

## Mental Health and Role of AI Chatbot

**Mukesh Sinha\***

Co-Founder, Gravitas AI Limited, UK Sustainability and ESG Practitioner, Nepal

**\*Corresponding Author:** Mukesh Sinha, Co-Founder, Gravitas AI Limited, UK Sustainability and ESG Practitioner, Nepal.

**Received:** August 07, 2023

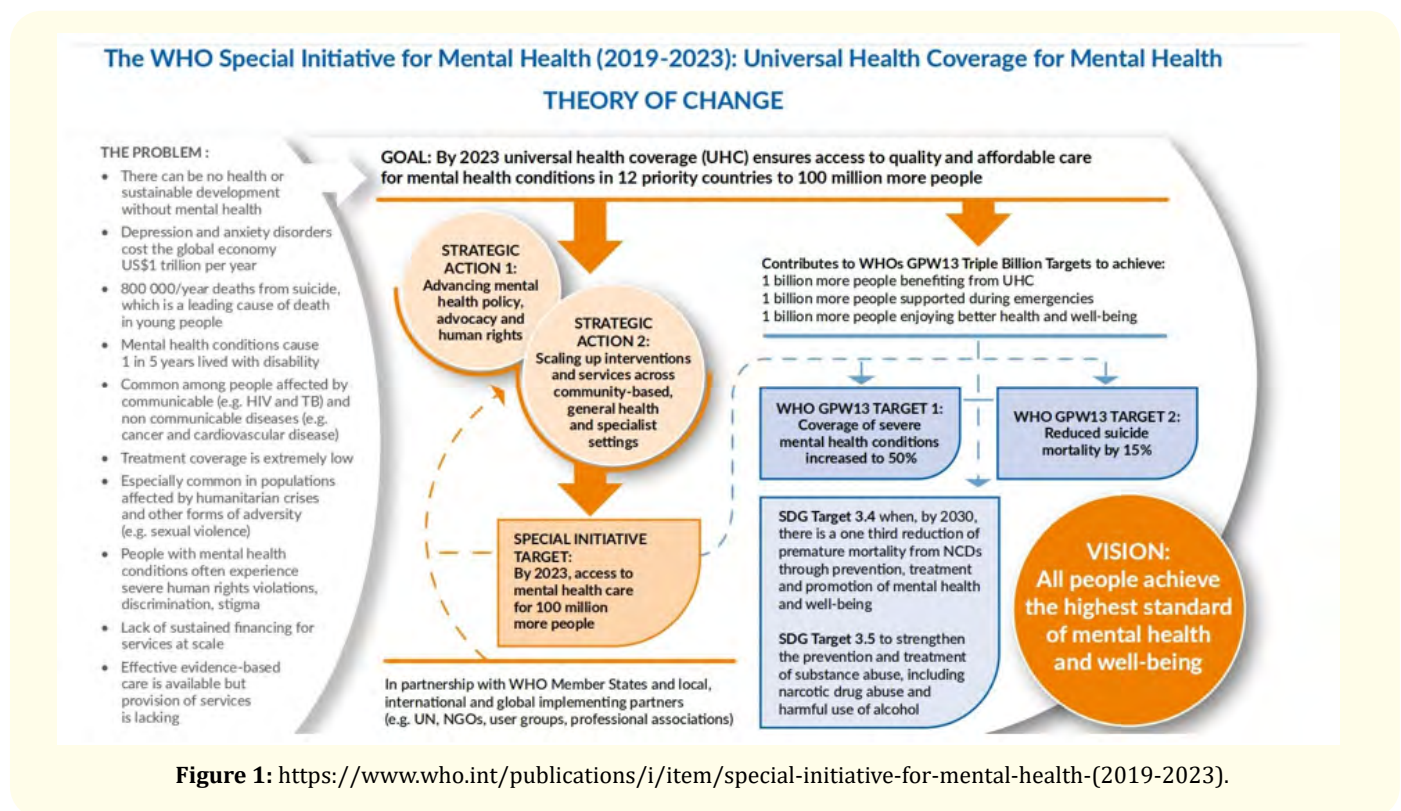
**Published:** August 21, 2023

© All rights are reserved by **Mukesh Sinha.**

### Global status on mental health

Mental health is becoming an epidemic of sorts, impacting individuals across the world. According to WHO, nearly 1 in every 8 people in the world are diagnosed with one or the other mental disorder that includes anxiety & depression. Mental health issues can range from common problems such as depression and anxiety to rarer ailments such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

Keeping consideration of the seriousness of this issue, WHO has set up a special initiative for mental health under the 13<sup>th</sup> General Programme of work (GPW13, 2019-2023) to ensure all people achieve the highest standard of mental health and well-being. Details framework under GPW13 are mentioned below:



**Figure 1:** [https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/special-initiative-for-mental-health-\(2019-2023\)](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/special-initiative-for-mental-health-(2019-2023)).

### Indian status on mental health

As per the National mental health survey 13.7% of Indian population are likely to experience mental health issues and continuously on rise, particularly post pandemic. As per WHO, for every one million people, there are just three Psychiatrists and even fewer psychologists in India. Keeping consideration of growing incidents of mental health, ministry of Health (MOH) India has launched 24 x 7, Multilingual Mental health Tele helpline in October 2022 and within a few months, received over 100,000 calls since its launch.

### Role of AI powered chatbot

Therapy is becoming a common approach to help individuals release stress and get over mental stress. However, many individuals diagnosed with mental health disorders find it difficult to openly talk about their concerns.

This is one of the reasons why chatbots are becoming an extremely popular way to provide support to individuals suffering from mental health issues. One of the key benefits of chatbots is that they can replicate and interact with people in a natural way. Let's examine the latest developments and benefits of chatbots in mental health therapy and counselling.

### Therapy chatbots

Therapy chatbots are AI-powered conversational chatbots that are designed to help individuals dealing with mental health concerns. One can integrate them on their website or app to provide assistance to patients and communicate with them effectively. Therapy bots can track patient conversations, and monitor their intent, thereby providing them with a tailored response ideal to their understanding and approach. While therapy bots cannot take over or may not be equivalent to a human therapist, they can serve as an effective point of contact and provide the required assistance to the patients seeking treatment or care.

Therapy chatbots work on methodology referred to as CBT or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. CBT is a common therapy which aims at teaching coping skills to individuals and providing relief to individuals seeking care for mental health problems. The process of CBT aims at identifying maladaptive thinking patterns or emotional responses exhibited by the patients. NLP and sentiment analysis set

the basis for proceeding with conversations with the patients. They allow the bots to simulate highly effective conversations with the patients, enabling them to ask highly directional questions. Based on the user response, the bots can further ask follow-up questions that may help engage empathically with the patient.

Therapy bots can be used to address a variety of mental health conditions including depression, anxiety, stress, addiction and mood disorders. One of the highlights of these bots is that the patients can reach them without any fear of any stigma and have an open conversation with the bots. The bots help create a safe place for individuals to talk about their problems and get their concerns addressed in a more effective manner.

### Benefits of chatbots in mental health therapy and counseling

Let us ascertain what are the benefits of integrating chatbots and how they can help address the challenges of mental health therapy and counselling.

#### Chatbots are Personalized.

Chatbots are personalised and effective at recognising individual personalities and preferences. This indicates how they can offer tailored and customised responses to the patients. Chatbots can be an excellent addition to assist human therapists. Furthermore, bots are highly effective at tracking and monitoring the history details of patients. This feature may provide much more enhanced and useful support to patients dealing with mental health concerns. One can be rest assured that they will get proper advice and care from the experts.

#### Chatbots are Reliable and Easy to Use

Well, there is no doubt that chatbots are not reliable. For a moment, humans may tend to forget or make a mistake while prescribing or giving any detail to the patient. However, bots are trained with languages and designed to function in a particular manner. If they have been trained to give a response, they will.

Otherwise, the bots will further refer to the human agents bridging the gap and making the process easier. As humans, you will have to check the bots are working in the proper manner and recommending the right choice.

Besides this, bots are extremely easy to use. Be it navigating and communicating with the bots or integrating them on the website or app, the process of using the bots is completely seamless and easy to use. There is no need for proper technical expertise or knowledge to communicate with them. One can converse with them the way they chat with a friend or a family member. We can say that the bots bring convenience for customers and employees alike.

### **Chatbots offer concierge level support**

Chatbots are designed to provide support and assistance to individuals dealing with mental health concerns. Chatbots can even provide concierge-level support and help with appointment booking, resolving the concerns related to pre and post-care for the issue. The best thing is that any individual can chat with the chatbot. There are no disparities that the patient is likely to face. The patient can even be as much open as they want, without having any fear of judgment in their minds. We can say that a chatbot can help an individual get the help they require without any other concerns. Chatbots are even available 24\*7, making it convenient for individuals facing such issues in the wee hours of the day. When the doctors are not available or the patient is away, they can seek consultation from the chatbots and further fix their appointment with the doctors.

### **Conclusion**

Mental health issues are highly prevalent today and the stressful work environment is taking a toll on an individual's well-being. While companies are taking initiatives to combat stress, therapy chatbots can be critical in mitigating the mental health crisis and providing the required support to patients. The chatbots can open up new levels of possibilities, making it easier for such individuals to seek treatment. Chatbots are affordable and can be an excellent investment for doctors and professionals providing mental health services. The bots can be used to provide better connections and deal with patients more efficiently.