



Union Health Ministry to Observe World Mental Health Day 2026, Reaffirming Commitment to Accessible, Inclusive and People-Centred Mental Healthcare

Tele-MANAS renders yeoman service in bringing free, confidential and round-the-clock mental health support within easy reach of people across India through toll-free helpline 14416

Over 47.75 lakh calls received since launch on 10 October 2022; 53 Tele-MANAS Cells operational across all 36 States and Union Territories

Women account for nearly 44% of recorded caller profiles, reflecting growing access to mental health support through telephone-based counselling

MANN Jaagriti initiative to strengthen community awareness, encourage early help-seeking and address mental health stigma

Mental health services integrated into over 1.83 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs; District Mental Health Programme sanctioned for 767 districts

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The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will observe **World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2026**, reaffirming the Government of India's commitment to making mental healthcare accessible, affordable, inclusive and people-centred. This year's global theme, **"Lived experiences heard: real voices, real change,"** underscores the importance of listening to individuals with lived experiences of mental health conditions and ensuring their voices contribute to shaping responsive mental health policies and services.

At the heart of India's efforts to improve access to mental healthcare is **Tele MANAS (Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States)**, which has emerged as an important pillar of the country's mental healthcare delivery system. Through its **national**

toll-free helpline 14416, Tele-MANAS is providing free, confidential and round-the-clock mental health counselling and support, enabling people to seek professional assistance easily, irrespective of their geographical location or socioeconomic background.

Tele-MANAS: Making Mental Health Support Just a Phone Call Away

Launched on 10 October 2022, Tele-MANAS has rendered yeoman service in bridging gaps in access to mental healthcare by bringing timely counselling, emotional support and professional guidance directly to people through a simple telephone call.

Since its launch, **Tele MANAS has received 47,75,644 calls, with 53 operational cells across all 36 States and Union Territories**, as of October 2026. This extensive reach reflects the growing importance of accessible, technology-enabled mental health services in addressing diverse mental health needs across the country.

Through **14416**, individuals experiencing emotional distress, anxiety, stress, sleep-related concerns or other mental health challenges can connect with trained counsellors without having to travel to a healthcare facility for initial support. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and supported by multilingual services, the helpline makes it easier for people to seek help at a time and place convenient to them.

The service is particularly significant for people residing in rural, remote and underserved areas, where access to specialised mental healthcare facilities may be limited. By offering a confidential and supportive platform, Tele-MANAS is also helping address hesitation associated with seeking mental health assistance and encouraging individuals to reach out early.

Beyond initial counselling, the programme facilitates access to specialised mental health professionals and appropriate referral services wherever required, helping ensure continuity of care through linkages with the wider public healthcare system.

Growing Public Engagement Reflects the Importance of Accessible Mental Healthcare

The increasing utilisation of Tele-MANAS highlights the importance of having a readily accessible platform where individuals can seek support without fear of stigma or discrimination.

An analysis of 13,35,275 recorded caller profiles indicates that **women account for 43.78% (5,84,587) of callers**, while men constitute 54.18% (7,23,427). The substantial participation of women highlights the role of telephone-based counselling in providing a convenient and supportive avenue for seeking mental healthcare.

The service has also witnessed significant engagement among young and working-age populations, with individuals aged **18–45 years accounting for 73.2% of recorded caller profiles**.

The range of concerns reported by callers, including emotional distress, stress related to examinations, workplaces and relationships, anxiety and sleep disturbances, demonstrates the importance of accessible mental health support in everyday life.

By providing a platform where individuals can speak openly, receive guidance and be connected to appropriate services, Tele-MANAS is contributing to a broader shift towards recognising mental health as an integral part of overall health and well-being.

MANN Jaagriti: Taking Mental Health Awareness to Communities

As part of World Mental Health Day 2026, the Ministry is also taking forward **MANN Jaagriti**, a structured community awareness and engagement initiative aimed at strengthening mental health literacy, reducing stigma and encouraging timely help-seeking.

The initiative seeks to move beyond one-time awareness activities by promoting sustained community engagement through schools, colleges, workplaces, health facilities and other community platforms.

Through locally relevant activities, States and Union Territories will encourage open conversations around mental health, promote early identification of mental health concerns and create greater awareness about available services, including Tele-MANAS.

The initiative will also encourage the involvement of healthcare professionals, educators, community workers, youth, families, caregivers, civil society organisations and persons with lived experience of mental health conditions.

By bringing mental health conversations into everyday community settings, MANN Jaagriti aims to foster supportive environments where seeking mental health assistance is recognised as a positive and important step towards well-being.

Strengthening Mental Healthcare from the Community to the District Level

Complementing the reach of Tele-MANAS, the Government of India continues to strengthen mental healthcare services through the **National Mental Health Programme (NMHP)** and the **District Mental Health Programme (DMHP)**.

The DMHP has been sanctioned for implementation in **767 districts**, with support extended to States and Union Territories under the National Health Mission. The programme facilitates outpatient care, counselling, psychosocial interventions, medicines, follow-up care, outreach activities and referral services, alongside provisions for inpatient mental healthcare at the district level.

Mental health services have also been integrated into the Comprehensive Primary Health Care package offered through **over 1.83 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs** across the country.

Through these facilities, primary healthcare teams undertake screening and early identification of mental health concerns, provide psychosocial support and follow-up care, and facilitate referrals to higher healthcare facilities wherever necessary.

Together, these initiatives are strengthening a continuum of mental healthcare that connects community awareness, primary healthcare, district-level services and digital counselling platforms.

Towards a More Inclusive and Supportive Mental Healthcare Ecosystem

On World Mental Health Day 2026, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare reiterates that **mental healthcare should be within everyone's reach and seeking help should never be a source of hesitation or stigma.**

The growing reach of Tele-MANAS, alongside the expansion of community-based and primary mental healthcare services, reflects the Government's continued efforts to build a responsive healthcare system that places the needs, dignity and well-being of individuals at its centre.

Through Tele-MANAS, the Ministry is reinforcing a simple but important message: mental health support need not be distant, difficult or inaccessible. **Help is available, and reaching out can begin with a phone call.**

The Ministry encourages individuals experiencing mental health concerns, as well as families and caregivers seeking guidance, to make use of the free and confidential services offered through **Tele MANAS at 14416**, available 24×7 across the country.

Every conversation matters. Every voice deserves to be heard. And mental health support must be accessible to all.

SR

HFW/Union Health Ministry observes World Mental Health Day 2026/9th October2026/2

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