MINUTES

*Mental Health Legislation Project Botswana*

First meeting of the Botswana National Mental Health Advisory Committee (NMHAC)
Tuesday 17 February 2015 0830-1130
Ministry of Health Botswana

1. **Introduction of participants: participants introduced themselves to each other.**
   
   Dr Edward Maganu, Chairperson, Mental Health Board, and Chairperson of NMHAC
   Mr Patrick Zibochwa, Programme Coordinator Mental Health, Rehabilitation and Mental Health Division Ministry of Health
   Ms Gaboelwe Rammekwa, Chief Health Officer, Rehabilitation and Mental Health Division Ministry of Health: National coordinator for NMHAC project
   Ms Jill Iliffe, NMHAC Project Manager, Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation
   Dr Mpho Thula, DPS (Psychiatrist), Clinical Services Department, Ministry of Health
   Ms Malebogo Pilane, Clinical Psychologist, S’brana Psychiatric Hospital
   Mr Lameck Balapi Gabakgorwe, Psychiatric Nurse, Botswana Police Clinic
   Dr Philip Opondo, Psychiatrist, University Of Botswana
   Ms Malebogo Motsekono, Community Mental Health Nurse, Serowe DHMT
   Mr Clark Kebaitse, Lecturer, Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing, Institute Of Health Sciences, Lobatse
   Ms Motlaelepula Vakalisa, Prisoners Rehabilitation, Botswana Prisons Department
   Mr Gilbert Gangata, Specialist Teacher, Botswana Council for the Disabled
   Mr Samuel Almasi Zoka, Occupational Therapist, S’brana Psychiatric Hospital
   Ms Violet Losike, District AIDS Coordinator, District Commissioner’s Office
   Mr Abednigo Bigboy Maphoko, Hospital Manager, Scottish Livingstone Hospital
   Mr Moagi Gaborone, Health Promotion Officer, World Health Organisation
   Ms Motlaelepula Segopolo, Legal Advisor, Ministry of Health
   Ms Keaneilwe Ralekgobo, Social Worker, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (Social Protection Department)
2. Welcome
Dr Mpho Thula welcomed participants, thanked them for their attendance, and emphasised the importance of the project. Dr Edward Maganu, Chairperson, Mental Health Board was introduced as Chairperson of the National Mental Health Advisory Committee for the project.

3. Background to the project.
- Ms Jill Iliffe provided participants with background to the establishment of the project.
- In 2013 the theme for the annual Commonwealth Health Ministers’ meeting was mental health. The Commonwealth Health Professions Alliance commissioned research on mental health legislation across the Commonwealth. The research was conducted by Dr Soumitra Pathare, coordinator of the Indian Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy. Mental health legislation in 45 Commonwealth countries was assessed against the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability. Ms Iliffe made a presentation on the key findings, conclusions and recommendations from the research.
- Following release of the research findings, the Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation submitted a funding application to the Commonwealth Foundation to work with two Commonwealth countries to assess their mental health and related legislation against the UN Convention and make recommendations for reform of their legislation. The two countries who agreed to participate in the project are the Seychelles and Botswana.
- Ms Iliffe tabled the project plan; timelines; roles and expectations of the various parties to the project; a proposed communication strategy; and the project budget.

4. Discussion
- Those present at the meeting endorsed the general project plan and directions of the project.
- The composition of the committee was discussed. The project requires that the committee include a user of mental health services and a carer of a person with mental health problems. The Ministry undertook to locate suitable people to join the committee. The importance of having legal representation from the Attorney General’s Department present at each meeting was emphasised. Generally, however, the committee considered that the current representation was sufficient and that too large a committee would be difficult to service.
The proposed communication strategy was discussed and the importance of involving the media and the public emphasised. It was noted that it might be necessary to purchase space in local media. The committee agreed to identify local champions for the project.

5. **The next steps**
   - Soft copies of relevant legislation will be obtained to be forwarded to the researcher, Dr Soumitra Pathare. Relevant legislation might include, in addition to mental health legislation, legislation relating to property, marriage, employment, criminality, disability.
   - The next meeting of the committee will be scheduled for mid-April. At the next meeting, a more detailed communication strategy will be presented.
   - Committee members will be circulated to add names to a data base for receipt of information about the project.
   - The researcher will attend the June meeting of the committee to present his findings and recommendations.

6. **Closing remarks**
   Ms Gaboelwe Rammekwa thanked committee members for their attendance and emphasised the need for commitment to attend meetings and participate in project activities of the project was to be successful.