

‘Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Suicide’: Theme of World Mental Health Day 2019

World mental health day (10 October each year) is an international day for global mental health education, awareness and advocacy against social stigma. It was first celebrated in 1992 at the initiative of the World Federation of Mental Health, a global mental health organization with members and contacts in more than 150 countries. World mental health day is supported by WHO through raising awareness on mental health issues using its strong relationships with the ministries of health and civil society organizations across the globe.

The theme of world mental health day 2019 is “Promotion of mental health and prevention of suicide”. In the present world suicide is a burning issue. The rate of suicide is increasing day by day. Close to 8,00,000 people die due to suicide every year, which is one person every 40 seconds. The rate of suicide is sharply increasing in Bangladesh. According to data from police head quarter, in 2017 a total of 11,095 people committed suicide in Bangladesh, which means on average 30 people kill themselves every day. The rate of suicide is higher among females than males in Bangladesh.

Large majority of those who die from suicide have some form of mental disorder at the time of death (>90%). Today’s world is a world of anxiety, stress and depression. People in every part of the world, every country, are living a life which is full of anxiety and stress and many of them do not know how to cope, how to manage those stresses and anxiety. As a result they develop mental health problem and disorder. Ultimately many of them develop the risk of suicide. This is because they do not seek help or come under the treatment facilities provided by mental health professionals. It occurs due to the lack of awareness and stigma about the mental health and mental disorder.

The goal of our life is to lead a physically and mentally healthy and peaceful life. Can we imagine a man or woman without a mind? No, it is impossible. Human being is a combination of body and mind. But the most frustrating thing is that we never give so much importance to our mental health as we give it to our physical health. But the

real fact is that mental health is equally important to physical health.

If we consider our this year’s theme ‘Promotion of Mental health and prevention of suicide’ we should know that suicide itself is not a mental disorder, but it is the symptom or outcome of many mental disorder or mental health problem and we can take many fruitful measures to prevent suicide. To do this firstly we have to identify the people who are in the risk of suicide that is assessment of risk. Psychiatrists assess these risks in various ways, but there are some simple tips through which family members, friends, colleagues and people in the society can also assess a person who is in the risk of suicide. Factors that point to greater risk of suicide include direct or indirect statement of intent, marked hopelessness, a history of previous suicide attempt, social isolation, depressive disorder, drug dependence, Schizophrenia, abnormal personality, Impulsivity etc.

There are many causes or factors responsible for suicide. Among them the most important factors are individual psychiatric factors which include Depressive disorder, Alcohol and other substance dependence, Major psychiatric disorder, e.g. Schizophrenia, Organic mental disorder, Personality disorder etc. Social factors e.g. unemployment, poverty, divorce, dowry, social fragmentation etc. also play an important role behind suicide. Biological factors such as a family history of suicide increases the risk at least two fold, and genetic factors account for 45% of variance in suicide behavior. Suicidal behavior has been linked to decreased activity of brain serotonin pathways. Dysfunction or dysregulation of impulsivity circuit (ventral striatum→Thalamus »ventromedial prefrontal cortex »Ventral striatum) is also responsible in committing suicide. Psychological factors such as hopelessness, dichotomous thinking, cognitive constriction, problem solving deficiency, over generalized autobiographical memory etc. have important role behind suicide.

But we should always keep in mind that the act of suicide is a multifactorial origin.

So, if we can identify the risk, underlying mental health problems and correct them accordingly we will be able to prevent many of the suicides. And this will be possible if we can reduce the stigma and ignorance about the mental health problem.

Last of all, one thing we should always keep in mind that with all its sorrow, distress and stress life is beautiful and the journey of life is definitely a pleasant journey. But we have to realize it, we have to accept it with a proper cognition. And for this we need a healthy mental life. So,

never hesitate to take help from psychiatrists or mental health professionals whenever it is needed.

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