MENTAL HEALTH IN MONGOLIA

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INTRODUCTION

- **Who am I?**

  - Dr Vanessa Jones, Clinical Psychologist. Member of the British Psychological Society.
  - Undergraduate Degree in Psychology and Philosophy University of Sheffield, England.
  - Masters Degree in Clinical & Cognitive Neuroscience, University of London.
  - Doctorate in Clinical Psychology University of Birmingham.
Why am I here?

- To learn about life and healthcare in Mongolia. To share my skills and knowledge.
- To gain experience of different ways of working and to bring back ideas to England.
- To learn about Mongolia and see the beautiful countryside!

Where am I working?

- I am working two days at the National Centre for Maternal and Child Health. Two days at the Oncology Hospital and one day teaching at the Etugen Institute.
MY WORK EXPERIENCE

- Oncology Service
- Eating Disorders Service
- Older adults
- Learning Disabilities
- Children and families
- In-patient ward: Psychosis
- Assertive Outreach: Working with chronic mental health
- Stress Management Groups
- Traumatic Brain Injury
AIMS

- To increase knowledge of mental health and psychology
- To increase understanding of the situation in Mongolia
- To think about the needs of Mongolia
- To think about what you can do to help
WHAT IS CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY?

- Psychology uses science to understand people and society
- The way people think, feel, behave and how their bodies work.
- Situations, life experiences and health all affect these things.
- Clinical Psychology uses psychology to improve health – mind and body
- Uses this understanding to reduce psychological distress
FOUR MAIN ROLES:

- Mental Health
- Social Health (orphanages, homeless, domestic violence)
- Physical Health
- Organisations (staff teams, ways of working)
WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?
**What is Mental Health?**

- Health of the mind
- Connected to the body - if ill, mind is vulnerable to illness too.
- If mind is ill, body is vulnerable to illness (Centre for Disease Control, 2004)

- Mental health is a continuum. Mind is never 100% and never 0% (Keyes & Corey, 2002)
- We are all on the continuum and we all move up and down depending on our current life events

- Mental health is our mind’s way of surviving difficult situations.
**Mental Health and Stress**

- Our brains can only do so much
- Stress is anything that uses up your brain

Good things take energy too

Our lives are full of stresses.

Too much stress = Mental ill health
What types of Mental Health are there?
Types of Mental Health Problems

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Psychosis
- Eating Disorders
- Phobias
- Addictions
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Anger
- Mania
- Personality Disorder
- Learning Disability
HOT CROSS BUN MODEL

THOUGHTS

BODY SYMPTOMS

FEELINGS

BEHAVIOUR
Depression

Thoughts
- I am bad
- I am not important
- No-one likes me
- Think about killing self – suicide

Feelings
- Feel very sad all time
- Irritable

Body Symptoms
- Tired – want to sleep all time
- Can’t sleep
- Heavy
- Slow

Behaviour
- Do not want to do anything – no motivation
- Do not talk to people
- Do not look after self
- Stay in bed all day
Anxiety

Thoughts
- What will happen next?
- It will go wrong
- They will think I am stupid
- They will find out I am no good

Feelings
- Worried
- Panic
- Scared
- Anxious

Body Symptoms
- Heart racing
- Sweating
- Breathing fast
- Butterflies in tummy
- Nervous energy – hands, feet

Behaviour
- Avoid
- Check everything
- Do not look at people
- Speak quietly
- Make excuses
- Do not look after self
WHY IS MENTAL ILL HEALTH A PROBLEM?

- Quality of Life: We can live with mental ill health but important to value ourselves and our happiness

- People with mental health problems are more likely to be out of work – not contributing to economic growth and using government services (Layard, 2004)

- Mental health problems affect people’s relationships (Storrie, Ahern & Tuckett, 2010) and parenting (Barth, 2009)

- People in prison, the homeless and the unemployed are more likely to have mental health problems. (Kupers, 1999; National Institute of Mental Health, USA, 2005)
WHO GETS MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS?
WHO GETS MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS?

- 1 in 4 adults worldwide have mental health problems at any one time (WHO)

- Numbers for Mongolia?
  Changing societies at increasing risk due to changing roles and expectations

- Anyone can get mental health problems

- People are more likely to get mental health problems if: high stress, bad diet, bad sleep, bad health, money worries, family problems
What can we do about it?

- Mental Health services: Teams of trained professionals
- Can provide advice, medication, support, help back into work, counselling and more
- Psychology: understanding of how the person’s problems started and what they can do to make them better.
- Understanding and empathy are very powerful
- Work-life balance: too much work will cause stress for anyone
- Health: Good health means less vulnerable to stress (Myers, Sweeney & Whitmer, 2000)
Psychology in Mongolia

- Very few psychology jobs
- Most work privately or as volunteer
- Difficult to find a private psychologist – even other psychologists do not know where to go to find one

- If they are employed: physical health services
- Training for doctors and nurses
- Short term therapy
- Research
**Physical Health and Psychology**

- Psychology services can reduce spending on physical health problems e.g. heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, cancer and chronic pain (Hunsley, 2002)

- For example: fewer medical appointments, more healthy behaviours

- Stress-related disabilities: every $1 spent on psychological treatment saved $5 (Gonick, Farrow, Meier et al, 1981)

- Staff burnout, staff sickness and staff leaving their jobs
- Overstretched: One psychologist per whole hospital – if lucky
MENTAL HEALTH IN MONGOLIA

- Mental health is not well understood – Western problem
- Mental health problems may not be recognised
- May be seen as a spiritual problem, not a psychological one
- No data: Do not know what sort of mental health problems Mongolians face or how many
- No services: Mental Health State hospital or nothing.
- Stigma
What we do know?

- Alcoholism and domestic violence are widespread problems.

- Both are bad for quality of life of the person and their friends/family.

- Children in these families are at high risk of mental health problems and suicide.
WHERE NEXT?

What we need:

- Somewhere people can go if they have mild-moderate mental health problems

- I.e. Mental Health services: Teams of nurses, doctors, psychologists and social workers.

- Trained psychologists
Somewhere people can go if they have mild-moderate mental health problems

To do this we need:

- Doctors and nurses to know mental health problems when they see them
- To refer people to the mental health services
- Members of the public to know what mental health problems are
- To know it is okay to ask for and receive help

To do this we need: Research and public awareness campaigns
Mental Health services: Teams of nurses, doctors, psychologists and social workers.

To do this we need:

Government bodies to understand what mental health is and why it is important to treat it.

To create jobs for people working in mental health.

To do this we need: Research and public awareness campaigns.
Trained psychologists

To do this we need:

- In-house training
- International relations
- Peer-training

To do this I am: organising a psychology supervision network

Share ideas, forum to contact other psychologists, arrange joint training opportunities.
Flow chart of Development of Mental Health Services in Mongolia
WHAT CAN YOU DO?
WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Need to know what mental health problems people in Mongolia have: Need research

- Every country is different – but similar too: work life pressures, family pressures, changing society. Naïve to think any country is free of mental health.

- What is the social and economic impact of these mental health problems? Need Research

- Evidence drives governmental change and service provision.

- If Mongolia is to become a first world country, it needs to focus on both quality of life for it’s people and the economic impact on the country.

- Public Awareness
REFERENCES


- Kupers, T.A. *Prison Madness: The Mental Health Crisis Behind Bars and What We Must Do About it*. 1999