

Executive Summary of the Global Youth Mental Health Awareness
Zimbabwe Virtual Campaign, held on the 4th of May 2020, Main
Theme: Good Mental health for a good future and Sub-theme:
Promotion of good mental health for youth empowerment.

Time: 10:00am – 1:30pm Harare Pretoria

Goals and objectives

- To bring together many on the same platform. Such as the international political leaders, youth activists, celebrities, and journalists, etc. to discuss the most crucial issues facing the domain of Youth Psychology.
- To raise awareness (advocacy) for the general public on mental health.
- To provide a safe a supportive environment for young people to discuss the youth mental health.
- De-stigmatizing mental health issues and creating both a demand and a supply for mental health care among the most marginalized communities.
- To encourage networking, sports, talent, counseling and communication as a way to curb mental health issues.

Guest speakers

Prof. Jude Ediae – GYMHA Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Trained Mental Health Practitioner, Business and Education Specialist

Welcoming Speech and Introductory remarks

Mrs.Tariro Kutadza – HIV/TB Advocate, and Global Goodwill Ambassador

Anna-Colletor Penduka, Executive Director of Women and AIDS Support Network (WASN)

Launching of WASN – Congratulations to Mrs. Tariro and Anna on the official launching of WASN.

Richard DiPilla – Founder and Chief Executive Officer at Global Goodwill Ambassadors Foundation.

Topic: The importance of Humanitarian works, and Reflection on COVID-19 and Anxiety

Mahmooda Lowe – New Hope Foundation Chairperson, Zimbabwe, and Moderator.

Dr. Beatrice Dupwa – Ministry of health and Child Care, Zimbabwe.

Topic: Good Mental health for a good future

Comfort Tanaka Gutu – Pharmacist and Global Goodwill Ambassador Zimbabwe

Topic: The Fight Against Mental Illness Stigma

Trudy Nyakambangwe – PhD Candidate, Director of Child and Youth Care, Zimbabwe

Topic: Promotion of good mental health for youth empowerment

Nyasha Mazorodze – Zimbabwe Pharmaceutical Students Association President

Topic: Drugs, alcohol, and youth mental health

Tandi Kuwana – Nurse, Western Australia WOMEN’S HALL OF FAME 2020
“COMMUNITY” INDUCTEE, Founder and Director of Mental Wellness Keys

Topic: Youth psychological first aid

Angelica Mkorongo – Founder/CEO of Zimbabwe OCD Trust

Topic: OCD Lived experience

Talitha Mashamba – Lawyer (LLB.), Law Society of Zimbabwe, Society of Construction Law Africa.

Topic: Perception of people towards Mental Health and Psychology

Delight Muchazondida – Former Junior Member of Parliament

Topic: Understanding the structural causes of youth mental health

Lawyer Modicai Donga LLM, LLB. Admitted Attorney of the High court of Zimbabwe

Topic: Demonstrating the linkages between mental health, discrimination, poverty, and access to justice

Josh Daniel – Vice President/Country Chair, Global Goodwill Ambassador Nigeria

Topic: Stress management and therapy

Steering Committee Members

Mrs. Tariro Kutadza (convener), Comfort Tanak Gutu (chairperson), Prof Jude Ediae (director), Mahmooda Lowe (secretary), Lawyer Modicai Donga LLM, LLB., Delight Muchazondida, Nyasha Mazorodze, Anna-Colletor Penduka, Dr Beatrice Dupwa, Kudakwashe Pembere, Catherine Mwauyakufa, Toluse Dove Francis, Maria Chiwera, Igweshi Austine, Judith Mari, Elison Thaulo, Kudzai Shumba, Delight Muchazondida.

GYMHA First Zimbabwe Community Ambassadors

Hearty congratulations to:

Mrs. Tariro Kutadza, Mahmooda Lowe, Nyasha Mazorodze, Comfort Tanaka Gutu, Delight Muchazondida, Lawyer Modicai Donga LLM, LLB, and Tafadzwa Donald Mapuranga.

Supporting Organisations:

Global Goodwill Ambassadors (GGA), Women and AIDS Support Network (WASN), Zimbabwe Pharmaceutical Students Association (ZPSA), New Hope Foundation (NHF) Zimbabwe, Masvingo Association of Residential Care Facilities Trust (MARCFT), CEPASD, and Reo Foundation.

Executive Summary

The promotion of good mental health for a good future calls for individual, societal, and collaborative efforts through making use of evidence-based practices to make informed decisions and a positive contribution to society and uphold ethos of love and kindness. It is aimed to

promote the realization of a good future for all Zimbabweans, particularly the youths, and young people living with HIV/AIDS, survivors of GBV and vulnerable people in society. It also seeks to pay a special recognition to those individuals who are mentally disordered or intellectually handicapped, or those who face mental illness stigma and discrimination. And ultimately, help those individuals to access appropriate healthcare services and social inclusion in order to realize an optimal level of self-actualization in times of great need and distress. Such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In Zimbabwe, the provision and access to mental health care services is regulated and guided by a number of legal instruments, including the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment number 20, the Mental health Act of 1996, the Mental health strategic plan 2019-2023, the WHO MhGap 2016-2020 to mention but a few. All of which may simply be understood as having an aim to promote inclusion of and realization of mental health needs of all persons and prioritization of those that are mostly in need.

WHO estimates that 450 million people worldwide suffer from mental or a neurological disorder, and that one person dies of suicide every 40 seconds.

Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It affects how a person thinks, feels, and acts, and determines how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. WHO defines Health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Zimbabwe has a population of 16 million. According to statistics, Zimbabwe has a total of 17 registered Psychiatrists, and there are 6 -7 psychiatry hospitals in Zimbabwe. This can be translated to 1 Psychiatrist per 1.5 million people. Therefore, mental health services are provided by other professionals including government medical officers, psychologists, social workers, psychiatric nurse Practitioners, occupational therapists.

Generally, in society, there is not enough knowledge about mental illness, and sufferers of severe mental illnesses are mostly associated with witchcraft, and are treated as outcasts, and thus lack family and community support.

Affective disorders such as Anxiety and Depression are common among young people. The native term for depression is “Kufungisisa”, and Psychiatrist Dixon Chibanda, has through his Friendship bench model, come up with talking therapy interventions to scale up treatment of Depression and Anxiety.

Promotion of good mental health also includes looking at HIV/AIDS through gender lenses. Women and girls should enjoy their full sexual reproductive health rights (SRHR), during HIV/AIDS era and beyond. This implies that, during times of pandemic like COVID-19, access to healthcare services concerning health, hygiene, HIV/AIDS, safe and satisfying sex and GBV elimination, open communication between partners, elimination of harmful cultural practices, access of women to power and the respect and protection of women’s rights at all times should not be neglected. Interventions, through which such can be realized includes research, advocacy, psychosocial support, networking, and development of effective models of health care.

For children and young people, interventions to achieve good mental health will promote development of and realization of full potential, competence, intergenerational independence, and self-actualization through intellectual and emotional quotient potential nurturing by community and parental figures. So, that when life brings challenges, for instance COVID-19, young people can cope with the associated economic, emotional, and social stress. It is when young people are equipped with mental health coping mechanisms, that they can overcome the barriers to good mental health which include health-comorbidity with other chronic illnesses, and or substance abuse, economy-poverty, social-culture, peer pressure, poor parenting techniques and spiritual well-being choices. Lack of, or inadequate national budgetary allocation to mental health, can be understood as a structural cause of mental health problems as well.

Key Learnings

How can the youth achieve an optimal level of good mental health, and especially in these times of uncertainty brought by COVID-19 pandemic?

Stress is a natural feeling of apprehension and tension. A little bit of stress is okay. However, excessive stress is detrimental to health. Anxiety, excessive stress, and fear are some of the real

consequences many of us experience at these unprecedented times of COVID-19 pandemic and probably beyond.

The youth are advised to make use of stress management tips, which includes:

1. keeping contact with family members, thus having trusted people to share their worries and anxieties with.
2. identify and reduce sources of stress.
3. making use of relaxation activities. Such as prayer, yoga, meditation, exercises, listening to music.
4. seeking information about health topics, including COVID-19 from reliable sources such as WHO and Ministry of health.
5. understand anger management and develop effective skills to manage your anger. Such as communication, understanding and accepting oneself, taking a time out, sharing concerns with a loved one, and deep breathing exercises.
6. communicate with confidence.
7. make use of the online library or resources to learn new things.
8. engage in sporting activities, sports relieve pent up tension. Engage in jokes for laughter, and adventure to change the mindset.
9. the youth should be innovative, and use their environment to sustain themselves, and avoid self-destructive behaviors e.g. substance abuse, exchanging sex for economic gains.

There are three key things to live a successful life. These includes:

- (i) Doing good – humanitarian, helping others according to your ability, sharing with love. Thus, everybody has something to give.
- (ii) faithfulness – doing things with sincerity, and

(iii) love – the key answer to every question in life is love. We're all called to show love more than ever, especially during these times of uncertainty.

How can we deal with mental health stigma and the associated stress?

Community empowerment, advocacy, and engagement have been identified as the major pillars in fighting stigma associated with mental illnesses.

Community empowerment, entails doing community outreach programs, to reach out to people at grassroots level, and empower them with knowledge about mental health itself and positive psychology. This includes putting light to the myths and misconceptions and harmful cultural practices that fuel mental health stigma.

Advocacy includes all professionals and health professionals, recognizing the mentally challenges youth or patients, and promoting their access to treatment and rehabilitation of their condition. It also includes, advocating for resources needed in the care of the mentally ill. Such as medications and rehabilitation facilities that suite their care. Advocacy also entails, trainings of professionals on the rights of mentally ill person and facilitating their access to treatment.

Engagement entails a multi sectoral approach in the scaling up of mental health service delivery right from grassroots level. So that, there is promotion of good mental health for a good future for all, particularly the youth and vulnerable groups in society.

In Zimbabwe, suicide is on the rise, and stigmatized patients have a potential risk of committing suicide, due to poor coping skills, lack of community support, finance, and access to healthcare resources.

How can we change young people's perception about mental health and make psychology a household term?

Young people should be nurtured using evidence based and positive psychology, that recognizes the whole person.

Young people should be empowered on how to make a self-assessment, identify strengths and develop life skills. These allows making healthy lifestyle choices, including personal safety and resilience.

The youth need to be empowered with life management skills, critical thinking abilities to face adversities. Empowering the youths includes helping them make choices concerning spirituality, effective parenting skills that foster harmony, promotes effective marriages for youth in their future, and promote career path development.

Changing people's perception of mental health, involves the engagement with policy makers. It is important to understand that, mental health itself is recognized as pivotal in holistic healthcare delivery, and the prevalence of mental illnesses, is exacerbated by inadequate investment in mental health programming and policies.

We need to enlighten young people on the significance of volunteerism as a way to boost mental health, marketing one's skills, team building, and self-motivation.

It is important to note that, people who take prescribed mental health medications, and have an insight into their mental illness, can live a healthy life and makes a positive contribution to the society.

What is youth psychological mental health first aid?

We all have a mental health that we need to look after. The youth mental health first aid is designed to teach parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health and human services workers, and other caring citizens on how to help a young person who is experiencing a mental health or addiction challenge or is in crisis.

It is an evidenced based approach that is co-designed with the community. An immediate, first line assistance given to a distressed person who is faced with an adversity. It considers all the needs of the distressed person and including safety.

It aims to provide safety, efficacy, connectedness and enhance an individual's ability to cope using emotional and physical supports.

NB: Community first aiders, need not necessarily be health professionals, but rather, they are trained to attend to persons in need, and link them to health care where necessary. They can be a community member who are trained (undertake the course) to provide initial professional

response for youth suffering from mental health or those who are potentially at risk of developing mental illness.

Finally, the youth mental health first aid course will teach the participants on how to assist young people who may be experiencing a mental health problem or mental health crisis until appropriate professional help is received or the crisis resolves, using a practical, evidence based Action Plan – ALGEE (MHFA)

A- approach and assist

L-listen, and non-judgmentally

G- give support and information

E- encourage to get professional help

E – encourage other supports

Thank you!

For any enquiries, please inbox jude@gymha.org or visit: www.gymha.org

We'd love you to connect with us:

<https://www.facebook.com/Global-Youth-Mental-Health-Awareness-GYMHA-318074815739705/>

[https://www.linkedin.com/.../global-youth-mental-health-awa.../...](https://www.linkedin.com/.../global-youth-mental-health-awa.../)

<https://twitter.com/GymhaOrg>

<https://www.globalgoodwillambassadors.org/>