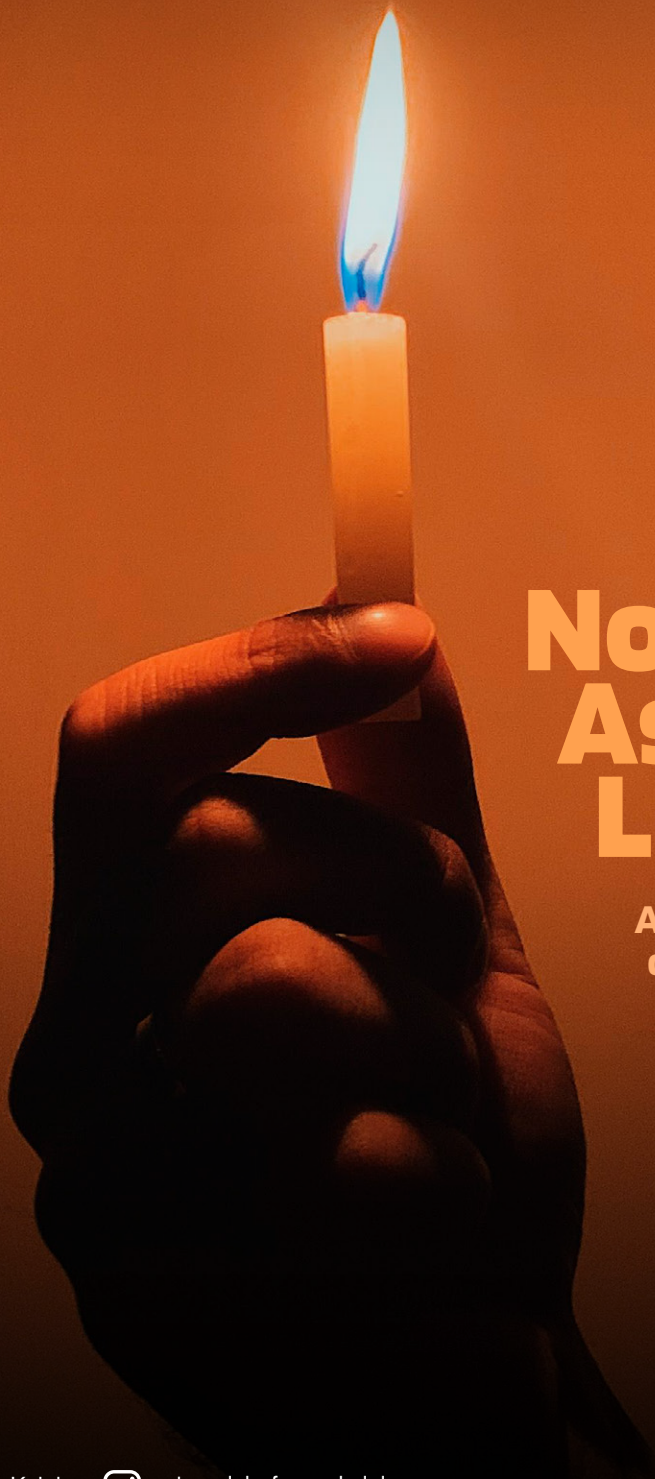


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Notice Ask Listen

A fellowship
conversation
on mental health



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Safer Roads, Stronger Leaders, Healthier Minds

HISKOOL NRGIZER brings three generations of service to Namugongo



**Rtr. Tumuramye Ronald
(TRON)**



**Rtn Muhanguzi Derrick
(Wonder Jr.)**

On Sunday, 27 September 2026, the grounds of Uganda Martyrs Secondary School - Namugongo became more than a place of learning. They became a space for reflection, connection, music, service and hope, as 106.5FM NRG Radio, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Upper Kololo, the Rotaract Club of Upper Kololo and the Interact Club of Uganda Martyrs Secondary School Namugongo, presented HISKOOL NRGIZER.

The day was full of youthful high school energy, with live performances from Kapeke, Josh Mc, Mc Benjhi Dreadlazer, Eyo Mackus, Thee Wildfire and Ri DeeJay. But the music carried a deeper purpose. Alongside it, we set out to serve on three fronts: safer roads, stronger young leaders and healthier minds.

Ride Safe, Save Lives

We began with the Ride Safe, Save Lives campaign and the boda boda riders, who keep Uganda moving but also bear a heavy share of the toll on our roads. According to the Road Safety Report 2025, highlighted by Rotary District 9213, road traffic accidents in Uganda claim approximately 15 lives every day.

Many of these crashes are linked to reckless riding and the lack of basic protective gear such as helmets and reflective clothing, and many happen at dusk or at night, when a rider who cannot be seen is at greatest risk.

We handed reflector jackets to the riders so they are more visible to other road users, and urged them to make safety a priority, for their own sake, for their passengers and for everyone who shares the road. A jacket cannot replace careful riding, but together they can save lives. Behind every statistic is a family, a friendship and a community forever changed. Road safety is not only a personal responsibility but a collective commitment.

Three Generations, One Purpose

One of the defining moments of the day was the installation of Jeremiah Henry Ssekanjako as President of the Interact Club of Uganda Martyrs Secondary School - Namugongo, as the outgoing administration handed over to the new leadership. The ceremony was officiated by President Elizabeth Mushabe of the Rotary Club of Upper Kololo and President Emmanuella Charles of the Rotaract Club of Upper Kololo.



Interact equips teenagers with leadership skills early. We urged the new team to serve with commitment, responsibility and empathy, especially towards peers who are vulnerable or less fortunate. The occasion brought three generations of service together under one roof: Rotary – Rotaract – Interact. Different age, experiences and one shared mission.

Becoming conscious users, not just users

Beyond the stage, HISKOOL NRGIZER made room for honest conversations about addiction and depression, and social media led by Rtn. Muhanguzi Derrick, popularly known as Wonder Jr. The students spoke openly about the pressures of school, friendships, identity and an increasingly complex world.

Social media can connect, teach and inform. It can also drain, distort and divide. Countries such as Finland, the UK and Australia are debating restrictions on social media for under-16s, and the students' first instinct was to push back. Their phones connect them to friends, family and the wider world, and that concern is valid. It is also true that Uganda has fewer safe alternatives, such as accessible recreation centres, parks and sports facilities, where young people can socialise and build friendships off-line. Until those spaces exist, the answer cannot simply be to log off.

The answer lies in awareness. Behind the screen are quieter dangers: addiction, negative influences, unrealistic beauty

standards, constant comparison and the pressure to look or live a certain way. Much of what we see on-line is a carefully selected highlight reel, not the full reality of anyone's life.

“

Our aim was never to tell young people to abandon social media, but to help them become more conscious, critical and responsible users, people who take charge of their screens rather than letting their screens take charge of them.

Service that grows forward

Whether it was a reflector jacket, an installation ceremony or an honest conversation, each act carried the same message: every person matters, and every generation has a part to play. Service does not grow old. It grows forward, and the journey continues.

Service Above Self, from one generation to the next •

Safer Roads, Stronger Leaders, Healthier Minds



“

The foundation upon which rotary is built is friendship; on no less firm foundation could it stand.”

Paul P. Harris

Picture



Notice, Ask, Listen

**A fellowship conversation
on mental health**



Last Friday, our fellowship turned to a subject many of us think about but rarely say out loud. Our own Rotarian, Grace Linda Nabatanzi, a mental health specialist at Beautiful Aspirations SMC Ltd, led a guided conversation on staying mentally and emotionally healthy. The questions were the kind we ask at our own kitchen tables, so we are sharing her answers here for those who could not join us.

What is mental health, really?

Grace began by reminding us that mental health is far more than the absence of disease. It is a state of well-being that lets us cope with the stresses of daily life, realise our abilities, learn, work well and contribute to our community. It shapes how we think, feel and act.

What puts us at risk?

Nobody is immune, and the causes are rarely simple. Grace walked us through the many things that can predispose us to mental ill health: our biology and genes, family history, difficult early experiences, serious illness, traumatic events such as accidents, job loss, financial hardship, and the constant comparison that comes with social media. Often it is a combination rather than one single cause, which is a good reason to be gentle with ourselves and with others.

Her key point was that different stages of life bring different pressures and need different support. That thread runs through the questions below.

1. How do we protect our minds as we age?

Grace showed how the pressures change over time. In young adulthood, it is career, relationships, finances and identity, and what helps is strong support systems, healthy ways of coping and realistic expectations. In later life, the pressures shift to retirement, loss, changes in health and isolation. What helps then is purpose, staying active, social connection and mental stimulation.

The research on cognitive decline points the same way. Regular exercise, good sleep, healthy blood pressure and blood sugar, learning new things and staying socially engaged all help, and so does caring for our hearing and eyesight. A weekly coffee with a friend is a health habit as much as a pleasure. Start today with a walk, a phone call to someone you have lost touch with, or a new skill that stretches you a little.

2. How do we balance career, family and ourselves?

For midlife, Grace's answer was work-life *integration* rather than perfect balance. Her ingredients were planning, boundaries, meaningful connection and discipline. Some weeks work will take more, other weeks family will. What matters is that over time, no important part of life, including you, is consistently starved.

Decide what is non-negotiable, whether that is dinner together, a morning walk or an evening that is yours, and protect it like a meeting with your boss. Let some things be "good enough," and say no more often, and kindly. Share the mental load at home rather than carrying it silently.

3. What should we watch for in our teenagers?

Teenagers carry the pressures of identity, peers, fitting in at school, social media and academics. Adolescence brings mood swings, so watch for change that lasts: withdrawal from friends and favourite activities, shifts in sleep or appetite, falling interest in school, unusual anger, unexplained aches and pains, risky behaviour, and any talk of hopelessness or of not wanting to be here. That last one must always be taken seriously.

Grace's advice to parents was to be present, to set boundaries and keep to them, to listen, to act early, and to offer career guidance. Boundaries and warmth belong together. Choose relaxed moments, like a car ride or a walk, and try "I've noticed you seem heavy lately, and I'm not going anywhere" instead of a barrage of questions. Feeling heard is often what opens the door to a counsellor or doctor.

4. How does mental health affect our marriages?

Grace explained that stress and burnout alter how we relate, communicate and respond, and our closest relationships feel it first. Anxiety can look like constant reassurance-seeking. Depression can look like withdrawal, which a partner often reads as rejection. Exhaustion makes us short-tempered with those we feel safest with.

Couples can watch for more criticism and less curiosity, conversations that are all logistics, avoiding each other, and feeling like flatmates rather than partners. Name it early and gently: "I've missed us lately" lands very differently from "You never make time for me." Protect ten minutes a day of undistracted conversation, and do not treat couples counselling as a last resort. It works best when things are strained but not yet broken.

Mental Health By Numbers

1 in 8

Ugandans experience psychological stress

1 in 13

Ugandans have depression

9.8%

of Ugandas GDP is spent on health care but only 1% of that reaches mental health care

Uganda
23/24

616,175

Outpatient attendance for mental health conditions

Worldwide
12 Billion

Working days lost every year to depression and anxiety

3 to 4x
Men die by suicide

three to four times more often than women

Behind the figures are people we know – colleagues, neighbours, family and perhaps ourselves.

Figures as presented by Rtn. Grace Linda Nabatanzi, Beautiful Aspirations SMC

5. How do we care for children and ageing parents without burning out?

The sandwich generation is raising a family, caring for ageing parents and building a career or business all at once. Grace's prescription had five parts: shared responsibility, spiritual grounding, working systems, recovery time and investment in yourself.

In practice, share the load with siblings, your spouse, relatives and paid help where possible, and be specific when asking: "Can you take Tuesdays?" works better than "I need help." Lean on your faith or whatever grounds you. Build routines that carry some of the weight, and protect real time to recover. Looking after yourself is not selfish. It is what makes it possible to keep caring.

6. When does workplace stress become burnout?

Grace described what she called the overload cycle: what happens when we meet everyone's needs while placing our own at the bottom of the list. It unfolds in four stages:

The honeymoon phase. High energy, high commitment, and you say yes to everything.

The onset of stress. The excitement fades and daily routines begin to feel draining.

Chronic stress. The pressure becomes constant and hard to escape, and we begin to lean on unhealthy ways of coping.

Burnout. You detach, productivity drops, you feel empty, exhaustion is constant, and cynicism creeps in.

The difference is this. Stress is a natural response to pressure, and it happens when demands exceed our ability and capacity. Burnout is the state of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion that comes from prolonged, chronic stress.

To protect yourself, guard the basics that get dropped first: sleep, food, movement and breaks. Set boundaries around your time, take your leave, and work out what is really driving the strain, whether workload, lack of control, unclear expectations or feeling undervalued. Have an honest conversation with your manager where you can. If you are already deep in it, seeing a doctor or counsellor is wisdom, not weakness.



To protect yourself, guard the basics that get dropped first: sleep, food, movement and breaks. Set boundaries around your time, take your leave, and work out what is really driving the strain – whether workload, lack of control, unclear expectations or feeling undervalued.”



7. Why do so many men struggle to speak up?

Grace's slides describe a pattern. Under prolonged pressure, men tend to become angry first, then withdraw, and then overwork or take risks. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to snap, ruminate, cry, or become numb or indecisive. Neither is weakness. They are different ways of showing overload, and the male pattern is easily mistaken for bad temper or dedication to work, so real distress goes unnoticed. With men dying by suicide three to four times more often than women, this matters enormously.

Many men grow up absorbing quiet rules: be strong, do not be a burden, handle it yourself. Families, friends and workplaces can help by starting conversations side by side, over a drive, a game or a walk, and by asking sincerely, “You’ve seemed off lately. How are you really?” Then stay with the answer without rushing to fix it. When one person goes first, others feel permitted to follow. Reaching out is strength, and a responsibility to the people who love us.

8. How do we know when it is time to seek help?

Every life has hard seasons, and sadness and worry are then normal. The questions that help us tell the difference are: How

long has this lasted, weeks rather than days? How intense is it? And how much is it getting in the way of sleep, work, relationships, appetite or enjoying anything at all?

It is time to reach out if you feel persistently low, anxious or numb, cannot lift out of it even when circumstances improve, are leaning on alcohol or other unhelpful ways of coping, feel hopeless or like a burden, or if people close to you are worried. If you ever have thoughts of harming yourself or ending your life, treat it as urgent and contact a doctor, a crisis service or someone you trust straight away. You do not have to wait until things are unbearable.

Grace's toolkit:

Five questions to ask when life gets heavy

Grace closed with a set of practical skills, framed as questions we can ask ourselves:

During challenges: what can I control? My reactions, my emotions and my routines.

In my circle: what can I influence? My relationships, my choices and my decisions.

In the event of hard situations: what must I accept or stop? My circumstances and other people's decisions.

Going forward: what can I change? My plans, my habits, my work and my social media activity.

Resources: who do I have, and what can I do? Diet, movement, rest, meditation, sleep, adapting, and, importantly, asking for help.

Her closing reminder is worth keeping: we cannot always choose the pressures that enter our lives, but we can become more intentional about recognising their impact, changing what we can, asking for help and developing healthier ways to carry what remains.

True to the Rotary spirit of service, the best thing we can do for one another is to notice, ask and listen. If something here touched close to home, take it as an invitation to have a conversation this week, with a friend, a family member or a professional ▪



UPPER KOLOLO SAVINGS
& INVESTMENTS CLUB [UK Club]

≡ Weekly Reminder! ≡

**YOU MAY NOT
NEED TO WAIT
FOR THE MONTH
TO END.**

Your consistency builds our future.



OPTION 1

AIRTEL MONEY

Dial

***185*7*3*6#**

and follow the prompts to make your deposit.



OPTION 2

CENTENARY BANK

- Visit an agent and ask them to deposit through **Sasula** on Centenary.
- Submit your **NV5**** number.
- Ensure you get a **Sasula** receipt.



ENSURE YOU GET A **SASULA** RECEIPT



Let's stay consistent. Every deposit counts.

Thank you for being part of our growth!