Developing a 4 week online digital course for journalists on Sensitive Reporting of Mental Health

Author: R.Mangala*[1], Sweta Pal[2], Anant Bhan[2], R.Thara[1] and Vikram Patel[2] [1.]Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF) Chennai [2.] SANGATH , Bhopal

Enabling Translation of Science to Service to ENhance Depression CarE (ESSENCE)

- Bridge science to service gap
- Capacity building of key stakeholders in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Afghanistan
- **To achieve** : Reduction in MH Gap

GOAL	TARGET GROUP
Develop Cost effective implementation research	Researchers
Dissemination of findings Knowledge exchange	**Media professionals Service users**
Facilitate policy making using research findings	Policy makers and program managers

Capacity Building of Media Professionals

Aims:

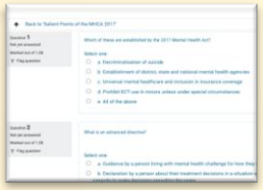
- Design and develop a free online course on Sensitive reporting of mental health
- Fellowships for working journalists for 1 year
- Increase and improve mental health reportage

Design and Development of course material

Insights from pilot testing

Positive feedback on content and learning methods

Need for prompt tech support



- **46 completed in 2 batches**
- Course is available to learners
- Launch of course and onboarding
- Final edits and review
- Digitisation and pilot testing on LMS
- External review and revisions
- Content development
- Interviews with key stakeholders to develop course blueprint
- Scoping review of existing CB courses for media professionals

Course on Sensitive Reporting of Mental Health

Self-paced, 4 weeks, requiring 6-8 hours/week

Currently available in English

4 modules, divided into 4-5 lessons each

Module 1 : Introduction to Mental health

Module 2: Understanding Mental illnesses, disease burden and interventions

Module3: Sensitive reporting

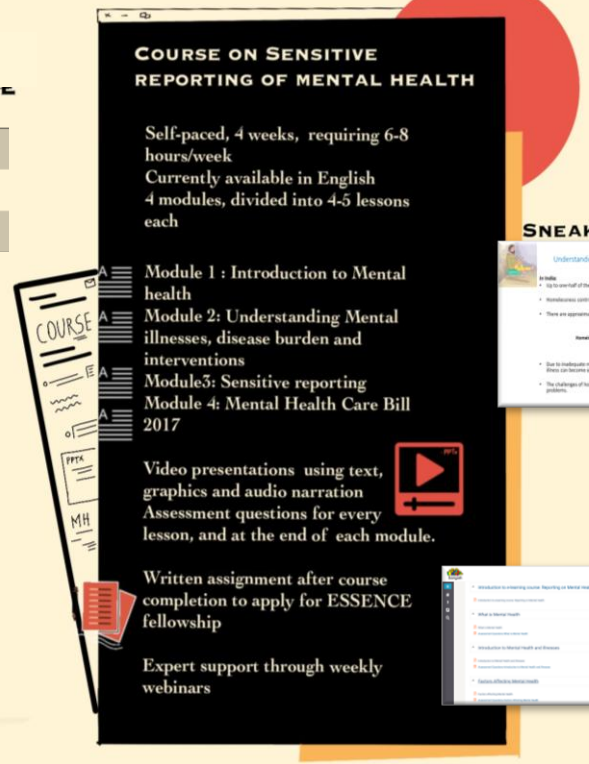
Module 4: Mental Health Care Bill 2017

Video presentations using text, graphics and audio narration

Assessment questions for every lesson, and at the end of each module.

Written assignment after course completion to apply for ESSENCE fellowship

Expert support through weekly webinars



Sneak peak

Salient Features

- First of its kind in India
- Available free of cost
- Highlights lived experiences of people with MI
- Encourages critical thinking
- Weekly webinars
- Critical evaluation of articles & practice assignments
- Free course completion certificate
- Eligibility to apply for ESSENCE Fellowships

Evaluation metrics being recorded:

- Rates of dropout
- Engagement on LMS, time spent on each Part
- Assessment scores
- Pre and post survey to measure change in KAP
- Learners applying/ receiving fellowships
- Learner feedback

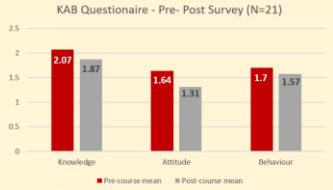
Course Evaluation

2 batches completed so far

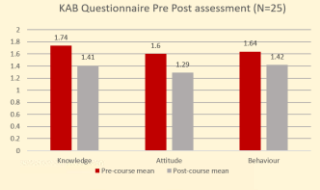
Batches	No. of applications	Onboarded on LMS Platform	Number Completed	Drop Outs
May-June 2020	48.	35.	25.	10
Sept-Oct. 2020	37.	27.	21.	6
June-July 2021	37.	29.	Ongoing	NA

Reasons for Dropout: Network issues, Covid related, Work related

Knowledge Attitude Behaviour Questionnaire



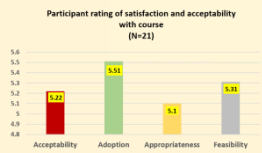
Improvement in all 3 domains seen but not statistically significant



Very small group, with good pre test scores – reason for lack of significant change.

Course Evaluation : Music Inventory (26 item, 6 point likert scale)

Mean score across the domains > 5 (out of 6) Favourable rating of all domains



Outcomes

- Course translated and adapted in Nepal, Bangladesh and Afghanistan
- 5 fellowships from course participants completed so far
- Several publications in National and regional newspapers, online and Television

Future directions

- Translation into Tamil and Hindi
- Make it available online throughout the year
- Fellows to become mentors of juniors at workplace.
- Plan to offer this to students of media/ journalism through colleges.

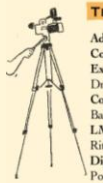
PUBLICATIONS AS A PART OF ESSENCE FELLOWSHIP

Testimonials

I am sure it will help journalists in reporting on mental health issues in more accurate and ethical manner.
- Shashwat Gupta Ray

Content explained in a simple way . Helped me write 15 stories - Prem Vijay

Made me realize the impact of journalism for mental health advocacy. It's been a great learning experience.
- Deepika Gumaste



Team Roles:

Advisors: Dr Thara, Dr Vikram Patel, Dr Anant Bhan
Course lead: Dr Mangala R, Sweta Pal
External Review Group: Dr Jaya Sreedhar, Ramya Kannan, Ramanathan S
Course Coordination: Babita Negi, Sruti Mohan
LMS Management: Ritu Srivastava
Digitisation& Graphics: Pooja Dhurve

mangala@scarfindia.org

FUNDED BY NIMH