

2023 POLICY FRAMEWORK

# Nigeria's National Mental Health Policy

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Understanding What It Means for You

Presented by:

**Mental Health with Ditty Foundation**

# What We'll Cover Today

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01

## Understanding Mental Health in Nigeria

The current landscape, challenges, and why policy change is urgently needed

02

## The National Mental Health Policy

Framework, goals, key provisions, and rights protection mechanisms

03

## Implementation & Community Action

How communities and individuals can support and implement the policy



Part One

# Understanding Mental Health in Nigeria

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The current landscape and why policy change is needed

# Why Mental Health Matters in Nigeria

## Mental Health Affects Everything

Mental health influences how we **think**, **feel**, and **relate to others**. It impacts our daily functioning, relationships, work productivity, and overall quality of life.

### The Current Situation in Nigeria



#### Millions Affected

Mental health conditions affect millions of Nigerians across all ages and backgrounds



#### Limited Treatment

Many people do not receive the treatment they need due to various barriers



#### Stigma Barriers

Stigma prevents people from seeking help and discussing mental health openly



#### Uneven Distribution

Services are limited and concentrated in urban areas, leaving rural communities underserved



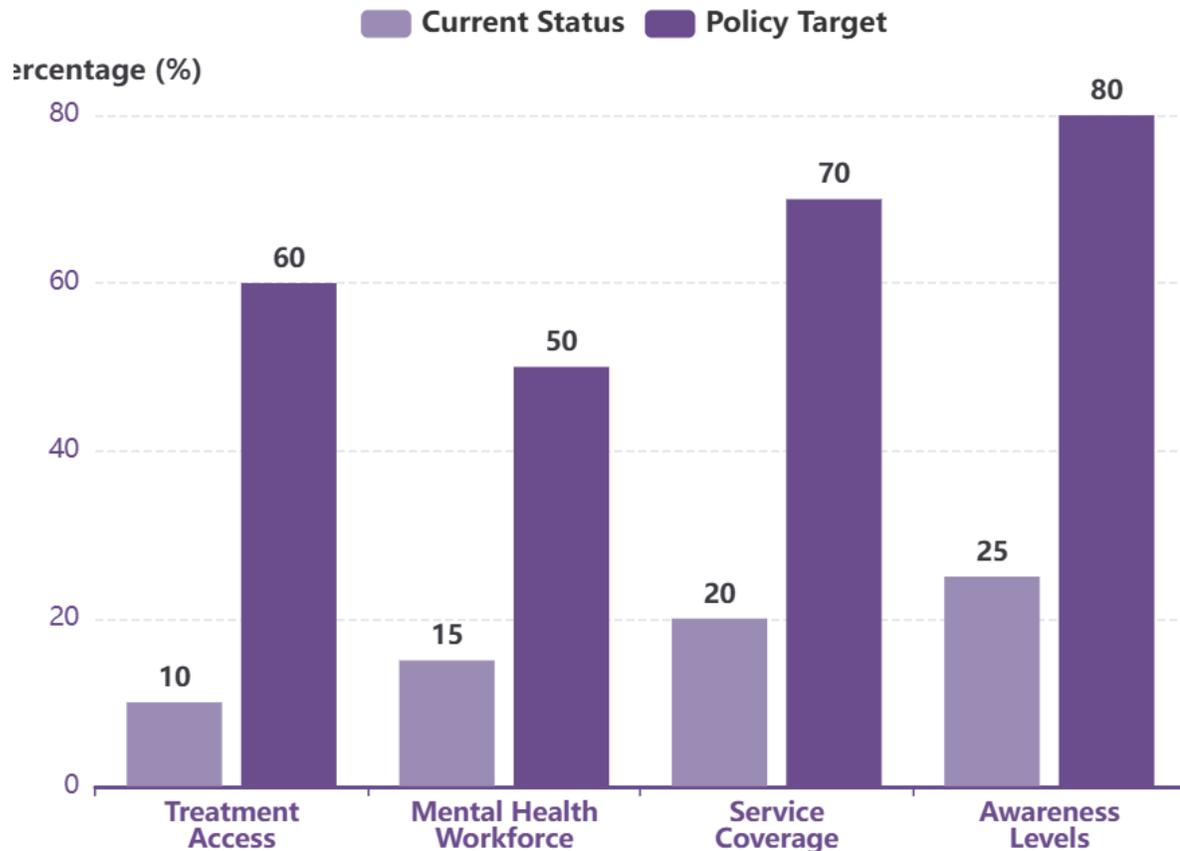
### Why This Policy Matters

The National Mental Health Policy was created to address these challenges and protect the rights of people living with mental health conditions.

A comprehensive framework for  
change

# The Current Mental Health Landscape

## Key Statistics & Research Findings



### Prevalence Rates

Mental health conditions affect approximately **20-30%** of Nigerians at some point in their lives, with depression and anxiety being most common.

### Service Gaps

There are fewer than **300 psychiatrists** serving over 200 million people, creating a severe workforce shortage.

### Urban-Rural Divide

**80%** of mental health services are concentrated in urban areas, leaving rural populations with minimal access.

### Stigma Impact

Cultural stigma prevents **70%** of those affected from seeking professional help.

# The Treatment Gap: A Critical Challenge



Only  
**10%**

Receive Treatment

This means **90% of people** with mental health conditions in Nigeria do not receive the care they need.



## Geographic Concentration

Mental health services are mostly located in **urban areas**, creating significant barriers for rural populations who must travel long distances for care.



## Workforce Shortage

There are very few **mental health professionals** relative to the population. Nigeria has one of the lowest psychiatrist-to-population ratios globally.



## Stigma Barriers

**Cultural stigma** prevents many people from seeking help. Fear of discrimination and social exclusion keeps people silent about their struggles.

→ This policy was developed specifically to close these critical gaps.

Part Two

# The National Mental Health Policy

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Framework, goals, and key provisions

# What is the National Mental Health Policy?

## Definition

The **National Mental Health Policy (2023)** is a comprehensive national framework developed by the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to guide mental health service delivery across Nigeria.

## Three Core Guidance Areas

1

### Service Delivery Standards

How mental health services should be delivered in Nigeria, including quality standards and best practices

2

### Rights Protection

How to protect the rights of people with mental health conditions and ensure dignified treatment

3

### Support Structures

How government, communities, and institutions should collaborate to support mental well-being



Developed By

Federal Ministry of  
Health and Social Welfare

- ✓ Evidence-based approach
- ✓ Stakeholder consultation
- ✓ International best practices
- ✓ Human rights framework

# The Five Core Goals of the Policy



## Improve Access

Improve access to **quality mental health services** for all Nigerians, regardless of location or socioeconomic status.

🎯 Target: 60% access by 2030



## Integrate into PHC

Integrate mental health into **primary healthcare** systems, making services available at community level.

🎯 Target: All PHCs by 2028



## Protect Rights

Protect the **rights and dignity** of people with mental health conditions, ensuring equal treatment.

🎯 Target: Zero discrimination



## Reduce Stigma

Reduce **stigma and discrimination** through public education and awareness campaigns.

🎯 Target: 80% awareness by 2028



## Strengthen Services

Strengthen **prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation** services across all levels of care

# Seven Key Focus Areas

A comprehensive framework for mental health transformation



## Mental Health Promotion

Public awareness and education campaigns



## Prevention

Early intervention and risk reduction



## Treatment & Care

Quality services at all healthcare levels



## Human Rights

Protection and dignity for all



## Community Services

Local, accessible care delivery



## Workforce Development

Training and capacity building



## Research & Data

Evidence-based policy through **research and data collection** for continuous improvement

- ✓ Prevalence studies
- ✓ Service monitoring
- ✓ Outcome tracking
- ✓ Policy evaluation

# Integration into Primary Healthcare

## Major Policy Focus

One of the most significant aspects of the policy is integrating mental health into **Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs)** across Nigeria.



### Services Closer to Home

People can receive mental health support **closer to their communities**, eliminating the need to travel long distances to urban centers.



### Early Detection & Treatment

**Early identification** of mental health issues becomes easier, allowing for timely intervention and better outcomes.



### Part of Regular Healthcare

Mental health becomes **normalized as part of regular healthcare services**, reducing stigma and encouraging help-seeking.

### Impact on Urban-Rural Gap



This integration directly addresses the urban-rural service disparity, bringing care to underserved communities.

# Rights Protection Framework

## Fundamental Rights

The policy emphasizes five fundamental rights that must be protected for all people with mental health conditions.

### Dignity

Every person deserves to be treated with **dignity and respect**, regardless of their mental health status.

### Respect

People with mental health conditions must be treated with **respect and compassion** in all interactions.

### Non-Discrimination

**No discrimination** based on mental health status in employment, housing, or services.

### Protection from Abuse

Protection from **physical, emotional, or financial abuse** in all settings.



## Access to Treatment

Everyone has the right to **access quality treatment** and care services without barriers.



## Equal Rights

People living with mental health conditions have the **same rights** as everyone else.

“ Mental health is a human right ”

Part Three

# Implementation & Community Action

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How communities and individuals can support the policy

# The Role of Communities

## Beyond Hospitals

Mental health is **not only the responsibility of hospitals**. Communities play a crucial role in supporting mental well-being.



### Reduce Stigma

Communities can challenge stereotypes and **reduce stigma** through open conversations and education.



### Encourage Help-Seeking

Create supportive environments that **encourage people to seek help** without fear of judgment.



### Support People

**Support people living with mental health conditions** through inclusion, understanding, and practical assistance.



### Promote Well-Being

Promote mental well-being through **community activities**, social connections, and healthy lifestyles.



Everyone has a role to play in building mentally healthy communities

# Workforce Development Strategy

## Building Capacity

The policy outlines a comprehensive approach to building mental health workforce capacity across Nigeria through training and development programs.

### PHC Workers

Training **primary healthcare workers** to identify and manage common mental health conditions.

### Specialists

Expanding the number of **psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychiatric nurses**.

### Community Workers

Training **community health workers** to provide basic mental health support.

### Traditional Healers

Integrating **traditional healers** where appropriate and providing mental health education.



## Training Priorities

- ✓ **Mental Health First Aid**  
Basic skills for everyone
- ✓ **Clinical Skills**  
For healthcare providers
- ✓ **Counseling Techniques**  
Evidence-based approaches
- ✓ **Rights Protection**  
Human rights in mental health
- ✓ **Cultural Competency**  
Context-appropriate care



## Target Workforce Growth

Triple the mental health workforce by 2030

# Research and Data for Mental Health



## Evidence-Based Policy

The policy emphasizes the importance of **evidence-based implementation** through continuous research and data collection.

### Why Research Matters

-  **Understand the problem:** Know the true scale and nature of mental health challenges in Nigeria.
-  **Inform decisions:** Make policy and resource allocation decisions based on data, not assumptions.
-  **Track progress:** Monitor whether interventions are working and adjust strategies accordingly.
-  **Continuous improvement:** Learn from successes and failures to improve services over time.



### Prevalence Studies

Regular surveys to understand **how common mental health conditions are** across different populations and regions.



### Service Utilization Data

Tracking **who uses services**, what services they use, and what barriers they face.



### Outcome Monitoring

Measuring **treatment outcomes** and quality of life improvements for people receiving care.



### Policy Evaluation

Assessing whether policy goals are being met and **identifying areas for improvement**.



Data drives better decisions and better outcomes

# Why Awareness Matters

## Policies Need Awareness

Policies only work when people know about them. Awareness is the bridge between policy creation and real-world impact.



### Understand Your Rights

Awareness helps people **understand their rights** and what services they are entitled to receive.



### Seek Help When Needed

When people know about available services, they are more likely to **seek help when needed**.



### Support Others

Awareness enables people to **support family members, friends, and community members** who may be struggling.



### Advocate for Better Services

Informed citizens can **advocate for better services** and hold leaders accountable for implementation.



Awareness connects policy to people, creating real change

# Resources and Where to Learn More

## Access the Full Policy

The complete National Mental Health Policy (2023) document is available from the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

### Official Document



#### Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Official government source for the policy document



#### National Mental Health Policy (2023)

Complete policy framework and implementation guidelines



#### Access the Document

Available online through official government channels



### Mental Health Organizations

Connect with organizations providing mental health support, advocacy, and education in Nigeria.

- ✓ Mental Health with Ditty Foundation
- ✓ Nigerian Mental Health
- ✓ Mentally Aware Nigeria Initiative



### Support Services

Access helplines, counseling services, and support groups for mental health concerns.

- ✓ Mental health helplines
- ✓ Counseling and therapy services
- ✓ Support groups and peer networks



Knowledge is power. Learn more to support yourself and others.

# Taking Action: Your Role

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## Everyone Can Make a Difference

Whether you're an individual, community member, healthcare professional, or advocate, you have a role to play in implementing this policy.

### As an Individual

- ✓ Learn about mental health and share knowledge
- ✓ Practice self-care and seek help when needed
- ✓ Support friends and family members

### As a Community Member

- ✓ Challenge stigma and discrimination
- ✓ Create supportive environments
- ✓ Encourage help-seeking behavior

### As a Professional

- ✓ Integrate mental health into your practice
- ✓ Stay updated on best practices
- ✓ Advocate for patient rights

### As an Advocate

- ✓ Push for policy implementation
- ✓ Raise awareness in your networks
- ✓ Hold leaders accountable

# Mental Health is Everyone's Business

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By understanding national policies and supporting mental well-being, we can build:



Healthier Communities



Stronger Families



A Supportive Society

Together, we can make mental health a priority in  
Nigeria