

# **Investment in Mental Health; Our Greatest Wealth**

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# Thoughts to ponder

- Is my neighbour mentally healthy?
- Should I be concerned about their mental health?
- Am I mentally healthy?
- Could I be mentally unwell?
- Could mental ill health be the cause my physical ailments?
- Is there anything I can do about mental health?

# Thoughts to ponder

- When you say that you are healthy yet you are mentally unhealthy, something is wrong!
- No health, without mental health
- Unwell and unaware?

# What is Mental Health?

WHO defines Mental Health as a state of well-being in which the individual:

- Realizes his or her own abilities
- Can cope with the normal stresses of life
- Can work productively and fruitfully
- Is able to make a contribution to his or her community

# Examples of mental disorders

- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- Substance use disorders
- Posttraumatic stress disorder
- Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders
- Bipolar affective disorder
- Autism spectrum disorders
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- Disorders secondary to physical illness, etc

# Risk factors for mental illness

- Genetics
- Childhood adversities
- Civil conflicts/wars
- Natural disasters
- HIV/AIDS
- Domestic violence
- Loss of a significant other or property
- Lack of social support, etc

# Mental illness does not segregate

- Rich and poor
- Young and old
- Christian and unbeliever
- Educated and uneducated
- Rural and urban
- White or black
- African, American or European, etc

# Global burden of mental disorders

- Mental disorders affect more than **1 billion people globally**
- About **25% develop psychiatric** and behavioral disorders during their lifetime
- Untreated mental disorders account for **13% of the global burden of disease**
- About **0.7-0.8m people commit suicide annually**
- The biggest burden **{80%}** is in LMICs



# African burden of mental disorders

- Globally there are nine mental health workers per 100,000 people
- In Africa, **there is about 0.9 mental health workers per 100000**
- Uganda has about **45 psychiatrists** for 45m
- Most of the **psychiatrists are in capital cities**
- Less than **10% of those who need care access it**

# African burden of mental disorders

- Mental disorders account for 19% all years of healthy life lost due to disability (YLDs) in Africa
- Most African **governments spend less than 1% of their health budgets** on mental health

# Ugandan burden of mental disorders

- Uganda is among the **top 6 African countries with high rates of depression & anxiety disorders**
- 4.6% of Ugandans are depressed
- **About 1% healthcare expenditure goes into mental healthcare, mainly Butabika Hospital**
- **Mental Health Act not yet gazetted & unavailable**
- **Most mental health units are now for COVID**

# Ugandan burden of mental disorders

- Clinical psychologist's are only employed at national referral hospitals and Universities
- Government has focused on money and forgotten the impact of alcohol use
- Uganda is one of the **19 countries with suicide as a crime**

# Clinical help available for people with mental illness

- Outpatient care in health facilities
- Inpatient care in health facilities
- Medications
- Psycho-education
- Talk therapies
- Rehabilitation centres

# Challenges and opportunities

- Few pharmacies import psychiatric medications
- Psychiatric medications can be quite expensive for no good reason
- Most companies do not want to insure mental illness

# Challenges and opportunities

- Limited investment in private mental health facilities
- Investors want quick returns but mental illness becomes a liability
- Focus has been on mortality without considering mental health as a possible underlying problem

# Preventive measures

- Investment at an individual level
- Investing in health care is one of the best investments governments can make
- Neglecting mental health will make it difficult to attain many other targets
- Poor mental health is a cost for businesses, governments and societies



# **Low investment is a liability**

- Poor mental health leads to low work outputs
- A sick neighbour or brother becomes a liability
- Denial of mental illness doesn't take it away
- Mental disorders responsible for some of the crimes
- Invest in mental health for crime reduction

# Opportunities for investment

- Engaging in physical activity and Playing
- Enhancing positive coping behaviors that have worked in the past
- Positive thinking; hoping in God
- Studying the Word; Praying; Seeking counsel; Etc
- Seeking care from professionals

# Opportunities for investment

- Change of attitudes, behaviours and strategies
- Invest in health care infrastructure
- Invest in human resource for mental health
- Focus on community mental health
- Mental health defence forces e g. Police, UPDF, LDUs, Prison officers, etc
- Mental health of Boda-boda and taxi drivers

# Opportunities for investment

- Conflict resolution/problem solving
- Coping skills
- Self-awareness
- Parenthood and child upbringing
- Mental health knowledge acquisition
- Fighting stigma of mental illness
- Regulate alcohol and drugs
- Decriminalise suicide in Africa

# Role of Faith in mental health

- **Our faith should motivate us to challenge the status quo**
- Faith gives hope and better coping
- Faith helps us to surrender what we can't manage
- Faith leaves room for divine interventions
- Need to know when to apply faith
- Faith is not ignorant or disobedient
- Church needs to invest in capacity enhancement

- Q & A