

BasicNeeds-Ghana

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BasicNeeds-Ghana and Mental Health Alliance Call for Prioritisation of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services during Catastrophes and Emergencies

On this 10th October 2025, the day marked as World Mental Health Day, the Alliance for Mental Health and Development (Mental Health Alliance) in Ghana joins the rest of the world, particularly, individuals, families, organisations, and government of Ghana to draw attention to the urgent need for enhanced mental health and wellbeing for people, especially during humanitarian catastrophes and emergencies.

The global theme for the 2025 World Mental Health Day is “**Access to Services: Mental Health in Catastrophes and Emergencies,**” which focuses on the urgent need to support the mental health and psychosocial needs of people affected by humanitarian emergencies. It reminds all that Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) are essential in all situations.

Ghana is no stranger to disasters, both natural and otherwise, and humanitarian emergencies, such as perennial floods, droughts, fires and explosions, road accidents, conflicts, as well as collapse of buildings that have claimed lives, injured people and left individuals, families, and communities with lasting traumatic, psychological and emotional injuries and scars. In all these unfortunate situations, response interventions have fallen short of inclusion of MHPSS for the affected individuals, families and communities.

While much attention and effort are often given to physical survival, through the provision of shelter, food, and water, the psychological toll of such crises, though profound and often invisible, is mostly neglected. Fear, anxiety, trauma, and depression are common but rarely addressed. For the poor and vulnerable, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and those already living with mental health conditions, catastrophes and emergencies compound existing inequalities and increase suffering.

Without MHPSS, recovery remains incomplete. Families struggle to rebuild livelihoods effectively, children's education is disrupted, and communities remain fragile. Addressing the MHPSS is therefore not optional, but essential for individual healing, family stability and community resilience, recovery, as well as national development.

On this World Mental Health Day, the Mental Health Alliance calls on the Government of Ghana to:

1. Include MHPSS in disaster preparedness and emergency response frameworks NADMO and MMDAs.
2. Ensure first responders in disaster or emergency situations include MHPSS experts
3. Increase investment in mental health within Ghana's health budget and allocate adequate resources for MHPSS.
4. Equip frontline health workers, humanitarian experts and managers with skills in psychosocial first aid to provide timely support during catastrophes and emergencies.
5. Strengthen community-based support systems and structures to support survivors of disasters and humanitarian emergencies, including self-help groups to extend mental health care to hard-to-reach areas.
6. Combat stigma through nationwide community-based awareness campaigns, especially in communities emerging from disasters and humanitarian crises, affirming that mental health is an essential part of health, especially in times of emergencies and catastrophes.

Ensuring access to mental health during catastrophes and emergencies require making mental health a key part of Ghana's Universal Health Coverage (UHC) strategy and plans. Ghana has made progress through the passage of the Mental Health Act 2012 (Act 846) and the integration of mental health into primary health care. However, resources remain limited, services are overly concentrated in urban centres, and stigma continues to silence many in need. These become even more pronounced in times of crisis.

As we observe World Mental Health Day 2025, let us reaffirm our commitment to make provision of mental health and psychosocial support part and parcel of our health and wellbeing needs, especially during humanitarian emergencies ensuring no one is left behind in times of crisis.

REGISTRATION DETAILS

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TIN: C0009458409

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Note to the Editor

The Alliance for Mental Health and Development (Mental Health Alliance) is a national network of over three hundred CSOs, NGOs, and CBOs engaged in mental health advocacy in Ghana. It has eight regional chapters in the Upper East, Upper West, Northern (Northern, Savannah and North-East), Brong Ahafo (Bono, Bono East and Ahafo), Greater Accra, Ashanti, Volta, Central, and Eastern Region.

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