

World Mental Health Day- October, 10th Theme for Year, 2015: Dignity in Mental Health

For centuries, mental illness is marred by stigma, shame, guilt and ignorance. People want to keep their or their family members' illness under wraps. Even when they talk about it, it is in the hush-hush tones. People with mental illness continue to suffer in silence because of the label of 'mentally ill', 'looney', 'psycho', 'insane', 'crazy' attached to them. They are called names and the label goes with them wherever they go. They are discriminated against, their human rights are violated and they are exploited and ill-treated in home, society and even in the institutions of mental health care services. There have been many instances in the past when stories of mentally ill people being treated in inhuman ways were out in the open.

Stigma, shame, guilt and ignorance are some of the factors that deter people with mental illnesses from seeking treatment and availing mental health care facilities. It's time we broke the shackles of stigma and dispelled the shame and ignorance associated with mental illness. The first step in this direction would be generating awareness among general population about mental illnesses, their causes, treatment options available and availability and accessibility of mental health care agencies. This mental health day, let's create an environment of free and frank expression, where people are able to talk about mental illness just like they talk about Hypertension or Diabetes Mellitus. Let's talk and spread the word around.

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