

Mental Health Project for Adolescents:

Organisation profile:

Ahmedabad Women's Action Group (AWAG) was founded in 1983. AWAG's focus is to support women who have experienced domestic violence. In Gujarat domestic violence was not regarded as a violation of human rights, but after many years of campaigning from AWAG, then in 1995 there was re-evaluation of the criminal justice system and domestic violence legislation was introduced.

Main issue:

AWAG has been working with mental health amongst adolescents in Gujarat for the last 7 years. Over these years, some of the common problems cited by children are fear and anxiety during exam time, suicidal thoughts and depression problems and lack of understanding by parents.

Profile of the area and need for the project:

This project is concentrated in Municipal schools of East Ahmedabad namely – Bapunagar, Rakhial, Gomtipur and Saraspur. These are economically backward area, majorly consisting of Dalits and Muslims. Parents of these children are predominantly labourers who also encourage these children to work with them after school hours as labourers. Majority of the parents are illiterates and do not have the capability to understand or guide their children during mental distress

Project activity:

Counsellor and social worker will approach classes of 8, 9 and 10th standard school children of 5 government schools. Initially, counsellor will talk to each class separately and give an introduction to mental health. The entire class will be educated on types and symptoms of mental illness. If the child is experiencing any of the symptoms, he/she is encouraged to enrol their name for individual counselling session. In addition, teachers will also assist in identify children who need extra psychological support.

Following the screening, each child will be allotted time for one-to-one counselling. The sessions will address children's emotional need and equip them with relevant coping mechanisms. At the end of the project, 25 teachers of the 5 schools will be trained on mental health to develop sensitivity and understanding on psychological patterns of vulnerable children.

From the project, it is anticipated that:

- 750 children from marginalised sector would be better informed about mental health.
- 750 children will be equipped with skills to manage emotional trauma.
- 750 children will be given extra academic guidance and support.
- There will be increase in academic performance.
- Positive school atmosphere will reflect on better school attendance.
- Counselling will develop confidence in a child to have a secure future.

Time frame:

Twelve month project with potential to extend

Budget:

Activity	Total cost in Rupees	Total cost in pound sterling
Salary of 1 Counsellor (for 12 months)	12000 x 12 = 1,44,000	120 x 12 = 1,440
Salary of 1 Social worker (for 12 months)	7000 x 12 = 84,000	70 x 12 = 840
Travel expenditure to 5 schools (5 days a week)	25,000	250
Administration costs	22,000	220
2 day teachers training (1000rs x 25 teachers, as a handover project)	2500	250
Total	3,00,000	3,000