KEY CONCEPTS IN AFRICAN LANGUAGES

The following concepts recur across multiple chapters. Readers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these terms before engaging with individual chapters, as they form the conceptual vocabulary of this volume. Concepts are presented in the African language in which they appear, followed by a working definition as used in this book.

Amadlozi (isiNdebele) Ancestral spirits; understood as influencing the psychological and spiritual wellbeing of the living. Introduced in Chapter 9.

Bana ba sekolo (Sesotho) School-going children; the population at the centre of Chapter 12's analysis of school-based MHPSS delivery in Lesotho.

Baraka (Arabic) Spiritual blessing or divine grace; a dimension of healing in Arab-Islamic culture. Introduced in Chapter 7.

Basa rebatsiridzo yemagariro (Shona) Social work; the professional practice of addressing human wellbeing and social functioning. Introduced in the chapter on male youth suicide.

Bophelo bo botle ba kelello (Sesotho) Mental health; a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, and contributes to their community. The central concept of Chapter 10.

Botho (Sesotho) The Sotho equivalent of Ubuntu; humanness, ethical care, and communal responsibility. The foundational concept of Chapter 6.

Chimbadzo (Shona) An informal loan or credit arrangement accessed through community networks, often involving household assets as collateral. Introduced in the chapter on male youth suicide as a socio-economic driver of suicidal crisis.

Dare (Shona) An indigenous council or gathering space for communal dialogue and decision-making. Introduced in Chapter 1.

Dikgoro (Sesotho) Family councils; customary governance and therapeutic assemblies in Sotho communities. Introduced in Chapter 6.

Emadloti (Siswati) Ancestral spirits; spiritual forces understood to influence the wellbeing and fortunes of the living. Introduced in Chapter 8.

Gacaca (Kinyarwanda) A customary community justice and reconciliation process used in Rwanda after the genocide; an example of indigenous healing at the collective and societal level. Introduced in Chapter 2.

Go bolela (Sesotho) Speaking openly; the practice of communal storytelling as narrative therapy and communal healing. Introduced in Chapter 6.

Gota (Shona) The customary equivalent of n*hanga* for boys; a space for intergenerational dialogue and mentorship. Introduced in Chapter 5.

Harambee (Swahili) Let us pull together; a Kenyan philosophy of collective action and communal solidarity. Introduced in Chapter 7.

***Hukama* (*ukama*)** (Shona) Kinship or relatedness; the relational bonds within and between families that form the basis of communal support. Introduced in Chapter 11.

Humwe (Shona) Communal work or collective labour; a practice of shared effort that reduces isolation and supports mental health. Introduced in Chapter 11.

Hupenyu (Shona) Life; the foundational concept from which the HUPENYU acronym framework of Chapter 5 is derived.

Hurukuro (Shona) Dialogue or conversation; specifically, a culturally grounded process of communal dialogue around issues of life. The central concept of Chapter 5.

Hurukuro dzehupenyu (Shona) Dialogues of Life; the Hurukuro Dialogues Initiative model for community mental health support developed by the author of Chapter 5.

Ilima (isiNdebele) Communal labour; the practice of community members coming together to assist one another, serving

both practical and therapeutic functions. Introduced in Chapter 9.

Impepho (isiZulu/isiNdebele) A sacred herb used in ancestral communication and healing rituals. Introduced in Chapter 1.

Indaba (isiNdebele/isiZulu) A formal community gathering or dialogue process for collective deliberation, problem-solving, and healing. Appears across multiple chapters.

Indoda kayikhali (isiNdebele/isiZulu) A man does not cry; a cultural idiom encoding masculine emotional restraint that this volume examines as a barrier to mental health help-seeking. The central concept of Chapter 9.

Kufunganya (Shona) Stress or worry; a related idiom of distress to *kufungisisa*, associated with the mental health impacts of climate change and poverty. Introduced in Chapter 11.

Kufungisisa (Shona) Thinking too much; a culturally recognised idiom of distress in Zimbabwe describing the experience of excessive worry or rumination, often associated with depression. Introduced in Chapter 1.

Kupererwa (Shona) Being overwhelmed; a Shona expression describing the emotional and psychological experience of being unable to cope. Introduced in Chapter 11.

Kusanganiswa zvakare (Shona) Reintegration; the process of returning an individual to full community membership after incarceration. Introduced in Chapter 4.

Kusimbisa (Shona) Strengthening; the third stage of the Friendship Bench session, focused on consolidating the action plan and building resilience. Introduced in Chapter 7.

Kusimudzira (Shona) Uplifting; the second stage of the Friendship Bench session, focused on building the client's confidence and identifying strengths. Introduced in Chapter 7.

Kutfwasa (Siswati) The calling or initiation of a indigenous healer; a spiritual vocation recognised in Swazi customary practice. Introduced in Chapter 8.

Kuvhura pfungwa (Shona) Opening the mind; the first stage of the Friendship Bench counselling session, in which the client is encouraged to open and identify their problem. Introduced in Chapter 7.

Kuzviuraya (Shona) Suicide; the act of taking one's own life. The central subject of the chapter on male youth suicide in Bindura, Zimbabwe.

Kwesaba kuhluleka (Siswati) Fear of failure; the psychological and cultural dimensions of anticipated failure, particularly salient for aspiring entrepreneurs. The central concept of Chapter 8.

Letsema (Sesotho) Collective work gatherings; communal labour as a form of psychosocial support and social reintegration. Introduced in Chapter 6.

Lits'omo (Sesotho) Storytelling; a deeply rooted African oral practice through which teachers and community leaders teach coping skills and resilience. Introduced in Chapter 10.

Masekitlana (Sesotho) A therapeutic storytelling technique using symbolic narratives and metaphors to help individuals process trauma. Introduced in Chapter 6.

Mukwerera (Shona) Rain-calling ceremony; a communal ritual invoking ancestral spirits to bring rain, relevant to climate change and collective coping in Chapter 11.

Ngozi (Shona) Avenging or troubled spirit; an ancestral force associated with unresolved spiritual conflict that may manifest as psychological distress. Introduced in Chapters 9 and 10.

Nhanga (Shona) A customary initiation space for girls in Zimbabwe, used for dialogue on important life issues. Introduced in Chapter 5.

Nyadzi (Shona) Shame or disgrace; in the context of incarceration and mental health, the social stigma experienced by individuals who have been imprisoned and their families. Introduced in Chapter 4.

Sangoma (Siswati/isiZulu) Diviner-healers; practitioners who diagnose and treat physical, psychological, and spiritual conditions through ancestral connection and ritual. Introduced in Chapter 8.

Sankofa (Twi) 'Go back and fetch it'; the principle of drawing on the wisdom of the past to navigate the present and future. Introduced in Chapter 1.

Seriti (Sesotho/Setswana) A person's dignity, life force, and social standing, understood as connecting them to their ancestors and community. Introduced in Chapter 7.

Simba (Shona/iSwahili) Strength or power; used in Chapter 4 in the context of resilience and the inner resources required for reintegration. Introduced in Chapter 4.

Thakaneng (Sesotho) Peer support groups; communal spaces in which learners sit together to share experiences, discuss challenges, and develop problem-solving strategies. Introduced in Chapter 10.

Tinyanga (Siswati) Indigenous healers; specialists in herbal medicine and spiritual healing in Swazi society. Introduced in Chapter 8.

Tlhokomelo (Sesotho) Attentiveness and care; the ethic of emotional presence and practical support for those in distress. Introduced in Chapter 6.

Ts'ehetso ea maikutlo (Sesotho) Psychosocial support; services offered to children and families going through difficult times. Introduced in Chapter 10.

Ubuntu The overarching African philosophy that holds that individual personhood is constituted through reciprocal and just relationships at the family, community, societal, environmental and spiritual levels. It is the philosophical foundation of this volume. Appears in multiple chapters.

Ukudinga usizo (isiNdebele) Seeking help from others; reframed in Chapter 9 as a courageous, culturally endorsed, and communal act rather than a sign of weakness.

Ukuphosa amathambo (isiZulu/isiNdebele) Throwing the bones; a divination practice used by indigenous healers to

diagnose illness including mental disturbance. Introduced in Chapter 1.

Ukuzehlisa (isiNdebele) Humility; understood in this volume not as weakness but as a form of wisdom that enables men to acknowledge their struggles and seek help. Introduced in Chapter 9.

Umbilini (isiZulu) The gut or deep inner self; a concept referring to intuitive or somatic emotional experience. Introduced in Chapter 1.

Umntu ngumntu ngabantu (Nguni languages) A person is a person through other persons; the relational Ubuntu formulation of personhood. Introduced in Chapter 12.

Utano hwepfungwa (Shona) Mental health or wellbeing of the mind. Introduced in Chapter 4.

Utsigiro hwemhuri (Shona) Family support; the role of extended family as a support structure for individuals experiencing mental health challenges. Introduced in Chapter 4.

Vechidiki vechirume (Shona) Male youths; the population at the centre of the Bindura urban suicide chapter.