

Mental health

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ACCORDING to the World Health Organization, Mental Health is a state of wellbeing where an individual is able to understand their abilities, manage daily stresses, and contribute to their community.

It is about being emotionally healthy enough to cope with life, make decisions and connect with those around you.

Throughout our lives, various circumstances and encounters affect our mental health, and each person experiences this differently. It affects our thoughts, moods and behavior.

Lifeline Fiji has been getting a lot of crisis calls in relation to relationship issues, family pressure, grief, food assistance and suicidal ideation (the formation of ideas or concepts).

While these are common issues in our households, its impact on people is different.

The various ways in which people deal with these stressful situations also bring about different social and clinical outcomes. Life experiences can either become a mental health risk factor or a protective factor that strengthens a person's resilience.

Our mental health can change over time, so if you know someone is struggling with mental health issues, do show your support or kindly refer them to the relevant service providers.

A few early warning signs that someone may be struggling with their mental health could be:

thoughts/talks of harming themselves or others

dramatic change in appetite and sleeping patterns (could be more or less)

feeling excessively sad, worried, scared, confused, or angry

increase in the use of alcohol or smoking

Feeling like nothing matters or feeling hopeless or helpless

Withdrawing from usual people or activities once enjoyed

■ Talking about hearing voices

■ Extreme mood swings that affect relationships

Low energy and loss of interest in daily tasks such as getting ready for school, work, or personal grooming

Inability to concentrate or remember things

Any event can affect a person's mental health. It can be a recent loss of friendship, unemployment, long term illness, family violence, or death of a loved one. When stress from these events are not properly managed, it can accumulate and manifest physically, emotionally or socially. Just being kind to someone and showing you care can go a long way in helping them open up to you.

You can look after your mental health by learning how to effectively deal with daily stresses of life, staying active, connecting socially, surrounding yourself with positive people, take care of your body, sleeping well and practicing gratitude just to name a few.

If you are struggling and want to speak to a counsellor or just chat, do call the numbers below, remember you do not have to go through it alone.

Lifeline Fiji has been doing a lot of work in this space with very few resources. They are at the front line of support for literally thousands of people who call for help. Forty percent of all calls received by Lifeline Fiji are suicide related. Nothing is more tragic than someone whose world has become so despairing, that they want to take their own life. If they succeed, they leave devastation in their families and loved ones left behind. Lifeline Fiji is at the coalface of intervention to give new hope to those who feel so desperate.

In 2019, Lifeline Fiji was facing a very bleak future. Thanks to the Gala Dinner that year and the generous support of so many people, this future became a lot more stable.

But now, two years of pandemic have taken their toll. In 2020 and 2021, due to the world-wide COVID-19 crisis, the gala dinners had to be cancelled, and along with it, the opportunity for Lifeline to raise funds to see them through these two years

The need for funds does not stop because of a virus – in fact, the number of calls the dedicated volunteers respond to now has increased dramatically as so many Fijians are under so much more emotional pressure.

But due to the cancelled dinner and loss of fundraising opportunities, Lifeline is now in danger of losing its volunteers as there will soon be no more funds to support them. To save funds, last year, they moved their offices to a volunteer's private home as they can no longer afford their office rent.

On Friday October 7th Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, who is the Patron of Lifeline Fiji will be hosting what will be one of the biggest highlights on the Fiji entertainment calendar – A Gala Dinner and Concert - TOUCHING HEAVEN – The World's Most Beautiful Music will be an evening of the most beautiful classical opera arias of all time.

The music will be arranged and directed by Music Maestro Igelese Ete and will feature international class soloists led by Soko, combining in soaring beautiful music.

The evening will also feature a grand dinner and a charity auction.

All profits from ticket sales as well as all proceeds from auctions will go to the work of Lifeline Fiji, which will be used to enhance their outreach of Lifeline Fiji to the many people calling for help.

There will be amazing auction prizes including travel, accommodation, dining, and sports memorabilia including an All Blacks jersey signed and donated by Richie McCaw and other memorabilia from Eric Rush and Sir Michael Jones.

Lifeline Fiji and Ratu Epeli Nailatikau invite you to be a part of this memorable evening, by sponsoring the dinner and purchasing tables for this very worthwhile cause.

You can support Lifeline Fiji by:

Becoming a gold, or silver sponsor

- Purchasing tables of 10
- Donating auction items
- Encouraging your colleagues and other organisations to support the event

This event will generate great media attention and will provide strong exposure for our gold and other sponsors who will receive high profile media coverage.

For further information please contact:

· Ms Selai Vonotabua Phone: 9364734 / 7575650 Email: selaiv@gmail.com Thank you for considering this worthy cause. We look forward to your support for this memorable evening.

This article is co-written by Laisiana Rakula from Lifeline Fiji and Kameli Batiweti, FCEF chief executive officer. The views expressed in this article are their own and not necessarily that of this newspaper.