

Child Behavioural health

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Presentation outline

1. Key child mental health challenges in Uganda
2. Current infrastructure for child and adolescent mental health services in Uganda
3. Competing issues (children, adolescents and families face opportunities) that impact child behavioral health
4. How to effectively address stigma
5. Roles of leaders in creating effective approaches to child behavioral health

Common presentations of child behavioural

- Epilepsy
- Post traumatic stress disorders
- Conversion disorders: hysteria especially in schools
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Subnormalities related to genetic syndromes such as Down's syndrome

Common causes/ predisposing factors

- Psychological trauma:
 - Parental separation
 - Domestic Violence
 - Parental separation
 - Violence against children (home and in schools)
- Alcohol and drug abuse: Alcohol, marijuana, aviation fuel, petrol, e.t.c
- Infections: cerebral malaria, meningitis

Common causes/ predisposing factors

- HIV related encephalopathy
- Physical trauma: birth trauma, accidents
- Poor ECD services:
 - lack of early stimulation
 - malnutrition
- *Household poverty* is both a predisposing factor and a consequence

Challenges to child behavioural health

- Low community awareness
 - To identify subtle behavioral challenges
 - Effects of GBV and child violence
 - Violence towards children with behavioural challenges
 - Belief in witchcraft
 - Stigma and discrimination
- Understaffing at general hospitals and lower health facilities

How to address stigma

- Lack of drugs for mental illness medicines
- Stigma and discrimination
- Community wide sensitization that mental health can be treated/managed
- Adequate counselling of the family with affected child
- Appropriate management of the affected cases

Role of leaders

1. Enact and implement laws to regulate the use of alcohol and substance abuse
2. Strengthen the mental health services at regional and district hospitals
3. Decentralize and integrate mental health into Primary Health Care
 - Staffing of general hospital and HC IVs with Psychiatric Clinical Officer/ Psychiatric Nurses

Role of leaders

- Training of professional health workers in child behavioural health
- Include mental health drugs into the requisition lists

3. Sensitize communities on child mental health

- General community
- Traditional healers
- Faith based leaders: those who promise cure and for reducing stigma

Role of leaders

3. Conduct child behavioural health outreaches to lower health facilities
4. Establish/ referral system for child behavioural problems/mental illness from community (VHT) to National referral hospital
5. Research into underlying causes of child behavioural problems: Nodding syndrome, epilepsy beyond known causes, system delivery challenges

Where is ChildFund's work in these?

- Supports programs that aims at addressing the causes of Child behavioral challenges
 - Early childhood development
 - Household economic security
 - Child rights
 - Gender based violence prevention

THANK YOU