

## Mental Health Awareness: Reforming tool for the growth of the Nation

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### Abstract

Mental health is an essential aspect at overall well-being. It includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also help determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. The present study throws a light on mental health awareness, its importance and how it is a reforming tool for the growth of our nation. The purpose of the study is to take attention of the individuals towards mental health awareness and to guide them how to avail knowledge about it.

“Mental Health is not a weakness. It takes strength to seek support and prioritize self-care.”

**Keywords:** - Mental Health Awareness, National Development, Psychological Well-being, Public Health Policy, Social Stigma Reduction, Emotional Resilience, Workplace Mental Health, Sustainable Human Development

### Introduction

“Mental health... is not a destination, but a process. It’s about how you drive, not where you’re going.”

According to the WHO, more than 264 million people of all ages around the world have some sort of depression. Regardless of where it originates depression can lead to devastating consequences. The WHO reports depression can lead to suicide, something close to 8,00000 lives every year. This static alone underscores the importance of mental health awareness.

Depression and other mental health issues have stigmas attached to them. Often, seeking help is seen as a sign of weakness or something that evokes shame. Mental health stigmas can often come from either a place of fear or a lack of understanding. This combination can foster a negative view of individuals who are dealing with mental health issues.

For centuries, mental health disorders have been met with a negative perception around the world. While this negative perception have fallen away in contemporary times. An increasing awareness of mental health helps society work towards eliminating its stigmas. This understanding can allow people to recognize those who may be dealing with anxiety, depression or other conditions that may affect their mental well-being. This could include a self-realization of their own mental health conditions.

There is no health without mental health.

Mental health is increasingly recognized as a universal human right and an essential foundation of human development. All over the world, there are vast number of cases remain without access to the support they need, hindered by stigma, discrimination and structural barriers. These gaps affect not only individual well-being, but also social cohesion and economic progress, making mental health a challenge that affect every dimension of life.

Meeting this challenge requires collective will to confront stigma, to line up prevention and treatment as well. The future of global health, equality and sustainable development depends on making mental well-being truly

universal. As Good Health and well-being (SD 43) comes under 17 sustainable development goals 2030 agenda at number 3.

Achieving mental well-being for all is essential to advancing public health, sustaining socio-economic development and fulfilling human rights. It is embedded in the UN's commitment to Universal Health Coverage.

The WHO defines mental health 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.” It exists on a continuum – from optimal functioning to severe distress – and is experienced differently by each person. It is influenced by a combination of individual, social and structural factors. Risks such as genetics, substance use, poverty, violence and inequality can undermine well-being, especially during childhood.

Protective elements, such as emotional skills, supportive relationships, quality education, and safe communities help build resilience. Local challenges and global crisis, from community violence to climate change, further shape mental health outcomes. There is no single decisive factor rather, their interaction over time that determines overall well-being.

Mental disorders are clinically significant disturbances in thinking emotion, behavior that interfere with daily life and well-being. They affect people across all ages, genders and cultural backgrounds. Depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorders, PTSD, schizophrenia and other psychoses, eating disorders, neurodevelopmental conditions – are all presents distinct challenges, seriously affect quality of life and participation in society, which further negatively affects the growth of the nation.

Risk factors such as poverty, violence, inequality, increase vulnerability, while protective factors include strong emotional skills, supportive relationships and access to education and social participation enhance resilience.

Mental Health Awareness is the effort to increase public knowledge, understanding and acceptance of mental health issues and illnesses by reducing stigma and promoting early intervention and support.

#### **Key aspects of Mental Health Awareness –**

- **Reducing Stigma** – As mental is an essential aspect of overall well-being, the goal is to break down the negative stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding mental illnesses. By open discussion, making it easier for people to talk about their struggles.
- **Promoting Understanding** – It involves educating people about the signs and symptoms of mental health conditions and their impact on person, family and society as well.
- **Encouraging Seeking Help** – The idea should be promoting that seeking help for mental health challenges is a sign of strength, not weakness.
- **Fostering Empathy and Support** – The initiative encourages empathy and support for individuals experiencing mental health issues, creating a more compassionate and accepting society. Efforts should be done to improve access to mental healthcare services and resources for those who need them.

#### **Why Mental Health Awareness is important –**

- **To Normalize Conversations** – Awareness helps to integrate mental health into everyday conversations, similar to hoe we discuss about our physical health.
- **Identify Issues Early** – Increased mental health awareness allow individuals and those around them to recognize mental health struggles sooner, which leads to timely intervention.

- **Helps to Build supportive and Understanding Communities** – When mental health issues are better understood, communities can become more supportive and less isolating for those who are affected.
- **Advocates for Policy Making and Change** – Awareness effort can drive advocacy for better policies regarding mental health awareness and funding for research and interventions.

#### **Awareness as a reforming tool –**

Mental health awareness is a transformative force for national reform, addressing the underlying human issues that affect a country's social, economic, political and judicial systems. With the help of destigmatizing mental illness and expanding easy access to care, nations can unlock full potential of their populations, fostering productivity, social cohesion and effectiveness.

#### **Social Reform -**

Mental health awareness help to build a more resilient and inclusive society by combating stigma and promoting social cohesion.

- **To Combat with Stigma** – Self stigma, public stigma, and institutional stigma prevent individuals from seeking help. Awareness campaigns can foster a more accepting environment.
- **To Strengthen Relationships** – Positive mental well-being improves interpersonal relationships within families, among friends and in communities, which promotes stronger social bonds.
- **To Address Societal Problems** – There are many social issues such as substance abuse, homelessness, and violence are linked to underlying mental health conditions. An awareness may help our society in preventive interventions.
- **Promoting Resilience** – A mentally healthy population is more resilient at the time of adversity. In disastrous situations resilience help in reducing the long term trauma and help people in managing stress in life.

#### **Political Reform –**

When we're talking about the reform of our nation at large, mental health enters the political discourse, it influences policy, leadership and public engagement.

- **Policy making** – Increasing awareness and political pressure lead governments to adopt new mental health policies and expand access to care.
- **Resilient leadership** – Politicians are not immune to stress and a focus on their mental health can lead to better decision-making and performance. If leaders are open about their mental health, they can help reduce stigma for the entire nation.
- **Inclusion in global agendas** – Mental health is increasingly recognized as a key components of human rights, global health and sustainable development.

**Judicial reform** – A deeper understanding of mental illness can lead to more human and effective justice systems.

- **Diverting affected individuals to treatment** – Increased awareness can lead to mental health diversion programs and specialized courts. These can steer non-violent offenders with mental health issues toward treatment rather than incarceration.
- **Reforming criminal sentencing** – Psychological assessments can be used to inform criminal sentencing, ensuring that individuals receive appropriate rehabilitation and treatment.

- **Dispelling misconceptions** – Awareness helps dispel the misconception that people with mental illness are inherently violent. This reduces the stigma that individuals experiences when interacting with law enforcement.

To improve mental health we have to focus on daily self-care habits like getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet and experiencing regularly. Practice mindfulness, connect with others through social activities and support system. Manage stress by setting realistic goals and making time for relaxation and healthy hobbies.

Mental health awareness is a powerful tool of social reform because it touches the foundation of how people live, work and relate to one another, by prioritizing mental well-being, societies move towards equality, compassion and collective progress.

“A society that heals minds also heals itself”.

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