

Report on Virtual Mental Health Program for Migrant Nepalese - Session 1

Program Title: “Mental Health Awareness Session for Nepali Migrants – Talking about Journey of Heart”

Date: December 23, 2025

Mode: Virtual (Online)

1. Background and Purpose

This virtual mental health awareness session was organized in response to the growing psychosocial needs of Non-Resident Nepalis (NRNs) living and working abroad. Migrant Nepalese often face multiple stressors including labor exploitation risks, work pressure, social isolation, cultural adjustment difficulties, family separation, and limited access to culturally appropriate mental health services.

The program aligns with the objectives of NRNA, working to promote migrant welfare, protection, and wellbeing. The session aimed to complement existing labor, protection, and consular support services by integrating mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into migrant-focused interventions.

2. Session Summary

The session began with establishing shared agreements to ensure psychological safety, confidentiality, respect, and voluntary participation. Participants were encouraged to engage either by raising hands or using the chat function.

Key components of the session included:

- **Grounding and mindfulness exercises:** breathing techniques, focusing on bodily sensations (feet), and awareness of surrounding sounds to help participants connect with the present moment.
- **Ice-breaking and interaction:** one-word sharing on positive aspects of living abroad, challenges of foreign employment, things missed from Nepal, understanding of mental health, and self-care practices.
- **Conceptual understanding of mental health:** mental health explained as a balance of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, using the metaphor of “mind as weather.”
- **Emotional check-in:** participants reflected on their current “mind weather.”
- **Case story discussion:** Case story of Sita, “*सीताको मौन आशु*” was used to explore real-life challenges faced by migrant Nepalis, emotional and behavioral impacts, barriers to help-seeking, and ways of providing peer support.
- **Psychoeducation:** definitions of health and mental health, differentiation between stress and mental health problems, common signs and symptoms, and global mental health statistics.
- **Coping and management strategies:** individual, family, and social-level strategies for mental health care.

- **Myths and facts:** addressing common misconceptions related to mental health.
- **Help-seeking information:** sharing national and organizational helplines and counseling services.

The session concluded with an open question-and-answer segment and a feedback form.

3. Participants Overview

- **Target group:** Non-Resident Nepalese (foreign employment, study, and long-term residence abroad)
- **Total participants:** 34 (17 males, 14 females, 3 unknown)
- **Geographical spread:** Participants joined from multiple destination countries like Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Portugal, USA and Spain)
- **Participation mode:** Audio, chat, and interactive discussion
- **Engagement level:** High engagement observed through chat responses and one-word reflections.

4. Questions and Concerns Raised by Participants

Participants raised reflective and practical questions, including:

- **Male, Oman** *“Health safety is the main challenge in abroad, how to address it?”*
- **Female, Europe:** *“Differences between normal stress and mental health problems and how to recognize early warning signs of mental health difficulties?”*
- **Female, Europe:** *“There are many suicides related issues in Europe among migrant Nepalese. How can we control?”*
- **Female, Portugal:** *“How NRNA and other mental health organizations can address the increase rate of suicide in host countries like Portugal?”*

These questions reflected strong interest in self-awareness and need of accessible mental health support systems.

5. Challenges Identified During the Session

- **Low participation volume:** Multiple group interaction and sharing on different perspectives of mental health among participation was challenging in a small virtual group.
- **Time-zone barriers:** Different time zones affected being fully presence during the session.
- **Emotional sensitivity of topics:** Discussions on topics likes suicide, distress, challenges and depression required careful facilitation and emotional containment in small group activity which was not possible due to lack of breakout rooms setup.
- **Stigma and fear:** Participants expressed hesitation in openly discussing mental health concerns due to fear of judgment or employment consequences.

- **Limited-service linkage abroad:** Participants highlighted many suicidal, anxiety and depression cases, and was concerned about accessibility of mental health support in host countries.
- **Technical issues:** Minor issues during zoom meetings like opening full screen, changing slides and showing up in video call was addressed.

6. Key Learnings

- Migrant Nepalese experience significant emotional and psychosocial stressors related to separation, domestic violence, work pressure, and cultural adjustment.
- Safe spaces and storytelling are effective in encouraging sharing and reflection
- They were not able to verbalize their challenging situations among family members so need of safe and supportive space to ventilate emotions and share challenges like virtual sessions and small group activities is necessary.
- Participant's value simple language, metaphors, and practical coping tools.
- There is a strong need for continued mental health awareness and support programs in future.

7. Recommendations

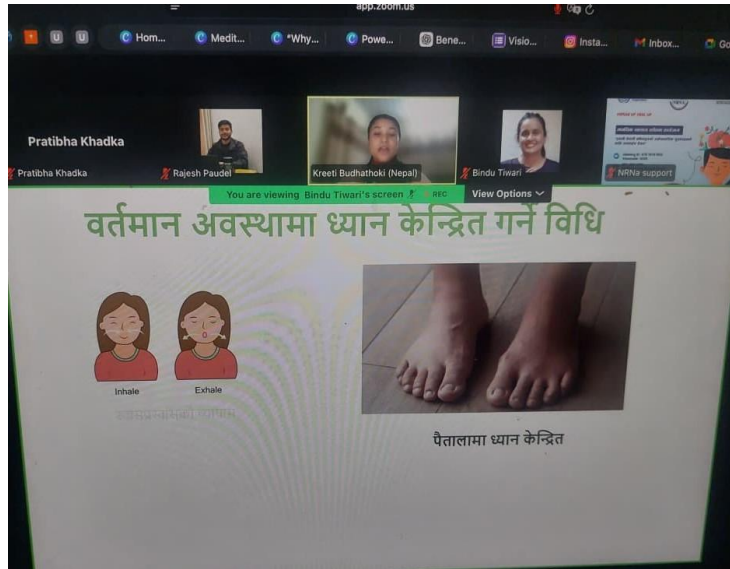
- **Integrate MHPSS into migrant support services:** NRNA, embassies, and mental health organizations should mainstream mental health awareness within labor orientation, welfare, and protection programs.
- **Conduct regular thematic sessions:** Topics such as workplace stress, family separation, substance use, trauma, suicide prevention, and relationship challenges abroad should be prioritized.
- **Establish referral and coordination mechanisms:** Develop clear pathways linking embassies, NRNA, and mental health service providers in Nepal and destination countries.
- **Strengthen peer-support networks:** Train community volunteers, NRNA representatives, and migrant leaders in basic psychosocial support and psychological first aid.
- **Develop multilingual, culturally appropriate materials:** Simple Nepali-language resources, recordings, and helpline information should be widely disseminated.
- **Address stigma through advocacy:** Joint campaigns by embassies, NRNA, and MH organizations can normalize help-seeking and counter harmful myths.

8. Conclusion

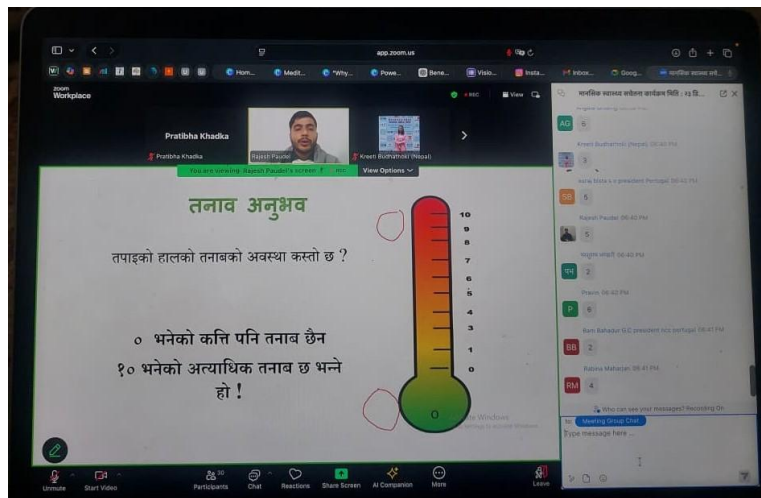
This virtual mental health awareness session demonstrates the critical importance of integrating psychosocial wellbeing into migrant support systems. For NRNA, Mental health organizations and Nepali diplomatic missions, such initiatives offer a practical, low-cost, and high-impact approach to strengthening migrant resilience, preventing crisis situations, and promoting early help-seeking.

Scaling and institutionalizing similar programs through collaboration between embassies, NRNA and civil society organizations can significantly contribute to the protection, dignity, and overall wellbeing of Non-Resident Nepalis worldwide.

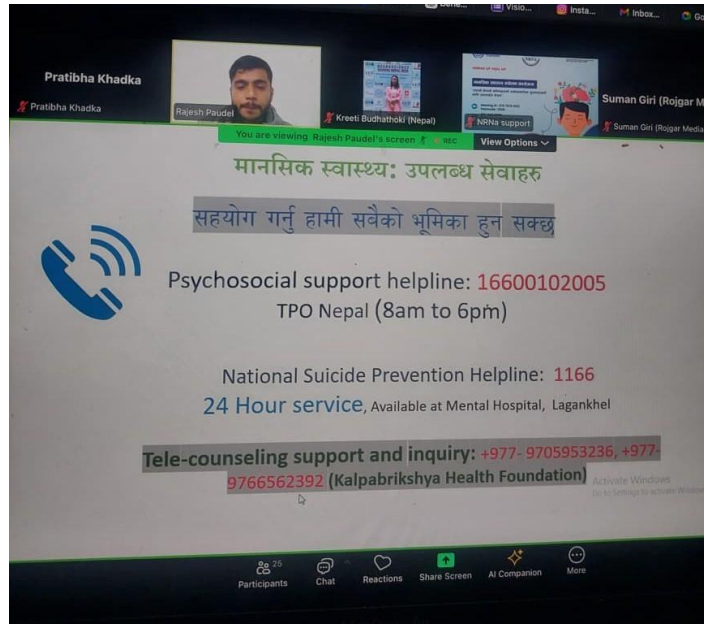
Some clips taken during the virtual session



Facilitator demonstrating and guiding grounding technique among participants



Facilitator assessing the level of stress through stress thermometer



Facilitator circulating helpline and support contact numbers among participants