

Challenges faced by people living with mental illnesses in Maldives

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Title: Chairperson

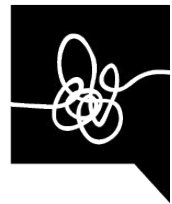
Affiliation: Mental Health Support Group (MHSG)



Outline

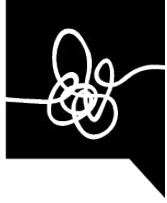
- Context
- Overall challenges
- Challenges: Work environment
- Challenges: Seeking services
- Challenges Accountability and redress mechanisms
- Possible solutions





MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP

- Only organization founded and run by persons with mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities in the Maldives.
- Founded in 2018 as a peer-support group.
- Officially registered as a CSO in 2021.



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP

Areas of work:

- Peer-support
- Integrated arts for mental wellbeing
- Advocacy
- Contributing to state policy and legislation
- Assistance navigating mental health care services and NSPA

Overall challenges

- Stigma:
 - Societal stigma
 - Internalized stigma
 - Institutional stigma



Challenges: work environment

- Employment and human resources policies in the Maldives have yet to incorporate the rights and needs
 - Particularly for psychosocial disabilities.
- Sick leaves:
 - Forced to give non-mental health related reasons.
- Stigma, discrimination and retaliation



Challenges: work environment

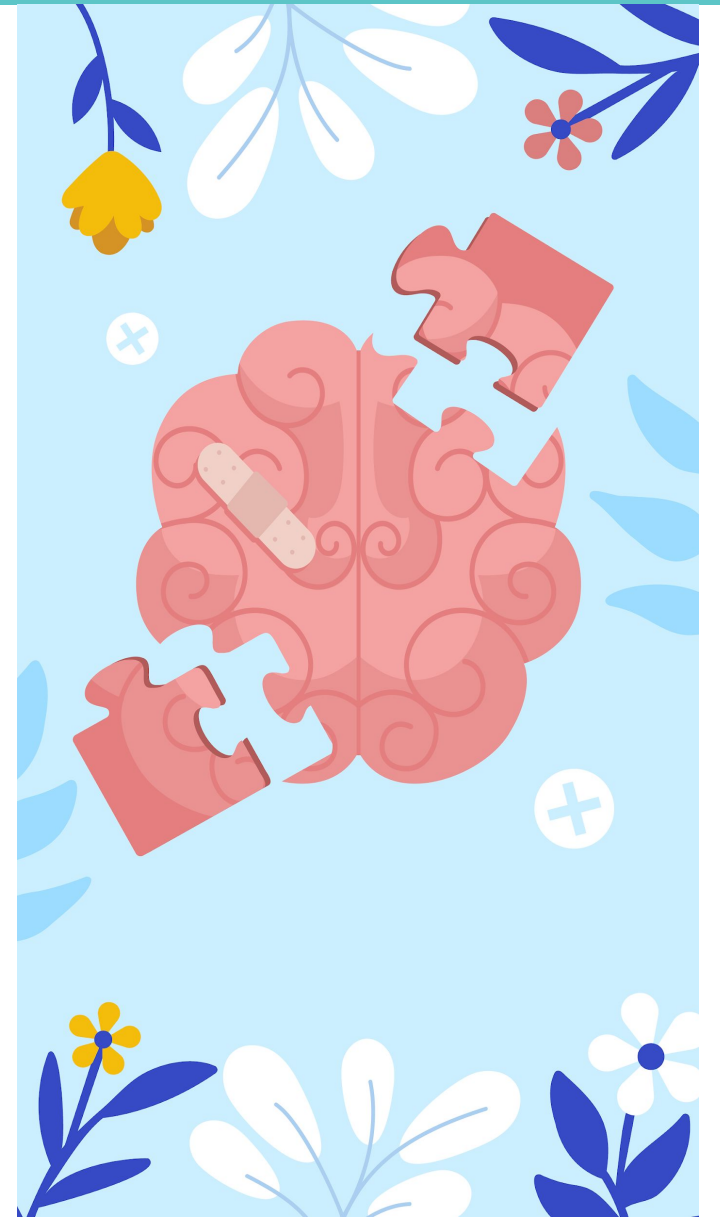
Real life example:

- Hawwa confided in medical officer,
- Medical officer told employers,
- Employers tried to maneuver Hawwa into resigning,
- Hawwa did not know her rights and
- Almost lost her job.



Challenges: seeking services

- Unaffordability
- Waiting lines
- Data management issues
- ER experiences
- No emergency assistance available
- Lack of trust in mental health service providers

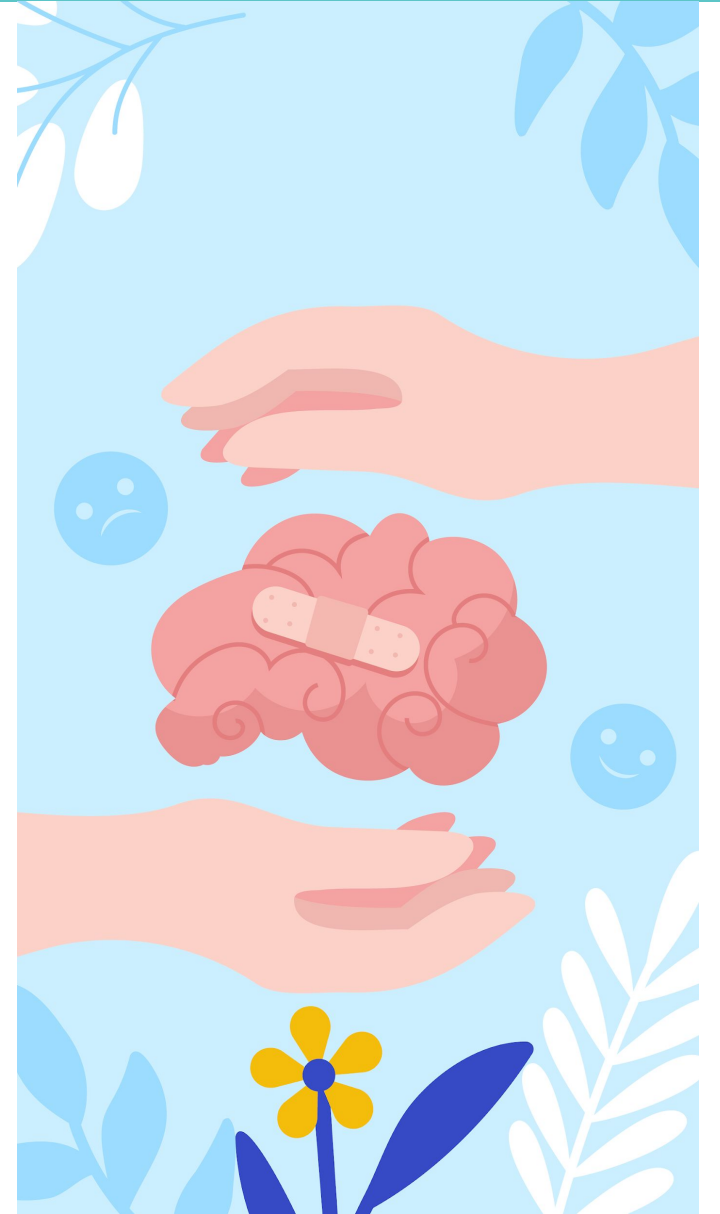


Challenges: Accountability and redress mechanisms

- No functional or effective accountability and redress mechanisms.
 - Only existing avenue for complaints not functional or safe for victims.
- Lack of accountability
 - Lack of trust in service provides
 - Negatively impacting help-seeking behavior

Possible solutions

- Establish accountability mechanisms
- Higher standards
- Better data management
- Words matter





oevaru

mental health conference

15 - 16 october 2023

changing currents ~

~ forming connections

Thank you