

Strengthening responses to child sexual abuse: Evaluation of a residential therapeutic programme in South Africa

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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

EVALUATION OF A RESIDENTIAL THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMME IN SA

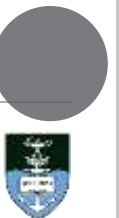
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- Shanaaz Mathews
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Implementing partners:

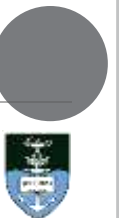
- NACCW, Childline SA & DSD

Project duration: January 2015 - June 2016



AIM OF PRESENTATION

- To briefly review what is known about the provision of therapeutic services for sexually abused children
- **Main focus:** An outcomes evaluation of a residential therapeutic programme for sexually abused children
- To provide an overview of the methodology employed for this evaluation
- To reflect on some of the baseline fieldwork outcomes



THE PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN SA

Sexual violence against children in SA: widespread epidemic

- 38% girls & 17% boys experience sexual violence before 18 yrs (*Jewkes et al. 2009*)
- 1 child is raped and murdered every 3rd day in SA (*Mathews et al 2013*)

No reliable national prevalence or incidence estimates

- 44% (22 781) of reported sexual offences to the police are children under the age of 18 years (*SAPS 2013/2014*)
- **BUT**, only 1 in 9 cases are reported (*Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002*)



PROVISION OF THERAPEUTIC SERVICES FOR SEXUALLY ABUSED CHILDREN

- **The Children's Act of 2005:** strengthen prevention and early intervention services for children and their families & to provide therapeutic services to reduce the long-term impact of abuse.

- **Little is known about:**
 1. The provision of therapeutic care services for sexually abused and vulnerable children in South Africa
 2. Current models of care or their efficacy in facilitating healing and psychological recovery of traumatised children



EVALUATION OF THE RESIDENTIAL THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMME

- Evaluation of a short-term intensive residential therapeutic programme developed by Childline and the Isibindi *Creating Circles of Care* model.
- This is one of the first evaluations to explore the **outcomes** of the provision of therapeutic services for sexually abused children
- **Rigorous evaluation of impact and efficacy is needed**



OBJECTIVES FOR THE EVALUATION

CHILDREN:

- To measure change in a) PTSD symptomology, b) behavioural and social competence, and c) resilience in children from baseline to mid-point and end-point to assess psychological and behavioural adjustment in the sample of children over time.

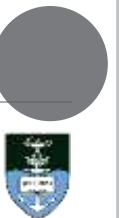
CAREGIVERS:

- Caregivers are assessed in terms of changes in parenting practices and parent-child interactions.



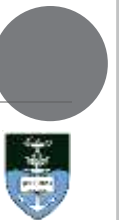
ISIBINDI 'CREATING CIRCLES OF CARE' MODEL

- Developed by the NACCW in 2001
- Aim: to create safe and caring communities through the delivery of community based child and youth care services
- Isibindi + Childline = Residential Therapeutic Programme (RTP) for sexually abused children



OBJECTIVES OF ISIBINDI CHILD PROTECTION RTP

- 1) Provide a short-term intensive residential therapeutic intervention
- 2) Provide on-going supportive services and monitor the child protection plans for each child when they return home
- 3) Implement a multi-disciplinary team – the district social worker, CYCW and Childline therapists



PROGRAMME THERAPEUTIC OBJECTIVES FOR CHILDREN & CAREGIVERS

- Promote healing by helping the child re-integrate back into his/her family and community life.
- Help child understand, manage and practice new and healthy ways of coping
- To reduce/eliminate symptomatic behaviours.
- Helping caregivers to understand the impact of the abuse on their children
- Teach caregivers to monitor/supervise children in terms of their safety and protection



RESEARCH METHODS: SETTING

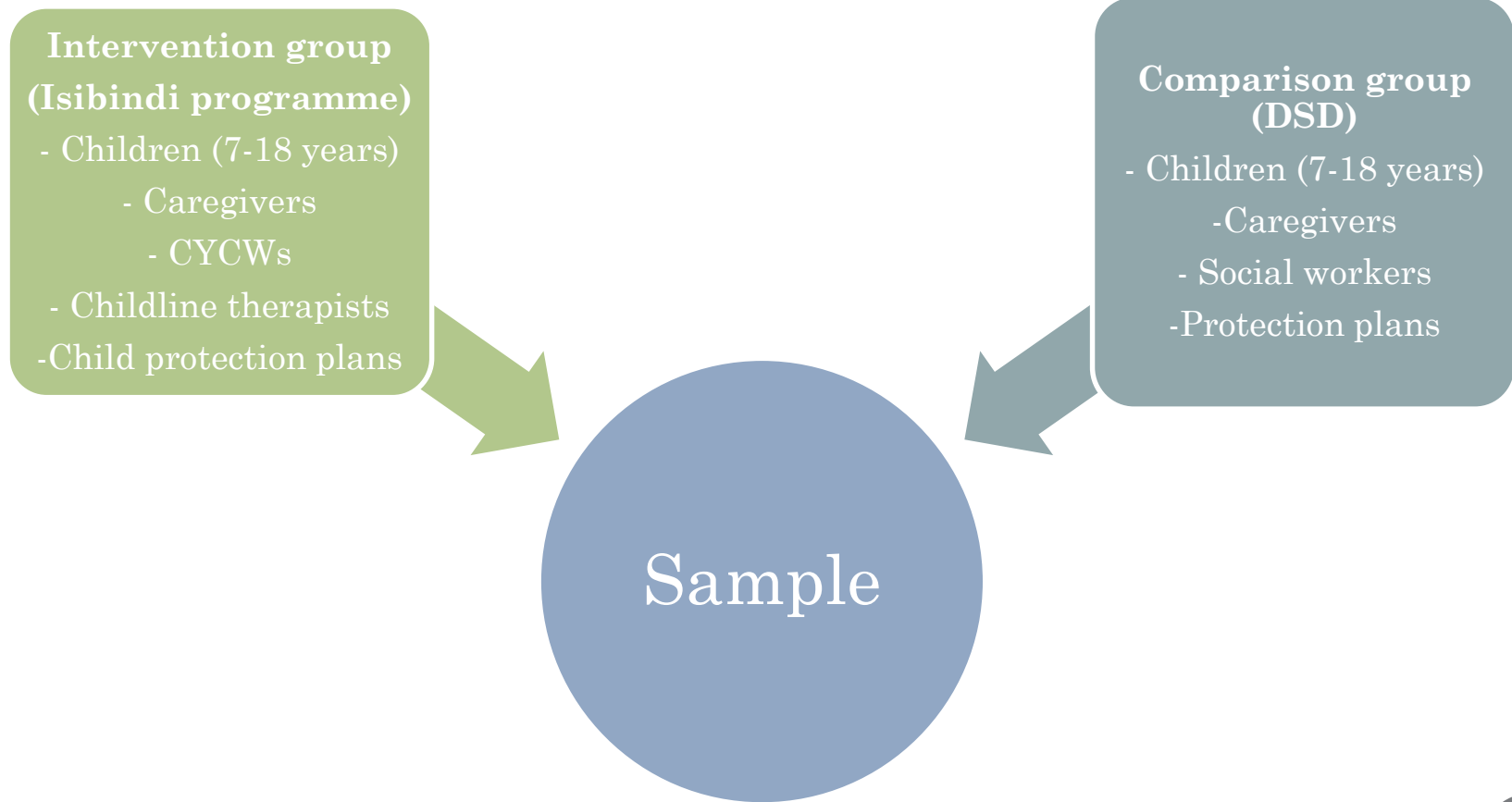
SELECTED PROVINCES

Eastern Cape:
Alfred Nzo, OR
Tambo, Chris Hani

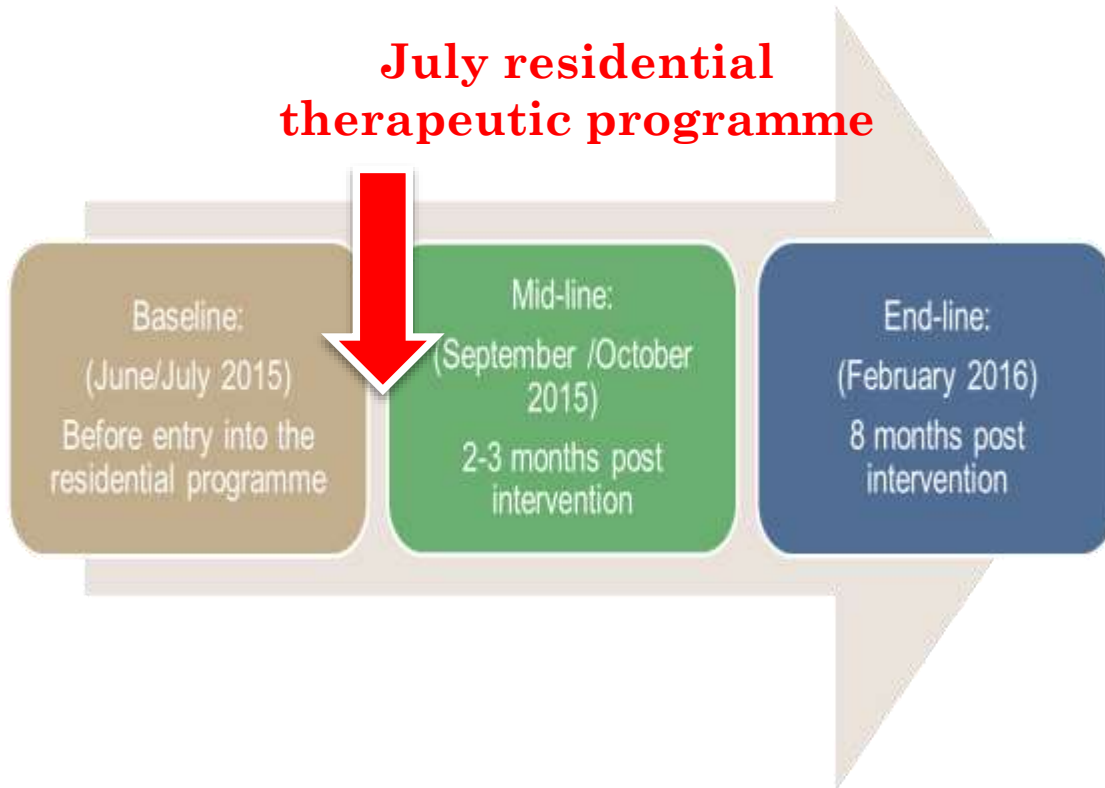
KwaZulu-Natal:
Amajuba,
Umkhanyakude



METHODS: RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE EASTERN CAPE AND KWAZULU-NATAL



EVALUATION DESIGN



- Quasi-experimental, longitudinal design
- Mixed-methods approach
- **Measures:** Child PTSD Checklist, Child Depression Inventory, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, Alabama parenting questionnaire

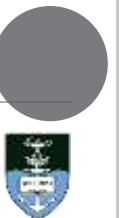
REFLECTIONS ON BASELINE FIELDWORK

Comparison group accessibility and resistance:

- Lack of therapeutic support for children and families
- Child safety compromised due to lack of response from social workers
- Deep rural communities – very few resources to make contact with social workers
- Ethical matters: control group is particularly in need of services
- Research of a sensitive nature – silencing mechanisms become apparent

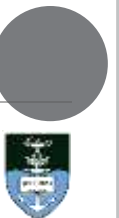
Impact of sexual abuse disclosure:

- Caregivers: stress, trauma, health problems emerging from the emotional distress of the incident
- Support systems may not be readily available



KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN MOVING FORWARD...

- Opportunities to improve and strengthen practice and to inform capacity development of the relevant role players
- The importance of obtaining data on the effectiveness of early intervention programmes for vulnerable children.





THANK YOU!



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