MENTAL ILL HEALTH AFFECTS 1 in 4 PEOPLE
It’s more common than people think, hence why they are called ‘COMMON MENTAL DISORDERS’ (CMD’s)

MENTAL HEALTH
FOR EVERY COMMUNITY
RUBATSIRO RWURIKO, HAUSI WEGA
THERE IS HELP, YOU ARE NOT ALONE

What we do at the Friendship Bench...

PROBLEM SOLVING!

The Friendship Bench ® Programme aims to reduce the mental health treatment gap at primary care level by addressing mild to moderate mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression (kufungisisa).

When you visit a Friendship Bench you will be met by a community health worker who has been trained by the Friendship Bench clinical team and they will deliver a step by step problem-solving therapy intervention.

The psychological approach of problem-solving therapy works through enabling a more positive orientation toward resolving problems and so empowering people to have a greater sense of being able to cope in times of adversity and to gain a level of control over their lives.

In practical terms, clients are taught a structured approach to identifying problems and finding workable solutions. We do not give clients solutions or advice, we guide them through a process where they figure out the answer to their own problems, this empowers them and helps them realise that they are capable of helping themselves.

PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS

**Part 1.** Problem identification
**KUVHURA PFUNGWA - OPENING THE MIND**
Solution exploration
**KUSIMUDZIRA - UPLIFTING**

**Part 2.** Reassurance
**KUSIMBISA - STRENGTHENING**

**Part 3.** Encouragement
**KUSIMBISISA**

CIRCLE KUBATANA TOSE
After 4 individual sessions on the Friendship Bench clients are invited to join Circle Kubatana Tose circle (CKT). These circles are peer led groups that provide women and men ongoing support. A circle is a safe space for people to come and share how they are coping with life or how they feel they aren’t coping with life. We have found, and research has proven, that it is important to listen to others’ experiences and to share your own experiences as part of the recovery journey. There is so much wisdom to be learnt and passed on in lived experiences.

Visit www.friendshipbenchzimbabwe.org for more information
What are mental health problems?

Mental health problems affect the way we think about ourselves, relate to others, and interact with the world around us. They affect our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Mental health problems can disrupt a person’s life or create challenges, but with the right support, a person can get back on a path to recovery and well-being.

It’s important to understand that there are many different types of mental health problems that affect people in different ways. Within each mental health problem, people may have very different symptoms and challenges. However, symptoms are just one piece. Access to services, support from loved ones, and the ability to participate in communities play a big part in the way people experience mental health problems. Culture, background, and personal beliefs also shape the way people understand them.

Many people who have a mental health problem(s) do not want to talk about it. We want people to know that poor mental health is nothing to be ashamed of! It is a medical condition, just like heart disease or diabetes.

Common mental health problems...

**MOOD DISORDERS**

Mood disorders all affect a person’s mood—the way we feel. This can affect every part of a person’s life. When someone experiences a mood disorder, they may feel sad, hopeless, tired, or numb for long periods of time. At times, some people experience an unusually ‘high’ mood and feel powerful and energetic, but this can also create problems.

**Depression and bipolar disorder are examples of mood disorders.**

**ANXIETY DISORDERS**

Anxiety disorders are all related to anxiety. They may include excessive and uncontrollable worry, strong fears around everyday things or situations, unwanted thoughts, panic attacks, or fears around a past scary situation. Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illnesses, and they can create barriers in people’s lives.

**Panic disorder and phobias are examples of anxiety disorders.**

What can be done?

Experiencing a mental health problem can be very distressing. You may wonder if you’ll feel like yourself again. You may not know what’s happening to you, and you may worry about other people’s reactions. **It’s important to know that it’s not your fault and it’s not a sign of weakness.**

It’s important to seek help early. Finding help early will get you on the road to recovery faster and may even reduce the risk of problems in the future. Treatment often includes a few different approaches—for example, talk therapy, medication and self-care. Support groups can connect people with shared experiences. Each person has their own preferences and goals, and we believe recovery plans should reflect that.

Visit the Friendship Bench Open House or your local primary care clinic to sit on the bench and talk to a trained mental health care worker.

You are not alone.