



**GLOBAL
WIDOWS**
EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION

'Helping To Bring Light In Dark Times'

Presents:

MINIMISING ANXIETY & FEAR DURING COVID-19

DECEMBER 11, 2020

SEMINAR REPORT

Seminar facilitated by:



In partnership with
**THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
COMMUNITY FUND**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On the 11th of December 2020, Global Widows Empowerment Foundation hosted an online seminar on "Minimising Anxiety and Fear During COVID-19". A total of 24 devices were connected to the seminar. As the COVID-19 pandemic stretches on, and disruptions to people's way of life persist, there is an increased risk for mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, as well as mental and physical breakdown. This seminar was convened to discuss possible struggles with fear and anxiety that participants may have, as well as equip them with coping strategies for continued mental well-being.

The seminar was kick-started by Patricia Aboyeji, Founder and Director of Global Widows Empowerment Foundation, who shared tips on caring for mental health and well-being in light of COVID-19. Three speakers then spoke on the topics: handling fear and choosing focus, making the most of a COVID-19 holiday season, and the COVID-19 vaccine.

Participants were invited to complete an online survey after the seminar, and the feedback given is included in this report. The survey reflected a high level of satisfaction with the seminar, and participants indicated that they were likely to participate in similar events and seminars in the future. Participants also gave feedback on topics they would like to see covered in future seminars.



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INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus has inflicted the world with chaos and worries, and people worldwide have been under tremendous strain for a prolonged period of time. These negative effects may surface more during the upcoming year-end holiday season, as people process how the pandemic has affected them and their families during this year. In addition, the introduction of several COVID-19 vaccines has also sparked fear and controversy, and people are filled with questions about the vaccines and what it will mean for them.

With the ongoing situation, it is clear that we seriously need to look after our mental health and well-being so as to avoid mental and physical breakdown. It is important that we take measure to minimise the fear and deal with the worries that have come with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The goal of this seminar was to discuss possible struggles with fear and anxiety that participants may have, as well as equip them with coping strategies for continued mental well-being. We invited a panel of speakers to address issues of how to deal with fear, as well as how the holiday season may worsen anxiety and how to deal with this. Among the speakers was a medical specialist who spoke on the COVID-19 vaccine and explained what it was and how it worked. Participants were then given a chance to ask questions about the vaccine, and were encouraged to stay informed by referring to official government communication channels as well as scientific research.

SEMINAR AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to take a toll on people's mental health, particularly in light of the disease's second wave, renewed lockdowns, and anxieties around the COVID-19 vaccine. The aim of this seminar was to discuss possible struggles with fear and anxiety that participants may have, as well as equip them with coping strategies for continued mental well-being.

In line with this aim, the seminar had the following objectives:

1. Discuss challenges with fear and anxiety that participants, and those around them, may be facing, particularly during the festive season and as the year draws to a close.
2. Equip participants with coping skills to handle the fear and anxiety they may be experiencing.
3. Provide a platform for a discussion on the COVID-19 vaccine that has been introduced.

SEMINAR SUMMARY

The seminar was opened by Patricia Aboyeji, founder and chair of Global Widows Empowerment Foundation. Patricia spoke on the possible negative mental health effects of the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic. The possible negative impact of the pandemic has been the motivator for her organisation, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, to hold a series of seminars in 2020 to equip people on how to safeguard their mental well-being in such a time. Patricia, who herself has been diagnosed and recovered from COVID-19, shared 10 quick tips to help individuals take care of their mental health, including the importance of staying socially connected through technology, staying informed, maintaining physical activity, and finding a safe way to express any negative emotions.

The first guest speaker, Dilys Sillah, talked about "Fear vs. Focus". She emphasised that our emotions are informed by what we focus on, and that no matter what the circumstance, we always have a choice to make on what we feed our minds. Dilys shared from her own experience of being locked down in Africa during what was supposed to be a short visit, and how she determined to use that time to seek out purpose and find meaning in an adverse situation. She shared that, in hindsight, what had seemed like a terrible circumstance had actually been an opportunity to connect with people she would not have otherwise met, and learn things she may otherwise not have learnt.

Fortune Gezana, an emotional wellness consultant, took the second session. Fortune spoke on the importance of hope during this holiday season, even in a pandemic. He explained that it can be expected that people will experience ambivalence, and a mixture of both positive and negative feelings during this time. He however encouraged people that it is possible to learn to live with uncertainty, and maintain hope. Fortune ended his talk by once again bringing it back to the importance of choosing what we focus on. We can all make a deliberate choice to make the best of the 2020 holiday season.

The third guest speaker was Dr. Kayode Adeboye, a consultant in Emergency Medicine. Dr. Adeboye spoke on the COVID-19 vaccine, explaining first what a vaccine is and how it works. He then spoke about the research that has been done around the COVID-19 vaccine that is being rolled out. Dr. Adeboye answered a number of questions raised by participants, and he emphasised the robustness of the vaccine development and approval process. He also encouraged people to rely on information from reputable sources such as government websites, WHO, and scientific research articles.

SEMINAR EVALUATION

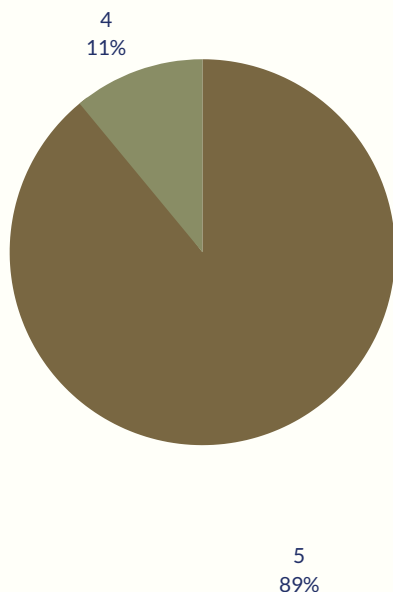
Participants were asked to fill in an online seminar feedback form, and the results from the 5 responses showed the following:



89%

OF THE PARTICIPANTS RATED THEIR OVERALL SATISFACTION AT '5'

When asked to rate how satisfied they were with the conference on a scale of 1-5, 89% of the participants who filled in the survey rated it at 5/5, while the remaining 11% rated it at 4/5



89%

OF THE PARTICIPANTS RATED THEIR LIKELIHOOD OF PARTICIPATING IN FUTURE SEMINARS AT 5/5

Asked to rate how likely they are to participate in similar events and seminars in future on a scale of 1-5, 89% the participants who gave feedback responded 5/5, while the remaining 11% pegged their likelihood at 4/5.

COMMENTS FROM THE FEEDBACK SURVEY

What did you like most about the seminar?

- The topics were great and presentations excellent, very informative.
- Very informative and educative.
- Everything
- I am more knowledgeable now
- All topics
- COVID-19 information well presented
- The explanation about the vaccine.
- It tells us to always be happy at every situation. COVID should not stop us in Christmas.

What was your key take-away from this seminar?

- Information is power. We can survive this pandemic.
- I need to always stay connected.
- My anxiety was reduced.
- The Doctor, honestly.
- I should not allow fear to hold me back.
- Very informative.
- The vaccine is safe.
- Discussion on the virus.
- Not good to live with fear.

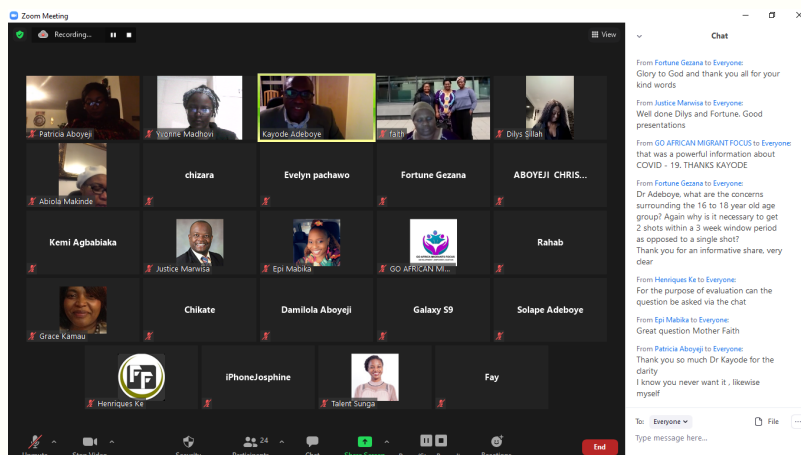
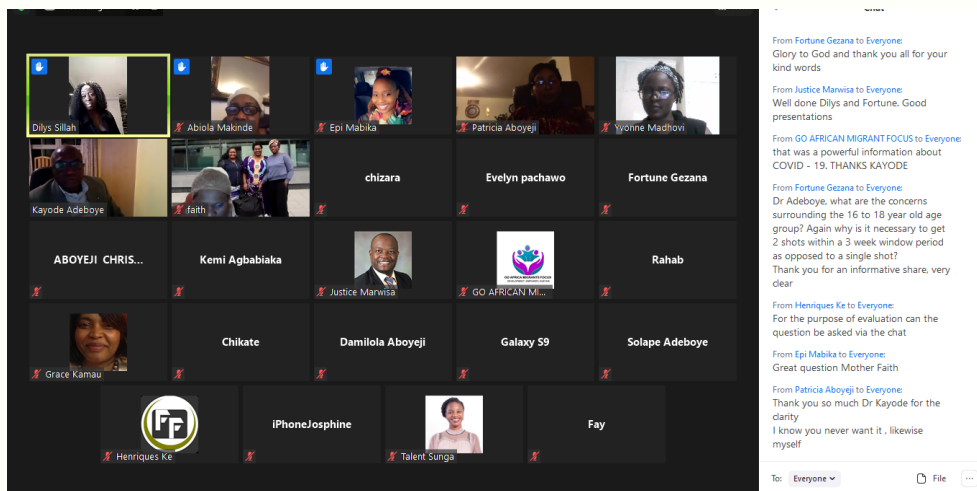
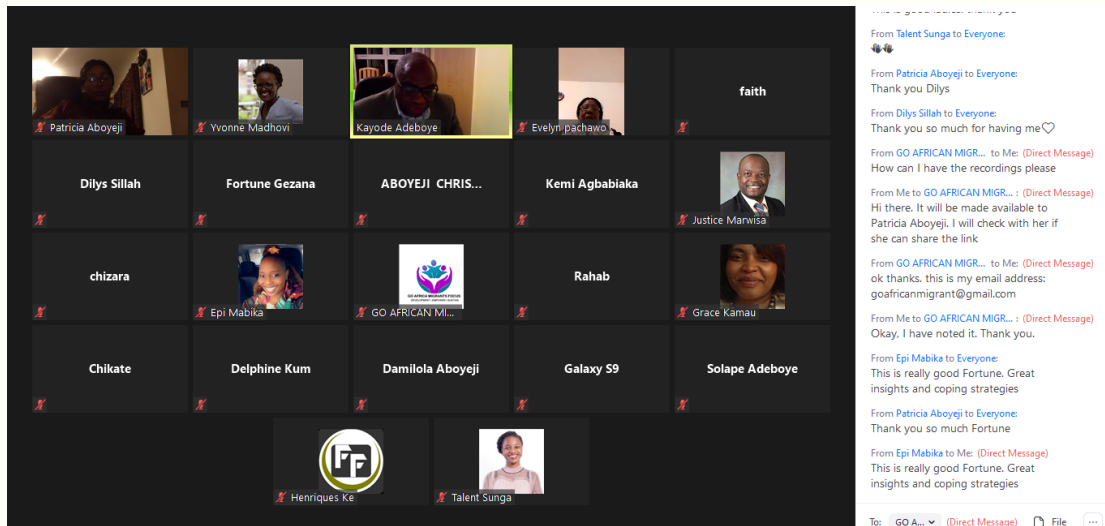
In future, what would you like us to improve on?

- Nothing, is all very well.
- None, well done.
- We are happy with the work you do.
- Everything went well.
- More time.
- Providing notes.
- Nothing really. The session went on well.
- Nothing.

Which topics would you like to see covered at future seminars?

- Something on entrepreneurship
- How to cope with loneliness
- Fear of the vaccine
- Any topic relevant to today's life.
- Entrepreneurship during the pandemic
- Anything that is helpful for widows
- More about the safety of the vaccine.

APPENDIX A: SEMINAR PICTURES



APPENDIX B: SEMINAR FLYER

MINIMISING ANXIETY & FEAR DURING COVID-19

ONLINE CONFERENCE
DECEMBER 11, 2020
6:00PM (LONDON TIME)



Host:
Patricia Aboyeji
"Tips on COVID-19"



Co-host:
Chizara Philips



Facilitator:
Yvonne Madhovi



Dilys Sillah
"Fear vs.
focus"



Fortune Gezana
"COVID-19 &
Christmas"



Dr Kayode Adeboye
"The COVID-19
vaccine"



Meeting ID: 221 015 3946
Password: 975993

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COMMUNITY FUND

Facilitated by:



For more information, visit our website: www.globalwidowsempowermentfoundation.org

APPENDIX C: SEMINAR WELCOME PACK