



Society for Pre and Post Natal Services

PVO 12/2015

SPANS COVID-19 COMMUNITY FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH REPORT

2020



Members of the SPANS Team ready to go out into the Goromonzi Community on their Covid-19 Community Family Mental Health Awareness Response Campaigns.

Introduction

For the Society for Pre and Post Natal Services (SPANS), the year 2020 was indeed a year of innovations, improvising, grabbing opportunities, implementing initiatives and creating milestones; all this done in the drive for the Organization to survive the global turbulence and make a mark both at Local and National level and upon the global Mental Health arena at large. The unfavorable economic climate, exacerbated by the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, made the year a time of learning valuable lessons on surviving in a demanding professional climate and managing to cultivate and establish visibility and relevance on an international scale.

A- Accomplishments Made in 2020

1- Covid-19 Community Family Mental Health Awareness Response

This SPANS initiative in the Goromonzi District which came as an impromptu response to the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic gained the organisation international acclaim and much recognition within the Mental Health fraternity and among generous donors through of Global Giving fundraising page <https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/covid-19-and-community-family-mental-health/> and philanthropist organisations, as evidenced by the attached reports;

- https://embermentalhealth.org/uploads/Ember-Insights-Covid_July2020.pdf
- <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2021/01/organisation-set-to-kickstart-mental-health-awareness/>
- <https://www.globalgiving.org/learn/covid-19-mental-health/>: *Coping With COVID-19: Shining Light On A Hidden Crisis*
- <http://www.interventionjournal.org> on Tuesday, January 12, 2021, IP: 10.232.74.26]: *Stories from the Field: Mapping Innovation in Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, *Intervention* 18(2) 500-519
- <https://www.interventionjournal.org/downloadpdf.asp?issn=1571-8883;year=2020;volume=18;issue=2;epage=165;aulast=Hamilton;type=2>

The SPANS team is so grateful to all like-minded generous individuals, in every community around the Whole World who are donating to our Global Giving fundraising page which makes our efforts easy to implement.

When Covid-19 was declared a global pandemic in March 2020 and the first total national lockdown was invoked in Zimbabwe, SPANS immediately grabbed the opportunity responded to the call by the National Inter-Ministerial Covid-19 Task Force for volunteers in the fight against Covid-19 by offering and organizing a multi-disciplinary Community

Mental Health Awareness Campaigns in Goromonzi District comprising the SPANS Team, ZRP Victim Friendly Unit details and the local MoHCC Environmental Health Practitioners.

The offer was approved by the Secretary for Health and SPANS mobilized financial resources from funding partners and rolled out the programme in May of 2020, covering peri-urban and rural communities in the District.

It has been reliably noted by the SPANS Team members in their interactions with society that there is a widespread misunderstanding among the general public and even among healthcare professionals about the difference between “Mental Health” and “Mental illness,” a misunderstanding which the outreach team sought to clarify and provide accurate information in all the communities reached. The Team was therefore disseminating Mental Health Awareness promotion messages to the communities and the response was overwhelming.





SPANS Covid-19 Community Family Mental Health Response Team members engaging community members.

May 2020 Covid-19 Community Family Mental Health Awareness Response Figures

DATE	AREA	LOCATIONS COVERED	WOMEN	MEN	CHILDREN	TOTALS	AREA TOTALS
10 May 2020	Ruwa and Zimre	Spar Shops	46	134	-	180	
		Mavambo Shops	58	32	10	100	
		TM Complex	192	42	16	250	
		Mtangaz Zimre	33	47	-	80	
		Greenshop Zimre	4	35	1	40	
		George/Choppies	130	250	20	400	1,050
12 May 2020	Ruwa and Damofalls						
		Spar Shops	47	120	13	180	
		Mavambo Shops	37	100	3	140	
		Better Days Shops	25	17	8	50	
		Ruwa Borehole	35	5	-	40	
		Corner Shop	9	41	-	50	
		Damofalls Phase 3 and 4 Streets	260	80	460	800	

		<i>Wenera Shops</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>60</i>	
		<i>Pamusasa Shops</i>	<i>122</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>1,520</i>
<i>14 May 2020</i>	<i>Caledonia</i>						
		<i>Gazebo Shops</i>	<i>353</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>610</i>	
		<i>Bradford School</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>150</i>	
		<i>Royal Shops</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>60</i>	
		<i>Mandedza Shops</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>69</i>	
		<i>Residential Streets</i>	<i>654</i>	<i>159</i>	<i>637</i>	<i>1 450</i>	
		<i>Phase 6</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>2,439</i>
					<i>-</i>		
<i>18 May 2020</i>	<i>Timire</i>	<i>Timire residential</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>450</i>	
		<i>Banks Farm</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>575</i>
<i>21 May 2020</i>	<i>Melfort</i>	<i>Ruoko Farm</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>80</i>	
		<i>Matope/Oregon Farm</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>150</i>	
		<i>Melfort Residential</i>	<i>300</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>650</i>	<i>880</i>
<i>25 May 2020</i>	<i>Goromonzi Business Centre</i>						
		<i>Business Centre</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>246</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>400</i>	
		<i>Chinyika Shops</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>50</i>	
		<i>Warrendale farm</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>150</i>	
		<i>Residential Area</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>670</i>	<i>1 150</i>	<i>1,750</i>

27 May 2020	Rusike	Norah Shops	5	15	-	20	
		Rusike Clinic	10	3	7	20	
		Kandengwa Shops	23	12	-	35	
		Nziramasanga Village	23	7	20	50	
		Rusike Shops	200	127	23	350	475
29 May 2020	Juru and Bosha	Juru Growth Point	200	100	50	350	
		Juru Residential	250	200	350	800	
		Bosha Shops	15	20	5	40	
		Dzvete Shops	8	17	-	25	
		Bosha and Dzvete Villages	250	100	150	500	1,365
		TOTAL REACHED	4,264 women	2,969 men	3,172 children		1 0,405 people

The Awareness Team targeted busy shopping centres, water points (community boreholes) and residential streets, seeking those frequented hot-spots and sending mental health messages to the communities. SPANS Team members shared the megaphones with the ZRP VFU officers and the Environmental Health Practitioners (EHPs), making sure to sanitizer the gadgets after every speaker was done.

High-risk behaviour patterns such as non-use of face masks, non-observance of social distancing and lack of hand sanitizers at shop entrances were observed in the various communities visited and appropriate messages were disseminated, depending on the nature of risks observed. The Awareness Team communicated the noted problem areas to the

Ministry of Health, the District Development Coordinator and to the relevant Enforcement Agents to institute the necessary corrective control measures and help contain the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Mental health issues noticed to be most rampant in the communities included;

- Gender-based violence/conflicts arising from the unfamiliarity of being together as families/couples all day for days on end during the Lockdown;
- Increase in instances of child physical abuse;
- Increase in economic abuse, targeted mostly at the female spouse;
- Cases of sexual abuse among siblings and family members continuously enclosed together for long periods during lockdown;
- Failing to make ends meet or provide for families due to the suspension of income-generating economic activity and
- Development of cases of depression and perpetual anxiety disorders caused by worrying over the bleak-looking future for employees, indigenous business people and the school-going children. All these issues communicated to the Team go to show the great need for professional mental health interventions to help alleviate the development of desperation and hopelessness which might drive people to suicidal ideation and breakdown of marriages.

The initial approval for the SPANS Covid-19 Community Family Mental Health Awareness Response exercise having expired on 31 July 2020, the Organization requested for and got a twelve (12) month extension for the programme as from September 2020.

All the necessary logistics having been put in place, the SPANS Team engaged in another multi-disciplinary Awareness Response in September 2020, this time conveniently distributing re-packaged hand sanitizers and SPANS-branded face masks.





Summary of communities reached in the September Outreaches and the estimates of people reached.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Outreach Area</i>	<i>No. of men reached directly</i>	<i>Women reached directly</i>	<i>Children reached directly</i>	<i>Total reached directly</i>	<i>Estimated No. of homes reached</i>	<i>Estimated No. of people reached in homes @ estimated 5 members per homestead</i>	<i>Grand Totals reached directly and indirectly</i>
<i>Monday 14/9/20</i>	<i>Solomio Settlement</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>354</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>4,000</i>	<i>4,354 people</i>
<i>Wed 16/9/20</i>	<i>Eastview, Caledonia</i>	<i>570</i>	<i>968</i>	<i>355</i>	<i>1,893</i>	<i>2,200 homes in Phases 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,</i>	<i>11,000</i>	<i>12,893 people</i>

						6, 8, 10 and 12		
<i>Monday 21/9/2020</i>	<i>Ruwa & Zimre Park</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>210</i>	<i>195</i>	<i>555</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,555 people</i>
<i>Wednesday 23/9/2020</i>	<i>Walker- Mutamba settlement</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>650 homes in Eastview Phases 15, 16 & 20, and Walker & Ivhelengas</i>	<i>3,250</i>	<i>3,438 people</i>
<i>Monday 28/9/2020</i>	<i>Timire & Mandalay Park</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>167</i>	<i>110</i>	<i>550</i>	<i>717 people</i>
<i>Wednesday 30/9/2020</i>	<i>Damofalls Park</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>119</i>	<i>700</i>	<i>3,500</i>	<i>3,619 people</i>
<i>TOTALS</i>		<i>1,018 men</i>	<i>1,411 women</i>	<i>847 children</i>	<i><u>3,276</u> people</i>	<i>4,660 homes</i>	<i><u>23,300</u> people</i>	<i><u>26,576</u> people</i>

In all the six communities the Awareness Outreach Team went out into, an approximate total of **26,576 people** were reached out to. This figure reflects a marked increase in the number of people reached in this campaign.

During the second Awareness Outreach it was observed some community members had relaxed in their strict observance of the recommended preventative guidelines and therefore the exercise was very necessary and served as a timely reminder for the communities to be constantly on high-alert to avoid falling victim to the pandemic. The use of face masks, hand sanitizing and social distancing varied with the communities, registering higher compliance in the urban and peri-urban settlements and diminishing with distance from Enforcement Agents' presence. The Awareness Team continued to emphasize the importance of protecting one's mental health and avoiding falling prey to issues arising from laxity in adhering to the MoHCC guidelines, thereby exposing their families and loved ones to risk of infection.

The apparent rise in the recorded Covid-19 positive cases towards the end of the year is clear indication that there is dire need for increased awareness promotion among the communities in the face of the purportedly more deadly variant of the virus discovered to be causing the second wave of the pandemic, with more devastating effects on the people's physical and resultantly their mental health. SPANS is therefore continuously mobilizing resources to rise up to the task of awareness promotion, which the government has acknowledged as being top priority.

2- Confidential Family Therapy Sessions

As indicated in SPANS's MOU with the Republic of Zimbabwe represented by the Secretary for Health and Child Care, one of the organization's responsibilities as articulated in the objectives being;

-to provide systemic family therapy and psychological support to the reproductive age group and to the whole community,

SPANS therapists are therefore offering therapy sessions to community members who may have issues for which they need professional mental health assistance.

The organization is using a booking system in order to avoid congestion of clients awaiting counseling, and all necessary documentation, ie;

- Client Appointment Forms;
- Confidentiality Agreement and Consent Form for Family Therapy;
- Case Management Progress notes and ☐ Counseling service Feedback forms.

The Team is trying as much as possible to provide systematic professional counseling procedurally coupled with subsequent sessions to ensure the clients get quality professional therapy until their issues are all resolved using long-term solutions. The Team also distributes fliers to all community members who visit the Primary Healthcare centre and this has proved helpful as some clients come through referrals, an indication that awareness of the availability of professional counseling services at the Centre is spreading in the community.

The human resource complement having been beefed up by the engagement of Social Work Interns , psychologists, graduate social workers and student family therapists, the organization is now adequately staffed to offer therapy sessions on a larger scale. The mental health education sessions and Focus Group Discussions have definitely indicated that parents and families have a lot of issues for which no professional interventions have been available previously. With intensive awareness promotion, coupled with the recent establishment of the SPANS Mental Health Therapy Centre at Ruwa Clinic where the organization is based, the SPANS staff are experiencing a higher turnout of clients requiring therapy sessions.

Month	Male Clients	Female Clients	Monthly Total	Average sessions attended
September	3	5	8 people	2
October	4	13	17 people	3
November	1	19	20 people	3
December	3	6	9 people	2



5- Establishment of the SPANS Family Mental Health Therapy Centre

One of the landmark achievements the organization made in 2020 was the construction of formal spacious standardized offices at Ruwa Clinic, under Goromonzi Rural District Council. Many thanks go to the District Medical Officer who provided the Letter of Support to the Goromonzi RDC Planning Section, which letter was attached to the standard proposed architectural plan for the structure. The Council's Building Inspectorate approved the

plan and construction commenced under the continuous supervision of the Building Inspectorate right up to completion.

The impressive structure, which was a long overdue project, comprises an Administrative Office, Reception area, Counseling Room and a spacious Conference Room. It was started and completed in October 2020 and the Organisation started using it early November 2020. The Counseling Room provides for confidential therapy sessions without disturbance or distractions, while the Conference/Lecture Room is being used for Mental Health Education sessions and Focus Group Discussions. The same room is used for lectures for students training for the SPANS Diploma in Systemic Family Therapy course and for any other various training sessions conducted by the organization.

The organization has plans to replicate the establishment of Family Therapy Centres across the District (for a start), conveniently siting them at the already-established numerous Primary Healthcare Clinics to complement the services provided by the Ministry staff and ensure availability and accessibility of professional mental health services.



6- Engagement of Social Work Interns

Being a duly registered and recognized organization according to the Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare requirements, one of SPANS's responsibilities according to the terms of the

subsisting MOU is; “to engage suitably qualified staff for the implementation of its planned activities and programmes.” Consequently, for the effective implementation of its Psychosocial activities, the organization started engaging tertiary Social Work students for their requisite attachment periods and accord them the opportunity to consolidate their academic theoretical work learning and practical work experience. The interns, the first batch having started in September 2020, are providing very handy and appreciable assistance in the implementation of our community mental health assessments and in the provision of Social Welfare-related guidance and assistance to the clients.

The organisation currently has four (4) students-on-attachment and intends to continue offering the opportunity for practical work experience to students in future, at the same time boosting its human resource base for effective successful implementation of its programmes.

B- Planned Activities from lessons learnt in 2020

1- Intensified Covid-19 Community Family Mental Health Awareness Response

Owing to the notable marked increase in the incidence of local transmission cases of Covid-19, it is therefore imperative that the organisation intensify its awareness promotion activities within the communities. The organisation plans to capitalize on the noted prevalent misunderstanding of the distinction between mental health and mental illness and elaborate these to the communities, at the same time disseminating to the people the need to timeously seek and access professional mental health services.

Awareness creation has definitely proved to be highly necessary to help contain the spread of the virus, at the same time raising mental health awareness to help the community manage the various issues arising from the pandemic.

2- Mental Health Assessment/Research in Goromonzi District

Due to the visibility SPANS attained on the international platform, mainly gained through publicization of its HCCP and Covid-19 Community Mental Health Awareness Response activities on the various social media platforms, the organisation has received partnership offers to facilitate and conduct an assessment of the mental health issues presenting and prevailing within families in the district. Arrangements for the initial assessment program are at an advanced stage and this activity is supposed to be a precursor to further research on mental health awareness in the district and further.

3- Virtual International Conference on Maternal Mental Health in Africa (ICAMMHA)

Having failed to successfully organize and host another edition of this renowned ICAMMHA in 2020 due to the disruptions and complications arising from the dreaded Covid-19 pandemic, in view of the presenting multiple mental health issues triggered by the disease and the new initiatives brought up within the mental health field, the organisation has already initiated dialogue with some interested relevant players to organize a virtual event which will bring together researchers, policy makers, health workers, charities, students and individuals from the communities who will share findings, knowledge and ideas to ensure that maternal and indeed family mental health is prioritized. The event will also include panels or breakout rooms where experts will share examples of maternal mental health research taking place across Africa and beyond. The conference intends to give space for participants to hear from individuals across the continent with lived experience of maternal mental health problems

4- Increased Mental Health Advocacy

SPANS administration gained some satisfaction from the way their petition was received, read and accepted in the august house as worthy of perusal, investigation, research and has now got to the stage where a report of the findings of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Health and Child Care from their visits to mental health institutions and also from the oral evidence gathered from the Ministry officials. It is with great exhilaration that the organisation realized that Mental Health seems to now have an allocation in the National Health Budget. It is the organization's sincere hope that due diligence will be employed to ensure that the communities get their due fiscal share and benefit from the inclusion and availing of mental health screening and intervention for both maternal care patients and those seeking all other physical health attention.

The organisation, together with all other mental health advocacy lobbyists, will continue to call for and assist in mental health awareness promotion activities on a national scale so that the whole populace benefit and are able to access the vital mental health services even at community level.

B- Conclusion

Most of the programs and activities which the organisation had hope to successfully carry out in the course of the year 2020 were unfortunately disrupted by the advent and persistence of the global Covid-19 pandemic and its devastating effects upon all communities and the other systems which were supposed to assist in the implementation of the programs.

However, in the midst of all the mayhem caused by the pandemic, SPANS, like the innovative and adaptive organization that it is, is grateful that alternative opportunities were

conveniently grabbed and utilized for the furtherance of mental health initiatives and their innovations were recognized and appreciated by the parent Ministry and also by the mental health fraternity.

It is therefore with the same resilience that the SPANS Team intends to brace for the evident persistent disruptions arising from the pandemic and hopes against hope that 2021 will turn out to be a year to celebrate further achievements and innovations, while making more strides in establishing the organization as a force to reckon with in the mental health field while benefitting the communities they work with from the same passion that has been continuously displayed by all team members.