

Editorial

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health problems are an extremely important issue worldwide¹ (aggregate point prevalence of 10% for adults and 18 to 20 per 1000 person in India) due to their impact on the human rights and quality of life of those affected and their families.

World Mental Health Day² is observed on 10th October every year, with the overall objective of raising awareness of mental health issues around the world and mobilizing efforts in support of mental health.

The day provides an opportunity for all stakeholders working on mental health issues to talk about their work, and what more needs to be done to make mental health care a reality for people worldwide. World Mental Health Day² is an annual event which aims to raise awareness of mental health issues across the globe and mobilize efforts in support of mental health.



2016 Theme²: What is Psychological First Aid: Supporting People following Crisis Events

When terrible things happen, we want to reach out a helping hands to those who have been affected. Psychological first aid is a humane, supportive and practical response to people suffering exposure to serious stressors and who may need support. It is an approach to help people recover by responding to their basic needs and showing them concern and care, in a way that respects their wishes, culture, dignity, and capabilities.

What does Psychological First Aid involve?

- * Giving nonintrusive, practical care, and support;
- * Assessing people's needs and concerns;
- * Helping people address basic needs (food and water);
- * Listening, but not pressuring, people to talk;
- * Comforting people and helping them to feel calm;
- * Helping people connect to information, services, and social support;
- * Protecting people from further harm.

Who can offer Psychological First Aid?

Perhaps you are called upon as a staff member or volunteer to help in a major disaster, or you find yourself at the scene of an accident where people are hurt. You may be a doctor, health worker helping someone who has been the victim of violence, or you may be a teacher, firefighter, police officer or emergency medical technician. Learning about psychological first aid will help you to know the most supportive things to say and do for people who are very distressed. It will also give you information on how to approach a new situation safely for yourself and others, and not to cause harm by your actions.

Who can benefit from Psychological First Aid?

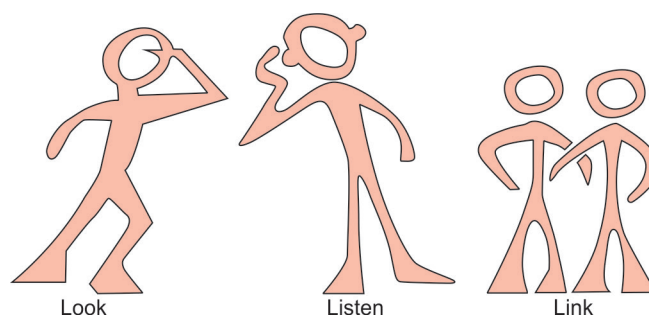
Although many people cope well enough in crisis situations, others may feel overwhelmed, confused, fearful, sad, angry or numb. Psychological first aid may be helpful for people who feel emotionally distressed after a crisis event. However, some people may need specialized help, such as those in need of emergency medical care or with very serious emotional reactions such as being disoriented or unable to care for themselves. If you are providing psychological first aid, know your limits! If possible, refer people in need of specialized help, to, e.g., a psychiatrist, health care professional or psychologist.

India: District Mental Health Programme³

District Mental Health Programme has now incorporated promotive and preventive activities for positive mental health which includes:

- * School mental health services: Life skills education in schools, counseling service.
- * College counseling service: Through trained teachers/counselors.
- * Work place stress management: Formal and informal sectors, including farmers, women, etc.
- * Suicide prevention services: Counseling center at district level, sensitization workshops, IEC, help lines.

The National Human Rights Commission also monitors the conditions in the mental hospitals along with the Government of India, and the States who are acting on the recommendations of the joint studies conducted to ensure quality in delivery of mental health care.



Principles of Psychological First Aid

REFERENCES

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