



Raising awareness on mental health

By Anna Thakkar, Counselor, FIDA Uganda

May is the mental health awareness month where individuals are encouraged to focus on the importance of mental well-being and appreciate how our mental health affects every aspect of our lives—and the lives of others, too. Mental health is significantly linked to 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals i.e. Eradication of hunger and poverty, reduced infant mortality, and improved maternal health.

Although the pressures of life can bring a lot of distress, not all mental health distress is considered a mental health disorder. A diagnosable mental health disorder comes when there is a sustained and/or recurring personal distress that causes impairment in the functioning in one or more areas of one's life. More than 25% of people in all walks of life are affected by mental and behavioral disorders at some point in time during their lives.

Women are at high risk of developing a mental health disorder because they live through multiple emotional and physical abuses by people so close to them. Structural violence such as conflict, unemployment, low education level, neglect, and poverty, as well as instances of social injustice, is all the nature of problems addressed at the FIDA Uganda legal aid clinics. Reports from the psychosocial and counseling reveal that over 85 % of clients seen at FIDA Uganda grapple with stress, depression, anxiety, panic, and loneliness. These mental health conditions have a great impact on the quality of life of individuals and families.

In particular women and children are at a higher risk of mental health issues since they suffer social injustices such as disadvantage and discrimination our responsiveness to their issues enhances their mental health and thus responding to the thematic area enhancing justice for women

Seek counseling if you have:

- ✚ Chronic stress or anxiety that makes it difficult to accomplish your daily tasks at work, school, or home
- ✚ A declining mood that makes you feel drained, angry, or depressed
- ✚ Difficulty sleeping, thanks to unwanted thoughts or imaginary scenarios running through your mind
- ✚ Conflict or distress due to relationship difficulties with a friend, family member, child, parent, a colleague, or romantic partner
- ✚ Trouble controlling your use of substances such as alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs—especially if you're using them to cope with emotional pain
- ✚ Counselling services are available at FIDA Uganda both for virtual and in-person sessions. Phone 0784650657, toll-free at 0800111511, WhatsApp 0776987044.
- ✚ We work alongside other service providers such as:
- ✚ Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO) for our northern and Karamoja region
- ✚ CARITAS Gulu Archdiocese in Pader district
- ✚ PsychoAid Counselling Centre International (PSAI) in Lira