



## Short Communication: Transforming Adolescent Mental Health Care in Nepal

**Amit Jha**

Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist Team Lead, Adolescent Mental Health Unit Mental Hospital, Lagan Khel Nepal.

### Article Info

**Received:** July 16, 2024

**Accepted:** August 26, 2024

**Published:** September 04, 2024

**\*Corresponding author:** Amit Jha, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist Team Lead, Adolescent Mental Health Unit Mental Hospital, Lagan Khel Nepal.

**Citation:** Jha A. (2024). "Short Communication: Transforming Adolescent Mental Health Care in Nepal." *Clinical Psychology and Mental Health Care*, 6(1); DOI: 10.61148/2994-0184/CPMHC/081

**Copyright:** © 2024 Amit Jha. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

### Abstract:

The Adolescent Mental Health Unit (AMHU) at Mental Hospital, Lagankhel, Nepal, stands as a pioneering entity in providing comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, and evidence-based mental health services for adolescents. Since its inception on October 3, 2023, and the initiation of inpatient services on December 4, 2023, the 12-bed unit has significantly advanced in addressing the mental health needs of adolescents across the country

**Keywords:** adolescent mental health; comprehensive care; multi-disciplinary approach; nepal, mental health services

### Introduction:

The Adolescent Mental Health Unit (AMHU) at Mental Hospital, Lagankhel, Nepal, stands as a pioneering entity in providing comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, and evidence-based mental health services for adolescents. Since its inception on October 3, 2023, and the initiation of inpatient services on December 4, 2023, the 12-bed unit has significantly advanced in addressing the mental health needs of adolescents across the country.

**Team and Services:** the AMHU comprises a dedicated team of 32 professionals, including child and adolescent psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, medical officers, nursing officer, social workers, special educator, staff nurses and various support staff. This diverse team enables the unit to offer holistic care, catering to over 1,391 adolescents by June 2024, including 93 in-patient cases. The unit's comprehensive services include outpatient and inpatient care, tele-mental health services, and community outreach programs, ensuring accessibility even in remote areas.

**Comprehensive and Multi-disciplinary Approach:** The AMHU adopts a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach to mental health care, extending beyond immediate treatment to continuous support through innovative programs. The unit's tele-mental health services provide critical access to care for adolescents in remote regions. Community outreach programs play a vital role in delivering psychological first aid during natural calamities and rapid responses for mass dissociation events.

The unit actively engages in advocacy and education to combat the stigma associated with mental illness. By leveraging mass media and collaborating with government agencies, NGOs, and INGOs, AMHU enhances awareness and trains local service providers, creating a network of informed caregivers nationwide. Educational initiatives in schools, focusing on mental health awareness, stress management, and life skills, further empower adolescents to navigate their mental health challenges effectively.

**Therapeutic Environment and Social Work:** The therapeutic milieu within the AMHU ward fosters peer support among adolescents, promoting healing and community building. Social workers bridge the gap between hospital services and the community, facilitating disability certification and advocating for the rights of adolescents with special needs. This approach ensures an inclusive and supportive environment for all adolescents.

**Challenges and Achievements:** Nepal's population comprises 38% children and adolescents, presenting both opportunities and challenges for the AMHU. Cultural resistance to pharmacotherapy for severe mental illnesses poses significant obstacles. Despite these challenges, the unit has achieved remarkable success in

managing mental health concerns among adolescents, supported by a committed team and evidence-based practices.

### Conclusion:

The AMHU at Mental Hospital, Lagankhel, has made a profound impact on adolescent mental health care in Nepal. By providing essential services and reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, the unit has transformed the lives of many adolescents. The commitment to innovative, evidence-based, and compassionate care continues to drive the unit's mission, inspiring further growth and excellence in adolescent mental health services.