



# *The* Hope Magazine

November 2025 | **Second Edition**

## ***Word from the Coordinator***

**Dear Sisters, Collaborators, and Friends,**

As we release the Second edition of The Hope Magazine, I am filled with gratitude for the path we have walked together and with conviction for the journey ahead. This edition is more than a collection of stories—it is a testimony that counseling is no longer a hidden service but a trusted source of healing, resilience, and renewal across our communities.

The Counseling Hub and the Religious Sisters Counsellors Network Initiative (RSCNI) were founded with a clear purpose: to place mental health and professional counseling at the heart of well-being. Today, we can look back with pride at what has been achieved and forward with clarity about where we are going.

## Our strategic focus is threefold:

### Professional Excellence <sup>1</sup>

Equipping counselors with continuous training, supervision, and peer learning so that every client receives care rooted in professionalism and compassion.

### Expanded Reach <sup>2</sup>

Building on the momentum of satellites in Uganda, Malawi, and Zambia to bring services closer to religious sisters, youth, families, and other institutions while forging strong partnerships within the Church and society.

### Sustainability <sup>3</sup>

Laying firm foundations for long-term impact by mobilizing resources, strengthening accountability, and fostering collaboration across borders.

This edition showcases the fruit of these efforts: lives restored, families renewed, changing peoples' mindset on mental health and communities learning to place mental health at the center of their growth. These stories are not isolated - they are a sign of the movement we are building together.

I invite each of you—sisters, partners, and friends—to read this edition with both pride and purpose. Let it inspire us to deepen our commitment, to continue innovating, and to carry this mission forward with courage and unity.

Together, we are writing a new chapter in which no one struggles alone and every person knows that healing and hope are within reach.

With determination and hope,

**Sr. Editrudis Kajuna**

*Coordinator, RSCNI*



## Editorial Note

With this **second edition of *The Hope Magazine***, we continue to strengthen the voice of the Religious Sisters Counsellors Network Initiative (RSCNI) as a credible force for healing and resilience. This publication is more than a collection of success stories—it is an evidence-based record of how professional counseling is reshaping lives, families, and communities. The experiences from Uganda, Malawi, and Zambia presented in these pages show clear progress: Religious sisters have a safe space to explore their growth, young people regaining focus in school, families restored to harmony, caregivers equipped with self-care and communities opening up to conversations once clouded by stigma.



***This edition signals growth in scope and strategy.***



*These are not isolated achievements. They are the result of structured interventions, professional training, teamwork, and a shared conviction that mental health must be prioritized.*

Counseling services are now reaching across borders, gaining recognition from institutions and the Church, and creating partnerships that will secure long-term sustainability. It is evident that our work is no longer on the periphery—it is becoming a recognized and trusted service embedded in community life.

As Chief Editor, I commend the sisters, partners, and contributors who have made this issue possible. Your voices and experiences ensure that ***The Hope Magazine*** stands as a professional platform—documenting impact, setting direction, and inspiring confidence in our mission.

May this edition remind us that the path to healing is collective, and that through resilience, professionalism, and faith, we are building not only a network, but a movement of hope for generations to come.



**Sam Bernard Gumisiriza**

*Chief Editor, The Hope Magazine*

## ***Breaking out of the Cocoon: Sr. Jane's Journey of Growth***

***By Sr. Jane Ngamita, SHS***

For over a decade, ***Sr. Jane Ngamita*** worked tirelessly as a counselor, often in isolation. With limited resources, she shouldered the work of individual and group counseling, workshops, and seminars alone. Though her dedication was unwavering, the weight of working without peer support or shared learning often left her in a “small cocoon” of practice.



That cocoon has now been broken.

## A New Chapter at the Counseling Hub

Joining the Counseling Hub opened doors to teamwork, collaboration, and renewed energy. Surrounded by a supportive team, Sr. Jane embraced new methods, fresh perspectives, and the joy of shared mission.

She now serves in areas that touch the core of human struggle:



## Tools for Healing

Sr. Jane blends a wide range of approaches to meet people where they are:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (Aaron T. Beck)
- Psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud)
- Person-Centered Therapy (Carl Rogers)
- Humanistic models (Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers)

Her sessions are marked by empathy, integrity, and confidentiality. Clients leave not only with coping strategies but also with renewed hope and dignity.



*Giving life or putting a smile on the face of another person in need is deeply edifying. – Sr. Jane*

## **The Power of Teamwork**

What once felt like a lonely mission has become a shared calling. In the Hub, Sr. Jane finds her work “renewing and strengthening.” The energy of collaboration multiplies her impact, extending healing to families, children, schools, and religious communities.

## ***Walking Beside the Wounded: A Counselor’s Story***



At the Counseling Hub, every person who walks through the doors carries a story – of struggle, pain, and often silence. What makes a difference is not only professional skill, but the counselor’s ability to bring healing where despair once lived. Sr. Maurence Katushabe embodies this. Her empathy, patience, and resilience have translated into real benefits for those she serves.

***By Sr. Maurence Katushabe,  
Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross***

Children have learned to manage anxiety and return to school with confidence. Families once fractured by conflict have rediscovered peace and the ability to function together. Religious burdened by burnout and depression have found strength to continue their mission. These outcomes are not accidental—they are the fruits of counseling marked by compassion, confidentiality, and teamwork.

The Counseling Hub environment magnifies these benefits. Through collaboration with her colleagues, Sr. Maurence ensures that every client receives not just a listening ear, but a circle of support. This teamwork has empowered clients to cope with trauma, overcome unforgiveness, and step into renewed independence. Positive feedback continues to confirm that counseling is not only about addressing pain but about restoring dignity, and joy while improving balanced emotions.

*Counseling is necessary for every individual to live with a positive attitude and well-being – Sr. Maurence*

”

Her story is less about herself and more about what happens when the right attributes—empathy, integrity, and collaboration—are put to work: lives are rebuilt, hope is restored, and mental health becomes a shared priority for all.

## ***God at Work: Stories of Healing from Uganda***

In Uganda, the Religious Sisters Counsellors Network Initiative (RSCNI) has become a channel of hope for those carrying heavy burdens. Day after day, people arrive weighed down by trauma, stress, depression, and the invisible wounds

of life. What they find is not only professional skills, but also a compassionate presence that helps them rediscover dignity.

Through counseling, many have learned practical ways to manage anxiety and stress, replacing restlessness with calm. Individuals battling depression have been supported to overcome feelings of sadness, isolation, and hopelessness. Caregivers and frontline workers—often exhausted and emotionally drained—have received guidance on self-care, enabling them to continue their work without losing themselves in the process. Survivors of trauma have found safe spaces to release pain, name their wounds, and begin the slow but steady journey toward healing.

The benefits of this work ripple outward. Clients who once struggled to cope now live more independently and with renewed purpose. Families begin to function again. Communities see the rise of emotionally resilient members who are equipped with coping skills and a healthier outlook on life.

Behind these results are the counselors themselves—women who bring not only training but also qualities like emotional intelligence, adaptability, patience, and cultural sensitivity. Their presence makes people feel understood. Their teamwork with religious leaders, social workers, teachers, and healthcare professionals ensures that no client walks alone. And their dedication to mobilizing groups for workshops, seminars, and sensitizations has helped extend the reach of counseling far beyond individual sessions.

For the sisters in Uganda, the journey has not been easy. But they have embraced the challenges as part of their calling, drawing energy from the transformation they witness. As one counselor reflected: *“It gives me strength to see my clients become self-aware, heal, grow, and gain autonomy. In those moments, I truly see God at work.”*



The story of RSCNI in Uganda is one of steady, faithful service; meeting people where they are, restoring what was lost, and planting seeds of healing in lives, families, and communities.

## New Hope Rising in Malawi

**By Sr. Bernadette Kasadzula, Malawi**

When the Counseling Satellite in Malawi opened its doors on 1st March 2025, it was a modest beginning with big dreams. Today, only months later, it stands as a space for healing, growth, and transformation. The numbers tell a powerful story:



**1200+**  
**Clients**

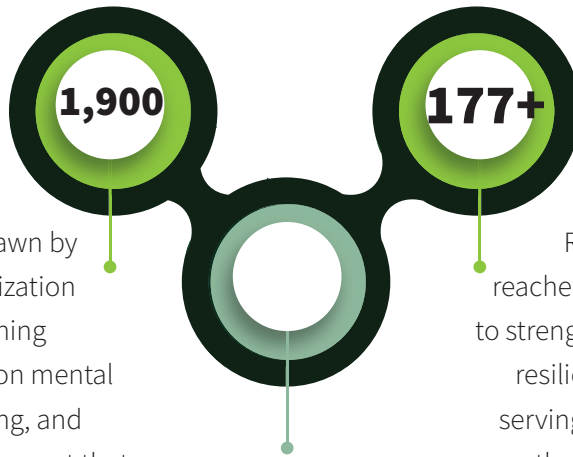
Over **1200 clients** have already received individual and group counseling, many of them young people referred by schools, families, and community leaders. But behind those numbers are lives profoundly changed.

***"I have seen a big change in my students' discipline and motivation after they began attending sessions with the sisters."*** – One teacher shared

Teachers now speak of transformed youth under their care. Parents tell of sons and daughters who once seemed lost to alcohol and drugs but are now focused on establishing their future. Families who came burdened by conflict leave with tools for forgiveness and reconciliation.

### Beyond Counseling Sessions

The satellite is more than a place for one-on-one help. It is becoming a platform for community change.



Participants drawn by monthly sensitization programs, opening conversations on mental health, parenting, and psychosocial support that were once absent.

Religious sisters reached, gaining skills to strengthen their own resilience while also serving as lifelines for their communities

The sessions are shifting attitudes: people are beginning to see counseling not as a sign of weakness but as a source of strength. The ripple effect is clear: when a sister returns to her convent or ministry renewed, the healing touches many more lives.

## Building Bridges

Partnerships have been another mark of progress. Through the leadership of AWRIM, the Malawi satellite collaborates with programs such as Early Childhood Development (ECD), Catholic Care for Children - Malawi (CCCM), and Youth Led initiatives. These projects now refer clients for counseling, ensuring those most in need are not left behind, a sign of growing trust and recognition of the vital role of professional counseling.

## A Movement of Healing

What makes these achievements remarkable is the speed with which attitudes are changing. Young people are becoming role models for their peers, parents are gaining confidence to guide their families, and communities are beginning to open up conversations about mental health in hopeful terms. The satellite is seen as a support that meets real needs.

The journey is still young, but its fruits are already visible. The Malawi Counseling Satellite is proving one simple truth: when people are given access to compassionate, professional care in a safe environment, they flourish. And when they flourish, entire communities rise with them.

### Spotlight



*"I have seen a big change in my students' discipline and motivation after they began attending sessions with the sisters."*

**- Teacher testimonial**

# ***Zambia Satellite Lights the Way for Youth and Families***

**O**n 1st March 2025, the Counseling Satellite in PHI, Zambia, opened its doors. What began as a milestone for the Religious Sisters Counsellors Network Initiative has quickly become a source of hope for young adults, families, and communities. In only a few months, the center is already showing the difference accessible counseling can make.

## **Serving Students and the Community**

**S**trategically located near hostels houses and universities, the Zambia satellite has become a haven for students grappling with academic pressure, relationship struggles, and emotional challenges. Young people now have a safe, professional space to talk, learn coping skills, and regain balance in their lives. Couples and families from the surrounding neighborhoods have also started seeking support voluntarily—a clear sign that attitudes toward counseling are changing.

## **Taking the Message Wider**

**B**eyond its walls, the satellite has extended its reach through media. Sister counselors have taken to the airwaves in Lusaka on Radio Maria, in Kasama on Radio Lutanda, and in Monze on Byta Radio. These programs have sparked conversations across Zambia, raising awareness that mental health is not something to hide but something to embrace. Community members who once kept silent now call in, ask questions, and seek help, encouraged by the message that wellness is for everyone.

## Early Signs of Impact

**T**he response has been encouraging. Steady attendance at the center, positive feedback from clients, and enthusiastic community engagement all point to a deep need being met. Students who once struggled alone are now supported, families are rebuilding communication, and individuals are learning strategies to manage stress and anxiety. The center is already proving that when mental health services are available and accessible, people will use them.

## Laying the Foundation for Growth

**W**hat excites the counselors most is not just the progress made but the foundation laid for long-term impact. The early success of the Zambia satellite shows that the demand for counseling is strong, the stigma slowly is breaking, and the future is full of possibility. The sisters leading this work are committed to deepening their outreach and expanding services so that even more young people, families, and communities can benefit.

The Zambia story is still in its first chapter, but its message is clear: when counseling is made part of everyday life, healing and growth follow—and communities are strengthened.

*“These radio programs have helped inform the public about the availability of counseling services and encourage people to practice mental wellness.” –*

**Counselor’s reflection**

## Spotlight

Growind number of **students and families** already served.

**Community members seeking help voluntarily** for the first time.

Counseling promoted **3 major radio stations** across the country

## Our Gallery



*Counsellors meeting at Bugonga*



*Zambian Team*

# How counseling is helping people live better lives

**By Fr. Vincent Bwamabare,**  
*Chaplain, Kasese Secondary School*

Counseling has become a lifeline for many people across Uganda. It is used in schools, hospitals, prisons, parishes, and religious institutions to help people understand themselves, manage challenges, and improve their overall well-being. I once believed my introductory training in psychology and counseling was enough to handle any situation. That changed when I faced personal challenges that I could not manage alone. I sought help from a brother priest and quickly realized the importance of having someone to journey with. That experience strengthened my appreciation for counseling and improved the way I support students and parishioners in my ministry.

Counseling continues to transform lives in meaningful ways:

## 1. Emotional Support and Self-Awareness

Counseling provides a safe, confidential space to express emotions without fear of judgment. It helps people understand themselves better, make clearer decisions, and build healthier relationships. This emotional support reduces isolation, confusion, and stress.

## 2. Coping Skills and Stress Management

Through counseling, individuals learn practical tools for managing stress, anxiety, and emotional challenges. It builds resilience and strengthens one's ability to handle pressure with confidence. Many people experience improved emotional balance and reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression.

### 3. Stronger Relationships and Improved Communication

Counseling encourages honest conversation and active listening. It helps resolve misunderstandings, strengthens trust, and improves emotional connection. Many families, couples, and friendships are restored when communication becomes healthy.

### 4. Personal Growth and Development

Counseling promotes self-reflection and helps individuals identify unhelpful behavior patterns. It supports people in discovering their strengths, setting goals, and improving confidence. By addressing obstacles, individuals grow emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

### 5. Mental Health Support

Counseling provides professional techniques—including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy—to manage conditions such as trauma, depression, anxiety, and stress. It works alongside medical care when needed and creates a safe space to process deep emotions. This approach reduces stigma and encourages holistic healing.

### 6. Building Resilience and Adaptability

Life is filled with unexpected challenges. Counseling helps individuals bounce back, adapt, and face transitions with strength. It fosters emotional stability and supports overall well-being.

### A Personal Encouragement

Having experienced the value of counseling firsthand—both as a recipient and as someone who guides others—I strongly recommend that people seek support when life becomes overwhelming. No one should carry life's burdens alone.

**Counseling is not a sign of weakness.  
It's a step toward healing, clarity, and a better life.**



# Counseling as a Pillar of Community Well-being

**By Dr. Andrew Twineamatsko,**  
*Seed Global Health, Program Manager*

In recent years, Uganda and the wider region have made notable strides in elevating the role of counseling and mental health care. Central to this progress are initiatives such as trauma counseling, family therapy, school-based sensitization programs, community workshops, and the establishment of Counseling Satellites. These services are not only addressing pressing psychological needs but are also reshaping how communities perceive and engage with mental health. Religious organizations, with their deep community roots, have been pivotal in advancing this agenda, creating acceptance, mobilizing participation, and reinforcing sustainability.

## Addressing Trauma and Emotional Distress

Mental health challenges such as trauma, depression, anxiety, and stress remain prevalent. Left unattended, they compromise individual well-being, disrupt families, and weaken communities. Structured counseling interventions are turning the tide. Survivors of conflict and violence are regaining stability, students once derailed by emotional struggles are finding resilience, and families fractured by conflict are rebuilding harmony. Counseling has become a critical tool for restoring dignity and enabling people to navigate life with confidence.

## The Role of Religious Organizations

Faith-based institutions remain at the center of these developments. Their credibility and influence have enabled counseling to move beyond clinics into parishes, convents, schools, and public forums.

Sisters and faith leaders breaking stigma by affirming that seeking counseling is not a weakness but a step toward healing. Through sermons, community gatherings, and partnerships, they are not only amplifying the reach of counseling but also embedding it into cultural and spiritual life.

## Achievements and Future Directions

- Families once torn apart are reconciling and rediscovering peace.
- Youth previously vulnerable to substance abuse are choosing healthier paths.
- Religious institutes are equipping members with skills for resilience and emotional care.
- Communities are opening up to counseling as a shared public good.

Looking forward, scaling Counseling Satellites, strengthening school-based interventions, enhancing professional supervision, and deepening collaboration with faith-based institutions will be critical. By sustaining these efforts, counseling can become fully integrated into community health systems, ensuring no one is left to struggle in silence.



**Dr. Andrew Twineamatsiko**

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“The lesson is clear: when counseling is prioritized, individuals heal, families thrive, and societies grow stronger. Faith-driven, community-rooted, and professionally guided counseling has the power to reshape not only mental health outcomes, but also the social fabric of our nations.

# 4 Years of Sobriety: How Counselling and Faith Restored My Life

## Finding hope after addiction

I celebrate 4 years of sobriety — a milestone that still feels miraculous. My journey from addiction to healing has been shaped by two powerful forces: **counselling and faith**. Together, they helped me rebuild my life, honest conversation and prayer at a time.

## From darkness to discovery

There was a time when nights ended in streets and parking yards, not bedrooms. Alcohol ruled my life. I had lost control and direction. The turning point came when I was taken by my relative to meet a sister counsellor and accepted help through counselling. My counsellor guided me to face painful truths — the fears, anger, and shame I had buried for years.

That process was not easy, but it was freeing. I learned that recovery begins the moment you stop hiding and start talking.

*Counselling helped me face the truth I kept running from — and that truth set me free.*

## The gift of inner peace

Four years later, I can live without alcohol. That peace didn't come by will-power alone. Counselling taught me coping skills, emotional awareness, and self-compassion. Faith added strength to those lessons.

I now sleep in my own bed — something that used to be rare — and I thank God daily for that simple gift.

Sobriety has brought creativity. I've learnt to write stories, compose songs on the power to rediscover self. Writing is edifying.

*“Each day of sobriety is a quiet victory worth celebrating.”*

## Growth through pain

In life things do not go in a straight line; painful moments come and go. Heartbreak can force one to go back but when it comes, I have learnt to reflect. Counselling helped me to grieve, forgive, and grow stronger. I learned that emotional pain can be a teacher if you don't run from it.

## Growing Stronger, wiser, and better

I know the journey is still on but so far, every trial has shaped a more grounded version of myself. Through counselling, I gained tools to manage emotions and live purposefully. Through faith, I found strength when I felt empty. Counselling didn't just help me stop drinking — it helped me rediscover who I truly am

*“Sobriety opened my heart to faith, and faith deepened my healing.”*

## Final reflection

My story is proof that **counselling works**. When guided by compassion and honesty, it restores hope, rebuilds families, and renews purpose. I thank God for this sister counsellor and all the counsellors — the silent heroes who help people like me find life again.

