



# Deddeh Z. Kolubah

Midwife, Kenya

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My name is Deddeh Z. Kolubah, a registrar midwife currently assigned to the Marshall Health Center as a maternal healthcare trainer. For over 15 years, I have been providing services as a maternal and child healthcare supervisor and trainer in areas such as safe childhood, family planning, and safe motherhood, among other health-related services. As such, through my work, I have acquired extensive knowledge and skills in areas such as the prevention and treatment of malaria in pregnancy, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS, newborn resuscitation (Helping Babies Breathe), and the appropriate use of the manual vacuum aspirator.

Over the years, I have not only observed but also experienced how women and children suffer most during crises such as war. For example, on 11 May 2003, I almost died as a result of childbirth complications. This real-life experience inspired me to build a career in midwifery as a means of providing professional services to childbearing mothers. With this ambition in mind, and before practising extensively, I pursued and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree (Institution of Population Studies), a Bachelor of Science degree in Midwifery, and a Diploma in Midwifery-Certified Midwife (CM) from the Tubman National Institute of Medical Arts (TNIMA).

One key role that makes a difference in my function as a maternal health supervisor is counselling childbearing mothers struggling with maternal mental health conditions such as postpartum depression (PPD), generalised anxiety disorder (GAD), and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), among other serious conditions. In such cases, mental health becomes a critical issue that must draw the attention of all trained midwives, thereby shaping their role to include methods of counselling aimed at saving lives.

Maternal mental health refers to the emotional and psychological well-being of mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. It is therefore critical to the survival and well-being of both mother and child. For example, in cases of postpartum depression, a mother may experience persistent sadness, fatigue, and difficulty bonding with her baby. Similarly, obsessive-compulsive disorder may cause a mother to have intrusive thoughts about harming her baby. In either situation, timely intervention can save lives. Hence, the urgency of addressing maternal mental health cannot be overstated and should be a key function of every trained midwife.

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