

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

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سازمان جهانی بهداشت

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World Health Day 2017, Depression

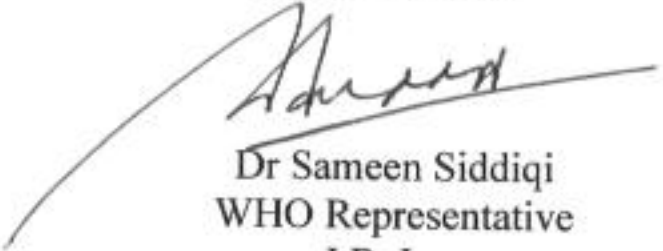
Dear Dr Asadi Lari,

I wish to inform you that every year World Health Day celebrated in 7 April. This year theme of the World Health Day is "Depression: Let's talk". In this respect please find below link to Dr Fikri's video (Regional Director) message on the occasion of World Health Day. <https://youtu.be/0y1NSBy5Kp8>

It would be appreciated if you could please disseminate the message with relevant department in MOHME, in addition WHO developed a web based one year campaign starting October 2016. I would specifically request you and your team to use the engagement platform, which is now live at <http://apps.who.int/depression-campaign-2017/en>. The purpose of this platform is for countries, individuals, organizations, institutions, etc. to engage with the theme, by sharing their activities and events. I encourage you to start using the Create and Share option, on desktops, phones and tablets, noting that you can enter information in the Submit your activity section in languages other than English.

Thank you and best regards,

Yours sincerely,


Dr Sameen Siddiqi
WHO Representative
I.R. Iran

Dr Mohsen Asadi Lari
Acting Minister of Health for International Affairs
MOHME, I.R. Iran

Q6: Why is depression rising in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region?

In WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region, the number of people living with depression is increasing and is among the highest in the world as a result of ongoing violence, conflicts and unrest, which resultant displacement and loss. In these settings, the rates of anxiety and depression can increase by 2 to 3 times respectively. As many as 1 in 5 people are affected by depression and anxiety in these settings.

Remember! There is a lot you can do to keep mentally strong. Talk to someone you trust or seek professional help.



Q7: How is WHO supporting countries to improve mental health services and care?

WHO works with the health sector, and other related sectors to:

- strengthen leadership and political commitment
- integrate mental health services in primary health care services through use of guidelines like the mental health GAP intervention guide (mhGAP-IG)
- strengthen secondary and tertiary care mental health services
- identify and prioritize vulnerable persons
- increase the public's awareness of mental health and substance use
- establish information and data collection systems and promote research to bolster the evidence base.



Q8: What are WHO-specific interventions to support countries to take action in mental health?

- **The mental health GAP action programme (mhGAP)** – which calls for improving political commitment and developing policy and legislative infrastructure, to provide for integrated mental health care.
- **The mental health global action plan 2013-2020** – which provides a roadmap for countries to promote mental health and to provide for integrated services for prevention and treatment of mental, neurological and substance use disorders. The actions proposed can provide a foundation for the development of national strategies and action plans.
- **The regional framework to scale up action on mental health** – which is a roadmap for scaling up action on mental health and substance use. The framework provides strategic interventions and indicators to assess progress in the areas of: governance; health care; promotion and prevention, and surveillance, monitoring and research.



For more information, please contact:

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Depression is treatable.
You are not alone. Help is available.

Presentation notes

World Health Day 2017 – Depression: let's talk

Slide 1: What is world Health Day?

As you all know, World Health Day is celebrated every year on 7 April. The Day marks the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization. World Health Day provides us with a unique opportunity to mobilize action around a specific health topic of concern to people all over the world.

What is at the core of the World Health Day 2017 campaign?

At the core of the World Health Day 2017 campaign is the importance of talking about depression as a vital component of recovery. The stigma surrounding mental illness, including depression, remains a barrier to people seeking help throughout the world. Talking about depression, whether with a family member, friend or medical professional helps break down this stigma, ultimately leading to more people seeking help. The campaign slogan is: Depression: let's talk.

Slide 2: What are we aiming to do in our campaign?

The overall goal of this one-year campaign is that more people with depression, in all countries, seek and get help. More specifically, we are aiming to achieve the following:

- provide a better understanding of what depression is, and how it can be prevented and treated
- the general public is better informed about depression, its causes and possible consequences, including suicide, and what help is or can be available for prevention and treatment; and
- help reduce the stigma associated with depression.

Slide 3: Why are we focusing on depression?

Depression affects people of all ages, from all walks of life, in all countries. More specifically, depression affects more than 300 million people worldwide, and is the single leading cause of disability around the world. Moreover, depression has social and economic costs for individuals, communities and nations, estimated at more than US\$ 1 trillion globally. If not treated, depression can cause suicide, which is the second leading cause of death among 15-29 year olds.

Yet, depression can be prevented and treated. A better understanding of what depression is, and how it can be prevented and treated, will help reduce the stigma associated with the condition, and lead to more people seeking help.

Slide 4: What is depression?

Depression is an illness characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities, for at least two weeks. In addition, people with depression normally have several of the following symptoms: a



loss of energy; a change in appetite; sleeping more or less; anxiety; reduced concentration; indecisiveness; restlessness; feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or hopelessness; and thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

Slide 5: Who are we targeting?

This campaign is for everyone, whatever their age, sex, or social status. That said, at the World Health Organization, we have chosen to pay particular attention to three groups that are disproportionately affected: adolescents and young adults, women after childbirth, and older adults (over 60s). These groups are at a higher risk of suicide.

- **Adolescents and young adults** are presented with many opportunities for meeting new people, visiting new places and finding a direction in life. These years can also be a time of stress, making adolescents and young adults feel overwhelmed rather than excited by these challenges. **There is a lot that you can do. If you feel that you may be heading for depression, talk to someone you trust or seek professional help.**
- **Women after childbirth.** Depression affects 1 in 6 women after childbirth. Symptoms of depression after childbirth also include: a feeling of being overwhelmed; persistent crying for no apparent reason; lack of bonding with your baby; and doubts about being able to care for yourself and your baby. **Depression after childbirth can be treated with professional help. Talking treatments and medicines can help.**
- **Older adults over 60s.** The life changes that come with ageing can lead to depression. Depression is common in older people but often overlooked and untreated. Depression in older people often causes memory problems, and can be mistaken for dementia. It is often associated with physical conditions, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes or chronic pain; difficult life events, such as losing a partner; and a reduced ability to do things that were possible when younger. Older people are at a higher risk of suicide. **Depression is treatable, with talking therapies or antidepressant medication or a combination of these.**

Slide 6: What causes depression?

Very often, a combination of physical, psychological, and social factors are involved in the onset of a depression. **Having strong social support can often help ease some of the effects of these difficult situations.** Some of these situations include:

- a family history of depression
- poor nutrition
- having chronic physical illnesses like hypertension, diabetes, cancers, thyroid disorders and Parkinson disease
- repeated exposure to extreme stressors like war, conflict or natural disasters
- use of licit and illicit drugs
- rapid change in life situations like marriage, child birth, loss of job or partner
- experiencing adversity and abuse in childhood like early loss of parent(s) or non-responsive and non-stimulating parenting
- long term difficulties like financial problems, belonging to a minority group, and marital difficulties

countries experiencing conflict, strife and unrest the rates of mental disorders in general and depression in particular are on the rise in our region, making this year's world health day theme of particular relevance.



Campaign materials

We have this year developed a wide range of materials , covering a range of topics and target groups because depression can affect anyone, anywhere. All our campaign materials can be accessed at

<http://www.emro.who.int/world-health-days/world-health-day-2017/index.html>, and all content is available in English, Arabic, and French. These include :

1. **POSTERS:** Six region-specific posters covering depression in different target groups and settings. The target groups covered include younger and older people, women and men. Settings include urban, rural, school and conflict/emergency. Each of the six posters are available in two sizes: A2 and A4. **For the posters:** low and high resolution versions for printing and adaptation can be downloaded at <http://www.emro.who.int/world-health-days/world-health-day-2017/campaign-material.html>.
2. **HANDOUTS:** Eight handouts which provide information on depression in general, the signs and symptoms in different target groups, the role of family and friends, coping with depression, suicide, and asking for and getting help. **For the handouts:** high resolution versions for print can be downloaded at <http://www.emro.who.int/world-health-days/world-health-day-2017/campaign-material.html>.

3. Engagement platform

This year, WHO Headquarters developed an engagement platform, which is now live at <http://apps.who.int/depression-campaign-2017/en>. The purpose of this platform is for countries, individuals, organizations, institutions, etc. to engage with the theme, by sharing their activities and events. I encourage you to start using the Create and Share option, on desktops, phones and tablets, noting that you can enter information in the Submit your activity section in languages other than English. This platform is an excellent opportunity for people around the world to engage and share with one another so please take the time and get involved, and share the link with everyone you know.

Please take some time to browse our website, as it houses all the information and resources you need, to take the campaign forward at national level. We are also producing a video message from Dr Mahmoud Fikri, WHO Regional Director on the occasion of World Health Day which we will be sharing with you over the coming days. We will also keep you updated about the planned regional events for WHD 17 as the plans crystallize.

I will appreciate if you could disseminate the message and the materials as widely as possible in your respective countries. Please feel free to contact Ms Nisreen Abdel Latif (email: abdellatifn@who.int), Mr Omid Mohit (email:

Slide 7: Why is depression rising in WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region?

In WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region, the number of people living with depression is increasing as a result of growing humanitarian crises, ongoing violence, conflicts and unrest, which result in loss and displacement. The rates of anxiety and depression in conflict-affected populations can increase by 2 to 3 times respectively. In these settings, as many as 1 in 5 people are affected by depression and anxiety. In this graph, we can see that the prevalence of depressive and anxiety disorders in men and women are similar to the global estimates. The data show that depressive and anxiety disorders are more common among women than men. Indicators of disadvantage like low socioeconomic status, early age at marriage, high fertility rates, abuse, absence of decision-making autonomy, limited access to resources, proscribed social roles and status have been identified as being the major contributors to this excess illness.

Slide 8: Prevalence of depressive and anxiety disorders in the EMR

This graph highlights the rates of depressive and anxiety disorders in individual countries in WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region. Overall, depressive and anxiety disorders range from 3-6%. The data show that depressive and anxiety disorders are higher in high-income countries. This can be attributed to the interplay of a number of factors like epidemiological transition with resultant increasing number of older people, lifestyle changes contributing to high rates of chronic physical illnesses like diabetes, hypertension and heart conditions which are associated with increased rates of depression. Other possible contributors include socioeconomic factors.

Slide 9: Global burden of depression and anxiety

This graph focuses on countries in the North Africa and the Middle East Region, where depressive and anxiety disorders are among the highest in the world. This is because countries in North Africa and the Middle East are the most impacted by humanitarian crises, ongoing violence, conflicts and unrest. The rates of anxiety and depression in conflict-affected populations can increase by 2 to 3 times respectively. In these settings, as many as 1 in 5 people are affected by depression and anxiety.

Slide 10: What can everyone do about depression?

With the escalating rates of depression, and the vast number of displaced populations and people living in conflict areas, it is imperative that people do something about depression. Everyone has a role in helping people with depression get the treatment and care they deserve.

- Governments can improve mental health services.
- Families and communities can provide social support.
- Civil society groups can raise awareness.
- Individuals can seek help, and get treatment through medicines and talking to others about how they feel.

Talking about depression is a vital component of recovery. The stigma surrounding mental illness, including depression, remains a barrier to people seeking help throughout the world. Talking about depression, whether with a family member, friend or medical professional; in larger groups, for example in schools, the workplace and social settings; or in the public

Q1: What is depression?

Depression is an illness that makes people feel constantly sad, lose interest in activities they enjoy, and makes it difficult to carry out daily tasks. Other symptoms of depression include: indecisiveness; change in appetite; restlessness; sleeping more or less; feelings of worthlessness, guilt or hopelessness; anxiety; thoughts of self-harm; reduced concentration; and thoughts of suicide. At worst, depression can lead to suicide.

Remember! Depression is not a character weakness.

Q2: What causes depression?

A combination of physical, psychological, and social factors can cause depression. Some of these factors include: a family history of depression; loss of one of the parents early in life; having chronic physical illnesses; alcohol or drug use; extreme stressors like war, conflict or natural disasters; experiencing adversity and abuse in childhood; rapid change in life situations like marriage, child birth, loss of job or partner; and long-term difficulties like financial problems, belonging to a minority group, and marital difficulties.

Remember! Strong social support can help ease some of the effects of these factors.

Q3: Who is most affected by depression?

Depression can affect anyone, whatever their age, sex, or social status. However, three specific groups are most affected by depression, and are at a higher risk of suicide. These groups are: adolescents and young adults; women after childbirth; and adults over 60. For the three groups, these times coincide with social, emotional and physical changes, making them vulnerable to depression.

Remember! Depression is treatable. Talk to someone you trust or seek help.

Q4: What can you do if you think you are depressed?

- Talk to someone you trust
- Stay connected with family and friends
- Seek professional help
- Stick to regular eating and sleeping habits
- Keep up with activities you used to enjoy
- Accept that you might have depression

Remember! Depression can be treated. If you think you have depression, seek help.

Q5: What can you do for people who are depressed?

- Make it clear that you want to help, listen without judgement, and offer support.
- Encourage them to seek professional help, and offer to accompany them to appointments.
- If medication is prescribed, help them to take it as prescribed.
- Help them with everyday tasks, and to have regular eating and sleeping patterns.
- Encourage regular exercise and social activities.
- Encourage them to focus on the positive, rather than the negative.
- Take care of yourself too. Try to find ways to relax and continue doing things you enjoy.
- If they are thinking about self-harm, or have already intentionally harmed themselves, do not leave them alone, and remove items such as medications, sharp objects and firearms.

Remember! When you live with someone with depression, you can help them recover, but you need to take care of yourself too.





**World Health
Organization**

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

domain, in the news media, blogs or social media, helps break down this stigma, ultimately leading to more people seeking help.

Slide 11: Remember! If you are depressed:

- Depression is not a character weakness.
- Depression can happen to anybody.
- Depression is treatable.
- You are not alone.
- Talk to someone you trust or speak to a professional.
- With the right help, you can get better.
- Seek and get help.

Slide 13

On this World Health Day, everyone can do something about depression. Fight the stigma and encourage people to speak out.

For more information, please contact:

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