Depression and anxiety

KUFUNGISISA
Shona term. Literally translated into “thinking too much”

What is kufungisisa?
Kufungisisa (depression and anxiety) is a common mental disorder. It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working.

Kufungisisa can affect anyone, at anytime. It is not based on age, race, gender, sex, class, job education, background, religion or lack of it. Kufungisisa crosses all boundaries.

These are some of the symptoms and behaviours that you might see in someone with kufungisisa;

• Sadness, anxiety, or “empty” feelings
• Decreased energy, fatigue, being “slowed down”
• Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed, including sex
• Insomnia, oversleeping, or waking much earlier than usual
• Weight or appetite loss, or weight gain and overeating
• Feelings of hopelessness and pessimism
• Feelings of helpfulness, guilt, and worthlessness
• Difficulty concentrating, deciding, or remembering
• Difficulty speaking or thinking clearly
• Restlessness, irritability or excessive crying
• Physical aches or pains with no obvious physical cause
• Using tobacco, alcohol or other drugs more than usual
• Thoughts of death, suicide, or suicide attempts

Kufungisisa can be treated. The earlier treatment begins, the more effective it is. So if you think you are suffering from kufungisisa or know someone who might be suffering from it please visit the Friendship Bench at your local clinic and talk to a trained lay health worker.

Visiting the Friendship Bench

PROBLEM SOLVING

What happens on the Friendship Bench?
When you visit a Friendship Bench you will be met by a lay health workers (Ambuya Utano) who will deliver problem solving therapy. All LHW have an average of 8 years of education, their previous training is in home based care for people living with HIV & AIDS, in community follow-up of persons on TB treatment and in delivering community health education and promotion.

The therapy is a problem solving approach, delivered on a bench in a discrete area outside of the local primary care clinic. Each session lasts approximately 30–45 min with the first session lasting up to an hour, and we try to do at least 4 sessions with each client and afterwards there is the availability of group support, Circle Kubatana Tose.

Part 1.
Problem identification
(KUHVURA PFUNGWA- OPENING THE MIND)

Part 2.
Reassure
(KUSIMBISA- STRENGTHENING)

Part 3.
To encourage one another
(KUSIMBISA- ENCOURAGEMENT)

Research has shown that out of 10 people who visit a clinic, 3 are struggling with depression and anxiety- kufungisisa (“thinking too much”) but they are not aware of this.