

mhGAP Newsletter

Mental Health Gap Action Programme



MARCH 2017



There are many reasons why we need to take depression seriously: it is the largest cause of disability worldwide; the economic costs are staggering; and the treatment gap is much, much higher than it should be. Perhaps the most compelling reason, however, is the immense suffering that depression causes to the individuals who are affected and to their families.

It is for all these reasons that this year's **World Health Day, on 7 April**, is dedicated to depression. In this special edition of the mhGAP newsletter, I invite you to find out how you can get involved in the **“Depression: let’s talk”** campaign and to take steps to join us in shining a light on this most disabling of disorders.

Shekhar Saxena

Links to main campaign: [Facebook](#); [Twitter](#); [YouTube](#); [Instagram](#)

Using the campaign hashtag **#LetsTalk**, share our posts with your own networks, share your own materials and join discussions on issues related to the campaign.

***Depression: let's talk* campaign gains momentum**

Launched in October 2016, the *Depression: let's talk campaign* is gaining momentum. Since the launch, the World Health Organization's campaign team has been busy developing materials that can be used in all regions of the world, depicting conversations in the home, at school, in a clinic, in community settings and even in emergency situations. Handouts with advice on dealing with depression at different ages and life stages can be downloaded from the campaign site. In the online toolkit, you can find advice for organizing your own activities and key messages that you might wish to use in your materials.

Campaign site: [English](#); [Arabic](#); [Chinese](#); [French](#); [Russian](#); [Spanish](#)



Tell us what you are planning through our campaign app



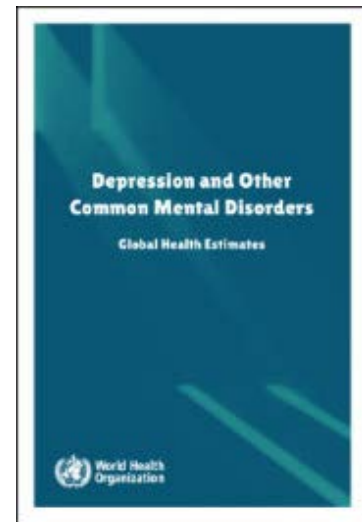
Events and activities, both in-person and online, are great ways of stimulating discussion and action. Tell us – and others – about activities you are planning that relate to the campaign through our online app. Activities can be anything from discussion groups and exhibitions to fundraisers and briefings for journalists. Registering your activity will help us get a sense of the number and scope of activities being organized, and can give visibility to the work of your organization too. You can also create your own campaign post, by choosing one of our campaign visuals and messages and sharing with your own networks, social media or otherwise.

[Campaign app](#)

WHO releases global health estimates of depression and other common mental disorders

According to new estimates of depression, released by the World Health Organization in February, the number of people living with depression increased by over 18% between 2005 and 2015. Depression is also the largest cause of disability worldwide. More than 80% of this disease burden is among people living in low- and middle-income countries. The new publication provides global, regional and country estimates of the prevalence of depressive and anxiety disorders, and health loss as a result of these conditions.

[Access the publication](#)



Campaign activities

Below are a few examples from the range of events being planned for World Health Day 2017.

We would like to know what you are planning to do. Please share your stories at our [campaign app](#)



World Health Organization Facebook Live event; 7 April 2017, Geneva, Switzerland

On World Health Day, mental health experts from the World Health Organization will explain what depression is and how it can be prevented and treated. The panel will take questions from our Facebook followers on depression. More information will be available in the days leading up to the event on [WHO Facebook](#).

World Health Day in Berlin; 7 April 2017, Berlin, Germany

A special convention, hosted by the German Federal Association for Prevention and Health Promotion (BVP) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Health (BMG), will be held in Berlin. Experts from the fields of science and practice will give participants an overview of the illness from a medical and epidemiological perspective. Participants will have the opportunity to further discuss specific aspects in different workgroups. The event is aimed at people working in prevention and treatment of depression.

[Read more in German.](#)

World Health Day activities in Jordan; 14 March 2017, Sehab, Amman, Jordan

The World Health Organization in Jordan is planning, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and nongovernmental organizations, a number of activities in different provinces. The activities will take place in schools, community centres and health institutions. In addition, awareness events will be held for refugees both inside camps and in the host communities.

UN City staff event with the Human Library; 6 April 2017, Copenhagen, Denmark

UN staff are invited to an in-house event where they can meet and discuss in small groups or one-on-one with people from the Human Library who have suffered from depression and now work to challenge stereotypes and break down stigma. [Read more](#)

World Health Day event in Bosnia and Herzegovina; 6 April 2017, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

An event with the Regional Health Development Center on Mental Health of South East Europe Health Network and health authorities will be held in UN House in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. A press conference is planned for the same day. Other activities are being planned together with the UN Communication Group in Bosnia and Herzegovina. [Read more.](#)

World Health Day in the Philippines; 6 April 2017, Manila, Philippines

A high-level advocacy event is being convened at the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific in Manila, Philippines. Guests will include members of the diplomatic corps, representatives from other UN agencies, local partners and the media. [Read more.](#)

Suicide prevention in Guyana



As in many low- and middle-income countries, suicide prevention needs to be a higher health priority. There is no country where this is more critical than Guyana, which is among the countries with the highest suicide rates in the world. To address this, the Government of Guyana has launched its National Mental Health Action Plan for 2015–2020 and a national suicide prevention plan, and is working with WHO and PAHO supporting Guyanese doctors taking the online *mhGAP Intervention Guide* course.

[Read more](#)

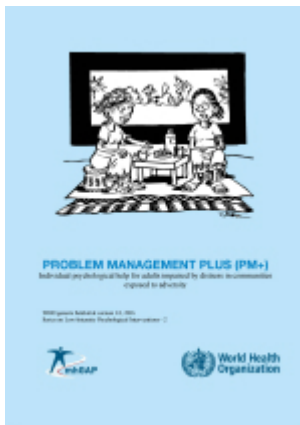
Treating depression where there are no mental health professionals: Q and A with Vikram Patel

Many people with depression and other mental health problems can be treated successfully by community health workers, but so far no country has scaled up this approach. Vikram Patel, a pioneer in the provision of mental health care in settings without mental health professionals, talks to the World Health Organization about how such a programme works, and why scale-up is important.

[Q and A with Vikram Patel](#)



Problem Management Plus (PM+): Individual psychological help for adults impaired by distress in communities exposed to adversity



With this manual, the World Health Organization (WHO) is responding to requests from colleagues around the world who seek guidance on scalable psychological interventions for people exposed to adversity. To ensure maximum use, the intervention is developed in such a way that it can help people with depression, anxiety and stress, whether or not exposure to adversity has caused these problems. It can be applied to improve aspects of mental health and psychosocial well-being no matter how severe people's problems are.

[Access the publication](#)

Lisbon International Learning Programme on Mental Health Policy and Services



As a new and innovative development of the International Master on Mental Health Policy and Services (NOVA University of Lisbon), an International Learning Program for mental health leaders and professionals willing to develop public health skills in mental health policy and services, will be held in 2017. Professors José Miguel Caldas de Almeida and Benedetto Saraceno from the Lisbon Institute of Global Mental Health & NOVA Medical School Portugal, will coordinate the programme.

[Read more](#)



World Health
Organization



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