

Raise awareness in society and remove stigma

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Renowned Bangalore-based Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist raises awareness on mental illnesses in pregnancy and the role of the creative arts to support maternal, child & family mental health in UK Parliament

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New Delhi , The House of Commons hosted HOPE 2018, a ground-breaking, awareness raising event on 'Mental Wellbeing in women during Pregnancy and beyond' at the Attlee Suite, UK Parliament, Westminster on Monday, the 10th December 2018. It was organised by Consultant Obstetrician Dr Raja Gangopadhyay from the UK. It aimed to raise awareness in society and remove stigma. Worldwide, at least 1 in 10 mothers suffer from mental health conditions during pregnancy (WHO), making this one of the commonest health conditions during pregnancy. Mental health conditions are still one of the leading causes of death of the mothers in the UK and globally. According to the last Confidential Enquiry into Maternal death (MBRRACE report), almost a quarter of mothers died due to psychiatric causes. 1 in 7 mothers died of suicide. Many such sad deaths and suffering are preventable if appropriate measures are taken during pregnancy and after childbirth. However, many mothers (and families) do not get the support they need during this vital period of life. Many mothers sadly suffer in silence due to stigma, shame, and fear of the baby being removed by the social services. Stress/ poorly controlled mental health conditions during pregnancy can also adversely affect pregnancy outcomes. This can lead to low birth weight, premature labour, preeclampsia and mental health problems in the unborn child. Globally lauded Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist, composer/musician, artist, author, speaker and humanitarian Dr Ramya Mohan , who is currently based between Bengaluru, India and the United Kingdom was an invited speaker on the occasion . Dr Mohan spoke on ' Creativity and Creation : A mental health strategy using the creative arts for women and families in pregnancy and beyond'. At this booked-out mental health event, Dr Mohan highlighted the particular mental health issues faced by expectant and new mothers and their families . She threw light on the science /role of creativity and the use of the creative arts (Music, Art) in supporting emotional well-being and mental health. She discussed her internationally acclaimed therapeutic technique CAPE (Creative Arts for Processing Emotions) and its usefulness in pregnancy and in families with new babies . Dr Mohan's motivating talk threw light on the innovative concept of integrating Neuroscience and the Creative Arts through CAPE, a self-guided technique pioneered by Dr. Mohan and acclaimed on a global platform. CAPE has supported resilience, emotional health and self-esteem in many women, children and families over the past three years. Dr Mohan spoke of her rich experiences, working in the diverse areas of psychiatry, music and art across the East and the West to support brains better. Dressed in a sari, Dr Mohan eloquently spoke as a global citizen on West/East perspectives, shared statistics and insights relevant to mental illness and opened a conversation on future directions. Her unique perspectives as a clinician and musician working across cultures and her pride at her dual British Indian heritage evoked an enthusiastic response from an informed audience. The talk was followed by a Q & A with the receptive audience, a mix of UK parliamentarians , policy-makers , change makers , healthcare staff and mental health advocates/campaigners. Tim Loughton, one of the three sponsoring MPs , discussed the need to involve stakeholders in conversations and initiatives around mental health. He spoke of the need for investment and initiatives around early childhood development. He stressed the importance of early intervention services, supporting new parents and young people's emotional health. "Investment in society and the well-being of our children and their parents is the best investment ever. Ease of access to mental health is a global issue", he said. MPs from across the United Kingdom were present at the event - Helen Whately (Chair of the All Parliamentary group for Mental Health), Richard

Harrington and Luciana Berger spoke on the occasion and contributed to the conversation around mental health awareness in women, children and families. Mothers, fathers, families and service users shared their personal experiences, questions and thoughts with the MPs (along with other leading experts across spheres as diverse as Obstetrics , Midwifery, Writing, Life coaching/Mentoring) in this high profile international event. There was a lively dialogue around case studies, myths, facts and realities surrounding mental health conditions during pregnancy. Mr Richard Harrington MP (MP For Watford and Watford General Hospital), Mr Tim Loughton MP (MP for East Worthing & Shoreham), and Mr Norman Lamb MP (MP for North Norfolk) sponsored the event.

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