

Press Release

Accra, Ghana – 4 October 2023

As Ghana readies to mark World Mental Health Day on October 10th, Ghana Somubi Dwumadie stands united with local partners in highlighting this year's theme: 'Mental health is a universal human right.'

Ghana Somubi Dwumadie is dedicated to empowering people with disabilities across Ghana and has achieved significant milestones. Notably, we worked with the Mental Health Authority to inaugurate and train the Regional Mental Health Visiting Committees in 5 regions, and the Mental Health Review Tribunal in 3 regions, as well as developing their operating manual. Both of these are critical human rights functions. We are also producing evidence for scale up of our exciting pilot of district mental healthcare plans.

"Empowering individuals with disabilities is not just our mission; it's our commitment to justice, dignity, and equality. Together, we strive to make 'mental health is a universal human right' a reality for all." Lyla Adwan-Kamara, Team Leader, Ghana Somubi Dwumadie

On World Mental Health Day, Ghana Somubi Dwumadie reaffirms its commitment to championing the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities, including their mental health. We invite local partners, government, civil society organisations, and all to join us in this endeavour.

Together, we can forge a society where mental health is universally recognised as a fundamental human right, accessible to all, leaving no one behind.

For more information about Ghana Somubi Dwumadie and our ongoing initiatives, please visit ghanasomubi.org

About Ghana Somubi Dwumadie:

Ghana Somubi Dwumadie (Ghana Participation Programme) is a four-year disability programme in Ghana, with a specific focus on mental health. This programme is funded with UK aid from the UK government. The programme is run by an Options' led consortium, which also consists of BasicNeeds-Ghana, Kings College London, Sightsavers International and Tropical Health, and focuses on four key areas:

- Promoting stronger policies and systems that respect the rights of people with disabilities, including people with mental health disabilities
- Scaling up high quality and accessible mental health services
- Reducing stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities, including mental health disabilities
- Generating evidence to inform policy and practice on the effectiveness of disability and mental health programmes and interventions

Contact information

For further information, please contact:

Lyla Adwan-Kamara, Team Leader; 0543443755; l.adwan-kamara@ghanasomubi.com

Appropriate Language on Disability and Mental Health

Use	Avoid
People with disabilities / Person with a disability	The disabled / the handicapped - implies a homogeneous group separate from the rest of society and is therefore seen as negative. Handicapped is offensive to some people because it is derived from historical associations with 'cap in hand' and begging. PWD / Special Needs / Suffering from / Vulnerable 'Living with a Disability' - mocked by some people who point out that they live with family or friends, or even pets. They don't live with their Disability; they are disabled by the barriers in society.
Person with a learning difficulty or a learning disability / Person with a cognitive / intellectual / developmental disability / Autistic person / Person with Down syndrome, etc	Mentally handicapped / retarded / subnormal / Mongoloid
Blind person / Visually impaired / Partially sighted person / Person with low vision	The blind, the sight impaired
Deaf person / Person with hearing loss / Hard of hearing/partially deaf person / Deafened	The deaf / deaf-mute / deaf and dumb - perhaps one of the most negative and offensive labels attributed to Deaf people. This terminology can imply that Deaf people are incapable of being taught, of learning or of reasoned thinking.
Mental health service user / Person with mental health condition / person with psychosocial disability	Mentally ill / Suffering from mental illness / Insane / Mad / Crazy / Imbecile / Mental
Unable to leave their house / bed	Bed-bound, bed-ridden, house-bound
Person with physical or mobility disability / Person with Cerebral Palsy / Wheelchair user	Crippled / handicapped / Spastic / Wheelchair-bound / Confined to a wheelchair
Person with (e.g. AIDS or epilepsy)	Suffers from e.g. 'Aids sufferer' or 'epileptic' as a noun
Person with restrictive growth / short stature / dwarfism / Little Person	Midget
Person with Chronic illness (Generally referring to people with energy-limiting chronic conditions and long-term health conditions)	Invalid - an offensive word because it equates impairments with illness and can be construed as 'not valid' 'incorrect' or 'worthless'
An accessible or adapted toilet	Disabled Toilet

Remember, where you can, ask the person how they would describe themselves or how they would like to be referred to!