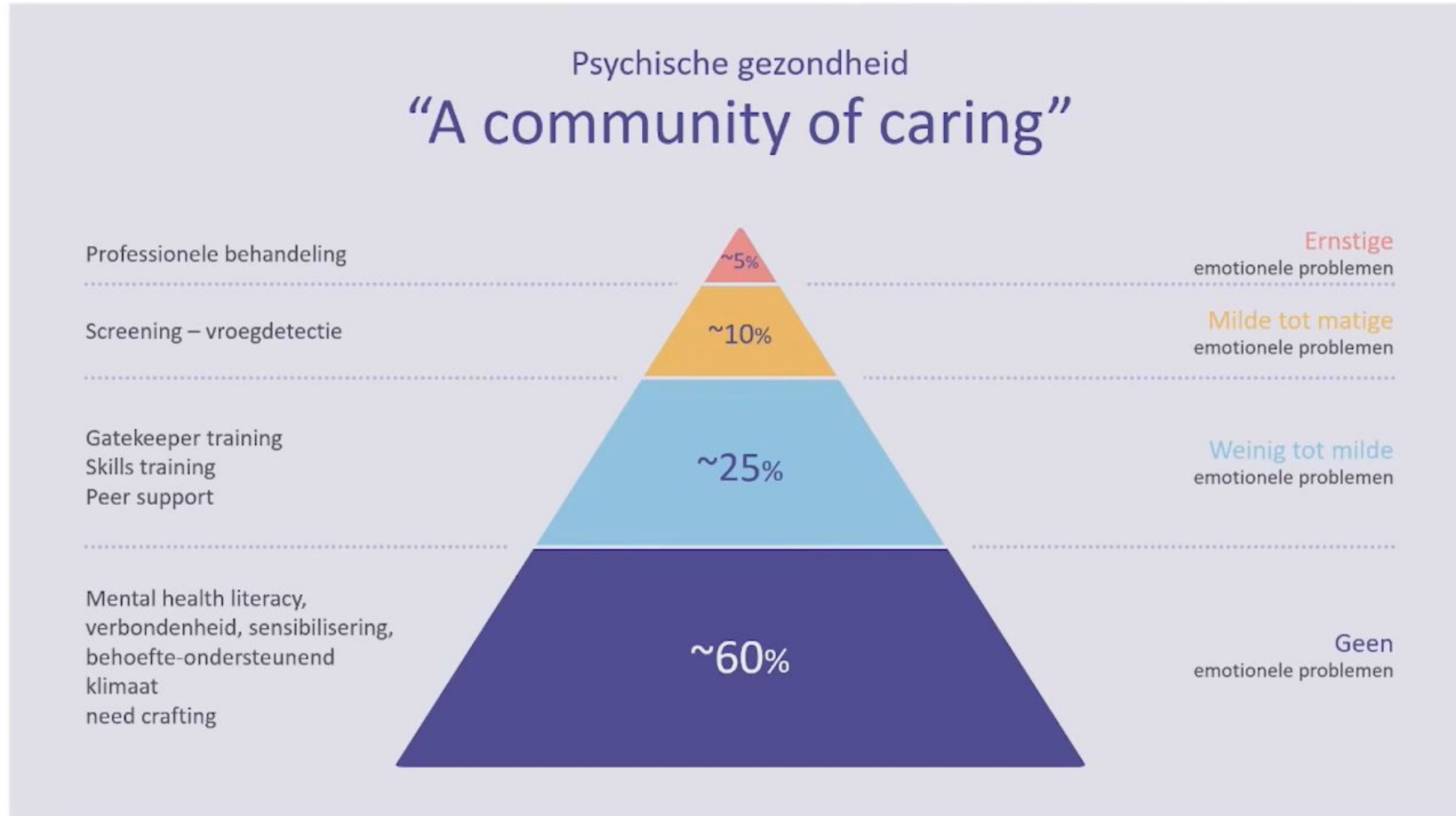
Promoting mental wellbeing and connectedness



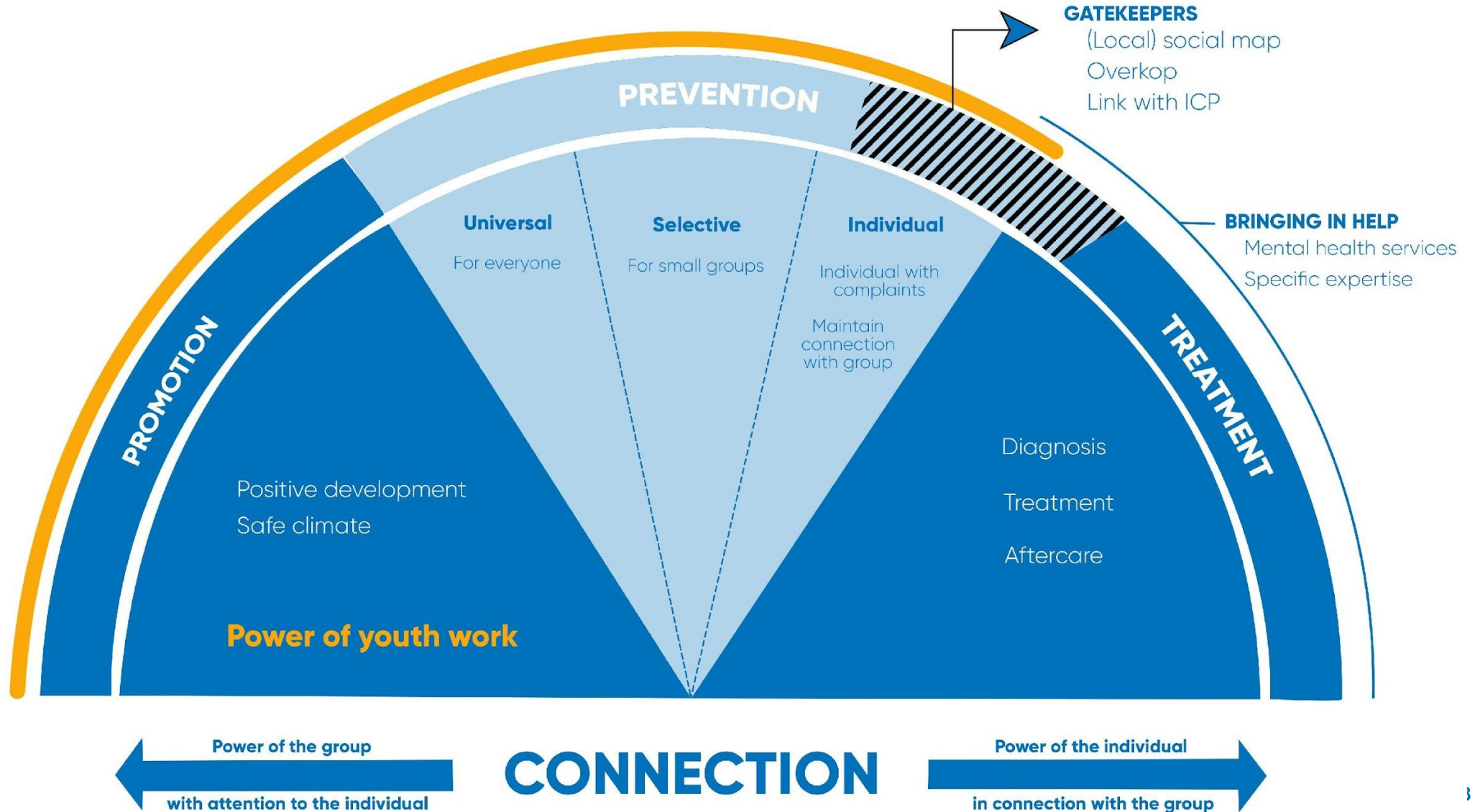
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What is the role of youthwork?

What can the environment mean?



Playfield of mental well-being youth work





Promotion



Examples

- *People who create a warm welcome and who are emotionally available, who create an enthusiastic atmosphere*
- *Buddy-system*
- *Alternative for 'dead moments'*
- *Training of youth workers (competences) □ strong way of being a youthworker*

Promotion means working on the mental well-being of children and young people in the group before, but also independently of, the development of mental health problems.

It is important that children and young people feel comfortable in the group to which they belong, by providing a **safe climate** where they can be themselves and **where dealing with emotions is considered normal**.

The protective factors have a dual role: they help children and young people to be **more confident** and they **provide a buffer** against what might go wrong.



Prevention

Preventing mental health problems or disorders means **focusing on factors that can cause or trigger mental health issues.**

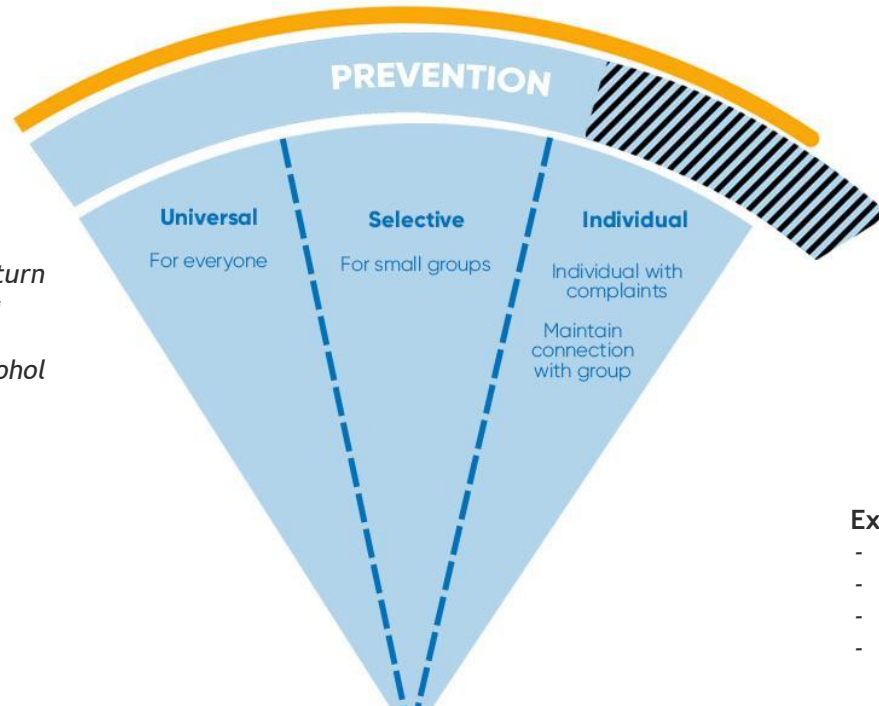
You raise awareness of these factors or try to reduce their impact.

3 types of prevention:

- universal
- selective
- individual

Examples

- Low-stimulus room
- Claryfying who to turn to when something happened
- Agreements on alcohol en drug use



Examples

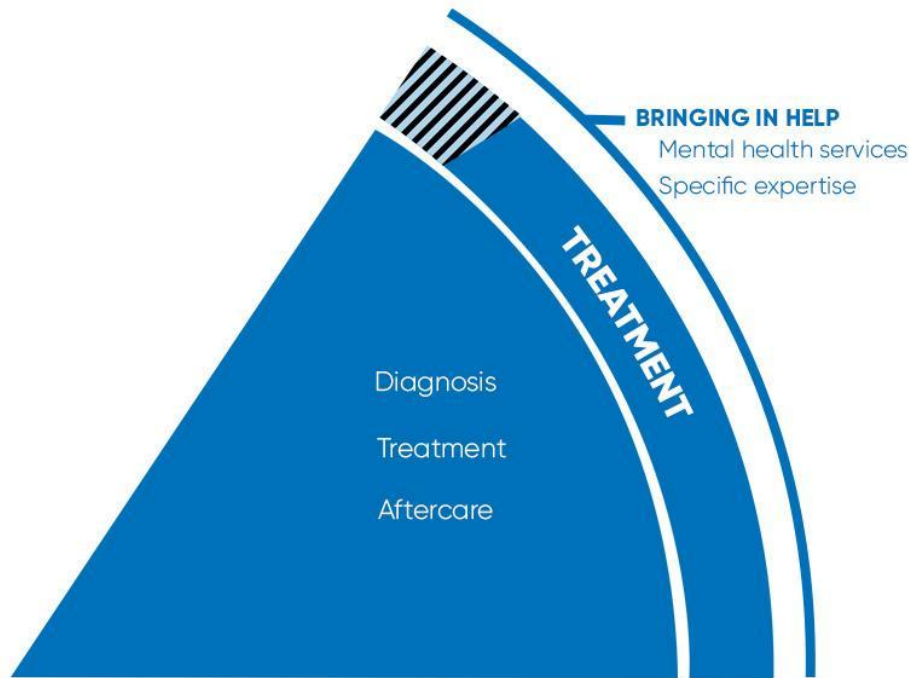
- Workshop about cyberbullying
- Talking about micro-agression
- Conversation with three girls about eating patterns

Examples

- Conversation with someone who has social anxiety
- Ask someone if the young adult need to talk
- To tell someone you are worried about how they look
- Parents tell you to take care of their child because of the divorce



Bringing in help



Sometimes it is not enough for a child or young person to work on their mental well-being from the strength of the group. This is when it is important to bring in **external help**.

In addition to treatment, it is also **necessary to maintain a commitment to promotion and prevention**.

In other words, the youth worker and the social worker/counsellor can cooperate to **ensure that the young person can still be part to the group**.

Example

A young person tells you that he is facing a difficult period and needs some rest. If the young adult agrees, you help him to search for help externally. You are available to talk to the professional therapist if the young adult is okay with that. You ask regularly the young adult how he's feeling and what the youth work organisation can mean for him. You look together how he can still be connected to the group, or if he wants to go to an activity.

Gatekeeper - bridgefigure



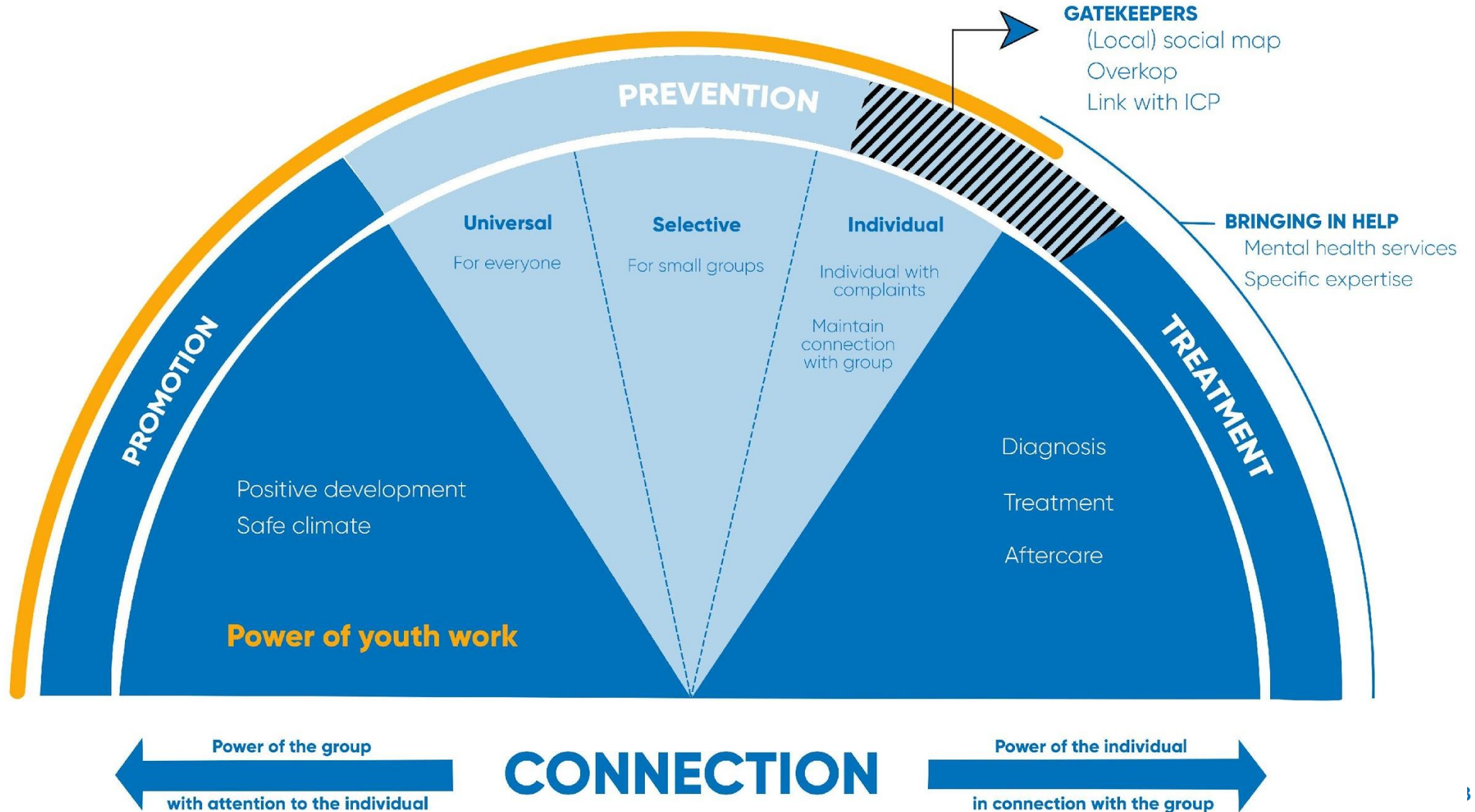
Bridgefigure between prevention and bringing in help:

- Helps search for right caretaker
- Low key trust figure
- Advocate of topic 'mental wellbeing' (promotion, prevention, treatment)
- Works together with someone of the organisation who is responsible for integrity/well-being questions
- Knowledge of local social map or know where to begin and wants to take steps

Right support for the gatekeeper!

Every organisation is free to give this shape

Playfield of mental well-being youth work



*A youth worker/a teacher/... is not a therapist! BUT
Has a role to play in this story
e.g. traumasensitive*

Points of interest

- Those who are in **contact with children and young people** and their support-organisations should be supplied with these topics where we think **thoroughly who should have which competences** (teacher, youth worker, ...)

- Welfare work - **public mental health** - some principles:

- Work on structural prevention – health in all policies

Qualitative housing, green environment, qualitative schooling for everyone with a curriculum where there is psycho-education (relationships, lifestyle, emotionregulation, ...)

- Location oriented work – outreach – community based m.h. services
 - Easy accessible playces with aid from different angles – interconnected services □ task sharing with other care providers – human rights perspective
 - Working systemically
 - Switch from more to less help or vice versa if needed

Next challenges - Flanders

- Health in all policies: structural prevention view
 - human & children's right view
- Implementation of interconnected services and the role of youthwork
 - partnership via convention frameworks
 - ! Underfinanced sector - waiting lists
- Supporting youth work in finding the balance and shaping competences
- Participatory work on psycho-education in educational environments
- integrity - safe space policy
- Digital world: opportunities and threats

Time for reflections!

Do you want the worksheets or more information?

[See our website](#)





What do you take with you and what is your first step?

