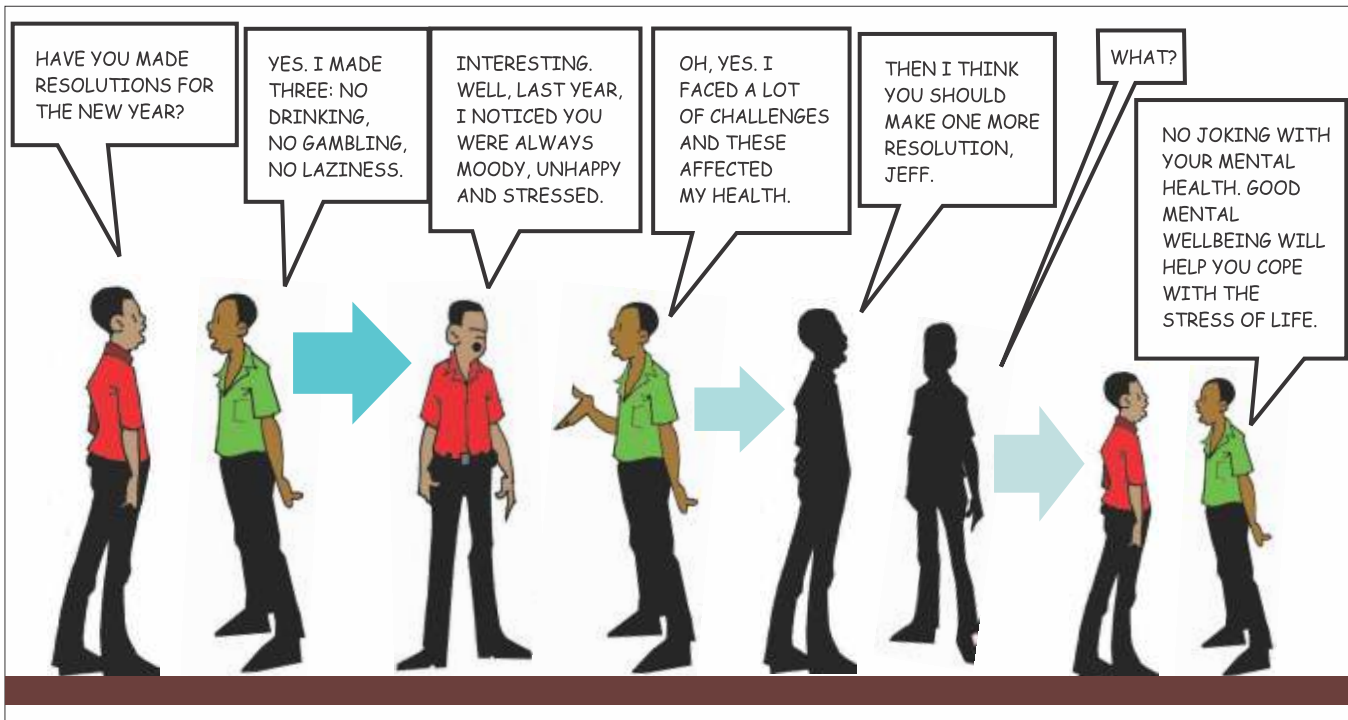


# **Mental Health and Wellbeing For All**



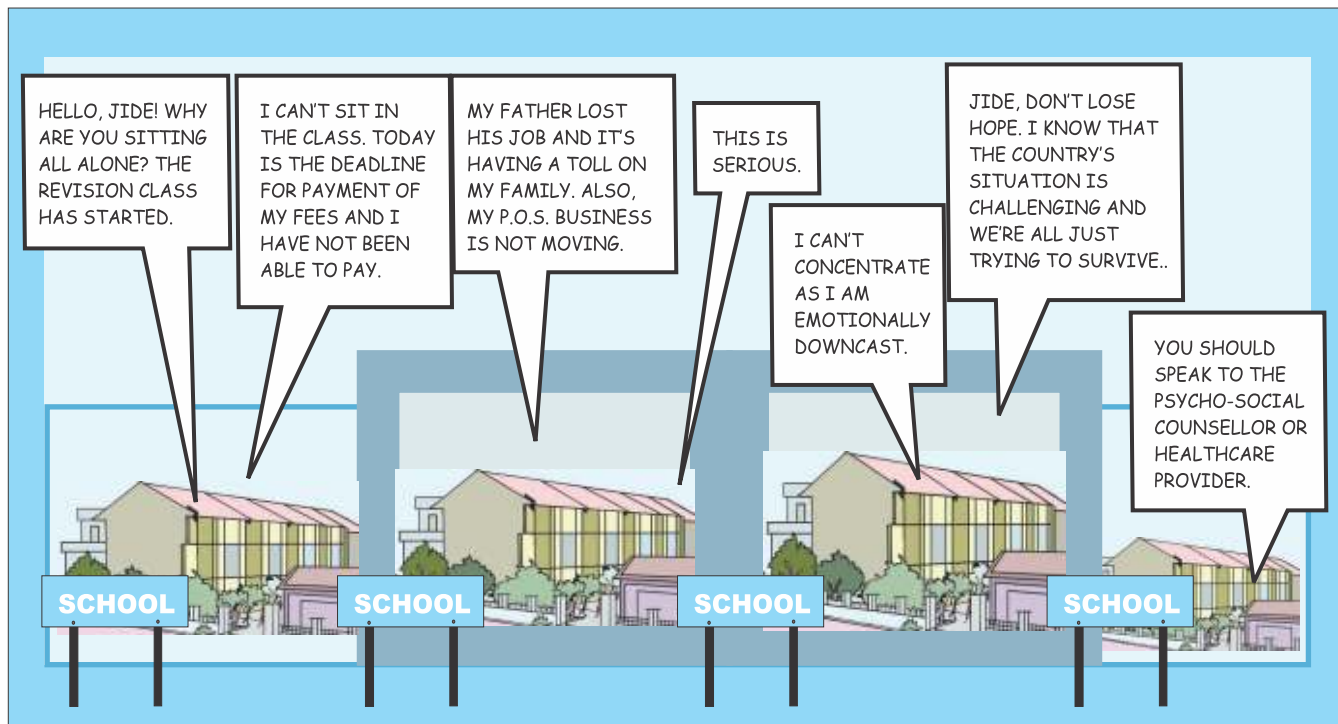
**Action  
Health Incorporated**

YEAR  
**2023**



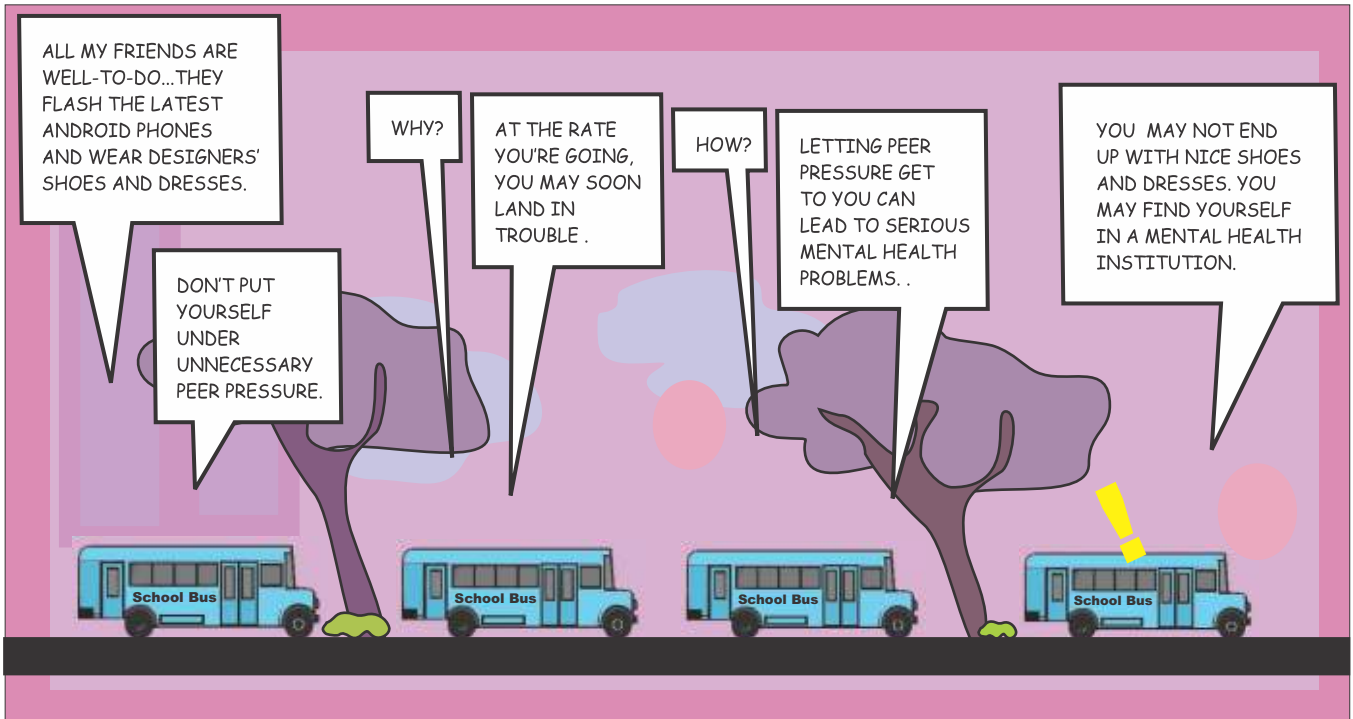
**What is Mental Health?** Mental health is a state of mental wellbeing that enables people cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well, work well and contribute to their community. Mental health is a basic human right and is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development.

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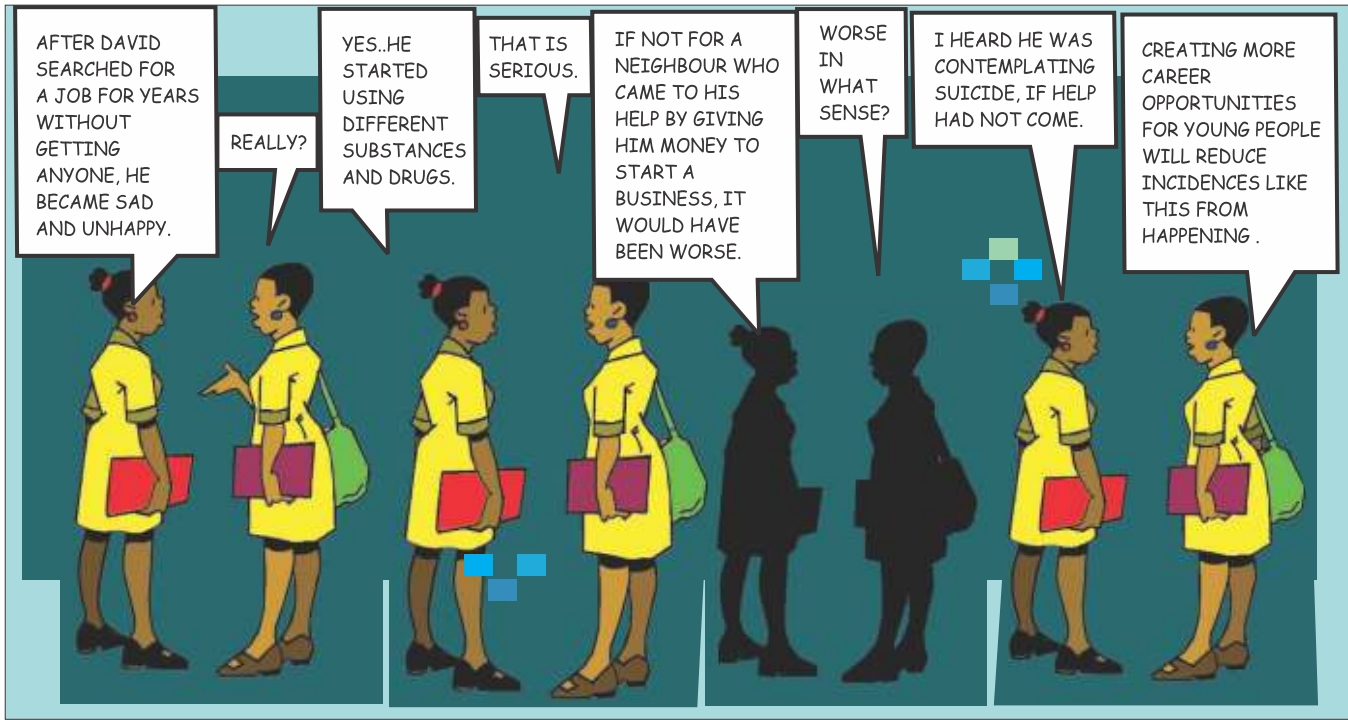
**What is the Scale of Mental Health Challenges among Young Persons in Nigeria?** In Nigeria, 1 in 6 Young People, aged 15-24 are at risk of a mental disorder and a good number have been attributed to economic hardship, negative environmental externalities and a rising cost of decent living in the country. Without mental wellness, people are unable to reach their full potential or play an active part in everyday life.

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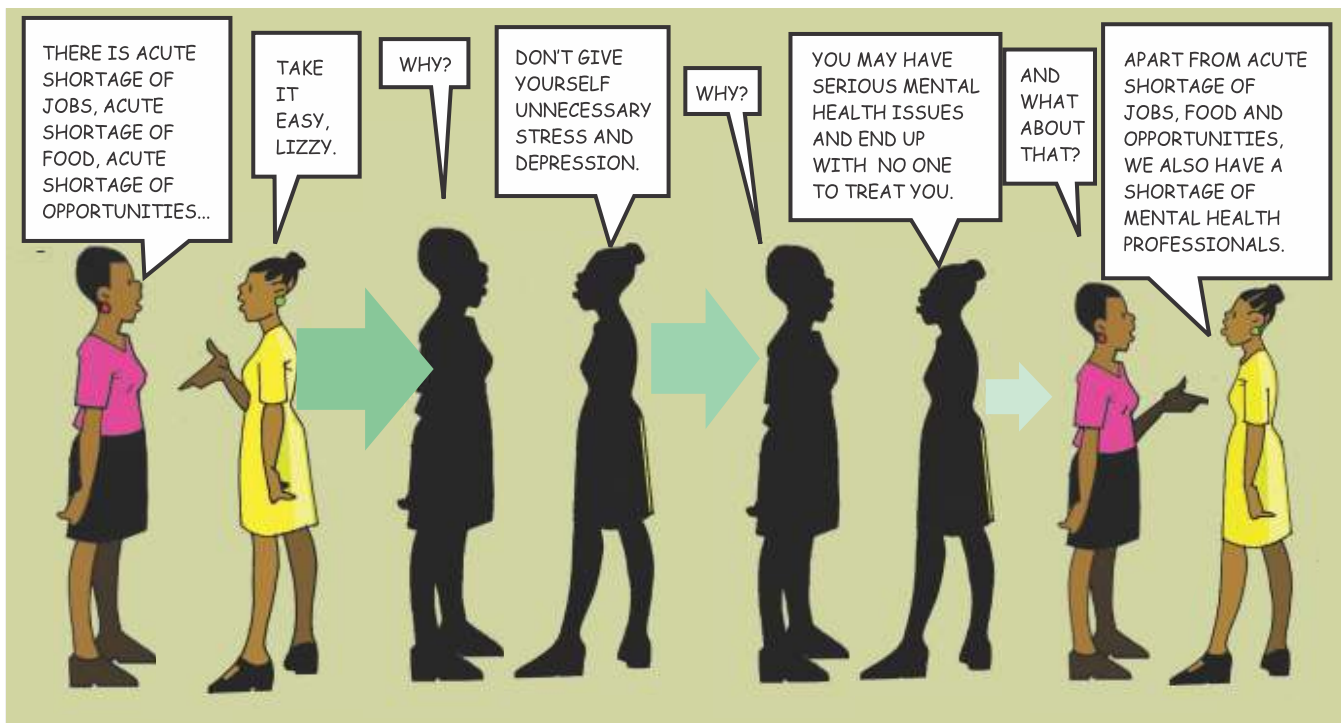
**Factors that Affect the Mental Health of Young People:** Multiple factors affect mental health. The greater the risk factors young people are exposed to, the greater the impact on their mental health. Such stress factors are exposure to adversity, pressure to conform to peers and exploration of identity.

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**Common Mental Health Issues among Young People:** The most common mental health issues in young people are mood disorders (e.g. anxiety, depression), substance use disorders and suicide. Suicide, for example, is the fourth leading cause of death in young people between the ages of 15-19 years.

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**Challenges of Mental Health Care in Nigeria:** Key challenges are the huge shortage of mental health professionals, shortage of mental health facilities, and a generally low level of the public's mental health awareness.

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**Substance Use and Mental Health among Young People:** Young people with substance use problems face a high risk of co-occurring mental health problems, which may lead to a more difficult life situation, social problems, and result in the worst treatment outcomes.

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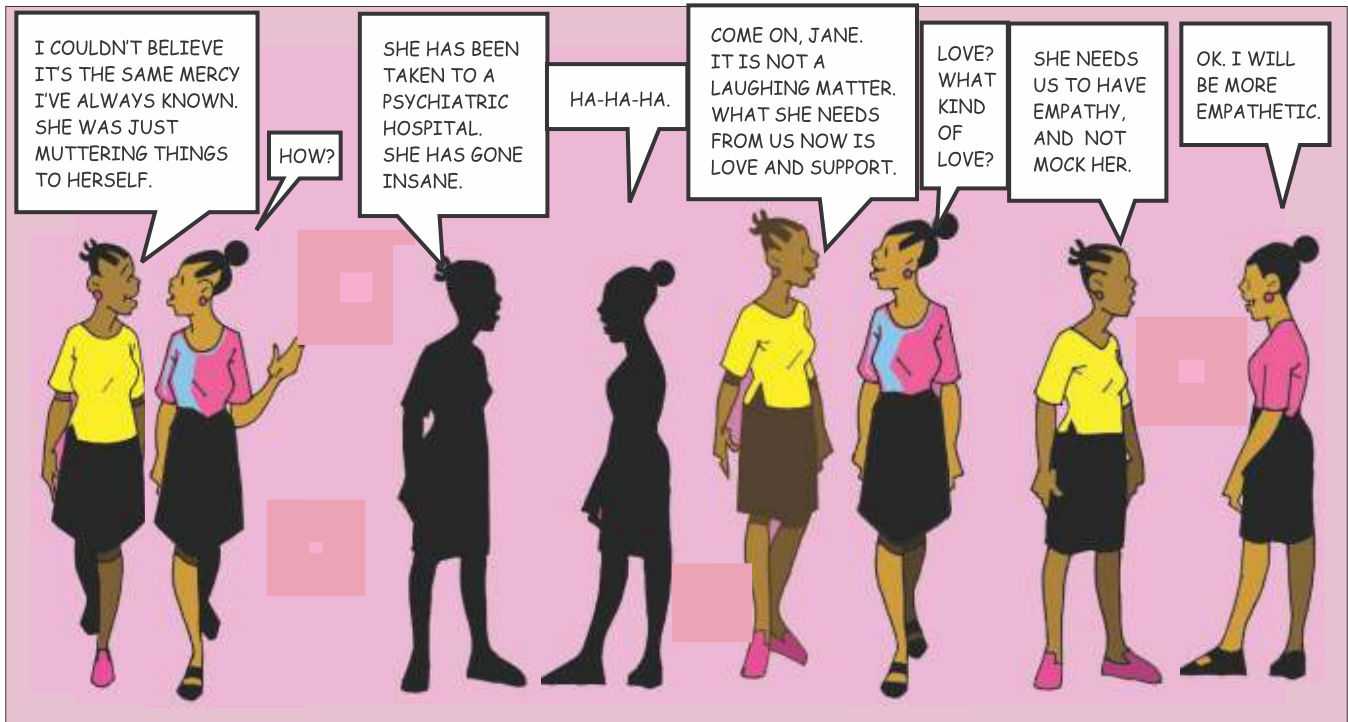




**Social Media and Young People's Mental Health:** Social media has brought about a great amount of creativity, learning, and innovation among young people. However, addictive social media usage can increase the risk of depression, anxiety, loneliness, self-harm and even suicidal thoughts. Interventions such as cyber monitoring and cognitive behavioral rehabilitation should be implemented to curb negative effects of social media use on young people.

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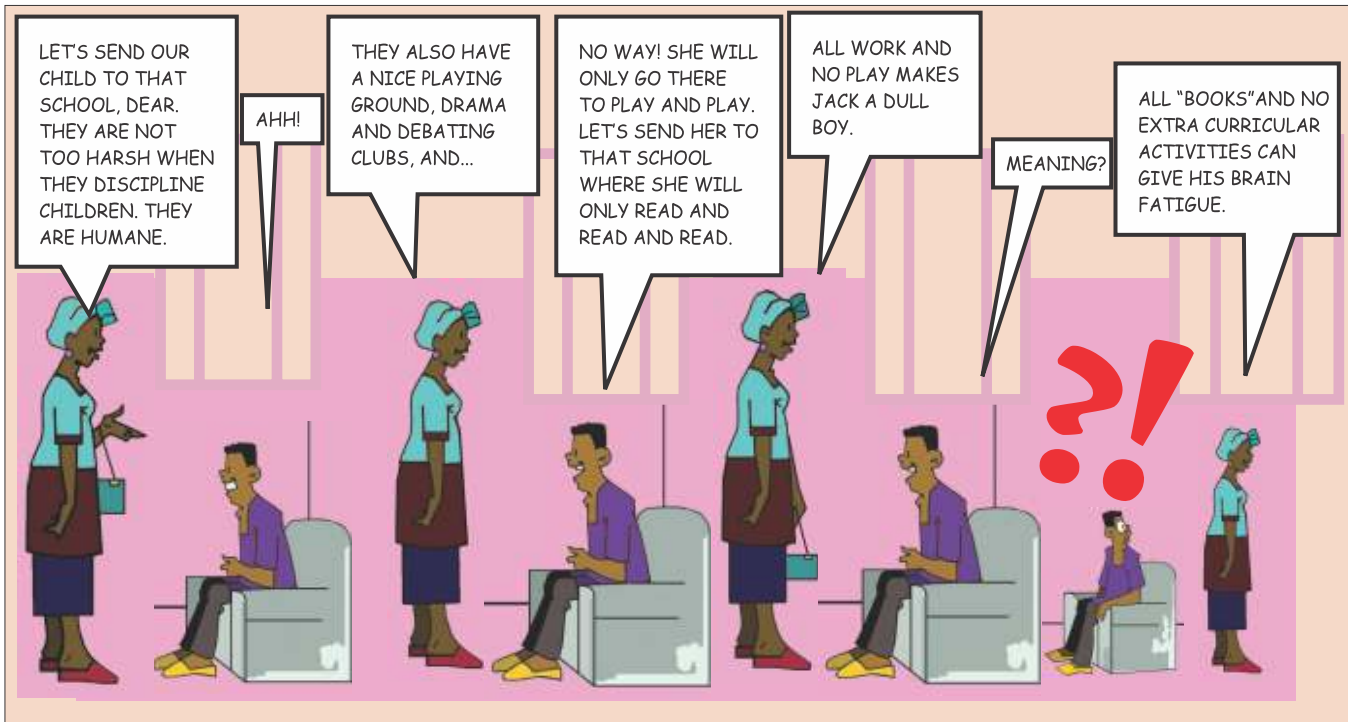
**Tackling Stigma against Mental Illness in Nigeria:** Everyone has a role to play in supporting persons with mental health challenges. By demonstrating empathy, treating them with kindness, and clearing up public misperceptions about mental illness, we will be protecting them from stigma.

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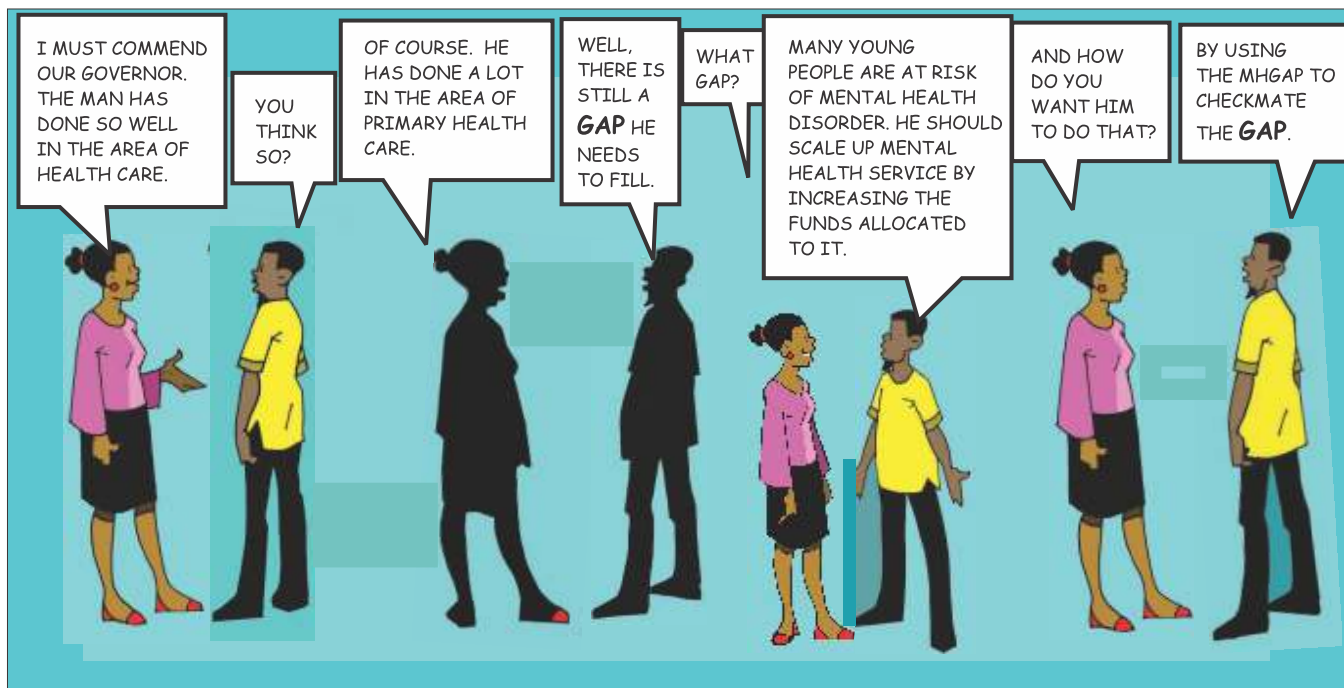
**Mental Health Promotion for Young People:** Government should make mental health promotion and prevention services universally available to young people, and also build a partnership between public and private sectors that will lead to increased investment in promoting young people's mental health.

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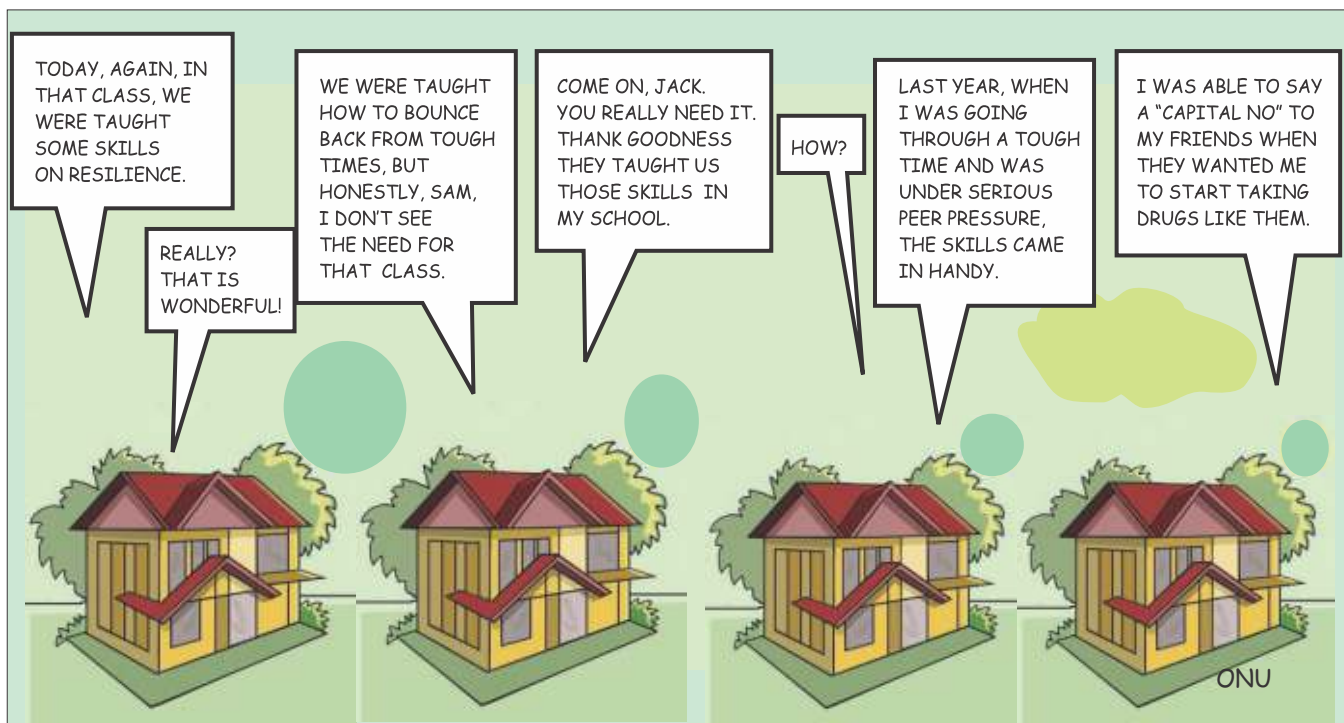
**School as Mental Health Promoting Space:** Schools play a critical role in developing young people's mental health. Educating young people about their mental health, employing humane disciplinary measures, and providing more opportunities for extracurricular activities can also help improve the mental health status of students. These strategies are essential.

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**Integrating Mental Health Services and Care:** It is important to scale up mental health services in primary care settings in Nigeria using the **Mental Health Gap Action Programme (MHGAP)**. This will help reinforce the commitment of government, international organisations and other stakeholders to increase the allocation of financial and human resources for mental health care.

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**Building the Resilience of Young People:** Fostering resilience in young people through strengthening their capacity to handle stressors and promoting social skills, life skills and livelihood skills, will help to optimise their mental health.

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Action Health Incorporated (AHI) is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation dedicated to the promotion of young people's health and development. AHI has significantly contributed to the advancement of the health and wellbeing of vulnerable women, girls and adolescents especially in the humanitarian settings of North East and North West Nigeria.

Our programmes include:

- Advocacy and Community Mobilisation
- Sexuality Education and Counselling
- Resource Material Development
- Clinical and Referral Services
- Job/Vocational Skills Training



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