SAMRC Presentation on Violence in Children and its consequences in South Africa

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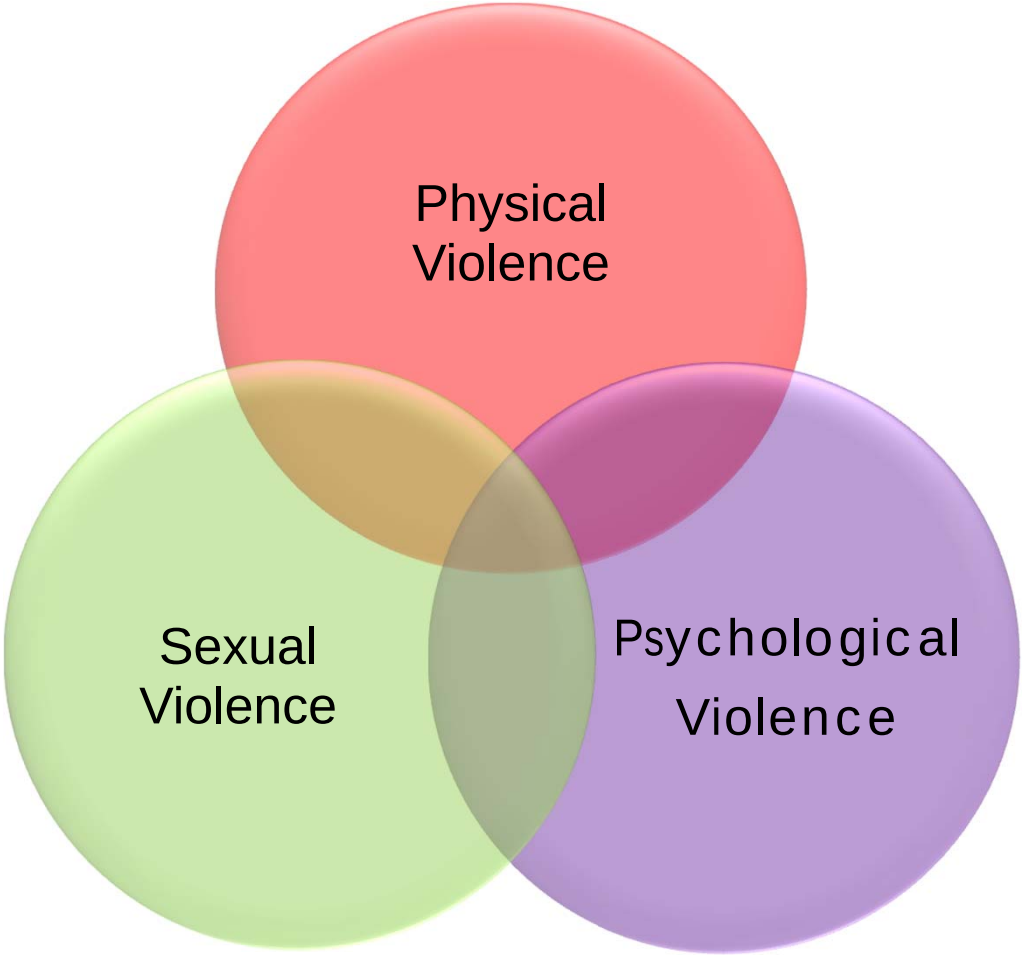
What is violence against children?



- Child murders/homicide
- Sexual exploitation & trafficking
- Harmful traditional and cultural practices
- Child labour
- Bullying

Violence against Children

BY ADULTS

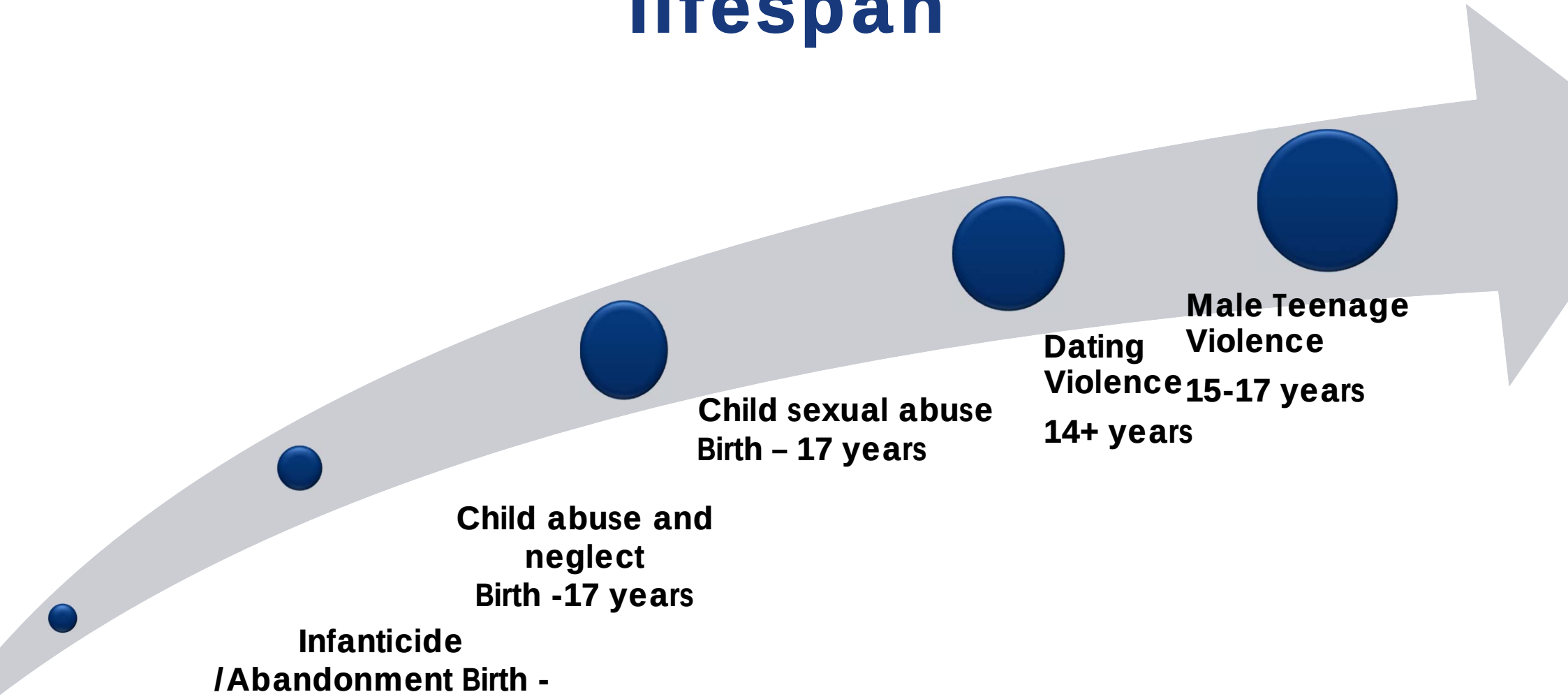
- Physical
- Emotional

BY PEERS

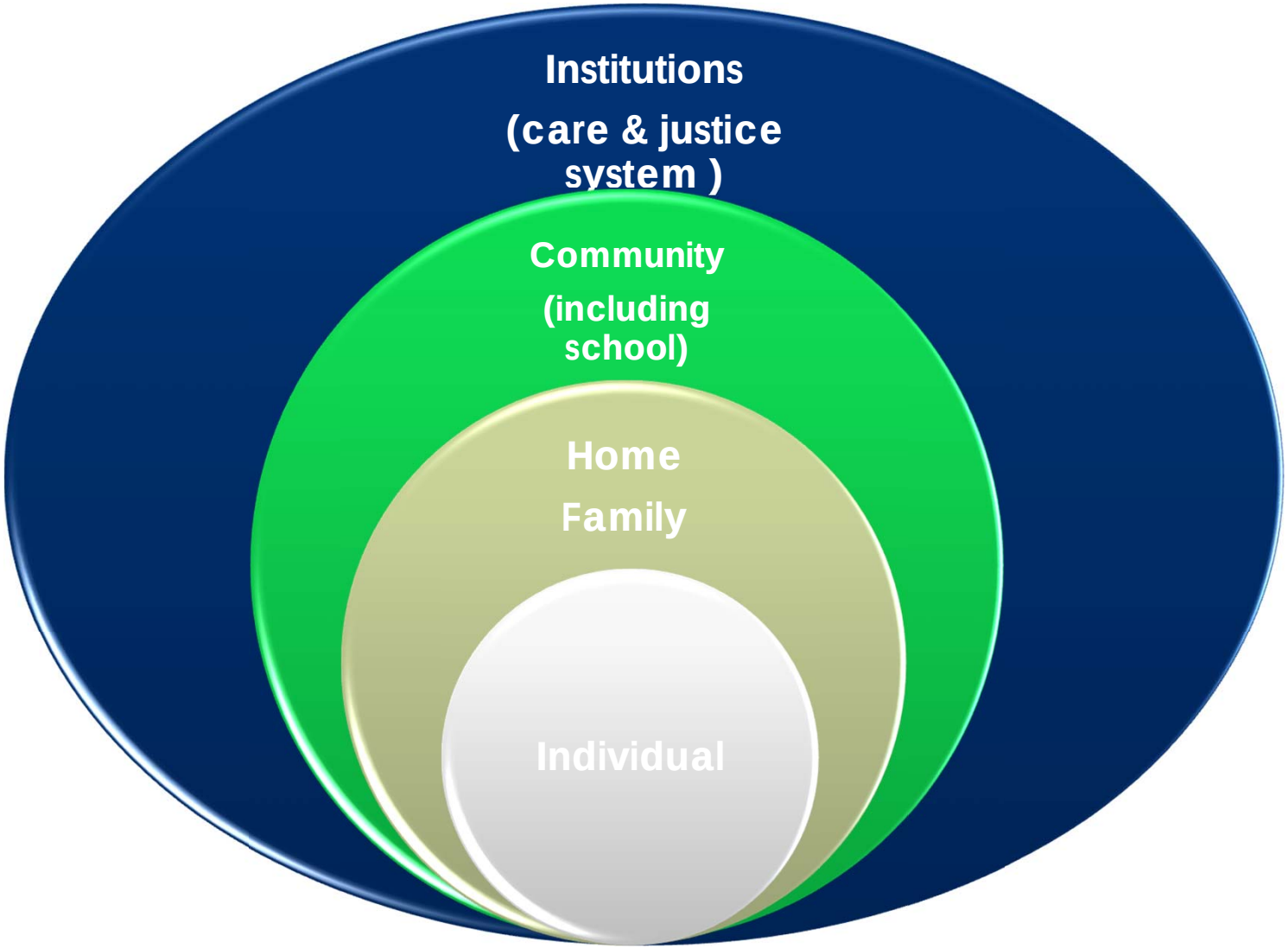
- Physical
- Verbal
- Indirect

Suicide
Substance abuse
Alcohol abuse
Delinquent behaviour
Mental Health problems
Conduct problems

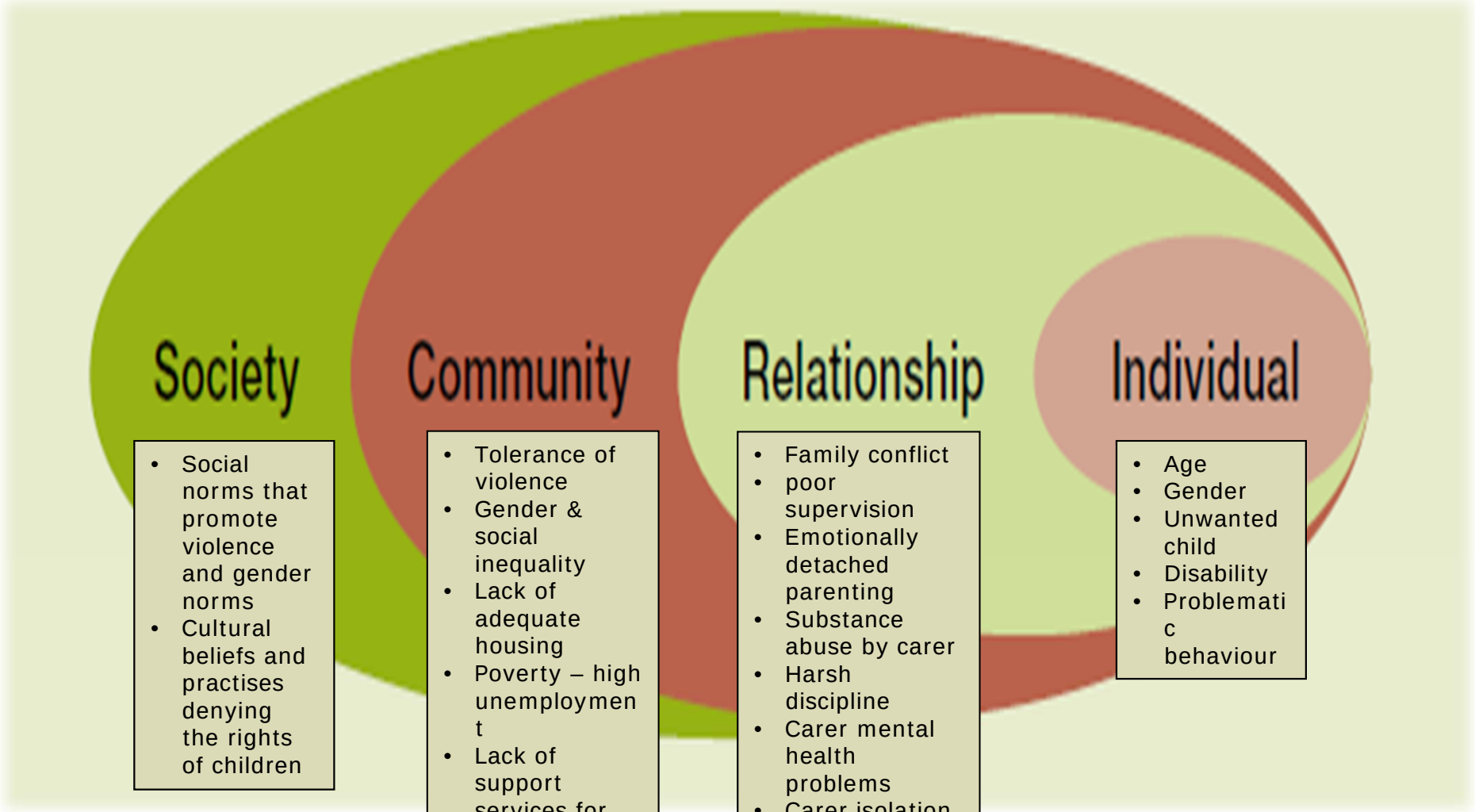
Forms of violence through the lifespan



Where does violence occur?



Risk factors for Violence Against Children



Child Murders in RSA

Child murders in RSA

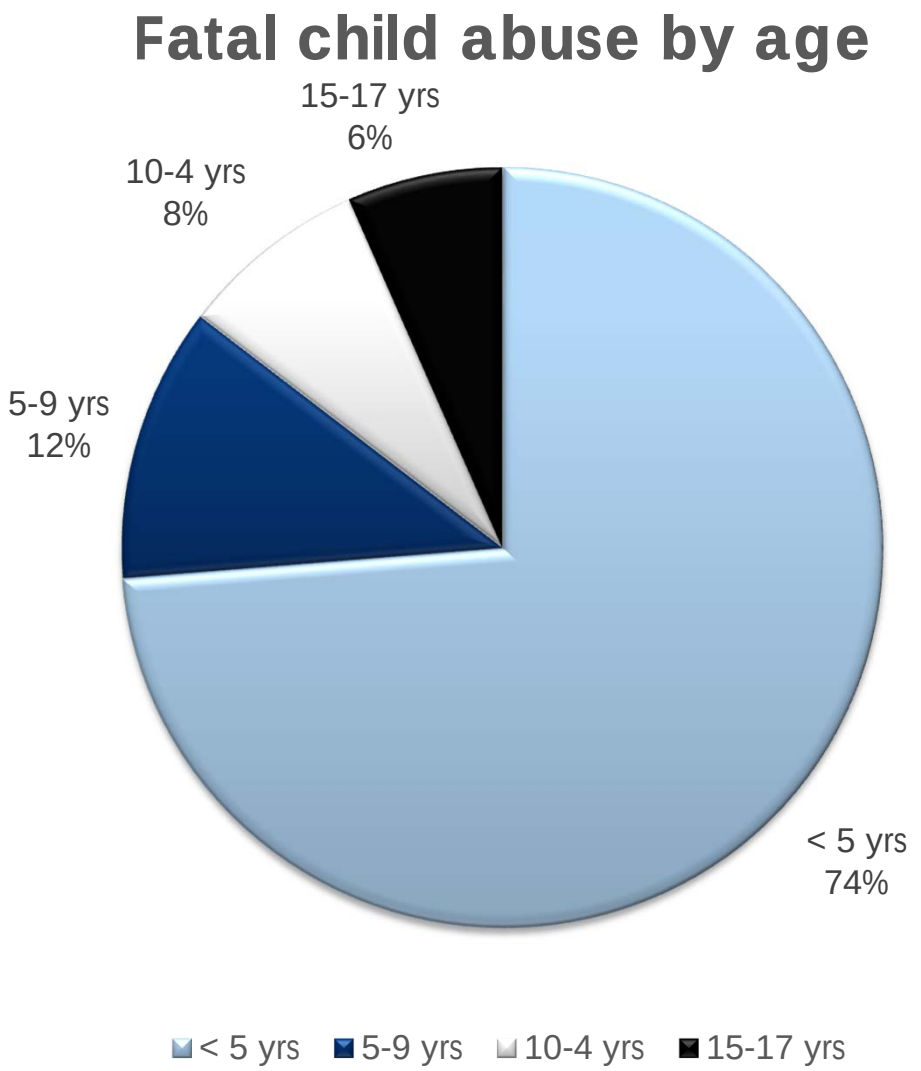
- 1018 children < 18 years murdered in South Africa in 2009
  - 3 children murdered per day in SA (double the global rate)
- Child homicide rate of 5.5 per 100 000 children
- (Global rate 2.4/100 000 children)
- Male child homicide rate – 6.9/100 000 (driven by interpersonal violence among teens)
- Female child homicide rate – 3.9/100 000

Matthews S, et al WHO Bulletin 2013

Fatal Child Abuse

45 % (454) of all child homicides were child abuse or neglect related

74% of children killed in the context of abuse were under 5 years old



Matthews S, et al WHO Bulletin 2013

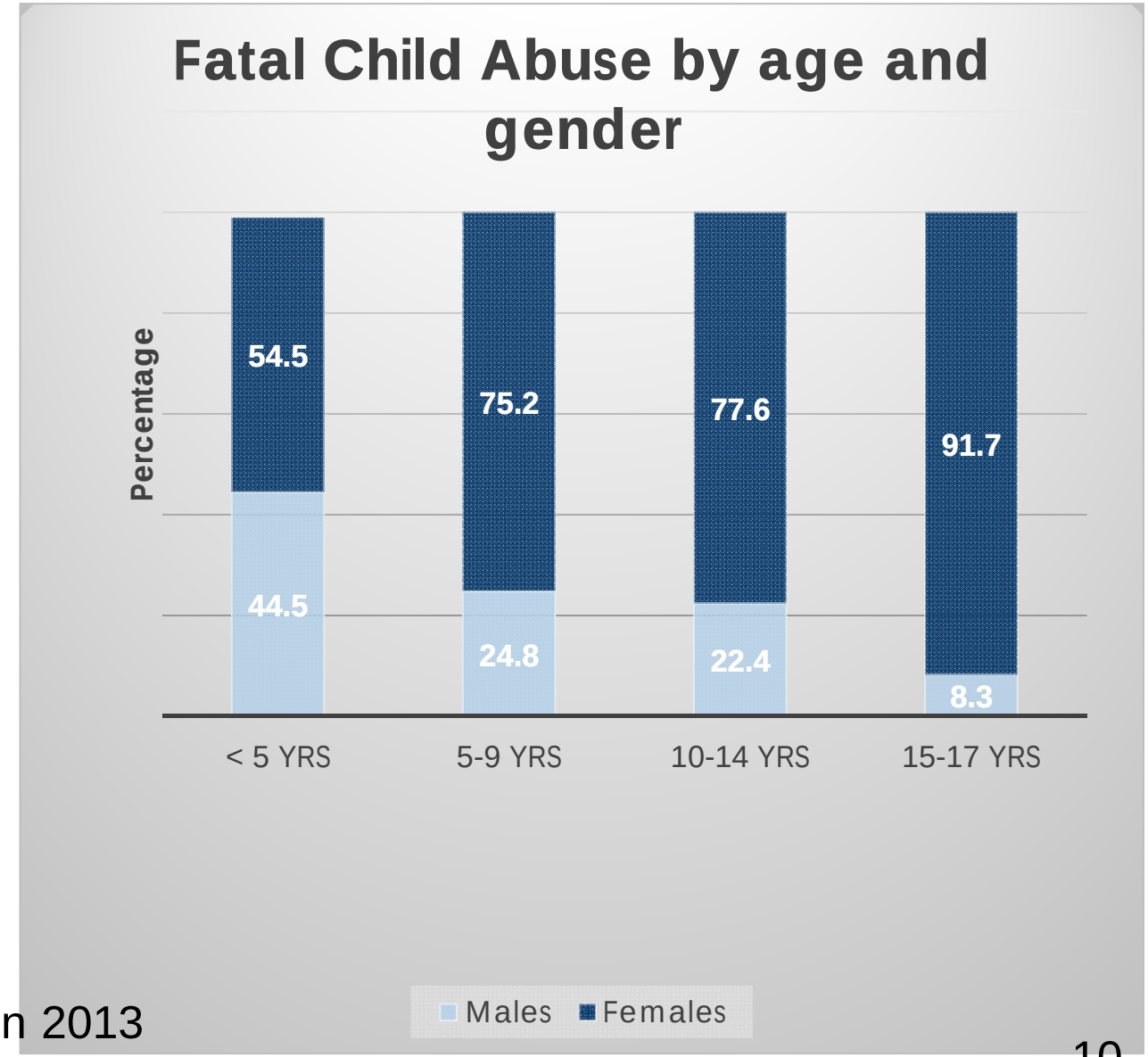
Fatal child abuse

- More girls deaths were linked to child abuse and neglect.
- This was consistent across all ages except for the under 5 age group

Rape and child murders

- Overall rape homicide was suspected in 10% of child homicide cases.
- Problem mainly affecting girls

Matthews S, et al WHO Bulletin 2013

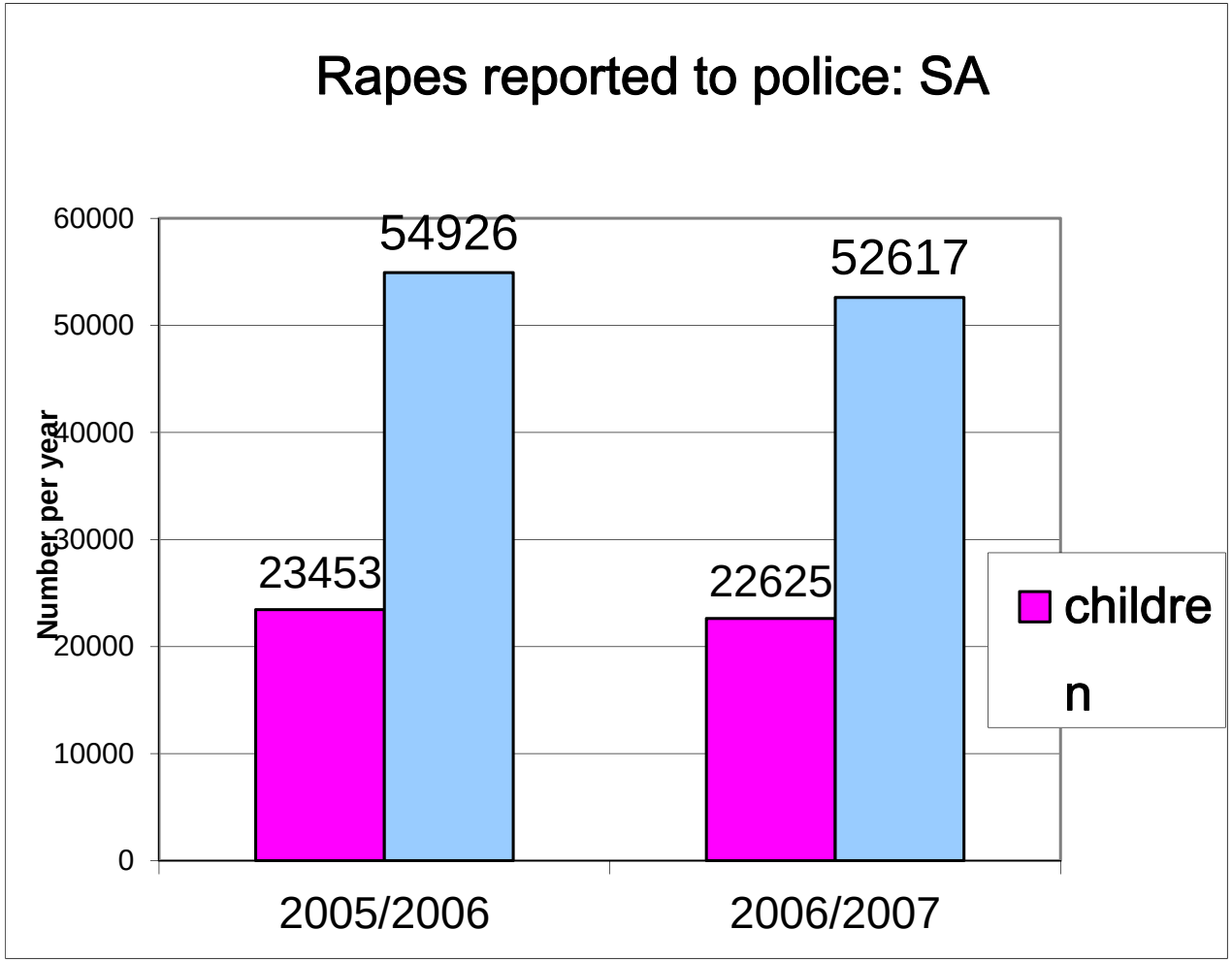


Child Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse

Child sexual assault

- **Between 40-50% of the rapes reported to SA police are children under the age of 18 years**

SAPS 2005-2006



Child sexual abuse contributes risky sexual behaviours

Childhood sexual abuse → Greater likelihood of teen pregnancy, STIs

↘ Increased "risk" behaviors such as sex with many partners, unprotected sex

↓ Younger age at first intercourse

Physical & Emotional Abuse in Children

PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE: In the past 6 months, how often did your caregivers or other adults:		**(2013)** **AT LEAST ONCE**
PHYSICAL ABUSE:		
Use a stick, belt or other hard item to hit you		17 %
Make you stand or kneel in an uncomfortable position for a long time		10 %
Slap, punch, hit, pinch or pull your ear/hair so that you were hurt or had marks		19 %
In the past 6 months, has a teacher beaten or physically punished you		34 %
EMOTIONAL ABUSE:		
Single you out to do household chores all day instead of school or play		13 %
Threaten to hurt you or give you bad grades		11 %
Say they would call ghosts or evil spirits or harmful people		8 %
Tell you they wished they did not have to look after you or make you feel you are a burden		14 %
Make you feel unwelcome in the home		18 %
Say that you would be sent away or kicked out of the house		17 %
Call you dumb, lazy or other names		29 %

Matthews C, personal communication

PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE: In the past 6 months, how often did your caregivers or other adults:	**(2013) WEEKLY**	**(2013) AT LEAST ONCE**
PHYSICAL ABUSE:		
Use a stick, belt or other hard item to hit you	5 %	17 %
Make you stand or kneel in an uncomfortable position for a long time	4 %	10 %
Slap, punch, hit, pinch or pull your ear/hair so that you were hurt or had marks	6 %	19 %
In the past 6 months, has a teacher beaten or physically punished you		34 %
EMOTIONAL ABUSE:		
Single you out to do household chores all day instead of school or play	5 %	13 %
Threaten to hurt you or give you bad grades	5 %	11 %
Say they would call ghosts or evil spirits or harmful people	3 %	8 %
Tell you they wished they did not have to look after you or make you feel you are a burden	4 %	14 %
Make you feel unwelcome in the home	5 %	18 %
Say that you would be sent away or kicked out of the house	5 %	17 %
Call you dumb, lazy or other names	11 %	29 %

Matthews C, personal communication

PREVALENCE OF ANY ONE FORM OF PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE AT THE HANDS OF ADULTS AT LEAST ONCE 2013

PHYSICAL ABUSE			EMOTIONAL ABUSE		
Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
28 %	31 %	26 %	42 %	42 %	42%

Grade 8 students **Average age = 13**

Matthews C, personal communication

PREVALENCE OF ANY ONE FORM OF PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE AT THE HANDS OF ADULTS WEEKLY 2013

PHYSICAL ABUSE			EMOTIONAL ABUSE		
Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
9 %	12 %	8 %	18 %	19 %	18%

Grade 8 students **Average age = 13**

Matthews C, personal communication

BOTH PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL ABUSE WERE ASSOCIATED WITH:

1. Suicide attempts
2. Substance use
3. Increased use of Alcohol
4. Delinquent behaviour (e.g. stealing, vandalism)
5. Mental Health problems
6. Conduct problems

Bullying

PEER TO PEER VIOLENCE: In the last 6 months:	**(2013) MORE THAN 4 x**	**(2013) AT LEAST ONCE**
ANY FORM OF BULLYING:	16 %	32 %
PHYSICAL BULLYING: Punching, kicking, beating you up, hurting you physically or threatening	6 %	12 %
VERBAL BULLYING: Making fund of you, calling you names, swearing at you	13 %	27 %
INDIRECT BULLYING: Refusing to talk with you, breaking or damaging something of yours, trying to get you into trouble with friends	8 %	17 %

Matthews C, personal communication

PHYSICAL BULLYING

WAS ASSOCIATED WITH:

1. Suicide attempts
2. Increased use of Alcohol
3. Delinquent behaviour
4. Mental health problems
5. Conduct problems

VERBAL BULLYING

WAS ASSOCIATED WITH:

1. Suicide attempts
2. Mental Health problems
3. Increased use of Alcohol
4. Delinquent behaviour
5. Mental health problems
6. Conduct problems

INDIRECT BULLYING

WAS ASSOCIATED WITH:

1. Suicide attempts
2. Delinquent behaviour
3. Mental Health problems
4. Conduct problems

Maltreatment of Children

Adversity(maltreatment) in Childhood before age of 18 yrs

	Women	Men
Emotional Neglect (often or very often)	19.2%	15.5%
Emotional abuse (often or very often)	22.9%	22.0%
Physical Hardship (often or very often)	35.0%	20.8%
Physical punishment (often or very often)	73.8%	84.9%
Sexual abuse (often or very often)	15.2%	3.9%
Sexual abuse (sometimes / often/very often)	39.0%	16.7%

Forced first sex < 18 years

Eastern Cape: (2003-4) 1415 Female 1367 Male	 18.8% female - forced or tricked 1.4% men - forced or tricked
Western Cape: Khayelitsha (1995-6) Pregnant and non-pregnant young women < 19yrs	 31.9 % pregnant women 18.1% non–pregnant women
Soweto (2001-2) Women attending antenatal clinic	7.3% experienced forced first sex 8% raped as a child (before age 15yrs)
Gauteng (2010)	8.5% forced first sex

SAMRC, personal communication

Exposure to child maltreatment is a well-researched factor for Violence Against Women

- Having witnessed abuse of one's mother is associated increased perpetration of sexual violence towards women more than threefold
- More than half of adult women who had ever faced domestic violence had experienced violence in childhood and more than one third had witnessed mother's abuse.
- Other research studies showed that child sexual assault and forced first intercourse resulted in a greater subsequent risk of physical and/or sexual partner violence and sexual assault by a non-partner.
  - 67.5% of the men who raped were teased and harassed as a child as opposed to 49.5% for the men who had not raped.
- Childhood exposure to violence may increase the acceptance of violence either as a victim or perpetrator

Psychological impact after sexual assault among 8-17 year olds

- **Study assessed psychological adjustment of children post sexual assault**
  - high levels of mental health symptomatology found with nearly half of all the children meeting the clinical diagnostic criteria for anxiety,
  - over two-thirds of children meeting the criteria for full symptom of PTSD
  - one in four children still showed clinically significant levels of anxiety nearly six months after disclosure of the sexual assault
  - PTSD was persistent with 43.3% of children still meeting the criteria for full diagnosis nearly six months post-disclosure.
- **Services**
  - Few children access mental health services
    - service level barriers
    - support by caregivers not always adequate or sustained

Impact of childhood adversity/ maltreatment

- **Women**
  - Increase risk for HIV among women who experience emotional, sexual and physical abuse as a child
  - Depression and alcohol abuse in adulthood among women was also associated with sexual abuse and emotional neglect in childhood
- **Men**
  - Alcohol abuse as a adult was associated with physical hardship, sexual abuse and emotional abuse

- **Emotional neglect during childhood had the most impact on both men and women and was associated with alcohol abuse, depression, suicidality and HSV2**

Violence experienced across racial groups

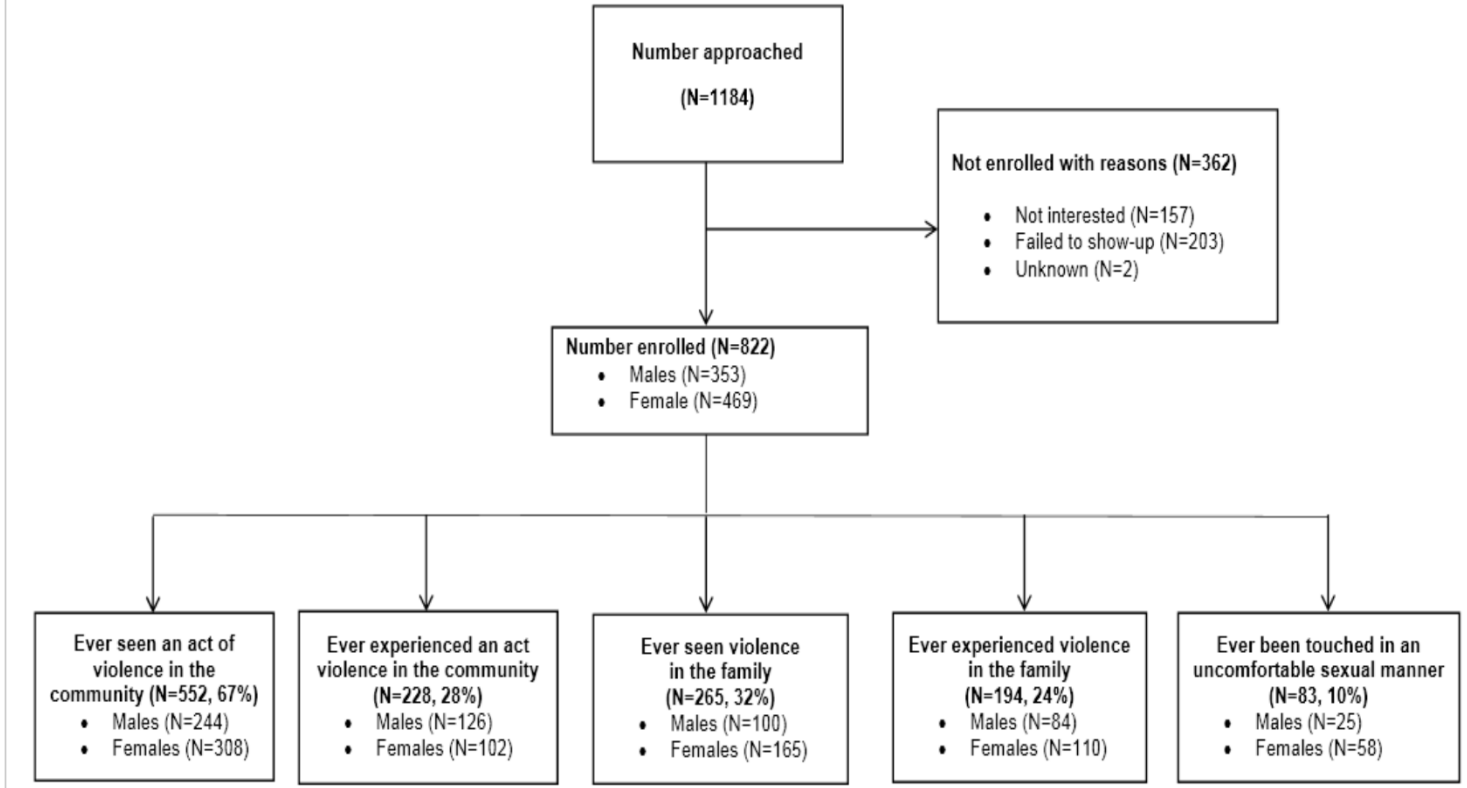


Figure 1: Participant Disposition Flow Chart of Violent Experiences

Otwombe K, et al submitted 2014

- **Reported sexual violence (n=83):**
  - **Blacks (10%, 49/506)**
  - **Coloured (5%, 5/107)**
  - **Indian (10%, 11/106)**
  - **Whites (17%, 18/103)**

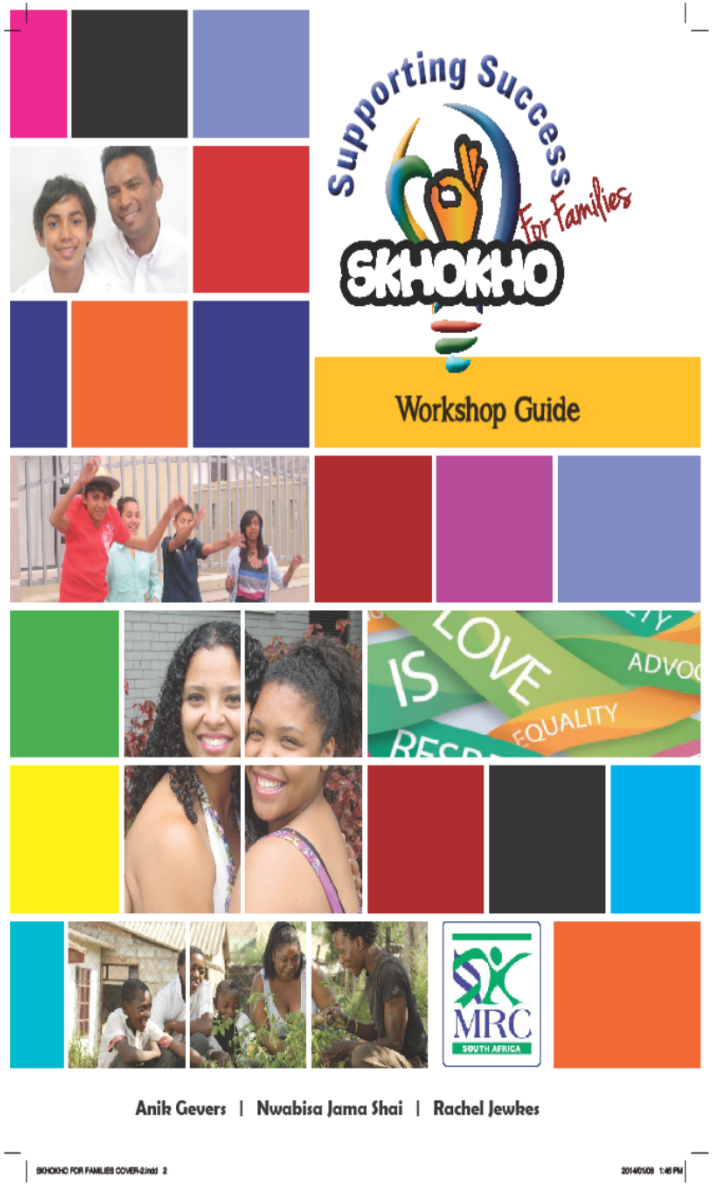
Otwombe K, et al submitted 2014

Interventions

- **Prevention is critical and we need research to understand what works**
  - **Working with teens and parenting interventions have been recognized as having potential to prevent violence against children and as adults**
- **The SAMRC Gender & Health Research Unit developed a intervention for teens and their parents. This is currently being evaluated in Gauteng schools**

Skhokho Supporting Success

- **AIM: Prevention of sexual and intimate partner violence among teens**
- **INTERVENTION: Multi-faceted school-based intervention**
  - **Supporting Success for Teens: LO workbook**
  - **Supporting Success for Schools: (a) support workshops for LO educators; (b) skills workshops for educators; (c) learner clubs for change**
  - **Supporting Success for Families: workshops for parents and teens promoting nurturing relationships, open communication, positive discipline, and adaptive coping skills**
- **EVALUATION: 3-arm cluster RCT with pre, post, and two follow up (12 + 18 months) surveys and some qualitative inquiry with adolescents, educators, and parents**
- **RESULTS: Expected 2016; qualitative feedback has been very positive**


Supporting Success
For Families
SKHOKHO
Workshop Guide
Anik Gevers | Nwabisa Jama Shai | Rachel Jewkes

Supporting Success
For Teens
SKHOKHO
GRADE
8
LIFE
ORIENTATION
Learner Workbook
You
Tube
Rachel Jewkes | Anik Gevers | Nomathamsanqa Pityana

South African framework

SA Constitution (section 28)

Every child has the right – (d) to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse and degradation

Obligations:

- **To prevent violence against children**
- **To protect children from further harm if the have experienced violence**
- **To support and treat children to restore physical and psychological wellbeing post experiencing violence**

Summary

- The homicide study showed that more than thousand children died from homicide in 2009
- Nearly 3 children a day die from homicide
- Three distinct problems are highlighted by the study:
  - Abandoned babies, fatal child abuse and male teenage interpersonal violence
- Fatal child abuse and neglect deaths are underestimated due to weaknesses in identifying such deaths
- The murder of children is preventable and we have a responsibility to see that children are protected.
- It is essential that we collectively develop and implement a national strategy to address child murders in South Africa.

Recommendations

- Child abuse cases should be detected before they become fatal – increased resources and training of child protection services is imperative if we aim to make homes and communities safer.
- Interventions and Prevention strategies should be evidence based:
  - Contraception and abortion services must be strengthened
  - Male teenage homicide – programmes targeting boys at risk at schools
  - Vulnerability of girl children reflects their position in society
- All child homicides must be identified and investigated. The Children's Act mandates all medical professionals who suspects NAI to report this for further investigation, this include your pathologist.
- Strengthening the identification of child abuse fatalities through the establishment of a child fatality review system can enhance our current practise as this can assist the police in their investigation and holding someone accountable for the child's death.

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