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## Mental Health Must Take Priority Over Physical Well-being, Say Experts



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Speakers at the World Mental Health Day celebration organized by Media Plus in association with the Neeraj Foundation emphasized that mental health deserves greater priority than physical health. They called on society to act as a compassionate “weeping shoulder” for those in distress and to stand united in promoting collective welfare and emotional well-being.

They underlined that timely social intervention in matters affecting an individual’s psychological

stability can create a transformative impact. “World Mental Health Day is not merely a day of awareness—it is a call to action,” they said, stressing the need to reshape public attitudes toward mental wellness and to make mental health care a universal and accessible priority for all.

The event, held at the Mumbai Hall of the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), was inaugurated by Jose Philip, founder of the Neeraj Foundation. Sharing the tragic story of his son, he highlighted the importance of recognizing each child’s unique potential and nurturing their emotional development. “Children should be allowed to enjoy their childhood. Academic excellence alone cannot guarantee success. We must aim for the development of a well-rounded personality,” he said, urging educators and parents to create a balanced environment that protects children’s mental health.

He further cautioned that rigid educational systems, performance pressure, and excessive screen exposure are contributing to growing levels of anxiety and depression among students worldwide. “Our collective responsibility is to listen to our children, to understand them, and to help them grow with joy and confidence,” he added.

World Mental Health Day, observed globally every year on October 10, serves as a platform to raise awareness, share professional insights, and promote strategies for positive mental health outcomes. This year’s observance carried the message of “mental health as a universal human

right,” aligning with international calls for inclusive, community-based mental health services.

Distinguished speakers including Habeeburahman Kizhisseri, Executive Director of Friends Cultural Centre; Jolly Thomas, student counsellor; Riswa Salahudheen, social worker; and P.N. Baburajan, ICC Advisory Board Chairman, delivered insightful talks on the role of communities and families in supporting those struggling with emotional challenges.

Dr. Amanulla Vadakkangara, CEO of Media Plus, who conducted the event, stated that mental health issues represent one of the world’s leading public health challenges, affecting people from all walks of life. He emphasized that it is a shared duty to provide emotional support, raise awareness, and promote resilience across all sections of society.

The event concluded with a soulful musical performance by Singers of Classic Qatar, whose melodies echoed the evening’s central message of compassion, empathy, and hope for a mentally healthy world.