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MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

CONTACT US: 0800 333 048 | USSD CODE *120*1080# | EMAIL HEALTHHEROES@KULAPARTNERS.CO.ZA

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Mental Health Awareness Month is a time to raise awareness about the importance of good mental health and to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well, and contribute to their communities. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right. And it is crucial to personal, community, and socio-economic development.

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAMME

- 24-Hour health and wellness support for you and your family
- Less stress
- Improve your wellbeing
- Find solutions
- Improve your happiness

How can we help you?

WE ARE WAITING FOR YOUR CALL!

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WHAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS?



Mental illnesses encompass a range of conditions that may affect a person's thinking, behaviour, and mood, resulting in changes in emotion, thinking, or behaviour (or a combination of these). Common mental health conditions include anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, trauma- and stress-related disorders, and many more.

Mental illnesses take many forms. Some are mild and only interfere in limited ways with daily life, such as phobias (abnormal fears). Other mental health conditions are so severe that a person may need care in a hospital. Like other medical illnesses, the optimal ways to provide care depend on the illness and the severity of its impact.

Mental health or psychiatric conditions are common. Many times, they run in families. Some of the most common mental health conditions are depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder. These illnesses and others like them interfere with your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Learning you have a mental health condition can be upsetting. But there is hope. There are a variety of treatments available for mental health conditions which include the following:

PSYCHOTHERAPY

Psychotherapy is a form of mental health treatment that involves talking with a trained therapist or psychologist to help address and resolve psychological and emotional difficulties. The goal of psychotherapy is to improve an individual's mental well-being and alleviate symptoms of mental health disorders. It is based on the principle that by exploring and understanding thoughts, emotions, behaviours, and underlying patterns, individuals can gain insight, and develop positive coping mechanisms, and positive changes in their lives.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE

Medicines don't cure psychiatric conditions or health problems. But they can improve your symptoms. They can make other treatments, such as counselling, more effective.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Self-help and support groups can help you gain insight into your condition. They can provide friendships, support, resources, and tips on how to live with your condition. They also help address the feelings of isolation that often go along with mental health conditions.

OTHER THERAPIES

These can include physical activity, such as exercise or yoga. They can also include creative therapies. These are therapies done using means of expressing yourself creatively. They can include using art, music, movement, or writing.

HOSPITAL OR RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAMS

Sometimes your mental health issues become so bad that you need to receive treatment in a hospital or a long-term program. This can happen when you can't take care of yourself. Or it happens when you are in danger of harming yourself or others.



MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Mental health wellness in the workplace is a crucial aspect of promoting healthy and positive work environments. Here are some tips and strategies for promoting mental health wellness.

1. ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

encourage employees to communicate openly about mental health concerns without fear of being judged or discriminated against.

2. PROMOTE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

encourage employees to take time off work when they need it and encourage flexible work arrangements and manageable workloads.

3. REDUCE STIGMA

work to reduce stigma around mental health by promoting positive messaging and creating a safe space for employees to talk about their struggles.

4. EDUCATE EMPLOYEES ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

provide training and education to employees about mental health and how to identify signs of distress and offer support where necessary.

5. PROVIDE RESOURCES

Make all mental health resources available, including health talks, counselling services, Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), and mental health apps which are more time-efficient and make employees' lives easier. Mental health tools that promote mindfulness and stress management are also important.

Mental health is often misinterpreted or misunderstood, and despite strides in awareness within the past few years, it is still stigmatised. Encouraging positive mental well-being by actively educating employees about mental health in an easy way can promote mental well-being within the workplace.

By taking steps to promote mental health and wellness in the workplace, employers can improve the overall well-being of their workforce and create a culture of positivity and support.



Knowing your own darkness is the best method for dealing with the darkness of other people - Carl Jung



UNDERSTANDING CHOLERA AND HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

In light of the recent cholera outbreak in South Africa, it's crucial to arm ourselves with knowledge about the disease, how it spreads, and the steps we can take to safeguard our health, particularly that of the most vulnerable members of our society - our children.

WHAT IS CHOLERA?

Cholera is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Vibrio Cholerae*. It affects the intestinal tract and is characterised by intense watery diarrhoea, which can lead to severe dehydration and even death if untreated. The disease is known to cause outbreaks, especially in areas with inadequate water treatment, poor sanitation, and insufficient hygiene.

HOW IS CHOLERA SPREAD?

Cholera is typically contracted by drinking water or eating food contaminated with the *V. Cholerae* bacteria. In many cases, the source of the contamination is the faeces of an infected person. The disease is not likely to spread directly from one person to another; therefore, casual contact with an infected person is not a risk factor for becoming ill.

PREVENTING CHOLERA

Prevention strategies are primarily centred around ensuring access to clean water and practicing good hygiene.

- 1. WATER SAFETY:** Drink and use safe water. Bottled water with unbroken seals and canned/bottled carbonated beverages are safe to drink and use. Use safe water to brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, and to make ice.
- 2. FOOD SAFETY:** Cook food well (especially seafood), keep it covered, eat it hot, and peel fruits and vegetables.
- 3. CLEANLINESS:** Wash your hands often with soap and safe water, particularly before eating or preparing food and after using the bathroom. If no water and soap are available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- 4. SAFE WASTE DISPOSAL:** Use toilets or bury your faeces; do not defecate in any body of water. Dispose of dirty nappies in sealed plastic bags in a closed bin. Clean bathrooms and handwashing stations with soap and water.
- 5. HAND WASHING:** Wash your hands every time you have used the toilet or entered a public bathroom. Unhygienic practices lead to the spread of infectious conditions.



SYMPTOMS OF CHOLERA

Cholera symptoms can begin as early as a few hours or as long as five days after infection. They often appear suddenly, and in severe cases, can include:

- Intense watery diarrhoea, which may have a fishy smell.
- Vomiting
- Thirst
- Leg cramps
- Rapid heart rate
- Loss of skin elasticity
- Low blood pressure
- Muscle cramps

Most people exposed to the *V. Cholerae* bacteria don't become ill and never know they've been infected. However, because they shed cholera bacteria in their stool for seven to 14 days, they can still infect others through contaminated water.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT CHOLERA INFECTION

If you suspect that you or a family member has contracted cholera, it is essential to seek medical help immediately. Rapid loss of body fluids leads to dehydration and shock, which can be fatal without prompt treatment.

Treatment primarily involves rehydration to replace lost fluids and electrolytes using a simple rehydration solution, oral rehydration salts (ORS). The ORS solution is available as a powder that can be reconstituted in bottled or boiled water.

KEEPING YOUR FAMILY, ESPECIALLY CHILDREN, SAFE

Maintaining high standards of hygiene is critical in preventing cholera, especially among children who may not be aware of these practices. Teach them to wash their hands regularly, especially before meals and after using the toilet.

Ensure children only drink water that's been boiled, from sealed bottles, or that has been treated with a reliable, effective disinfectant. The same applies to food - it should be well-cooked and hot, and fruits and vegetables should be washed in safe water or peeled.

Stay vigilant & prioritise your health and your family's health by practicing these preventive measures:

1. HYGIENE EDUCATION

It's important to talk to your children about Cholera, how it's spread and how they can play their part in preventing it. Make sure they understand the importance of using only clean, safe water for drinking and cleaning purposes, and eating well-cooked food. Teach them about the disease's symptoms so they can alert you if they feel unwell.

2. AVOID CONTAMINATED WATER & FOOD

Ensure your family, especially children, avoid street food, which may be prepared and served in unsanitary conditions. Be cautious of raw seafood, uncooked fruits and vegetables, and unpasteurised milk and milk products.

3. BREASTFEEDING

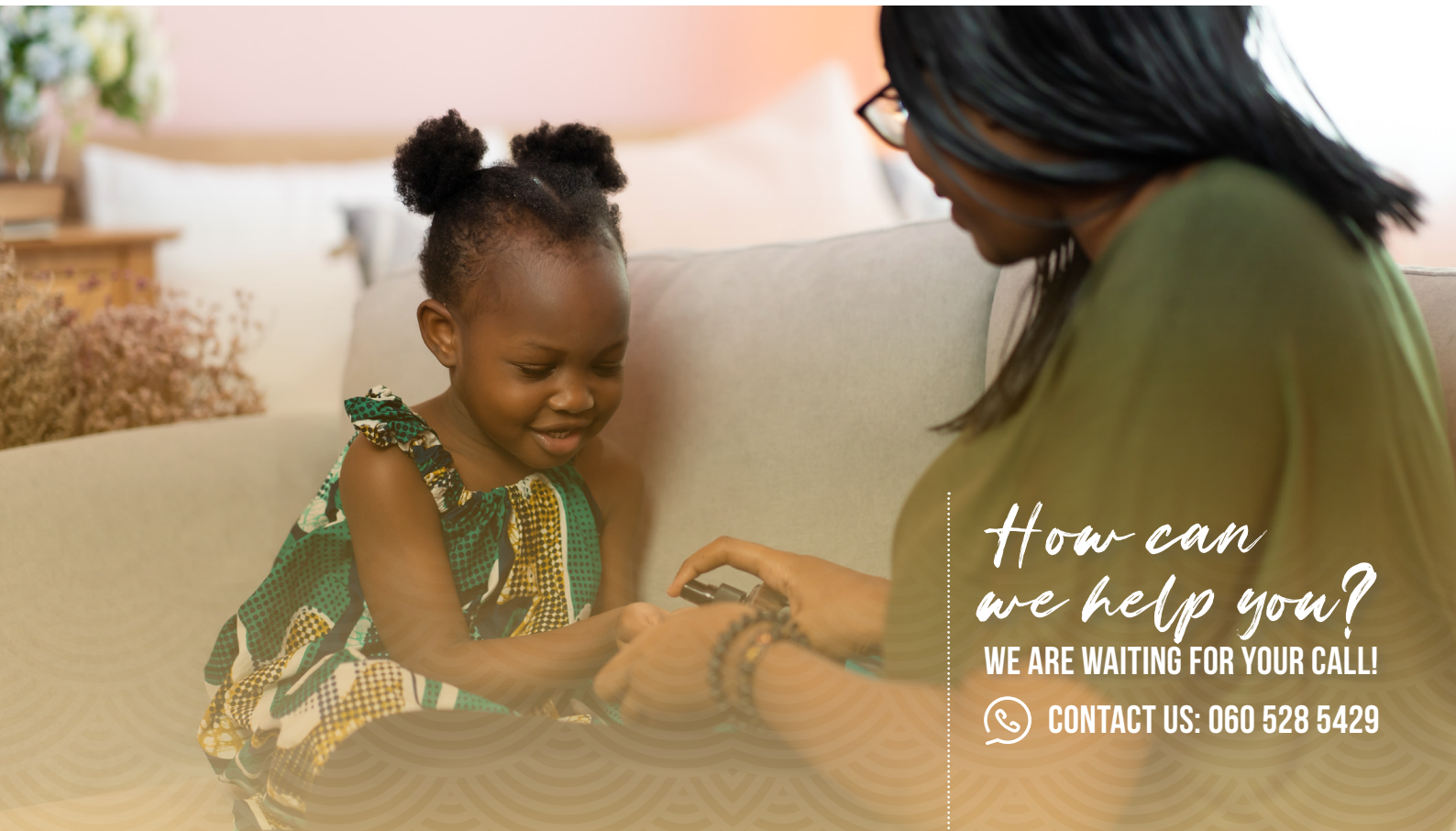
For infants, breastfeeding is the safest way to prevent cholera as breast milk is free of contamination. In places where a cholera outbreak has occurred, breastfeeding should be encouraged and promoted.

4. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Have an emergency plan ready with a list of emergency numbers, hospitals, and local health departments. Ensure you have a stock of essential medications, oral rehydration solutions, and clean water.

Cholera can be a devastating disease, but with knowledge and the right practices, it can be prevented. Your vigilance and preparedness can make a significant difference in keeping your family safe.

Remember, it's essential to stay informed about updates from health authorities and follow their guidelines to curb the spread of Cholera.



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