

Young Achievers



With Mbangweta Mufungulwa

Mental health: understanding relapse and how to prevent it

Managing a relapse is not just about taking medication, going for clinical or counseling reviews but rather developing a skill to differentiate between illness and the actual person. Having the ability to tell when things are falling apart requires a deep individual and family involvement in recognizing early signs of a relapse when things are getting out of the way but this goes a long way in avoiding a disastrous detour of a point to return for some. A relapse if avoided, living with mental illness wouldn't be horror as many people perceive it to be but rather living a normal life where one is mindful of their lifestyle choices that wouldn't make them vulnerable to relapse. Are you or do you have a relative living with mental illness? Take time alone or with family members to see if the symptoms below are present or you have experienced them before. From the list below tick signs and symptoms you or your relative you can relate to or the ones you or your relatives are currently noticing. Remember that these signs and symptoms may differ from one person to another and from one mental disorder to another, but common ones include: *Extracted from PsychologyToday.com: Mental Illness: Preventing a Relapse*

- COMMON CAUSES OF A RELAPSE:**
- Preventing a relapse should be prioritized by people living with mental illness and their families so as to avoid the negative impact discussed above. A relapse can be seen coming way before it becomes a full blown episode hence the need for individuals and families to explore factors that are likely to cause a relapse. Below are some of the factors associated with chances of relapsing. Identify those likely to cause you a relapse. *Extracted from PsychologyToday.com: Mental Illness: Preventing a Relapse*
1. Poor understanding of your mental disorder in general, and of the symptoms of a relapse in particular.
 2. Non-compliance with medication or decreased dose of medication
 3. Drug and alcohol misuse
 4. Lack of sleep or irregular pattern of sleep
 5. Stress
 6. Lack of social relationships and support
 7. Felt stigma
 8. Prior physical health
- EARLY SIGNS OF A RELAPSE:**

PART TWO



Benjamin

- Developing ideas that other people find unusual, strange, or unbelievable.
- Neglecting your personal care.
- Neglecting to take your medication
- Dressing in unusual clothes or unusual combinations of clothes.
- Sleeping excessively or hardly at all.
- Eating excessively or hardly at all.
- Becoming increasingly suspicious or hostile.
- Becoming especially sensitive to noise or light.
- Suffering changes in mood.
- Losing your sense of humor.
- Becoming tense, irritable, or agitated.
- Finding it difficult to concentrate.
- Retreating from social situations and neglecting outside activities and social relationships.
- Saying or doing irrational or inappropriate things.

Hearing voices or seeing things that other people cannot see or hear.

THE ROLE OF MEDICATION

Taking medication should be prioritized at all cost, most people have a lot of fears and misconception when it comes to treatment of illness. Other fear are as a result of side effects experienced while taking medication and has resulted in most people stopping medication which has proved fatal in most cases as some individuals have failed to regain control of the symptoms. Scientific research suggests that, in many cases, long-term treatment with medication can substantially reduce the risk of relapse. When people experience side effects that they find uncomfortable, it seems at that particular time that stopping medication is best or wise choice when it's a gamble that would result in irreversible consequences with time especially if treatment is not resumed as soon as possible.

The reality of every treatment is that side effects are always there but it's very important to report any challenges one is experienced while taking medication so that you are helped in the best way without compromising ones health and life in general. The best time to report such is when one has either a clinical or consulting review. Other than side effects, some people have stopped taking medication because of religious reasons after being prayed for and others have stopped in pursuit to search for other treatment options like going for traditional medication. This disruption in treatment effects treatment outcomes and put one in danger of developing more symptoms that will even need an increased dose that usually comes with more side effects at times and making it very difficult for the individual to

adhere to treatment.

In conclusion, it's very possible to live with mental illness and still lead a normal life with minimal or no struggles altogether. The message to all is "Let's end Stigma and Discrimination for People Living With Mental Illness", let's get involved and help people living with mental illness, Love them, embrace them, care for them and mostly work with them to prevent a relapse. You may never know tomorrow it maybe you or one of your loved ones and the Question we should ask ourselves is "How would I want to be treated if it were me or any of my loved ones? Remember mental illness does not replace ones personal identity unless if one allows it to do. But when one has several relapses, they ultimately take up the identity of the illness, and usually this happens when one keeps relapsing and what people see more, is what they will label you to be. Avoiding a relapse not only helps one enjoy life but also helps one rediscover their identity that has been overshadowed by frequent relapses and also reducing the stigma and discrimination that is associated with mental illness.

This article would be incomplete without recognizing our ever supportive Pillar and stake holder New Vision Paper for standing with us and for this robust platform. As Achievers Young Women organization, we are more than grateful for the creativity and passion on the advocacy art exhibited and from the entire team we would like to say thank you to our readers for your time and continued support.

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Belief system change key to a better Zambia, UoA don

By Davis Malenga

Change of existing belief system had potential to catapult Zambia to greater socio-economic heights, says University of Africa (UoA) Chancellor Ruth Mubanga.

Dr Mubanga said the existing ills of unemployment and other challenges could be mitigated by applying transformative tools of learning that enabled a complete change of belief system in people.

"Embracing transformative education at all levels would eventually reshape the belief system of the nation, including the notion that government was solely responsible for creating sustainable development.

"Our belief system shapes who we are and who we become. It is this belief system that will shape our contributions to the development of our community. If as a people we believe there is a government that will do every thing for us, it will be expected for government to pick up the trash we carelessly dispose of, then we shall not take care of our environment and in the end shall indiscriminately dispose of our skills," she told fresh graduates at university's 6th graduation ceremony recently held in Lusaka.

About 300 students were conferred with bachelors, 23 masters and four doctor of philosophy degrees. Eighty others had diplomas.

Dr Mubanga summarized the graduation theme of "Upholding a transformative education as key for social culture and economic development", pointing to the key attributes graduates needed to exhibit to make a positive difference to society.



University of Africa (UoA) Chancellor Ruth Mubanga

simple skills of listening, and collaborative problem-solving as the main attributes of transformative education.

"At UoA we strive to shape our learners in transformative education. This allows them to master existing frames of reference as well as learn new ones to transform points of view as well as shift mindsets.

"This is best captured in the Zambian proverb in Bemba: 'Tekali adabe unuilimo unu waishiba bwino'. For the benefit of speakers of other languages, this simply means that you cannot forget a skill that you have mastered well," she said.

Earlier guest of honour Justice Min-

in the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP).

"The plan was anchored in the theme "Accelerating development efforts towards the Vision 2030 without leaving anyone behind". Its implementation recognises the multi-faceted and interlinked nature of sustainable development.

Distinctively, the realisation of key outcomes, including economic diversification and job creation; poverty and vulnerability reduction; reduced developmental inequalities; enhanced human development; and an enhanced governance environment for a diversified and inclusive economy, hinged on harnessing existing and new skills.

Lubinda said the salient purpose of institutions such as UoA, involved in the provision of private university education through open and distance learning, was to help government combat the challenges of building human capital, a key ingredient to attain Vision 2030.

He said the growth of distance education had played an important role to overcome previously insurmountable challenges of building the necessary human capital by giving opportunities of getting higher education qualifications especially women, working people and socio-economically disadvantaged people.

Lubinda was also categorical distance learning qualifications had equivalent status with conventional education.

The import of his statement was not lost given that there were only 100 graduates when Zambia attained independence in 1964. It was realised by new independent state that it had a dif-

and enable prosperity for its citizens. Thus emerged the importance of educating the masses as a prioritised national task, and remained a hobbyhorse by the first Republican President Dr Kenneth Kaunda who spent much of his administration hammering away at the importance of education in eradication of ignorance and poverty.

However, up until 2013 when the University Act of 1999 was replaced with Higher Education Act, there were only two public universities that were bursting at the seams due as demand outweighed supply. The new act had gone a long way to mitigate the situation with the growth of higher learning institutions currently standing at seven public universities and nearly 70 private.

Thomas van der Zee, representing ADVTECH, the major shareholder in UoA, said they were committed to play a complementary role to government's efforts in creating sustainable development.

On the difficulty graduates faced in finding employment, he says more than 70% of students in various private learning institutions of ADVTECH, the major shareholder in UoA, got jobs after graduation.

ADVTECH counted Rosebank College, Varsity College, Vega and other premium private schools in addition to UoA among its assets in the provision of private education. It boasted of more than 40,000 graduates under the bouquet of its private higher learning institutions. The company's investment private education sector was in excess of K3 billion.

On future priorities, Van der zee said ADVTECH was seeking further expansion in the Zambia and the rest of