



TEAM SOUTH AFRICA

LET'S TALK | BREAKING THE CYCLE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE...
EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTIONS

BONNIE'S GLOBAL CAFÉ | WORLD FORUM FOUNDATION

Wednesday | 22 September 2021

PRESENTERS

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BACKGROUND

- > **2020** | President Ramaphosa spoke of GBV as a second pandemic
- > **Premise** | Start early > science proves the early years are important
- > **Recognise** | Apartheid and patriarchal society, inequality and culture implications
- > **Recognise** | Start with gender equality and gender stereotyping in ECD
- > **Why?** | Impact on later development
- > **Critical partners** | Include parents and community

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BACKGROUND continued

- > **Authentic and transformative practice** | Values clarification is key (practitioners come from different backgrounds and experiences affected by race, equality, equity, gender, poverty, and subject experiences)
- > **Teaching practices are influenced** | Call for integrated practice
- > **Important note** | Initiative is born

WHATS HAPPENING CURRENTLY

- > Violence | All encompassing
- > COVID | GBV escalation
- > Estimated figures range from 33% to 67% for women
- > Femicide 5 times higher in South Africa than globally
- > 1 in 9 women and children report GBV
- > Gauteng study | 51 % experienced GBV
- > Unknown factor | Men and boys do not report GBV

Between April and August 2021, GBV in South Africa increased by 72%!

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THE VICTIMS & THE OFFENDERS

- > **Risk** | Men's overall risk of emotional abuse may be increasing while women's risk of domestic violence may be decreasing.
- > **Younger men** | Higher rates of emotional and financial abuse as gender roles and the distribution of resources are changing.
- > **Prevention campaigns** | Needed for for both males and females.
- > **Counsellors and prevention programmes** | Must recognise the seriousness of emotional abuse and that males have substantial rates of victimisation.
- > **Gender and GBV** | Both men and women commit acts of GBV, but the nature of the acts differ across the genders.

IMPACT OF VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

- > The copying / modelling of aggressive behaviours
- > Boys tend to externalise via overt behaviour
- > Girls tend to internalise the trauma via depression and anxiety
- > Heightened arousal (anxiety) leads to elevated / raised hormones which impacts on brain development and functioning
- > Acting out
- > Impact on brain development and later development
- > The cycle continues

ECD, GENDER & GBV

- > Gender “influences every aspect of children’s development, from their values, beliefs, emotions, language, cognition, styles of communication and physical activities, use of space and social relationships...”
MacNaughton (1996:54)
- > Strong beliefs in gender stereotypes are correlated with being both a victim and a perpetrator of sexual violence. (Tessa Horwath Research, 2019)
- > The years from about age two to age six are crucial years in the development of gender roles influenced by family, community, school, peers and media.
- > Teach the empathy and prosocial skills likely to mitigate violence and discrimination.

ECD, GENDER & GBV continued

- > South Africa has gender parity in ECD and education access.
- > ECD programmes and schools continue to be a context for gender inequality; and consciously or unconsciously reinforce gender stereotypes leading to different life and education experiences.
- > Most ECD programming is gender-blind rather than consciously gender sensitive and responsive, and there is a need to address this.
- > Research is clear that practitioner attitudes about gender shape their teaching practice and that these need to be addressed and explored further (training and other ways).
- > Governing bodies.
- > It is imperative to intervene early.

AN EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE TRAINING

- > Ntataise, a national ECD NGO, identified GBV as a critical issue
- > Recognised ECD as vehicle for intervention
- Pilot project with 13 partner organisations from their network
- 50 Trainers
- To reach 350 practitioners and 5000 children over a year
- > Funding from a national funder
- > Online training with two facilitators over three days with different cohorts
- > Various training methodologies (readings and reflections, parent café, group work, creation of materials with relaxation exercises)

AN EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE TRAINING continued

- > **Curriculum:** Values clarification and sharing | GBV in ECD (gender equality) | ECD Programme | Engaging parents and communities | Being a Changemaker
- > **Expectation** | Cascade to staff, practitioners, parents, stakeholders
- > **Evaluation** | Lessons learned / shared - contribute

“We CANNOT teach gender equality in isolation from the other diversity issues such as race and inclusivity”.

OUR TRAINING MODEL & METHODOLOGY



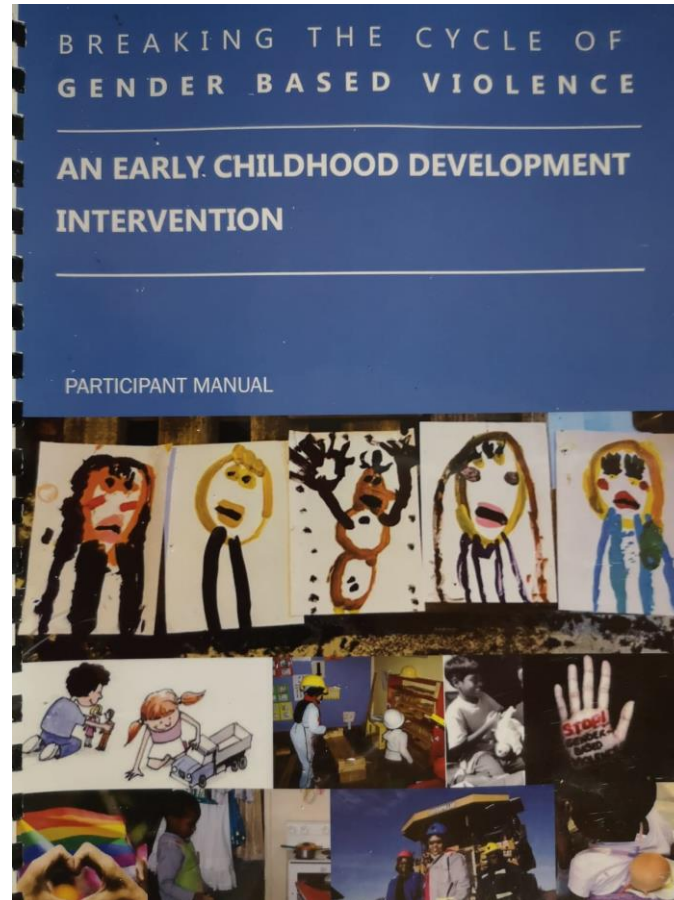
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OBJECTIVES: Gender Equality as a strategy for preventing GBV

- Create a platform for ECE trainers and practitioners to reflect on their own gender values, norms and beliefs, including gender equality and violence against women and children .
- Equip ECE practitioners with the knowledge, skills and confidence to integrate values-based life skills in their programmes to promote gender equality in ECD Sites.
- Raise awareness around GBV issues and to reinforce non-violent child management strategies with parents/caregivers/stakeholders.

TRAINING MATERIALS

PP



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TRAINING IN ACTION

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TRAINING INPUTS

- > **New words: LGBTIQ** | Twins, children with albinism and other disabilities
- > Babies born different from others used to be silenced by midwives or family members in the olden days
- > Other family members and the community had no experiences of living with them
- > Most babies are now born in hospitals, with more children and people who are 'different' from others being more visible, and society does not know how to 'treat' them
- > **Stigmatisation** | Children and other people with disabilities suffer the consequences of being 'different'

TRAINING INPUTS continued

- > **GBV ECD programme** | Empowers ECD workers working with parents / family members and children for a better understanding of diversity
- > The programme creates a pathway to embrace the equality processes and strives for unbiased approaches in the early years

The early years provide a window of opportunity for impactful change in the children, and by extension, the family, care-givers and the community at large.

EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS

- > Boys are usually raised and portrayed to be strong individuals
- > “Boys do not express their true feelings” -- associated with being ‘soft’
- > “Boys don't cry or show friendliness” -- associated with ‘weakness’
- > Males are perceived as strong which result in them bottling up their feelings and not knowing how to cope with life challenges | A BIG result to GBV and suicides

It is important to know that all feelings are okay, and it is okay to feel a particular way. What is important is that children, especially boy children, learn how to regulate their emotions.

SKIN COLOUR AND OTHER EXTERNAL APPEARANCES

- > Light skin colour portrays positivity and beauty vs 'yellow bones' vs dark chocolate skin
- > Usage of artificial materials and objects | skin lightening lotions, wigs, cosmetic surgery
- > The inheritance of natural and original beauty loses its value, as 'fakeness' and other illusions of beauty take over

ECD programmes play a vital role in re-affirmation and self-acceptance accompanied by positive self-esteem for both children and adults (teachers and parents) –STARTS YOUNG !

OUR FINAL THOUGHTS

- > It begins at home....initially
- > It includes eliminating all forms of violence in the home, not just physical abuse / punishment of children
- > The learning must be by example and through the presentation of opportunities for chores free of gender-based bias
- > Positive self-esteem and affirmation
- > Explore child management techniques
- > Researchers and practitioners are recommending "Start at the beginning..."
- > Include parents (families/fathers), communities and other stakeholders

ECD PRACTITIONERS

- > Early childhood development and education is critical for prevention
- > Gender pedagogy
- ECD activities | Set up and facilitate interactions that expose boys AND girls to opportunities not determined by gender
 - Some Ideas discussed (outdoor, toilet facilities, wall posters)
- Challenge and discuss stereotypes
- > Model gender responsiveness
- > Identify violence and / or abuse experienced by children / parents – provide support and refer
- Open-up discussion of GBV and gendered expectations with colleagues and parents / home

Countries, Contexts, Cultures, Communities...



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IT ALL STARTS WITH ECD...



DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS Early Education
Joyful Learning from the Start

Anti-bias Practices in Early Education: A Reflective PLC

Part II

June 2021

Three inset portraits of Denver Public Schools Early Education staff members are shown on the right side of the slide.

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FACILITATED DISCUSSION

- > What was most significant for you from the video?
- > What values / cultural practices / traditions / norms impacts gender equality / GBV in your country?
- > What more can we do to prevent GBV in the context of ECD?

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Unless we take ALL gender-based violence seriously, we will not succeed at prevention!

THANK YOU...from Patsy, Linda, Fanezile Masilela , Joan, Amanda and other members of the team.