



The Mental Health Nursing Forum / Commonwealth Nurses Federation
Australian Nursing Federation Victorian Branch
Melbourne/Australia

Presentation on:

“Mental Health Nursing/Care in Sierra Leone

By:

Senesie Margao

Sierra Leone Nurses Association



**THE SIERRA LEONE
PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL
KISSY, FREETOWN.**

VISITING HOURS

MON - FRI - 4.00 PM - 6.00 PM

SAT - SUN - 2.00 PM - 6.00 PM

Presentation Outline



- Background of Mental Health
- Status
- Challenges
- Recommendations



BACKGROUND



- Sierra Leone like most developing countries dedicate less than 2 percent of health budgets to mental-health care. However funding isn't the only challenge. The stigma toward people with mental illness remains high. "You still have a very widespread supernatural belief in the causation of mental illness, where people see it as a result of a curse (role during the rebel war) or some voodoo. Still some patients are taken to the traditional healers for treatment and others to spiritual leaders for prayers.
- The now Sierra Leone Psychiatric Hospital is the oldest Mental hospitals in the south of the Sahara built in 1827 by the Anglican Church. Mental patients from Ghana, Nigeria, The Gambia, Mali etc were formerly treated at this facility being the only at that time. Formerly known as 'Kissy Mental Home, it is the only psychiatric hospital in Sierra Leone. The hospital, serving an estimated population of six million, with 400 beds and 10 wards, has minimal specialist services and there is little or no provision outside the capital. Admission, accommodation, food and medication are free and Government resourced. (presently 6 wards are been used with 100 patients)
- Most patients in Kissy Mental Hospital are psychotic because of severe drugs and alcohol abuse, others are traumatized by having participated as a fighter in the 11 years war.

BACKGROUND-*Cont*



- The Psychiatric Hospital Kissy, have gone through several names, Mental asylum, Mental home, Mental Hospital and now Psychiatric Hospital Kissy. The Hospital got its present name as a result of persistent stigmatisation of patients and staff from the public.
- In 2006, the hospital was reconstructed and refurbished with funds provided by Islamic Development Bank and officially reopened by former President Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba with the present name.

STATUS/SUCCESSSES OF MENTAL HEALTH



- Government Policy with:
- **VISION** - To make available to all the people in Sierra Leone, in collaboration with a range of partners, affordable, accessible, sustainable and integrated high quality mental health services.
- **GENERAL OBJECTIVES**
- To improve the mental health of all people in Sierra Leone, by increasing access to affordable and acceptable quality mental health services.
- To promote the quality of life (e.g. good general health status, social inclusion) of all people with mental disability and their families.
- To develop an enabling social environment for mental health through strong collaboration with all stakeholders, within and beyond the health sector.

STATUS/SUCCESSSES OF MENTAL HEALTH-*Cont*



- Psychiatric department established and first batch of 21 Nurses trained at the Faculty of Nursing (all sponsored), and some to be post to the district Hospitals.
- 2011 formation of Sierra Leone Mental Health Coalition, by Government in partnership with Enabling Access to Mental Health (EAMH), Global Psychiatric Association, Christian Blind Movement, other line Ministries and NGO. To advocate for better psychiatric treatment of all concern patients.
- Develop training resources (curriculum of both in-service and pre-service training, and training of trainers)
- Refresh and update training of the mental health staff currently working

CHALLENGES



- mental health presently not high in the national health agenda
- Lunacy Act outdated as since 1960 it is still been used.
- Less resources allocated for mental health (finance and human, no running tap water, bore holes are use, intermittent electricity supply and few psychiatric drugs)
- High stigma and discrimination towards mental disorder patients, relatives and staff.
- Only one health institution offering psychiatric services- less access to mental health services
- Poor working environment for mental health workers

RECOMMENDATIONS



- Maintain mental health high in the national health agenda
- Support the enactment of the review Mental Health Act and include mental health objectives in other health plans. HIV/AIDS, RCH
- Government and partners to give specific attention and resources for mental health (finance and human)
- Sensitized the public to increase awareness and reduce the stigma and discrimination
- Support the paradigm shift from institutional to community/family based mental health care services at all levels for sustainability, accessibility, acceptability and affordability of services
- Increase access to mental health services, including trainings.
- Promote an enabling and motivating work environment for all mental health workers



Thanks for your Attention.