How is mental health in international missions?

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Abstract

Many times when we talk about mental health our mind wrongly traps us with examples like "the angry neighbour that shouts to her kids"; "that friend who has awkward behaviour or committed suicide"; "The crazy ex boy Friend who was paranoid" or "the main Psychiatric ward".

In fact all this assumptions are included in the vast area of mental suffering and not mental health.

If we stick to the concept of mental health we access a world of harmony and well being that all of us desire to achieve.

Nowadays science and information are available about physical and mental health, but it seems we have favouritism for our Physical health and a prejudice when it comes to Mental health. Why?

We know that a sedentary life has impact in the quality of our sleep; we know that the excess of sugar in a daily basis is not good and we also know that cholesterol can damage our health. Living in an on-going stressful context can affect our well-being; A diet with vitamins deficiency can influence our memory, concentration and the way we perceive others and the world that surrounds us.

For this reasons I believe it’s urgent to integrate Mental and Physical health without favouritism. If we are aware of its advantage I think we shouldn’t do differently and especially because we have a holistic and integrated condition as human being.

Once we are conscience about ourselves and the impact that reality has in us, we can become experts in adjusting and surviving to all contexts where we live. By developing and getting self-knowledge about the way the reality impacts us we will also be able to monitor and regulate our emotions adjusting our answers to reality and others.

When it comes to crisis situations, like humanitarian crisis, wars, natural disasters or even a big change of life, once we know what can happen to our mental and physical health, we will be able to identify our general needs and we will also be able to react and reduce the impact of this unexpected situations, that requires a fast and adapted response.

This is the main benefit of a mental health Intervention when it comes to a crisis situation. Mental health will not only prevent mental suffering and mental chronic conditions, like depressions, generalized anxiety, schizophrenia or psychosis, but will also support the medical programme when it comes to community approach and understanding.

Generally during crisis situations people get scared about the symptoms they began to express, like insomnias, anger, emotions instability, confusion or hair loss. They also get more suspicious about each other and especially about foreign support. Many times people begging to think that they are getting crazy, tend to get angrier and isolate themselves, facts that will increase what is a normal stress reaction into a severe condition or a chronic condition (like Post traumatic stress disorder for example).

As soon as the population get the information about what services are available to support them as well what can be a nor-
mal stress reaction, will also understand what is going on with them and begin to learn how to take care of themselves, understanding what can be health and unhealthy ways of coping. Studies show that as soon as the population has information about their normal stress reactions they are resilient to recover by themselves in 80%, only 20% will need individual support. This will also prevent the medical services obstruction and contribute to a traumatic social recovery. Form this 20% only around 1% will require a long-term intervention, due to development of Pathologies. I must admit that I became excited with this studies, because is very good news when it comes to generational trauma in countries in war. With Efficient Mental health intervention we can interrupt the traumatic transgenerational cycle.