

EPISODE 17:**CHALLENGES ACCESSING HEALTH SERVICES AND MEDICATION, AND GETTING TESTED**

- The COVID-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for youths and adults to access health services or chronic medication (including ARTS, blood-pressure medication etc). How serious is this challenge and how can it be addressed?
- What should people do if they worry that they may have COVID-19 and need to be tested? Some health facilities do not have the right equipment, and helplines are not always answered promptly? What do health experts in our country advise?

RADIO:

Start with playing the 'COVID-19 – Together we can beat it' song.

Welcome to the 17th of our 'COVID-19 – Together we can beat it' radio programmes. We've come a long way together!

These programmes are brought to you by MIET Africa in partnership with the Ministry of Education, to strengthen the SADC Region's response to COVID-19, with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

As you all know, the COVID-19 pandemic has created many challenges for our country, our communities and every one of us. In this programme, we talk about these and find solutions together.

Keep listening and have your say! Phone us on XXX, SMS us on XXX or send a WhatsApp message on XXX to be part of this conversation.

And remember our PRIZES for lucky winners! At the end of this programme, we'll ask a question about today's topic. The first FIVE listeners who SMS or WhatsApp the right answer will get a FutureLife-Now! drawstring backpack and water bottle. So keep listening, and send us your answers!

Over the past 16 weeks, we've spoken about COVID-19 and how to protect ourselves against the disease. We've also discussed other challenges linked to the pandemic. Last week we spoke about at how parents, families and other adults can help children and youth to cope with the devastating impact that the pandemic has had on them.

Over the weeks, it's become very clear how difficult this time is for most of us: The pandemic has affected us in so many ways!

This this week, we talk about another serious challenge. The COVID-10 pandemic has made it more difficult for adults, youths, children and the elderly to access health services and chronic medication.

And once again, this is most challenging for people who are already vulnerable: Young people, the elderly and people with chronic health conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes and HIV.

We've heard that young girls have been more at risk of sexual abuse and of falling pregnant and contracting HIV. And this is particularly frightening if you can't access youth-friendly health services or get access to chronic medication.

Our health system has geared up to cope with COVID-19 infections, making it more difficult to access other health care.

Older people also have a higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 and potentially dying if they don't get medical care. They need to know how to get tested if they experience symptoms that could be COVID-19 related.

Unfortunately, research by the World Health Organisation and others sketch a sad situation in Southern Africa. This is what they tell us.

- There has been a greater need for sexual and reproductive health services during the pandemic, but adolescents have been less able to access these services.
- There have been spikes in gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and other forms of violence during COVID-19. But again, it is more difficult for victims to get help.

Are these factors really a problem in our country? And if so, where? Let's hear from you, our listeners.

We have lots of questions! Fortunately our expert panellists can help to answer our questions.

<Introduce panellists.>

So, let's talk about it! And keep your calls coming!

<TO THE HOST: Note that there are helpline numbers for your country on Page 3:

Find out from the health specialist if these numbers are correct (before the programme). Then ask about them and share with listeners (Question 5 below)>

QUESTIONS TO THE PANELLISTS:

<Alternate questions between panellists, and only ask all the questions if you don't get many questions from listeners. Their questions come first!>

Health services specialist

- 1 We've heard that youth, the elderly and other vulnerable groups need health services and chronic medication more during the COVID-19 pandemic. But it's more difficult to access those. What is happening in our country?
- 2 It seems that health services have been under strain. Why is that?
- 3 Are you aware of an increase in sexual violence, unintended pregnancies and other challenges for girls and women, and of HIV infections? If so, please tell us about it.
- 4 What advice do you have for young people who have health challenges? What should they do to get help?
- 5 The elderly and people with chronic conditions need health care and medication to stay safe. What is your advice for them?
- 6 Our country has helpline numbers which people can call to report gender-based violence, or if they suspect they may have COVID-19 and want to get tested. Will listeners get help if they call these? If so, let's share the numbers with listeners.

<Host or panellist to read out numbers FOR YOUR COUNTRY(list on next page)>

Youth

- 1 From your experience, have the last months been more difficult for young girls and other youths? And have they needed more access to health services? If so, tell us about it.
- 2 Have you or your friends had to access health services or get medication? Has it been more difficult than usual? Tell us about it.

- 3 Did you know of the helplines that you can call in the case of gender-based violence or COVID-19 infection? And do you know if they work?
- 4 How would you describe 'youth-friendly health services? Do you believe youths have access to those?
- 5 Do you have a message for the health specialist and other health service providers, about what young people need?

<AT END OF PROGRAMME:>

The moment that you've waited for - Our prize-winning question:

Give one helpline number you will call if you want to report gender-based violence.

SMS or WhatsApp your answer to us NOW. Also give us your name, age and where you live. We'll announce the lucky winner's name next week, and tell you how we'll get your prize to you.

ANSWERS:

LESOTHO: 8006666

ZAMBIA: 999 (Victim Support Unit); 116 (Childline); 5600 (Marie Stopp

MALAWI (any number below):

Ministry of Health Toll-Free numbers:

 54747
 or *929#
 or 321

 929
 or *929#

See Helpline numbers to call in cases of emergency on the next page:

NUMBERS TO CALL FOR HELP



IF YOU NEED URGENT HELP OR ADVICE FOR COVID-19 RELATED OR OTHER REASONS, CALL ONE OF THE FOLLOWING HELP-LINE NUMBERS IN YOUR COUNTRY.



LESOTHO

COVID-19 Command Centre 80093030
 Ministry Of Health - COVID-19 80032020
 Gender-based Violence 80066666
 CHILD HELPLINE 116



MALAWI

Ministry of Health Toll-Free numbers:



..... 54747
 or *929#
 or 321



..... 929
 or *929#



ZAMBIA

COVID-19: 909 - Toll free
 878 - SMS
 +260 974493553
 +260 964638726
 +260 953898941

HIV, GBV AND OTHER SERVICES:

Victim Support Unit 999
 U-Report 878
 Childline 116
 Marie Stopes 5600
 Drug Enforcement Commission +260 955684343

