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Tajuk : Sarawak third highest state in mental health problem

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KUCHING: Sarawak is in the third place in mental health problem, where prevalent mental illness among Malaysians is 29.2 per cent involving those between 16 to 19 years old and in the low income group.

There might be several factors that lead to the mental health problem with an 11.2 per cent increase from 2006 such as economic crisis, jobless, stress, environment, imbalance psychological needs, lack of awareness and lack of education about mental illness.

This was stressed by Minister of Welfare, Women and Community Wellbeing Datuk Hajah Fatimah Abdullah during the closing ceremony of the International Seminar on Professional Counselling 2016 at Hilton Hotel here, yesterday.

"This may seem like very simple thing but the mental illness does make a real difference in our family and community systems.

"It is no surprise that without opportunity to socialise, share or explore the world around us, anyone of you can feel unfulfilled and unhappy," she said.

Fatimah encouraged counsellors who graduated with counselling degrees, to register their expertise with Lembaga Kaunselor (Malaysia).

Counselling is a profession which has its own legal body. By utilising their counselling license, counsellors are able to provide better counselling services professionally and ethically, she added.

She further added that registered counsellors too, need to enhance their counselling skills and knowledge from time to time. There are no more boundaries in learning and education especially in this generation.

"With the updated knowledge and skills, counsellors may be able to reduce the stigma about mental illness, educate the community and make our society more open



DATUK Hajah Fatimah Abdullah (first row centre) with Prof. Dato' Dr. Mohamad Kadim Suaidi (first row ninth left), Dato' Dr. Abdul Halim Mohd Hassan (first row eighth right) and other officials having a group photograph with the participants of the International Seminar on Professional Counselling 2016 (ProCoun16).

and understanding about mental health issues.

"But we also need to get serious about treatment and make sure that the help is there for people who need it and we have provide a professional helping to understand the psychological needs," Fatimah pointed out.

Treatment for mental health is not something that happens overnight. It is something that is cured by a drug or procedure. Therefore, together we need to prevent mental health problems by educating the family member and community to understand what mental health is.

"We can also educate ourselves and start to think about how we can be to more welcoming and more understanding our friend, our

neighbor or colleague or to someone who is going through a tough time in their life and who may need someone to turn to.

"The reason that we should have an agent of change in mental health is to become a mediator. The experience of those who have suffered from it, the route to recovery the way we can support and help people toward that recovery," she said.

Family's ability is also important to positively change in light of challenging live event or stress where the presence of vulnerability processes and protective process were conceive to interact reciprocally, thus affecting the functioning of a family and all its members in a circular manner, she said.



DATUK Hajah Fatimah Abdullah accompanied by Prof. Dato' Dr. Mohamad Kadim Suaidi (third right), Dato' Dr. Abdul Halim Mohd Hassan (left) and others taking a look at the 'play therapy' displayed during the International Seminar on Professional Counselling 2016 (ProCoun16). PHOTOS: RAMIDI SUBARI

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