



Tackling Challenging Behaviour In Children Through Psychological Training Sessions



Pictures: Christopher Masia

Participants at the Behavior Modification Training at Southern Sun International in Pretoria

By Matlaba Machethe

Bullying, mental health disorders, violence, serious defiance, and aggressiveness are among the challenging behaviours that officials at Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs) are faced with on a daily basis.

To tackle that, the Gauteng Department of Social Development's Psychological Services has embarked on a nine-day behaviour modification training at the Southern Sun Hotel.

This aims to implement behaviour modification as a strategy to shape the behaviours of children and youth by minimising disruptive and undesirable behaviours while increasing positive and desirable behaviours among the kids in the institutions.

The training sessions engaged with the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) officials about the challenges they face in CYCCs and displayed the level of knowledge they possess when it comes to dealing with children admitted to these institutions.

The sessions are designed to equip MDTs with the skills for interacting with children who show negative behaviours and strategies for modifying positive or desirable behaviours.

These children may display undesirable behaviours due to the background and environment they come from, which are often characterised by violence, neglect, and substance abuse. As such, the CYCCs deal with children that display extremely complex and challenging behaviours, who need skills as well as techniques to help shape their behaviours and help them become good citizens who contribute positively to society.

The programme aims to ensure that the MDTs are equipped with the knowledge and skills to participate together in managing and contributing positively to shaping the children's behaviours. The MDTs play a very crucial role in the CYCC; these are representatives from care sections who possess knowledge about service users, psychiatrists, psychologists, or mental health professionals; Occupational therapists; case managers; and Social Workers responsible for the service users.

Thembisile Sibanyoni, a Child and Youth Care Worker from Emmasdal CYCC, came into the training sessions with the expectation of being taught new techniques and tools for interacting with the children and she left training with the knowledge of reinforcing positive behaviour and parenting styles.

She added "The implementation of these strategies is applicable to modifying behaviour and the instructions are easy to follow".

The psychological services team of coordinators and organisers extend gratitude to the department and the opportunity to learn from other officials. The team added that as much as this is an intervention with various techniques meant to reduce or eliminate maladaptive behaviours as well as increase or develop new, desirable behaviours, it is also an opportunity to bring MDT officials together and share knowledge amongst each other.

Behaviour modification is concerned with analysing and changing human behaviour.

Government Takes Services Closer To Citizens



Pictures: Eric Malema

Impumelelo disabled protective workshop beneficiary Beyonce Adams during Thusong Service Centre Week in Muldersdrift

By Teddy Gomba and Eric Malema

Government, working with communities and social partners countrywide, hosted the Annual Thusong Service Centre Week from 18 - 22 September 2023.

This year's Thusong Service Centre Week was held under the theme, "Building a Professional Public Service for Quality Service Delivery."

In Gauteng, The Thusong Service Centre Week was held in Muldersdrift, West of Johannesburg, on Wednesday.

The Thusong Service Centre Week forms part of the Integrated Public Service Month, which aims to promote the value of Thusong Service Centres, which continue to offer communities access to services and information about opportunities to people like 18-year-old Beyonce Adams from Impumelelo Disabled, a protective workshop in Krugersdorp where she is getting skills on art (painting) and she said she learned a lot on the day (about government services).

"I came to this event because I wanted to be assisted by SASSA as I have not been getting my grant money since I moved in with my mother. I used to get my grant money when I was staying with my sister, but I'm not getting it anymore because my sister has my grant card", she said.

South Africans are encouraged to visit their nearest Thusong Service Centres to explore the array of services offered at their local centres. Like 74-year-old Richard Phuti from Honeydew informal settlement. Phuti said he was grateful that Home Affairs was there to assist with IDs. He said they are happy services have been brought to them as they are unemployed and taxis are expensive.

The Thusong Service Centre Program was initiated in 1999 to widen the reach of government services in an integrated manner. The Annual Thusong Service Centre Week was piloted in September 2014.

The campaign, which is in its ninth year, seeks to demonstrate and share how these centres continue to better the lives of communities.

During this year's campaign, the government consulted communities on how the centres can be improved, although government and various partners are making solid advances in tackling some of the operational challenges centres have faced.

The activities of the Thusong Service Week will profile the work of public servants, particularly front-line officials based at Thusong Service Centres and their contribution to the envisioned efficient Public Service, which is putting people first.

During this year's Thusong Service Centre week, mobile outreach activities have been planned to provide access to services and information closer to citizens. Partnerships have been forged with different organizations and the private sector to better communicate and share available opportunities to the citizens.

Thusong Service Centres have made it easier for citizens to access ID documents, birth and marriage certificates, computer training, health services, and UIF applications. All citizens are invited to visit www.gcis.gov.za to locate the centre closest to them.



Pictures: Supplied

Ke Moja Coaches To Intensify Peer Education Following High Cases Of Suicides In Gauteng Schools, Writes Phetoho Maja

The Gauteng Department of Social Development has deployed 500 Ke Moja Coaches to assist with substance abuse awareness programmes in schools following alleged suicides of over 40 learners in the province since the beginning of the 2023 academic year.

Gauteng MEC for Education, Matome Chiloane has welcomed the deployment and reiterated that it will deal with addressing the root causes of such actions.

In a statement, MEC Chiloane said suicide was a bleak reality and one of the leading causes of death among young people, and that learners in schools are confronted by a variety of problems, including drugs and substance abuse, which leaves them feeling vulnerable, hopeless, and overwhelmed.

While the province witnessed several tragic and premature deaths of learners who took the painful decision of ending their lives, it was important to draw interventions to deal with the concerning and alarming numbers of learner suicides and deaths.

The Ke Moja Coaches and its Coordinators will play a critical role in bringing about substance abuse prevention programmes to 727 schools in Gauteng.

This includes 103 Puppet Coaches who specialise in using puppetry as a creative tool to convey messages, 102 Alternatives Coaches who are targeting youth out of school through poetry, dance, music, drama and physical fitness, and 43 Coordinators who play a decisive role in the overall coordination of the programme in 23 Non-Profit Organisations.

'Ke Moja' which means 'I am fine without Drugs', is a brand name for the South African Government geared towards drug and substance abuse prevention.

Ke Moja was launched by former Minister of Social Development, the late Zola Sekweyiya to focus on strengthening and building capacity, self-reliance and resilience of young people while addressing individual, environmental and societal factors to create conditions

that enhance wellness and ultimately prevent social challenges or risks.

The programme is implemented mainly in primary and secondary schools as well as tertiary institutions. It aims at sustaining a drug free environment in which learners and the youth enjoy their freedom by developing intellectually, socially, economically, emotionally, spiritually, and physically.

Furthermore, to help children and the youth, to avoid initiation into the use of drugs, or, if they have already started, to avoid developing disorders such as dependence.

According to the 2020/24 Deliverology Plan for the Gauteng Department of Social Development, the Department is mandated to reduce the demand for drugs through the rollout of substance abuse prevention programmes to 8 280 420 children, youth and adults by 2024.

The Gauteng Department of Social Development is implementing the programme in all five (5) Regions or Corridors of the province, in partnership with the NPO sector.

The NPOs are contracted to appoint coaches that implement the programme at identified high risk schools. African Youth Development Fund (AYDF) conducts continuous capacity building, training and monitoring of the implementation of the programme.

The success of the programme prompted the Department to continue with training of new coaches and provide them with a certificate of participation on an annual basis.

Each year, since 2013, the Department hosts a certification and award ceremony to acknowledge the best performing coaches and implementing organisations. This serves as motivation to continue with service excellence and also serves as an encouragement to improve service delivery.

A Once Delinquent Masango Turns His Life Around, Thanks To The Department



Pictures: Eric Malema

Kitso Lesedi volunteer Sfiso Masango preparing breakfast for homeless people

By Madali Chibambu

34-year-old Sfiso Masango from Soshanguve in Tshwane has been homeless after he escaped death from an angry community who wanted to burn him alive.

Three years ago Masango was almost a victim of "necklacing", an act where a car tyre is placed on one's neck and they pour a flammable liquid and set it alight. Sadly that also happened to him.

He was saved by the police who took him to George Mukhari Hospital in Garankuwa, where he spent a few months recovering after both his legs were broken.

Masango said before being attacked, his mother received a phone call from an angry community that they were about to kill her son.

Her mother's response was that they could do whatever they wanted with him. She was also tired of him. In no time, the house where his mother was staying with a stepfather was surrounded by an angry mob, who started hitting him with rocks and everything they could lay their hands on and placed tyres around his neck, fortunately police arrived.

After being discharged from hospital, he did not have a place to stay because his family did not want him anymore, and no one visited him even when he was still in hospital, and that's when he realised that he was on his own.

He sought shelter under the bridge not far from Marabastad. It was here that he continued with his criminality. Masango said his new family used him to steal at a local shop

"At time I was in pain, using crutches to walk but since I did not have someone to go to, I was forced to obey the rules of the 'elders' under the bridge to go and steal," Masango explains.

"Life on the streets is a living hell as one experiences people who are dying from drugs and cold, but thanks to Kitso Lesedi Development Community Centre, which is funded by the Gauteng Department of Social Development for giving me a second chance. I have completed courses in baking and computer end users. I am helping with cooking and preparing food for the homeless daily," he said.

Masango has a National Senior Certificate and said this is the beginning of new leaf in his life and he wants to continue with his studies. His dream is to become a Drug Addiction Counsellor for the homeless.

Masango told Weekly Bulletin that he has now moved out from the shelter and was now renting a flat with his friend with the stipend they receive from Kitso Lesedi Development Community. He says he is looking for a job as a car mechanic, and he can also bake different kinds of cakes.

Masango shared his story during a visit to Kitso Lesedi Development Centre which is funded by the Gauteng Department of Social Development to assess and monitor the implementation of social policy that both creates an enabling environment for and leads to the reduction in poverty. The Department also ensures the provision of social protection and social welfare services to all people who live in our land.

Honored Seasoned Choir Conductor Serves With Pride



Pictures: Tenda Ngoza

Senior citizen's choir conductor Reggy Nkwane

By Lawrence Mashabela

One of the distinctive Tshwane senior citizen's choir conductor Reggy Nkwane from Mamelodi is happy that his contribution to the Older Person's choirs has been recognized.

The 73-year-old who has been conducting the Tshwane choral choir since 2011 was honored and appreciated by his fellow senior citizens, including Tshwane Older Persons Forum, for his contribution to their well-being through choral music.

A seasoned Choir Conductor, Nkwane said he served both the region and the province with pride in choral music. He said his work speaks for itself. He added that his motto was always to strive to present choirs that are well rehearsed and prepared.

"I am proud of the contribution that I made to the senior citizen's healthy lifestyle through choral music", he said.

Nkwane reminisced on how he used to interact with retired Lawyers, Nurses, and Teachers when he was preparing their voices and teaching them how to sing in what he describes as a humbling moment.

"It could have been anyone else, but I was chosen to do that and for that I am grateful to the Gauteng Department of Social Development for giving me the opportunity to showcase my talent even in my golden years", he added.

Nkwane said he cannot describe the love and appreciation he has experienced amongst the senior citizens who were part of the departmental active aging program.

Nkwane said that the respect shown by his fellow choir conductors and choristers humbled him dearly. He encourages other seniors to come and join them, adding that music is a good thing, especially when aging, because it keeps you happy and so relieved of many problems.

"I am extremely excited to be honored like this while I am still alive because it is not always the case where people who contributed positively to other people's lives in the name of serving gets this kind of gesture and recognition, and from the bottom of my heart I want to thank people who took the initiative and everyone who was involved in making sure that I get this appreciation" Nkwane added.

Over the years, Nkwane said he has been a conductor for various choirs, including Pretoria Serenades male voice choir. He was also the founder of Ga-Rankuwa Adult choir, which also went to Israel in 1986.

However, Nkwane said it is very unfortunate because schools are no longer playing their role of teaching young children music literacy and children are no longer active in music and sports which is painful as our children won't have anything to keep them away from social ills.

Garankuwa Community Outreach

 Pictures: Eric Malema



Behavior Modification Training at Southern Sun Pretoria

📷 Pictures: Christopher Masia



Kitso Lesedi Staff Preparing Breakfast, Lunch and Supper for Homeless People

 Pictures: Eric Malema



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