

Statement from an effected person:

I am about 1 ½ year in Austria. MY friends did notice that I was sick at that time and they took me to the hospital. At first I did not have the feeling that I was sick. For me, I thought that all my behaviours were just normal. But at last I could realise that those behaviours were not normal. I felt so hot that I had to strip myself. I had an extra ordinary feeling, moved like a roboter and felt fascinated.

At the hospital I got good treatment and the doctors there told me that I had "post-traumatic stress disorder" as a re-experience the inability to effectively cope with series of events or disasters that disrupted normal life-activities that happened in the past. It is very important and helpful to adhere to the doctors instructions. The medicines I got helped me very well and at the moment I attend counselling psychotherapy sessions.

My family and community members understand and give me lots of support and make it easier for me to cope with the situation.

Fieldwork experience – Ikemba worker:

I work for Ikemba as Outreachworker. One of the pastors from the African community called me on phone and narrated to me that one of his church members has not been showing up at different important meetings and worships. According to the pastor this guy does not show any interest for any type of daily activity, could not got to work again, avoided meetings with his friends and also could not come to prayer-meetings. The pastor expressed the fear that his church member has been sick, rejected some help and refused to accept mental health professionals. I visited the said church member and after intensive conversations with him, he accepted to receive treatment at the hospital (LSF). He is doing well now. The doctors that saw to his case said he had "depressive-disorders".



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Integrationsreferat der Stadt **GRAZ**

Gesundheitsamt der Stadt **GRAZ**



A project to support the mental health of Africans in the migration through Empowerment

2012



The African community is built on the strengths and values of being your brothers' keepers, solidarity, care and responsibility for one another especially in moments of trials. Songs, music and togetherness, faith in God coupled with prayers are very important for the mental health wellbeing. But in certain critical life-events where these strengths are not enough to reach, support and carry community/family members along – especially in case of mental ill-health. We need the help of mental health professionals. The treasured community and family strengths and values cannot replace the services and support of the mental health professionals.

Someone suffering from mental ill-health lives isolated from his/her environs. He/She might not come to community meetings or take part in worship.

Mental illness could affect anybody!

About every fourth person in Austria suffers from one form of mental ailment or the other during his or her lifetime. Some of the mental illnesses could be addictive illnesses, depressions, fears/anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenic disorder.

Mental ill-health could manifest in **different symptoms**. There could be noticeable changes in attitudes and behaviours, for example: self-withdrawal from social activities or contacts, irritation, aggression or alcohol abuse are sometimes the effects of mental illness.

Mental ill-health poses an **extreme burden** on the affected person and his/her family and community members.

Depressive disorders count to the most causes of inability to work and suicidal behaviour.

Some of the depressive **symptoms** are:

- Depressed mood most of the day
- Significantly diminishes interest or pleasure in daily activities
- Appetite disturbance and subsequent weight gain/loss
- Sleep disturbance agitation or restlessness that is evident to others, on-going loss of energy
- excessive guilty feelings and sense of worthlessness
- impairment of concentration and repetitive thoughts about death, dying and suicide

Mental ill-health is treatable!!! With **psychotherapy, sociotherapy and medicine** it is possible to help a mental ill person.

It is very important to continue with the prescribed medicines for at least one year even after the symptoms have subsided to help to prevent possible relapse.

It is normal that one becomes sick during his lifetime, notwithstanding if one suffers physical or mental distress.

Ask for help!

If someone in your family or community shows symptoms of mental ill-health or you are affected, do not hesitate to look for and speak with mental health professionals/care workers. They are very often ready to help.

Counselling or psychotherapy does not cost you any money and at the same time remains under confidentiality!

Where do you get help?

Verein ZEBRA – Counselling Center

Schönaugürtel 29 / 2. Stock
Tel.: 0316 / 83 56 30 - 23

OMEGA – Transcultural center for mental health and Integration

Albert-Schweitzer-Gasse 22
Tel.: 0316 / 77 35 54

Psycho-social Center Graz-Ost

Hasnerplatz 4
Tel.: 0316 / 67 60 76

Psycho-sozial Center Graz-Ost

Plüddemanngasse 45
Tel.: 0316 / 22 84 45

Counselling Center for Mental and social Issues - Graz-West

Granatengasse 4
Tel.: 0316 / 71 10 04

Social Medical Centre Liebenau

Liebenauer Hauptstraße 102–104a
Tel.: Büro: 0699 / 180 84 375
Tel.: Praxisgemeinschaft: 0316 / 46 23 40
Tel.: Sozialarbeit: 0316 / 42 81 61

Home care Center Styria (Wohnplattform)

Lendplatz 45
Tel.: 0316 / 22 88 81

Pro Mente Styria

Eisteichgasse 17
Tel.: 0316 / 71 42 45