Nasirullah Psychotherapy Unit (NPU)

Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Dhaka

Community-based Mental Health Project for Children and Young people

**ToR to conduct the study on the effectiveness of community mental health approaches.**

**Introduction:**

Nasirullah Psychotherapy Unit (NPU), a research and service wing of the Department of Clinical Psychology at the University of Dhaka, has been implementing a community-based mental health project since June 2020 under the leadership of ADD International Bangladesh, with the other two consortium members, the Innovation for Wellbeing Foundation (IWF) and the Disabled Child Foundation (DCF).

The main focus of the project is to address key gaps in minimum healthcare services for children and youth with mental health impairments and will reduce stigma and discrimination, leading to a healthier life for children and youth with mental health issues.

The project intended to strengthen the mental health literacy of parents and caregivers, local organizations, government representatives, health service providers, students, and teachers. It has targeted systemic and attitudinal change, family and community engagement, and service provider capacity. It hopes to contribute to the development of a quality and inclusive community-based mental health support system to improve the MH and wellbeing of underserved children and young people, particularly girls, young women, and those with other disabilities.

**The community approach:** The project is being implemented in marginalised communities through some unique approaches and activities to reduce the stigma and change the health-seeking behaviour of community members, as well as provide services to 5,500 children and youth with mental health and psychosocial issues, including at-risk populations. This community mental health approach is basically a combination of four key segments: (i) identify key gaps; (ii) reduce stigma and discrimination; (iii) improve access to mental health; and (iv) respect social and human rights. The community-based mental health programme stands on the following four major pillars:

* Frontline worker base integration process.
* Educational institution-centric prevention system
* Local-level mental health first aiders and MH promoters
* Mental health service system improvement process

**Major component of the community mental health project.**

The four pillars of the project are basically components of the project. Under each component there are key activities integrated.

Local & national

level advocacy; workshops. Linkage and referral, health camps and learning

sharing; accessibility,

gender & disability

sensitive services

**Component-1:** Capacity development of OPD leaders, LGI members, caregivers & family members, religious leaders; awareness & destigmatisation.

**Component-2:** capacity building of teachers & SMC members peer support, school sessions; co-curricular activities, student's forum etc.

**Component-3:** MHFA training among teachers, health workers, NGO-CSO workers, family sessions, discussions etc.

**Component-4:** Local & national level advocacy; workshops. Linkage and referral, health camps and learning sharing; accessibility, gender & disability sensitive services etc.

Mental health service system improvement process

Local level

Mental Health

First Aider and

MH promoting

process

Educational

institution-

centric prevention

system

Frontline

worker base

integration

process

**About the study.**

The main objective of this study is to see how major approaches effectively contributed to the project and to determine the success or failure of the approaches based on the criteria, as well as to validate them as model practices.

**Importance of the study.**

It is important to know the effectiveness of these approaches because there is a lack of sufficient community-based mental health support at the grassroots level, especially in the underserved areas of Bangladesh. Importantly, the study results need to be shown to the government and other stakeholders to strengthen and support a collaborative approach in the future with them, as quality mental health services are not available.

**Methodology**

Appropriate methods may be required for the study; however, initial thoughts are mixed-methods to know the effectiveness of using major components of this project and how these contributed to reducing the gaps in services.

**Timeframe:** 23 May 2024