

# **Global Youth Mental Health Awareness (GYMHA) Conference Held at Impact Hub, S393/4, Otswey street Ako Adjei-Osu, Ghana on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2019.**

## **Executive Summary**

The program started at exactly **10:21am** with the welcoming of participants and guest speakers by Master of ceremony, Daniel Addotei.

The theme of the session was introduced by master of ceremony (Mc) which focuses on The Importance of Youth Mental Health Wellbeing and Job Security. The first speaker, GYMHA Founder and CEO, Prof. (Dr.) Jude Ediae was unable to present a welcoming speech via zoom due to technical difficulties. However, the welcoming speech was presented by Daniel A. on behalf of Prof Jude. Through collaborative efforts, a better awareness on mental health can be achieved. Dr Jude gave statistics on the prevailing increase of suicide, use of drugs and mental issues among the youth.

One in four people in the world will be affected by mental or neurological disorders at some point in their lives. Around 450 million people currently suffer from such conditions, placing mental disorders among the leading causes of ill-health and disability worldwide-WHO.

It is estimated that of the 21.6 million (now 30,766,850) people living in Ghana, 650,000 are suffering from a severe mental disorder and a further 2,166, 000 are suffering from a moderate to mild mental disorder. The treatment gap is 98% of the total population expected to have a mental disorder.

It is estimated that about 50,000 people in Ghana abuse substances. Seventy percent of these result in mental illness. The use of drugs among young people in Ghana between the ages of 12 and 17 is on the rise. Currently, about 70% of the inmates at the psychiatric hospitals in Ghana fall within this age bracket.

A recent study by the Ministry of Health shows that 41% of young people report their incapacity to manage their stress as the major reason for abusing drugs. Also, some teenagers who have issues with low self-esteem are vulnerable to this menace than those with self-confidence.

GYMHA believes that young Ghanaian people can have powerful and positive effects on adults, organizations, and communities. Through empowering processes such as learning decision-making skills, critical awareness, managing resources, and working with others, both youth and adults become better equipped as change agents.

## **Introduction to GYMHA core Priorities**

Global Youth Mental Health Awareness (GYMHA) is an international membership-based initiative directly supported by the Global Socio - Economic & Financial Evolution Network (GSFEN) and is a key initiative associated with their Sustainable Development Goals. GYMHA is registered under Australian Securities and Investments Commission of the Corporations Act 2001. The company is a limited by guarantee Not-For-Profit organization. The GYMHA core priority is to achieve high level of health in young people to ensure the reduction of suicide.

## **Vision**

To make psychology a household term. **Slogan** “Empowering young minds with every little act of kindness”.

## **Target Group**

The goals and objectives of the target group (youth) was made clear.

### **Key Partners**

**Psychaid and Love Outreach**, Arisen Nation, International Youth Parliament (IYP), Reo Foundation, Center for Peace Advocacy and Sustainable Development (CEPASD)

### **Steering Committee Members**

The amazing committee members includes John Aggrey, Daniel K Addotei (Convenor and IYP country director), Prof Jude Ediae (Director), Oladopo, Aguster Asentewaa Boateng (Secretary), Paul Nwchuku, Sedi Djentuh (media and communication), Gifty Essel, Lucky Amy Bittor (partner), Alexandra Zografou ( GYMHA Administrative Officer), Toluse Francis, Stephen Olayiwole, Igweshi Augustine, Justice Okai-Allotey (partner)

The Global Youth Mental Health Awareness (GYMHA) provides a platform that advocates for raising awareness and improving youth emotional and mental health outcomes. The project seeks to bring together diverse youth groups to a space where youth mental wellbeing is discussed without shame, prejudice or stigma to enable empowerment.

--- To my knowledge, Gymha's mission is to "Empower" Everyone, everywhere should have someone to turn to in support of their mental health. This is the only Conference where Youth and young people are encouraged to take charge of their lives, and do this by addressing their situation and develop in advancing their access to resources which would transform their perception positively through their beliefs, values, and attitudes, with respect to proper moral as a core value to initiate ethical responsibility as a principle example for the future of others to follow - Oladapo Omitogun (GYMHA Community Ambassador)

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### **WHAT WE WANT FROM GHANA CONFERENCE**

- Great networking opportunity with international political leaders, youth activists, celebrities and journalists etc.
- A very safe and supportive environment for young people to discuss the youth mental health
- Best strategies on Youth psychological first aid
- Understanding the importance of Ghanaian youth mental health wellbeing and job security
- Building strong professional relationships between all allied health care networks to improve Ghanaian youth mental health.
- Understanding Youth Mental Health from a psychological perspective
- Promote our youth to lead and develop self-awareness and worth to assist others towards a better mind space.
- Perception of people towards mental health and psychology.
- Understanding the structural causes of youth mental health
- Certificate of participation to boost Job seekers resume (s)

**OVERALL GOAL OF EVENT:** to influence policy makers, universities and other relevant organisations to improve the current situation for youth with mental illnesses.

## **PROGRAM OF EVENT**

Opening address and GYMHA video – Prof Jude

Welcome speech – Psychaid and Love Outreach (Lucky)

Theme: The importance of youth mental health wellbeing and job security – Dr. Samuel Dotsey

### **Panel session**

**Topics:** Youth psychological first aid -Toluse, A mindful boost of Self-Esteem and entrepreneurship – Oladapo, Understanding the structural causes of youth mental health and unemployment – John A., Perception of people towards mental health and psychology – Justice, How to influence Government policies toward youth mental health – Amb. Raphael, Using Digital Tools To Enhance Your mental health – Mr Ibrahim, Understanding Mental Health from a psychological perspective – Samuel Otto Mensah, Introduction to online youth mentoring class – Arising Nation

### **GROUP INTERACTIVE SESSION**

**Topic:** The fight against mental illness stigma and Youth psychological well-being – Lucky. Allow youth to discuss and write down what they think. Take microphone around and allow youth around to present their discussion points, Presentation of gift and award, group photos, closing remarks/Thank you, and Networking.

There were presentations made by the guest speakers.

#### **First speaker (Samuel Dotse) Medical Doctor and CEO of Arisen Nation.**

His topic was on **The importance of Youth mental wellbeing and job security.**

He stated some causes of which he categorized them into Biological, Genetic, and Environmental factors. He talked about how to get a list of entrepreneurs to work with. He also mentions 3 secrets to ensure sustainable profitable career and healthy mind.

1. Find the kind of job to help you against mental illness
2. Live your dream
3. Strengthen your mental health

He concluded his presentation with a quote

**“You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with”-JIM ROHN**

#### **Second Guest Speaker (Samuel Otoo Mensah) a Clinical Psychologist under Training.**

**Topic: Mental Health - Things that affect your thoughts, Feel and Behavior.**

He defined Mental Health as an individual ability to identify your capabilities, cope stress in your life. Illness: finding it difficult to achieve your capabilities, emotions etc.

Psychological factors of mental health

1. Thinking (Depression)
2. Environmental (anxiety, the use of drugs)
3. Social Issues(unemployment)

### **Mental Health First Aid**

1. Know the signs and symptoms.
2. Know the person and the kinds of changes in the person

### **Some signs to prove**

- a. Depression
- b. Hopelessness
- c. Suicidal mind
3. Be genuine (so that the person will have confidence in you)
  - a. Do not be judgmental
  - b. Allow them to talk
  - c. Be a good listener
  - d. Be careful of the choice of words
  - e. Talk from your perspective (thus talk about your personal observation)
  - f. Be empathetic

He concluded by summarizing mental health as a way of Thinking, feeling, behavior, and mental health doesn't mean you are mad.

His last words were that, the quality of our physical health affect your mental health.

### **Third guest speaker John Aggrey (Founder and CEO of Hired Consult, Executive Director of Hired Project USA)**

Many psychological variables are adversely affected by unemployment, including perceived control, belief in one's own competence or self-efficacy, self-esteem, identity, life satisfaction, and sense of meaning and purpose in life.

#### **Factors Predicting Worse Mental Health**

1. Work Role Centrality
2. Social Undermining
3. Financial Strain
4. Stress Appraisal

#### **Factors Predicting Better Mental Health**

1. Positive Core Self-Evaluation
2. Time Structure
3. Re-employment Expectancy

Staying mentally healthy and positive in the face of repeated disappointments, job lose, and uncertainty is certainly a difficult task. Yet this appears to be one of the keys to finding re-employment and regaining life satisfaction.

There was also a message from the International youth Parliament (IYP) women's commissioner, Aguster Asentewaa Boateng. She gave an overview of IYP programs.

### **Fourth Guest Speaker Ibrahim Mustapha (Author, Digital Skills Trainer, Public Speaking Coach, CEO of Me for Africa)**

He summarized his presentation on that, live the life you want to live and do not compare yourself to others.

### **Fifth Guest Speaker Lucky Amy Bittor**

Topic: **Stigma.**

1. Men being Shut down to be a man
2. Children being cut off from speaking
3. Illness such as cancer, HIV etc.

### **A MINDFUL BOOST OF SELF ESTEEM AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY OLADAPO**

#### **HOW TO BOOST YOUR SELF ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE QUICKLY.**

There are a number of things you can do to boost your self-esteem and get back on track for success. Because in the end, confidence is the key to success.

Here are 10 research-backed ways to boost your self-esteem.

1. Wear black.
2. Wear perfume or cologne.
3. Listen to music.
4. Take a selfie.
5. Dress for success.
6. Socialize.
7. Practice good posture.
8. Exercise outside.
9. Talk to yourself in second person.
10. Meditate.

Practicing mindfulness is a great way to increase your confidence. In fact, a number of studies show mindfulness practices including meditation and yoga directly affect self-esteem.

### **ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Entrepreneurship is important most especially in situation that we are now that there is not enough job to serve everybody and an entrepreneur helps in solving the lack of the enough job by creating job for other people.

So, believing in oneself, contributing our quota to our nations development by starting from where we are, goes a long way to improve ourselves and the lives of other people.

After all the presentations, a short exercise was conducted and the topic was, **ways the youth can help prevent mental health.** Then a panel discussion was held.

The vote of thanks was presented by Sedi Djentuh and closing prayer by volunteer at around 2:21pm. There was some refreshment after which everyone dispersed around 4:10pm.

### **GYMHA recommendations:**

1. Youth mental health awareness, engagement and integration
2. Job opportunities
3. Early intervention and prevention
4. Critical awareness on substance abuse
5. Rapid, easy and affordable access to Youth specific care
6. Best strategies on Youth psychological first aid
7. Youth partnership and engagement across various sectors

8. Family engagement and support. Such as kindness, empathy, love, etc
9. Promote multi-stakeholder collaboration to advance state, federal, and global efforts in favour of good youth mental health
10. Improve access to mental healthcare and encourage the development of novel drugs and therapies for the treatment of Ghanaian youth mental health conditions