



*The secret tears of Rape  
Victims, The Story begins .....*

Pippi conversing with her friend on her way to  
Uncle Mike's house

Kikki: Hey girlfriend, where are you heading to?

Pippi: Am going to see Uncle D, to say hello to him

Kikki: Okay, your dad's brother that stays down the road, right

Pippi: Yes, would you like to go with me?

Kikki: No, I have an errand to run for my mum but I might still meet you there, if I get back  
early

Pippi: Okay, it's fine

Pippi now at Uncle D's house

Uncle D: Haa! Pippi, how are you? I never knew you were coming, how is your dad and mum?  
You look good

Pippi: Thank you sir, I just thought of checking on you since mummy said you were not feeling  
too well

Uncle D: Thank you am better now, that's so thoughtful of you

Pippi: Have your seat, relax and feel free

(Uncle D looking at Pippi and turns on the TV for her to watch and goes to the kitchen to get her a drink)

Uncle D: Take Pippi to relax your nerves from the scorching sun (Pippi smiling and stretching her hand to receive the glass of drink when Uncle D intentionally dropped the glass)

Pippi: Ooops! My dress (Pippi squeezing her face)

Uncle D: Sorry, I didn't know you had not held the glass properly before lifting my hands off it

Uncle D: You can go into my room and change your wet dress

Pippi: Okay, let me go quickly

(Uncle D enters the room and meets Pippi undressed trying to tie a wrapper to and wash her dress, and immediately pushed her to the bed)

Pippi: (Screaming and shouting) Uncle D, please stop it, I beg you

(Uncle D. over powers Pippi and forcefully had his way with her)

Pippi: (Wailing)

Uncle D: Common stop crying, you are a big girl, mind you no one must know what happened here today or else I will kill you

Pippi: (Crying profusely, manages to put on her dress, in a sad mood, leaves Uncle D's house)

(Pippi in her room lonely and sad, her mum comes to find out what had gone wrong but to no avail, Kikki her friend also comes around but Pippi will not speak out because of the fear of Uncle D but instead Pippi tells Kikki she is sick)

(Pippi lives with the pain and shame of Rape for the rest of her life, but this disgraceful act is

definitely not without a scar on Pippi's mental health)



Similarly, other rape victims suffer same or slightly different to Pippi's experience. Serious injuries, risk of pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and threats to mental health are outcomes, which generally affects the victim's total wellbeing.

*What is Rape and how does it affect victim's mental health?*

**Rape** is an act of sexual intercourse with an individual without his or her consent, through force or the threat of force. It has different short and long-term effects on a victim's **mental health**, this negative mental health symptoms can last for weeks, months, and even years after the event which may lead to the death of some victims. Survivors report flashbacks of their assault, feelings of shame, isolation, silence, shock, confusion, and guilt. People who were victims of rape or sexual assault are at an increased risk of

developing: Depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PSTD), eating disorder, suicidal thoughts etc.

**Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**, includes flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety, and uncontrollable thoughts.

**Depression** which includes persistent sadness, feelings of hopelessness, unexplained crying, weight loss or gain, loss of energy or interest in activities previously enjoyed.

**Dissociation/Stigmatization** this includes not being able to focus on work, stabbing of lectures in schools, low self-esteem, as well as not feeling present or involved in everyday activity. The reduced physical activity and social isolation leads to poor physical and mental health.

**Suicidal thoughts** or attempts and eventually **death** (some of the victims lose their lives to the rapist or the victims killing themselves) is what rape victims resort to do.

*.... Is COVID a culprit for this increase incidence of Rape in our society?????*

From the time when the first index case of **COVID-19** was reported in Nigeria, Nigeria has had cause to deal with several issues ranging from insecurity, poverty and **rape**. The rape pandemic has been on the rise in the country. For example, a newspaper reported that in one month, there were ten high profile cases of rape across the country. The horrific and devastating part of this increasing menace is the killing of the victims by the rapist. In Edo State recently, a 22-year old university student Vera Uwaila Omozuwa, simply known as Uwa was beaten to death in a church after she had been allegedly raped. The assaulters smashed her head with a fire extinguisher; the lady died few days after. Another terrible incident occurred in Ibadan on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June, a 19-year old student Barakat Bello was raped inside her father's house and murdered.

The recent killings of rape victims have raised concern in the heart of many; this could be a way of silencing them forever.

COVID-19 may be responsible for the eruption of reported cases of rape experienced in this short period due to the lock down and isolation imposed on citizens, which has left many families in pain. Premium times in one of their reports says that rape is an **epidemic** that has now reached **pandemic** proportions due to inaction, stigmatization, limitations of existing law and the failure of the state to respond to what is clearly a major humanitarian crisis.

Many reported cases of rape to the security agencies are mishandled leaving the victims helpless. Situations like this have silenced rape victims from speaking out.

Join us at @ Brain Health Initiative Nigeria to support rape Victims in our community