

MINDA BIG WALK in conjunction with World Mental Health Day 2010

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Stigma is a negative social response evoked by the perception of a negative difference in the attribute or behaviour of an individual (Goffman, 1963). Professor Kua has rightly pointed out in his book entitled “Speaking Up For Mental Health” that if a society continues to be fearful of the mentally ill, then patients who have recovered will not have any chance of surviving in a hostile community plagued by bigotry. (Kua, 2009). In order to battle stigma, there must be continuous effort in creating a healthy and realistic public perception on people suffering from mental illness.

In conjunction with the World Mental Health Day on 10.10.2010, the Malaysian Mental Health Association (MMHA) and MINDA(Pertubuhan Sokongan Kesihatan Minda Malaysia) with the support of the Ministry of Health jointly organized the MINDA BIG WALK 2010 at the Dataran PJ. Over 2,000 participants took part in the morning walk. The event was officiated by the Deputy Health Minister YB Datuk Rosnah bt. Hj Abdul Rashid Shirlin, Deputy Minister of Health, Malaysia.

The objectives of the MINDA BIG WALK was to create more public awareness on mental health and to de-stigmatise ‘Mental illness’ by fostering positive and supportive public attitudes towards those who are suffering from mental illness. The event was sponsored by the Lembaga Promosi Kesihatan, GIANT and many other generous donors. The event was part of a simultaneously organized Mental Health Big Walk that took place in Penang, Johor Baru, and Miri.

Besides the 4km walk on a beautiful and cool Sunday morning, there were other interesting activities like aerobic exercises, “Qi Gong” demonstration, line dancing, akido self-defense technique demonstration and general health screening. Mental health screening and consultation were also provided to the public. Those who were found to be at risk were referred to the psychiatrist on duty. A poster exhibition to create better awareness on mental illness and dispel some misconceptions of the illness was also held.

Highlight of the event was the Creative Team event by participating colleges and Hospital Kuala Lumpur with their creatively designed banners and lively performance to promote mental health and de-stigmatise mental illness. Participants were rewarded with attractive prizes in the lucky draw and in the Creative Team event.

It is hoped that the series of event to celebrate World Mental Health Day in the country had achieved its objectives of creating better awareness on mental health and de-stigmatising mental illness, and in the process, promote early detection and treatment of mental illness. Mental health is a key component of health because “**There is No Health Without Mental Health**” (WHO fact sheet on Mental Health, September 2010)

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Reference :

Goffman E (1963) *Stigma-Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

World Health Organization (WHO) fact sheet on Mental Health, September 2010

Photo gallery



Guest of honour who supported the walk



Aerobic exercise before the walk.



Health Screening section



Poster exhibition on mental health



Participants from all age groups

Banners with messages on Mental Health and Overcoming Stigma of Mental Illness

