THE 8th INTERNATIONAL EAST AFRICA
PSYCHOLOGY VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Community Mental Health After the Covid-19 Pandemic Around the Globe

October 6th-8th 2022
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Welcome Message

On behalf of the Uganda Behavioral Health Alliance board of directors, Sebastian Family Psychology Practice, the University of Kisubi, and our partners, we welcome you to the events of the 2022 Conference. This Conference will take place on October 6th and 7th, with the 8th being a vision and planning session for the delegate leaders. We have a unique excitement for this year because we mark our 10th anniversary since we started hosting this learning and exchange event.

The 2022 Conference comes at a time of great significance in our lives, especially in relation to the Conference’s theme of Community Mental Health, which could not come in a more timely manner. Our individual and collective lives have significantly been altered by the Covid-19 Pandemic, and the concurrent major changes that we cannot ignore. These include an increased and heightened awareness of the inequalities in social justice, in accessing, affording, and utilizing healthcare, and in significant economic and geopolitical changes.

The prevailing war by Russia into Ukraine has for all purposes become a war against the entire globe, given its known and unknown consequences on the combatants and humanitarians in general. The catastrophic economic devastation, felt in many parts of the world, although at different levels of impact are well known to us.

As a community of providers focused on advancing and promoting mental health and wellbeing in a Global context, these major forces are compelling indeed. We are pleased to report that the consortium of partners that are responsible to host and attend this Conference, have remained focused on their work with considerable collective impact since the beginning of Covid-19 and its variants, through today and beyond.

This year’s Conference will be remarkable in a sense that it will be primarily in person at each of the eight locations and a planned synchronous virtual event, that will take place on Thursday, October 6th and Friday, October 7th.
The main event hosted by the University of Kisubi, and taking place at the Ulrika Conference Center, will receive delegates from Meru and Nairobi, Kenya; Beni and Goma, Eastern Congo; Somaliland; and have active virtual participants from two locations in Nigeria, as well as Burkina Faso. We will have participants from Toronto, Canada, as well as various cities in the United States.

The collective is primarily a combination of frontline professionals in mental healthcare delivery, social work, humanitarian providers, and an interdisciplinary body of professionals with a collective good. This collective good is to seek and be part of a movement that aims to make mental healthcare and healthcare in general to be two sides of the same coin. The multiple psychosocial stressors precipitated by Covid-19 and its variants, are taking a considerable toll on human beings on every Continent. Examples of this include elevated stress and higher suicide rates on the African Continent, and a significant spike of suicide and homicide behaviors worldwide. The devastating effects of economic distress also heighten the pressure on psychological wellbeing for all humanity. Endeavoring to cope with and be positioned to overcome these difficulties is an ultimate goal of this Conference.

Among other outcomes for the Conference, will be the opportunity to increase the personal relationships and meaningful social engagement from the participants and partners in care. A unified sense of mission will be emboldened by these events, as we head into the end of 2022 and awaiting the 2023 calendar year. Each site remains actively engaged in providing care on the ground while also participating in ongoing cross sector consultation and training that happens once a month for the directors. Educating the next generation of providers is part and parcel of our wider mission.

The inspiration and motivation to serve at such a difficult time in history is not by accident. It is the result of careful nurturing of relationships, and a meeting of minds where participants have a unified vision to make a positive difference in the way human beings reach out to and are present to each other.
Finally, we are grateful to our sponsors making this event possible and are grateful in advance to many who will continue to support our work, as it unfolds daily throughout the year.

We thank you for your support and involvement. Should you be in a position to donate and/or to approach those that are able to, we welcome any level of donation for the purpose of supporting the frontline work that goes on in different sites across seven African countries and within the United States.

To donate please go to our UBHA website and/or at the Sebastian Family Psychology Practice website, and follow the instructions enabling you to assist our mission.

Respectfully,

Sebastian Ssempijja, PhD., Co-Chair of the UBHA
CEO/Clinic Director at SFPP
Our Sponsors:

- Uganda National Alliance
- Sebastian Family Psychology Practice LLC
- University of Kiburi
- University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
- University of Wisconsin
- Wisconsin University of Wisconsin-Madison
- The Nachan Project
- Mirembe Words of Wisdom
- CIMRO Healthcare for All
- Endiro Coffee
- Grandmothers Beyond Borders
- Caritas For Children
- Hope Without Borders
- Immy’s African Cuisine
- Anonymous Donor
- Gilliam K. Mukasa Estate Namulamba
- Mr. Charles Ssenteza’s Rugby Team
- Dr. Gerald Makumbi Medical Services
Conference Theme

Community Mental Health After the Covid-19 Pandemic Around the Globe

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will use an interdisciplinary approach to behavioral health and wellness within the context of life in the community.

2. Participants will value the role of local communities in determining psychological and wellness outcomes that fit their context. This includes looking at the role of culture, rituals and practices, and their impact on health and wellbeing.

3. Participants will focus on the reality on the burden of mental illness, its impact on life, and effective treatment approaches.

4. Participants will discuss the role of medicine and traditional healing practices, including non-traditional and cultural treatments practiced since and during Covid, and Implications to treatment going forward.
Sub-Themes and Topics

1. Holistic approach to Mental Health Issues
   - Indigenous/cultural/spiritual healing practices
   - Evidence based practices

2. Quality of Life for Resilient Futures
   - Capacity building
   - Mental health of workers at workplaces
   - Mental health of the caregivers
   - Addiction and substance misuse
   - Suicidal tendencies.

3. Social expectations and Mental Wellness
   - Mental health of students
   - Poverty
   - Trauma, depression, and grief
   - Technology for Mental Health (Telecare)

4. Post Covid Family structure Dynamics and Psycho-social Well-being
   - Parenting
   - Domestic violence
   - Abuses
Our Communities

Burkina Faso

Canada
- CIMRO, Critical Incident Management Response Organization Corporation, Toronto

Democratic Republic of Congo
- Bethesda Counseling Center, Beni

Denmark
- DIGNITY, The Danish Institute Against Torture

Kenya
- Hope without Borders, Nairobi
- International Peace Initiatives, Meru

Nigeria
- University of Abuja Teaching Hospital, Abuja
- Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Aro Abeokuta, Ogun State

Somaliland
- Gabiley Mental Hospital, Gabiley
- Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Health, Somaliland

Uganda
- University of Kisubi, Kampala
- Butabika Hospital, Kampala
- Africa Youth Initiative Network, Lira
- Muni University, Arua
- Umoja Development Agency, Gulu
- The Nachan Project, Kampala

United States
- Hope Without Borders
- Uganda Behavioral Health Alliance
- UW - Madison, Department of Psychiatry
- UW- Madison, Global Health Institute
- UW- Milwaukee, Institute for Systems Change and Peacebuilding
- Caritas for Children, USA
- Sebastian Family Psychology Practice, Wisconsin
Virtual Synchronous Meeting:

The times for the joint virtual zoom meeting on Oct 6th and 7th are:

Wisconsin:  8:30am-10:30am CST
New York:  9:30am-11:30am EST
Nigeria:  2:30pm-4:30pm
Beni, DRC:  3:30pm-5:30pm
Uganda, Kenya, Somaliland: 4:30pm-6:30pm

Please confirm the time in your time zone prior to the event:
Time Zone Converter: https://www.thetimezoneconverter.com/

Zoom Meeting Link for Oct 6th and 7th, 2022:

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82937231569?pwd=QVVcbXlzY2hRZGFMeVRKeEdrVFJxZz09

Meeting ID: 829 3723 1569
Passcode: 077963

Call in Option:
Dial: +1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 829 3723 1569
Passcode: 077963
UNLOCKING MENTAL HEALTH CARE: A CALL TO ACTION

Please add your name Unlocking Mental Health Care: A Call to Action! We invite you to DIGITALLY sign the call to action at http://chng.it/9kvBL7p5cR. We hope to procure a large number of signatories that can be used as leverage for policy support.

"THERE IS NO HEALTH WITHOUT MENTAL HEALTH"

All families need welcoming access to quality mental health care and psychosocial support at all times. Every family faces challenges related to untreated mental illness, and the increased presence of alcohol and drugs in our communities. Around the world family members are impacted by traumatic life events experienced by their loved ones, including social stigma, violence, social and economic disparities, the impacts of mass incarceration, complex emergencies, war, and environmental instability.

This need is universal, and effective strategies for health system and community-based prevention and care are known and can be made available. Yet families in need of this support face increasing rates of depression and suicide in both adults and children. They face challenges and injustice related to stigma. People living with mental illness or addiction face the added trauma of costly and unjust incarceration and detention.

We can, should and must help all families to live and prosper by unlocking mental health care. We call on local and global leaders in government, social institutions, religious organizations, development organizations and the caring professions. We ask them to work with communities and individuals, families and caregivers to provide access to care that is client-led, community-engaged, compassionate, comprehensive and culturally relevant.

Unlocking mental health care puts a stop to shackling, imprisonment, separation and exclusion, and replaces these inhumane responses with effective care and respect for human rights and personal dignity.

There is no health without mental health.
June 27, 2019, Madison, Wisconsin. USA.

This call to action was raised at the University of Wisconsin – Madison during an International Mental Health Learning exchange that brought together local Wisconsin and global African leaders in June of 2019. The event was sponsored by UW – Madison’s Global Health Institute, African Studies Program, School of Nursing, School of Medicine and Public Health Department of Psychiatry, as well as the Ugandan Behavioral Health Alliance, Sebastian Family Psychology Practice LLC of Milwaukee, Medical College of Wisconsin Department of Psychiatry, Journey Mental Health, and African Association of Madison. Please consider joining our movement by adding your signature.
Thank You for Participating

For more information, please visit the Uganda Behavioral Health Alliance Website

UBHA Website: ubha.org