



Students are discussing ways to raise awareness about mental health at schools. Credit: WHO

12 December 2018 – the World Health Organization (WHO) in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Higher Education is conducting workshops in 34 schools across the West Bank in December to support students in raising awareness about mental health among their peers.

Around 100 representatives of student parliaments participated in the workshops, discussing issues they face in their schools and ways to help children and adolescents cope with everyday challenges. Together with the school counsellors they also developed and presented an awareness campaign to launch in their schools. The workshops were facilitated by specialists from the Ministry of Health mental health centres. These activities are linked to the WHO global awareness campaign that focuses on young people and mental health in a changing world.

Half of all mental illness begins by the age of 14, but most cases go undetected and untreated. Fortunately, much can be done to help build mental resilience from an early age to help prevent mental distress and illness among adolescents and young adults, and to manage and recover from mental illness. Prevention begins with being aware of and understanding the early warning signs and symptoms of mental illness.

The workshops are part of the "Building Palestinian resilience: Improving psychosocial and mental health responses to emergency situations" WHO project funded by the European Union. The project addresses critical gaps in the development of mental health services in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly concerning the mental health emergency response.

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