**Embarking into the “Unknown”**

“No place like home”, Chimwemwe’s Mum said, as she took his bag into the boot of the car. Chimwenme woke up very early on the eve of the new year to catch a flight at 2:00 pm. The anxiety of starting a new phase of his career was so overwhelming, to the extent that he couldn't sleep the night before. For the past four months, he had been attending classes virtually, from home, for his one-year professional program hosted by a university in the UK/Canada. Due to the pandemic, he couldn’t begin the program in person, and the borders just opened the month before. The drive to the airport with his family was a marathon, but it also felt like one of the best days of his life. This was his second time leaving the country, but this time he was to stay longer outside his home.

Everything still felt normal as he travelled from the airport to his new apartment, but the only difference he noticed was that time-difference. After some time, he received his grades for the first academic term which he did virtually because of the pandemic and found out he failed a course. However, the Director of his program who was also his mentor wrote to the course instructor and they decided to allow him to pass the course.

The reality of being in the UK/Canada started becoming more tangible as exams for the new term began to approach. He knew he had to improve his reading habits so he wouldn't fail any more courses, however he became distracted for a few weeks when he heard the news that his brother at home was seriously hurt because of an accident. This news broke him down!

Chimwenme turned to drinking excessively after he managed to write his exams, his sorrows were further exacerbated when he heard his mum had diabetes, and in addition to alcohol, he started using substances. He reached out to the Director of his program, and he had just two options, first to defer the rest of his program (4 months till program finished) and go back home. However, he would have to self-fund since the grant for his program wouldn’t be available any longer. The second option was for him to continue the program, finish up and then return home.

**Possible case issues:**

1. The mental health of students in a new environment
2. Sense of belonging
3. Transitioning into a new environment

**Possible guiding questions:**

1. How would you help Chimwenme navigate this dilemma?
2. What plan of action would you suggest for his studies - deferral or continuation?
3. How would you help him navigate his substance use?