



**Society for Pre and Post Natal Services  
PVO 12/2015**

**Maternal, Paternal, Child and Family Mental Health in Zimbabwe: Prevention, promoting early identification, early presentation of family mental health issues and early intervention for the mental wellbeing using the whole family approach.**

<b>Project REPORT: 2022 project report</b>
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**Society for Pre and Post Natal Services (SPANS) 2022 Report.**



***'No health without Mental Health'***

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This document summarizes SPANS's activities in the year 2022.

SPANS is among over fifteen (15) Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) currently operating in Goromonzi District. The distinction being SPANS is the only perinatal mental health organization. The organization commenced its activities in 2010, in response to the scarcity of players providing perinatal mental health services within the district and even the whole country. The organization then got duly registered in the Republic of Zimbabwe (ROZ) as a Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO 12/2015) in terms of the Private Voluntary Organisation's Act Chapter 17:05. The organisation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Republic of Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC) on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2021.



SPANS activities are in line with the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC) strategy. In 2017 the Zimbabwe MOHCC published its New National Health Strategy 2016-2020, *Equity and Quality in Health: Leaving No One Behind*.

The strategy sets out four priority disease control programmes namely:

- Communicable disease programmes;
- Non communicable diseases and conditions programmes;
- Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child Health and Adolescent Services, and
- Public health surveillance and disaster preparedness and response programme.

SPANS supports the MOHCC's objective of reducing the incidence of selected Non-Communicable Disease (NCDs) by 50% and to improve the mental health status of the population.

## **2.0 SUMMARY OF 2022 ACTIVITIES**

The section below provides lists activities undertaken by SPANS IN 2022. Implementation of planned activities was restricted by lack of funds.

- In order to fulfil objective 1.2 as set out in Article 1 of the MOU (to solve social problems/issues that affect mental health in pre and post-natal care) as well as objective 1.4 (to improve public awareness on the importance of mental health and to increase self-understanding so as to improve positive attitudes towards mental illness), SPANS, the official ICAMMHA conference organizer, successfully initiated the International Conference on Maternal Mental Health in Africa (ICAMMHA) in December 2016. SPANS successfully hosted the first ICAMMHA and the second ICAMMHA in 2020. It is now preparing to host the third ICAMMHA conference later this year. SPANS is the official organizer of the “International Conference On Maternal Mental Health in Africa” (ICAMMHA) the biggest Afro-centric conference focused on promoting maternal, paternal, and child mental health which is an important day to the African continent. Maternal mental health is a widespread public health issue that impacts the wellbeing and livelihood of mothers, their infants and families. One hundred delegates attended the first ICAMMHA conference. The second one was online and a total of 300 delegates participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ICAMMHA conference. In 2022 preparations for the third conference commenced.
- Training the next generation of family therapists** : In order to fulfill objective 1.5 as set out in Article 1 of the MOU (which states that SPANS shall provide training services in Systemic Family Therapy and Systemic counselling) SPANS initiated the registration of a vocational training institute (**SPANS vocational training institute**) on the 30th of July 2019 in terms of the **Manpower Planning and Developments Act (Chapter 28:02)** to offer training services in Bookkeeping, Business Calculations, ITC Fundamentals, Counselling, Sign Language and Child Counselling. SPANS is now offering a diploma in **Systemic family therapy and family developmental counselling** in maternal, paternal and child mental health in order to respond to a huge gap in mental health professionals in Zimbabwe.



In the year 2022 training services continued to run smoothly. Currently SPANS has many students who are being trained to be Family mental health therapists which are already on the MoHCC Department of Mental Health Organogram.



The table below summaries number of registered students undertaking the diploma in the respective intakes.

**Diploma in Systematic Family therapy and family developmental counselling in maternal, paternal and child mental healthy**

**SPANS statistics for student with at least 2 blocks of attendance till date**

<b>Intake number</b>	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Day of commencement</b>	<b>of</b>
intake 1 &2	25		weekdays
intake 3	10		weekdays
intake 4	8		weekdays
intake 4 weekends	5		weekends
intake 5A	24		weekdays

intake 5B	28		weekdays
intake 5C	21		weekends
intake 6A	28		weekdays
intake 6B	13	14-Mar-22	weekdays
intake 6C	16		weekends
intake 7	18		weekdays
intake 8	10		weekdays
intake 9A	25	3-Oct-22	weekdays
intake 9B	36	8-Oct-22	weekend
intake 9C	27	17-Oct-22	weekdays
<b>Comments</b>	<b>There is a high demand for this course and huge support from the government (MOHCC). The course is also internationally accredited to the Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding body (United Kingdom). It is also recognized by the allied health practitioners council of Zimbabwe as well as department of quality assurance and standards under the ministry of higher and tertiary education in Zimbabwe.</b>		
<b>2023 intake</b>	Next intake 20 February 2023		

- **Mental health literacy sessions:** SPANS is strengthening the Health Education (HE) program for the Ministry of health and child care (MOHCC) through conducting mental health literacy sessions during the routine antenatal and post-natal health care visits at Ruwa clinic in Goromonzi district.



The sessions are conducted at the SPANS office at Ruwa clinic. The table below summarizes number of people reached in 2022.

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2022 adult participants</b>	20	4 800	4 820
<b>comments</b>	<p>Most of the women who come for routine ante natal and post-natal care visits prefer to express and use idioms of mental related problems they face in their day to day lives. Hence the language of choice should be the clients' language. Most people cannot differentiate between mental health as a state of wellbeing and mental distress, mental health problems and mental illness or disorder.</p> <p>A few people are willing to take their time and take part in the organization's mental health education sessions and awareness</p>		

	Male	Female	Total
	<p>campaigns. They believe that family issues should just evolve around their relatives (the aunts and uncles) and not to be disclosed to someone who is not their relation (social worker). A handful are willing to come for family counselling and psychological support. Hence, there is need to re-educate people on mental health literacy and the importance of family counselling and psychological support.</p>		

**Individual and Family Therapy Sessions:** SPANS uses the systemic approach in addressing mental health problems that affect families coupled with subsequent sessions using the booking system for those women who visit the clinic for the routine antenatal and post-natal care visits. Clients are identified during mental health literacy sessions. It is hoped that mental health issues will be professionally addressed through the Family therapist.

- **Covid-19 Community Family Mental Health Awareness:** SPANS developed the “Covid-19 Community Family Mental Health Awareness Response” that entails awareness campaigns on mental health and Covid. This provides mental health education and support to the community and front-line workers by using a van, loudspeakers and open-air discussions. In 2022 the community health awareness road shows were not conducted due to lack of funding.
- **Mentorship of university student volunteers**

Under the student mentorship program, the following students supported SPANS activities.

	Male	Female	Total
<b>2022 students</b>	5	50	55

These were drawn from universities that include University of Zimbabwe, Women’s University, Ezekiel Guti University, Catholic University, Great Zimbabwe, Reformed church, Midlands state University and other colleges.

The respective degree programs studied include: Bachelor’s degree in: development studies, social work, journalism etc. Students gain skills and experience in different disciplines.



The table below continues to summarize outcome of activities planned in 2022.

<b>Key Objective</b>		
<b>Objective 1: Solve social problems/ issues that affect mental health in pre and post-natal care</b>		
<b>Priority Area 1</b>	<b>Priority Activity</b>	<b>2022 Outcome/comments</b>
Strengthening of Health Education (HE) program for the Ministry of health and child care (MOHCC).	To build awareness and skills in addressing prenatal mental health needs and tackling stigma and discrimination.	Conducted under mental health literacy and education sessions. The sessions provided input in 2023 program activities. Lessons learnt, recommendations and 2023 initiatives were manly drawn from these sessions.
	To establish a 1001 days community committee group to drive forward work on education, prevention and early intervention in this period.	Carried over to 2023
<b>Priority Area 2</b> Addressing prenatal and post-natal mental health disorders & facilitating research.	Bereavement support following a miscarriage, infertility, suicidal, stillbirth and any loss attached to women and their families	Carried over to 2023
	To conduct a baseline on mental health needs assessment.	Carried over to 2023
	To facilitate for proper referral pathways for local community perinatal mental health services.	Carried over to 2023
	Improve access to appropriate and effective community mental health care services	Carried over to 2023
	Expansion of International Conference on Maternal mental Health in Africa	Carried over to 2023

	(ICAMMHA) by hosting our third conference	
	Holding sensitization meeting with key stakeholders on perinatal mental health for safe parenthood,	Carried over to 2023
<b>Objective 2: Provide training services in Systemic family therapy and systemic counselling</b>		
<b>Priority Area 3</b> Training the next generation of family therapists	Perinatal mental health trainee's (family therapists) programme in Diploma Systematic Family Therapy and Developmental Counseling in Maternal, Paternal and Child Mental Health course in Systemic family Therapy.	ongoing
	To do a pilot project in Goromonzi district in ten (10) selected clinics to establish whether Systemic Family Therapy is an effective intervention approach for pre-natal mental health disorders.	Carried over to 2023
<b>Objective 3: Provide education, ongoing supportive family therapy/counselling and psychological support to the reproductive age groups and the entire community.</b>		
<b>Priority Area 4</b> Prevention, promoting early identification, early presentation of family mental health issues and early intervention for the mental wellbeing using the whole family approach.	Early identification of prenatal mental health disorders and therapeutic services (individual or group counseling) for the reproductive age groups for both males and females.	Conducted under mental health literacy and education sessions.
	Developed and disseminate age appropriate (IEC) materials on complications for prenatal mental health disorders	Carried over to 2023

	Improving timely assessment of social and emotional wellbeing services for women, babies and their families as soon as needed	Carried over to 2023
	Mapping care pathways for Perinatal Mental Health	Carried over to 2023

### **3.0 LESSONS LEARNT 2022**

1. There is confusion in the community on the understanding of mental disorders and mental illness. There is need to strengthen health education/awareness initiatives to clarify the difference between the two.
2. Fear of stigma related to mental illness/ disorders limits early access to care and treatment. There is need to develop strategies to address stigma related to mental health in the community.
3. There is a big gap in the availability of trained mental health professionals in Zimbabwe. SPANS is training therapist to try and close the gap.
4. There is need for more IEC materials for community mental health awareness e.g. hats, t-shirts, caps, etc.
5. There is need to strengthen health education for patients and their family support system.
6. There is need to actively mobilize participation of spouses and other family members in mental health interventions.
7. There is need for communities to recognize early warning signs of mental health disorders/illness and seek treatment/support early. There is need for communities to be aware of approved service providers.
8. There is need for mental health education for people working with children i.e. teachers, caregivers, etc.
9. There is need for communities to understand the link between mental health disorders/illness and drug abuse.
10. There is need for more mental health awareness for community stakeholders e.g. pastors, teachers, heads, police, etc.
11. Public Perceptions: There are no proper dedicated infrastructure and human capital at primary health care facilities to respond to mental health problems.
12. It was also observed that the family approach in addressing mental health issues is not being fully put into practice within the primary health care centers, hence individuals cannot address mental health issues in isolation.

### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Implementation of 2023 planned activities

- Funds permitting there is need for capacity building.
- There is need to strengthen fundraising activities for the organisation.
- There is need to advocate for creation of mental health professionals posts in MOHCC in Zimbabwe.

## **5.0 ANNEX**

- Supporting letters



**The End.**