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Long-distance Coaching, Mentoring and Supervision

Clinical supervision is an activity that brings skilled supervisors and practitioners together in order to reflect upon their practice. It is a time for nurses and other health professionals to think about their knowledge and skills and how they may be developed to improve care. It has been described as providing education for the health professional and protection for the client (RCN 2017).

Most of Unity in Health's in-country volunteer placements last an average of 3 months. Whilst overseas, volunteers engage in a variety of duties, including offering informal coaching and supervision to colleagues and local staff. Through these methods, volunteers and staff establish important working relationships based on trust, respect, and mutual learning. Supervision and coaching helps

Unity in Health to strengthen its bonds with in-country partners, to understand local socio-cultural factors affecting healthcare, and to better respond to the needs of health staff practicing in Unity in Health's programmes regions.

As a way of maintaining these important working relationships, and above all ensuring continuity to its programmes, Unity in Health is developing a system of long-distance coaching and supervision between volunteers and local staff. The system consists of encouraging volunteers and specific members of local staff to be in contact on a periodical basis, following a simple, efficient supervision and/or coaching structure, using both *Skype* and *Facetime*.

Face-to-face coaching and supervision can be considered more immediate, reactive, influential and personable.

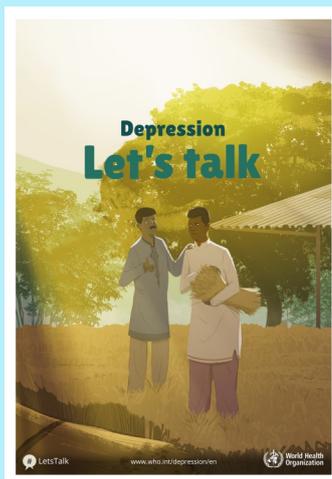


Facetime & Skype, some of the tools used for long distance work contact. Credit: Facetime/Skype

However, long distance contact offers other benefits which are of relevance for a young organisation with limited resources like Unity in Health. A long distance format allows individuals to organise and present ideas and feedback with more thought; it is a way of ensuring local staff feel supported even when volunteers are not in the country; and it offers Unity in Health's partners an opportunity to explore and apply new learnt skills, and take positive risks having the backup and guidance of Unity in Health's colleagues in the UK.



Credit: Stuart Sage



"Depression, let's talk". Credit: WHO

7th April, World Health Day: Depression

World Health Day is a global awareness day sponsored by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other agencies, celebrated every year on the 7th of April. This year's theme was depression.

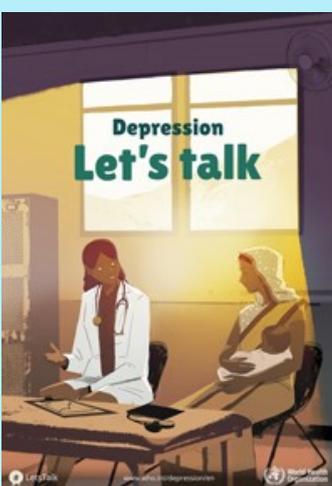
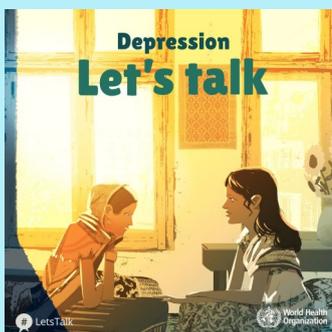
According to WHO, depression is the leading cause of ill health and disability worldwide. Over 300 million people are now living with depression, an increase of more than 18% between 2005 and 2015. Lack of support for people with mental disorders, coupled with a fear of stigma, prevent many from accessing the treatment they need to live healthy, productive lives. Across the globe more women are affected by depression than men. At its worst, depression can lead to suicide. At present, it is the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year olds. There are effective treatments for depression, however many, and in particular in low and middle-income countries, have limited or no access to adequate mental health care.

What is depression?

Depression is an illness characterised by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities, for at least two weeks. In addition, people with depression normally have several of the following symptoms: a loss of energy; a change in appetite; sleeping more or less; anxiety; reduced concentration; indecisiveness; restlessness; feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or hopelessness; and thoughts of self-harm or suicide. (WHO 2017)



"Depression, let's talk". Credit: WHO



"Depression, let's talk". Credit: WHO

World Health Day celebrations were boosted by the launch of WHO's campaign "Depression, Let's Talk", which focused on the importance of talking about depression, feelings and emotions as part of the recovery process. The campaign targeted in particular children and young adults, women of childbearing age, and older adults.

Key messages of the campaign included:

- . Depression is a common mental disorder that affects people of all ages, from all walks of life, in all countries.
- . The risk of becoming depressed is increased by poverty, unemployment, life events such as the death of a loved one or a relationship break-up, physical illness and problems caused by alcohol and drug use.
- . Depression causes mental anguish and can impact on people's ability to carry out even the simplest everyday tasks, with sometimes devastating consequences for relationships with family and friends.
- . Untreated depression can prevent people from working and participating in family and community life.
- . At worst, depression can lead to suicide.
- . Depression can be effectively prevented and treated. Treatment usually involves either a talking therapy or antidepressant medication or a combination of these.
- . Overcoming the stigma often associated with depression will lead to more people getting help. Talking with people you trust can be a first step towards recovery from depression.

Mental health is central to Unity in Health's work. All of our current projects focus on strengthening the capacity of health services to respond to mental health conditions, including depression, in both Sri Lanka and Nepal. Talking about depression and the burden of mental health conditions is vital to the development of effective treatment and responses. Our commitment to support the training of nurses and other mental health care staff remains strong, and is underpinned by the belief that better equipped, skilful and resourceful human resources can play a key role in improving the mental health and well-being of those affected by psychosocial disabilities.

1th—7th June, Volunteers week

Volunteers' Week is a long-standing, popular event in the voluntary sector, established in 1984. It is supported and celebrated by small grassroots organisations as well as larger, household-name charities, who together run hundreds of events across the UK. These events showcase and celebrate volunteers and the contribution volunteering makes in our communities.

Volunteers are the back bone of Unity in Health. We could never achieve what with do, both in the UK and overseas, without the unfaltering commitment of our volunteers. Without their time, skills, generosity and willingness to share and to learn with and from others, we would not succeed in our mission to improve standards of care in low and middle income countries.

Volunteers are therefore a core part of our team. We welcome people with an array of skills and knowledge, and who want to support us with our day-to-day running of our online office, organising campaigns, fundraising or raising public awareness, as well as with the delivery of our in-country projects.

Voluntary opportunity! Current vacancy:

We are currently looking for an experienced child mental health worker (Child Psychologist/Child Mental Health Nurse/Child Trauma Therapist) to work on one of our upcoming projects in Nepal. For more information on this vacancy, profile and job description please contact Unity in Health via info@unityinhealth.org

Nepal. Credit: UiH



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UiH is a Charitable Incorporate Organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission (England & Wales). We are committed to improving the number and quality of health services in regions where these are insufficient or non-existent. To find out more on how you can help us to support those at the front line of health care services in low and middle income countries, please visit our web page on unityinhealth.org or write to us on

info@unityinhealth.org

We look forward to hearing from you!

UiH Team

