

'Mental health as crucial as physical health'

By DK RYNI QAREENA

KOTA KINABALU: Psychological approaches should be reinforced in both preventive and rehabilitative measures to battle mental health issues, a subject in need of critical attention.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Panglima Mohd Shafie Apdal said mental health is as crucial as physical health as it impacts individuals' development and daily lives which contribute to their future.

Psychology, he noted, plays a huge role in character-development and has the ability to unleash an individual's la-

tent self-potential which could build the foundation of a healthy mental state.

According to him, 4.2 million or 29.2 per cent of adults aged 16 and above in Malaysia were found to have mental health issues based on the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2015.

"The study found that these mental health issues were caused by multiple factors including work pressure, relationship problems, poor parenting skills, divorce and domestic violence.

"Apart from that, issues related to psychological skills such as poor coping skills and

social support worsened these individuals' mental status," he said during the Seminar on Women and Family Mental Health here yesterday.

His speech was delivered by Assistant Minister of Health and People's Wellbeing, Norazlinah Arif.

Shafie stressed that the government fully supports programmes that empower mental health issues particularly those involving women and families who shape the future of a nation.

The seminar, he said, should be able to educate women on how to react and seek help



CRITICAL ... Norazlinah (2nd left) and Dr. Dahlan (left) during the launching ceremony of the seminar.

when needed while opening up the minds of the public on mental health predicament and the solution to it.

"I believe mental health awareness campaigns need to undergo comprehensive reformation in order to determine particularly the symptoms that we were all the while unaware of.

"The expertise from local universities should also be optimised not only from their

studies but also on how to apply the results for the well-being of the people as a whole," he said.

The two-day seminar was jointly organised by Counseling Psychology postgraduate students of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Sabah Women's Organisation, Sabah Women's Affair Department and the Ministry of Health and People's Wellbeing.

A total of 45 papers were

presented during the seminar which was aimed at educating and raising awareness on mental health as well as creating social support system in coping with the issue within the local community.

Also present was Dean of UMS Faculty of Psychology and Education Prof. Dr. Mohd. Dahlan A. Malek who represented Vice Chancellor Prof. Datuk D Kamarudin D Mudin.