

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Psychiatrists and Psychologists Meet

April 12, 2022 | Webinar

## Problem Management Plus, a treatment of Depression and practical problem solving by non-health care professionals in Rural Area (Rwandan context)

PM+ is a brief psychological intervention for adults developed by the World Health Organization to help people living in adversity and experiencing emotional and practical problems. This psychotherapy intervention is called “Problem Management Plus (PM+)”, and is a low-intensity intervention which has its roots in cognitive-behavioral and problem-solving strategies, and has been shown to improve depressive symptoms and improve functioning when delivered by non-specialists in resource-limited settings, compared with enhanced care as usual. PM+ covers 4 core strategies which are: 1. Managing Stress (Helps patient manage anxiety and stress), 2. Managing Problems (Helps patient address practical problems), 3. Get Going, Keep Doing (Aims to improve patient’s levels of activity), and 4. Strengthening Social Supports (Helps reduce isolation and improve social support) and is made up of five 90-minute individual sessions. It is recommended that you have the sessions once a week. However, you may need to see clients more or less frequently depending on their needs and the local context.

This model of psychotherapy is used in Burera district in Rwanda where health center general nurses were trained on PM+ because they are already working to treat patients with mental health issues, they are people who care for the community, they have good interpersonal skills and are trustworthy.

However, this training should be strengthened by mentorship where the psychologist work together with the trained nurse in order to complete the theory gained during training, serving like practical side. The overall aim of PM+ is achieved through a process beginning with screening of the clients with PHQ9 whereby eligible ones are confirmed based on criteria enrolled on sessions with purpose of building their ability to manage their own emotional distress and reduce their own practical problems. For this reason, the language used is similar to training or coaching approaches and PM+ avoids giving advice. This strategy is aimed at improving clients’ levels of activity (e.g. social activities or carrying out necessary tasks or jobs), because many clients who have reduced their activity usually feel depressed.

### Biography

I have a bachelor’s degree of Arts in clinical Psychology obtained from the University of Kibungo in 2011, Master of Education in Curriculum Designing and Development, from the Open University of Tanzania in 2019 and candidate of Masters of Public Health in Mountain Kenya University. Additionally, I am Master of Public Health candidate at Mount Kenya University and I serve as psychologist in Mental Health Program as manager, integrator of psychotherapy (PM+) intervention at Partners In Health/Inshuti Mu Buzima, Rwanda program, from 2017 until now.

**HAKIZIMANA JANVIER**

*Partners In Health/Inshuti Mu  
Buzima, Rwanda Program*

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