

INTRODUCTION

Mental Health On Air is a unique initiative funded by Grand Challenges Canada and led by Farm Radio International in collaboration with teenmentalhealth.org. Farm Radio Trust and the World University Service of Canada to raise awareness about teenage Depression and improve mental health services for young people in Malawi and Tanzania. Mental Health On Air combines interactive radio programs for youth, secondary school curriculum materials about

mental health, school-based radio listening clubs and training for primary health providers in the diagnosis and treatment of adolescent Depression. It helps reduce stigma about mental health disorders among young people, parents, teachers and communities and increases access to adolescent mental health care. This initiative provides an opportunity to improve health outcomes for adolescent Depression in East Africa.



After teaching about mental health in classrooms, 81% of teachers report a positive change in student attitudes toward mental illness and 96% noticed positive changes in student behaviours.



BREAKING BARRIERS



Improving access to mental health care by:

- Providing schools with materials to educate teachers and students about mental health and mental health disorders
- Providing primary health care workers with the training and tools to help them identify, diagnose and appropriately treat youth who may be suffering from Depression
- Delivering training to primary health care workers on 'Effective Helping' for teenagers

- Improving access to medications known to be effective in treating depression in young people through advocacy and policy engagement
- Creating community awareness of mental health and decreasing stigma through radio soap opera, youth mental health clubs and peer mental health educator training

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I think the program is really cool. We are the youth and they talk about how we live our life and how we can make it better. They talk about how we should avoid stress in our life so we can live longer.

- Achmed, 17 years old

TEENAGERS TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH ON THE RADIO!

Radio shows like Nkhawa Njee in Malawi and Positive Mood in Tanzania are created for youth, in the language they speak. Each program integrates a dramatized radio mini-series to tell stories about youth as they struggle with Depression and other real life issues. The weekly radio shows also feature celebrity interviews, music, quizzes and call-ins with mental health experts to entertain, inform and provide advice. Young people who listen to the programs on a regular basis demonstrate improved knowledge about mental health and decreased stigma.

WHY ARE THESE RADIO PROGRAMS SO SUCCESSFUL?

Radio is the most widely available and accessible medium in Malawi and Tanzania, allowing programs like Nkhawa Njee and Positive Mood to reach hundreds of thousands of young people. The radio programs are supported by schools, youth clubs and health care facilities, which are all working together as part of this program to raise awareness about teenage Depression and provide appropriate mental health care.



RADIO



Nkhawa Njee(Malawi), Positive Mood(Tanzania)



More than 500,000 youth reached in Malawi and Tanzania through a weekly radio show about mental health



200 hours of radio programming on mental health aired in Malawi and Tanzania



90% of youth who listen to the program on a regular basis demonstrate improved knowledge, attitudes and health seeking behaviours



More than 2000 young people listen to a weekly radio show about mental health in radio listening clubs

RADIO CAN'T DO IT ALONE

Trained teachers, peer mental health educators and health workers provide a community support system.

SCHOOL PROGRAM

Integrating a new mental health curriculum into secondary schools has demonstrated positive effects on the knowledge and attitudes about mental health among teachers and students in participating schools. Educators report that students now:

- Know what to do and where to go if they have a personal problem
- Act supportively towards fellow students who may have a mental health problem
- Explain what Depression is and how to handle situations that could lead to suicide
- Talk more openly about mental health

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TRAINING

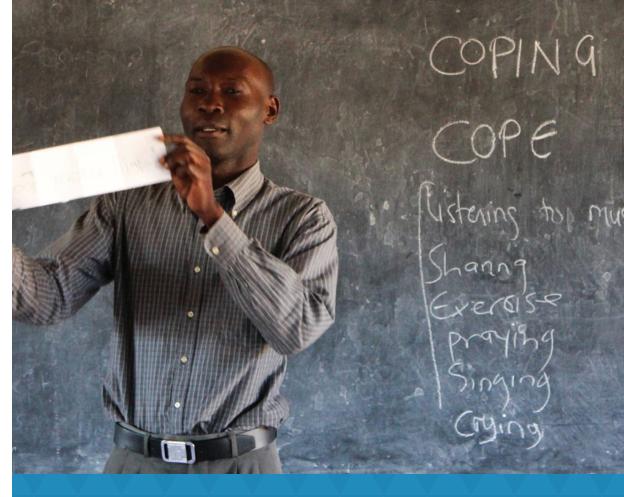
A training program for primary care providers developed for use in Canada by Teen Mental Health has been translated and adapted for Malawi and Tanzania.

200 primary health care workers in Malawi and Tanzania received training to screen for, diagnose and treat adolescent depression through face-to-face workshops, over-the-shoulder coaching and a tablet-based e-learning course.

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New tools have been developed to more accurately gauge youth mental health needs and to help better understand how to diagnose and treat depression.

- Mental Health Trainer, Malawi



TRAINING



Teachers, peer educators & health workers



Approx. 500 teachers trained in Malawi and Tanzania using mental health curriculum resources in their classrooms



Approx. 300 trained peer educators are facilitating mental health clubs in 70 schools in Malawi and Tanzania



200 primary care providers in Malawi and Tanzania trained in identifying, treating and diagnosing adolescent Depression



Farm Radio International, in partnership with World University Service of Canada Malawi, Farm Radio Trust in Malawi and Dr. Stan Kutcher of Dalhousie University, is taking on the challenge of spreading the word about Depression, with support from Grand Challenges Canada.

Working with radio broadcasters, youth groups, schools and health care providers, this innovative program will help youth in Malawi and Tanzania understand Depression and its symptoms, learn to talk about it and get help. Farm Radio International will support the development of an innovative radio drama and program to overcome stigma and raise awareness about youth Depression in Africa.

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