

FRIEND'S CORNER DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER



Highlighting interventions, collaborations and engagements to sensitize, mobilize and improve adolescents life



Words from the Mission Director Ram Kumar S IAS, Mission Director, NHM

I am delighted to introduce Friend's Corner, a monthly Newsletter on RSKS (Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram) programme that promotes Adolescent Health under the National Health Mission. It is intended to highlight activities and initiatives in the field to create awareness and reach-out to the adolescents and youths including key stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved with the programme.

Adolescents being the integral part of the population, the RSKS program strive to ensure that they are healthy and investment on this important age group will bear rich demographic dividends. Various interventions have been initiated to cater to this population through RSKS Program. Currently, there are 122 Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics established at district hospitals, CHCs and selected PHCs.

Community based interventions through close co-ordination with Education and Social Welfare Deptt. are also key highlights under this program. The school health & wellness

ambassadors' program (SHWP), weekly iron folic acid supplementaion (WIFS) and peer educators' programs are few examples of convergence under this Program. The newsletter besides reaching out to the target audience, it also seeks to target the elite section and thereby garner Expert's advice, and vital information on related topics. It aspires to be vibrant, engaging and accessible to all in which an e-copy will also be available for download from the NHM website.

Summing up, the main idea of this newsletter is to highlight interventions, collaborations and engagements that the program has achieved. Bridging the gap between adolescents and stakeholders, the newsletter will go a long way in ensuring that the much needed information is being disseminated to the target audience.

I am hopeful this newsletter will attract more adolescents, stake holders and well-wishers to come forward and work together towards building a healthy young population who are well informed and dynamic.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Adolescent
Friendly

Health
Clinics

Health
Camps

Friend's
Corner

Face of
recovery:
A Success Story

Experts Speaks

HOW TEENAGERS CAN PROTECT THEIR
MENTAL HEALTH DURING A PANDEMIC

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ADOLESCENT FRIENDLY HEALTH CLINICS (AFHC)

Since the inception of the Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHCs) there has been an improved delivery of clinical and counselling services to adolescent between the age of 10- 19 years. The AFHCs have been made accessible and are effective in providing health services in a proper manner through improved resources and facilities.

Adolescent boys of Selsella receives ball from Counsellor

Adolescent boys at Selsella were elated when they received a new ball from the counsellor at the Adolescent Friendly Health Clinic. (AFHC). Fond of playing football, but most of their parents cannot afford it. Knowing how much it would mean to them, the counsellor decided to present them with one. On the day they visited the AFHC, the counsellor presented the ball to them. They thanked the counsellor with smiles on their faces before running off to a nearby football field.



“If you see someone without a smile, give them one” - Counsellor



It was encouraging to see youth adolescents with uniforms and school bags visiting the FRIEND'S CORNER at Ampati Civil Hospital SWGH after school. At the Friend's corner we ensure no one leaves empty handed. They take with them knowledge and relevant information that can help build better and healthy adolescent life. These corners provide thorough counselling and support that at times just a pack of sanitary pads and information on menstrual hygiene has given them immense happiness and education at the same

time. Most of these children come from poor family and cannot afford to buy sanitary supplies. The outreach Programme have played a tremendous part in reaching out to the adolescents. A counsellor of the Friend's Corner said, "As a dedicated counsellor myself I know the problems of an adolescent. Sometimes they cannot share their problems with anyone." She informed, "One girl asked me, if she could get my number, without hesitation, I said yes, and gave her my contact number. This gave them a sense of security as they have someone to talk to besides their parents". From feedbacks, we learn that most of the youth who visited the corner have received information about this facility through the awareness programme. The counsellor added, "after the counselling session, I can see a smile on the face of the clients and they appreciate me by saying Thank you. As the saying goes, 'if you see someone without a smile give them one of yours!' Because money cannot buy Happiness! As we all know that "Adolescents are the future leaders teach them when they are still young".



With an aim to sensitize adolescents, their families and other stake holders on information related to adolescent health issues and services available, the Adolescent Health Day (AHD) cum N.O.H.P under RSKS was conducted at KGBV School under Dadenggre Block on the 18th of November, 2021. The programme addressed many issues pertaining to adolescent health and wellness. Following the programme, a screening session was also conducted by the RSKS team and Dental Surgeon besides distribution of toothbrushes and sanitary pads to the participants.



Mega Health Camps & AHWDS held

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many are reluctant to visit healthcare facilities. It has made it impossible for people to get the much-needed health services. To cater to the community and make health care accessible for them, health camps approach was adopted whereby stalls rendering health services under various programmes were set up across the state in various community spaces. This way not only adolescents got access to the services but even parents and children too. Meghalaya Legal services, NMHP, RBSK, Leprosy, TB, NOHP etc worked together to address the health needs of the people. Hundreds of Adolescents were counselled and free check-up were provided till date through this initiative.



EXPERTS SPEAKS

Mental Health among Teens during the Pandemic - How to cope

6 Strategies for teens facing a new (temporary) normal - By UNICEF



Being a teenager is difficult no matter what, and COVID-19 is making it even harder. With school closures and cancelled events, many teens are missing out on some of the biggest moments of their young lives. For teenagers facing life changes due to the outbreak know this: you are not alone. According to expert adolescent psychologist, Dr. Lisa Damour: one should practice self-care and look after your mental health which can be elaborated into 6 helpful strategies that follows:

1. Recognize that your anxiety is completely normal: If school closures and alarming headlines are making you feel anxious, you are not the only one. In fact, that's how you're supposed to feel. Your anxiety is going to help you make right decisions that you need.
2. Create distractions: Divide the problem into two categories, things you can do and things you can do nothing about. There is a lot that falls under that second category right now, and that's okay, but one thing that helps us to deal with it is creating distractions for ourselves.
3. Find new ways to connect with your friends: If you want to spend time with friends while you're practicing social distancing, social media is a great way to connect. However, keep track of the time you spend on social media. Keep a balance.
4. Focus on you: It's the best time to start something new, like read a new book or spend time practicing a

- musical instrument?. Focusing on yourself and find ways to use your new-found time in a productive way to look after your mental health.
5. Feel your feelings: The best way to deal with disappointment is to let yourself feel it. "When it comes to having a painful feeling, the only way out is through. Go ahead and be sad, and if you can let yourself be sad, you'll start to feel better faster." What's important is that you do what feels right to you.
6. Be kind to yourself and others: Some teens face bully and abuse at school. Kids and teenagers who are targeted should not be expected to confront bullies: rather we should encourage them to turn to friends or adults for help and support. If you witness a friend being bullied, reach out to them and try to offer support. Doing nothing can leave the person feeling that everyone is against them or that nobody cares. Your words can make a difference.

FACE OF RECOVERY - A SUCCESS STORY

FRIEND'S CORNER

Living Recovery: True Story of Addiction

Gideon's first exposure to heroin occurred about a year ago when he was exposed to it by his friends. He quickly became addicted and started using all on his own. This habit continued for seven to eight months and became a prisoner to the need of finding heroin to keep him from going into withdrawals. In the midst of all this, he lost all personal connections with his family his friends and most importantly with himself. He was confined to his room which was his only comfort. Soon he became tired found no meaning to live. That's when a friend, a heroin user himself (IDUs) suggested to seek counselling and find an opiate substitution clinic where both their lives could be saved.



Gideon's attendance at the counselling programme helped him understand the process of addiction and treatment more easily. He was referred to the OST clinic at CHS to help manage withdrawals. Although Gideon was at a phase where personal connections with his family is taking shape his relationship with his girlfriend came to an abrupt end. He was devastated and heartbroken but because of his strength and ability to attend counselling he fought each day to not let that stray him away from his recovery.

Gideon is completely honest all the time at counselling about his recovery, sobriety, feelings and emotions. His will power to change is immense, he continued treatment and counselling soon he was able to live the life he wanted with self-respect.

Gideon is still attending OST and counselling, he has a new profound appreciation for good friends and family who supports him throughout his ordeal.

Gideon's story is inspirational and we hope that it would help many others who are in a similar situation. The road to recovery is only a decision and will power away.



Students taking a pledge against Teenage Pregnancy

