

Public encouraged to build inclusive society in support of World Mental Health Day 2023

The Department of Health (DH) today (October 10) encouraged members of the public to support World Mental Health Day 2023 by understanding mental health issues, accepting people with mental health needs and building an inclusive society.

The World Federation for Mental Health has designated October 10 annually to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilise efforts in support of mental health. World Mental Health Day 2023, with its theme "Mental health is a universal human right", encourages everyone to embrace mental health rights, including the right to be protected from mental health risks, the right to available, accessible, acceptable and good quality care, and the right to liberty, independence and inclusion in the community.

According to the World Health Organization, one in every eight people, or 970 million people around the world, are living with a mental disorder. Good mental health is vital to one's overall health and well-being. Mental health conditions can impact one's physical health, connections with others, and livelihoods. It is common that people with mental health needs might be unnoticed in the community. Out of their fear of unease, they are less likely to seek help and intervention from professionals. By recognising mental health as a universal human right, societies can work towards reducing the stigma, improving access to care, and fostering an inclusive and supportive community.

Appropriate treatments can effectively manage mental illness, and people with mental health needs can continue to apply their talents, contribute to and serve society. Members of the public are called on to show care and acceptance to people with mental health needs, encourage them to be optimistic and take positive actions to control the illness. Offensive or derogatory expressions and behaviours should not be used against them to avoid further damaging their mental health.

The Advisory Committee on Mental Health and the DH have jointly implemented a mental health promotion and public education initiative, "Shall We Talk", since July 2020, which aims to step up public engagement in promoting mental well-being, enhance public awareness of mental health to encourage help-seeking and early intervention, and reduce the stigma towards people with mental health needs.

The "Shall We Talk" initiative provides mental health-related information through an array of channels, such as its one-stop dedicated website, social media fan pages, TV and radio programmes, offline events as well as social media campaigns. Apart from providing the public with

information on mental health and advice on dealing with mental distress, the one-stop website also compiles a series of mental health hotlines and support services to enable those in need to seek help.

For more information on mental health, please visit www.shallwetalk.hk.