

## A Threat to Public Mental Health: The Scary World Syndrome

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### Abstract:

The scary world syndrome is the tendency of heavy television viewers to believe that the world is a more hostile place than it really is, to be more afraid of being a victim of violent crime, and to be more distrustful of others. According to Gerbner, those who watch significant amounts of violent content on television change their view of the world. These people start to see the world as a dangerous place. This situation indicates that those who watch violent broadcasts much more are more likely to exaggerate crime and violence in the real world.

According to Tarhan (2012), there are three types of reactions in those who think that the world is getting worse;

1. Taking violence as an example and increasing violent behavior,
2. Desensitization to violence
3. Becoming fearful, perceiving themselves as victims of violence and developing avoidance behavior. Stating that it is difficult to say that all these three types of reactions are healthy, Tarhan (2012) stated that “the scary world syndrome” is one of the most important consequences of lack of empathy and the scary world syndrome as it emerges when social emotions are damaged.

In the context of community mental health, it is thought that scary world syndrome can increase the anxiety and anxiety levels of individuals, make them more vulnerable to mental problems, damage people's sense of trust in each other and society, and cause conflicts between communities. In this context, public health nurses can help individuals develop critical evaluation skills by informing the society about media literacy. They can also provide counseling and support services to individuals experiencing anxiety and fear and encourage positive social interactions.

In conclusion, public health nurses have a critical role to reduce the negative effects of this syndrome and protect community mental health. Strategies such as media literacy, mental health support and promoting community solidarity can contribute to building a healthier and safer society.

### Keywords:

public health, scary world syndrome, community mental health.