

# Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Services

January – June 2023

**58,706**

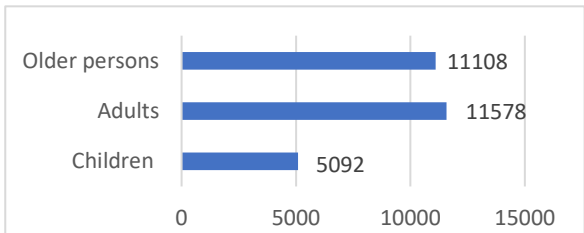
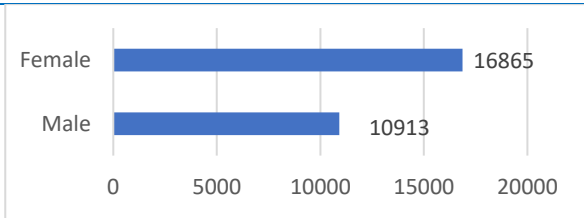
people received MHPSS services as a response to the earthquake

**877**

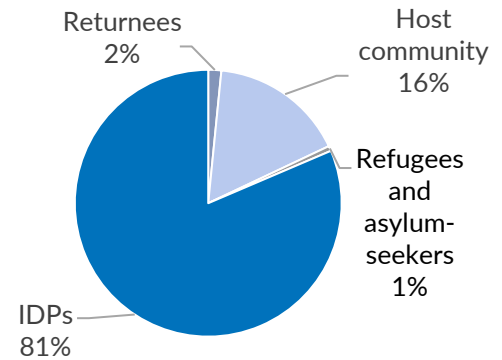
people referred to specialized mental health services

**5,041**

people attended rehabilitation programmes



Population groups benefitting from services.



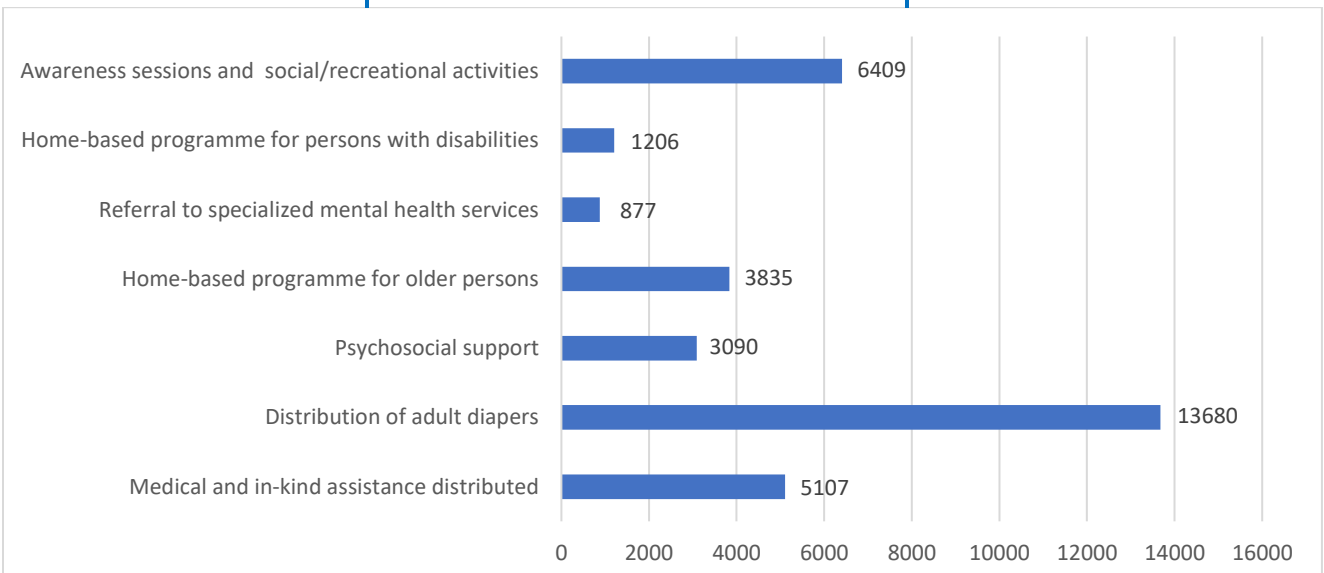
 **14 Governorates**



**114 Community Centres**



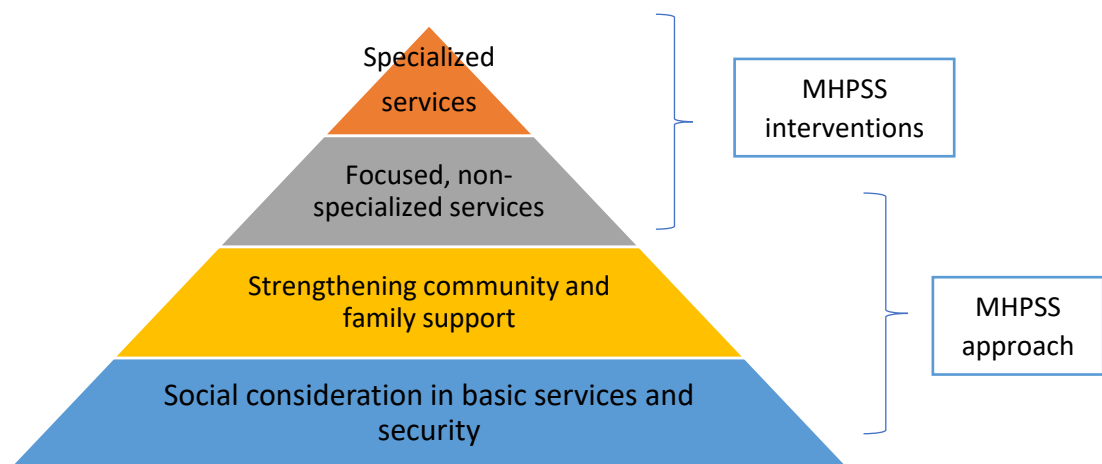
**684 Volunteers**



## Services provided

Mental health in Syria has been severely impacted by years of crisis, displacement, and economic insecurity. Affected populations have experienced a range of stressors such as exposure to violence, separation from or loss of loved ones, poor living conditions, poverty, food insecurity, loss of livelihoods, physical injuries, and illnesses as well as a lack of access to services such as health care, education, and social care.

The mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) approach of UNHCR in Syria is aligned with [UNHCR's operational guidance on MHPSS and Inter-Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\) guidelines](#). Multi-layered interventions are integrated in the health and protection responses (primary health care, community-based protection) as well as in education and shelter programmes.



IASC pyramid of MHPSS approach and interventions

## EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

The earthquakes in February 2023 caused deaths, severe damage to buildings and neighbourhoods, physical injuries, loss of means of livelihood, and displacement of people. As a result, high levels of psychological distress including feelings of fear, worry, and helplessness have been reported. To address the issues, UNHCR is providing MHPSS services through a network of **11** partners in **4** most affected governorates with MHPSS frontline workers and outreach volunteers.

- From the onset of the earthquake until end of June 2023, **UNHCR's partners provided psychological first aid to 21,853 affected people** to reduce stress symptoms and assist in a healthy recovery;
- Of the above, **1,451 vulnerable people showed signs of psychological problems** and were referred to MHPSS case management for further follow-up. In total, **862 vulnerable people received individual counselling** for trauma and stress caused by the earthquakes;
- As part of UNHCR's psychosocial support for persons physically injured by the earthquake, UNHCR through partners managed to distribute **3,410 medical assistive devices** and **1,805 items and materials to prevent any further protection risks** they might encounter;
- **Adult diapers were distributed to 50 older persons and persons with disabilities** residing in collective shelters, as part of UNHCR's psychosocial support for these individuals;

- **Specific services were also provided to 377 older persons and 235 persons with disabilities** to help them cope and assist them to meet their basic and health needs. They were also provided with specific guidelines and instructions on what to do before, during, and after an earthquake;
- Awareness sessions on the psychological effects after natural disasters and social recreational activities to reduce and manage stress were provided to **28,664 vulnerable people residing in collective shelters**.

## MHPSS REGULAR RESPONSE

### Social considerations in basic services and security

- The **age, gender and diversity approach** is applied and mainstreamed in all protection activities and interventions conducted at UNHCR-supported **community centres** and by mobile teams and outreach volunteers;
- Basic services such as food, core relief items, shelter, health, and education are provided in a safe and culturally appropriate manner that ensures dignified access for all people with and for whom UNHCR works;
- During the reporting period, UNHCR continued through its partners to provide MHPSS services targeting **5,107 persons with specific needs** (older persons, persons with disabilities) with general and medical in-kind assistance. This assistance is provided to increase a sense of dignity, help prevent harmful coping mechanisms, and reduce the financial burden on the families and caregivers. In addition, **13,680 persons with specific needs** received adult diapers.

### Strengthening community and family support

- One child-friendly space is established in each UNHCR-supported **community center** to support the development of children. Child-friendly spaces are safe spaces set up in humanitarian settings to help support and protect children. Their objective is to restore a sense of normality and continuity to children whose lives have been disrupted by crises;
- Older persons' clubs are established in each community centre to support the integration of older persons. Activities taking place at the clubs include social/recreational activities, intergenerational activities, awareness sessions, psychodrama, games, and music;
- Home-based rehabilitation interventions were provided to the families and caregivers of **3,835 older persons and 1,206 persons with disabilities** to strengthen their capacity to care for the older persons and the persons with disabilities in their families, and to preserve their independence and dignity;
- UNHCR and partners conducted **6,409 social/recreational activities and awareness-raising sessions for 96,712 individuals**.

### Focused, non-specialized psychosocial support

- Individual and group counselling was provided to **3,090 persons with psychosocial needs** by MHPSS case managers in all UNHCR-supported community centres and multidisciplinary clinics;
- During the reporting period, **3,217 persons were provided with mental health and psychosocial support case management services**.

### Specialized mental health services

- **877 referrals to psychiatrists and psychotherapists** were made by MHPSS case managers for people suffering from severe mental health disorders.