

HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
WATCH

# Life for people with mental health conditions in Nigeria



Nigeria: People with Mental Health Conditions  
Chained, Abused



# About us

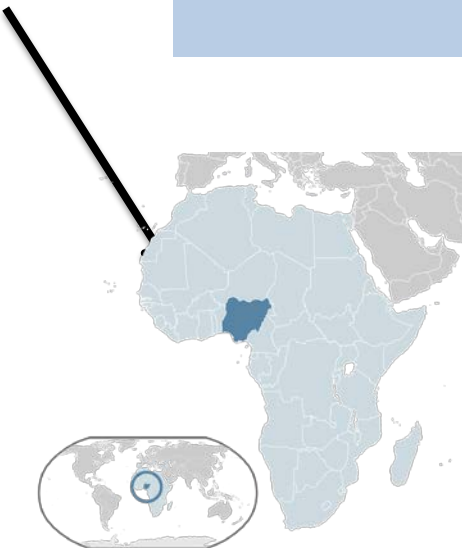
HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
WATCH

We are called Human Rights Watch.



We work to make sure that everyone in the world is treated fairly and gets their rights.

# About this report



This report is about people with mental health conditions in Nigeria.

Nigeria is in Africa.



Mental health conditions are about how someone thinks, feels and behaves.

For example, someone may have a mental health condition if they are upset, worried or scared a lot.



In 2018 and 2019 we looked at what was happening to people with mental health conditions in Nigeria.

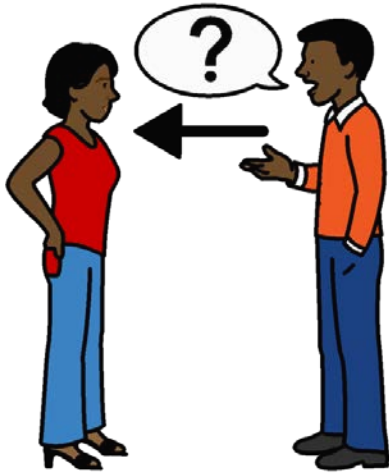


We visited hospitals and other places where people with mental health conditions are forced to stay.

Some places are run by the government of Nigeria.

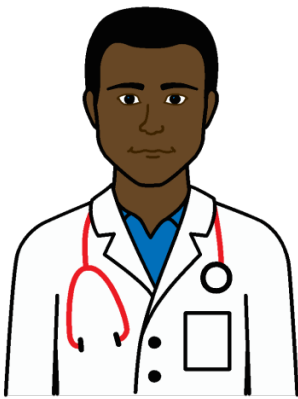
Some places are run by religious groups or other people in the community.

We will call these places mental health places.



We spoke to:

- Adults and children with mental health conditions and their families
- People who work in mental health places
- People who support people with disabilities and their rights
- Doctors who give care to people with mental health conditions
- People from the government



We found that people with mental health conditions in Nigeria are often treated very badly.



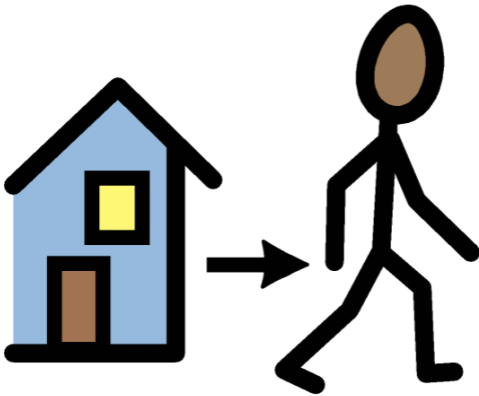
This report tells you:

- What we found out
- What we want to happen next

# What is happening to people with mental health conditions in Nigeria?

## People may be forced to stay in mental health places

Many adults and children with mental health conditions have to live in mental health places.



They have no choice.

Their families or the police may send them there.

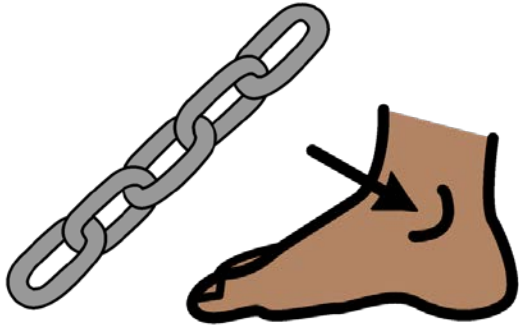
They cannot leave when they want to.



Some people in the mental health places may not have a mental health condition.

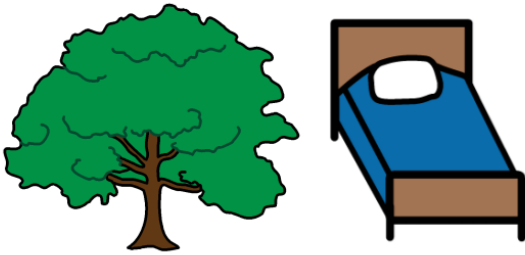
For example, some adults and children are sent there because people think they have taken drugs or done bad things.

## Many people are tied up in chains in the mental health places



The chains are made of metal.

A person cannot move around because of the chains. They have to stay in one place for long time.



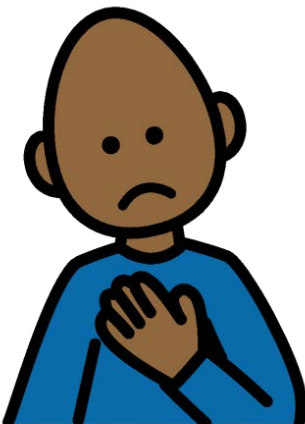
People often have chains around their ankles.

They may be tied to each other.

Or they may be tied to beds or trees.

2015						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

People may stay like that for a very long time.

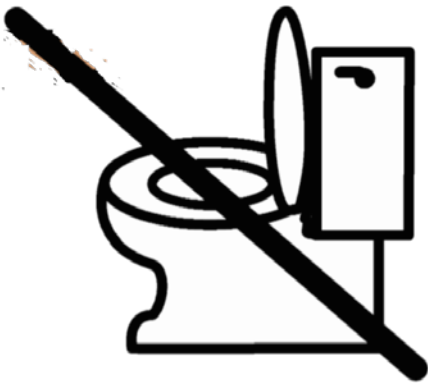


Putting chains on people can hurt their bodies and make them feel much worse.

## The mental health places are often dirty and unsafe



There may be too many people in the same place.



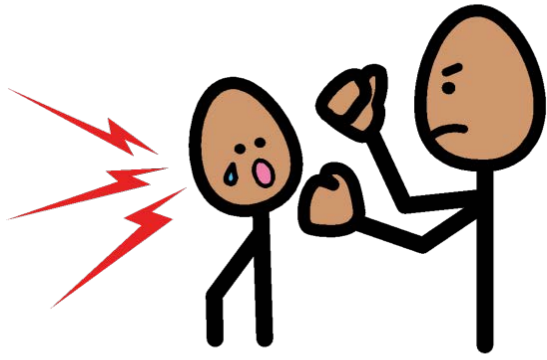
People may have to eat, sleep and go to the toilet in a very small space.

They may have to go to the toilet in front of other people.



People in some religious places may be left without food for a while.

Staff say this is part of the person's care.



## **Violence against people with mental health conditions**

Some staff may hit or hurt adults and children with mental health conditions.



For example, staff may hit people with a rope on their chest, back and arms.

## **Forcing people to take medicine or treatment**



Staff may force people with mental health conditions to take medicine or have treatment.

This includes treatment using electricity on the brain.

Staff may not ask people first if they want any of this.



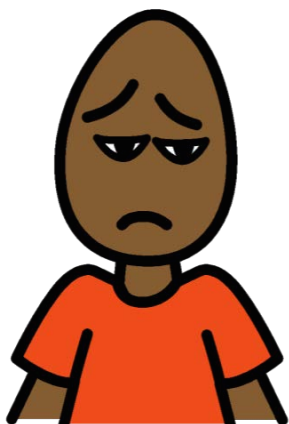
In some places staff may force people to eat or drink herbs. Staff say this is part of the person's care.

Staff may hold people's bodies down to make them do this.



## Other problems

### Problems with care and support in Nigeria



It is hard for most people with mental health conditions in Nigeria to get the right support near where they live.



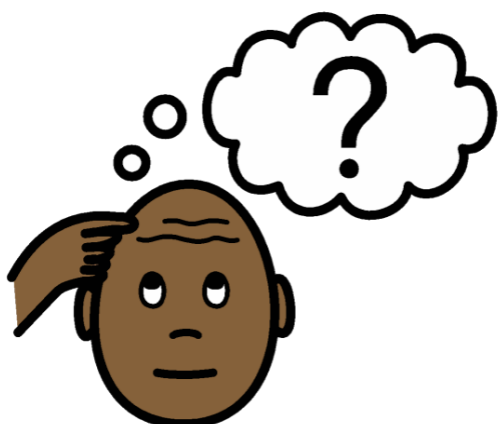
For example:

- There are not enough staff with the right training to help people with mental health conditions



- It can cost a lot of money to get the right care

This means many people have to go to religious places and places run by other people in the community instead.



### People may think bad things about mental health

Many people in Nigeria may not understand about mental health conditions or the support that people need.

# What the government in Nigeria is doing

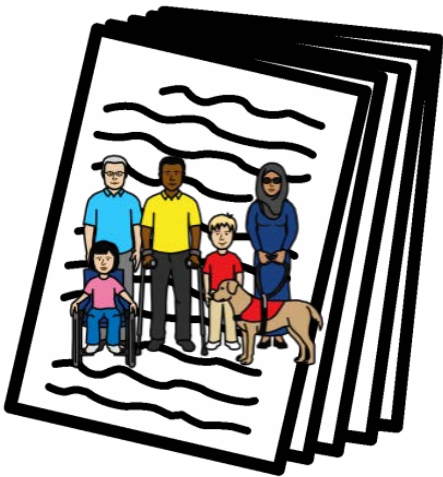


The government said it wants to stop people being hurt and treated badly in mental health places.

Some religious places have now been shut down.

But people are still being hurt and treated badly in other places.

This includes some places run by the government.

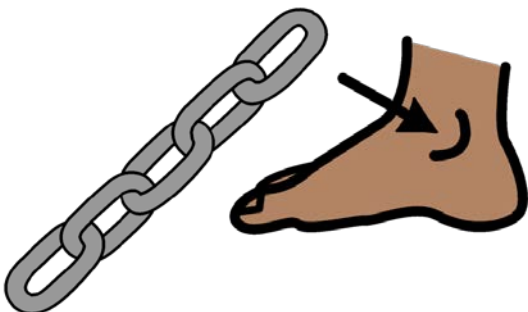


There is an important document about the rights of people with disabilities in the world.

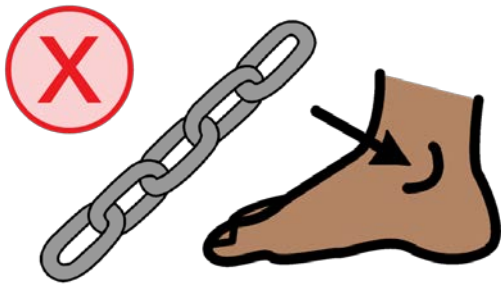
The government in Nigeria has promised to do what this document says.

But people with mental health conditions are still being tied up in chains.

This is wrong and needs to stop.



# What we want to happen next

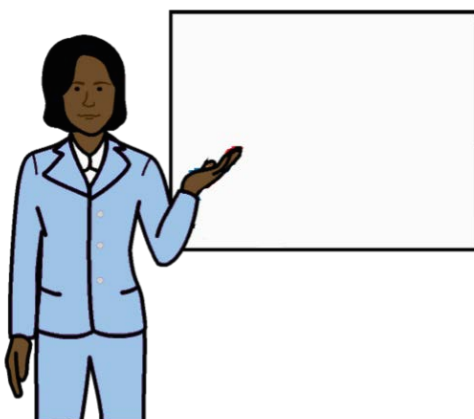


The following things are for the government in Nigeria to do:

Stop using chains to tie people up in mental health places.



Look at what is happening to people in all mental health places.

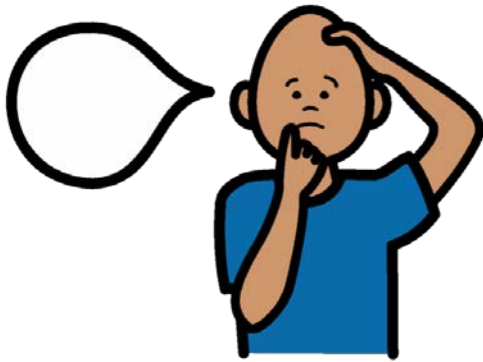


Give staff training about mental health and how to support people with mental health conditions.

The training should be for:

- Government health workers
- Staff in all mental health places

This includes places run by the government and religious and community groups



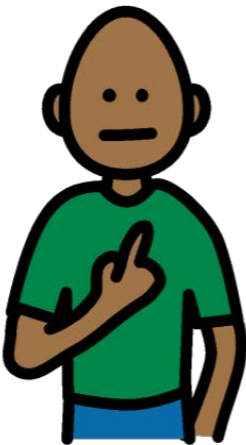
The government in Nigeria should also:

Make it easy for people with mental health conditions to complain in private if they have been treated badly.



Make sure people can get good mental health care and support near where they live.

The support should be easy to get and use.



People should choose if they want the support or not.



The support should not cost too much money.