

MHPSS2019 UGANDA

Emergency situations such as displacement, armed conflict, persecution, or natural disasters or epidemic outbreaks put significant psychological and social stress on individuals, families, communities and service providers. Uganda recognizes Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) as an essential element of basic care package. The people of Uganda know this from their experience, having suffered from war, violence themselves for a long time in the past, experienced a number of natural disasters(Landslides) and major epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, Ebola etc. all of which take a toll on affected persons mental health.. The MoH has prioritized the development of mental health in the country, with decentralization and integration of MHPSS into general care and this require a continuous effort of all of us here.

The provision of MHPSS to refugees is not separate from services for nationals. Translating these commitments into practice, Uganda is at the forefront of implementing the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), formulated and launched Health Sector Integrated Refugee Response Plan (HSIRRP) to ensure equitable and well-coordinated access to health services for refugees and host communities including Mental Health. The Plan is a critical milestone confirming Uganda's pioneering approach and lead role in shaping the way the international community is responding to large-scale movements of refugees and protracted situations.

The Government of Uganda working with partners has been able to offer Mental and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to over 1,313,000 million refugees in 13 districts. The Refugees can only be able to cope with these difficult experiences and even build resilience, if a supportive community environment is provided. Uganda has a progressive policy towards refugees, allowing them to work and study as this in itself has positive effects in mental health and wellbeing.

Continuous capacity building of VHTs chosen among the refugee populations has been undertaken to care for the refugees directly within their settlements.

In conclusion, the Government of Uganda is committed to the open door policy to refugees, will continue to provide holistic care to refugees and host populations with a focus on integrated MHPSS at all levels of care with call for continuous partner support. As a follow to the MHPSS 2019, the Uganda team to conference will have follow up meeting to review the commitments of meeting and develop actions to move the MHPSS agenda forward.