



# WORLD MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2021

A REPORT

## ABSTRACT

Based on the theme of *Mental Health in an unequal world*, a successful attempt was made to address the gaps in awareness and advocacy of mental health in general population and students in particular.

## ➤ BACKGROUND:

As the world struggles with containment of COVID-19 pandemics, mental health of most the people is invariably jeopardized. People are gripped with rising concerns of spread of the illness, preventive measures that are antithesis of economic stability, unemployment, academic issues and many more. Feelings of helplessness, uncertainty, loneliness that are direct or indirect consequences of the pandemic are thereby, increasing anxiety, depression, and risk of suicide. This becomes a matter of utmost concern because the demand for mental health interventions is far greater than the capacity of the current infrastructure and resources. The mental health consequences of COVID-19 will be seen long even after the pandemic is over.

The access to affordable mental health care is severely limited due to the prevailing stigma in our society and it has only worsened this year due to disruption of health systems during the pandemic. In view of current pandemic and increased mental health concerns amongst the youth and people, National Service Scheme, Uttar Pradesh (NSS-UP) launched 'Muskurayega India' initiative, in partnership with Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and UNICEF Uttar Pradesh. It is an initiative to bring smiles, by offering tele-counselling to the students and general public for prevention and management of mental health issues during COVID-19 and after.

Taking this initiative further, the partner organizations observed a month long campaign and webinars on mental health that aligned with the World Mental Health Day 2021. The campaign commenced from World Suicide Prevention Day, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021, till World Mental Health Day, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Based on the theme of ***Mental Health in an unequal world***, we made an attempt to address the critical gaps in awareness and advocacy of mental health. With the involvement of MI counselors and their volunteers, the campaign became a huge success in sensitizing people and initiating a conversation on this long stigmatized aspect of health.

## ➤ ACHIEVEMENTS:

### 1. Webinar on World Suicide Prevention Day (10<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2021):

A webinar was organized with the participation of more than 60 MI counselors. The initiative of World Mental Health Month 2021, was launched. The guest speaker, Dr. Santosh spoke about the incidences of suicidal issues in the country and myths surrounding it. Dr. Nilam Behere and Dr. Rashmi Soni discussed on the current scenario, suicide prevention steps and answered the queries from the MI counselors. A discussion

on challenges faced by counselors in solving the students and callers' mental health problems was also held.

## 2. Campaign: Promotion of Mental health messages

An expert vetted mental health promotional document, namely "**My Mental Health**" were prepared by the core team. The target audience of the messages were the adolescents, youth and college going students. It focused on five key elements, what is mental health, what is good mental health, how to identify poor mental health, how someone feels during poor mental health state and how to help. These messages were disseminated by MI counselors and Program officers to their fellow students and volunteers. Further, in many districts like Lalitpur, Jhansi and Meerut, **MI box** was launched where students can drop in their mental health issues anonymously.

During the campaign, many students engaged themselves in poster making and slogan writing competitions to sensitize other students on mental health. Subsequently, many counselors invited eminent guest speakers in their colleges to promote mental health discussion their colleges. These counselors regularly advocated mental health awareness messages and related activities in their local newspaper and social media. News articles were published by counsellors in over 50 different newspapers.



Figure: Poster Competition at Baghpat district





Figure: MI box launch at Jhansi

## मानसिक रोग से बचाव के लिए जागरूकता आवश्यक

ललितपुर | संवाददाता

10 सितंबर से 10 अक्टूबर तक विश्व मानसिक स्वास्थ्य माह के तहत नेहरू महाविद्यालय में आयोजित कार्यक्रम के दौरान लोगों ने अपनी प्रतिभा का प्रदर्शन किया और गोष्ठी में अपनी बात रखी। अतिथियों ने प्रतिभागियों का उत्साहवर्धन किया।

पूरा विश्व 10 सितंबर से 10 अक्टूबर तक विश्व मानसिक स्वास्थ्य माह मना रहा है। इसी क्रम में मुस्कुराएगा इंडिया के तत्वावधान में विश्व मानसिक स्वास्थ्य माह 2021 के तहत कार्यक्रम आयोजित हो रहे हैं। इसी क्रम में नेहरू महाविद्यालय 21 सितंबर को पोस्टर प्रतियोगिता व

### गोष्ठी में उठे मुद्दे

- नेहरू महाविद्यालय में आयोजित किया गया कार्यक्रम
- पोस्टर प्रतियोगिता में उकेरे चित्र गोष्ठी में उठाए मुद्दे

विचार गोष्ठी आयोजित हुई। विद्यार्थियों ने पोस्टर प्रतियोगिता में बड़ चढ़कर प्रतिभाग किया और स्वास्थ्य के प्रति लोगों में जागरूकता पैदा करने पर आधारित थे।

प्रथम पांच स्थानों पर आने वाले विद्यार्थियों को प्रचार्य ने पुरस्कृत किया गया। पोस्टर प्रतियोगिता में कंचन प्रथम, सेजल जैन द्वितीय, चांदनी तीसरे सहित दो अन्य



कार्यक्रम दौरान अतिथियों के साथ आयोजकमंडल के सदस्य।

प्रतिभागियों को चौथा व पांचवां स्थान प्राप्त किया। निर्णायक मंडल में डा. पंकज शर्मा, डा. सुधाकर उपाध्याय रहे। इसके उपरंत मानसिक स्वास्थ्य जागरूकता पर एक संगोष्ठी का आयोजन हुआ। विचार संगोष्ठी को

संबोधित करते हुए प्राचार्य डा. अवधेश अग्रवाल ने कहा कि मानसिक रोगियों के प्रति भेदभाव नहीं होना चाहिए। उनके प्रति परिवार व समाज को विशेष भाव रखना चाहिए। उन्होंने कहा कि मानसिक बीमारियों

का कार्डसलिंग व दवाइयों से उपचार संभव है। संस्कृत विभागाध्यक्ष डा. ओम प्रकाश शास्त्री ने कहा कि मानसिक रोगों से दूर रहने का एक ही उपाय है कि मन में श्रेष्ठतम व शुभ संकल्पों के साथ सकारात्मक ऊर्जा की स्थापना करें। सामाजिक व परोपकारी कार्यों में भाग लेते रहें। इतिहास विभागाध्यक्ष डा. पंकज शर्मा ने कहा कि मानसिक रोगों से बचने के लिए अपने परिवार से जुड़े रहें। परिवार, रिश्तेदारों से बात करते रहें। योग, ध्यान, प्राणायाम जरूरी हैं। शारीरिक शिक्षा विभागाध्यक्ष डा. अनिल सूर्यवंशी ने कहा कि सिर्फ शारीरिक ही नहीं बल्कि मानसिक स्वास्थ्य के मुद्दे को भी गंभीरता से लेने की आवश्यकता है। इसके प्रति

सजग और सतर्क बनें। कार्यक्रम संयोजक एवं मुस्कुराएगा इंडिया कार्डसलर डा. सजीव कुमार शर्मा ने कहा कि समाज में मानसिक रोगों के प्रति जागरूकता पैदा करके मानसिक रोगों से बचा जा सकता है। इसी क्रम में मुस्कुराएगा इंडिया द्वारा मानसिक स्वास्थ्य जागरूकता अभियान चलाया जा रहा है। प्रदेशभर में मुस्कुराएगा इंडिया के कार्डसलर निशुल्क अपनी सेवाएं दे रहे हैं। यह लोगों को मानसिक रोगों से मुक्ति दिला रहे हैं। इस अवसर पर डा. सुधाकर उपाध्याय, डा. हरीश चंद्र दीक्षित, डा. राम कुमार रिछारिया, डा. सुभाष जैन, डा. राजेश तिवारी, डा. बलराम द्विवेदी, डा. धीरेन्द्र तिवारी आदि मौजूद रहे।

Figure: Mental health advocacy in newspaper by MI counselor

### 3. Young Ambassador's Summit (9<sup>th</sup> October 2021):

The event was launched day prior to the World Mental Health Day. The objective of the event was (a) to provide a platform to young volunteers to raise their voices for mental health (b) to have a qualitative understanding of youth's views and needs on mental health and (c) to obtain inputs on MI program for youth. The MI counsellors nominated their three-best volunteers for this summit who have been most active throughout the mental health. We had entries from 22 MI counsellors and thereby 66 students were enrolled. The event was attended by 80 such participants. This event also became a

parameter to assess and facilitate the best volunteers and counsellors for the World Mental Health day event. Many volunteers suggested the ideas of scaling up the MI initiative, use of social media, developing referral mechanism and giving internship/volunteer-ship activities to engage more students. Along with this, students suggested to advocate mental health through art forms, social media, and human resource camps and include yoga in practice.

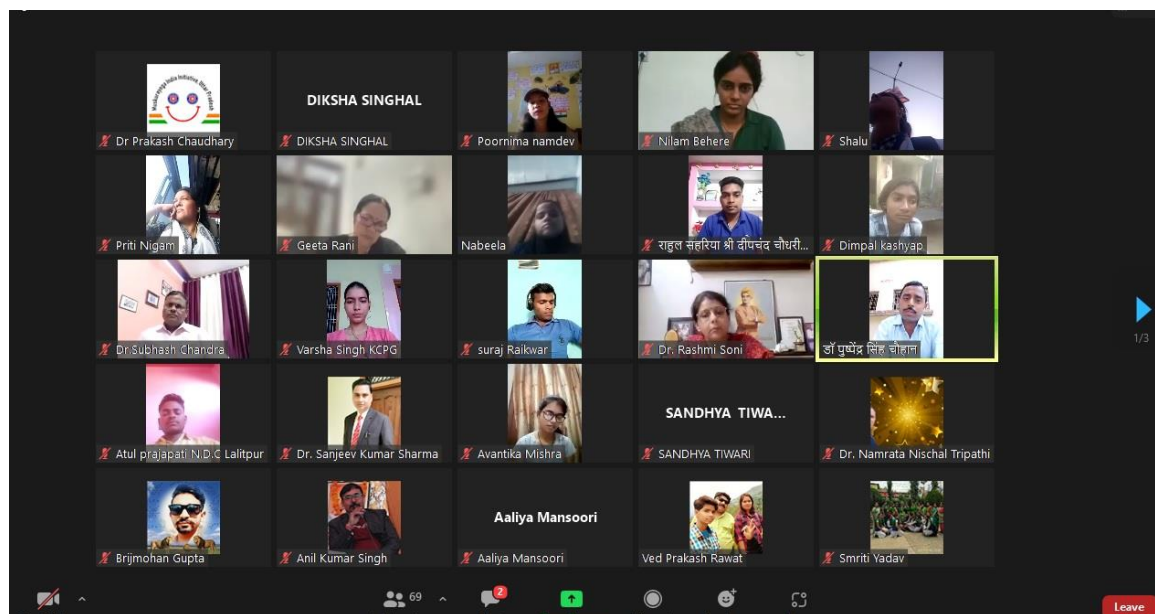


Figure: Young Ambassador Summit webinar

#### 4. World Mental Health Day (10<sup>th</sup> October 2021):

A webinar was organized to commemorate this day. The event was attended by 150 participants virtually and around 300 participants through Facebook live. The participants were inclusive of Program Officers, MI counselors, NSS volunteers, students and their families. Prof. Sanjay Gupta and Ministhy S. Nair, IAS were the guest speakers, who shared their experiences on mental health and advised everyone to promote mental health throughout the year. The event was concluded by showcasing the activities and achievements during the entire month and by felicitation of best performing volunteers and counselors.



Figure: World Mental Health day webinar

### ➤ IMPLICATIONS:

All the volunteers and counsellors showcased as advocates of mental health and created a strong 'case' to be featured on various national and global platforms for further actions by stakeholders. It achieved special importance in the face of COVID-19, where attention to creating demand would pave a way to greater investment and commitment towards mental health.



Figure: Glimpses of the activities done under World mental health Month Sept-Oct 2021.