GLOBAL SCHOLARS ACHIEVING CAREER SUCCESS (GSACS)
Spring Conference; May 2022

Destigmatizing Mental Health and Promoting Access to Care in Jordan and New York City

Presenters

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UN SDG #10 Reduced Inequalities:

Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Project Overview

- Students worked with their bi-national groups to develop and exchange ideas on how to reduce barriers and address stigmas surrounding seeking mental health support.

- As a group, they created an innovative advocacy campaign to address the challenges they researched in their comparative analysis assignment.

- Bi-national groups shared their findings in a conference style-presentation.

Shared Inquiry Question

What inequalities and stigmas exist in seeking mental health care in Jordan and in New York City?

The Importance of Mental Health in Jordan & NYC

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	Jordan	New York City
Urbanization	Jordan has experienced significant changes in recent years, including an influx of refugees from neighboring countries, which has caused mental health issues for both refugees and host communities. The exhaustion of resources leads to stress, anxiety, and other issues.	NYC is a densely populated city with a fast-paced and competitive nature, high stress levels, and numerous social and economic pressures. These factors can lead to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and substance abuse.
Public Health	Jordan has made progress in addressing mental health concerns, which includes the establishment of clinics and the development of national policies to improve mental health services. But more needs to be done to increase access to mental health care, reduce stigma, and provide support to vulnerable populations.	NYC needs to improve outreach with underserved communities and individuals to ensure all residents have equal access to quality care and support. This will help reduce mental health disparities within this city among people of different cultural and economic backgrounds.

The Comparison of Mental Health in NYC and Jordan

The complexities of comparing mental health in New York City and Jordan are due to the influence of cultural, social, and economic factors on the way mental disorders are diagnosed and reported.

	New York City	**Jordan**
Infrastructure	Has a well-established mental health infrastructure, in terms of clinics, hospitals, and private practitioners. There are also a wide range of mental health advocacy and support organizations.	Jordan has a more limited system with fewer mental health professionals and facilities.
Prevalence of Mental Disorders	19.1%	18.3%

Cultural Difference in Mental Health

Culture plays a significant role in how mental health is perceived and addressed in different regions. In New York City, there is a growing awareness of the importance of mental health, and many individuals are comfortable discussing their struggles openly.

• In Jordan, however, mental health is often seen as a taboo topic, and seeking help for mental health issues can be stigmatized. This cultural difference can make it more challenging to address mental health issues in Jordan and may contribute to a lack of resources and support.

The MENA Country/Jordan/ Challenges

Psychiatric treatment in Jordan faces many challenges related to the **small number of hospitals and centers** that provide psychological services

In addition to the lack of doctors, and **the spread of a culture of shame** from going to a psychiatrist, which made many people resort to remote psychological treatment at Al-Hadba Hospital for Medicine.

Most people, especially in the Middle East, do not have the privilege of **quick and reliable access** to mental health care centers.

Mental health care can be **a bit expensive for many people,** especially in our Arab world and the Middle East.centers.

Waiting time. The longer they wait, the poorer the patient's mental and physical health, and the less interested they are in seeking psychotherapy in the first place.

The United States /New York City

Important Facts

Every year, more than 1 in 5 New Yorkers has symptoms of a mental disorder

2,802,000 adults in New York have a mental health condition, that's more than 10x the population of Buffalo

1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year

5.3% of people in the state are uninsured

91,271 people in New York are homeless and 1 in 6 with a serious mental illness

More than half of Americans report that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on their mental health.

Source: NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness

Source: Priority Area: Mental Health/Substance Abuse - Mental Health

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Destigmatizing Mental Health and Promoting Access to Care in Jordan and New York City

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Destigmatizing Mental Health

Why do Stigmas Exist?

The persistence of mental health stigmas is due to:

1. Lack of understanding
2. Negative Media Portrayals
3. Cultural beliefs
4. Discrimination and Prejudice
5. Self-Stigma

The negative effects theses forms of stigmas can have are detrimental on an individual's mental well-being.

Why Reduce Stigma?

If we don't reduce stigmas about mental health an individual's existing mental health problem(s) can worsen or discourage people from seeking or continuing treatment.
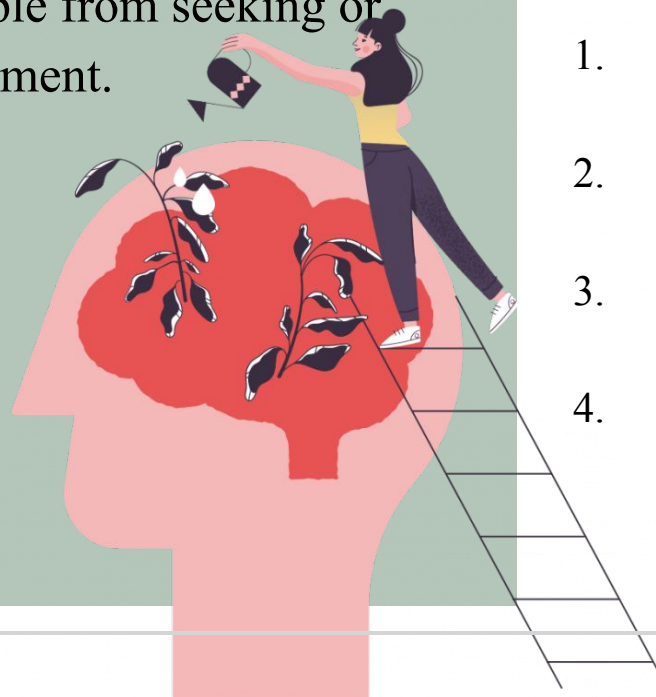
How to Reduce Stigma

Destigmatizing mental health can only happen in our culture if we implement a **serious national effort** involving health agencies, employers, schools, and social media.

1. Educating citizens of all ages and backgrounds.
2. Use less stigmatizing language when referring to mental health.
3. Show compassion and encourage talking openly about mental health.
4. Create awareness through social media and social media campaigns.

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Mentel Health VS. Teenagers

Teens experience stress, anxiety, and depression that can lead to substance. **Listening to and supporting them** is critical in getting them help and reducing the negative stigma surrounding stress, anxiety, and depression.

Avoid phrases *like "You're fine," "You'll get over it," or "Cheer up." When a teen is feeling overwhelmed by emotions avoid these statements because they can be perceived as judgmental and will make them feel as if they are not being taken seriously*

How Do We Destigmatize Mental Health?

1. **Normalize the conversation:** Start by talking openly about mental health. This can help people feel less alone and encourage more people to seek help.

2. **Educate yourself and others:** Learn about mental health and share accurate information with others. Help people understand that mental illness is a real and treatable condition, just like physical illnesses.

3. **Challenge stereotypes:** Challenge negative stereotypes and misinformation about mental health when you see them. Make sure you're not spreading stigma in your own words or actions.

4. **Lead by example:** If you feel comfortable doing so, share your own experiences with mental health to help others feel more comfortable seeking help.

5. **Support mental health organizations:** Support mental health organizations and advocacy groups that work to reduce stigma and improve access to care.

6. **Advocate for policy change:** Advocate for policies and laws that support individuals with mental health conditions and reduce stigma, such as improved access to mental health care and better insurance coverage for treatment.

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How to Reduce Barriers and Address Stigmas

Affordable Mental Healthcare Services

Social Media
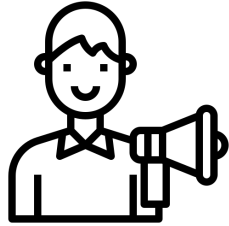
Support Group

Education

Communication/Conversation

Family and Government Support

Advocacy Levels

Individual/ Self Advocacy

Community Advocacy

Systems Advocacy

Taking Action
-Advocacy-

#1: Improve The Mental Health Systems

Governments can invest in mental health services and ensure that they are **accessible to everyone.** This may include increasing funding for mental health clinics, training more mental health professionals, and expanding health services.

#2: Increase Awareness

Education campaigns, forums, and public programs can help us reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and **encourage people to seek help.**

#3: Address Social Determinants of Mental Health

Social factors such as poverty, unemployment, and discrimination can contribute to poor mental health. The government can help address these issues by **investing in education, housing, and employment programs, to help level out equality.**

Ways We Can Promote Mental Health on Social Media

Through publishing topics related to mental health on the **trending list** and utilizing unique hashtags to increase awareness.

#mentalhealthawareness
#stopthestigma
#mentalhealthmatters
#selfcare
#mindfulness
#loveyourself
#itsoknottobeok
#suicideawareness
#endstigma
#mentalhealthhero

Create more videos that focus on mental health by mental health professionals who discuss **both maintaining mental health** and **stigmas around disorders.**

- One of the amazing new features that Instagram has is **a self-injury reporting system**.
  - *If you see someone who might be self-harming or might need support, you can **report that person's photo to an Instagram team member**. The team member will reach out to the person you are concerned about and will remove photos that come up in the app that might trigger self-harm.*

- Instagram has a new **anti-bullying feature called Restrict.**

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Recommendations

1. **Spreading awareness,** starting from homes, by publishing paper leaflets printed on the doors of homes that contain special instructions for mental health.

2. Presenting a **daily psychological segment** on all local Jordanian channels.

3. Creating **donation boxes** in public places and **commercial centers** to support mental health services.

4. Conducting **periodic courses** in health centers to educate patients and intensify nursing home visits to educate citizens about **the importance of mental health, its causes, factors, symptoms, and places to provide services.**

5. Jordan leads with a high percentage of social media celebrities, so **celebrities can promote the importance of mental health** and share their experiences and the experiences of others on their pages.

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