

# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Learn about our transformative partners here at the International Mental Health Association.



## An interview with Linos

This past week, we had the opportunity to interview Linos Muvhu. He is the founder of SPANS and is The Secretary and Chief Talent team leader. Their organization is currently implementing the program on Holistic Community Care for Parenthood (HCCP) in Zimbabwe. We covered a variety of topics, including the interactions between reproductive and mental health, the current understanding of mental health in Zimbabwe and how this organization is looking to reduce stigma and improve quality of life through education.

## OVERVIEW

- SPANS COVID-19 initiatives
- Importance of Reproductive Health
- Mental Health Stigma in Zimbabwe

*"Some people are saying that the next wave after COVID-19 will be one of mental health disorder and deterioration. This [pandemic] affects us physically and mentally and will impact stress levels, especially [those] with poor coping mechanisms."*

-Linos Muvhu



## The Interview

By Riyan Visram  
with Linos Muvhu

**Q: What kind of work are you doing with COVID-19?**

*A: We are focusing on education, raising awareness, and giving structured family therapy sessions for those who come to our centre. We realized people are trying to raise their voices about mental health, but there are a lot of misconceptions. There is a lot of interchangeable use of mental health, mental illness and mental disorder, even among the advocates themselves.*

*In response, we are mobilizing and distributing educational materials. With this understanding, people are realizing the importance of protecting mental health. The best thing we can do is educate the community.*

**Q: What are the outcomes of this advocacy?**

*A: We are realizing that through our initiatives, people are beginning to understand that there is a need to promote and protect everyone's mental health status. People are able to recognize the initial symptoms including distress, mild and moderate anxiety, and depression and differentiating between mental health versus mental illness.*

**Q: What is the connection between reproductive and mental health?**

*A: There are adverse childhood experiences in reproductive health that impact the youth who want to be better parents for tomorrow. They need to be children, but there are issues that occur [during childhood] such as violence. Domestic violence has a lot of emotional issues, though there is a focus on physical issues.*

*There is a huge connection between mental health and sexual reproductive health. Those that are behind this cause focus heavily on physical issues, child abuse and physical violence. There needs to be more focus on emotional aspects, which comes from these circumstances.*



**Q: What does SPANS focus on?**

*A: [This is why] we introduced the holistic community care for parenthood. We need better parents, because we believe in the giving and taking concept where we say we need to take from our parents. Therefore, we are teaching from generation to generation.*

*Science is very clear about which stages a child can be affected mentally. Even from the first environment, this child can suffer, especially if the mother is suffering. These associations can start during the pregnancy and in the pre and post natal periods. This is why our program examines children across the lifecycle.*

## IMHA & SPANS: Our Work Together

This partnership was formed with the goal of improving the overall understanding of the mental health related needs of the people in Goromonzi, Zimbabwe.

Through the implementation of local assessments, programs are currently being planned. Once implemented, this programming will aim to address concerns surrounding trauma, health services, poverty, and deaths by suicide.

Passionate about mental health in Zimbabwe?  
Reach out to [team@imha.ngo](mailto:team@imha.ngo) to get involved.

