

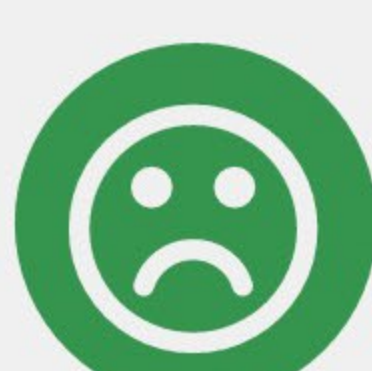
DEPRESSION

IN THE CARIBBEAN

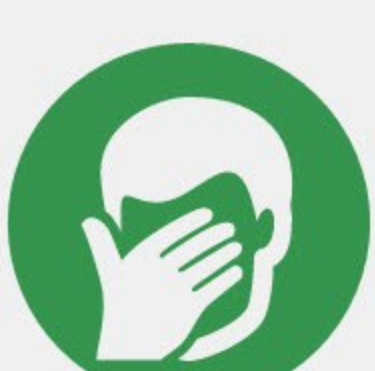
A tool for civil society advocacy, produced by the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, in support of World Health Day 2017.

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

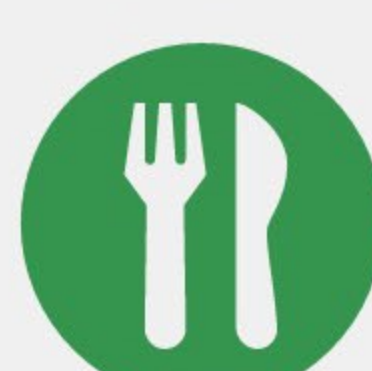
Depression - a complex mental health disorder - with symptoms ranging from relatively mild, but debilitating, to severe. Hallmark symptoms of depression are:



Sadness



Guilt or low self-worth



Loss of appetite



Tiredness, feeling 'slowed down'



Disturbed sleep



Poor concentration



Thoughts of suicide or death

Depression results from a complex interaction of **social, psychological, physical, and biological** events or factors.

More stress and dysfunction

Worsening of life situation

Increased depression

At its worst, suicide

COMORBID DEPRESSION

Comorbid depression - depression alongside another illness - is common and increases morbidity and mortality. Depression often occurs as a response to the disability associated with the chronic illness.

TREATMENT



Psychosocial support



Pharmacological

Combination therapy is the gold standard

BURDEN OF DEPRESSION

Globally, more than **300 million people** of all ages suffer from depression. Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, and is a major contributor to the overall global burden of disease.

In 2015, there were **> 2 million** prevalent cases of depressive disorders in the Caribbean - a 40 percent spike from 1990.

1 in 4 people suffer from one or more mental or behavioural disorder in their lifetime.



5,318
per 100,000 cases of depression diagnosed in Cuba

9th most depressed country globally.

24
per 100,000 cases of depression diagnosed

SURINAME

27
per 100,000 cases of depression diagnosed

GUYANA

claim some of the world's highest mortality rates from self-harm.

Depressive disorders greatly contribute to disability in the Caribbean populations, ranking as the 3rd highest contributor to disability adjusted life years (DALYs) among 15-49 year olds.

COMPLEXITIES OF DEPRESSION



Mental disorders are associated with a 15 - 20 year **life expectancy** reduction



Globally, fewer than 50% of those affected receive any treatment (in many countries, fewer than 10%). **Mental health services** are insufficient in number, distribution and efficiency. Health services in many territories remain mostly centralised.



Barriers to **effective care**: a lack of resources; lack of trained healthcare providers; insufficient and inaccurate assessment at the individual and population level; and social stigma.



Monitoring and evaluation, including annual external reviews of patient human rights, needs to be improved.



Many territories lack a mental health **policy**.



Insufficient **budget** allocation towards mental health, with misappropriation to centralised care.

WHAT CAN BE DONE

The main priorities for achieving an optimal mental health system are:

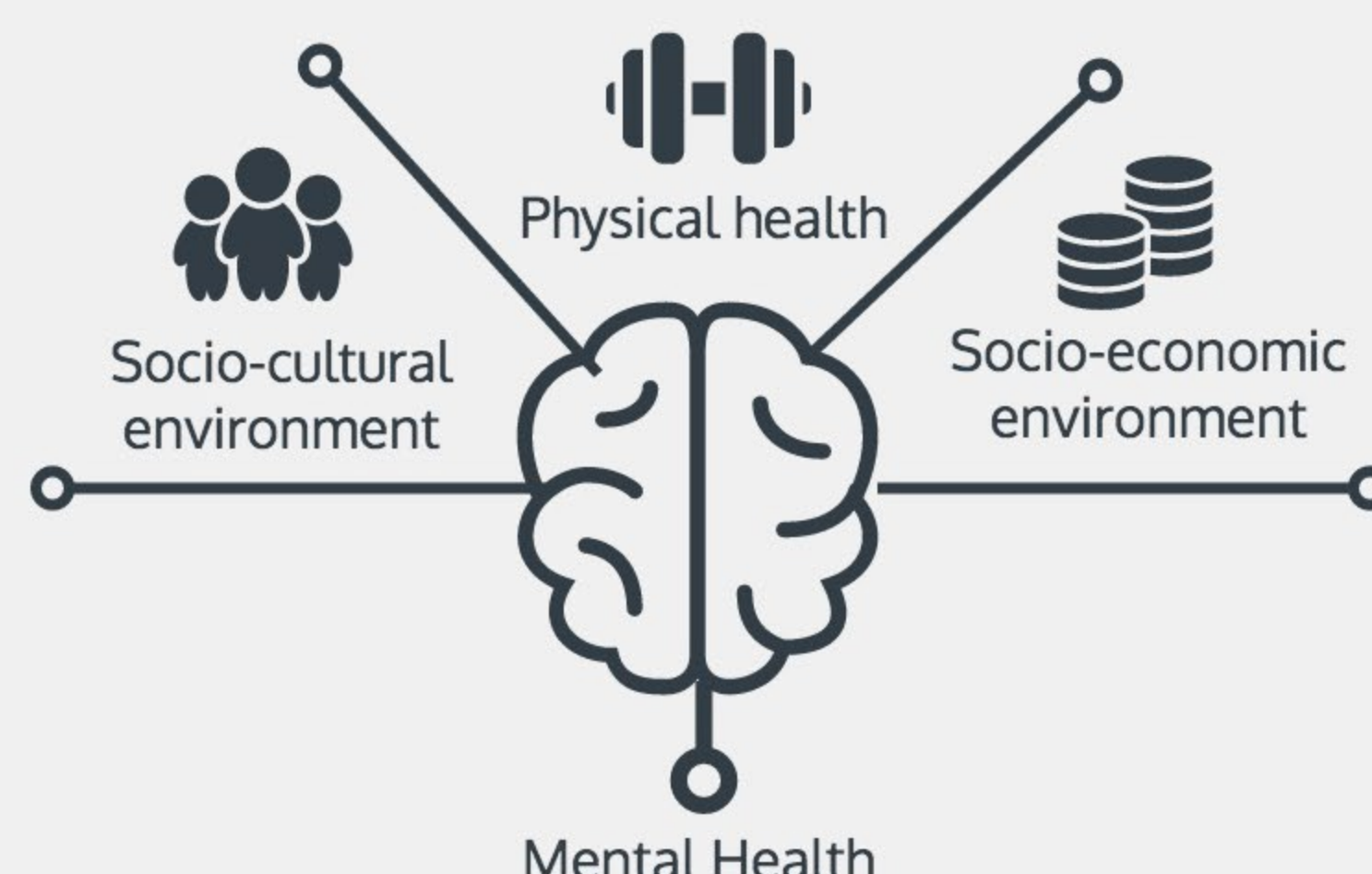
- 1 Promoting campaigns to eliminate stigma and discrimination
- 2 Establishing a national mental health policy or strategy
- 3 Strengthening and enabling psychosocial treatments aimed at recovery/return to work
- 4 Facilitating the move from mental hospitals to community care (deinstitutionalisation)



Mental health must be seen as a resource for well-being!



To reduce the burden of depression, we must first appreciate the connection between:



Multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral action must be taken to achieve the most change.



Reduction in the burden of mental health disorders including depression will require action from key actors across all sectors of society

- Civil Society Organisations
- Private Sector
- Policymakers
- Healthcare Professionals
- General Public
- Researchers



CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

- 1 Increase community awareness of depression, and the fundamental link between mental and physical health
- 2 Promote campaigns to eliminate stigma and discrimination
- 3 Advocate for appropriate financing of mental health programmes
- 4 Advocate for a national mental health policy or strategy
- 5 Promote depression research



GENERAL PUBLIC

- 1 Pay attention to your own state of mental health; prioritise building good relationships with friends, family or the community
- 2 Engage in physical and social activity to reduce stress and anxiety
- 3 Sleep is crucial; aim for at least 7 hours of sleep per night

This tool is part of **Healthy Caribbean Coalition's** ongoing advocacy agenda in support of assisting governments in meeting national, regional and global NCD targets.

* screening biases: the number of depression diagnoses can depend upon the efficacy of screening at the country-level.

SOURCES

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- Copeland J, Thornicroft G, Bird V, Bowis J, Slade M. Global priorities of civil society for mental health services: findings from a 53 country survey. World Psychiatry. 2014;13(2):198-200. doi:10.1002/wps.20133.

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- London Faculty of Public Health & Mental Health Foundation

- World Health Organization