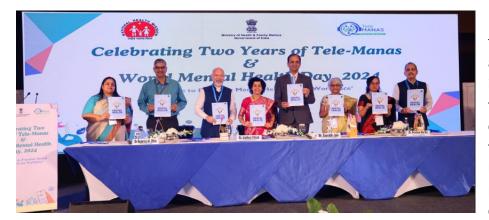# World Mental Health Day: Mental Health at Workplace

October 10, 2024

Background

Mental health is fundamental to health and plays a crucial role in enabling individuals, families and communities to function at their highest level, work productively and contribute to society. The theme for **World Mental Health Day 2024** focuses on **"Mental Health at Workplace**". Unhealthy environments, such as discrimination, stigma, and exposure to dangers like harassment and other unfavorable working conditions, can be quite dangerous and have an impact on one's general health, well-being, mental health, and involvement or productivity at work.

This World Mental Health Day, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India announced a national program in Delhi comprising of various events to mark two years of

the launch of **National Tele Mental Health Programme – 'Tele MANAS'**, reflecting the government's commitment to nurture nation's mental well-being. The Tele MANAS toll-free helpline numbers **14416** or **1-800-891-4416** offer multi-language support and have been pivotal in facilitating communication between callers and mental health professionals. By far, Tele MANAS has reached a significant milestone, receiving approx. **14.5 lakh calls**.

Highlights of the event

The event commenced with the launch of Tele MANAS app and Tele MANAS video call facility along with the release of WHO Tele MANAS assessment report and Self-Care module for employees.

Tele MANAS app: - Taking a step ahead in expanding the mental health services, a comprehensive mobile platform - Tele MANAS App is developed for general public. This mobile app offers free and confidential mental health support through trained mental health professionals across India, **24x7** for immediate counselling and support through text and audio. It also harbors a library of information pieces which include tips on self-care, recognizing distress

signals and managing early signs of stress, anxiety and emotional struggles. It has a section that engages the user through some mind challenges and games such as Sudoku and mindfulness practices through art. Its interactive and personalized prompts are catered to provide a user friendly experience.

Video call facility: - Video consultations in Tele MANAS is yet another upgrade to the already existing audio calling facility. This will be undertaken by the mental health professionals who are taking audio call escalations to get further information about the caller as part of history taking and clarification. This can also include a brief physical examination or do an MSE for the caller and to confirm any findings with examination. However, it is mandatory to take the prior consent from the caller before doing video consultations which can be done by MHPs during the audio call itself.

WHO Tele MANAS assessment report: - In order to evaluate the performance and progress of Tele MANAS, a rapid assessment was organized by MoHFW in coordination with India WHO Headquarters (SEARO) & NIMHANS. The assessment was based on desk reviews of national data and primary data collected from four states/UTs namely, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha. The report highlights some significant milestones achieved by Tele MANAS helpline in providing mental health support and its robust technological architecture.

Self-Care module: - The Self-care module for the employees comprises of simple self-care practices and strategies that one can undertake routinely to reduce stress as well as anxiety and depression. Engaging in self-care routine has been clinically proven to boost emotional and mental health and thereby better productivity at work.

The national event further had roundtable discussions with a variety of panelists coming from diversified group of people that include Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Ministry of Ayush, NIMHANS, Industry associations such as FICCI/CII and NAT Health, organizations promoting wellness such as Art of Living Foundation and Arogya World, and Civil society organization like Jan Sahas. The topics for discussions were as follows-

- Panel discussion 1: - Policies and frameworks to foster mental health resilience at workplaces
- Panel discussion 2: - Mental Wellbeing at Informal Workplaces / Challenges, Opportunities, and Inclusive Solutions
- Panel Discussion 3: - Preventive Mental Health- The Role of Holistic Practices in Promoting Well-being

The panelists also explored the role of Ayushman Arogya Mandir (AAMs) & Tele MANAS in promoting mental health support.

Key Initiatives

Additionally, to highlight the spirit of **"मन हित्त से जन हित्त",** local events at Ayushman Arogya Mandir - AAMs were organized across the country to reach a wider audience and provide mental health services at the grassroots level. These included Yoga/wellness sessions and awareness generations among local community. The Community Health Officers (CHOs) were encouraged to celebrate and document the efforts towards raising mental health awareness at facility level and also use the social media to highlight the same.

Furthermore, MoHFW sought an active participation from all the ministries to implement employee engagement activities designed to support mental health in the workplace. Suggested initiatives included art and poetry competitions, setting up of gratitude walls, counsellor sessions and promoting positive communication. These activities are known to foster a supportive and productive work environment and institutional success.

Conclusion

World Mental Health Day serves as a critical reminder of the importance of mental health care in our lives and workplaces. India's recent efforts to address mental health challenges through policies, surveys, and programs are commendable. India is making strides towards reducing the treatment gap and addressing the country's mental health burden. India has upgraded more than 1.74 lakh Sub Health Centers (SHCs) and Primary Health Centers (PHCs) to Ayushman Arogya Mandir (AAM) or Health and Wellness Centers and added Mental Health services in the package of services under Comprehensive Primary Health Care provided here. Continued efforts and collaboration between government, stakeholders, organizations and individuals is essential to provide solutions and enhanced awareness and support regarding mental health.