Leveraging Ubuntu values and principles as cultural strength to overcome mental health and emotional wellbeing issues

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ABSTRACT

There is a need for African people living in Australia to consider leveraging Ubuntu values as a cultural strength to address mental health and emotional wellbeing issues. for African people living in Australia. This paper is a systematic review research which employed key terms such as mental health, emotional wellbeing, African Australian, Young people. There were no participants involved, however the research articles that were reviewed in the study only focused on the African Australian community. Mental health issues among African Australian youth need to be better understood, as studies have shown they are at a higher risk for mental health, yet there has been insufficient research on the topic. In this study, most articles we employed highlighted that the extensive research on that reported migrants to be at ten times higher risk of experiencing mental health issues compared to the general population. Many studies carried out in the African Australian community have drawn more attention to the African Australian culture. This raises the need for research to be conducted on African Australian young people aged 15-29 years which is the Australian age range of a young person, to sensitize the African Australian community on mental health issues, and factors leading to young people's mental health problems in African Australian society. The aim of the study was to raise awareness about mental health issues facing the African, Australian young people and suggesting ways forward to support young people. The finding of the study demonstrates significance and values to address mental health issues in African-Australian Community groups. Research asserted that young immigrants are at greater risk of developing mental illness due to resettlement, cultural transition, and separation from extended family members. Young people lacking a secure base for emotional support from their families are more likely to face mental health issues in their lives. Mental health issues in the African context may not be categorized as a vast problem, but instead identified as life circumstances that every individual encounter. Since mental health subject is a taboo in the African culture, the study encouraged young people to pair up with other African youths to create awareness and advocate to access mental health services should need arise. This study encourages young people and their families from African heritage to leverage Ubuntu values and principles as their cultural strengths in dealing with challenging issues such as mental health and emotional wellbeing issues.

KEY TERMS: *Ubuntu, mental health, emotional wellbeing, African Australian, Young people*

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INTRODUCTION

Mental health problems remain a challenge globally regardless of the efforts of psychotherapists and governments' aimed support services to remedy situations causing poor emotional wellbeing among the young people. Australia is among the countries working hard to alleviate mental health issues permeating the community, resulting in poor emotional wellbeing among families and youth. Young people from African community groups in Australia found themselves struggling with many competing demands including confusing cultural issues and mental health issues. The purpose of the study is to raise awareness about the factors impacting on mental health and emotional wellbeing of African Australian young and their families. Based on difficult experiences and lack of emotional support, this study aims to encourages young people and their families from African heritage to leverage Ubuntu values and principles as their cultural safety and strengths in dealing with mental health and emotional issues. The paper is drawn on existing literature with efforts to document and address social issues that are intertwined with mental health among African Australian young people. This paper also unravelled the gaps in service delivery for young people from cultural groups in Australia. Emotional wellbeing is prominent to human beings, and it is inherently connected to physical health. Emotional wellbeing is defined as an everyday experience that human beings encounter that influence their emotional quality either positively or negatively, further determining their cognitive process (Misheva, 2015). The mental health systems encourage seeking assistance at an early stage to prevent the exacerbation of poor emotional wellbeing among the youth. However, African Australian young people continue to be at risk of experiencing poor emotional wellbeing due to different factors (Abur & Kagola, 2023). Researchers asserted that young people remain without a specific definition for different reasons in different countries. Therefore, in this study, young person is referred to any individual between the age of 15-29 – years. Since young people in the study are not Australian born, they will be referred to as emigrants or African Australian. Many African Australian young people moved to Australia by themselves for a better future that their country of origin could not offer them whilst other relocated due to life-threatening situations (Fauk et al, 2021). In 2020, studies reported that 380,000 African migrants were residing in Australia. As mentioned previously African Australian young people in Australia are at risk of poor psychological wellbeing due to social exclusion encompassing housing, and racial discrimination (Mwanri et al, 2022). For example, some of the young people came to Australia fleeing country of origin due to war or genocide is compounded by several factors: subjection to torture, trauma that impact their mental health, and uncertainty. The above issues are contributing to the statistics Mwanri et al (2022) whose study discovered African Australian migrants to be at high risk of poor emotional wellbeing compared to the Australian general population. Therefore, there is a need for the body of research to carry out a study about African Australian young people to explore mental health issues among them and how to address these factors. The understanding of mental health issues in African Australian community is essential because this creates opportunities to promote support services to reduce further mental health problems. Therefore, this study does provide insight into mental health issues among African Australian young people by highlighting some factors that are known to be contributing to a high level of mental health issues.

Factors affecting mental health and emotional wellbeing of African Australian young people

There are different factors affecting mental health and emotional wellbeing of African Australian young people. These include uncertainty of migration and settlement challenges such as disconnection with family members, family breakdown, bullying from school, discrimination and racism, lack of employment, displacement, and lack of connection with resources as well social capital. From research perspective, we know that youths that relocated to another country find it difficult to secure a job which causes pervasive mental health problems (Coetzer et al, 2022). African regions experienced socio-historical neo-colonialism that led to unequal distribution of resources, conflict, the war in Africa and further entrenched high unemployment among young people. Due to unemployment and inequality in the African regions, many young people migrate to the Western world for economic opportunities (Ngila, 2022). However, young immigrants are highly at risk of unemployment in western countries due to working rights and level of education. For young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees, it can be challenging to secure working job immediately due lack of experiences and local skills needed in Australia. Many of these young people have fled their countries due to conflicts and wars, which resulted in political instability and hindered their education and work experiences. Unfortunately, the often prevents them from finding employment due to their low level of education and lack of skills. Unemployment and financial challenges can tremendously impact mental health due to stress, depression, and a sense of uncertainty about the future (Disney, 2021). An extensive body of research implied that unemployed young people are at greater risk of engaging in delinquent activities, such as consuming excessive alcohol, drug use and substance misuse, to deal with their mental health problems (Thern et al, 2017).

Another possible explanation is that unemployment brings about vulnerability and stigma, which affects young people's mental health (Vlient, 2021). Unemployment negatively impacts young people as they might remain in poverty, which further influences their mental health. Because employment allows an individual to meet their basic needs, which can be interconnected to emotional well-being. Financial difficulties can impact African Australian young people because of the inability to pay the bills, which can lead to homelessness and further mental health issues. Unemployment can be paired with poverty, which complicates young people's mental health due to the pervasiveness of mediocrity. Also, Australia is among the most expensive countries in the world without employment it can be challenging for individuals to sustain themselves, which can cause further mental health problems among unemployed African Australian young people. Employment is a crucial part of African Australian young people's identity formation as it enhances them to sustain themselves which could alleviate mental health issues. Some caused of mental health issues are due to high expectations in life. When a young person fails to meet their set expectations and goals, it affects their mental health.

Postmigration impact on African Australian young people

Finding belonging after migration can be a daunting task for young people to negotiate their identity and belonging in new culture. This can carry overwhelming emotional issues for both young people and their families. It is easy for young people to be confused between a culture of a host country and cultural heritage. For example, cultural shock and cultural confusion caused emotional difficulties and roller coasters for some people. Lack of emotional wellbeing and emotional resilience can be problematic for some people. Emotional wellbeing is connected to ecstasy, contentment, satisfaction with past, present and life in general encompassing employment, education, and opportunities to maximise full potential resulting into positive emotions and resilience (Sissons, 2023). Moreover, positive emotions improve people's thinking and thoughts, ensuring that the mind is occupied with hope, optimism, and sense of peace, replacing negative emotions that could impact emotional well-being (Langeland, 2014). Migrating to another country disadvantage refugees because they are forced to leave behind sources of income such as businesses and savings that could financially sustain them. Another, they are financially disadvantaged because they might have to wait longer for their refugee status to be reviewed before securing a job. On top of the economic challenges, refuges are likely to face social exclusion in their new environment due to cultural differences, language barriers, and social status. Social exclusion stressors can affect refugee health through emotional distress, which involves depression, stress, and panic attacks. Such distress can negatively affect the emotional well-being of African Australian young people with a refugee background (James et al, 2019). Another, African Australians experience pre-migration trauma due to life-threatening situations they envisaged before relocating to a new country. These circumstances are anticipated to affect African Australian young people, especially with refugee backgrounds, contributing to emotional well-being issues (Fauk et al, 2021). Young people that witnessed the death of closest family members, especially parents and siblings, are at risk of significant psychological distress worsening their emotional well-being (Mwanri and Mude, 2011). Also, the caused African Australian young people to lose their cultural systems in order to fit into the unfamiliar culture, which could further contribute to poor emotional well-being. Because recognition is fundamental to human beings its associated with self-worth, a sense of meaning in life and self-concept that derives from being identified with a cultural heritage (Schweitzer et al, 2006). Scholars presume the above challenges to cause long-term mental health problems among the above-mentioned population. For young people that witnessed the earlier mentioned traumatic experiences are likely to suffer from hallucinations and mental health issues. Traditional healers in the African region are known to be exceptional due to their skills, and knowledge to diagnosis poor psychological well-being and define the causes of the problem. They can communicate with ancestor spirits that convey the person responsible for the client illness (Zabow, 2007). Additionally, they are known to categorise poor psychological well-being associated with a range of explanatory models, from supernatural/ spiritual or its due to poverty. Because of the above stated the community that is embedded in the cultural beliefs highly recommends traditional healers to treat issues connected to poor psychological wellbeing (Kannampallil et al, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

We aimed to answer this research question "to what extent African young people and their families can use Ubuntu values and principles as cultural strength to overcome mental health and emotional wellbeing issues"? Upon review, we analyzed "Alcohol, Other Drug Use, and Mental Health Among African Migrant Youths in South Australia" authored by Lillian Mwanri and William Mude in 2021.The article was reviewed as it unriddles the increase of resettled Africans that rose from 33% in 2003 to 70% in 2005. We used the internet search by to be specific google scholar, Pub med, the university of Sydney library database search, and BMC psychiatry beginning

with an inverted pyramid of literature; we sought general articles that focused on the area of mental health issues, and mental health problems among Australian youth, mental health issues among youth with a refugee background, and African Australian young people. Then, we removed literature that was not aligned with the recent study, narrowing it down to literature that speaks to the keywords of the study; Ubuntu, mental health, emotional wellbeing, and young people This helped in focusing on articles that explicated the research topic and helped focus on the information within the spectrum of our study purpose and scope. This was helpful, as it guided us to navigate the appropriate approach to employ during the assessment of literature reviews.

There were numerous sources that to be exact google scholar, Pub med, Australia Association of Social work website and BMC psychiatry journal article we browsed through on mental health problems and factors contributing to African Australian young people's mental health issues. We first determine the scope of our review and objectives (Figure 1). This method ensured that we focused on keywords that are in line with our topic, which helped establish the structuring of our review into various sections that address specific factors hampering mental health among African Australian young people. We further analysed the quality of materials that we utilised in the study and evaluated components such as data collection, study design, and conclusion drawn by each article author. We later identified gaps and themes, we used a table for illustration of our concepts and how various sources intersected and related to each other so as the aptitude to use them in this paper. There was no study conducted that specifically focused on African Australian young people's mental health issues or research that explored components that are furthering mental health issues among African Australian young people. Thus, this paper unfolds the gaps and tremendous need for support services to tackle mental health issues within the African Australian young people population.

Table 1: Illustration of key literature reviewed in the paper

Author	*Name of document*	*Main idea*	*Source*
Langeland, E.	Emotional Well-being	Emotional well-being is fundamental to human beings because it fuel psychological resilience	Google scholar 2014: (1-4) 1874-1876
Fauk, N.K. Zierch, A., Gesesew, H., Ward, P., Green, E., Oudih, E., Tahir, R. and Mwanri, L.	Migrants and services providers perspectives of barriers to accessing mental health services in South Australia	The prevalence of mental health issues among youth with a refugee background	Research gate 2021: 18 (17) 8906
Amuyunzu-Nyamongo, M.	The social and cultural aspects of mental health in Africa societies	Cultural beliefs and misconceptions obstruct youth to seek mental health services	Google Scholar 2013: 59-63
Abur, W. and Kagola, F.	The mental health of young African Australians	The main risk factors associated with the African Australian young people's mental health include resettlement, cultural transition, racial discrimination, separation from extend family members and stigmatisation of mental health issues due to cultural beliefs.	The University of Melbourne pursuit 2023: 28 February

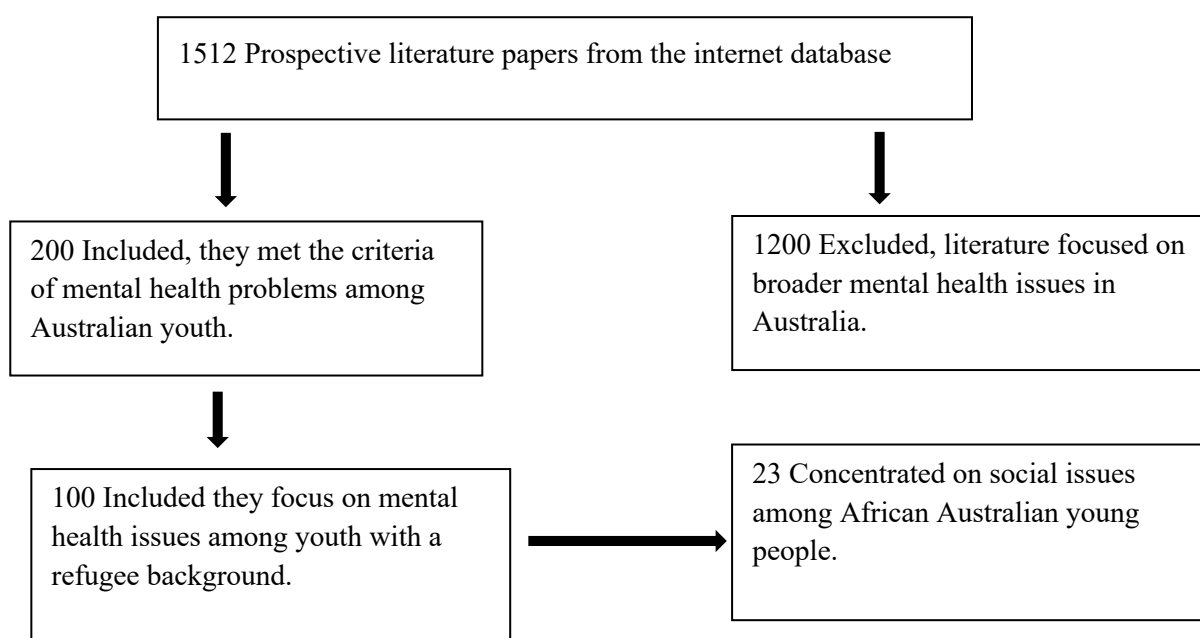| Sissons, B.	What is emotional health and wellbeing	Emotional well-being affects how an individual function on a day-to-day basis or how they cannot manage uncertainty.	Blog Medical news today 2023: 10 February
Coetzer, J.A., Bold, A. and Van der mark, E.J.	Exploring mental health interventions for youth in Southern Africa: A rapid review	Mental health treatments for young adults, especially during a vulnerable time in their lives, are lacking.	Pub Med 2022: 299-03699
Disney, L.	The impact of employment on immigrant mental health: results from a national survey	unemployment has a significant effect on the mental health of immigrants.	Google scholar 2021: 66(2) 93-100
James, P., Iyer, A. and Webb, T.L.	The impact of post-migration stressors on refugees' emotional distress and health	Refugees face significant challenges in their host country to be specific, extreme poverty, inability to meet their basic needs such as housing, employment to finance themselves which further results into poor emotional well-being.	Wiley online library 2019: 49(7) 1359-1359
Kagola, F. and Abur, W.	Psychological well-being of Namibian youth within the ecological system theory	There is high amount of unemployment among the youth further resulting in poor psychological well-being.	Journal of social issues in Non-Communicable Conditions and Disability 2022: 1 (2) 94-101
Kannampallil, T.G., Guido, F.S., Cohen, T. and Patel, V.L.	Considering complexity in health care systems	The community that is embedded in the cultural beliefs highly recommends traditional healers to treat issues connected to psychological well-being	Pub Med 2011: 44(6) 943-947
Koen, V., Van Eeden, C. and Rothman, S.	Psychosocial wellbeing of families in a South African context	The psychological well-being of South African families determining the prevalence of psychological well-being indicators.	Journal of psychology in Africa 2013: 23 (3) 409-418
McCann, T., Mugavin, J., Rwnzaho, A. and Lubman, D. (2016)	Sub-Saharan African migrant youths help seeking barriers and facilitators for mental health and substance use problems.	Young people from Sub-Saharan Africa experience help seeking barriers for mental health further resulting in longer duration of untreated problems and poorer outcomes.	BMC Psychiatry 2016: 16 (1)

Misheva, V.	What determines emotional well-being? The role of adverse experiences	Exploring emotional wellbeing and factors that are linked to a person's emotional health.	Springer Journal 2015: 17 (5) 1921-1937
Mwanri, L., Fauk, N., Ziesch, A., Gesesew, H. and Asa, G.	Post-migration stressors and mental health for African migrants in South Australia	The experiences of African migrants about the post-migration stressors they faced in resettlement that pose mental health challenges.	Pub Med 2022: 19 (13) 7914
Mwanri, L. and Mude, W	Alcohol, other drugs use and mental health among African migrant youths in South Australia	The perspectives about alcohol and other drug use among African Australian.	PubMed 2021: 18 (4) 1534
Ngila, F.	World refugee day: Why Africa's youth want to migrate to Europe and US	Many African youths are striving to leave the continent to travel to western world for better opportunities.	Blog 2022: 20 June
Reupert, A., Straussner, S.L. and Weimard	It takes a village to raise a child: understanding and expanding the concept of the village	Ubuntu concept enhances the African culture to work together, and every elder in the community to contribute to a child's life.	Frontiers journal 2022: 10 (1-8)
Schweitzer, R., Melulle, F., and Steel, Z.	Trauma, post migration living difficulties, and social support as predictors of psychological adjustment in resettled Sudanese refugees	The impact of post migration and the challenges associated with relocation to a new country	PubMed 2006: 40 (2) 179-187
Thern,E., Munder, J., Hemmingson, T. and Rasmussen, F.	Long-term effects of youth unemployment on mental health: Does an economic crisis make a difference	Youth unemployment impact their health including their psychological wellbeing	PubMed 2017: 71 (4)
Ali, A.Y.	Nomad	Somalians perceive mental health as Khatar (danger)	Biography 2011: 3 March
Ziaian, T., de Anstiss, H., Antoniou, G., Baghurst, P., & Sawyer, M.	Emotional and behavioural problems among refugee children and adolescents living in South Australia	The prevalence of emotional and behavioural problems among children and adolescents.	American Psychological Association 2013: 48 (2), 139-148
Zabow, T	Traditional healers and mental health in South Africa, international psychiatry	Traditional healers are known to be experts in Africa, and can assist to heal mental health issues	PubMed Central 2007: 4 (4), 81-83

| Vlient, D.R.R. | The effects of unemployment on mental health | The impact of unemployment on youth emotional well-being | Libraries dissertation 2021 |

FINDINGS

There were 1512 prospective literature papers that we identified to provide efficient information for this study. Nevertheless, through immense assessment, only 1200 fit the criteria of this recent study; we further narrowed the papers to 200 that specifically talked about mental health issues among refugee youth, which was broad as the focus is on African Australian young people's mental health issues. We further reduced the articles to 100 that specifically speak on African Australian general population, which slightly met the criteria of the study (see Figure 1). We further narrowed the study to 18 articles that speak to social issues that young people from the African Australian community experience, which we intertwined with mental health issues among African Australian young people. The key themes from the findings were some causes and factors affecting mental health, effects of post-migration on African Australian young people, and treatment for mental health.

Figure 2: Flow chart of literature included and excluded in the study.

1512 Prospective literature papers from the internet database

200 Included, they met the criteria of mental health problems among Australian youth.

1200 Excluded, literature focused on broader mental health issues in Australia.

100 Included they focus on mental health issues among youth with a refugee background.

23 Concentrated on social issues among African Australian young people.

Treatment for mental health

As mental health issues are raising from time to time, early treatment is vital for youth from refugee backgrounds that have experienced some difficulties in their lives such as PTSD, anxiety, depression, bullying at school, discrimination, and racism as well as other settlement related issues (Abur and Mphande,2020). Young people from migrant community groups are at greater risk of developing mental illness due to resettlement, cultural transition, and separation from extended family members (Abur and Mphande,2020, McCann et al 2016). Young people without a secure base for emotional support from their family negatively impact their lives, which contributes to mental health issues (Abur and Mphande,2020, Koen et al, 2013). In contrast, mental health issues in the African context may not be categorized as a vast problem, but instead identified as life circumstances that every individual encounter (Amunyunzu-nyamongi, 2013). While African Australian young people are at increased risk of experiencing mental health issues, African culture stigmatized people envisaging mental health issues due to a lack of mental health awareness, concerns for safety and pairing up mental health problems with spirituality (Amunyunzu-Nyamongi, 2013). As such, young people with mental health issues in an African community are likely to keep secrets of their mental health problems to avoid stigma and labelled which could add barriers to accessing mental health care that could assist them to overcome mental health issues (Coetzer et

al, 2022). Mental health in the African community is associated with misconceptions and beliefs that shape the understating of the subject. Most African cultures negatively influence the perception of mental health, which results in labelling people expressing deviant behaviours or 'inappropriate behaviour' schizophrenia to be specific, perceiving them as omunanamwengu (mad) in Ovawambo culture in Namibia. For example, in Somalia due to misconceptions and cultural norms, they associate mental illness with Khatar (danger) (Ali, 2011). Such a position seems to be supported by Amunyuzu-Nyamongi (2013) in her assertion that many African cultures have diverse ways to conceptualising mental health and illness, encompassing its nature, causes and the appropriate intervention required. Amunyuzu-Nyamongi also argues that mental health subject receives brief attention in many African countries due to lack of education, fear, culture, and religious reasoning that exacerbate stigma. Stigma against mental illness is a powerful and potentially reversible contributory factor towards the reluctance of many young people to seek help for mental illness. Stigma in Africa could be a result of lack of knowledge (ignorance), negative attitudes (prejudice), and excluding or avoiding behaviours (discrimination). In relation to knowledge about mental illness which is a clearly striking gap. For example, in Namibia most young people might not know what to do if they have a mental health problem, or what to recommend to a friend with mental health difficulties. Because mental health in Ovawambo culture in the Northen Namibia, they perceive it as okuna eemwengu (madness) (Abur and Mphande,2020, Kagola & Abur, 2023). There are therefore grounds to consider that because of these above misconceptions it can be a factor that reduce help seeking for mental illnesses, for example by avoiding the embarrassment of diagnosis. Due to the African culture that dismisses mental health issues because of stigma and taboo it could be presumed that African Australian young people would opt not to utter personal issues that are identified with mental health problems (Abur and Mphande,2020). Furthermore, should they decide to articulate their mental health issues, they are at increased risk of experiencing harassment stigma due to African cultural beliefs that perceive mental health h problems as normal reactions (Abur and Mphande,2020, McCann et al, 2016). Equally important, African-Australian young people might be reluctant to speak about their mental health issues to avoid conflict within their communities (Abur and Mphande,2020, McCann et al, 2016).

On the other hand, African Australian young people may not employ mental health services because mental health issues are being dismissed by the mental health care system (Ziaian et al, 2021). Fauk et al (2021) reported that there are fewer Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) services that affect the migrant population to access mental health services. Zaiain et al (2021) implied that CALD should commit to resourcing and implementing mental health services with the same access to quality care as the general population. Moreover, Zaiain et al (2017) further suggested that for CALD to achieve this goal they should be mental health promotion, early intervention, and prevention programs and efforts to ensure a competent capacity for CALD. Although cultural perceptions could have adverse implications for African Australian young people to convey their mental health issues, which can promote a vicious cycle of mental health issues among Africa Australian young people. Australian mental health service providers should consider acquainting themselves with the African culture and issues that African Australian young people envisage, such as racial discrimination and resettlement as well as refugee trauma they encountered. This would enable service providers to efficiently support African Australian young people that are accessing services or attempting to seek mental health assistance.

Decolonising emotional wellbeing of African Australian young people through Ubuntu

Discussing mental health and emotional wellbeing can be difficult subject in many African community groups for cultural reasons and taboo associating with mental illness. However, there is an opportunity for people to use their culture knowledge, values, and principles to address mental health and emotional wellbeing issues safely. In this paper, we argue that Ubuntu values and principles can assist people with mental health and emotional issues as their cultural strength to practice overcome mental health and emotional issues. Leveraging Ubuntu values as a way building cultural strengths and decolonising our own emotional wellbeing by grounding ourselves on Ubuntu values during difficult time. Ubuntu is an African term that defines togetherness within humanity, whereby every individual has an impact on the next person's life. Many researchers have explored Ubuntu, and the term contains a profound concept that explains various factors affecting the world and encompasses emotional well-being. Intertwining Ubuntu with emotional wellbeing would enable policymakers and social workers to consider expanding their efforts to advocate for new solutions for the African Australian young people with poor emotional wellbeing. Ubuntu's approach focuses on partnership between individuals and the building of relationships regardless of race, gender, class, or power; the aim is to transform the world around them and society at large. Additionally, we can pair Ubuntu with the African proverb "it takes a village to raise a child," which expresses the idea that many people in the community must come together to provide a safe, supportive, and healthy environment for young people. This environment provides them with security and enables them to flourish in life,

and to achieve their aspirations and ambitions. Providing a safe, emotional support and healthy environment for young people requires taking their voices seriously and having multiple people such as siblings, extended family members, neighbours, teachers, professionals, community members, and policymakers who care for them (Reupert et al., 2022). All these ''villagers'' may provide direct care to the young person or support the young person from a refugee background to thrive in their lives, which later contributes to positive emotional well-being. However, in many countries today, including Australia, the village is dissolute and fragmented. People tend to isolate themselves more and are less willing to offer or ask for help from others. Family breakdown, economic pressures, long working hours, and increased mobility may have contributed to African Australian young people feeling less connected to extended family members and their peers. Professionals, especially social workers, and policymakers should revive "the village" and enhance Ubuntu within African Australian communities through mentorship and providing psychosocial support to those facing emotional challenges.

DISCUSSION

This study provides insight into mental health issues among African Australian young people highlighting some factors that are known to be contributing to a high level of mental health issues. It encourages African Australian to leverage Ubuntu values and principles as their cultural strengths to overcome mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in Australia and other countries. African Australian migrants are reported to be at ten times higher risk of experiencing mental health issues compared to the general population. The main factors that are anticipated to be associated with the African Australian young people's mental health issues such as resettlement, cultural transition, racial discrimination, separation from extended family members and stigmatization of mental health issues due to cultural beliefs. Furthermore, unemployment and financial challenges, financial difficulties tremendously impact mental health due to stress, depression, and anxiety about the future. Moreover, it increases the risk of engaging in delinquent behaviours to be specifically extensive consumption of alcohol and substance abuse as a scapegoat to supplement mental health problems. This has the potential to significantly hamper the capacity of African Australian young people to maximize their full potential in life, which consequently trap them in the vicious cycle of poverty and further increases mental health issues.

Despite the prevalence of mental health issues among African Australian young people, they are reluctant to access mental health services because of the dismissal of their mental health issues by the mental health care system (Ziaian et al, 2021). In addition, there are fewer (CALD) services that impact the migrant population to access mental health services which includes African Australian young people (Fauk et al, 2021). Because of the disproportionately of mental health issues affecting young people, Ziaian et al (2021) suggested that CALD should consider committing sufficient resources and implementing mental health services with the same access to quality care as the general population. Equally important, Zaian et al further implied that CALD can achieve the goal of resourcing, implementing and proficient capacity of mental health services through mental health promotion, early intervention, and prevention programs. The improvement of CALD can contribute to the reduction of mental health issues among African Australian young people because they would receive appropriate treatment and intervention that could minimise serious disruptions in their emotional development.

Psychotherapy intervention

Early psychotherapy intervention can assist young people and their families to overcomes some of the mental health and emotional wellbeing related issues. It is better to put intervention early enough than to deal with later after damage is done. As such, mental health professionals should consider working together to tackle the challenges hindering the African Australian community from seeking mental health services. Social workers and welfare workers should launch social media awareness campaigns on TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook to engage more African Australian youth. Utilising social media will enable a high number of youths to be reached compared to carrying out traditional campaign awareness. Another approach could be campaign awareness within the African Australian community involving local churches and educational centres to address mental health issues among the African Australian youth. This outreach can destigmatize mental health problems and encourage youths and their families to comfortably support each other whilst accessing mental health services. Youths from other communities that celebrate mental health day should motivate African Australian youth to participate in celebrating the day; this will enable them to be sensitised and educated about mental health issues, including the repercussions of untreated mental health problems and their short- and long-term effects. We cannot reckon this approach as a solution; however, it would alter misconceptions of mental health issues among the African Australian youth. Equally important, African Australian youth that are confident to disclose and share their mental health challenges should be involved in mental health day celebrations to motivate other African Australian youth

to seek mental health services. The mental health issues are being dismissed by the mental health care system; this practice could be contributing to the African Australian young people not accessing mental health services. There are fewer culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) services that are affecting the migrant population to access mental health services. Policy makers should commit to increasing CALD resources and mental health services and provide the same access to quality care as the general population. Furthermore, policy makers should implement and fund prevention programs within the African Australian community to ensure a competent capacity for CALD and boost their quality of services to assist the migrant population. In addition, policy makers should liaise with African Australian community leaders to provide statistics on cases related to mental health issues. This will enable the policy makers to address and resolve any discovered gaps, loopholes, or opportunities and to better serve African Australian young people experiencing mental health issues. Moreover, policy makers could reinforce improvements for mental health services by encouraging social workers and welfare services to boost their efforts in addressing the gaps experienced by African Australian young people when attempting or accessing mental health services.

Family is prominent to African Australian young people because they perceived it as an institution that foster support and enhances positive emotions, further contributing to emotional well-being. Such a position is supported by Kagola and Abur (2022) in their assertion that family members play a significant role in youth emotional state, their attitudes, and behaviours enhance cohesion, social support, sense of meaning, self-worth, and other domains connected to youth's emotional well-being. Additionally, youths from loving family backgrounds are likely to express their poor emotional wellbeing without fear of stigma, meaning chance are high of them to seek mental health care services for treatment (Kagola and Abur, 2022). Although some African Australian's might be embedded in their cultural beliefs, it is essential to reinforce the idea of seeking mental health services to prevent issues caused by untreated emotional well-being problem (Abur & Kagola, 2023).

Implications for social work practice and social policy levels

The understanding of mental health issues in African Australian community is essential because this creates opportunities to promote support services to reduce further mental health problems. For example, there are implications for social workers in Africa to work closely with vulnerable clients and their families to address some mental health and emotional wellbeing issues. This work can also be extended to migration services in Africa to ensure that clients with mental health and emotional issues are clearly assessed and supported during migration. Also, African families do needs to be educated about social work services, their right to seek for help and support before migrating to another country. Therefore, this study does provide insight into mental health issues among African Australian young people by highlighting some factors that are known to be contributing to a high level of mental health issues. Mental health issues are raising from time to time among young people in the African community in Australian, and early treatment is vital to assist young people or youth who have experienced mental health issues and some difficulties in their lives.

Social workers do and can play a significant role in supporting young people with mental health issues in any community like African community, young people from African community groups in Australian are likely to keep secrets of their mental health problems to avoid stigma and negative labelling in community and family level, and these added to other barriers to accessing mental health care and support to young people. From social work practice and social policy level, African Australian young people and parents need to be sensitised on the importance of supporting young people within the community to access mental health services and to destigmatized individuals experiencing mental health issues (Abur and Mphande,2020). Mental health services awareness should be promoted in the African Australian community to help young people from the African community to seek mental health support services, and therefore, there is a need for holistic team approach and promotion for mental health service providers such as social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, youth workers and other case managers to work together to increase the availability of mental health services to African Australian young people who are seeking mental health support services.

Limitations

This study has some limitations, like any other research projects. However, there are two main limitations need to be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. The first limitation relates to the generalisability of the finding. There are few studies conducted that primarily focused on African Australian young people that significantly contributed to the generalising of the finding. Second, due to limited research on the African Australian young people's mental health issues, the recent study could not present more factors that are furthering mental health illness among African Australian young people.

CONCLUSION

The experiences of early trauma may further place African Australian young people at a disadvantage, which would exacerbate their mental health. The causes and factors such as unemployment, housing, and cultural beliefs perception can lead to mental health issues among African Australian young people. Unemployment is found to be a crucial part of a young person's life because it could determine their purposes and needs in their lives. On the other hand, culture plays a vital role in many African Australian young people's mental health issues; the perception of mental health problems among the African culture and stigma that is hindering young people to deter mental health services due to fear of being refrained from talking about mental health issues. The CALD services are another challenge that is prompting African Australian young people to be caught in a double bind to access mental health services. African Australian young people that fled their countries due to war and conflict are highly at risk of long-term mental health issues due to post-traumatic stress disorder (PSTD), depression, and the stress of family separation. Young people and their families consider taking proactive in seeking mental health support services that appropriate to their cultural needs as well as emotional needs. There are many mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, bullying from school and workplace, discrimination, and racism which some young people and their families encountered daily in Australia. However, they have no confidence and courage to seek support because of stigma and lack of trust in services. The African Australian community needs to be sensitised to encourage young people to access services without being stigmatized. The promotion of accessing mental health services by African Australian young people needs to be strengthened to prevent mental health problems that may negatively alter their future forever.

Declaration

There is no conflict of interest that is associating with this project and as well as no funding receive for this project. There was no ethics approval required for this project because it is literature review research.

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