



Members of the nongovernmental organization One Step perform a short play with the Sadrad performing arts group on the occasion of World Mental Health Day 2012. All around the world, health, social, and educational institutions came together on October 10, 2012 to advocate and support mental health issues. This year the topic was "Depression: a global crisis". Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide with over 350 million people estimated to be currently living with the disorder.

Depression in Jordan is an unspoken problem. World Mental Health Day aims to highlight the need for advocacy and social understanding and recognition. WHO Representative Dr Akram Eltom stated, "Mental health remains a priority for us. Important initial steps were made by its champions in the Kingdom; yet a lot remains to be done. I wake up depressed thinking about such challenges.

But then I come to this kind of uplifting event or I go visit a health centre where government, nongovernmental organizations and user associations work hard together to serve patients struggling with mental health issues. And suddenly, the sun shines on me with sufficient warmth and light to help me overcome such challenges".

All speakers were in agreement that depression in Jordan is a major concern. They believed it was important for schools and other community care centres to recognize the symptoms of depression and accept and support the people who suffer from it. They also agreed that the stigma that has afflicted many sufferers of depression is a problem for both the individuals themselves and mental health practitioners. They hoped that through events like this, a new culture of understanding can be created, allowing individuals to understand the causes and effects of mental health.

Under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of Health, WHO and International Medical

Corps (IMC) celebrated World Mental Health Day at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The event played host to a number of keynote speakers including: H.E. Dr Abdellatif Woreikat, Minister of Health; Dr Akram Eltom, WHO Representative in Jordan, and Head of Mission, Mr Seamus Jefferson; Country Director for IMC, Dr Nayel Al Adwan, Director of the National Centre for Mental Health; and Mrs Amira Al Jamal, President of the “Our Step” users association, a local organization created to represent individuals who suffer from mental health issues.

Over 200 guests, which included individuals from ministries, UN bodies, international and local nongovernmental organizations, were privy to a short play arranged and performed by “Our Step” users Association beneficiaries in cooperation with the Sadrad performing arts group. This play explored the true problems that currently face people who suffer from mental health, including the symptoms and stigmas.

The event was concluded with a number of volunteers from “Our Step” receiving awards for the excellent work they have carried out in the promotion of mental health in their communities.

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