

**MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT PPS**

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President

Pakistan Psychiatric Society

Pakistan Psychiatric Society (PPS) hasunfoldeditsvisionof futurein recent past.I amhumbled and seek the blessingsof Allah Almighty in my way to fulfill my responsibilities in this new venture of my professional career a\_spresident. I strongly believe in team work and mutual collaboration between stakeholders. I wished to add my twopenniesin the service of psychiatry throughPPSin terms of nationwide awareness and destigmatizing campaigns, enhancing the quality of teaching and training, international and national research training and collaboration, impact in publication, patronizing indigenous contribution to existing literature, and keeping our own experience up to date at par with international contemporary practices. I long one day psychiatry will grow into one of the many avenues of mental health profession and wemay be able to influence society and law makers in favor of human friendly normsandlegislation.

Moreover we will be jointly working for development of PPS National Guidelines, Book Publishing, GPs Training Program, Free Psychiatry Camps, informational care brochures, PPS membership Campaign and other Initiatives suggested or proposed by members of mentalhealth cornmunity!

! strongly believe that Mental Health Professionals can play a very dynamic role in not only providing clinical services but in general lifeissues like stressmanagement, better parenting,inculcation of tolerance, uplifting socialservicesin our society and in making our beloved country, strong and prosperous! We can also play our part by making thisworld moretolerant and humanfriendly place with Clean and GreenEnvironment!

Amid the voices of these vows were still echoing, the news of the death of two of our psychiatrist colleagues disrupted the echoes. While this incident is tragic and warranted our deep felt condolences, it only served to highlight the acute crisis of mental health which was already dire before the onset of COVID19. In the last year,mental healthproblemshavemultiplied manifoldall over the world.In Pakistan, this is manifested in the rising incidence of common mental illnesses including anxiety, depression and substance abuse. Alongside this are also rising cases of domestic and workplace violence, crime and violence aga1nst the most vulnerable segments of our populationincluding women,children and the poor. In addition, PPS is greatly concerned about the extreme stress and,burnout which all healthcare professionals are facing due to the fall out of the ongoing COVID19 pandemic. Doctors, nurses and all healthcare professionals are under

tremendous pressure bothatwork andathome.Wehavelost many brilliant and dedicated doctors and healthcare professionals to COVID19 and the ongoing second wave of the pandemic is stretching our healthcare resources including our dedicated healthcare heroes to the limits. PPS urges the Government of Pakistan and all provincial governments to make mental health a national priority and to take the following steps immediately to ameliorate the ongoingmentalhealth emergency:

1. Mental health must be provided a separate share in the national health budget commensurate with the existing needsof ourpopulation.
2. Treatment of mental illness and substance use disorders must be included in the usehat Sahulat Program" via 'Sehat lnsafCards'.
3. Psychiatric training centers need to be upgraded and enhancednationally.
4. All THQ and DHQ hospitals must have the services of a psychiatric department with consultant psychiatrists and affiliated mental health professionals working under their supervision available around the clock sopatients and their families do not have to travel to large cities to access mental healthservices.
5. All healthcare professionals and their families including doctors and nurses must be provided access to high quality mental health care round the clock for the duration of the COVID19pandemic andbeyond.
6. A national media awareness campaign about mental health and mental illness should be started immediately to inform the public about these deadly illnessesand their prevention and treatment.
7. Provision of Psychological hotline services for prevention of suicide.

Please feel free to communicate any ideas, plans, issues or other mattersof concern regarding betterment ofmentalhealth statusin Pakistan in terms of training of mental health professionals, service access to psychiatric patients, destigmatizing ideas,enhancement of forensic servicesor anyrelatedissues!

I look forward to stakeholdersfor a better mental health landscape in Pakistan.

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