



The 4th PEMA Symposium

“Inclusive Mental Wellbeing:
Transforming vulnerabilities to
Hope, Healing and Human Connection”

PEMA Rehab, Thimphu



Agenda

8-10 October 2026



About the banner

The Fourth PEMA symposium banner is the digital artwork of the 12th Century Changangkha Lhakhang, perched over a serene landscape depicting Bhutan. Home to our protective deity Gyenen Domsangpa, the sacred place holds within the God of Compassion, Chaktong Chentong, with its thousand arms and thousand eyes. It reflects the symposium's aspiration of building a community where no one's pain goes unseen and no one remains unreached.



Day I

8th October 2026

Sub-theme: Understanding Vulnerabilities and its impact on Mental Health Outcomes and Wellbeing

Time	Program	Facilitator/Resource
09:00 – 09:30	Registration	All
09:30 – 09:40	Welcome Note	MC: Sonam Jamtsho, The PEMA Secretariat & Student
09:40 – 10:00	Annual Symposium: Shaping Dialogue, Driving Action, Creating Change	Dasho Dechen Wangmo, Head, The PEMA Secretariat
Technical Session 1: Unpacking Biological Vulnerabilities and its impact on Mental Health and Wellbeing		
10:00 – 10:25	Strengthening health systems: Addressing mental health needs, vulnerabilities and mitigating risks	Dr. Andrea Bruni, Regional Advisor, WHO SEARO
10:25 – 10:50	Beyond Diagnosis: Advancing Mental Health and Wellbeing for Children and Young People with Neurodevelopmental Disorders	Dr. Brent Waters, Forensic Child Psychiatrist, Australia
10:50 – 11:20	Refreshment Break	
11:20 – 11:45	Healthy Ageing: Prioritizing mental Health and Wellbeing	Dr. Palanimuthu Thangaraju Sivakumar, Geriatric Psychiatrist, NIMHANS, India
11:45 – 12: 00	Q&A	
12:00 – 12:25	Strengthening Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for Children and Young People.	Ms. Tshering Choden, Clinical Counsellor, The PEMA Centre
12:25 – 12:50	Learning from Pilot Project: Building Responsive Care and Support for Older People.	Dr. Sonam Wangchuk, Psychiatrist, The PEMA Centre
12:50 -13:05	Q&A	

13:05 – 14:05	Lunch Break	
Technical Session 2: Uncovering the Biological and Physical Drivers of Mental Health and Wellbeing		
14:05 – 14:30	Implementation Strategies for Suicide Prevention: Hope, Healing and Human Connection	Dr. Sabine Bahrer Kohler, President, World Federation for Mental Health, Germany
14:30 – 15:30	Panel Discussion: How our Biology and Environment Shapes our Mental Health and Wellbeing	Moderator: Ms. Sangay C. Namgyel, Asst. Professor, FNPH, KGUMSB Panelists: People with Lived Experience, Psychiatrist, Physiotherapist, Regional Expert
15:30 – 17:00	From Evidence to Impact: Call to Action	Thematic Group Work with Experts
	Expert Led Group Work	Group 1: Children and Adolescent Mental Health
	Plenary on Call to Action	Group 2: Comorbidity and Mental Health
		Group 3: Mental Health and Elderly Care

Day II

9th October 2026

Sub-theme: Building Resilient and Enabling Systems for Situational and Environmental Vulnerabilities

Technical Session 3: Deepening Understanding of Situation and Environment in Shaping Mental Health and Wellbeing

09:00 – 09:25	Interaction of Biological and Environment vulnerability and Implications on mental health	Dr. Pratima Murthy, Psychiatrist, India
09:25 – 09:50	Building Resilient Families - Strengthening Parenting for Nurturing Environment	Dr. Tamsen Rochat, Clinical Psychologist, South Africa
09:50 – 10:15	Creating Safety Net: Rebuilding and Reintegrating Children with Conflict with Law	Dr. Meredith Gray, Forensic Psychiatrist, Australia
10:15 – 10:45	Helping Adolescent Thrive: Wellbeing Program in Schools	MoESD and UNICEF
10:45 – 11:00	Q & A	
11:00 – 11:25	From Crisis to Recovery: Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services during Emergencies	Ms. Ruth O’Connell, MHPSS Expert-UNICEF - Thailand
11:00 – 11:10	Q&A	
11:10 – 11:40	Refreshment Break	
11:40 – 12:05	Cultural Wisdom, Context and Development of Mental Health Care in Bhutan.	Dr. Anne Tietjen, Clinical Psychologist, USA
12:05 – 12:30	Breaking the Cycle: Transformative Mental Health Care through integrated Programmes and Services in Prison	Dr. Chencho Dorji, Consultant Psychiatrist, The PEMA Rehab
12:30 – 12:55	The Unseen Wound: Psychological Support in Palliative Care	Dr. Kinley Bhuti, Palliative Physician, JDWNRH
12:55 – 13:10	Q&A	
13:10 – 14:10	Lunch Break	



Technical Session 4: Unmet needs – Systemic Integration of mental health

14:10 – 14:35	Care Beyond Health Facility: Integrated Mental Health Care and Programs	Dr. Ngawang Samten, Psychiatrist, The PEMA Centre
14:35 -15:05	Lived Experience: Addiction, Recovery, Reintegration	Lived Experience from Rehab and Reintegration Programmes
15:05 – 15:30	Care of Caregivers: Preventing Burnout, Restoring Balance for Service Providers	Ms. Carly Clutterbuck, Mental Health Consultant, Australia
15:30 – 17:00	From Evidence to Impact: Call to Action Expert Led Group Work Plenary on Call to Action	Thematic Group Discussion with Experts Group 1: Parenting and Child Protection Group 2: Mental Health and Wellbeing During Emergencies Group 3: Community Based Care for Mental Health





Day III

10th October 2026

World Mental Health Day

Annotated Agenda for Closing Session

Time	Program
09:00	All guests and participants to be seated
09:30	Arrival of Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen
09:35	Announcement by MC
	Performance by Changangkha Middle Secondary School students
10:00	Appraisal to Her Majesty on proceedings of the Workshop by Dr. Andrea Bruni, Mental Health Advisor, WHO, South East Asia Region
10:20	Address by Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen
	Announcement on the overview presentation of launch documents
	Announcement inviting Her Majesty and Hon'ble Prime Minister to launch the following:
	Sem-Kham First Aid
	Mental Health in Emergencies
	National Care Pathway for Child Protection Services



High Tea

