



# **MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AMONG BHUTANESE COMMUNITIES**

1

**Presented by Suman Chhetri  
Association Of Bhutanese in Australia (ABA  
Sydney)**

# WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

- According to the World *Health* Organization, however, *mental health* is “a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”
- *Mental health* includes our emotional, *psychological*, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.
- *Mental health* is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood

# WAYS TO MAINTAIN POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

- Getting professional help if you need it
- Connecting with others
- Staying positive
- Getting physically active
- Helping others
- Getting enough sleep
- Developing coping skills

# WHAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS

- A **mental illness** is a health problem that significantly affects how a person feels, thinks, behaves, and interacts with other people. It is diagnosed according to standardised criteria.
- About ***one in five*** Australians will experience a mental illness, and most of us will experience a mental health problem at some time in our lives.
- According to the World Health Organization, ***depression*** will be one of the biggest health problems worldwide by the year 2020.
- Mental health problems are less severe than mental illnesses, but may develop into a mental illness if they are not effectively dealt with.

# EARLY SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Yelling or fighting with family and friends
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Having persistent thoughts and memories you can't get out of your head
- Hearing voices or believing things that are not true
- Thinking of harming yourself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks like taking care of your kids or getting to work or school

# CAUSES OF MENTAL ILLNESS

- Generally grouped into
  - Biological
  - Psychological
  - Environmental
- Some of the factors leading to poor mental health are
  - Childhood abuse, trauma or neglect
  - Social isolation
  - Experiencing discrimination and stigma
  - Drug and alcohol misuse
  - Bereavement (losing someone close to you)
  - Unemployment
  - Long term stress or long term physical health condition
  - Domestic violence or abuse (elder and to child)

# SUICIDE IN AUSTRALIA (2016 OVERVIEW)

- Suicide accounted for over one-third of deaths among people 15-24 years of age and over quarter of deaths among those 25-34 years of age.
- Suicide was the leading cause of death among all people 15-44 years of age and the second leading cause of death among those 45-54 years of age.
- 2866 people died from Intentional self harm
- 1808 drug induced deaths registered. Highest in 20 years

# SUICIDE IN BHUTANESE COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA

- So far 9 cases of Suicide among Bhutanese Resettled in Australia are known.
- Multiple deaths from MVA and drowning.



# BARRIERS IN ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

- A lack of knowledge or Understanding about Mental Health services
- A stigma related to Mental Illness or Seeking help.
- Language barriers
- Concerns about Confidentiality
- Cultural Misunderstanding
- Previous unfavourable or negative experiences with health or other services
- Concerns about being heard or understood about their problems

# STRATEGIES TO TACKLE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES – INDIVIDUAL & FAMILIES

- Build strong, positive relationships with family and friends.
- Become more involved in the community (e.g., mentor or tutor youth, join a faith or spiritual community).
- Encourage children and adolescents to participate in extracurricular and out-of-school activities.
- Work to make sure children feel comfortable talking about problems, such as bullying, and seek appropriate assistance as needed.

# STRATEGIES TO TACKLE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES – COMMUNITIES & ORGANISATIONS

- Provide space and organized activities (e.g., opportunities for volunteering) that encourage social participation and inclusion for all people, including older people and persons with disabilities.
- Support child and youth development programs (e.g., peer mentoring programs, volunteering programs) and promote inclusion of youth with mental, emotional, and behavioural problems.
- Train key community members (e.g., adults who work with the older adults and youth) to identify the signs of depression and suicide and refer people to resources.
- Expand access to mental health services (e.g., patient navigation, support groups) and enhance linkages between mental health, substance abuse, disability, and other social services.

# STRATEGIES TO TACKLE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES – BHUTANESE COMMUNITIES

- Tackling and Bringing awareness on Domestic Violences and discriminations.
- Ensure that those in need, especially potentially vulnerable groups, are identified and included in community activities.
- Include safe shared spaces for people to interact in community development plans, which can foster healthy relationships and positive mental health among community residents.
- Implement programs and policies to prevent abuse, bullying, violence, and social exclusion; build social connectedness; and promote positive mental and emotional health .
- Helping to build self esteem and confidence
- Advice on financial management
- Career guidance & Stigma Free environment
- Relationship counselling and referrals

# ORGANISATIONS TO CONTACT

- Local Community Organisations
- Local GP
- Local Mental Health Service
- Drug and Alcohol Services
- Gambling Helpline
- Transcultural Health Service
- STARTTS

# CRISIS HELP LINE

- Lifeline - 13 11 14
- Suicide Call-back Service – 1300 659 467
- Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800