

10 October 2023, Cairo, Egypt – Today, we mark World Mental Health Day 2023, the theme of which is “Mental health is a universal human right”. This year’s campaign calls on governments, politicians, health authorities, civil society and communities to place mental health at the top of health, development and humanitarian agendas.

World Mental Health Day has two main goals. First, to ensure the delivery of mental health and psychosocial support services to those in need. And second, to enhance the resilience of individuals and communities reeling from the effects of war, displacement and the climate emergency. The campaign aims to encourage and enable greater collaboration among the public and private sectors and civil society to achieve both of these goals.

Mental health is a critical issue for public health today. The global burden of mental health conditions is immense: more than 1 billion people are living with mental, neurological and substance use disorders, it is estimated.

An estimated 14.7% of people in the Eastern Mediterranean Region have a mental health condition – the second highest prevalence among all WHO regions.

World Mental Health Day 2023 urges all government agencies and nongovernmental organizations to work in concert to improve mental well-being across the life course. Together, they should apply evidence-based health promotion and preventive measures to support good mental health from birth to old age. Support and direct investment are required to make treatment available for mental health conditions, promote social inclusion, minimize stigma and discrimination, and protect the rights of vulnerable groups.

“Mental health is a basic human right for all people,” said Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean. “This means that everyone, everywhere should have the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of mental health. This includes protecting people from mental health risks and ensuring the right to available, accessible, acceptable and good quality care. This is a fundamental part of the WHO mandate and the essence of our regional vision of Health for All by All.”

Having a mental health condition should never be a reason to deprive a person of their human rights or to exclude them from decisions about their own health. Yet, all over the world, people with mental health conditions continue to experience a wide range of human rights violations. Many are excluded from community life and discriminated against.

“People with mental health issues should receive health services with dignity and should not be deprived of their right to liberty, independence and inclusion in the community,” added Dr Al-Mandhari.

**For more information:**

[www.emro.who.int/entity/mental-health/index.html](http://www.emro.who.int/entity/mental-health/index.html)

[World Mental Health Day 2023&nbsp;](#)

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