Mental Illness Awareness Newsletter

Sanlam

Kampala Hospital
Always Caring. Always Here

Of recent, there is an increased percentage of people with a mental illness condition. People with a mental health disorder might be a neighbor, friend, family member or relative or in our community. The stigma around mental health has prohibited several people from seeking the required treatment, which later leads to increased risk of suicide, poor performance at work places or even at school and high medical expenses.

Mental health is a basic human right, defined as a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community.

Determinants of Mental Healt h

• Multiple individual, social and structural determinants may combine to protect or undermine our mental health and shift our position on the mental health continuum e.g., harsh parenting and physical punishment is known to undermine child health and bullying is a leading risk factor for mental health conditions.

• Individual psychological and biological factors such as emotional skills, substance use, and genetics can make people more vulnerable to mental health problems.

• Exposure to unfavorable social, economic, geopolitical, and environmental circumstances – including poverty, violence also increases people's risk of experiencing mental health conditions.

• Protective factors that might occur throughout our lives and serve to strengthen resilience i.e., individual social and emotional skills and attributes as well as positive social interactions.

Some of the common signs or symptoms of Mental Illness
Suicidal thinking, trouble understanding and relating to situations and to people, excessive anger, hostility, or violence, significant tiredness, low energy, or problems sleeping, excessive fears or worries, or extreme feelings of guilt, detachment from reality (delusions), paranoia or hallucinations, feeling sad or down, trouble understanding and relating to situations and to people.
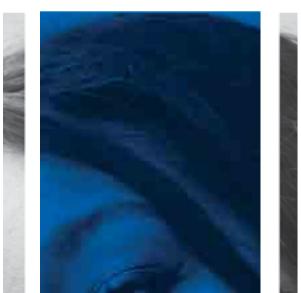
How to cope with Mental illness

• Treat yourself with kindness and respect and avoid self-criticism. Make time for your hobbies and favorite projects, or broaden your horizons
• Taking care of yourself physically can improve your mental health.
• Avoid smoking and vaping, Drink plenty of water Exercise, which helps decrease depression and anxiety and improve moods
• Get enough sleep. Researchers believe that lack of sleep contributes to a high rate of depression. In addition, surrounding yourself with positive energy i.e., a good support network of family and friends, quieting your mind through journaling, mediating, practice any spiritual activity, break up the monotony- a little change of pace can perk up a tedious schedule and stick to a treatment plan. How to prevent a mental illness? (practices)
• Talk about your feelings
• Get a good night's sleep
• Eat well. A balanced diet can improve your sense of wellbeing and your mood.
• Stay active. Physical activity is not only good for your body, but also great for your mind.
• Practice mindfulness, a way to be fully engaged and present in the moment.
• Keep in touch. Supportive friends can help you deal with the stresses of life, make you feel cared for and offer a different view from whatever's going on in your head.
• Care for others, whether that's working on relationships with family, letting go of old grudges or volunteering.

How to deal with the stigma around mental issues?

• Don't let the fear of being labeled with a mental illness prevent you from seeking help. Treatment can provide relief by identifying what's wrong and reducing symptoms that interfere with your work and personal life.
• Seeking counseling, educating yourself about your condition and connecting with others who have mental illness can help you gain self-esteem and overcome destructive self-judgment.
• Don't isolate yourself if you have mental illness, reach out to people you trust for the compassion, support and understanding you need.
• Join a support group
Mental health services are available in Uganda at Butabika national referral hospital, NGO's like TASO, Uganda Cares, Mild may and some private health facilities such as Kampala Hospital