

**"INTEGRATING DISCLOSURE AND ALCOHOL CONTROL POLICIES FOR A HOLISTIC
DEVELOPMENT AS A
BLUEPRINT FOR A HEALTHIER, RESILIENT YOUTH AND NATION"**

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- Mental health challenges, fuelled by stress, trauma, and substance misuse, are taking a toll on Uganda's workplaces, schools and communities. Recent high-profile incidents including two ministers exchanging blows during a parliamentary seating, while other female Hon Ministers were abducted from the Parliament, with their clothes torn and later hospitalized, a lecturer pouring hot water on her house help highlighted a culture of unaddressed emotional regulation and violence. Road accidents due to alcohol misuse, violence against women and girls linked to excessive drinking, and students missing exams after losing consciousness from alcohol or marijuana are everyday reminders of this crisis. Poor mental health, compounded by trauma and a lack of workplace support systems, exacerbates suffering and impedes productivity.
- Childhood, adolescence and young people are often fraught with various forms of loss and challenges. Disclosure openly sharing thoughts, emotions, and experiences plays a crucial role in navigating these losses and fostering resilience.

Demographic Data						Have you ever consumed alcohol or used drugs or substance not prescribed to you?										
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent											
Valid	Male	20	40.0	40.0	40.0	Valid	No	28	56.0	56.0	56.0					
	Female	30	60.0	60.0	100.0							Yes	19	38.0	38.0	94.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	100.0											
Feeling down, depressed or hopeless						Total	50	100.0	100.0	100.0						
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent											
Valid	Depressed	47	94.0	94.0	94.0						How did disclosing the secret impact your mental well-being? by feeling relieved or lighter, improved ability to cope with challenges or strengthened trust in your relationships	Yes	48	96.0	96.0	96.0
	Non Depressed	3	6.0	6.0	100.0	No	2	4.0	4.0	100.0						
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	100.0											
Have you ever felt burdened by keeping a secret or un disclosed information?											Valid	Yes	48	96.0	96.0	96.0
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	No	2	4.0	4.0	100.0						
Valid	No	3	6.0	6.0	6.0											
	Yes	45	90.0	90.0	96.0											
	No Idea	2	4.0	4.0	100.0											
Total	50	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0											

AIMS

1. Equip students with resilience-building tools to navigate loss and ensure healthy development.
2. Create a supportive space for open dialogue and connection, promoting holistic well-being.
3. Establish a network of support involving teachers, parents, and mental health professionals.
4. Encourage collaboration between schools, families, and the wider community where alcohol is restricted from student's vicinity.
5. Align mental health strategies with alcohol control policies e.g health policy from MOE to regulate adult consumption and

Provide more awareness on the dangers of alcohol onto the growing brains and advocate for alcohol to be consumed 21years and above.

Prevent and respond to GBV, stabilize mental health, reduce unwanted pregnancies, and prevent school dropouts.

METHODOLOGY

- A mixed-methods approach was conducted focusing on students aged 13-15 years. Quantitative data included questionnaire based assessment, while qualitative data captured personal experiences. Interventions featured stress management, positive thinking, and emotional regulation techniques.
- About 80 % of students 13-18 years from 4 different schools in Kampala underscored exposure to drugs and disclosed being victims of masturbation, pornography and overwhelming addictions in schools.

RESULTS

- Disclosure-friendly practices led to significant improvements in mental health.
- Students reported reduced depression and anxiety levels, and better stress management and emotional expression.
- The inclusion of the mental health club at Shiperoy became a vital support system, fostering resilience and positive behavioral changes.
- Awareness on the decrease in alcohol-related harm will lead to fewer cases of cancer, heart diseases, and overall improved public health outcomes.
- The advocacy for implementing of alcohol control policies contributed to awareness on prevention and responding to GBV incidents, unwanted pregnancies, HIV prevention, ending addictions and school dropouts.

CONCLUSION

- Fostering a culture of open communication through disclosure, combined with strict alcohol control policies, strengthens youth resilience and mental health.
- Prohibiting alcohol for youths up to 21 years and regulating adult consumption ensures a supportive environment for youth development.
- The inclusion of non-violent communication training directly addresses conflict resolution, as seen in corporate settings globally. Data from UAPA reveals that stricter alcohol policies reduce incidents of domestic violence, road accidents, and workplace conflicts, creating healthier, safer communities.

Key Takeaways:

1. Open Disclosure is Vital: Mitigating loss and fostering resilience among youths through open communication.
2. High Rates of Depression: Addressing the significant mental health challenges faced by students.
3. Supportive Environments: Creating safe spaces within schools for open dialogue and connection.

Non-Violent Communication: Understanding and addressing the emotional needs of youths.

4. Comprehensive Support System: Collaboration between schools, families, and community organizations.

5. Evidence-Based Interventions: Implementing stress management, positive thinking, and emotional regulation strategies.

1. Policy Integration: Incorporating mental health and alcohol control policies into school practices.
2. Preventing GBV and Dropouts: Reducing Gender Based Violence, unwanted pregnancies, and school dropouts through combined strategies.
3. Holistic Health Vision: Promoting a country free from alcohol harm, cancer, heart diseases, and mental health challenges, with students excelling with a good concentration and performance.
4. Integrating Christ Filled Therapy as a solution to casting down strong holds and bring freedom from addictions.
5. Implementing Mentorship Camps in different places of academia through sharing live stories model as an avenue to reflect on behavioral change through Disclosure, the secret influence in averting depressive tendencies that manifest through substance misuse and addictions

- strict law measures and enforcement on school gate keepers to overcome sneaking in alcohol and drugs in the school premises.
- Putting a total ban on house parties during holidays as they are known as a thief that exposes young people to drugs, pornography and repercussions of sexual abuse, violence, rape and addictions.
- Call of action to parents for upbringing, creating enough time for parenting and restricting the content on children's phones.
- Integrating Trauma informed care and Non-violent Communication approach in different institutions as trauma is the leading catalyst of drugs and violence in this Nation.
- Increase mental health awareness and conflict resolution skills across workplace settings to end violence which results in drinking.

- Advocate for stricter policies that raise the legal drinking age to 21, prohibiting alcohol access to schools, recognizing that the need to protect young developing minds is pivotal to breaking cycles of addiction and poor mental health.
- Integrating evidence-driven approach which addresses human suffering head-on By fostering open discussions, training key stakeholders, MGLSD, UCC, MW and aligning with the alcohol regulation goals, we can drive systemic change.

Target Groups:

1. Students (8 years old and above): Beneficiaries of mental health interventions and alcohol control policies.
2. Teachers and Educators: Facilitators of a supportive environment.
3. Parents and Families: Critical supporters in mental health care and alcohol regulation.
4. Mental Health Professionals: Providers of specialized support and training.
5. School Administrators and Policymakers: Integrators of mental health and alcohol control policies.
6. Community Members and Organizations: Partners in a comprehensive support system.
7. Healthcare Providers: Key players in reducing alcohol-related harm, cancer, and heart diseases.
8. Cooperate and Non cooperate workers e.g House managers, Taxi drivers, boda riders, security people etc