

World Mental Health Day 2015

The growing community of refugees, homeless and displaced people in the UK are at increased risk of poor mental health due to the strong psychological impact of their experiences. This experience can be especially damaging to the mental health of refugees as they are faced with a new and unfamiliar culture and an uncertain future. After the recent celebration of the 13th **World Mental Health Day** on Saturday 10th October our team was reminded of the important work which still needs to be done to ensure the mental wellbeing of our tenants.

UK approaches to mental health are often inaccessible to refugees and migrants who require specialised care which is sensitive to their unique and varying experiences. At ACH we therefore offer **culturally responsive support** which helps to break down language and cultural barriers, whilst providing **essential training** which gradually develops confidence and builds valuable relationships between our tenants and their support workers.

Positively Approaching Mental Health in the Refugee Community

Many refugees feel demoralised and defeated by their situation but we are strong believers in this year's World Mental Health Day theme of 'Dignity'. Our support staff have recently trained with the mental health charity **Mind** in order to enhance their cognitive behavioural therapy-based approach to their support work which ensures dignity for our tenants.

Effectively approaching mental health often starts with a simple conversation. We recently took part in the **91 Ways** scheme where tenants were treated to a variety of delicious meals, allowing them to share their passion for food and discuss any worries they may have with their support worker in a friendly and welcoming environment. These experiences are simple yet effective approaches to maintaining the mental wellbeing of our tenants.

Our focused support framework also includes:

- Introductory support and training from multilingual language trainers who facilitate instant communication and encourage conversation
- Social spaces in which tenants can interact with each other and build important relationships such as our integrated **Job Club**
- Structured short courses with an emphasis on personal development

- Dedicated training from our support workers who are currently learning Arabic to encourage tenants to share their own cultural knowledge