



WELLNESS WHISPERS

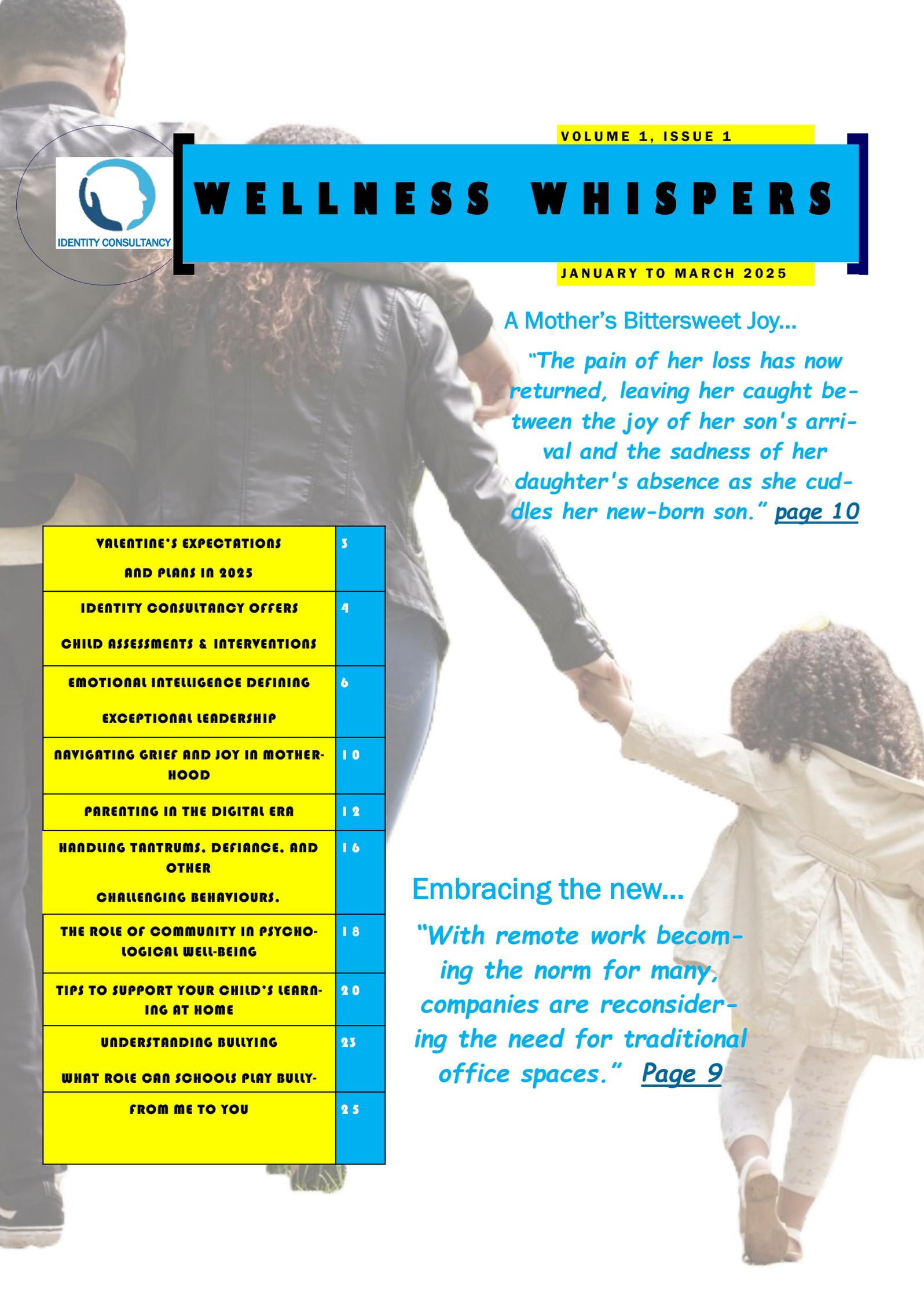
A Mother's Bittersweet Joy...

"The pain of her loss has now returned, leaving her caught between the joy of her son's arrival and the sadness of her daughter's absence as she cuddles her new-born son." page 10

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Embracing the new...

"With remote work becoming the norm for many, companies are reconsidering the need for traditional office spaces." Page 9



FOREWORD

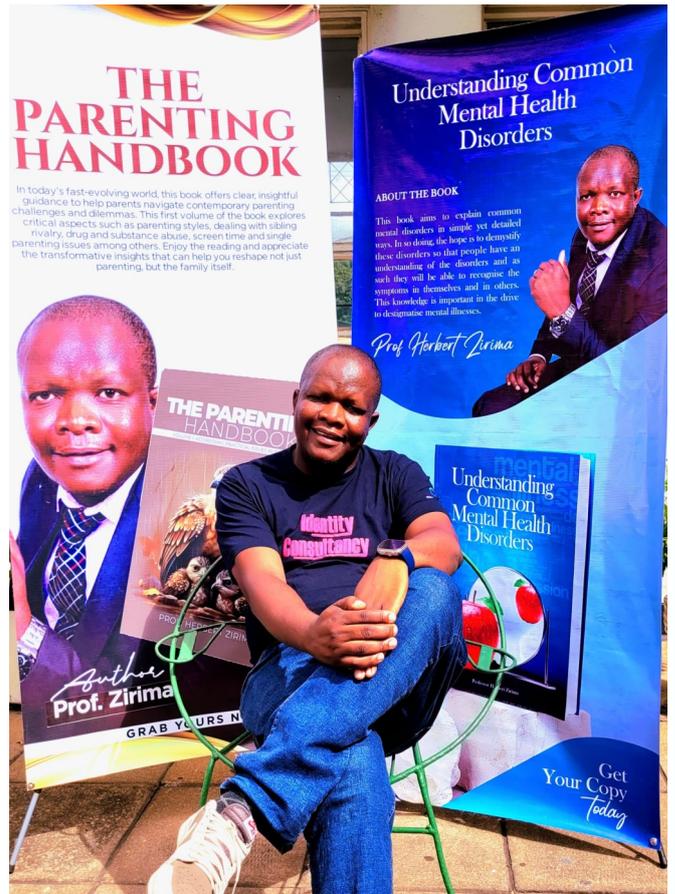
Hello readers, I welcome you to our very first instalment of the Wellness Whispers, a Digital Newsletter meant to boost your understanding of mental health issues. The newsletter ultimately seeks to enhance your overall wellness, hence its name, Wellness Whispers. This first issue takes you through articles to do with parenting with about half of the articles exploring this critical aspect. You will be able to appreciate the impact of social media on children's mental health, understand grief and joy in motherhood and techniques that you can use manage tantrums and other challenging behaviours that

children can present with. The newsletter also takes you through other mental issues such as bullying and the role that schools can play in preventing bullying and the role of the community in psychological well-being. I urge you to consider this newsletter as a digital therapist, one who is there to provide you with some whispers of wellness.

Enjoy the reading and consider contributing by writing your own article in the next issue.

I thank you.

Prof H. Zirima
Lead Consultant



Child Assessment and Intervention: Harare Class Graduates Receive Their Certificates

VALENTINE'S DAY STATISTICS BREAKDOWN: EXPECTATIONS AND PLANS IN 2025

By Professor Zirima et al



EXPECTATIONS ABOUT GIFTS ON VALENTINE'S DAY

The majority of participants (34.8%) indicated that they do not want or expect to receive anything on Valentine's Day. 15.7% would want to receive money, 10%, would want a romantic holiday, 8.7% would want a night out and 6.5% would want Dinner as well as another 6.5% preferring Perfume.

Expectations according to age

The 18 to 29 age group expressed that they want money as a gift on Valentine's Day (30.9%), while the few that expressed that they wanted something from the 30 to 44 years age group (Millennials) and the 45 to 60 age group expressed that they wanted "a night out" and some "a romantic holiday".

Expectations according to sex

57% of males expect to receive nothing on Valentine's Day whilst only 25% of females expect to receive nothing. Generally, therefore, this survey has shown that women expect to receive something on Valentine's Day. Of the few men who expressed the desire to receive something, their most preferred gifts were money followed by perfume and a romantic holiday. Women most preferred gift was money (17.4%), a night out (10.1%), a romantic holiday (9.9%), Dinner (8.7%), Flowers (8.7%), Jewellery (6.8%) and Perfume (6.2%).

[Please Find full article on Newsletter - IDENTITY CONSULTANCY \(IC\)](#)

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If you require surveys done for you or more details regarding this survey contact info@identityconsultancy.co.zw or +263789915304

PLANS TO CELEBRATE VALENTINE'S DAY

Most people indicated that they have no plans to celebrate Valentine's Day. The majority of respondents (63%) indicated that they have no plans to celebrate Valentine's Day with only 37% indicating that they have such plans.

41% of females compared to only 27.5% of males indicated that they have plans to celebrate Valentine's Day. Therefore, generally, if we are to generalise this survey, women have plans for Valentine's Day compared to men.

The 18 to 29 years age group (Gen Z) expressed more interest in planning for Valentine's Day with 47.3% of them expressing that interest, whilst the 45 to 60 years age group (Gen X) expressed the least interest with only 23.4% of them expressing that interest.

86% of respondents from Bulawayo have plans for Valentine whilst only 32% of Harare-based respondents have plans for Valentine. 50% of respondents from Masvingo have plans for Valentine's Day. The other towns with a significant number of people who indicated plans for Valentine's Day are Gweru and Kadoma.

In a world where love is often measured by the grandeur of gestures and the sparkle of diamonds, Valentine's Day stands as a global testament to romance, celebrated with fervour across continents.

"Yet, beneath the glittering surface of this universally cherished day lies a deeper, more complex story; one that varies dramatically across cultures, generations, and even genders."

While the day has so much global importance and undoubtedly business people have ridden on that hype to market jewellery, flowers and other products that can be bought as gifts, the real meaning, expectations and value that Zimbabweans attach to the day remains in question. A survey was conducted in early February 2025 to find out the expectations and plans that people in Zimbabwe have about Valentine's Day, specifically, the survey sought to find out people's expectations about gifts that they can receive on the day and what they want to do on the day.

A total of 230 people participated in the survey through volunteer sampling. Of the 230 participants, 161 were female and 69 were male.



Identity Consultancy offers Cutting-Edge Training on Child Assessments & Interventions

By Wilfred Chinhanho



Child Assessment and Intervention: Harare Class

Identity Consultancy (IC) successfully conducted two training workshops on Child Assessments and Interventions in Harare and Masvingo in the first quarter of 2025. The three-day training courses aimed to empower professionals, parents and caregivers with knowledge and skills to support children's physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development holistically. Practitioners offering psychosocial support to children in communities, such as teachers, nurses, and childcare workers, were equipped with knowledge and skills on how to screen and identify common mental and behavioural disorders (CMDs) in children and adolescents, and to offer effective interventions. Trainees warmly welcomed the workshops facilitated by Prof. H. Zirima, the Lead Consultant at IC, and his team of registered psychologists.

The first workshop was held in Westgate, Harare from 19 to 21 February 2025, while the second was conducted at GZU's Simon Mazorodze Medical School in Masvingo from 26 to 28 February 2025.

A combined total of thirty-three (33) participants drawn from different organisations actively contributed to the training workshops. Participants included social service officers, teachers, school counsellors, religious leaders, academics, and community childcare workers amongst other interested individuals.

The main objectives of this series of workshops as articulated by Prof. Zirima who is passionate about mental health, were to empower trainees with skills to identify common mental disorders (CMDs) affecting children, to learn cognitive screening instruments and interpret assessment reports, as well as to understand management and intervention techniques for example memory books and Hero books, amongst others. The

workshops were delivered in interactive, fun and practical ways which encouraged active participation by everyone. The lecture method, group activities and exercises, role plays, homework and field activities were all utilised to maximise learning outcomes and achieve training objectives. Participants delved into crucial topics that impact children's well-being such as Grief and Bereavement in Children: Understanding the impact of loss on young minds; Play Therapy: Harnessing play to support children's emotional healing; Stress Management in Children: Equipping kids with coping strategies for a healthy life, and Gifted Children: Nurturing exceptional talents and meeting unique needs. Other topics covered Assessments for Autism, ADHD, learning disabilities and other mental health disorders common among children, as well as Ethical issues and referral pathways.

The workshop was quite enlightening and was welcomed by all the participants who positively evaluated the workshop proceedings. The objectives of the workshop were successfully achieved as all the participants performed exceptionally well in the post-training Child Assessment & Interventions Training Quiz compared to the pre-training test. All participants received certificates, and special rewards were awarded to the two best students who walked away with an assortment of prizes notably branded t-shirts, coffee mugs and stationery materials.

Going forward, Prof. Zirima disclosed that plans were at an advanced stage to offer similar training online through platforms such as Zoom. He reiterated the government's call to 'leave no place and no one behind' by widening our reach to more interested participants who may have challenges attending the workshops physically.



Child Assessment and Intervention: Masvingo Class



Wilfred Chinhanho, is a full-time Lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) and he holds a Master of Science Degree in Counselling Psychology from GZU. He is currently completing an MPhil. in Public Mental Health with Stellenbosch University.

Chinhanho's research focuses on the effects of violence against women on women's mental health and wellbeing, and he has been instrumental in operationalizing the University's Mobile Mental Health Clinic.

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Emotional Intelligence Defining Exceptional Leadership

By Bothwell Matewe



being attuned to the feelings of those we deal with, being able to handle disagreements so they do not escalate, and having the ability to get into flow states while doing our work.

Quite a number of companies, have employed trained psychologists to develop what are known as 'competency models.' These registered and trained Psychologists allow people to have control of their feelings and impulses, to be able to create an environment of trust and fairness.

Have you heard about the trickle-down effect? Well, sufficient self-regulation has a trickle-down effect. You are an employee; would you want to be known as a hothead when the boss is known .

Value is always created through team efforts, which puts company focus on group IQ. This represents the sum of each team member's talents contributed at full-force. It is not the theoretical potential that has driven the team to greater heights but rather how well the team coordinates its efforts which we can term interpersonal harmony.

Boss! *Have you ever been bitten by an elephant? How about a mosquito?*

It's the little things in life that will bite you. Think of miserable morale, intimidated workers, or even arrogant bosses and any of the unmentioned permutations of emotional deficiencies in the workplace. All these can go for years unnoticed, but we can't run away from the costs which can be read through signs such as severely decreased productivity, work mistakes and mishaps and of course most importantly an exodus of employees. What is the major cause of all this? I know, it might be hard to accept, but low levels of emotional intelligence on the job. Being a good leader is not only about the 'head' but the 'heart'. Leadership is not domination, but the art of persuading employees to work toward a common goal.

A question to you my Boss. How do you motivate your employees?

Imagine the benefits of becoming skilled in the basic emotional competencies—

for her calm approach? Since time immemorial, negative energy has always been known as contagious converse with positive energy and mood. What then does this mean, fewer bad moods and energy at the top means fewer throughout the organization.

Do you even take time to think of the future of your company? What do they know you for? How will what you do today matter in the next ten years or even twenty?

With the fall of twilight, in that far future the specifics of our actions today may well fade like distant shadows of forgotten ancestors. What is left are the principles we hinged in the system, the norms we unconsciously and irrationally crafted, the footprints we left and wouldn't want to step on in return, and the decisions we made and cemented in the system like a tattoo. Think of all this my leader, for the stay is not guaranteed to certainty, your emotional intelligence matters.

Emotional intelligence does not mean giving free rein to feelings, or "letting it all hang out." Rather, it means managing feelings so that they are expressed appropriately and effectively, enabling people to work together smoothly toward their common goals. A good leader should know his/her emotions, manage emotions and moderate negative emotions while enhancing positive emotions. A good leader should motivate himself/herself, recognize and understand others' emotions.

Are you a good leader? I know, you are not sure of your answer. What makes a leader a good leader?

Think of these: self-awareness, self-management, empathy and social skills.



Self-awareness: This component of Emotional Intelligence is very crucial for a leader of an organization you might think of. Self-awareness extends to a person's understanding of his or her values and goals. How can you recognize this EI component? Well; self-awareness shows itself as an ability to assess oneself realistically. A leader with self-awareness is comfortable talking about their limitations as well as strengths openly and often demonstrates a thirst for constructive criticism.

Self-management: A good leader has higher levels of self-regulation. How do you see that the person has this component of EI? These people have the ability to say no to impulsive urges. This leader is able to regulate his/her emotions, reactions and thoughts in different situations.

Empathy: Simon Sinek once said, 'Empathy is being concerned about a human being, not just their output'. Empathy, allows leaders to understand not only the organizational experiences but also the personal experiences of their employees, which can foster a deeper rapport and a more cohesive work environment. This understanding is crucial for building trust and psychological safety which is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes.

Social skills: Leaders with this component are good at inspiring and guiding groups and people. Leaders with such competence articulate and arouse enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission. They are good at recognizing the need for change and removing barriers. Spot potential conflict and orchestrate win-win solutions.

Leadership decisions are effective when you incorporate emotions. Emotional intelligence matters!



WALKING WITH YOU THROUGHOUT THE PREGNANCY JOURNEY AND BEYOND

S.A.L.T Africa, operating in Zimbabwe, is working to address the critical issue of maternal mental health. Recognizing the lack of psychological support for pregnant women and new mothers, S.A.L.T Africa has stepped in to fill this gap. Through their initiatives, they provide essential services and resources to support the mental well-being of women during and after pregnancy, ensuring that this often overlooked aspect of maternal care is given the attention it deserves.

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Promoting mental health literacy

EMBRACING FLEXIBILITY: HOW REMOTE WORK IS REDEFINING COMPANY CULTURE.

By *Fadzaisha Chigamba*

Over the past few years, remote work has gone from a perk to a mainstream way of operating for many organizations. What began as a temporary solution to address the global pandemic of Covid 19, has now evolved into a permanent fixture of the modern workplace. Many employees appreciate the flexibility and work life balance that remote work provides, and businesses have found that they can maintain or even increase productivity with remote teams. Remote work completely transformed those invisible threads that hold company culture together. A positive company culture fosters employee engagement, boosts productivity and enhances job satisfaction even in a virtual environment. The significant shift has prompted businesses to reconsider traditional workplace norms. The focus is no longer solely on physical presence, instead, the emphasis is on productivity, results and employee wellbeing.

Organizations that once relied heavily on micromanagement are now learning to foster a culture of trust and autonomy.

Beyond operational efficiency, company culture is the bedrock of employee engagement, productivity, and innovation and it's like the glue that holds employees together when not in the same environment.

Remote work has shifted corporate culture from focusing on



the time spent in the office to evaluating performance based on results. Employees are now measured by their output and achievements rather than how many hours spend in the office, thus fostering a more flexible outcome-driven work environment.

Remote work has driven the adoption of digital collaboration tools. Platforms like Zoom, Slack and Microsoft teams have become integral to communication, encouraging more structured and transparent teamwork. These tools also help break down geographical barriers, enabling collaboration across time zones. Moreover, companies are now re-evaluating their technology usage to promote a healthy work-life balance. Remote work blurs the lines between personal and professional time. Organizations are implementing policies to encourage employees to disconnect after hours, ensuring that flexibility does not lead to burnout.

With fewer in-person interactions remote work fosters a culture of trust and autonomy. Employers must trust their employees to complete tasks without constant supervision. By this, it empowers workers to manage their schedules and work in ways that maximize their productivity. Leaders can enhance engagement by encouraging autonomy and ownership of projects, this allows workers to manage their work independently while

feeling empowered. This can be done through setting clear goals and expectations, and then giving them the freedom to determine how to achieve them. This fosters trust and helps workers feel more connected to their work.

Please Find full article on [Newsletter - IDENTITY CONSULTANCY \(IC\)](#)



Fadzaisha Chigaba is a passionate psychology student at Great Zimbabwe University, pursuing a Bachelor of Science honours degree. Passionate about empowering individuals, she worked as a psychology intern at Adult Rape Clinic, offering psychotherapy to victims of sexual gender-based violence.

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NAVIGATING GRIEF AND JOY IN MOTHERHOOD

By Audrey Nkhoma



As a psychology intern, I have had the privilege of assisting people in overcoming some of the most difficult obstacles in life. Bellie (a pseudonym), a mother whose narrative perfectly captures the complex interplay of grief, love, and resilience, is one instance that has struck a deep chord with me. Bellie's emotional condition provides an engaging prism through which to examine the intricacies of perinatal loss and postpartum transition. Her path as a mother has been filled with both joy and grief.

Bellie is the mother of three children; a six-year-old daughter, a new-born son who is just five days old, and a baby girl who unfortunately died soon after birth in 2023 from respiratory issues after a caesarean delivery. Bellie is overcome with grief for the daughter she lost, even if the arrival of her son is a time for happiness. She tearfully shared that she feels she never had the opportunity to properly mourn her baby, as the demands of life and the shock of the loss forced her to suppress her emotions. **The pain of her loss has now returned, leaving her caught between the joy of her son's arrival and the sadness of her daughter's absence as she cuddles her new-born son.**

From the standpoint of counselling psychology, Bellie's story emphasises the significant effects of unresolved grief, especially when it comes to perinatal loss. A child's loss is a particularly terrible tragedy that frequently results in feelings of helplessness, shame, and deep grief. Bellie's grief was probably worsened by the circumstances of her loss, which included a painful birth and the death of her child, leaving her with a physical reminder of the loss accrued and unresolved emotions. These feelings have returned with the arrival of her son, which is a common occurrence among mothers who become pregnant again after a loss. This is not a sign of weakness or ingratitude but rather a natural response to the complex interplay of love and loss.

A testament to the enduring power of mother love is Bellie's bond with her lost child. Her grief coexists with her ability to love her new-born son, establishing a delicate emotional balance rather than diminishing it.

Bellie works to preserve her daughter's memory while embracing the joy of her son's presence, which is a defining characteristic of maternal resilience. But striking a balance may be emotionally taxing, especially if you don't have enough support.

My job as a counselling psychology intern is to give Bellie a secure, accepting environment in which to work through her feelings. There is no "right" way to grieve, and the process is not linear. It may be incredibly helpful to support Bellie in naming her child, talking about her lost child, and admitting her pain. Bellie may find it especially helpful to incorporate her loss into her life story by using strategies like narrative therapy, which enables people to reinterpret and make sense of their experiences.

Additionally, mindfulness-based interventions can help her manage the intensity of her emotions, allowing her to be present for her new-born while acknowledging her grief.

Bellie's case also points out the importance of addressing postpartum mental health, particularly in mothers who have experienced perinatal loss. Research indicates that these mothers are at a higher risk of perinatal mood disorders, such as postpartum depression and anxiety. Bellie can get through this difficult time with the assistance of regular counselling, support groups, and psychoeducation about the mourning process.

The resilience of the mind and body is ultimately highlighted by Bellie's story. Her ability to love deeply, even in the face of loss, is a testament to the strength of maternal love. I'm determined to support Bellie on this journey as a psychology intern, guiding her to a healing route that will enable her to treasure her new-born son while preserving the memory of her daughter. Through empathy, validation, and evidence-based interventions, we can support mothers like Bellie in acknowledging their grief and embracing their joy



Audrey Nkhoma is a student at Great Zimbabwe University. She's currently doing her internship at SALT Zimbabwe.

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Parenting in the Digital Era: Exploring Social Media and its Impact on Children's Mental Health

By Alfa Ranganai Mandivavarira

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, parenting has taken on a new dimension. While technology offers countless opportunities for education, entertainment, and connection, it also presents significant challenges to parents seeking to nurture their children's physical and mental well-being. The digital revolution has undeniably transformed our lives, and its impact extends far beyond the realm of adults. Today's children are growing up as digital natives, constantly surrounded by smartphones, tablets, and laptops. While technology offers a plethora of educational and entertainment benefits, concerns are mounting about its potential negative effects on children's mental health. As we delve into the intricacies of parenting in the digital era, we will explore the impact of social media on children's mental health, the challenges of raising children in a digital age, and effective strategies for reducing unhealthy digital exposure.

Exploring Social Media and its Impact on Children's Mental Health

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp have become ubiquitous, particularly among teenagers and young adults in Zimbabwe. While these platforms offer opportunities for connection, self-expression, and access to information, they can also have detrimental effects on mental well-being.

Here are some key concerns regarding social media use and its impact on children's mental health:

Body Image and Self-Esteem:- Social media is saturated with curated images and unrealistic beauty standards. Constant exposure to these portrayals can lead to body dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and social comparison anxiety among children.

Cyberbullying and Online Harassment:- The anonymity and lack of face-to-face interaction often associated with online platforms can embolden cyberbullying behaviour. This can have devastating consequences for a child's mental health, leading to feelings of isolation, depression, and even suicidal ideation.



Fear of Missing Out (FOMO):- The constant stream of updates and curated profiles on social media can create a pervasive sense of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) in children.

Addiction and Sleep Deprivation:- The compulsive nature of social media platforms can lead to addictive behaviours, where children prioritize screen time over sleep, social interaction, and other essential activities. This can disrupt sleep patterns and contribute to fatigue, decreased concentration, and mood swings.

Research indicates that excessive use of social media can lead to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.

A particularly concerning aspect is the phenomenon of "comparison culture,"

where children measure their worth against curated images and lifestyles portrayed online.

For instance, **a child in Harare might feel inadequate when comparing their life to the glamorous portrayals of peers or influencers, leading to feelings of isolation and worthlessness.**

According to a 2022 report by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), 67% of households in urban areas have internet access. This statistic highlights the growing presence of social media in the lives of Zimbabwean children. Research specific to the Zimbabwean context is still emerging, but anecdotal evidence suggests concerns about cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate content, and the negative impact of social media on academic performance.

Navigating the Challenges of Raising Children in a Digital Age

The digital landscape poses unique challenges for parents. Here are some key considerations for navigating this new reality:-

Open Communication: Maintain open and honest communication with your children about their online activities. Talk to them about the potential risks of social media and encourage them to report any negative experiences.

Setting Boundaries and Screen Time Limits: Establish clear boundaries for screen time and device usage. Encourage other activities like sports, hobbies, and face-to-face interactions.

Leading by Example: Be mindful of your own digital habits. Children learn by watching their parents. If you constantly have your phone in hand, it sends a message that screen time is a priority.

Promoting Digital Literacy: Equip your children with the skills they need to navigate the digital world safely. Teach them about responsible online behaviour, cyberbullying prevention, and critical thinking skills to evaluate online information. Teaching children about the importance of privacy, online etiquette, and recognizing misinformation can empower them to use technology responsibly. Workshops in schools or community centres can be beneficial in promoting digital literacy.

Parental Controls and Apps: Utilize parental controls on devices to limit access to inappropriate content and monitor app usage. There are also apps available that can help track screen time and provide insights into your child's online activity.

Model Healthy Digital Behaviour: Children often emulate their parents' behaviours. By demonstrating a balanced approach to technology use, parents can set a positive example. This might involve putting away devices during family meals or engaging in discussions without distractions.

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Ways of Reducing Unhealthy Digital Exposure

In Zimbabwe, the digital divide remains a significant challenge, particularly in rural areas. However, access to mobile devices and the internet is growing rapidly.

The Zimbabwean government has recognized the importance of digital literacy and has made efforts to provide affordable internet access and distribute tablets to students. While these initiatives are commendable, it's important to address the potential risks associated with increased digital exposure. Parents and educators need to work together to ensure that children in Zimbabwe are equipped with the knowledge and skills to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly. There are several strategies parents can adopt to minimize unhealthy digital exposure and promote healthy digital habits in their children:

- ◆ **Create Screen-Free Zones:** Designate specific areas in your home, like bedrooms and mealtimes, as "screen-free zones" to encourage offline interaction and family time.
- ◆ **Encourage Alternatives:** Promote alternative activities that are engaging and fulfilling. This could involve sports, music, board games, reading, or spending time outdoors.

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- ◆ **Family Media Plan:** Develop a family media plan together that outlines rules and expectations for device use, screen time limits, and access to specific apps or content.
- ◆ **Lead by Example:** Model responsible digital behaviour yourself. Avoid excessive screen time in front of your children and prioritize real-world interactions.
- ◆ **Open Communication:** Foster a safe space for your children to talk about their online experiences, both positive and negative

Parenting in the digital era presents both challenges and opportunities. By understanding the impact of social media on children's mental health, navigating the complexities of raising children in a tech-driven world, and actively working to reduce unhealthy digital exposure,

parents can foster a healthier relationship between their children and technology. As Zimbabwe continues to embrace the digital age, a collective effort from parents, educators, and communities is essential to ensure that children thrive both online and offline. Through education, open communication, and proactive strategies, we can guide the younger generation toward a balanced and fulfilling digital experience.

Parenting in the digital era requires a balance between embracing the benefits of technology while mitigating its potential risks.

By understanding the impact of social media on children's mental health, navigating the challenges of raising children in a digital age, and implementing strategies to reduce unhealthy digital exposure, parents can help their children thrive in this interconnected world.



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Professor Zirima with his students at the launch of his latest book, The Parenting Handbook.

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Behaviour Management Techniques that parents can use for handling tantrums, defiance, and other challenging behaviours.

By Charity Shangu



We have all as parents come across situations where our children exhibit some challenging behaviours, while testing our patience and resolve. Parents often find it very difficult to talk to their children as they are also frustrated by the child's challenging behaviours. A parent can feel emotionally overwhelmed. Tantrums, defiance, and disruptive actions can be too much, leaving parents wondering how to respond successfully. Tackling or handling your child's tantrums, defiance and other difficult behaviours can be a very difficult task. Firstly, it is important to know what tantrums and defiance are. There is also a need to understand the reasons behind, tantrums, defiance and challenging behaviours.

What are tantrums and defiance?

Tantrums are uncontrollable expressions of anger, frustration or distress from your child and

these can confuse you as the parents, usually leaving you wondering what the cause could be and also not knowing what to do with the child.

What are tantrums and defiance?

Tantrums are uncontrollable expressions of anger, frustration or distress from your child and these can confuse you as the parents, usually leaving you wondering what the cause could be and also not knowing what to do with the child.

They may also be very argumentative, often displaying hostility or aggression. They may also be very argumentative, often displaying hostility or aggression. Is it possible to deal with such a situation?

How can parents identify tantrums?

There is a lot of whining or complaining, stomping or pacing, yelling or screaming, and a change in facial expressions, for example, tears showing, pronounced body language such

as clenched fists or even a rigid posture.. These can be managed by remaining collected, acknowledging your child's emotions as well as showing compassion and understanding through empathy. As a parent, avoid physically restraining or punishing your child as this may lead to more problems. You need to show a lot of patience. Find a safe space for regulation. Give the child some options to regain control and self-sufficiency. Do not forget to use positive language, set clear boundaries and have some expectations. If you model calmness, your child will learn to follow suit. Your child definitely needs this. Try to focus on what the child can do instead of what they cannot do. It is very wise to teach them some coping skills, after all, we are the parents who are socially and morally support to provide guidance.

How to foster good behaviour

To promote a healthy behaviour in your child, there are however some techniques and strategies that can be learnt to navigate such situations, in turn, promoting positive outcomes, and strengthening relationships with children.



⇒ Be able to offer positive reinforcement. You can proudly reward good behaviour with praise, chocolates or other rewards.

Positive behaviour can be encouraged by:-

- ♥ Praising efforts, not just outcomes
- ♥ Using detailed, genuine praise
- ♥ Offering rewards and incentives (e.g. sweets, chocolates)
- ♥ Creating a positive reinforcement system (e.g., behaviour charts)
- ♥ Fostering a growth mindset
- ♥ Encouraging self-reflection and self-evaluation
- ♥ Celebrating small successes
- ♥ Practice active ignoring where you ignore minor misbehaviours, but instead focus on positive actions.
- ♥ Model good behaviour by demonstrating respect, kindness, and responsibility. Be your child's role model when you are faced with such behaviours.
- ♥ Encourage open communication
- ♥ Teach emotional regulation techniques (e.g., deep breathing, counting)

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Charity Shangu is an MSc Counselling Psychology intern at Great Zimbabwe University and also a Registered Social Worker who is passionate about Mental Wellness.

To get good behaviour from your child, some techniques may be helpful. Parents, however, should see it fit to have some sort of understanding of the root causes of their child's behaviour. Do we as parents know the triggers? Here is a possible but not exhaustive list of triggers (push factors) for tantrums, defiance and other difficult behaviours that may be useful in identifying the causes:

-  Your child may be tired, hungry, or has feelings of discomfort
-  He or she could be frustrated or unable to communicate effectively either at home or school
-  It could be a way of seeking attention or control
-  Testing boundaries and exploring limits
-  Emotional regulation difficulties
-  Frustration or disappointment
-  Lack of or poor communication skills
-  Sensory surplus or processing issues
-  Imitation of adult behaviour
-  Unmet needs or wants leading to attention seeking tantrums
-  Developmental stages (e.g., toddlerhood, adolescence)

Strategies for Managing Defiance

Preventing challenging behaviours is often more effective than reacting to them. Consider these proactive approaches:-

- ⇒ Stay empathetic and validating
- ⇒ Use active listening skills
- ⇒ Avoid taking behaviour personally
- ⇒ Offer empathy statements (e.g., "You're really upset right now")
- ⇒ Provide a calm, safe space for regulation
- ⇒ Use non-verbal cues (e.g., gentle gestures, facial expressions)
- ⇒ Limit stimulation and distractions
- ⇒ Set clear expectations by establishing brief, achievable rules and consequences.
- ⇒ Make use of natural consequences by allowing your child to experience the outcome of their actions.



The Role of Community In Psychological Well-being

By Susan Samantha Joshua



Strong families and well-supported children are the foundation of thriving communities.

In Zimbabwe, where economic hardships, social inequalities, and historical traumas have affected many families, psychological interventions are essential for fostering resilience. Addressing mental health at the community, family, and child levels helps promote emotional well-being, prevent crises, and strengthen relationships.

This article explores key psychological interventions tailored to Zimbabwe's unique cultural and socio-economic landscape. By integrating evidence-based strategies with local knowledge, community-driven initiatives can support mental health in a sustainable and culturally appropriate manner.

The Community as a Protective Factor

Communities provide an essential safety net for families and children. ***Strong community ties create environments where individuals feel secure, valued, and supported.*** According to Chigangaidze (2022), social cohesion in Zimbabwean communities reduces stress, enhances psychological resilience, and mitigates the impact of socio-economic

hardships. Research also highlights the role of extended family networks in caregiving, especially for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS or poverty-related circumstances.

Community-Based Psychological Interventions in Zimbabwe

Several community-driven psychological interventions have been implemented in Zimbabwe to address mental health challenges. These initiatives are vital in a country where socio-economic hardships, high unemployment rates, and the effects of historical trauma have significantly impacted mental well-being. Community-based interventions provide accessible, affordable, and culturally appropriate mental health support to individuals and families, fostering resilience and improving overall psychological health.

School-Based Mental Health Programs

Schools play a crucial role in the psychological development of children

and adolescents. ***Given that many children experience stress, anxiety, and trauma due to family instability or economic hardships, school-based mental health programs have become an essential intervention strategy in Zimbabwe.*** One of the

most successful initiatives is the Friendship Bench Project, which integrates mental health support into primary healthcare and educational settings. This initiative, pioneered by Chibanda et al. (2016), trains lay health workers often elderly women referred to as "ambuyas" (grandmothers) to provide cognitive-behavioural therapy through a structured problem-solving approach. The program has been widely praised for its effectiveness in reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety, making mental health care more accessible to schoolchildren and the broader community.

Additionally, school-based interventions such as peer support groups and social-emotional learning (SEL) programs are

Public Awareness Campaigns

being introduced to help children develop emotional resilience. According to Nyamukapa et al. (2020),

schools that integrate psychological support into their curriculum report lower dropout rates, improved academic performance, and reduced instances of behavioural disorders.

However, challenges such as a shortage of trained mental health professionals and limited funding continue to hinder the widespread implementation of these programs.

Community Therapy Groups

In many rural Zimbabwean communities, traditional healing practices have long served as a primary means of addressing psychological distress. According to Gelfand (1973), traditional healers, known as n'angas, have historically provided counselling, spiritual guidance, and herbal treatments for individuals experiencing mental health challenges. While Western psychological approaches have gained prominence, ***many Zimbabweans still turn to traditional healing methods, often viewing mental illness as a spiritual or social issue.***

Modern community therapy groups have successfully blended traditional healing methods with clinical psychology, creating a culturally relevant approach to mental health care.

These groups provide safe spaces where individuals can share their experiences, receive counselling, and develop coping strategies. Organisations such as Zvandiri and Childline Zimbabwe run peer-support groups for vulnerable children, including orphans and those living with



HIV/AIDS. Studies by Dambi et al. (2017) indicate that community therapy groups not only reduce feelings of isolation but also improve adherence to mental health treatment and enhance overall emotional well-being.

One of the greatest barriers to mental health care in Zimbabwe is stigma.

Many individuals hesitate to seek psychological support due to fear of being labelled as “mad” or weak.

Public awareness campaigns have played a crucial role in changing perceptions and encouraging people to prioritize mental well-being.

The Zimbabwe Psychology Association (ZPA) has been at the forefront of efforts to educate the public about mental health issues and advocate for policy changes that improve access to care. National Mental Health Awareness campaigns, such as World Mental Health Day events and radio talk shows, have increased knowledge about mental health conditions and available treatment options. According to Chibanda (2021), media campaigns that use storytelling,

testimonials, and culturally relevant messages are more effective in reducing stigma than traditional medical explanations. By involving religious leaders, community elders, and social influencers, these campaigns ensure that mental health education reaches even the most remote areas.

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Susan Samantha Joshua is an aspiring Child Psychologist and Community Mental Health Advocate with experience in trauma-informed care, focusing on Zimbabwean families and community-based interventions.

Tips to support your child's learning at home

By Rutendo Leenrose Makabe



homework, assignments and grades. Parents should also communicate with the teachers to check for the areas that needs attention and also areas that have improved. This will enable the parent to identify which areas need special attention so as to improve the child's performance and also maintain it and start to take on more challenging tasks.

Parents should provide their children with all the resources that are needed for example text books and all the necessary materials that they will be using for example data for their research so that they will do all their work and complete all the tasks that they will be given. Parents can also find additional resources for example tutors and also making use of online tutorials that are found on YouTube.

Parental involvement in children's education is a very significant factor in a child's academic success. This article is going to give tips for supporting your child's learning at home and school and also how parents can best support children in their homework and how they can support a child struggling with academic work.

Tips to support your child's learning at home

Firstly, parents should recognize the signs of struggle in their children. This will help them in detecting the struggles early so as to prevent long term effects. If this is done parents can provide timely support, guidance and resources helping their children overcome challenges and thrive academically and personally. Parents should also understand learning difficulties in their children. These refer to conditions that affect an individual's ability to learn and process information. These challenges can impact academic achievement, social interactions, and daily life.

Parents should create a study place for their children so that the child will separate leisure time from study time. Weinstein (2018) noted that this place should have all the necessary resources that the child needs for example stationery, reading books, a chair that is comfortable, a desk, lighting and also a computer for him or her to do their research. Parents should make sure that the

place that they have chosen for study is away from distractors such as television, phones, video games and noise so as to ensure concentration.

Parents should establish routines that the child follows each day (Johnson and Johnson 2009). Parents should set a timetable for their homework and study times that a child follows. This enables consistency. Every subject will have an equal chance of being studied the child will not just do their favourite subject but they will be doing everything that is covered by their syllabus. This routine will also help a child to manage their time and also balance school work and leisure time.

Independence should be given to children by their parents. Encourage a child to do their homework on their own and parents will be there to help in those areas that are challenging to them. This will help them in developing problem solving skills and also the development of critical thinking and it also boost their confidence. Parents should also praise the effort that is being made by the child not just celebrate the good results that they have. This will motivate the child to do better each day.

Parents should monitor their child's progress by regularly checking on their

Setting realistic goals is an important tip to help a child's learning at home. Parents should help a child break larger tasks into smaller tasks that are manageable goals (Snyder 2020). This approach will enhance motivation and provide a sense of accomplishment as children will be able to complete each step.

Tips to support your child's learning at school

Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers and also build relationships with teachers so that they stay informed about their child's progress. This can also provide parents with additional strategies and resources. Parents are encouraged to email their child's teacher, make use of phone calls or even meet up with their teachers so that they hear the concerns of the teacher as well as understand the areas that need special attention. Communication with teachers will also enable parents to understand their child's strengths and areas for improvement. Regular updates can also alert the parent to any potential issues early, allowing for timely intervention.

Hills (2019) noted that parents should



that you as a parent are there to help them figure out the problem. By doing so the child will feel supported, encouraged and feels confident again. Parents can also help their child recall their past successes and accomplishments this reflection will also encourage them that despite the challenges they are having now they can do it because they have a history of success too.

Parents should find professional help so as to help a child struggling with academic work and homework improve. If struggles persist despite your efforts parents should consult educational psychologists, educational specialists or tutors specializing in learning challenges. Professional support can identify underlying issues and provide strategies to help the child succeed academically. Early interventions can make a significant difference in a child's academic struggles.

Most schools offer tutoring programs or those after-school help. Parents should also make use of educational websites and apps that can also provide supplementary learning materials that are suitable for the child's needs. These include Ruzivo app and Google Classroom. This application will help your child with homework and also help the areas that the child is struggling with.

understand the curriculum. In Zimbabwe, the curriculum is always changing so parents should be aware of the changes and also understand what is being said by the curriculum. Knowing what your child is learning helps you to reinforce those lessons at home. This will also enable you to find additional resources like educational videos or articles that will align with the school curriculum and also encourage extensions of learning beyond the classroom.

Parents should support school events. Attend concerts, plays, and sports events and also contribute to the decision-making at school. Attending events at school shows involvement in the child's activities and it will also motivate the child. And also shows that you value their education and you also invest in their education. Helping in decision-making will also help the child in that the decisions that you will make will be indirectly linked to addressing the areas of concern of your child.

Parents should promote social skills. Parents should encourage their children to participate in extracurricular activities and also group activities. These experiences will teach children how to communicate effectively with others, resolve conflicts and also teamwork. The

extracurricular activities include all sporting activities done at school, music and chess and also garden projects done at school.

Parents can best support children struggling with academic work through the following ways

Parents should identify the root causes of the problem. Parents must understand why a child is struggling academically. These factors may include learning disabilities, lack of motivation, or difficulties with specific subjects. If a parent identifies these, they will be able to identify the causes of the academic struggles and come up with ways to solve the problems identified.

If your child is struggling with academic work parents should reassure the child that that they can do it by letting them know that mistakes are ok and we learn from them. Parents should also give their children hugs or reassurance touch so that they feel that they are not alone and

Muir (2019) noted that parents are encouraged to promote a positive attitude towards learning. Encourage a love for learning by relating academic concepts to real-world applications. This will increase engagement and make learning more enjoyable. Parents should also encourage their children not to have an attitude towards certain subjects and also have negative attitudes towards their teachers as this leads to failure as they have told their minds that they cannot do it.

Being patient and supportive is an important aspect in helping a child who is struggling academically. Children may feel discouraged when facing academic challenges (Devito 2020). Providing emotional support and reassurance can help maintain their confidence and motivation. It is very important to remind our children to remind them that struggling is a part of the learning process.

Providing positive reinforcement is also important as a tip to help a child struggling academically (Bandura 2019). As parents, we must acknowledge the effort

and improvement, not just achievement. Celebrate your child's achievements, no matter how small. Positive reinforcement boosts self-esteem, and confidence and motivates our children to persist through challenges resulting in good performance at school and also encouraging them to continue putting in effort in their studies.

Encourage active learning for children who are struggling academically. Engage your child in discussions about their subjects, use visual aids, or incorporate hands-on activities. Active learning strategies have been shown to improve retention and understanding of material therefore improvement in their studies.

Parents should limit Screen time so that they encourage their children to read to improve their vocabulary, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. Screen time should be limited to at least one hour per day during weekdays to at least three hours during weekends and holidays. **Make reading a fun and shared activity to foster a love for literature. Excessive screen time will interfere with academic performance.** Encourage a healthy balance between technology use and other activities, including reading and outdoor play so that academic performance will improve.

In conclusion, parents must follow all the tips stated above so that they will help their children's learning at home, and school and also help their children who are struggling in their academics so that they improve their grades and also have a better understanding during their studies.



Rutendo Leenrose Makabe is presently pursuing a master's degree in psychology at Great Zimbabwe University. She holds an Honors Degree in Psychology. Her enthusiasm is directed toward the mental health of women and children.



The Parenting Handbook and Understanding Common Mental Health Disorders now in stock

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The Parenting Handbook offers practical insights into modern parenting challenges, helping parents reflect on their styles, presence, and decision-making. It's the guide you wish your own parents had read; an essential tool for navigating today's complex parenting landscape.

Understanding Common Mental Health Disorders simplifies mental health concepts, equipping readers with knowledge to recognize symptoms, support others, and reduce stigma. With clear explanations and coping strategies, this book enhances mental health literacy, empowering individuals to foster understanding and inclusivity.

Understanding Bullying. What Role can Schools Play in Preventing Bullying?

By Makuni Clemence,



Bullying in schools is a pervasive and insidious problem that affects millions of children worldwide. ***It is a phenomenon that can have serious and long-lasting psychological impacts on victims, perpetrators, and witnesses alike.*** Despite its prevalence, bullying remains a largely underestimated and under-treated problem, with many schools and educators struggling to effectively address it. Bullying in schools is far from being “just a phase” or “kids being kids.” It’s a pervasive issue with deep psychological ramifications that can extend far beyond the classroom. As parents, educators, and community members, it is crucial to understand the emotional and mental toll bullying takes on young minds and to work collectively to create safer, supportive environments for all students.

Bullying is a complex and multifaceted behaviour that can take many forms, including physical, verbal, relational aggression, social and increasingly, cyberbullying. It can involve direct attacks, such as hitting or name-calling, or more indirect forms of aggression, such as spreading rumours or excluding others from social groups.

While physical bullying may leave visible scars, the emotional wounds inflicted by verbal taunts, exclusion, or online harassment can be equally, if not more, damaging. Victims of bullying are often left grappling with feelings of isolation, fear, and worthlessness, which can significantly affect their mental health and academic performance by a range of factors, including prejudice, jealousy, and a desire for power and control.

The psychological impact of bullying on victims can be severe and long-lasting. Research has shown that victims of bullying

are at increased risk of developing a range of mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They may also experience decreased self-esteem, social isolation, and difficulty forming and maintaining healthy relationships. One of the most significant psychological impacts of bullying on victims is the development of anxiety and fear. Victims may become hypervigilant, constantly on the lookout for potential threats or dangers, and may experience intense anxiety or fear in response to even minor stimuli. This can lead to a range of behavioural problems, including avoidance, withdrawal, and aggression.

But bullying doesn’t just harm the victims. ***Research shows that bullies themselves are at a higher risk of developing behavioural and emotional issues, including aggression, antisocial behaviour, and difficulties forming healthy relationships later in life.*** Even bystanders—those who witness bullying without directly participating—may experience feelings of guilt, anxiety, or helplessness.



While the psychological impact of bullying on victims is well-documented, the impact on perpetrators is not well understood. Research has shown that perpetrators of bullying are at increased risk of developing a range of mental health problems, including antisocial personality disorder, substance abuse, and depression. Perpetrators of bullying may also experience a range of cognitive and emotional distortions, including a lack of empathy, a tendency to blame others, and a belief that they are entitled to dominate or control others. These distortions can lead to a range of behavioural problems, including aggression, violence, and abuse.

Witnesses of bullying can also suffer significant psychological effects, including anxiety, fear, and guilt. They may feel helpless to intervene or may fear retaliation if they do. Witnesses may also experience a range of cognitive and emotional distortions, including a tendency to blame the victim or to believe that the bullying is justified. For children and teenagers, whose identities and self-esteem are still developing, bullying can disrupt their sense of safety and self-worth. Victims often experience anxiety, depression, and chronic stress. In some cases, these feelings can escalate into severe conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or lead to self-harm and suicidal ideation.

Moreover, **the effects of bullying don't necessarily fade once the incidents stop.** Adults who were bullied as children often report lingering psychological scars, including low self-esteem, trust issues, and difficulty managing relationships. This highlights the importance of early intervention and long-term support for victims.

The Role of Schools in Preventing Bullying

Understanding the root causes of bullying is an essential step toward preventing it. Experts suggest that children who bully others often do so to assert dominance, gain attention, or cope with their own insecurities or personal struggles. Some may mimic aggressive behaviours they've witnessed at home or in the media, while others may act out due to a lack of empathy or emotional regulation skills.

It's important to note that labelling a child as a "bully" without addressing the underlying reasons for their behaviour risks perpetuating the cycle of aggression.



Instead, schools and families should work to identify and address the emotional needs of both the victim and the perpetrator. Schools play a critical role in preventing bullying and promoting a safe and supportive learning environment. **This can involve a range of strategies, including:**

Promote Open Communication: Encourage students to speak up about bullying, whether they're victims, witnesses, or even perpetrators seeking help. Adults need to listen without judgment and take every report seriously.

Educate About Empathy: Schools can incorporate social-emotional learning programs that teach children to recognize, understand, and respect the feelings of others. Role-playing exercises and discussions about kindness can help build empathy from an early age.

Establish Clear Policies: Schools should have clear anti-bullying policies in place, with consistent consequences for harmful behaviour. These

policies should be communicated to students, staff, and parents to ensure everyone is on the same page.

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FROM ME TO YOU

Everyone has the right to mental health, and it's time to provide access to this right. Well, as mentioned above, Wellness Whispers is a newsletter designed specifically to accommodate everyone: the general populace, students, and practitioners. It is not just about psychology; it is about the mental health of everyone. As such, the newsletter aims to help you understand mental health issues through a different and simplified perspective.

Because mental health issues affect everyone, we are eschewing the over-use of pointless jargon and phrases that limit understanding. We tell the stories in a way that makes vital information about mental health more accessible and meaningful for every reader.

Mental health conditions impact us, our loved ones, and the individuals within our community or workplace. As such, we focus on stories of discovery, resilience, and success that come from within our society.

The newsletter also looks at groundbreaking research, models, and technologies in the field and how they are impacting lives across the world. The Wellness Whispers isn't for psychology writers only; it is for everyone making an effort towards advancements in mental health.

Enjoy the read and unleash the strength within you. It is the editor's wish to help you become the best version of yourself!



The Editor: Tipedze Courage W

Courage holds a Master's in Counselling Psychology and is an intern counselling psychologist.



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