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Mindskillz program creates more awareness and information on mental health among adolescents in Nairobi County, Kenya

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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

Objectives: 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 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 champions on mental health. The intervention will also involve community dialogues, engagement through sports and arts, referral for mental health, and sharing of video stories. The intervention will empower the community with knowledge, skills, and services necessary for mental health. Train more peer champion for mental health to spread message to the community.

Biography

Gideon Omweri is a dedicated mental health advocate with LVCT Health in Kenya. He leads the Mindskillz Program, an initiative that raises awareness about mental health among adolescents in Nairobi County. With a focus on community engagement, Gideon collaborates with youth leaders, caregivers, and local authorities to promote mental health education. His efforts have reached over 2,000 individuals and facilitated 500 mental health referrals. Passionate about empowering communities, Gideon continues to champion access to mental health knowledge and resources in Kenya.

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