

[Professionals Consulted] 5 common mental problems in Nepal

5 common mental problems in Nepal



Professionals Consulted

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Adjustment disorder
- Borderline personality disorder
- Depression
- Anxiety disorder

“Stereotypes of mental health as a funny and useless topic along with relating mental illness to the extreme of madness and social unawareness of mental health services had caused a huge imbalance in our society”

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*[Professionals Consultant] 5 common mental problems in Nepal

The article is based upon facts and can be trusted. The references are provided below

Article Author:-Toran Jung Bam

Added In:-27 Jun 2024 Thu

Working on PDF !!

Views:- 208

"Basic stereotypes of mental health as a funny and useless topic along with relating mental illness to the extreme of madness and social unawareness of mental health services had caused a huge imbalance in our society"

Introduction



Mental health is one of the pillars for a happy life. It is a subject that requires to be known to every person. And is the underlying factor in everyone's life. WHO states about 970 million people globally were living with a mental disorder, with anxiety and depression the most common

In 2019.

Where mental health workers are now one of the most valuable professionals in the world. Nepal is still not able to develop in mental health. Basic stereotypes of mental health as a funny and useless topic along with relating mental illness to the extreme of madness and social unawareness of mental health services had caused a huge imbalance in our society. We as a citizen and individual have never provided a keen thought about our mental health which is an important aspect to remain healthy.



The traditional taboo and lack of emotional touch among family members have left sufferers with pain and discomfort in their life. Mental illness is often misunderstood and associated with shame in Nepali society. This has discouraged people from seeking help, leading to untreated conditions. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a ratio of at least one mental health worker per 10, 000 people, but Nepal falls far short of this with just 0.17 psychiatrists, 0.03 psychologists, and 0.21 mental health nurses per 100,000 people.

Due to which I, as a writer of this blog have consulted with 4 mental health professionals composed of Psychiatrist, Clinical Psychologist, Cross-cultural psychologist and Mental health Counsellor. I am really grateful for their support and help to make this article happen and I hope it will be a valuable article for promoting mental health in Nepal. This has been one of the longest article till now to write as I have tried my best to bring more help and awareness to me before starting my writing.

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Mental Problems

Autism Spectrum Disorder



Contributors ✍️: [Sunika Joshi](#) , [Hashana Shrestha](#)

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder which has been significantly rising in Nepal. AutismCare Nepal Society estimates 250,000 to 300,000 people with autism in Nepal. Autism has been stated as a common condition faced by minors and kids. The primary problem with providing support is caused due to lack of awareness about autism and its causes. It can cause them to struggle to concentrate, sit still, or think before they act. The diagnosis or realisation

for autism occurs very late due to which kids had to suffer a loss in their future endeavours too.

“ Although neuro developmental issues (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, learning disabilities etc..) can be identified in early childhood to late childhood, in most of the cases young adults who come for sessions were not diagnosed in childhood. As adult when they start to realise how they are different from their group, how it is not easy for them to socialise, maintain interpersonal relation, how they cant focus on a given task and how they need longer time in cognitive tasks of organisation, planning and detail works which their colleagues or friends can do without much effort. These realisations lead them to google the symptoms and then seek professional help. ”

[Hashana Shrestha](#)

An Social Awareness Video About Autism



Causes:-

Researches are ongoing to identify the exact causes.

However, so far we only know that there are genetic

Symptoms:-

Some of the general symptoms of autism are:-

Difficulty with social interaction,

predispositions,
prenatal
development
problems and
neuro
developmental
problems.

Difficulty with
Nonverbal
communication (eye
contact, facial
expressions)

Over- or under-
sensitivity to
sounds, touch,
light, tastes, or
smells

Look for unusual
outbursts,
tantrums, or
challenges in
managing emotions
in a healthy way

Adjustment disorder



Contributors ✍️: [Dr. Perna Jha](#)

Adjustment disorder is a short-term emotional and behavioural reaction to a stressful life event or change. With the increase of changing the structure of parents, living adjustment disorder has become one of the most common problems in our society. Along with the limited data and researches about this problem have even caused hardship in finding more about this issue. Awareness and emotional touch by parents is really required for the cure of adjustment disorder in Nepal.

Causes:-

Alcoholic parents

Bullying

Break-up

Broken family

Homesickness

Symptoms:-

Some of the general symptoms of adjustment disorder are:-

Stomachache

Headache

Panic attacks

Shortness of breath

Loss of interest

Borderline personality disorder



Contributors ✍️: [Punjita Pradhan](#) , [Hashana Shrestha](#)

Borderline personality disorder is another common mental issue in Nepal. And is more common in females in Nepal (As [Ms.Punjita Pradhan](#) has expressed, females to be more emotionally aware). Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is a mental health condition that affects how you feel about yourself and others, and how you react to situations. People with BPD experience intense emotions that can shift rapidly, and they often have unstable relationships. They

may also struggle with their own identity and have a fear of abandonment.

Borderline personality is developed mostly when individuals have very disturbed difficult childhoods.

“ Borderline personality is developed mostly when individuals have very disturbed difficult childhoods. More than 90% report history of childhood sexual abuse or any form of persistent abuse. Most of them have highly disturbed family dynamics where their emotions were not heard, not validated, not addressed instead were forced to repress inside. In many cases, they need to do emotional parenting to their parents, where they feel responsible to take care of their parents emotionally by not sharing or expressing their own emotions, difficulties and problems. So they develop low tolerance of distress, impulsive behaviour, poor

interpersonal relation issues , not knowing how to create personal boundaries.”

[Hashana Shrestha](#)

[Clinical Psychologist](#)

Causes:-

Genetical

Experiencing physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, or a chaotic family environment in childhood

Growing up in an environment where your emotions were dismissed or invalidated

Poverty, lack of

Symptoms:-

Some of the general symptoms of Borderline Personality Disorder are:-

Over/low excited to emotions

Constant search for validation

Cognitive distortions

The struggle with self-identity

The fear of

access to basic necessities, and limited opportunities can create chronic stress caused BPD abandonment

Depression



Contributors ✎: [Punjita Pradhan](#) , [Hashana Shrestha](#), [Dr. Prerna Jha](#), [Sunika Joshi](#)

Depression is one of the most common mental disorders in Nepal. And is stated by almost every professionals consulted.

Depression is a common and serious mood disorder that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Depression is generally characterised with fear of pasts. It can cause feelings of sadness or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed.

In the context of Nepal. Depression is prevalent in people ranging from teenagers to old age. A 2023 study analysing data from the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey found a 4. 0% prevalence of depression in the general population, with a higher rate among females (5.4%) compared to males (1.7%)

Causes:-

Genetical

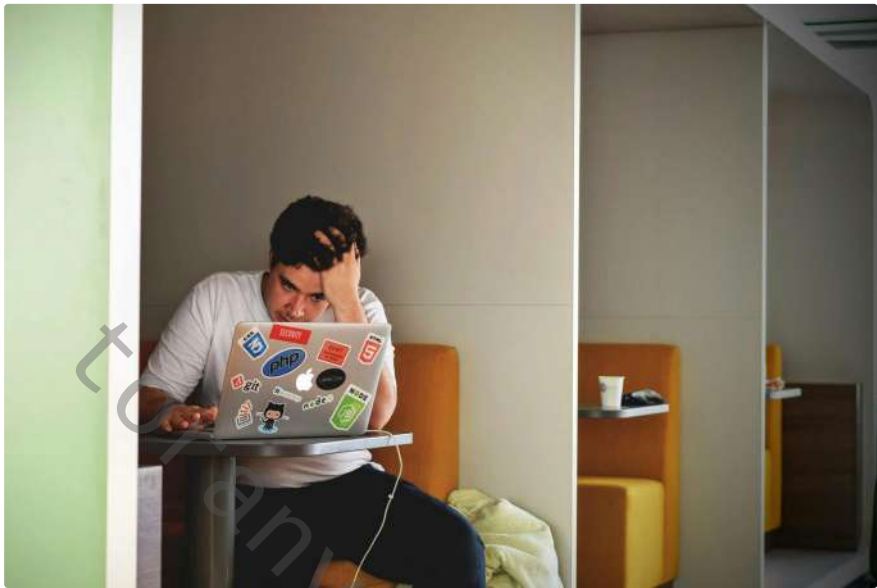
Work load

Symptoms:-

Some of the general symptoms of depression are:-

Bullying	Sleep disorder
Financial issues	Sadness
Socio-Economic Factors- unemployment, poverty, migration, illiteracy, limited access to health	Lose of interest
	Lack of energy
	Restlessness
	Loneliness
Cultural Factors- gender discrimination, caste discrimination, unrealistic expectations from men and women and focus on shame and prestige	Low self-esteem

Anxiety disorder



Contributors ✎: [Punjita Pradhan](#) , [Sunika Joshi](#)

Anxiety is one of the most common mental disorders in Nepal. And it is always suggested alongside depression. However, Anxiety is generally related to fear of the future. Different forms of anxiety disorder are most prevalent in any age group. An anxiety disorder is a mental health condition characterised by excessive and persistent worry, fear, or nervousness that significantly disrupts normal daily life. A

2023 study analysing data from the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) reported a 17.7% prevalence of anxiety in the general population, with a higher rate among females (21.9%) compared to males (11.3%)

Anxiety disorders, like other mental health conditions, result from a complex interaction of social, psychological and biological factors. Anyone can have an anxiety disorder, but people who have lived through abuse, severe losses or other adverse experiences are more likely to develop one.

For children it can be peer bullying, pressure from parents in study, fear of punishment in school, not having friends, disturbed family dynamics as- regular conflict among parents, or among other family members, regular alcohol drinking pattern any or both of the parents, fear of separation or losing parents.

In most adults or young adults, it looks like anxiety has been there since childhood. During childhood they didn't know what was that and even shared with parents their problems weren't heard and addressed. Beside this, uncertainty in career, choosing career according to choice of parents, relationship issues, life events as- losing job, shifting to other country, loss of near ones

Causes:-

Brain chemistry:
Imbalances in neurotransmitters like serotonin and norepinephrine can contribute to anxiety.

Genetics: A family history of anxiety disorders increases

Symptoms:-

Some of the general symptoms of anxiety disorder are:-

Generalised anxiety disorder (persistent and excessive worry about daily activities or events)

Panic disorder (panic attacks and

the risk

Frequent

earthquakes, floods, and landslides cause displacement, loss of property, and trauma, which can trigger anxiety.

Rapid

modernization and globalisation can lead to cultural clashes and disruption of traditional ways of life, increasing feelings of isolation and anxiety

fear of continued panic attacks)

Social anxiety disorder (high levels of fear and worry about social situations that might make the person feel humiliated, embarrassed or rejected)

Agoraphobia (excessive fear, worry and avoidance of situations that might cause a person to panic or feel trapped, helpless or

Uncertainty in
career,

Choosing career
according to
choice of parents

Relationship issues

embarrassed)

Separation anxiety
disorder (excessive
fear or worry
about being
separated from
people with whom
the person has a
deep emotional
bond)

Specific phobias
(intense, irrational
fears of specific
objects or
situations that lead
to avoidance
behaviour and
significant distress)

Selective mutism
(consistent inability
to speak in certain

social situations, despite the ability to speak comfortably in other settings, primarily affecting children).

Takeaway



The common mental disorders in Nepal are Autism Spectrum Disorder, Adjustment disorder, Borderline personality disorder,

Depression and Anxiety disorder. Where some are even caused by genetics. Mental illness in Nepal needs to be taken more seriously and even have to be promoted. We as a society should promote mental wellbeing and be more aware about mental health. Where the stereotypes around mental health need to be eradicated and a more emotionally intelligent society is needed to be present. I as a writer thanks again to all four of our professionals consulted on this issue.

References

The list made was based on the experiences and clients/patients faced by the following professionals. We are really grateful for their health and wish them even better days in the future in their lives.



Dr. Prerna Jha

Psychiatrist

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She started her career as a Psychiatrist after completing MD Psychiatry from TU, UCMS. She works at Everest Hospital, Star Hospital. She is experienced in both treating with medications and counseling patient. She has been treating both in admission and OPD(Outpatient Department) basis.



Sunika Joshi

Cross-Cultural Psychologist

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Sunika Joshi, is a mental health practitioner and social and cross-cultural psychologist, with over 7 years of work experience. She

has worked with diverse beneficiaries such as refugees, children living with HIV/AIDS, survivors of human trafficking and gender-based violence, and children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and ADHD.

Currently, She is working as Trainer and Consultant Therapist at Mankaakura. In the past, she has also worked as an Assistant Psychologist in the Nation Health Service (NHS) in the UK Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) department.

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Namaste, I'm Punjita. I'm a mental health counselor and therapist. I work with individuals who are Highly Sensitive, have

been diagnosed for Borderline Personality Disorder and are experiencing or dealing with traumatic events.

I believe every individuals have specific needs and no single approach can contain the effects of trauma and life stressors. I have been certified and trained in a range of modalities under Cognitive and Dialectical Behavior Therapy and Narrative Therpay. I am also attending the VITAL course by Psychedelics Today for Psychedelic Assisted Psychotherapy where my main focus is harm reduction.

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Hashana Shrestha is a Licensed clinical

psychologist (NHPC no. 20). She is working as Consultant clinical psychologist in Kanti Children Hospital. She is a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Certified Gestalt therapist. And she is also the founder of Samatha psychosocial Care Pvt. Ltd.



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