Sound mind

Town Hill staff educate Oribi Village about mental illness

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While most people were out and about doing their bit for Mandela Day, Town Hill Hospital staff spent the day at Oribi Village educating residents about mental illness and substance abuse. Ward 24 councillor, Philani Ngidi, said that the group wanted to speak to residents about mental health and how they can fight drug abuse in the area. Ngidi said that drug abuse in Oribi Village has become rife over the years.

“We need to aim for a drug-free environment. Most of the patients admitted to Town Hill hospital are not there because of brain deficiency, but due to drug abuse,” he said.

Town Hill Hospital’s public relations officer Themba Hlongwane said that the month of July is recognised as mental illness and substance abuse awareness month by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

“As a psychiatric institution, we thought it would be of great benefit to take the programme to the community by doing a door-to-door campaign. We also made people aware of the referral system that Town Hill operates under. If a person suspects that someone has a mental illness, they should take that person to a doctor or any general hospital so that they can be monitored for 72 hours, just to validate if they do show any signs of mental illness. If the results come out positive, they are then referred to Town Hill hospital,” said Hlongwane.

KZN department of health’s deputy manager for mental health and substance abuse, Lungi Mkhize, said that this year’s theme for Mental Health month is “be kind to your mind”.

“We need to look after our mental health. This year we are focusing on the youth as most of these youngsters use drugs as a form of escapism,” said Mkhize.

Town Hill hospital staff recently visited Oribi residents to educate them about mental illness and the dangers of substance abuse. Pictured are (back) Mmiselo Binza, (front, from left) Themba Hlongwane, Getrude Mshengu, Lungi Mkhize and Malcolm Lutchman.

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