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Tajuk : First aid for mental health

First aid for mental health

Participants of workshop plan to provide training in Sarawak

KUCHING: Following a recent workshop on mental health first aid, the participants plan to develop ways of providing such training and ensure it is relevant to Sarawak.

Organised by Universiti Malaysia Sarawak's Centre for Disability Studies and the Mental Health Association of Sarawak (MHAS), the workshop introduced the concept of first aid courses for mental health and discussed its local relevance.

It was conducted by Assoc Prof Dr Jenny Martin, a social work lecturer at RMIT Melbourne and trained youth mental health first aider.

The centre's director Assoc Prof Dr Ling How Kee said few people in Sarawak recognised the early signs that a young person was feeling troubled and would benefit from being helped by those trained in mental health.

"When a tragedy happens, people wonder why no one realised this earlier, yet no one thinks to ask for training. We need to increase what is now called mental health literacy," she said.

A major challenge will be breaking the stigma surrounding mental health problems, an issue MHAS tries to address.

MHAS member Gill Raja said society needed to be more informed so that they become more understanding and accepting of people experiencing a mental health condition.

"Currently, society's attitude can add to people's problems rather than help them open up and seek help. We have to realise there is nothing to fear.

"Mental health issues, like depression and anxiety, are very common and can be overcome," she said.



(From left) Dr Ling, Dr Martin and MHAS Miri chairman Dr Adeline Wong at the workshop.

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