



Deputy Minister of Public Health H.E. Dr Ahmad Jan Naeem delivered a speech at the event. Photo: WHO/H.MangalKabul 10 October 2016 – The Ministry of Public Health, WHO and partners commemorated World Mental Health Day today in Kabul to raise awareness about the need for further investment and attention to the prevention and treatment of mental health issues in Afghanistan. This year’s World Mental Health Day focuses on psychological first aid.

“Mental health is part of human health and without attention to mental health we cannot lead healthy lives. This is why improving mental health is among our core priorities,” said H.E. Deputy Minister of Public Health Dr Ahmad Jan Naeem.

Due to ongoing conflict and recurrent natural and manmade disasters and displacement, combined with a lack of adequate mental health services, many Afghans suffer from mental health issues. According to current estimates, 75% of Afghan women and 59% of men suffer from mental health issues. Although efforts have been made to address psychological disorders and mental health issues in Afghanistan since 2001, a lot more needs to be done.

“Mental health has been declared a priority health issue in Afghanistan and it is included in the country’s Basic Package of Health Services. We have seen a lot of progress – more than 1000 health workers have been trained in basic mental health care and many people have been diagnosed and treated,” said Dr Richard Peeperkorn, WHO Representative for Afghanistan.

WHO and partners will focus their efforts on improving awareness and understanding of psychological first aid and how it can be used after crisis events to support people in distress by any people who find themselves in a helping role, whether they are health staff, teachers,

community workers or police officers.

Speaking at the event, representative of the European Union Mr Gabriel Octavian Leonte said that the European Union has identified mental health as priority in Afghanistan. “Currently we are supporting the training of 257 mental health counselors around the country,” Leonte said.

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[World Mental Health Day](#)

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