

Newsletter Highlights

World Mental Health Day Commemoration.

All Empower Pacific branches were adorned with green decorations and our staff distributed green ribbons to the Ministry of Health & Medical Services staff to help advocate on Mental Health issues.

We conducted play/art therapy was conducted at the Lautoka CWM Hospital and a series of informational videos were released to help individuals enhance their knowledge of Mental Health.

In these videos, Empower Pacific's team of Counsellors and Social Workers highlighted the role of counsellors, assured the people that it's okay not to be okay. Our former Clinical Supervisor and Mental Health Specialist discussed Mental Health stigma and Mental Health Issues.

Our counsellors also produced a video that has information on Mental Health which is normally shared during our community awareness sessions.

Lastly, we shared a testimonial of one of our clients who had attempted suicide multiple times in the past year but has now managed to cope with his situation and is making fruitful contributions to his community.

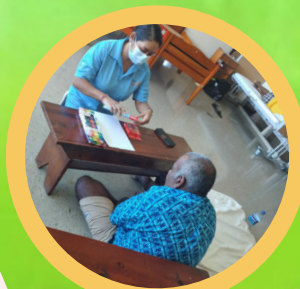
WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

FOR THE RECORD - FBC

PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID TRAINING

TRAININGS FOR MARITIME YOUTHS

COMMEMORATIVE DATES



Play Therapy

**Counselling
Helpline
5626**



Finally, we released a testimony video of one of our clients who had attempted suicide multiple times in the past year. The video featured Abdul Zorhab where he talked about how he overcame the challenges life threw at him and managed to start his own Youth Group.



Children and COVID-19

Our former Clinical Supervisor Ms. Prem Singh appeared on the FBC - For The Record Show to talk about the Impact of COVID-19 on children's Mental Health, the role of parents and communities in promoting children's mental health, Mental Health support services available etc.

During the show, we identified that children have been highly emotionally impacted because their parents or their primary caregivers have been enduring financial constraints. There are behavioural issues as well such as absconding or running away from home, talking back to parents. There are instances of alcohol and drug misuse including kava, cigarette, marijuana, etc. Children have been found to be suffering from or experiencing Depression, anxiety, suicidal ideations, lack of motivation, grief and loss caused by the passing away of family members, difficulty in sleeping, loss of appetite, academic-related stress etc.

Ms. Singh encouraged parents and the community at large to take responsibility for the good health and well-being of children.



Former Clinical Supervisor Ms. Prem Singh appearing on the For The Record Show with other stakeholders.



Mental Health & Well-Being Webinar Series

We completed a Mental Health & Well-Being webinar series consisting of five important topics for the One Nation Our People – Youth Group based in Lautoka. The sessions were held every Friday for five weeks.

Topics included:

1. How to Communicate Your Anger
2. Maintaining Healthy Interpersonal Relationships
3. How to apply Emotional Resilience
4. Child Protection and Safeguarding
5. Gender-Based Violence

The participants who attended all the five sessions were awarded a participatory certificate each.

Breast Cancer Awareness

All the staff from all our branches wore pink to commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness Month.



Suva Branch



Labasa Branch



Head Office in Lautoka

Psychological Resilience Training



In conjunction with the Ministry of Youth & Sports, we facilitated a three-day training on Psychological Resilience for Youths based in Nadi. Day One included an introduction on mental health, common mental health conditions, the stigma attached to mental health and discussions on how to identify individuals at risk. Day Two entailed social common issues affecting youths and relationships as well family issues. Day three was centred around self-care tips and strategies.

Psychological First Aid Training

Psychological First Aid (PFA) training was conducted in Ba, Labasa and Suva with the support of the Australian Humanitarian Partnership Disaster READY Program. PFA is the first help given to someone who has experienced some form of trauma or distress.

With the aim of enhancing disaster preparedness and disaster response, we were joined by individuals from various organizations such as the Rainbow Pride Foundation 4 LGBTQ Rights and Equality in Fiji, Youths from Ba that are volunteers in their local villagers, representatives from the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation and Fijian Ministry of Youth and Sports to be part of this training.



DIWALI WITH US



Virtual Training for Maritime Islands

Empower Pacific was invited by the Ministry of Youth & Sports to conduct virtual training for the Youths in Maritime Islands.

We were joined by 15 Youths from Waitovu Village, Levuka; 20 Youths from three Youth Clubs in Koro Island in the Province of Lomaitviti. These two trainings were conducted on Gender & Sex as well as Gender-Based Violence. The aim of the sessions was to increase awareness on gender issues and gender-based violence; understand the dynamics of Domestic Violence, and know what to do and how to help someone who is experiencing Gender-based Violence.

These trainings included discussions on the distinction of males and females, power imbalance, different forms of abuse, the cycle of violence, why it takes so long for women to report the violence they endure to authorities. Participants were also made aware of the characteristics of a healthy relationship.

A **Psychological Resilience Training** was facilitated for the Lakeba Volleyball team including police officers on the island. The training lasted three days and included a total of 25 participants.

Mental Health was brainstormed and participants shared how they were able to maintain their emotional well-being when facing difficult situations. The Youths were able to relate situations discussed with their experiences. They were able to identify appropriate coping mechanisms to assist them in the future. Resilience was something that was discussed as based on their experiences, it was identified that they were able to bounce back to their normal life soon after a disaster.

Another major training was done for members of seven youth clubs (Veitacini, Tokula, Nadrala, Nawamagi, Vunatoto, TIV Nadrala and Nasama Youth Club) based in the Nadroga/Navosa. This was also based on Gender & Sex as well as Gender-Based Violence.

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TO GET THE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT YOU NEED



16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

Under this year's theme 'Orange the World: End Violence against Women Now!', Empower Pacific conducted community awareness sessions in the Central, Western and Northern divisions. We believe that in order to make a difference in people's lives, they need to be informed of the different facets of Gender-Based Violence. Physical abuse is just one aspect of it. Most of the times individuals fail to understand the psychological trauma women and men get subjected to. Informing women and men of their rights and linking them to support services available will allow them to reach out when they need help.



Participants from Naboutini Village sharing their perspective of Gender-Based Violence.

In addition, our session also highlighted the purpose and process of obtaining a Domestic Violence restraining order (This is obtained to provide safety and protection for persons going through violence and abuse. It was further elaborated that DVRO can be interim and final as per the case situation), other relevant considerations such as the effects of GBV on children was raised and also the need for being agents of change in responding to issues of GBV.



Participants of the community awareness session held in Viseisei, Vuda.



Empty Chair being observed by the participants in Viseisei, Vuda. This symbolizes all the individuals we've lost as a result of violence. A moment of silence was observed in their name.

Child protection awareness session was accompanied by the GBV sessions that provided a platform of information giving on the need to understand child protection and children's rights, laws both international and local that keep children safe as well as emphasize the responsibility of all individuals to report any forms of abuse towards a child. Lastly, awareness was also raised on individuals' responsibilities when they witness GBV in their community.

A total of 6 community awareness sessions were held.



Discussions held on child rights by one of our Social Workers.

FIJI REACH PROGRAM

Empower Pacific was part of the FIJI REACH program organized by the United Nations Development Programme – UNDP, the Ministry of Women Children & Poverty Alleviation- Fiji and supported by the Government of Japan.

A total of nine sites was visited by the REACH team from the 25th of October to the 5th of November. Out of the nine sites, three outreach sites were located within urban areas while six in rural areas within Nadi district. In addition, ten other sites were visited from the 22nd of November to the 3rd of December in Nadroga & Navosa area. This included two outreach sites located outside of village boundaries while eight were conducted in community halls within the respective villages.

This allowed our Counsellors to promote and enhance our service delivery by going directly into the communities.



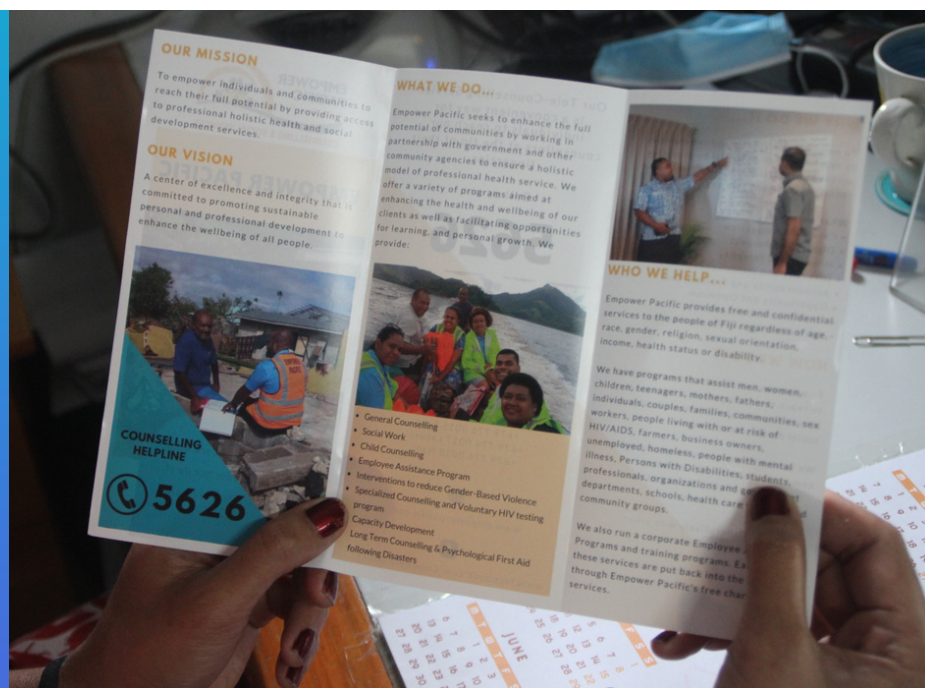
Counsellors attending to community members in the Nadi area.



Counsellors attending to community members in the Nadroga/ Navosa areas.

Whats New?

We've launched our newly updated organizational brochure. You can grab a copy from any of our branches.



Enhancing Collaboration where it matters

Through the assistance and partnership with the New Zealand government, Empower Pacific was able to create networks and develop a relationship with the Fiji Disabled People's Federation (FDPF)



Empower Pacific Social Worker delivers Adult Diapers to FDPF Secretary Ms Ateca Mataitoga

and Western Disabled People's Association to be able to have a collaborative effort in assisting persons living with a disability during COVID-19. It was established that COVID19 has been an added burden to many primary caregivers and individuals living with a disability in the sense that the challenges faced during normal times have now been heightened.

Empower Pacific's team of professional Counsellors and Social Workers provided information on COVID-19 safety protocols, tips on positive thinking with positive coping mechanisms, preventing burnout, and tips on self-awareness and care to all members of FDPF.

Empower Pacific also provided Adult Diapers to FDPF focal points for distribution to members needing them. The Western Disabled People's Association members also received some adult diapers upon request.

With the emergence of the Omicron virus, this wellness check would be vital in providing awareness on safety concerns and protocols as well as assist FDPF members to be psychologically resilient in dealing with Omicron.

Through this networking, Empower Pacific can learn from the experiences of people living with disabilities during this pandemic and also work towards meaningful efforts in addressing and reducing these barriers.