

The Ministry of Public Health Launches Awareness Campaign on Dignity in Mental Health

10 November 2015 | BEIRUT – The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), launched the National Campaign for World Mental Health Day: “Mental health is my right” “صحتي النفسية حقّي”, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, International Medical Corps (IMC), and various mental health actors in Lebanon.

Thousands of people with mental health conditions around the world are deprived of their human rights. They are not only discriminated against, stigmatised and marginalised but are also subject to emotional and physical abuse in both mental health facilities and the community. Stigma remains a main challenge facing mental health, cutting across all aspects of care and leading to discrimination, negatively impacting service development, delivery and utilization.

Through its first public awareness campaign, which revolves around the theme of "Dignity in mental health", the National Mental Health Program (NMHP) at the MoPH will be raising awareness that mental health is a right for every person and will be emphasizing the rights persons with mental health conditions are entitled to in order to ensure that they continue to live with dignity as defined in the Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities CRPD signed by Lebanon.

The campaign includes a TV spot and distribution of informational brochures. The Directors-General of the Ministries of Public Health, Justice and Social Affairs, Presidents of the Lebanese Psychiatric Society, Order of Nurses, Order of Pharmacists, Syndicate of Psychotherapists and Lebanese Psychological Association, and the Head of the Institute for Development, Research, Advocacy and Applied Care (IDRAAC), have all joined in the TV spot to emphasize all together that mental health has a whole system in the country that is being geared to ensure equitable access to all to quality mental health services; and that all people have the right to consult and seek treatment. Complementing this spot, the brochure defines mental health and illness and emphasizes every person’s rights in relation to mental health. In particular, it stresses that all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to have laws that protect their civil and legal rights and ensure their access to available health care services. They have the right to have access to quality care and treatment that does not discriminate on the basis of age, nationality, religion, type of illness, and socio-economic status; to receive a clear explanation about their mental health condition and plans for treatment and management; to participate fully in all decisions about these plans; and to have their privacy and confidentiality protected. Last but not least, all people are entitled to be treated by qualified health workers, and to know their name and qualifications. Different mental health professionals have distinctive roles to play which are clarified in the brochure.



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Dignity is one of the guiding values of the “Mental Health and Substance Use Prevention, Promotion and Treatment Strategy for Lebanon 2015-2020” that was launched by the MoPH in May 2015. This strategy aims at guaranteeing that all people affected with mental health disorders and their families, and all people providing services, will receive equal access to opportunities, services and care practices that fit with their diverse needs associated with their health status but also with their gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, legal status, geographic location, language, culture, or other personal characteristics. The revision and proposition of human-rights oriented laws and policies, the monitoring of mental health facilities for human rights protection, the development of a code of ethics for mental health professionals are a few of the objectives in the strategy that will be implemented to achieve the latter goal.

“Mental health is an integral part of health. There is no health without mental health”, as stated by WHO. Therefore, as asserted by the Director-General of the Ministry of Public Health, Dr Walid Ammar, “Mental Health is a priority for the ministry and as such we invite all to work with us to fight stigma and discrimination and preserve the dignity of persons with mental disorders”.

For additional information, please contact:

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About the National Mental Health Programme

The NMHP was launched by the MoPH in May 2014 with the support of the WHO, IMC, and UNICEF. The vision of the programme is that “All people living in Lebanon will have the opportunity to enjoy the best possible mental health and wellbeing”. As such, the programme aims “To ensure the development of a sustainable mental health system that guarantees the provision and universal accessibility of high quality mental health curative and preventive services through a cost-effective, evidence-based, multidisciplinary approach, with an emphasis on community involvement, continuum of care, human rights, and cultural relevance.” To achieve this, the programme launched in May 2015 the Mental Health and Substance Use Prevention, Promotion and Treatment Strategy for Lebanon 2015-2020. To access this strategy please visit the ministry’s website at <http://www.moph.gov.lb/AboutUs/strategicplans/Pages/MentalHealthStrategy.asp>.