



តើអ្នកអាចសម្គាល់បុគ្គលដែលមានជំងឺផ្លូវចិត្ត
តាមរយៈអាការៈ ឬរោគសញ្ញាដូចម្តេចខ្លះ?

Mental Disease: What signs to look out for?

Kids playing

Background

With the country’s harrowing past, it was inevitable that a significant proportion of the Cambodian population would be afflicted with a variety of mental illnesses, most commonly depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. But in a country with so few resources in psychiatric care, it is not only difficult to quantify the prevalence of specific illnesses, but also to find ways of managing them. It is estimated that 35% of the country’s population suffers from some form of mental illness(1).

According to a National Report on Health Statistics in 2016, 107,497 mental patients reported to come to seek consultant services and treatment (male: 36,626 ; female: 70,871). However, in Cambodia, Mental Health treatment services are available in just 65 hospitals, 111 health centers and 1 health post(2).

To respond to the issues above, the Innovation Camp aka iCamp on How might we help Cambodian people to access mental health service and knowledge was established by working collaboration between InSTEDD iLab Southeast Asia and 25 mental health experts (representing NGOs, Academic, Hospitals), patients, and families. The participants came together to discuss for better solution to help mental health patients’ family and neighbors to understand the symptom of mental health illness and able to access to the services.

Partnership

The production of Mental Health educational videos would not be possible without the work of InSTEDD iLab SEA and Maryknoll with funding support from SPIDER.

The Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (SPIDER) is a research center based in Stockholm University. SPIDER supports projects, research and capacity building in developing regions. Its mission is to decrease the global differences using ICT in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SPIDER, A donor of InSTEDD SEA iLab, financially supports the existence of iCamps at InSTEDD iLab Southeast Asia as well as the entire process of incubation and implementation. InSTEDD iLab SEA facilitates the production process, including drafting storylines, contacting media companies, communicating between Maryknoll and the production company and providing free technical support starting from gathering information to video shooting. Maryknoll Mental Health Cambodia, who has been working closely with the iLab SEA, dedicates its efforts to collecting material for building effective content, as well as the distribution to its targeted group.

1. McLaughlin D, Wickeri E. Mental Health and Human Rights in Cambodia. 35 FORDHAM INT'L L.J. 2012 4 895-967.

2. របាយការណ៍សម្រេចផលសុខាភិបាលឆ្នាំ២០១៦



First sign of mental health illness

The topic of “Helping Cambodians access mental health services and knowledge” brought together mental health stakeholders in Cambodia to have an open discussion and try to think of what can be done to improve the country-wide issue. Hours of group discussion led to a conclusion that better understanding and education about mental health, especially identifying the early signal of mental within family or close contacts, is an effective way to save lives.

With support from SPIDER, InSTEDD teamed up with Maryknoll Mental Health to produce two educational videos and run an awareness raising campaign on Facebook. Materials in form of videos were distributed via the Maryknoll Mental Health Facebook Page and other Facebook pages that deal with similar issues.

Symptoms of mental health were the core messages of the two videos being produced. The video scripts were written by InSTEDD's iLab SEA communication experts with many iterations of review and feedback by the Maryknoll team. Both videos were sent to Maryknoll Mental Health before publishing for review and fact checking to assure that the content provided is clear, correct and reliable. This awareness raising campaign has future ambitions to serve as a way to give momentum and support to the Maryknoll Facebook page to grow. In fact, we are looking forward to seeing the Maryknoll Mental Health Facebook page continue to produce more educational content and to continue to interact with their new and existing followers.

Business Model

We live in a highly visual world. We tend to believe and connect with ideas more when we conceive with our own eyes. Because video allows people to demonstrate their ideas, and attach faces to emotional and educational themes, people will tend to believe better and get more knowledge from it. Educational video has become more important and effective in online education and helps to raise awareness to youth in our target communities.

We worked to produce videos about the first signs of mental health issues, with content from the iLab iCamp on the subject. Two mental health education spots were produced under technical support by InSTEDD iLab Southeast Asia communications team with contributed content from iCamp participants and Maryknoll Cambodia.

These videos are talking about early warning signs of mental health illness which families and neighbors should pay more attention to. The videos are not only to raise awareness and educate via social media but also material that can help local psychiatrists and social workers with their patients.

The Challenge

Studying mental health symptoms is not an expertise of InSTEDD iLab Southeast Asia and has been challenging, but beneficial, for the team to tailor together and create the educational pieces. Writing detailed information related to Mental Health while at the same time learning about the issue was a big challenge for the iLab communications team. Thankfully, we collaborated with MaryKnoll Mental Health, an expert in mental health, to inform on common and urgent symptoms for the team to work on. With guidance from MaryKnoll Mental Health on every detail of the content of the educational videos, two different mental health education videos have been produced and distributed with a wide coverage across Cambodia.

The short production time period was a challenge, as it limited the time for outreach of these two videos. The project had two months to both produce and roll out the videos to our audience. During production we also spent time learning about mental health issues, building a list of contact information of mental health service providers, receiving inputs from subject matter experts, developing the script, and shooting and editing the pieces. By the time the production was complete, we had just two days to work on the outreach and distribution of the two videos.



The Solution

The InSTEDD iLab Southeast Asia team worked closely with Maryknoll mental health specialists to involve them in every step of the video production. Our team often leaned on them to validate the written and visual ideas that we had to ensure that we didn't misrepresent anything on this serious topic.

To achieve the widest distribution possible, the team worked to share these two videos to other institutions to utilize their networks. So far, the videos have been used by HOPE International, TPO Cambodia, Child Helpline and Cambodia Soviet Diabetes Center for their social media and to play on screens at their reception clinics.

Results

Knowing the early warning signs of mental illness helps one to take charge of his or her mental health and wellbeing. Recognizing when something is wrong is an important step in caring for yourself so that you can feel well again. Often, long before a diagnosis of mental illness for themselves or a loved one, people gradually begin to notice that something is wrong. Something just seems off or extra challenging in one or more areas of life--Thoughts, Feelings, Behaviors and General interactions with the world.

An awareness of the early signs of mental illness can help somebody get the help that they need before life spirals out of control.

In the era of digital and social media, distributing a video awareness campaign to local communities via social media is an effective channel to reach a wide audience and inform them on the first signs of a mental health problem. In the two days after being published on the Maryknoll social media page, the two educational videos received 32.8K views and Maryknoll mental health Cambodia Facebook page increased their 'Likes' from 150 to 500+ likes.

Some Facebook users commented to ask where they could access mental health services, while some commented to learn more about the details of the symptoms shown. Some also asked what should they do if they noticed symptoms in friends or neighbors, and others simply commented to give thanks for producing the great content.

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Next Steps

The next steps are to increase outreach in the greater community in order to help more people to understand the first signs of mental health problems. InSTEDD iLab Southeast Asia and Maryknoll mental health Cambodia's team will reach out to more institutions who work in areas related to mental health to use these videos for their target communities, as well as to outreach to other organizations not specifically working in mental health, who may be interested in using these educational videos as well.