

# **MENTAL HEALTH DURING YOUR SELF DISCOVERY JOURNEY**

## Safety & Wellness Guides for Queer Zimbabweans

In tough times, prioritizing your mental health is essential. It's okay to feel overwhelmed, especially when support feels scarce or circumstances seem unbearable. Recognizing signs of mental health struggles and taking proactive steps can help you maintain resilience and seek the support you deserve. You are not alone, and asking for help is a sign of strength.

## CHECKING IN ON YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Regularly assessing your mental health can help you identify when you might need additional support. Take time to reflect on your feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Pay attention to changes that might signal you're struggling. Awareness is the first step toward taking care of yourself.

## WARNING SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

While feelings of sadness, loneliness, or frustration are normal, they can sometimes escalate into more serious concerns. If you've noticed the following feelings, behaviors, or thoughts, it might be time to seek additional support.

## HAVE YOU FELT :

Have You Felt:

- Unimportant: Feeling like your existence or contributions don't matter.
- Alone: Feeling isolated or unsupported, even around others.
- Impulsive: Acting without thinking, making risky decisions, or feeling out of control.
- Suicidal: Having thoughts of ending your life or believing others would be better off without you.
- Overwhelmed / Unmotivated: Struggling to manage responsibilities or finding it hard to get out of bed.
- Trapped / Hopeless: Believing there's no way out of your current situation.
- Angry / Irritable: Experiencing frequent frustration or snapping at others without clear reasons

## HAVE YOU BEEN

- Giving Away Valuables: Parting with possessions that hold significant meaning.
- Losing Interest: No longer enjoying activities that used to bring joy or purpose.
- Planning for Death: Writing a will, farewell letters, or organizing your affairs.
- Changing Eating or Sleeping Habits: Eating significantly more or less or struggling to sleep (or sleeping excessively).
- Feeling Sick or Fatigued: Experiencing persistent physical symptoms like aches, tiredness, or illness without a clear cause.
- Using Substances More: Increasing reliance on drugs or alcohol to cope.

## DO YOU

- Feel Apathetic About the Future: Struggle to find hope or set goals.
- Put Yourself Down: Believe you deserve bad things or blame yourself excessively.
- Plan Goodbyes: Think about saying final goodbyes to people you care about.
- Have a Plan for Suicide: Have specific thoughts about how you might harm yourself.

If any of these resonate with you, it's crucial to recognize that these feelings and behaviors are not permanent. Help is available, and support can make a difference.

# STEPS TO TAKE FOR MENTAL HEALTH & PERSONAL WELLBEING

## Talk to Someone You Trust

- Reach out to friends, family, or mentors who provide a safe, non-judgmental space to express your feelings.
- If you're unsure where to start, consider sharing just one or two things you're struggling with.

## Seek Professional Help

- Therapists, counselors, or psychiatrists are trained to support you. Don't hesitate to schedule an appointment.
- If immediate help is needed, contact crisis services in your area.

## Create a Safety Plan

- List supportive contacts, crisis hotlines, and coping strategies.
- Identify safe spaces and activities that help calm and ground you.
- Include steps for seeking help if you're feeling unsafe.

## Practice Self-Care Daily

- Physical Care: Stay hydrated, eat balanced meals, and move your body (even gentle stretches can help).
- Mental Care: Try mindfulness, journaling, or deep breathing exercises to process emotions.
- Social Care: Spend time with supportive people, even if it's virtual.

## Engage in Activities That Bring Joy

- Rediscover hobbies, try something creative, or spend time in nature.
- Break tasks into small steps to make them more manageable.

## Avoid Harmful Coping Mechanisms

- Limit alcohol or substance use.
- Avoid isolating yourself entirely—even small interactions can be beneficial.

## RESOURCES FOR SUPPORT

### Support Services

- Zimbabwe :[GALZ](#), [Pakasipiti](#)
- Global:Befrienders Worldwide: [www.befrienders.org](http://www.befrienders.org)

### Community and Peer Support

- Join support groups in your area or online.
- Connect with organizations or communities that align with your identity and values.

### Mental Health Apps and Tools

- Use meditation or mental health apps to guide mindfulness, breathing, and relaxation.
- Journaling can help track your emotions and thoughts.