



Suicide

THE SILENCE WE SHARE

**SR. MAGDALENE
MUSAU**

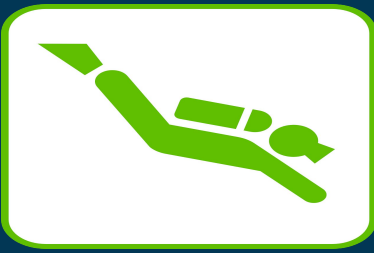
THE CHALLENGE OF TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE.

- Suicide is unsettling to talk about.
- How do I talk about suicide without upsetting you the audience.
- Let us struggle together as it is the nature of suicide.

DISCLAIMER

- This presentation may bring up some disturbing thoughts or memories.
- My intention is not to cause any disturbance or discomfort but rather to highlight the plight of those who contemplate suicide, and the silence those affected may get into.
- I suggest that you get yourself the support that you may need to help you navigate through what may be triggered as you follow this presentation.

AS WE



I invite you through Walela's lyrics:

*'Is everybody here?
Has everybody got a place
to hide?
Is everybody safe and warm
inside?'*



Be gentle with your heart!

PEOPLE WHO DIE BY SUICIDE ARE MARGINALIZED.

- Jesus in Matthew 25 presents himself as; *‘the hungry, thirsty, naked, unwell, in prison, strangers, homeless ...’*

The Mercy International Association was formed:

... to *‘inspire Sisters of Mercy and their associates*

... to incarnate the spirit of Catherine McAuley in ways which are creative and appropriate to the needs of our time ...’

My book hence my presentation focuses on those impacted by suicide.

THE QUESTIONS POSED TO MY TARGET GROUP

- Have you ever had a family member, or someone close, die through suicide?
- Please state who it was to you.
- How did you or those affected heal from the loss?
- Please speak to the relationship between silence and suicide.
- What are your beliefs about suicide?

THE SUICIDE THEMES I DERIVED FROM THE RESPONSES

- Definition: mental health, suicide, silence
 - Why study suicide?
What's the data on suicide.
 - Causes of suicide.
 - Suicide effects

- The pros and cons of silence
- Women leaders and mental health
 - Prevention:
The Healing Circle /
The Grandmothers' (Friendship) bench
- Where's God in all this?

DEFINITIONS:

- ❖ **Silence:** In this research *'refers to the quiescence before, during and after suicide.'*
- ❖ **Suicidal Ideation:** is the *'thinking about, considering or planning suicide'*
- ❖ **Suicide:** *'death caused by self-directed injurious behaviour with the intention of dying'*

WHY STUDY SUICIDE?

Because

- According to W.H.O. 2019.
- *Every year 703, 000 people take their own life and many more people attempt suicide.....*
- *Suicide was the 4th leading cause of death among 15-29 year-olds globally.*

WHY SUICIDE?

- *Over 77% of global suicides occurred in low - and middle-income countries.*
- *Suicide rates were also high amongst vulnerable groups who experience discrimination, such as refugees and migrants;*
- *By far the strongest risk factor for suicide is a previous suicide attempt.*

SOME RISK FACTORS

Include;

- Mental Health disorders.
- History of suicide in the family
 - Risky behaviours
 - Access to lethal means.
- Adolescent suicide idealisation

RISKS ...

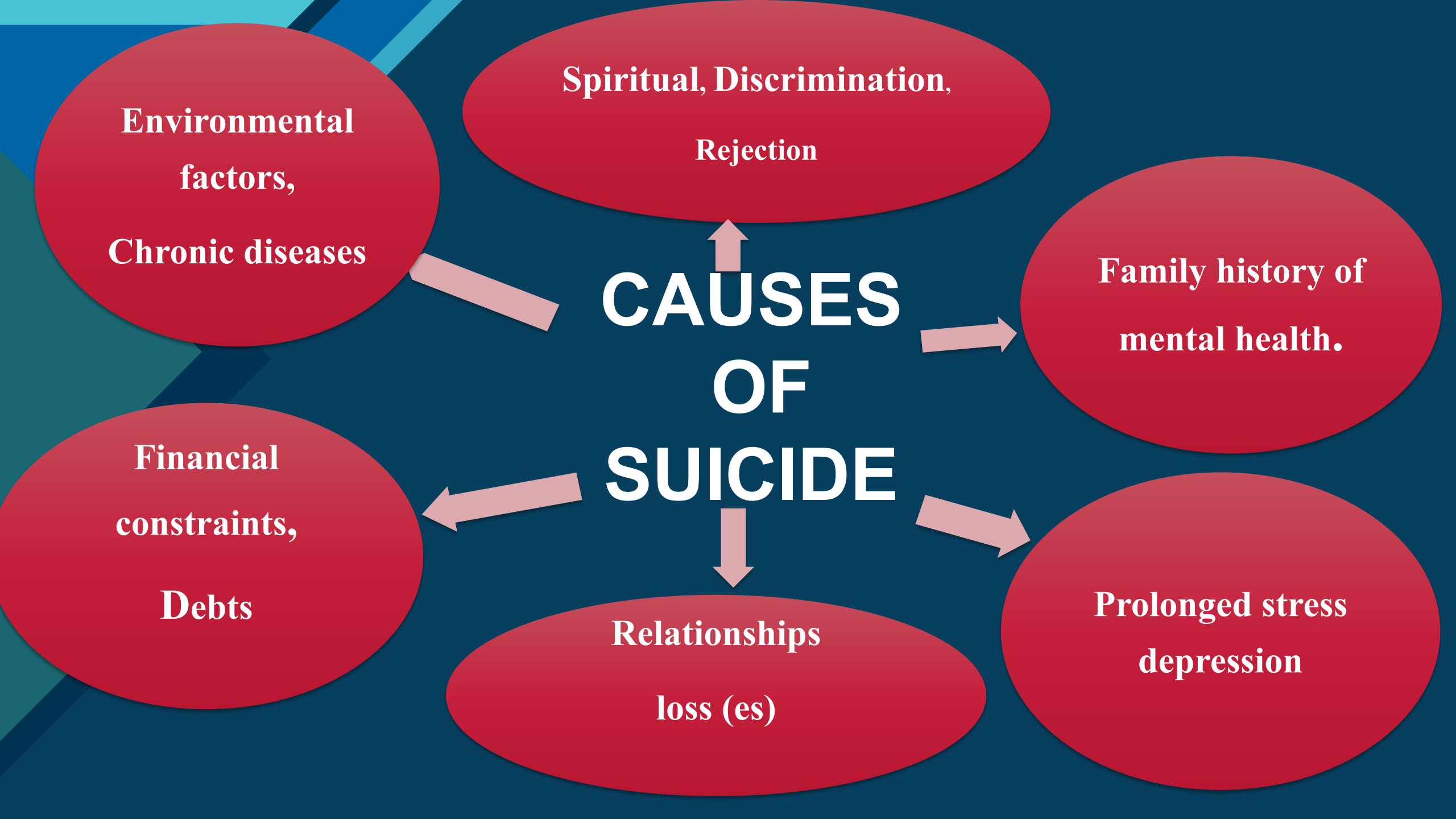
- Substance abuse
 - Depression
 - Loss (es)
- Financial problems
- Relationship issues.

RISKS CONTINUED ...

- Previous suicide attempts
 - Loneliness
 - Guilt
 - Shame
 - Burnout

RISKS CONT ...

- Joblessness
 - Debts
 - Abuse
- Serious or chronic illnesses
- Cultural / religious beliefs that suicide is noble!



**CAUSES
OF
SUICIDE**

**Environmental
factors,
Chronic diseases**

**Spiritual, Discrimination,
Rejection**

**Family history of
mental health.**

**Financial
constraints,
Debts**

**Relationships
loss (es)**

**Prolonged stress
depression**

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?



- Recognize,
- Express,
- Regulate emotions



- Be flexible
- Live in relationship with others.
- Empathise ,

Mental Health

- Mental health is the *'harmonious relationship between body and mind.'*
- *It is the state of internal equilibrium.'*

THE NEGATIVE WAYS OF DEALING WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.

- Abuse of drugs and alcohol



SILENCE



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OTHER



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RED FLAGS

.....

Withdrawal
Deep sadness
Indifference,

Guilt
Shame
Low
self-esteem

Loneliness
Frequent talk of suicide
Strong wish to die or be killed
Giving away precious items,

Apathy
Hopelessness
Interest or disinterest in religion

Abusive relationships
Silence
Self destructive behaviour

WOMEN LEADERS AND MENTAL HEALTH

“I’ve been dealing with problems with my health for a long time, and it’s been really difficult for me to face these challenges and to talk about everything that I’ve been going through.”

Celine Dion

• *‘I no longer have enough in the tank’*

Former Prime Minister Jacinda Arden of New Zealand

- **Self-care is NOT selfish**
- **Look out for another person.**

SAFETY CONTAINER: SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE

ACCEPTANCE

**Find
Healing**

Spirituality

Self - care

HOPE

**Self
COMPASSION**

CONNECTION: A FRIEND, A FAMILY MEMBER

**LOVE
EMPATHY**

SELF-EVALUATION FOR PREVENTION OF SUICIDE:

What stories do
I listen to?

What are the
words to my
music?

**Do the words, movies we watch,
the friends we keep, help us
keep a good mental state?**

What
movies do
I watch?

What
company
do I keep?

WOMEN LEADERSHIP

- How can we as women leaders engage with life impacts that make our hearts shiver and our teeth clatter?
- How can we look for cracks to engage with difference and the feelings that lie hidden under the carpet of our hearts?

- When life flows, leadership is an experience and when it does not, what skills help us navigate it?
- It is “cheap” to disagree and write each other off as women leaders.
- How can we stay and work through differences not, necessarily to be friends, rather to stay in a relationship with each other?

WOMEN LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS

- How can we as leaders talk about what truly ails us as women leading, being led or leading with each other?
- When the leadership tasks are done, will we have lost ourselves or each other?

SOME COPING MECHANISMS: what helps you ground?



Take a moment
Breath, see, appreciate...



A sunrise from Nairobi - Kenya

THE HEALING CIRCLE

In the Suicide book

- The Circle permeates all spheres of life.
- Represents God, completeness, Interconnectedness etc.
- Healing is both individual and Communal.



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THE HEALING CIRCLE

- As I share about suicide:

My challenge is to balance between us being in a healing circle where I believe healing can take place and being careful not to treat this as a therapeutic group.

THE FRIENDSHIP BENCH / THE GRANDMOTHERS BENCH



Dixon Chibanda - a psychiatrist (Harare Zimbabwe) started the grandmothers' bench by default in 2006.

- *By 2017 Over 30,000 people had been served.*
- *6 months after sessions clients were symptom free.*
- *It was noted that 'Grandmothers were more effective at treating depression than doctors.'*
- *Grandmothers showed no signs of burnout.*

The friendship bench is duplicated in other countries like the US with various age groups.

SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY IS MARKED EVERY SEPTEMBER

On a personal level the following have influenced my research...

.....

- The secondary school teacher **Mr. Kivuva**
 - ELLIAS** (former *my student*)
 - During Covid, **MUTHAMA** (*nephew*),

.....

We feel the shame, guilt and stigma as we acknowledge all.

NAME YOUR OWN PEOPLE.....



LET'S ALLOW THE 'HEALING OF THE HEART' BY LEONARD COHEN

In honour of all who have died through suicide:



SOME WAY FORWARD

Therefore, how can we support ourselves as leaders in relation to our mental health?

- Attend to our wounding.
- Call someone 
- Look out for another.
- Let us not waste our pain it was meant to serve!
- We cannot serve from 'emptiness' 

And remember there's 'A Place For You Here' Melanie DeMore:



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND GRATITUDE

- I thank the Mercy Global Action through Angela Reed and her team for this opportunity to participate in MELF.
- Thanks fellows for being part of my journey. (2022-2023).
- Thanks all for your presence here.

THANK YOU

Q & A