

Mental Health for All—Greater Investment—Greater Access, Everyone, Everywhere

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Pondicherry Journal of Nursing (2020): 10.5005/jp-journals-10084-12168

The World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) is duly regarded as an international multidisciplinary organization that patronizes all aspects of mental health.¹ The WFMH had its genesis in the year 1948 and continues to strive toward launching several novel and rational strategies aimed at the prevention of mental and emotional disorders.¹ In addition, the World Federation caters to devising proper therapeutic modalities and promulgates care of those with mental disorders. In other words, WFMH epitomizes promotion of holistic mental health with ingrained physical health.²

World Mental Health Day is globally observed on the October 10.³ Every year, World Mental Health Day specifies a different theme set by the World Federation for Mental Health. This year's theme for World Mental Health Day is "Mental Health for All: Greater Investment, Greater Access. Everyone, Everywhere." The theme acquires all the more significance in the light of the current pandemic.⁴

The pandemic has sent panic the world over. Fear, anxiety, and stress are obviously lingering in the minds of the people during these painful times. Normal responses to perceived threats are noticed and at times flare up due to uncertainty. Hence, it is quite understandable that the people are currently experiencing fear in the context of the coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.⁵

The fear of contracting the virus is looming large. The atmosphere at home as well as in the workplace are not the same in the pandemic phase. Hence, it is imperative that we take good care of our health. Health automatically refers to both physical and mental health. According to the WHO's World Health Report published in 2001, nearly 450 million people suffer from mental disorders.⁶ One has to necessarily understand that the need for getting and providing mental health support has increased over the past few months due to the pandemic, especially at a time when stern lockdown measures were enforced.

As the pandemic continues to wreak havoc, the World Health Organization has taken the lead in providing guidance for health workers, administrators of healthcare facilities, besides the vulnerable population. A point of particular concern is that every person reacts differently to stressful conditions and the response is thus variegated. Having said that, we need to evolve indigenous strategies to devise healthy ways to cope stress.⁷

We need to emphasize the fact that mental health is a fundamental human right and thus has to pervade all over.⁸ The growth and development of global nations is directly related to productivity and productivity is largely dependent on holistic health that obviously centers around sound mental health. Hence, this year WFMH has taken up the initiative in making mental health a reality for all. It is noteworthy to mention that necessary impetus be provided to uphold awareness, advocacy, accessibility, and action.⁹ However, we need to know that gaps do exist between action and

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How to cite this article: Parija SC. Mental Health for All—Greater Investment—Greater Access, Everyone, Everywhere. *Pon J Nurs* 2020;13(4):73–74.

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None

understanding. These gaps can be filled up by mobilizing endeavors related to creative initiatives. Creative initiatives will not fructify unless there is a spontaneous global participation.

In the present context, more than ever greater investment in mental health is absolutely deemed necessary in order to ensure that everyone, everywhere has access to mental health care.¹⁰ When this becomes a reality, the objectives of the mission would have seen the light of the day.

Mental health nurses have a huge task ahead of them and they are directly responsible for effective planning and providing support services. They need to closely work with the personnel from medical and surgical nursing in order to uphold day-to-day activities, especially in the COVID-19 wards. Organizing workloads during the pandemic is an important aspect. Reassuring the patients is cardinal.¹¹ Encouraging the patients to participate in therapeutic strategies including yoga and music would pay dividend. This has been enabled with great success at the COVID wards in our hospitals at Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth.

The nursing personnel have a major role to play in stemming the tide of mental health pandemic, referred to as the secondary pandemic. It is quite obvious that patients with established psychiatric disorders might go through a bout of exacerbated illness during this stressful period.¹² Nursing personnel should act with conviction and empathy in alleviating the misery that would signify their commitment and also enable compliance with the theme of World Mental Health Day 2020.

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