

Developing a Program Development and Implementation Toolkit to guide Municipal Government actions on mental health

Context

Mental health conditions are common in all regions of the country and have a significant impact not only on the health and well-being of those affected but also on their families, friends, and the communities they live in. Nepal has ratified UNCRPD and enacted disability rights and acts and regulation where psychosocial disability has been integrated as a wider social agenda. After federalization, local levels have the authority and mandate to plan and organize different services. The Basic Health Services, Basic Emergency Health Services which include assessment and initial management of Depression, Anxiety, Suicide, Epilepsy and Psychoses, is the sole mandate of local level governments. In addition, local level governments are also responsible for additional services and awareness to remove the existing barrier to increase access to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services; such as mental health promotion, social protection, education of the communities. And generally, communities on their own contain a wide range of resources that are protecting mental health and supporting the people with mental health conditions.

Realizing these responsibilities, different local levels (Municipalities) are showing interest on mental health and starting to allocate resources on this. Additionally, local governments are also receiving earmarked funds from the Federal and Province Governments. While this is useful development, in the absence of strong technical framework, it also risks inefficient allocation and expenditure of scarce resources. Therefore, a mental health program development and implementation guide is being developed as per the aspiration of National Public Health Service Act 2017 and National Mental Health Strategy and Action Plan 2020.

Purpose:

The purpose of this initiative is to develop a technical document to guide municipalities in planning, organization and implementation of MHPSS services at Local level. The guide is intended to expand mental health services beyond primary health care setting into communities.

Specifically, this will obtain following objectives:

- Identify the opportunities that exist within communities to promote mental health wellbeing, and expand access to quality mental health services;
- Provide guidance on how to identify local mental health needs and match them with activities that build on available resources and opportunities while engaging the local community to enhance their mental health resilience.
- Present mental health activities, programmes and interventions that can be done in the community
- Act against stigma, discrimination, social exclusion and human rights abuses that affect people with mental health conditions

- Integrate mental health into social care and education opportunities

Scope of work

Desk Review: Desk based review will be undertaken to elucidate authorities and responsibilities of local government on mental health service provision. Additionally, relevant national and international literature and publications will be reviewed and referred to. The summary of the desk review will form the basis while the consultation is organized with local stakeholders.

Consultation with Local Government and stakeholders: The guide is intended for a programme manager or service planner in the governmental or nongovernmental sectors to assist to identify possible settings, activities, and providers to meet the mental health needs of the local population and support training programmes in the community. Therefore, in depth consultation with local level elected representatives, program focal points for health, social protection, education, teachers, social workers, FCHVs, Police or person with lived experience and their carers is desired in addition to experts to formulate the interventions. These community stakeholders will participate fully while formulating actions feasible at the community level.

Formulation of actions with respect to core action areas: The interventions could be summarized possibly in following action areas derived from national legal and policy framework mandating local government actions.

- *Mental health promotion*
- *School mental health*
- *Overcoming stigma, discrimination & social exclusion*
- *Partnership with persons living with mental health conditions and their families*
- *Delivering Basic (mental health) Health Service and referral linkage*
- *Formation and promotion of community-based groups such as peer support and self-help groups*
- *Mainstream psychosocial disability in broader disability management initiatives e*

Piloting the intervention in three local levels: Upon formulating the actions, the package will be pilot tested in three local levels. Based on the implementation experience, the tool kit will be modified and finalized. The final tool-kit will be submitted for the endorsement of the Ministry of Health and Population.

Deliverables:

1. A report of desk review formulating local level actions based on evidence and on national plans and programs (End of Month 1)
2. Identification of possible local level interventions informed by local level actors (Month 2)

3. Formulation of toolkit based on consensus of experts, policy makers, program managers, right holders or local communities (Month 4)
4. Implementation experience based on initial pretesting in three municipalities (End of Contract)

Process

The guide will be developed under the overall leadership of Epidemiology and Disease Control Division, Department of Health Services and in consultation with Provincial authorities

The interventions will be formulated based on desk review of national and international literature and as per the consultation of local level stakeholders

All the interventions will be pilot tested before finalization

The final tool kit will be submitted for endorsement by the Ministry of Health and Population but the line ministries and provincial authorities will be consulted while finalizing the tool kit.

WHO Country Office for Nepal will provide initial technical and financial support for the development and pilot testing of the toolkit.

Timeline: 1 May, 2023 – 31 December 2023

Characteristics of the Provider:

- An academic institution or a non-for-profit organization NGOs or Organization of persons with lived experience on mental health
- Having implemented in mental health programs in Nepal
- Demonstrated knowledge on global mental health plans and policies
- Experience in working with the Government or international development partners in development setting