## POH 117: MENTAL HEALTH AND PANDEMICS

**Module Overview**

Definition of Terminologies and Concepts: mental health, stress, emotional distress, somatic symptoms, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, human rights violations, psychological first aid, sexual and gender-based violence.

Stressors and Conditions that Impact Mental Health: death of loved ones, isolation, loss of employment, illness, fear, poverty, culture and myths around communicable diseases, comorbid conditions, displacement, and stigmatization.

Populations at Risk: those with preexisting conditions, the impoverished, those with genetic predisposition, extremes of age, women, people living with disabilities (PLWD), people with drug substance abuse (DSA), those in quarantine, and the stigmatized.

Tools in Diagnosis of Mental Health Problems: Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS), Generalized Anxiety Disorder Screener (GAD-7), Addiction Severity Index (ASI), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Checklist, Behavioral Assessment Tools, Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS). SDGs

Support Tools in Managing Mental Health Conditions and Referral: psychologist, psychiatrist, medications, telehealth, government programs, support groups, employee assistance programs, alcohol and drug abuse (ADA) clinics, social protection, digital mental health tools, self-care, support of health workers, coping mechanisms.

Psycho-social Support: normal reactions to abnormal events, five principles of psychosocial support (ensure and promote safety, calm, personal and collective efficacy, connectedness, hope), psychosocial support activities, psychological first aid (prepare, look, listen, link) including at the household level.

**Mode of Delivery**

Interactive lectures, problem-based learning using interactive tutorials, small group discussions, written assignments, plenary presentations and case studies; *experiential learning* through independent study and field visits, field works and placements, and online peer discussions using video clips and conferencing.

**Instructional Materials**

*Materials:* Lecture notes and slides, video clips, Handouts, case studies, Reference materials (textbooks, journals, policy document guidelines), institutional placements and field visits

*Equipment:* projector, laptop, internet access, markers & flip charts.

**Core Reference Materials**

1. Chen, J., Farah, N., Dong, R. K., Chen, R. Z., Xu, W., Yin, J., ... & Zhang, S. X. (2021). Mental health during the COVID-19 crisis in Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(20), 10604.
2. Galea, S., Merchant, R. M., & Lurie, N. (2020). The mental health consequences of COVID-19 and physical distancing: the need for prevention and early intervention. *JAMA internal medicine*, *180*(6), 817-818.

**Recommended Reference Materials**

1. Inter-Agency Standing Committee. (2006). IASC guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings. *Geneva, Switzerland: IASC 2006*. Retrieved from https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-force-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/iasc-guidelines-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings-2007
2. World Health Organization. (January 8 2021). Mental health preparedness and response for the COVID-19 pandemic. Report by the Director General. EB148/20. Retrieved from <https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB148/B148_20-en.pdf>
3. World Health Organization, War Trauma Foundation and World Vision International (2011). Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers. WHO: Geneva. Available at <https://www.who.int/mental_health/publications/guide_field_workers/en/>