



WORLD MENTAL WELLNESS DAY- 10 OCTOBER 2020

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health refers to a person's condition with regard to their psychological, emotional, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, how we relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of our lives, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Over the course of a person's life, if one experiences mental health problems, his or her thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected.

COVID-19 AND MENTAL HEALTH

The novel Corona virus and COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on every aspect of life as we know it, from work to income to physical health and social interaction. The impact of this pandemic on mental health is weighing heavily on the minds of every individual as we are compelled to cope with a lot of changes beyond our control.

HERE ARE WAYS TO DEAL WITH THE STRESS OF COVID-19:

Learn how to protect yourself and others from COVID-19: Practice good hygiene by washing your hands frequently and thoroughly, sanitise your hands and surfaces often, maintain social distancing and stay home as much as possible.

Acknowledge your feelings: Know that feeling anxious about coronavirus is okay and normal. Whatever you are feeling right now, know that it's okay to feel that way. Allow yourself time to notice and express what you are feeling. This could be through journaling, talking with others, listening to music or doing any of your favorite hobbies. Let thoughts and feelings come and go in their own time, without getting overwhelmed by them.

Maintain your day-to-day activities and a routine as much as possible.

Having a healthy routine can have a positive impact on your thoughts and feelings. Try to stick to your regular meals, physical exercise, sleep, school or work schedule.

Stay connected: Remember that physical distancing does not necessarily mean social disconnection. There are many ways we can use technology to stay connected to family and friends, and both give and receive support (remotely) such as: Calling, texting, or video-chatting

Seek accurate information: Finding credible sources you can trust is important to avoid the fear and panic that can be caused by misinformation. Make use of sources like the radio or television for up-to-date.

Set limits around news and social media: Constantly reading, watching, or listening to upsetting media coverage can unnecessarily intensify worry and agitation. When you get the urge to check updates, see if you can pause, notice the urge, delay acting on the urge, and let it pass without judgement. Schedule a specific time to check in with the news instead to avoid excessive worrying and overthinking which may lead to stress and other mental illnesses.

SYMPTOMS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Signs and symptoms of mental illness can vary, depending on the disorder, circumstances and other factors. Many times, mental illness symptoms can affect emotions, thoughts and behaviors.

Examples of signs and symptoms include:

- 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

THE EFFECTS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

The effects of mental illness can be temporary or long lasting. You can also have more than one mental health disorder at the same time. For example, you may struggle with the disturbing symptoms of Depression and also have a problem with controlling the use of substances such as alcohol or drugs. If left untreated, mental illness can cause severe emotional, behavioral and physical health problems. Some of the noticeable complications linked to mental illness include the following:

- Unhappiness and decreased enjoyment of life
- Family conflicts
- Relationship difficulties
- Social isolation
- Problems with tobacco, alcohol and other drugs
- Missed work or school, or other problems related to work or school
- Legal and financial problems

- Self-harm and harm to others, including suicide or homicide
- Weakened immune system
- Heart disease and other medical conditions

WAYS TO MAINTAIN POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

Try the following tips to keep your balance, or re-balance yourself:

- Treat yourself with kindness and respect, and avoid self-criticism. Make time for your hobbies and favourite projects.
- Take a good walk or exercise
- Set aside 10 minutes a day to relax and collect your thoughts
- Painting or drawing
- Unplug the phone and get some time to yourself
- Express your feelings and emotions
- Spend time with positive people
- Get a hot cup of something wonderful, a journal and a pen
- Cheer up someone who is feeling down
- **Get professional help when you need it!**

Mental health conditions can be harder to treat if you wait until symptoms get bad. Too often, people don't try to get help out of fear of how others will react when they find out because society tends to believe that a person with a mental health condition is 'crazy', out of control, or incapable.

Surely, seeking help is a sign of strength — not a weakness! Our College Psychologist is there to listen and assist you!

To schedule an appointment with the College Psychologist, go to the SSS office at your campus **OR** you can contact us: call or send an SMS with your name and the name of your campus to **084 392 9569**.

CONFIDENTIALITY IS GUARANTEED!!!!!!



Mr G Mnisi

Deputy Principal Registrar



Ms JM Ramodike

College Psychologist