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Professor B

Intro to Sociology

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Global Social Action Report

1. Write a paragraph of the mission of the organization. Some questions to consider are: what are the organization's goals? What are their values? What do they do?

I chose to do my Social Action Report on the United for Global Mental Health Organization. The United for Global Mental Health organization aims to increase people's access to mental health resources globally. They believe that everybody has a right to be healthy mentally. In order to help people attain this right, the UGMH believes that mental health services need to be sufficiently financed, mental health services should be made accessible to everyone and should be focused on the individual, and the population as a whole should be educated on mental health to combat stigmatization and discrimination of those with mental health issues. They work to fulfill this goal by fighting for people's right to mental healthcare and assisting those who need it financially. They work to implement policies that guarantee people access to this kind of care. The United Global Mental Health organization also works to get financing for this kind of care and to build accessibility to mental healthcare through infrastructure. They also partner with businesses and other organizations to accomplish these goals and to educate people on mental health and the importance of accessible care. They also aim to combat the stigma surrounding mental health and psychosocial care in order to uplift people and better the world.

2. Pick a 1) review an archived webinar, 2) a live virtual event, 3) listen to a podcast episode (if they have one) or 4) read a resource document or report (any type of written document regarding the organization's research/advocacy, etc) and write 2 or three sentences about what it was about. .

I chose to go over UGMH's 2021 Year in Review. The link is <https://unitedgmh.org/knowledge-hub/2021-a-year-in-review-for-united-for-global-mental-health/>. The document provides an overview of the ways in which UGMH advocated for mental health and wellness in 2021. In their Rights section, they detail how they fought to decriminalize suicide, which is still a crime in twenty countries. In order to accomplish this, they are working with national leaders and companies/organizations to educate people on suicide and how criminalizing it perpetuates stigma, making people less likely to seek help if they are considering suicide. In their education section, they wrote about how they held an event, called Speak Your Mind, where many people came together to discuss what could be done to further mental healthcare advocacy and mental health in groups like those with disabilities or teens/young adults. They also advocated for universal healthcare in an effort to advocate for mental health systems. They did this by creating a

group called Working Group on Universal Health Coverage, which advocates for including mental health coverage in universal healthcare plans.

3. Relate what you learned from the webinar, event, podcast, or resource document or report from #2 back to course material. Make 3 separate connections.

When reading UGMH's 2021 Year in Review, I found many connections to the topics Professor B has discussed in class. I found UGMH's Speak Your Mind Summit worked to change the way we think of mental health accessibility. This effort reminds me of what Professor B taught us about critical paradigm shifts. A critical paradigm not only aims to change the way in which society thinks about an issue, but does so in a way that aims to implement social change. UGMH is not only looking to shift the viewpoint on mental health, but to do so in a way that benefits people who are struggling with mental health issues and disrupts the status quo of privatized healthcare and therapy. The information on the Four I's of Oppression that Professor B shared also seemed relevant to the work they are doing to advance healthcare for marginalized groups in this sphere. By pushing to make mental healthcare more accessible to these groups they are challenging the ideological and institutionalized levels of oppression that are blocking people from getting proper care. Ideas like "people who are mentally ill are just weak" and a lack of access to mental healthcare due to lack of money are being directly challenged by UGMH. I also think that UGMH challenging the stigma surrounding mental health relates to what Professor B taught us about the sociology of attention. As Professor Brandie mentioned in class, we do not focus on finding solutions for problems we are not paying attention to. When certain narratives are pushed on us, it makes it easier for society to ignore solutions to problems and maintain the status quo. A common narrative is that people with mental health issues are crazy or weak. As a result, we focus less on ways to treat mental health issues. By challenging this stigma, UGMH is shifting our collective attention to the causes of mental health issues which results in us looking for more ways to treat them.

4. Indicate what you thought about the webinar/podcast/resource document. Tell me what you liked, what you think could be improved, and provide some suggestions on how they could have improved it. Your suggestions could be based on the content itself, delivery or presentation.

After reading UGMH's 2021 Year in Review, I thought that a lot of what they focused on was very helpful. I particularly liked their focus on suicide decriminalization. Suicide decriminalization is incredibly important, even though it may not seem as important to us. In countries where suicide is still a crime, people who are suffering from depression or experiencing suicidal ideation may not seek help because they fear being punished. In countries like the US, where suicide has been decriminalized, the stigma remains. Phrases like "committed suicide" have been replaced with phrases like "died by suicide" in order to further some of the stigma. This speaks directly to what Professor B spoke about in class concerning the sociology of attention. Viewing those struggling with suicidal thoughts as weak or criminal makes us less likely to seek ways to prevent suicide. However, I think that there is a bit of a lack in representation for mental healthcare in less developed countries. UGMH spoke of working with the IMF to increase access to healthcare funding in these countries, however Professor Brandie has spoken about the ways in which IMF allows more developed countries to exploit underdeveloped countries for their resources. I

would have liked to see UGMH find other alternatives to fund mental healthcare in these countries or to at least commit to searching for a new solution in order to keep the citizens from being exploited.