

## **World Mental Health Day – 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

Tomorrow is World Mental Health Day – **Wednesday October 10<sup>th</sup> 2018**

### **What is Mental Health?**

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.

Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, your thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected. Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including:

- Biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry
- Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems

Mental health problems are common but [help is available](#). People with mental health problems can get better and many [recover](#) completely.

### **Why have a World Mental Health Day?**

The goal is to help raise mental health awareness. Each of us can make a contribution to ensure that people dealing with problems concerning mental health can live better lives with dignity.

This year's theme is: **Young people & Mental Health in a changing world**

Adolescence and the early years of adulthood are a time of life when many changes occur, for example changing schools, leaving home, and starting university or a new job. For many, these are exciting times. However, they can also be times of stress and apprehension. In some cases, if not recognized and managed, these feelings can lead to mental illness. The expanding use of online technologies, while undoubtedly bringing many benefits, can also bring additional pressures, as connectivity to virtual networks at any time of the day and night grows. Many adolescents are also living in areas affected by humanitarian emergencies such as conflicts, natural disasters and epidemics. Young people living in situations such as these are particularly vulnerable to mental distress and illness.

Half of all mental illness begins by the age of 14, but most cases go undetected and untreated. In terms of the burden of the disease among adolescents, depression is the third leading cause.

Every year one adult in four, along with one child in ten, will have a mental health issue. These conditions can profoundly affect literally millions of lives, affecting the capability of these individuals to make it through the day, to sustain relationships, and to maintain work.

### **Prevention begins with better understanding**

Much can be done to help build mental resilience from an early age to help prevent mental distress and illness among young people, and to manage and recover from mental illness. Prevention begins with being aware of and understanding the early warning signs and symptoms of mental illness.

## **The Dilemma**

The stigma attached to mental health causes a damaging, albeit ill-informed, attitude, making it more difficult for those affected to pursue help. According to UK estimates, only about one-fourth of those with mental health problems undergo ongoing treatment. By stark contrast, the vast majority of those affected with these problems are faced with a variety of issues, ranging from isolation to uncertainty on where to get help or information, to relying on the informal support of family, friends or colleagues.

## **Raising Awareness**

The best way to deal with this stigma is through facts and a better understanding of mental health problems. From identifying the causes, pinpointing solutions, and ultimately recognizing that we are really dealing with medical issues.

## **Mental Health and Wellness**

Positive mental health allows people to:

- Realize their full potential
- Cope with the stresses of life
- Work productively
- Make meaningful contributions to their communities

Ways to maintain positive mental health include:

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