

## **CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH - A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS WITH INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES**

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Child and adolescent mental health is a necessary priority for the healthy development of societies. Child and adolescent mental health is central to the future development of low income countries throughout the world (WHO). India presents a unique case in terms of its large population and 50% of them are children and adolescents; characterized by heterogeneity in respect to physical, economical, social, and cultural conditions. As a country of children, adolescents, and young adults it is not only the mental health needs of this 60% of the young population that we need to address, but also future generation's mental health. India was one of the first countries in the developing world to formulate a National Mental Health Programme. About 30 years have passed since this historic adoption and much has changed in the fields of health care delivery as well as population mental health in India (Isaac, 2011). Ten per cent of 5-15 year old has a diagnosable mental health disorder.

This suggests that around 50 million children under 18 would benefit from specialist services. There are up to 20 million adolescents with severe mental health disorders. Around 90% children with a mental health disorder are not currently receiving any specialist service (Shastri, 2008). In India, child mental health services have been neglected for more than 6 decades. National Mental Health policymakers have also failed to address the mental health needs of children and adolescents adequately. In this paper, the authors present an overview of statistics pertaining to mental health problems among children and adolescents in different regions of the world, development of mental health services for this important segment of the population, current realities, and gaps in service delivery, examine a few good models of service delivery and suggest future directions with implications to mental health professionals, particularly social workers.

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## **RESEARCH AND CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

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The purpose of this paper is to explore ethical research practice in the field of child and adolescent mental health and in doing so

contribute to the overall development of the research capacity of mental health practitioners and researchers (Gould, 2010). Social work

practice is changing; research is now an integral part of practice. The need for practitioners to be able to engage in research is becoming more important both for clients, organisations and communities. We should assume that research and practice are not mutually exclusive and that as practitioners, committed to social justice and human rights; we are also social researchers who embrace these same commitments. This paper explores the link

between socially just practice, research and ethics; and highlights the political nature of not only knowledge creation but also the relationship between researcher and researched. The paper concludes that our commitment to our clients and their communities is strengthened not only by an evidence base but also ethical research practice that embodies and manifests the principles of human rights and social justice.

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## **ARE WE ON A TREADMILL WITHOUT A STOP BUTTON? EXAMINING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION IN MENTAL HEALTH**

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Knowledge about mental health and the necessary skills to effectively work with clients are basic to contemporary social work practice. Social workers are considered to be an important part of the multidisciplinary team in the western countries. They are involved in a variety of settings and activities. Some of the activities are intake assessments, conducting bio-psycho-social assessments, providing therapeutic interventions, case managements and rehabilitation work etc. Even in the western countries, the role of social workers is critiqued often with a question being paused as to "what is the unique contribution

of social workers in the mental health field?. While it is still an ongoing debate and argument, in this presentation the author intends to explore this aspect in detail with a special focus on knowledge base for mental health practice, changes to the policies, workforce issues, practice issues and educating and training of social workers in an Indian context. Hence one would ask is it time for us to revisit the practice and professional standards? The examining of this aspect would leave us with only a few choices which are either we speed up, stop and re start or find a new treadmill.

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