



AAMMH

African Alliance for Maternal Mental Health

Educate. Advocate. Act.

An **invitation** to join the African Alliance for Maternal Mental Health (AAMMH), an alliance of organisations working together to improve the mental health of mothers in Africa

The **mental health** of a mother is **essential** to her wellbeing and that of her child, family and the wider community.

Across Africa, millions of women experience challenges to their mental health in pregnancy and the postnatal period. These challenges include gender-based violence, economic and gender inequalities, physical illnesses including HIV, complications of childbirth, and the stresses of childcare. Specific mental health problems that affect mothers include depression, anxiety and postpartum psychosis.

The consequences of poor maternal mental health include individual suffering, disturbance of the mother-infant bond, impaired ability to carry out infant care and feeding, and reduced use of health services including HIV treatment, family planning and infant vaccination. Maternal mental health problems and poverty often co-exist in a vicious cycle of disadvantage.

Untreated maternal mental health problems frequently have long-term detrimental effects on the health, growth, and psychological development of infants. Suicide is a tragic outcome of severe maternal mental disorder and is now a leading cause of maternal death worldwide.

Effective evidence-based interventions exist for the detection, prevention and treatment of maternal mental health problems. These are best delivered through integration of maternal mental healthcare into reproductive and child health programmes, supported by mental health services with specialist expertise.

The **African Alliance for Maternal Mental Health** (www.aammh.org) is an alliance of organisations working together to improve the mental health of mothers in Africa.

AAMMH is part of the Global Alliance of Maternal Mental Health (<https://globalalliancematernalmentalhealth.org/>) and works in close collaboration with the International Marcé Society for Perinatal Mental Health – African Section (<https://marcesociety.com>).

AAMMH calls for multi-level action to tackle the causes of poor maternal mental health in Africa and believes that this will be critical to the success of efforts to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals on health (SDG 3), nutrition (SDG 2) and gender equality (SDG 5).

The aims of the African Alliance for Maternal Mental Health (AAMMH) are:

- To **educate** care providers and the wider community about the importance of the mental health of mothers, and about the recognition, prevention and treatment of maternal mental health problems.
- To **advocate** for maternal mental health to be prioritised in the strategies, policies and budgets of governments and NGOs, and in the teaching and research agendas of educational institutions.
- To **act** together to develop reproductive and child health services in which the mental health of the mother is centrally integrated, and to ensure that mental health services have expertise in the care of women throughout their reproductive lives.

Who can join?

Evidence indicates that an alliance of **multiple organisations from different sectors** can accelerate the availability of maternal mental health care, raise awareness and reduce stigma (e.g. the successful UK campaign [Maternal Mental Health Alliance-Everyone's Business](#)).

We welcome membership applications from any organisation (e.g. user-led groups, NGOs, government agencies, professional associations, educational institutions, commercial companies) working in Africa that supports the aims of AAMMH. The focus of the member organisations can be:

- reproductive health
- child health
- mental health
- women's rights
- social/economic development
- any other relevant field

One of the objectives of AAMMH is that there should be a **national** maternal mental health alliance in every country in Africa. We will support AAMMH members to form these national alliances of care providers, educators, researchers, and mothers themselves, working together in their own countries toward the goals of AAMMH.

How to join:

Please complete the attached membership form and email it to: atu.indira@gmail.com. There are no membership fees. Individual organisations join as supporting members. National alliances, when established, will join as full members. For further information visit: www.aammh.org. Find us on twitter: [@matmentalhealth](https://twitter.com/matmentalhealth)

Thank you for your support!

AAMMH is registered as an NGO in Malawi. Chair of the board of trustees is Mrs Grace Makonyola. We are currently operating from the Mental Health Department at Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS) in Blantyre, Malawi. Current supporters include:

