

Mental health NEWSLETTER



World Health
Organization

December 2019

World Mental Health Day and 40 seconds of action

The focus of this year's World Mental Health Day, on 10 October, was suicide prevention. We used the opportunity of World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September to launch, together with partners – the World Federation for Mental Health, the International Association for Suicide Prevention and United for Global Mental Health – a campaign asking people to prepare to take 40 seconds of action on World Mental Health Day. The campaign was launched by the WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, with Talinda Bennington, mental health advocate.

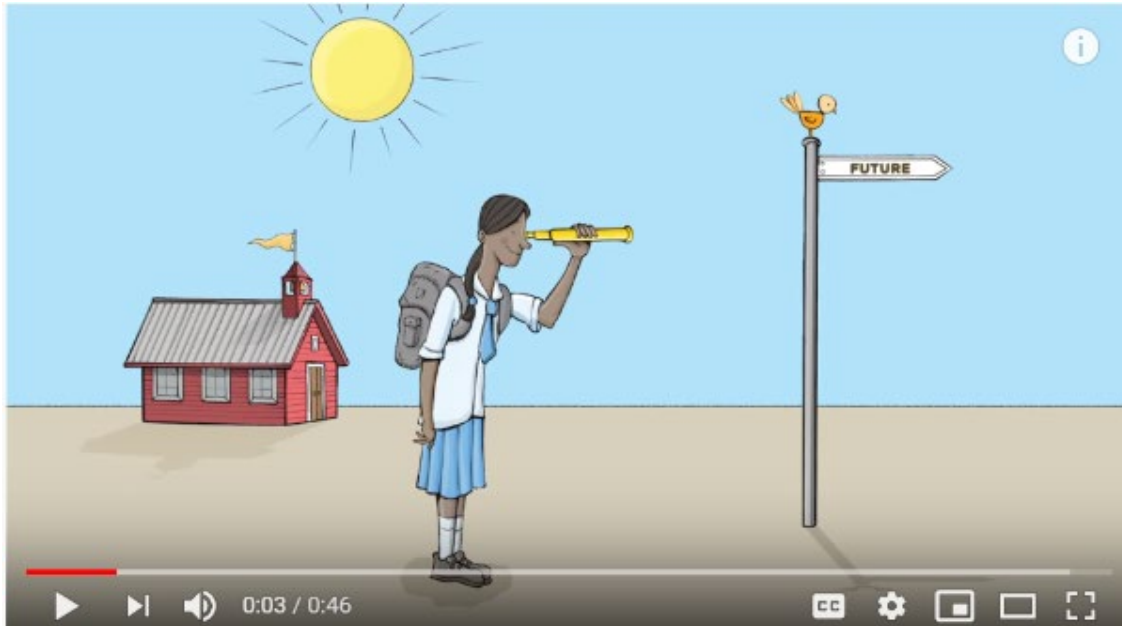
During the month-long campaign, WHO launched a number of materials:

- a booklet with latest data on suicide around the world;
- one-pagers and short animations on what health workers, teachers, employers, journalists, emergency responders and prison workers can do to help prevent suicide;
- a guide for filmmakers and others working on stage and screen on responsible portrayal of suicide; and
- a resource for pesticide registrars and regulators on preventing suicide.

For access to the above resources and more:

[World Mental Health Day 2019](#)

[Suicide prevention](#)



Preventing suicide: information for teachers

New estimates of mental disorders in conflict settings



In June, new prevalence estimates of mental disorders in conflict settings were published in The Lancet. The article concluded that there are more people living with mental disorders in areas affected by conflict than previously thought. The new estimates indicate that one person in five is living with some form of mental disorder, from mild depression or anxiety to psychosis. Almost one in 10 is living with a moderate or severe mental disorder.

[Article in The Lancet](#)

[Commentary from Dr Mark van Ommeren](#)

New support from the Netherlands for mental health in emergencies



In October, the Government of the Netherlands signed an agreement with WHO to provide support for a WHO-UNICEF-UNHCR project to develop a “Minimum Service Package for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in Humanitarian Settings”. This Package, which will be developed and tested in five countries affected by emergencies, will help ensure that MHPSS responses during emergencies are more effective.

[Read more on mental health in emergencies](#)

New and updated QualityRights training modules released



New and updated training and guidance modules for the QualityRights Programme were released in November. The updated modules cover topics such as mental health, disability, human rights and recovery; strategies to end forced treatment, seclusion and restraint; and establishing peer support groups. A self-help tool for recovery is also now available. QualityRights has now been introduced in 31 countries. Ghana became the first country, in early 2019, to introduce the Programme country-wide, with 6000 Ghanaians trained since then. Other countries introducing the Programme in 2019 were: Czechia, Estonia, Kenya, the Philippines and Turkey.

[New and updated training modules](#)

[Feature story: mental health services in Lebanon](#)

[QualityRights country implementation portal](#)

Preparing for hurricane season



In May, PAHO/WHO organized a workshop in Barbados on preparedness of the Bahamas for ensuring the availability of mental health and psychosocial support during emergencies. The timing of the workshop took into account the upcoming hurricane season. In August, PAHO/WHO supported the Government of the Bahamas in developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for mental health and psychosocial support in preparation for hurricane season. On 1 September hurricane Dorian hit the Bahamas. The preparatory work undertaken earlier in the year enabled mental health and psychological support services to be put in place quickly in affected areas.

[Read more on mental health in emergencies](#)

WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Mental Health announced



During the World Health Assembly in May, WHO announced the appointment of Cynthia Germanotta as a Goodwill Ambassador for Mental Health. In this role, Mrs Germanotta will raise awareness of the importance of mental health, help mobilize the international community to promote mental health and engage in global mental health campaigns.

Mrs Germanotta is President of Born This Way Foundation, which she co-founded with her daughter Lady Gaga in 2012, with the goal of supporting the wellness of young people and empowering them to build a kinder, braver world.

[WHO Goodwill Ambassadors](#)

Evaluation of "Leadership in Mental Health, Eastern Mediterranean" course published



A preliminary evaluation of the “Leadership in Mental Health, Eastern Mediterranean” course, organized by the Psychology department and Social Research Center at the American University in Cairo and WHO, and delivered annually since 2016, has been published. A positive impact of the course, which is for mid-level professionals, was found on participants’ knowledge, motivation, and implementation. Participants reported the greatest changes in their ability to integrate mental health into primary care, along with changes in ability to plan, take leadership, advocate for change, and establish networks between and within countries. They also felt better able to use research to advocate for mental health services and training.

[Read more](#)

Galvanizing action on the public health response to dementia



In September, for the first time, WHO convened a workshop dedicated to promoting and supporting dementia policy and planning at the national level in Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. National experts from Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Jordan, Malta, Morocco, North Macedonia, Qatar, Slovenia, Tunisia and Turkey attended. The meeting was hosted by WHO and the Government of Malta. The workshop provided a platform for country delegates, and representatives of WHO and international nongovernmental organizations active in the field of dementia (Alzheimer Europe, Alzheimer's Disease International), to share their experiences, learn about successful initiatives in the two regions and plan new national efforts for scaled-up action.

[More information on the workshop](#)

[More information on dementia](#)

Mental health services for people living with HIV: Gary's story



With the advancement in treatment and care, people with HIV are living longer than ever before. The challenges of living with HIV can, however, lead to mental health problems. Read about Gary Gumbs, from Anguilla in the Caribbean, how he manages his mental health while living with HIV, and the steps taken by the Health Authority of Anguilla to provide mental health services to the local population.

[Meet Gary](#)