



DFID MSP PROJECTS: TRAINING FOR CARE OF SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Project title: Curriculum development and training manuals for care of survivors of sexual assault

Service Provider: Medical Research Council

Partner: National Department of Health

Background

Concern about the high prevalence of rape in South Africa prompted the National Department of Health (NDoH) to initiate this project. The Maternal, Child and Women's Health and Nutrition cluster of the NDoH engaged with a team led by the Medical Research Council. A wide range of experts (medical, legal, police) were consulted in a participatory process to develop a curriculum for training doctors and nurses to care for survivors of rape and sexual assault.

The process

The development and implementation of training was carried out in close cooperation with the provinces. The curriculum was tested in four training courses attended by 144 staff members from 8 provinces, and the materials revised after testing. The team also worked with the provinces to identify criteria for determining who should be trained, which facilities should be designated, and for the development of in-service assessment, supervision and monitoring strategies. Participants in the testing course completed an attitudes survey which enriched the curriculum. It showed that their motivation for attending the course was passion for the issue, intellectual interest, and opportunity to advance – in that order. More than half the female participants had experienced one or more episodes of physical and or sexual intimate partner violence themselves. Nearly one in five male participants had perpetrated against a partner on more than one occasion

Follow-up interviews showed that there had been significant improvements in participants' attitudes towards rape after the course.

The result

Both Facilitator Manual and Participant Manual have been printed and distributed to the provinces. The course is accredited by the SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and it is now being rolled out across the country. The process has also led to the development of a brochure for rape victims that the NDoH plans to translate and make available to health facilities. This will play a critical role in post-rape literacy.

Conclusion:

The team concluded that it is possible to draw on the strengths of a range of experts in the country and produce a high quality product which has extensive support as a national curriculum for post-rape care.

The process resulted in the development of a state-of-the-art curriculum, which is evidence-based, and the most comprehensive in the developing world. Other countries have shown interest in adapting the model.

Evaluation has shown that the training led to a significant improvement in knowledge of the participants. It opened their eyes to new dimensions of post-rape care, particularly the need to support victims psychologically, and increased confidence in their ability to provide care.