

Features HEALTH & LIVING

Mental health: Don't take communication with youths for granted – WAITT

By Sola Ogunlana

TOWARDS developing and maintaining a positive social atmosphere and emotional habits essential for the mental wellbeing of adolescents and youths, Nigerians have been called upon not to take the essence of communication for granted when it comes to parenting. Making the call in Lagos during a chat, a Pharmacist, entrepreneur and Trustee of the What Am I To Talk Organisation (WAITT), Mrs Shade Ajayi, noted that the key ingredient to parenting is communication.

Ajayi, who along with a group of concerned parents established WAITT - an initiative that focuses to create awareness of available resources to support and navigate the journey through mental health issues with particular emphasis on the youth, charged parents to retool in line with today's reality.

Ajayi said: "The key ingredient here is communication! There are two steps to communication: hearing and listening. We cannot stop at hearing. The goal is to achieve both hearing and listening. We have to be able to decipher and understand what they are saying and not what we think they should be saying."

"Everything they are feeling is real to them. We need to acknowledge and validate their feelings without being judgmental," she remarked.

Besides, Ajayi observed that student years usually fall within that period of adolescence which are critical years for the youth.

"It's a period for developing and maintaining social and emotional habits important for mental well-being. Coupled with the changes of puberty and the physical changes that come with it, parents need to pay particular attention."

Noting that every parent wants the best for their child, she said the belief is that everything that they do is to safeguard their children's wellbeing and setting them on the path towards future success.

"We cannot parent our children today the way we were parented. Parents need to retool. It may be challenging but it is doable."

"As parents we need to be intentional about building relationships around our adolescents this will create a safety net for them. Trusted aunts, uncles and older cousins



A father counseling his child

could bridge the communication and generation gap.

"In addition parents need to be truthful with their children. Let them know that when growing up they were not perfect too. They had challenges they had to overcome."

"Times are more difficult now with the advent of social media but issues like bullying, drugs, stress and depression also existed back in the day. The approach of being truthful will make parents more

approachable and relatable. We at WAITT are with you on this journey," Ajayi remarked.

Also speaking on the parenting challenge as regards mental health, the Director, Vivian Fowler Memorial Girls School, Yaba, Mrs Olufunke Lesia Fowler-Amba, explained that the dynamics of parenting have changed dramatically over the years.

"There's no manual to parenting. One of the things I say to parents is that the cultural aspect has

to be injected into your parenting style and it doesn't make you old fashioned, it identifies who you are and it also identifies the boundaries the child has to take."

"It is so important for parents to spend time with their children and for parents to understand that each child is different, one shoe does not fit all and that everybody emerges over time. I think also that our parents are pushing their children too hard, there's a lot of pressure." She said.

PSN faults FG health reform committee

... Calls for reconstitution of body

By Chioma Obinna

LAGOS State Branch of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria, PSN, has faulted the membership of the Federal Government Health Sector Reform Committee, calling for reconstitution of the committee to accommodate all relevant stakeholders in the health sector.

In a press statement signed by the Chairman of the society in Lagos, Pharm. Gbolagade Iyiola, the PSN demanded the inclusion of more Pharmacists and other professionals including members of the Joint Health Sector Union, JOHESU.

The Chairman also stated that the government must assure them that the reform was not the beginning of job losses in the public sector.

Iyiola said of the 25 members of the Health Sector Reform Programme Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, Vice President, about 18 appear to be physicians while only 1 Pharmacist, a Nurse and a Laboratory Scientist.

Stating that they have critically appraised the membership, he said: "The Federal Government proposed Health Sector Reform Committee may

just go the way of previous Health Sector Reform projects because the philosophy and execution plan is one and same."

"Under the Obasanjo administration, late Prof. Olu Akinkugbe, an emeritus Professor of Medicine led a Health Reform team which had a similar composition of physicians dominating overwhelmingly, but the final report was dead on arrival because the positions like what the Osinbajo Committee will most likely bring on the table will be favourable to only physicians and that will make it unacceptable to the health professionals and workers who make up over 90 percent of the membership of the Health Sector."

"Typical of the processes involved in the sharing of benefits packages, privileges and resources in the Health Sector, the Reform Committee with over 75 percent presence of physicians already negates the rights and liberties of the majority of health workers in Nigeria."

"A Committee of this nature has slots for the DG, Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Council but not for an agency like NAFDAC which regulates all the

drugs, medical devices, vaccines, medical equipment, chemicals etc which are the essential tools and commodities which drive any credible Health System. The President of PSN, Pharm. Sam Oluabunwa is a former Chairman of National Economic Summit Group who should earn membership on personal recognition. His experience will be handy."

"We observe with consternation that at least 4 of the major trade unions including MHWUN, NUAHP, NASU and SSA have no representation on this Committee. MHWUN alone is reputed to have about 60% of the entire health workforce in its fold. Prof. Osinbajo, is a seasoned lawyer who should know much about fairness and justice to all concerned. What is the significance of this reform process if it does not bequeath a legacy of equity to health workers who remain the human resource to reckon with in this reform bid."

"It is unthinkable that a strategic arm of the health industry like JOHESU is ignored in this health reform, this composition defects will boomerang largely without sounding like a prophet of doom."

Stakeholders move to promote workplace safety

By Juliet Umeh

TOWARDS achieving safety in the workplace environment in Nigeria and across Africa, stakeholder including International Social Security Association, I S S A, OSHAfrica, Occupational Health and Safety Manager, O.H.S.M among others will hold a three-day conference in Lagos.

The conference tagged: International Vision Zero in Safety, Health and Wellbeing holds from November 23-25 with the theme: From Safety and Health Problems to Practical Solutions in Construction and Related Industries'.

Briefing the media in Lagos, Chief Executive Officer of Occupational Health and Safety Managers, Mr Ehi Iden, said the conference has been designed to bring together a wide range of spectrum of stakeholders for three days of mind-stimulating sessions on issues that bother on safety, health and well being of employers in the construction sector and related industries.

Iden said: "Issues abound within these

sectors and the need to bring global experts together for intense discussions capable of walking us, from problems into solutions became a huge priority."

"A report from O.H.S.M says that the leading causes of private sector worker death excluding highway collision in the construction industry were falls. And, other reports say 1 in 10 construction workers get injured annually."

Iden noted that the conference will bring together all professionals, captains of industries and stakeholders as well as service providers and exhibitors in Africa and the world under one roof with the primary aim of creating maximum awareness and benefits of implementing safety measures in the various economy.

"The conference will provide continental networking opportunities with the authorities, international organizations and the top industry players. The three-day event comprises of seminars, technical and breakout sessions, exhibitions, networking and award night," she said.

Euracare explores preventive care, opens centre

By Gabriel Olawale

WITH most healthcare setups faced with a vast demand for curative services due to rising cases of non-infectious diseases, a Lagos-based private healthcare company, Euracare has expanded its operations to include serving prime wellness services to patients as its full-fledged wellness centre debuts in September.

Speaking in Lagos, Head of Euracare Wellness Centre, Busola Ayelowo said that wellness is rising as a priority and Euracare Wellness Centre is positioned to meet that need.

Ayelowo said: "We will always provide the highest standard of professional care while addressing the individual and specific needs of each patient. At our wellness facility, we incorporate innovative technology and convenience to not just treat symptoms, but also to keep people healthier."

Faced with an increasingly chaotic

lifestyle as most residents of Nigeria are, prioritizing healthcare sometimes become secondary.

But Euracare Wellness Centre boasts of more than seven areas of medical intervention that will be available to patients after the launch. With these offerings, a new era in wellness opportunities awaits Lagos residents. The variety of treatment options means residents can continue prioritizing their wellness and overall health.

By mixing wellness prevention with medications and other remedies, current ailments can be treated while ensuring the prevention of imminent sickness. Prevention has always been better than cure, and wellness centers help you attain just that. When health is combined with wellness activities, people can get better insight into how their body and mind can benefit from care that supports every part of them.

The wave of the future is to focus less on illness and more on prevention and wellness.