

DEVELOPING A SEXUAL GENDER BASED VIOLENCE INTERVENTION TARGETING FEMALE STUDENTS IN SOUTH AFRICAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: MAPPING THE PROCESS

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BACKGROUND

- Young women in higher education institutions in South Africa continue to be at increased risk of sexual gender-based violence (SGBV)
- There is limited research to understand the scale and drivers
- SGBV interventions focusing on this group are lacking in SA
- To fill this gap, we conducted mixed-methods formative research aimed to gather context-specific data to inform the development of the intervention.
- Findings from the formative research were used to develop a Theory of Change and sessions of Ntombi Vimbela!, a manualized intervention.

AIMS

- This presentation
 - outlines steps taken to develop and pilot test Ntombi Vimbela! intervention in selected South African campuses
 - reflects on lessons learned from the pilot phase
 - puts forward recommendations for future intervention development and implementation for young women in similar settings.

PROCESS

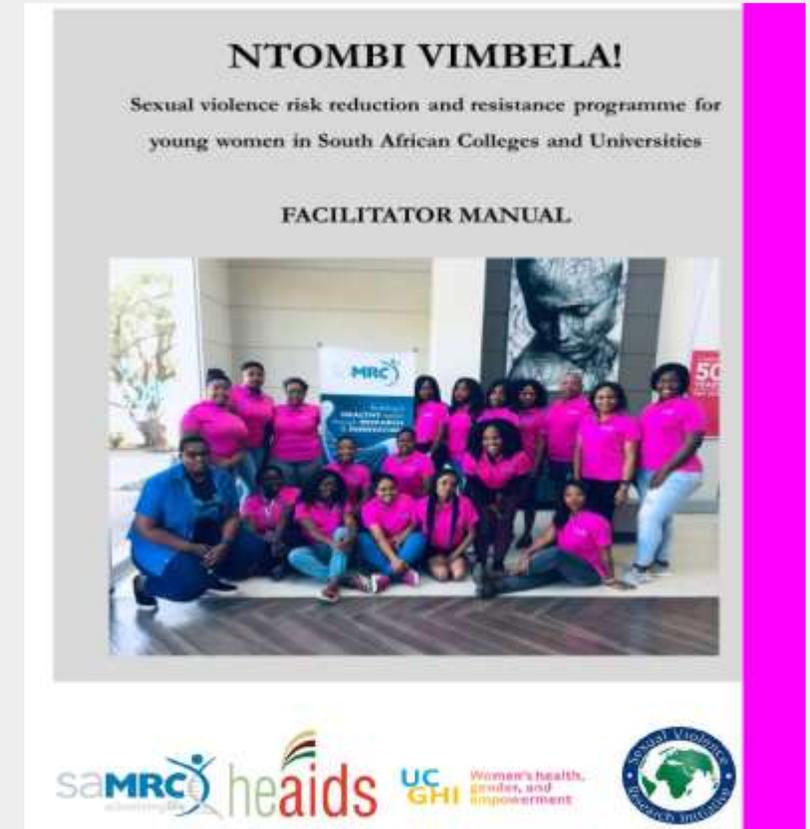


SNAPSHOT OF THE FINDINGS

- We found a high prevalence of sexual violence experienced by female students
- Driven by acceptance of patriarchal social gender norms, acceptance of rape myths and attitudes that blame victims, poor socio-economic status, lack of sexual agency and lack of assertive communication skills, poor safety and security measures on campuses and in communities, inequitable sexual relationships with men, pressure to fit into the tertiary environment and naivety, abuse of power by men in positions of authority, acceptance of “consensual and adult intimate relationships” between students and staff, poor institutional responses
- Mental-ill health is a huge problem amongst female students
- Data was used to develop a logical framework.

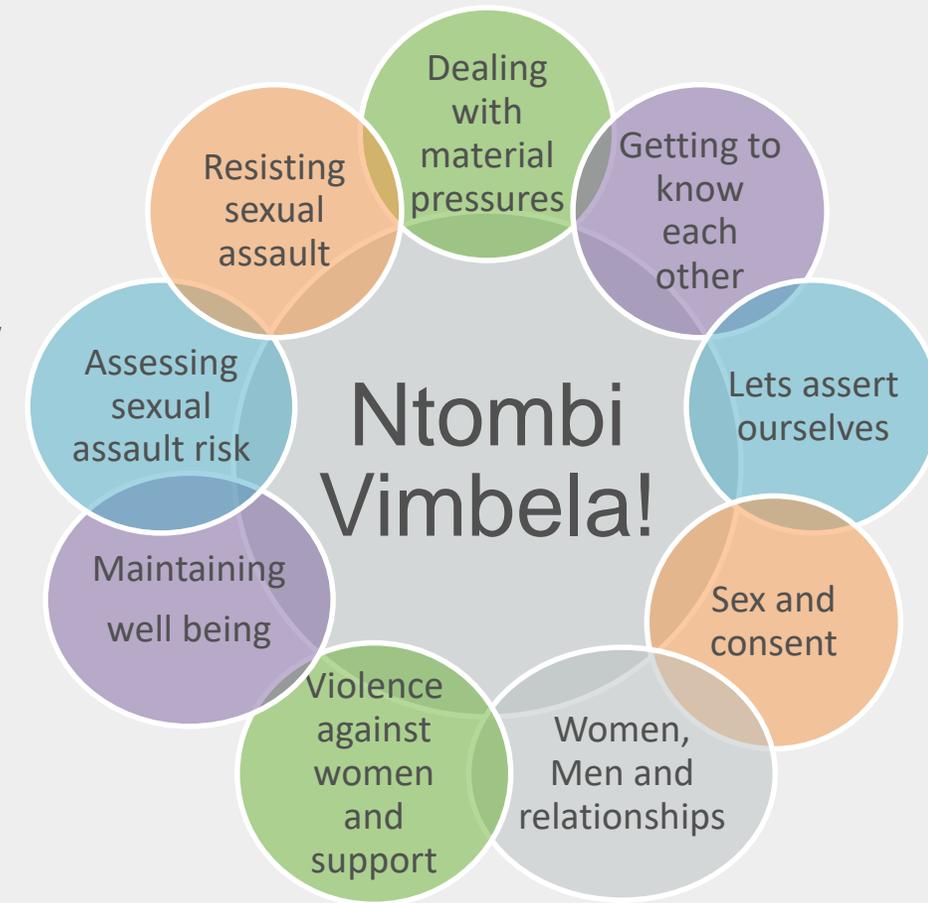
WHAT IS NTOMBI VIMBELA!

- A sexual violence risk reduction and resistance manualised intervention
- Ntombi means “girl or woman” in Zulu or Xhosa
- Vimbela is a Zulu word which means prevent, resist, restrain, block, or deter
- Ntombi Vimbela! was developed based on the findings of the formative research and through adapting sessions of effective EBIs including EAAA, Stepping stones and SASA!
- Ntombi Vimbela! targets young women between age 18 – 30 enrolled in tertiary education
- It aims to build young women’s resilience, confidence, and awareness to reduce sexual assault risk
- Constitutes a series of 9 sessions of 3.5 hours each
- Uses participatory methods, brainstorming, reflection, working in pairs and small groups, big group discussion, games and energizing activities.



WHAT DO THE SESSIONS COVER

- Key themes of Ntombi Vimbela!
 - Sexual rights and consent
 - Understanding violence against women and girls and its drivers
 - Reflecting on gender inequality and building gender equitable beliefs
 - Identifying sexual assault risk
 - Verbal, non-verbal and physical resistance in risky situations
 - Dealing with stress, fostering mental wellbeing and self care
 - Dealing with social and material pressures
 - Promoting utilization of health, psychosocial and justice services
 - Communication skills and relationship building.



RECRUITMENT OF FACILITATORS

- Intervention delivered by peer facilitators (matched by age and sex) who co-facilitate groups of maximum 20 participants
- Student support staff and students meeting the peer criteria (18- 30) were recruited
- 17 facilitators were recruited as follows
 - 7 university students (5 Masters levels and 2 Undergraduate)
 - 5 college students
 - 5 student support/liaison in colleges
- Different co-facilitation models for facilitators
 - Only student facilitators in university campuses
 - Staff and student model in 2 college campuses
 - Students only model in 1 college campus
 - Staff only model in 1 college campus
 - Staff and external facilitator in 1 college campus.

TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

- Nine day initial training covering:
 - content of the Ntombi Vimbela! intervention manual (4 days)
 - facilitation skills and rehearsals (2.5 days)
 - Wen Do Self Defense training (Wen Do instructor) (2.5 days)
- The manual was revised based on training feedback and observations
- Ongoing WenDo facilitator practice, recording and trainer feedback for 1 month
- Six and half day refresher training before pilot in campuses:
 - recap of the Ntombi Vimbela! manual (3 days)
 - facilitation skills and rehearsals (3 days)
 - Wen Do Self Defence practice (2 hours)
 - participant recruitment, liaison and workshop administration (2 hours)



The SAMRC, Gender and Health Research Unit (GHRU) is implementing a campus sexual assault intervention program. We are looking for young women interested to learn more about sexual violence and how to prevent it. If you are:

- ‡ A young woman age 18-30 ✓
- ‡ A first-year student ✓
- ‡ Interested to learn more about sexual violence and how to prevent it ✓
- ‡ Available and committed to attend 10 workshops over 5 weeks from August and September 2019 ✓
- ‡ Workshops are free & refreshments will be provided ✓

Sign Up NOW
Space is limited

Contact: Facilitator A & B

IMPLEMENTATION AND PROCESS EVALUATION

- Baseline electronic questionnaire filled by participants
- Facilitators are responsible for logistical planning, practicing content and liaising with participants
- Timing of sessions is agreed with participants (not more than 2 sessions a week)
- Ongoing support and debriefing sessions held weekly with facilitators
- Research team supporting and observing interactions in sessions. Feedback given to facilitators in weekly debrief sessions
- Participant feedback forms filled each session
- Facilitators journal reflections and discuss during debrief sessions
- Data will be collated to inform the finalisation of the manual
- End of intervention focus group with participants facilitated by research team.

LESSONS SO FAR - FACILITATION

- While peer-led interventions are recommended they require greater investment in time and support for effective delivery.
- Facilitators who had no prior facilitation experience required more support. Interventions using peers or novices as facilitators would do well to invest time and resources for long-term training prior to implementing the intervention
- Discussions with participants appear to trigger traumatic experiences, facilitators were challenged to confront personal experiences.

LESSONS SO FAR - FACILITATION

- In attempting to maintain fidelity to delivery, unexperienced facilitators tended to “stick to script” thereby comprising engagement & dialogue with participants
- Balance between pursuing fidelity to the intervention manual and encouraging dialogue and critical reflection requires adequate preparation prior to the workshop
- Having a good grasp of the intervention content and objective of each session allowed facilitators to focus on encouraging a sustained dialogue with minimal word-for word reading from the manual
- This has important implications for ordering of content in intervention manuals like Ntombi Vimbela!.

LESSONS SO FAR- PARTICIPANT SUPPORT

- Few informal spaces are available in higher education institutions for young women to connect, share problems and support each other. By bringing together 10-20 women, the intervention created a safe space, they open-up and empathized with each other. Facilitators must be trained to anticipate this and to handle it sensitively while still delivering the intervention as expected
- Especially in the colleges, the intervention attracted some women who had prior sexual assault exposure. Facilitators had to ensure that participants sensitively discussed, were mindful to detect distress, and reassured survivors that they were not to blame
- Such affirmation ensured that self-blame was minimized among survivors
- Women reflect and confront some of their deep-seated personal & traumatic experiences. Facilitators were trained to refer to available counselling services. Facilitator training & ability to contain and refer survivors is particularly important.



On Thursday our team will host a lunch time side event “ **Demonstrating sexual assault resistance strategies**” Venue: Grass area

