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MindSKILLZ program creates more awareness and information on Mental Health among adolescents in Kenya**Gideon Omweri***Nairobi County Government, Kenya*

Background: Mental health is a massive area of concern across the world. Kenya was recently ranked 4th in Africa with 1.9 million people with mental illness. Depression is the most common mental illness reported. According to the Kenya Mental Health Policy (2015-2030), mental disorders in Kenya continue to rise rapidly. Government statistics reveal that 1 in every 4 Kenyans has suffered from a mental illness at one point in their life

Objective's: To document the effect of MindSKILLZ Program in providing information and creating awareness on mental health among adolescents in Nairobi County.

Methodology: The MindSKILLZ Coaches aim was creation of more information and awareness on mental health to adolescents in school. as Coaches and other youth-s led CBO after the training and the sessions in schools, we went out to the communities to establish who the caregivers to the adolescents were. Coaches also sought opinions of community gatekeepers such as religious leaders, nyumba kumi heads, and community leaders, to establish if the community understood mental health and where to refer mental health cases. From the initial assessment, only 2 out of 20 people who were asked had basic information on mental health, but all of them did not know where to refer mental health cases. To correct this, Coaches started doing community dialogue, putting statues in the market place with mental health information and referring place and number to call in case of mental health needs.

Results: The activities that were carried out resulted in the dissemination on mental health information to 2,000 people. Additionally, 500 referrals for mental health services for both parent and AYP). The community was also provided with a hotline number to call when stress or depressed and information.

Conclusion: This intervention is a comprehensive and community-based approach to promote good mental health among AYPs. It involves engaging young group leaders, community health workers, parents, church youth leaders, and church elders. Different NGOs will support and train community.

Biography

Gideon Omweri is a dedicated mental health advocate and public health professional with the Nairobi County Government, Kenya. He is deeply involved in mental health initiatives, particularly focusing on raising awareness and providing information about mental well-being among adolescents. Omweri is the driving force behind the MindSKILLZ Program, a groundbreaking initiative designed to educate and empower young people in Nairobi County about mental health challenges and coping strategies.