

# Adullam

Mental Health Magazine

Issue No.1

## Moving Mental Health stories of trial and triumph

Adullam Therapy  
Mental Health Essay  
Contest

## Using the Internet to solve the global mental health crisis

Adullam Therapy and Wellness Center.

**Panarottis**

A brand taking care of your mind not just your belly.



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THERAPY

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# Letter From The Editor



August 31, 2024

Dear reader,

I welcome you to our first ever edition of Adullam Mental Health Magazine. Mental health according to WHO is a state of well-being in which an individual is able to cope with life's stressors and contribute positively to society.

This magazine envisions to be a beacon of hope to the millions of people around the world who are struggling in their mental health. Statistics reveal that 300 million people worldwide are living with Depression and 700, 000 people end their lives through suicide every year.

In this special edition we have endeavoured to bring to you real life mental health stories from people who have experienced heart breaking situations and circumstances first hand; this will give you a glimpse into a dark world that is often hidden from sight but just as these people opened up we encourage you to connect with a therapist today in order to get the support you need to thrive.

Sincerely,

Dr. Matiya Ndengi  
Editor-In-Chief

# **Breaking the stigma: Personal stories of overcoming Mental Health challenges**

By Wise Chibulu

I first heard of the term "mental health" in 2021. It was a time when I was on the verge of discovering myself. That same year, I had just attempted suicide, and I was living in fear that I might take my own life any day. I was trying to figure out what my problem was. Before then, I would hear about people who committed suicide across the country and the world at large, but it never crossed my mind that I could do the same—until it happened to me. I remember telling myself, "I can never take my life," but the truth is, I could. This experience of attempting suicide pushed me to begin a journey of self-discovery, and in the process, I was introduced to the concept of mental health. Before then, I hadn't even heard this topic discussed at school, church, or at home.

Let me share the story of how I almost took my own life. In 2019, I lost my mother, who meant a lot to me. I should mention that I was raised by a single mother and outside wedlock. Anyone who has been in this situation knows how hard it can be. Most of the traumas I've carried with me originated from this beginning, during my childhood. Like any other kid, I wished for a lot of things, like a father figure and materialistic things, of course, which my mother couldn't provide at the time. Being a child of circumstance, my mother was very overprotective and strict with me, but I don't judge or blame her for it.

In a way, my mother's attitude toward me positively impacted my academic life. For fear of punishment, I didn't want to let my mother down, so I worked hard to learn how to read and write. Being a teacher, she took it upon herself to teach me these skills. I happened to be a bright kid even before I was enrolled in primary school. Despite our strange relationship, we had a connection, just like any mother and child, so when I received the news of her passing on May 31, 2019, I was devastated, as you can imagine.

I felt hopeless. As I mentioned, she was raising me and my younger brother by herself, so her passing meant we were on our own. It felt scary in that moment because I was still young. My mother was my hope, and she made my dreams feel like they could become a reality.

Before all this happened, I was applying to enroll in university, so when my mother passed away, it felt like the world was crumbling before me. In trying to cope with the stress, I started abusing marijuana just to feel relaxed from the anxiety I was experiencing. Anxiety that continues to haunt me to this day. The reason I'm sharing this story is to connect it to the day I attempted suicide. You see, suicide isn't something that just happens; it's in you long before it manifests itself. There are suicidal thoughts that build up in your mind long before you decide to act on them.

These thoughts come on your bad days—days when you feel terrible about yourself. On those days, you might wish for death without truly meaning it, but because you feel hopeless in that moment, it happens. And these thoughts occur multiple times. The brain registers these bad days in your memory. At one youth gathering, Chef 187 shared a parable with us. He said, "On a day you feel like killing yourself, throw yourself in a deep lake and see how hard you will try to fight back to the surface, and then you will realize that you did not want to kill yourself, but only wanted to kill something in you." No one wants to die, and that's a fact. We're all scared of dying, just like every person who has committed suicide.

Back to my story—before I attempted suicide, I had been harboring suicidal thoughts for a long time, and my mind was just waiting for that intense trigger. This trigger came when I got swindled out of K7000 at a mobile booth where I was working. This made me feel ashamed, embarrassed, and unhappy with myself, especially since it happened in public. I swallowed multiple prescribed drugs, but fortunately, the pills didn't have the intended effect for whatever reason.

After the suicide attempt, I started reflecting on my life and questioning how things had gotten to this point—almost to the point of taking my own life. In that moment, I realized a lot of things, like how I was still battling childhood trauma and struggling to cope with my mother's death.

I had to ask myself tough questions and give myself honest answers. What I've learned from my experience with depression and anxiety is that people don't open up, not because they don't want to, but because the things they struggle with are things they're embarrassed to talk about. No one wants to admit they're fighting a porn or drug addiction because society's standards allow others to judge them. But if you intend to find a middle ground to deal with your mental health challenges, you need to dig deep into your core and bring out whatever you find there, whether it makes you comfortable or not. During my self-discovery journey, I learned how to interact with myself honestly and correctly, and that's why I'm writing this with no fear of what people might think about me.

The suicide attempt pushed me to start researching mental well-being and coping mechanisms. Enrolling in university a year after the attempt felt like a new beginning, and once again, I began to feel hopeful about life. It seemed like an environment where I could be productive and learn not only to maintain myself but also to interact positively with others. I can proudly say that this experience pushed me to discover my special abilities in writing, poetry, music, and advocacy. It's not that I don't have bad days anymore, but now I'm more prepared and confident when they come. Being mentally healthy doesn't mean you won't face bad days; it means you're better equipped to face them when they do come.

Enrolling at Cavendish University Zambia gave me answers to the questions I had about how my life would turn out, and honestly, what I've learned is that my life can only turn out the way I want it to. So, I started wanting more for myself. I started envisioning my life beyond just completing my studies and getting employed—to being able to make an impact with my story.

On this journey of finding healing, I've done many things I'm proud of while using my pain as a driving force. I stand here as a certified Berelevant Leader, Mental Health Advocate, Author, President of Cavendish Mental Health Association, and a Medical Student. I've done all this while trying to avoid the mental health challenges that overwhelm people and cause them to give up on their lives. As the saying goes, "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." When your mind isn't busy, it's susceptible to many thoughts, either positive or negative, so we as individuals have the power to decide what thoughts we allow in our minds. I try to keep my mind busy all the time.

Living a life of purpose, through offering mental health services to my peers and my community, is how I've been dealing with my mental health challenges. By engaging in these activities, I'm able to take my mind off negative thoughts. Besides this, I also belong to a mental health support group, where we meet as peers and discuss the various challenges we're facing and how we can support each other. This has been very effective, as it allows people to speak out and free themselves from what holds them down. It has been a very helpful gathering, and I highly recommend it.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize the need to educate people about mental health. It's clear that many people in our country aren't aware of what mental health really is, and because of this, there's so much stigma and misinformation surrounding it. To break the stigma, we must first introduce the topic to people and educate them about what they need to know. The lack of mental health education has led people to associate every mental health issue with being crazy or mad, which is completely untrue. This is why people need to be educated.

Secondly, I'm appealing to the government to prioritize providing mental health services to citizens. Honestly, it's very difficult to receive mental health help in Zambia. The government can do better by developing the mental health department, building more facilities in clinics and hospitals, and ensuring that people can access good therapy and medication.

My message to anyone reading this is that we should embrace kindness and tolerance towards one another when it comes to issues concerning mental health. Let's encourage our family and friends to seek help when it's necessary. Destigmatizing mental health begins with individuals. Maybe it's not you going through it, but someone in your circle might be. We're all in this together, and remember, "You are not alone."

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