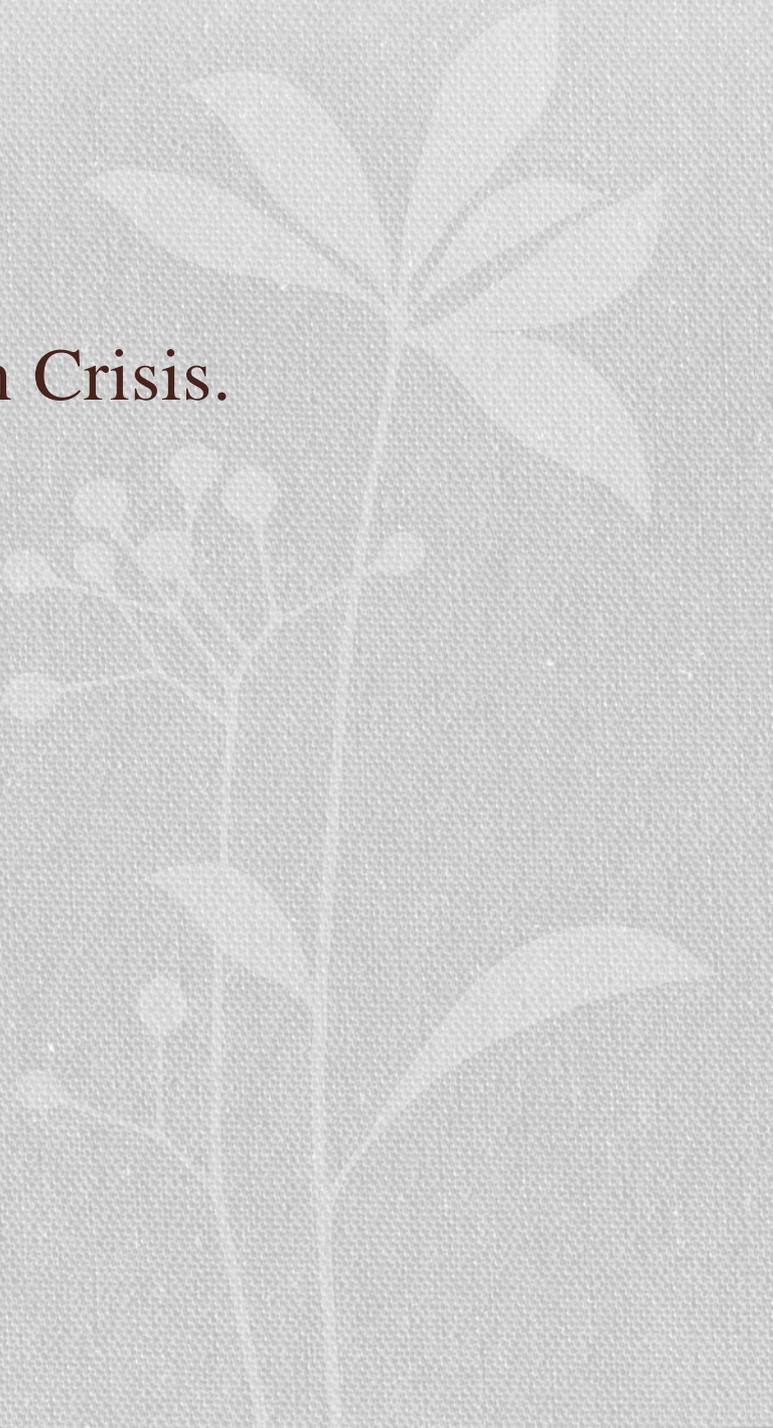


**MENTAL HEALTH
PROBLEMS AMONG
BHUTANESE REFUGEES
& POSSIBLE SUPPORT
STRATEGIES.**

**Ashok Gurung
Bhutanese Community
Association of Pittsburgh (BCAP).**

Outline

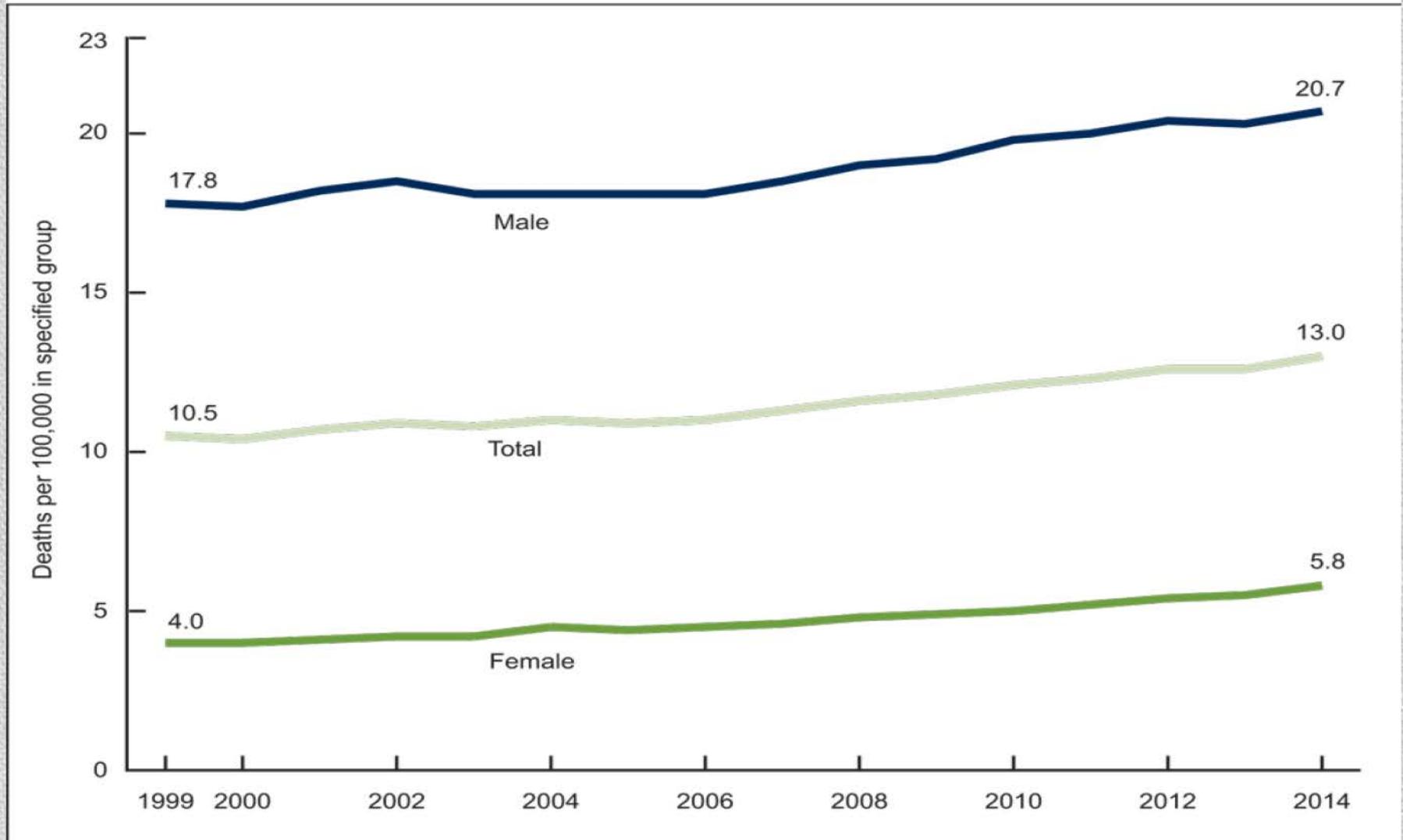
- ❖ Background, Mental Health Crisis.
 - ❖ Possible strategies to help.
 - ❖ MHFA Trainings.
 - ❖ Interventions.
 - ❖ Impacts and Outcomes.
 - ❖ Conclusion.
- 
- A faint, stylized floral graphic is visible in the background on the right side of the slide. It features several stems with leaves and small, light-colored flowers or buds, rendered in a light gray or off-white tone against the textured background.

Background; Mental Health Crisis

- ❖ Bhutanese Refugees = 20.3/100,000.
- ❖ 93 % of suicide occurred by hanging.
- ❖ Arrival at the time of financial downturn.
- ❖ Suicide rate in the United States= 12.4/100,000.
- ❖ Now, 15.4/100,000.00 in the US (CDC).
- ❖ In 2014, among 10-34 age group mental illness was second leading cause of death .
- ❖ Global trend: 1 million (1,000,000)/year.

Suicide overview in U.S.

Figure 1. Age-adjusted suicide rates, by sex: United States, 1999–2014



NOTES: Suicide deaths are identified with codes U03, X60–X84, and Y87.0 from the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision*. Access data for Figure 1 at: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db241_table.pdf#1.

SOURCE: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality.

Possible strategies to help

- ❖ Community Initiated Mental Health Conference.
- ❖ Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training by Native English Speaker (Trainers).
- ❖ Fighting MH Crises in Disguise – Pittsburgh model.

www.bcap.us

- ❖ MHFA Training by Bilingual Community Instructors (Volunteers)

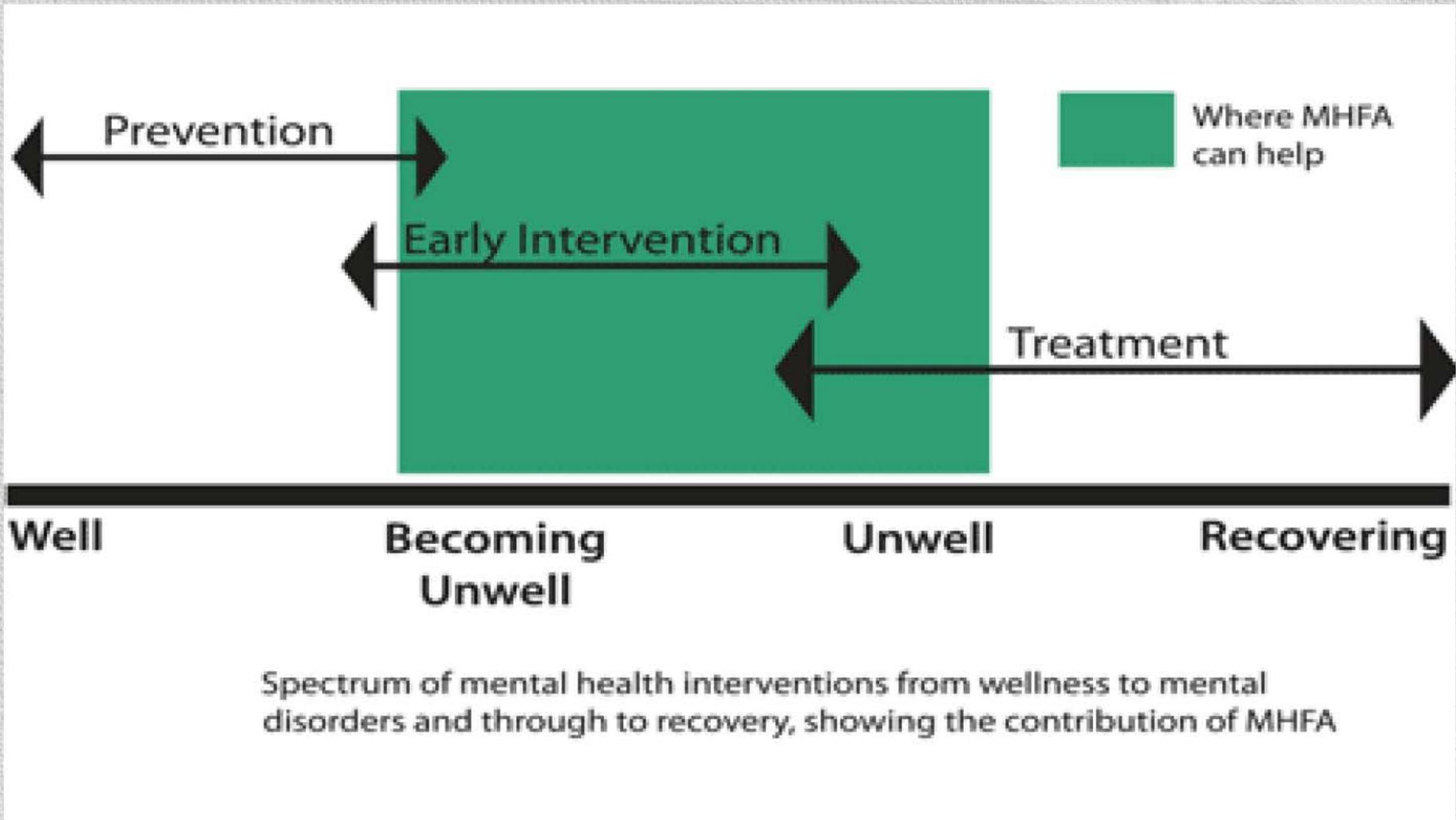
MHFA Trainings

- ❖ It began in 2001 in Australia → the U.S. in 2008
- ❖ It has international evidence base, with multiple randomized controlled trials to test program outcomes.
- ❖ Adopted by 26 other countries: Australia – Zimbabwe.
- ❖ It is 8-hour (12 hrs. in Au) course → Certification.
- ❖ 682,603 mental health first aiders and 10,000 instructors in the United States.
- ❖ PA has 57,726 (622).

MHFA course Overview

- ❖ MH problem in the U.S
- ❖ Understanding depression and anxiety
- ❖ Suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- ❖ Non-suicidal self injury
- ❖ Panic attacks
- ❖ Traumatic events
- ❖ Psychosis
- ❖ Disruptive or aggressive behaviors
- ❖ Understanding substance abuse disorders
- ❖ MHFA action plans and its uses

Where MHFA can help?



Interventions:

- ❖ Like First Aid, MHFA has a mnemonic.
- ❖ First Aid: ABC or DR – ABC
- ❖ MHFA: ALGEE
- ❖ A = Assess for risk for suicide or harm.
- ❖ L = Listen nonjudgmentally.
- ❖ G = Give reassurances and information.
- ❖ E = Encourage appropriate professional help.
- ❖ E = Encourage self help and other support strategies.

Impacts and Outcomes

- ❖ Our pre and post surveys showed improvements in the knowledge.
- ❖ No change in Negative attitude in the first study.
- ❖ The same survey with Bilingual instructors shows more improvement; the final result is yet to be seen.
- ❖ MHFA Demand throughout the country.
- ❖ Trained in Houston, Omaha, Akron, Rochester, Burlington, besides PA. More in schedules.

Conclusion

- ❖ We need to provide trainers training to the affected communities, refugees and immigrant communities.
- ❖ To make this training sustainable, agencies like state refuge program in PA need to come with strategies to produce at least one bilingual trainer per ethnic communities. e.g.: Iraqis, Congolese, Burmese, Sudanese, Liberian, and so on.
- ❖ Why not the traditional western model – Community and Cultural perspectives, language, lifestyles, and the known transition.
- ❖ Some refugees have diverse sub ethnic groups; focusing on language to produce bilingual trainers could be helpful. Ex. Arabic, Nepali, Burmese, Karen,...
- ❖ One city, one bilingual trainer - goal.

Thank you

???

