

Improving adolescents access to mental health care: The mental hub project

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Mental Health: The WHO defined Mental Health as “A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stress of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make contribution to his or her community”.

Global Statistics:

- Nearly 50% of all mental health issues globally begin before the age of 14.
- Suicide is one of the 4 leading cause of death in persons aged 15 -29.
- 1 in 6 people globally are age 10 -19.
- 1 in 7 of persons aged 10 -19 experience a mental health disorder.
- COVID-19 increased anxiety and depression rates by 25% globally.

Limitations to addressing Mental Health challenges:

- Stigma
- Low knowledge and awareness of mental illnesses
- Limited prevention programs
- Lack of access to mental health facilities and trained mental health workers.

The Mental Hub Project:

- The Mental Hub Project is an initiative of the health team of 2021 Carrington fellowship program that aims to train counselors on how to prevent, detect and tackle mental health challenges in adolescents.
- The Carrington fellowship is sponsored by the US consulate general lagos and brings together exceptional Nigerian youths with leadership skills to execute sustainable development projects within the community.
- Team members are Boluwatife Adeyemi, Osadebamwen Egaghe, and Olanrewaju Popoola.
- Partners hacey health initiative, NIGUVU health LLC, Women At Risk International Foundation (WARIF).

Summary of the Curriculum:

- Understanding adolescents.
- Strategies to limit mental health challenges in adolescents.
- Effective communication skills.
- Suicide prevention strategies.
- How to tackle mental health challenges caused by sexual assault and rape.

Conclusion: Training counsellors and teachers in high schools to provide basic mental health care and psychosocial support can be effective in reducing mental health challenges in adolescents.

Biography

Olanrewaju Olamide Popoola has over 3 years in clinical pharmacy practice, research and public health interventions. Currently he works as a Pharmacist at Health Plus limited, where he focuses on providing pharmaceutical care, health and medicine information and filling prescriptions.

Olanrewaju has volunteered with the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria Young Pharmacist Group, and the International Pharmaceutical Students Federation (IPSF). He served as a mentor during the IPSF Global Leaders-in-training where he developed the leadership, communication and research skills of 10 mentors from 6 countries through his volunteering activities. He has impacted over 2,500 pharmacy students and recent pharmacy graduates from over 50 countries.

He has a Bachelor of Pharmacy from Obafemi Awolowo University with certifications in Leadership and Management in health, and Project Management in Health both from the University of Washington. He also has a certification on Health Systems strengthening from the University of Melbourne in partnership with USAID. He is a fellow of the Young professionals Boot camp organized by the platform Nigeria, the Carrington Fellowship of the US consulate general lagos and the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) RLC West Africa.

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