

أنبارنا

ثقافية - اخبارية - متنوعة

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Polygamy Association sparked controversy among the Syrians

Last October, the «Polygamy Association» was established in Azaz, northern Syria, sparking great controversy among the Syrians inside and outside Syria. Some Syrians commended on the idea, which would serve in favor of women, especially the widows, who are forced to tolerate a lot of sufferings because of war and displacement conditions, while others completely refused the idea out of their belief that it promotes treating women as goods more than as humans. Moreover, the logo of the association was very provocative to many men and women, and made them despise the idea.

Ahlam Al-Soʻwd runs the association, and on October 18th, she published a post on one of her social networking pages saying that the polygamy association is aimed at ensuring women's rights, and that its governing board consists of highly-qualified social activists and academicians. In addition, the association's rules of procedures aims at ensuring women's dignity, empowerment, right of making a family, and right of a decent life.

The following day, Ahlam posted the association's rules of procedures as well as its goals which were as follows: Promoting the Sunnah (policy) of polygamy by all possible means, defending both men and women's right of polygamy, ensuring a decent life for as many widows as possible and caring for their children, opening marriage opportunities for all women wishing to get married, providing appropriate homes for polygamy, and presenting to the world a successful model of men who are married to more than just one woman.

A Facebook page holding the name of the association showed up on social media and it was proven to be fake and unofficial. Simultaneously, users of social networking sites were divided between supporters of the idea and opponents to it, and they had many fierce discussions. Supporters stressed the importance of such associations, while opponents spoke about the likely disastrous results in case the association remains active, and drew attention to much more important issues that need to be addressed.

Spokesman of the Local Council of Azaz, stated that: «the association wasn't authorized, neither orally nor on paper, by the council to operate, and necessary actions will be taken to close it immediately.» And the statement was concluded as follows: «women's rights of marriage, making a family, and living a decent life don't come through the establishment of such associations which violate principles, values, and traditions of our society.»

Many people are still wondering whether administrators of the polygamy association will work on getting an authorization to start operating again.

Rouba Almouhamed



Aaraa.Com

What do you think might be the reasons that influence women's mental health?

This was the question we asked on our Facebook page to learn from people about their views and ideas regarding mental health and the most important factors that might it have a negative influence on women's mental health.

10th October marks the World Mental Health Day, and it draws our attention to the importance of minding factors of the psychological stress faced by women daily and for many reasons.

The majority of women answering this question attributed the reasons for the many burdens and responsibilities assigned to women without showing any appreciation for the efforts they make, in addition to the social and economic factors and the loss of one or more family members.

The followings are extracts from the answers we received:

«Showing no appreciation to women's efforts and performance, interfering in women's private life, and many other reasons.»

Amira



The social and economic stress, the low level of education, gender-based discrimination, the violation of human rights.

Hanaa



«The heavy burdens inside and outside the house, the lack of awareness on the importance of good mental health, continuous blame, accusing women of ill-performance, and not releasing the piling stress.»

Zeina



// The importance of the psychological/mental health

What is psychological/mental health?

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined psychological/mental health as a state of wellness, in which an individual can devote his/her own abilities, adapt to normal types of stress, work professionally and effectively and contribute to the development of his/her society.

Psychological/Mental health and well-being are essential for strengthening our collective and individual ability to think, feel, interact with each other as human beings, earn a living and enjoy life. Thereby, the promotion, protection and recovery of psychological/mental health can be considered a vital concern for individuals, groups and communities around the world

Not so long ago, the term «psychiatric disorder» was a shameful characteristic among society. Rarely did we see individuals who were courageous enough to express their psychological state, and in case someone needed psychological therapy, they would try as hard as they can to keep this a secret.

The individual with psychological/mental problems would be addressed with piles of recommendations and prejudice claiming that these problems mainly oc-



cur due to poor faith and worship. However, the rapid development of social media had a great influence on the society, and that negative outlook changed. Psychological care started being acceptable, and the terms of «depression» and «psychiatric disorder» became no longer linked to social stigma.

Do all individuals accept admitting psychological problems?

Our attempts to pretend that we are strong hiding our psychological problems just because everyone else may go under psychological stress, means that we made our choice to live in a state of denial, reject the truth, and adopt with that stress. Poor knowledge of symptoms of psychological/mental disorder make us think that it's just a phase and

that it will change according to the circumstances. In fact, if we continue living in denial, our psychological/mental health will become worse.

Why is psychological/mental health important?

The changing living conditions, high cost and expenses, and the bad economic situation, make psychological stress increase. This makes us feel that we need to release the deep negative emotions in order to be self-satisfied with our performance within our self-satisfaction.

Psychological stress is not always linked to life conditions. Losing precious people, the inability of achieving our dreams and ambitions, in addition to the lack of appreciation for the job do, all can play a role in pushing us to lose passion and willingness to move forward.

It's important to learn about the best ways that can help us release stress, avoiding treating our children and the people surrounding us as tools for doing so.

And because psychological/mental health is a reflection of physical health, we should ask for necessary care whenever we feel psychologically disordered or whenever we notice any relevant symptom.

Does comparing people to each other contribute to the increase of psychological stress?

Comparing people to each other is in our genes, and sometimes misjudging others can be the reason why psychological stress is born. Comparisons vary according to different aspects (social, cultural, etc. ...).

It's unfair to compare our conditions and achievements to those of others because every person is unique in terms of the reality they live and ability to tolerate.

I believe that every individual is a performer who has his/her own role in the society. We all have positive features and strength points that should make us feel proud, so we need to concentrate on what we have more than what other people have. Psychological relief requires being realistic, working harder, and avoiding misjudging others based on the incomplete incidents.

Written by: Zeina

In the opinion column of our paper, we publish articles that reflects views of authors who wrote them and necessarily views of Women Support Unit

CSOs' Role in Providing Psychological Support for Women



Middle Eastern societies have always rejected dealing with the terms “psychiatrist” and “a psyche patient” out of belief that it’s a social stigma in the life of an individual who goes through mental health problems.

In the past, we hardly ever heard of the presence of psychological support centers, but today, ten years after the Syrian revolution started, we are all well aware of the amount of sufferings, disasters, and shocks, through which the Syrians have been going, and the resulting physical, psychological, and mental negative impacts on them.

The society, has now accepted using the terms related to psychological and mental health due to its dire need to improve conditions of the individuals who have been through traumas, to break their isolation, and help them overcome other psychological problems resulting from the loss of a family member or an amputee.

Today, and thanks to the projects implemented by CSOs, the majority of north-

ern regions in Syria have psychological support centers, which mainly target women and children as they are the most fragile individuals in the society, and the ongoing war was very harsh on them.

The psychological support centers aim at providing: a safe environment for women to tell their stories at a complete confidentiality, methods and tools to deal with psychological pressure without feeling embarrassed, educational and professional workshops to empower women's participation in the society.

Projects of psychological support are facing many challenges including the large number of people who have been through traumas and need to be treated personally and followed up continuously, the small number of staff working in the psychological field, and the lack of capabilities required for psychological support.

However, the Syrian communities realized the importance of these centers and the positive role they can play in their lives.

Sharifa, a supervisor at one of the psychological support centers in Idlib said: “views of the female beneficiaries are changing into the better. They used to hesitate when sharing their personal stories and experiences, but now they are more relaxed because they saw how positive their lives have become after coming to the center.”



Sub-Committees News

Women Support Unit

With the aim of raising women's political awareness and addressing procedures and factors of the electoral process, WСУ conducted the «Election Training» in its seven sub-committees as a preparation for the elections that will be held within the committees.

145

beneficiary

Al-Bab Sub-Committee

Women sub-committee held many sessions and trainings, the most important of which were: Training on «conflict management»
Training on «common ground methodology»
Training on «community dialog»
Training on «men's involvement (Positive Masculinity)»

42

beneficiary

Qabasin Sub-Committee

1. A session on «Gender equality»
2. A session on «The importance of media in conveying the youth's voices»
3. A session on «The International Day of Mental Health»
4. A session with the Syrian Association for Studies and Consultation

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WSU has access to 12 cities in rural northern and eastern Aleppo

Empowerment, training, participation, networking.

A local, non-profit civil society organization for women's affairs, launched in 2018 through a conference attended by more than 150 women in rural northern and eastern Aleppo from Afrin to reaching to Jarablus.

Empower and support women to participate effectively in public life.

A healthy society with empowered women who contribute to building society and meeting challenges in partnership with men.

The Unit targets women who have difficulty playing their role optimally in society. It also seeks to empower women politically, economically, culturally and socially in the northern and eastern countryside of Aleppo.



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Syria, Aleppo - Azaz

The geographical zone of the WSU's work: northern and eastern countryside of Aleppo