Child Mental Health Challenges in Ghana

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Outline

• Activities (Teaching and Psychological Assessment)
• Major Diagnosis
• Child and adolescent mental health services infrastructure in Ghana
• What are the competing issues?
• Addressing Stigma in Ghana
• Role of professionals and other stakeholders
I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember.
I do and I understand.

— Confucius
What do I do and Understand?
Activities

• Geisha “Obaatanpa Dérica” Radio Programme

• GSPH 463 – Psychological Influences on Health

• GSPH 467 – Adolescent Health: Social and Behavioral Perspectives

• GSPH 406 – Mental and Social Health Care

• Psychological Assessment
Who is a Child?

- Ghana adopts the WHO definitions:
  - ✓ Health
  - ✓ Children
  - ✓ Youth
  - **Child:** Birth to 18 years
  - **Youth:** Between 15 to 24 years
  - **Young people:** 10 to 24 years
Assessment (January, 2012 – March, 2015)

- Children Referred for Clinical Psychological Services.
- **Tests Administered**
  - ✓ Bender Gestalt Test
  - ✓ Progressive Matrices
  - ✓ Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT)
  - ✓ Comprehensive Test of Non-verbal Intelligence
  - ✓ Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder Test
  - ✓ Early Childhood Attention Deficit Disorder Evaluation Scale
  - ✓ Child Autism Rating Scale
Major Diagnosis

• Cerebral Palsy

• Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)

• Intellectual Disability
• Neuro-developmental patterns in children living in Accra: Implications for Health and Education sectors in Ghana.
Mental Health Service Infrastructure in Ghana
• Mental health services at most levels of care.

• Majority of care is provided through specialized psychiatric hospitals.
  ✓ Accra Psychiatric Hospital
  ✓ Pantang, Accra
  ✓ Ankaful, Cape Coast
  ✓ Department of Psychiatry, University of Ghana Medical School (UGMS)
Programmes

• School Health Programme (SHEP): children between 5 and 15 years in schools.

• Adolescent Health & Development (ADHD) programme: pre-adolescents (5-9 years) and young adults (20-24 years).
Legislation

Health
Law
Status
Legal
Legislation
Mental
Psychiatric
Mentally
Insanity
Forensic
Community
Personnel
Psychotherapy
Aptitude
Admission
Facilities
Commitment
Developmental
Psychiatry
Impairment
Disorders
Handicapped
Discharge
Psychotic
Offenders
Hospitals
Consent
Psychology
Children
Crime
Informed
Defence
Services
Medical
Mental Health Law

• Mental Health Act (846 of 2012) passed in 2012
  ✓ Re-focussing the way mental health services are to be provided.
  ✓ Move from an institutional model to a community-based approach.
  ✓ The Act is also designed to combat stigma and discrimination against mentally ill people.
Implementing the Law

• Mental Health Authority established in November 2013.
Competing Issues

Institutional Level

- Services underfunded.
  
  ✓ Only 1.4% of the health expenditure goes to mental health.
  
  ✓ Spending skewed towards urban areas.
  
  ✓ 18 psychiatrists
  
  ✓ 1,068 Registered Mental Health Nurses
  
  ✓ 19 Psychologists
  
  ✓ 72 Community Mental Health Officers
  
  ✓ 21 social workers working in mental health
Other Issues

• Demands placed on children

• High competition for schools/programmes

• Poverty

• Conflict
Issues of Stigma

• High rate of social stigma

• Families of people with mental illness hide them away from the public.

• Families and Courtesy Stigma
Addressing Stigma in Ghana

• Advocacy by BasicNeeds Ghana (a mental health and development advocacy organisation).

• Anti-stigma interventions must be a priority for health policy.

• Demystifying mental illness
• Improving knowledge about mental health.

• Positive attitudes toward individuals with mental health challenges.

• Integrate mental health team into primary care.
Going Forward...

People in Ghana desperately need more mental health services.
Making mental health accessible to all
• Delays in early detection, treatment and support can cause:

✓ Distress

✓ Increase the risk of relapse

✓ Can be harmful for the individual and their friends; family and carers.
All on Board

• Professionals

• Community

• Cultural Leaders

• Religious Leaders
Safeguarding child and adolescent mental health begins with parents, families, schools, communities and practitioners.
All of us as Collaborators on Board

Thanks for your attention