



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION SERVICES

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MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

People with a mental disability have a right to employment and to be treated with dignity. This is the key message for this year's Mental Health Month campaign during the month of July to create awareness on mental health issues and the rights of people suffering from psychiatric disorders.

Most people in our society must work in order to survive. Work is therefore the necessary means which can enable most people to earn an income for survival. The laws of this country support equal opportunities for employment to all. (South African Employment Act, 1998). The Mental Health Care Act No 17 of 2002 seeks to protect the rights and dignity of people with a mental disability.

Studies indicate that psychiatric disorders are among the leading causes of disabilities worldwide and are more common than cancer, diabetes or heart diseases. It is reported that one in every four person will be affected by a mental disorder at some stage in life.

Of all persons with disabilities, those with a psychiatric disability face the highest degree of stigmatisation in the workplace, and the greatest barriers to employment opportunities. This discrimination results in the majority of mentally ill persons ending up unemployed and forced to rely on state grants for the rest of their lives.



More often persons with psychiatric disabilities are viewed as being unskilled, unproductive, unreliable, violent and unable to handle workplace pressures. Depression has been cited as the most common psychiatric illness that doctors are called upon to diagnose and treat, and, contrary to misconceptions, it responds well to treatment, like many other forms of mental illness.

Let us give people with mental illness and people with intellectual disabilities a chance to work and also establish support employment centers for people with psychiatric disability.

HOW CAN A MENTALLY PERSON GET HELP?

You can contact your nearest clinic to assess you and there after refer you to the next level of care for treatment.

CAN A MENTALLY ILL PERSON LEAD A NORMAL LIFE?

Yes, they can lead a normal life and they can be employed- With proper medication or other form of therapy, mentally ill people can lead normal live and hold descent jobs.

WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE WITH PSYCHIATRIC AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY?

They too have a right to be employed in jobs where it does not involve a lot of thinking like, packing in a shop and factories where simple tasks are required.

ENDS.

For more information please contact Mrs Gloria Mhlaluka (Mental Health and Substance Abuse) on (033) 395 2387 or Lindiwe Khuzwayo on 083 393 9943