



29 health staff in Ramallah received WHO training on Mental Health Gap Action Programme. Photo:WHO

February, oPt - The World Health Organization supports the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) in integrating mental health services into primary health care to ensure that people in the West Bank and Gaza get better access to the mental healthcare they need.

In February 2019, 29 health staff working in the MoH primary healthcare clinics in Ramallah received WHO training on Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) that will help them to identify and manage priority mental, neurological, and substance use conditions. The training was conducted using the mhGAP Intervention Guide (2.0), a tool designed to build the capacity

of non-specialist on detecting, treating and referring mental health cases with common mental health problems.

According to the WHO survey conducted in 2013, one-third of people using MoH primary health care services in the West Bank and Gaza have common mental health problems. Provision of mental health services at primary health care is part of WHO recommendation in developing comprehensive mental health services at the three levels of health care (primary, secondary and tertiary) to enhance detection, treatment and referral for common mental health problems.

The mhGAP enables health workers to provide essential mental health care to people with depression, psychosis, bipolar disorders, epilepsy, developmental and behavioural disorders in children and adolescents, dementia, alcohol use disorders, drug use disorders, self-harm/suicide and other significant emotional or medically unexplained complaints.

With continuous support from the European Union, WHO's mental health project '*Building Palestinian resilience: improving psychosocial and mental health responses to emergency situations*'

aims to significantly enhance the capacity of mental health services in both Ministry of Health and UNRWA health facilities. The project promotes comprehensive national mental health services, supports integrating mental health services into primary health care, enhancing the emergency response and scaling up community mental health services.

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