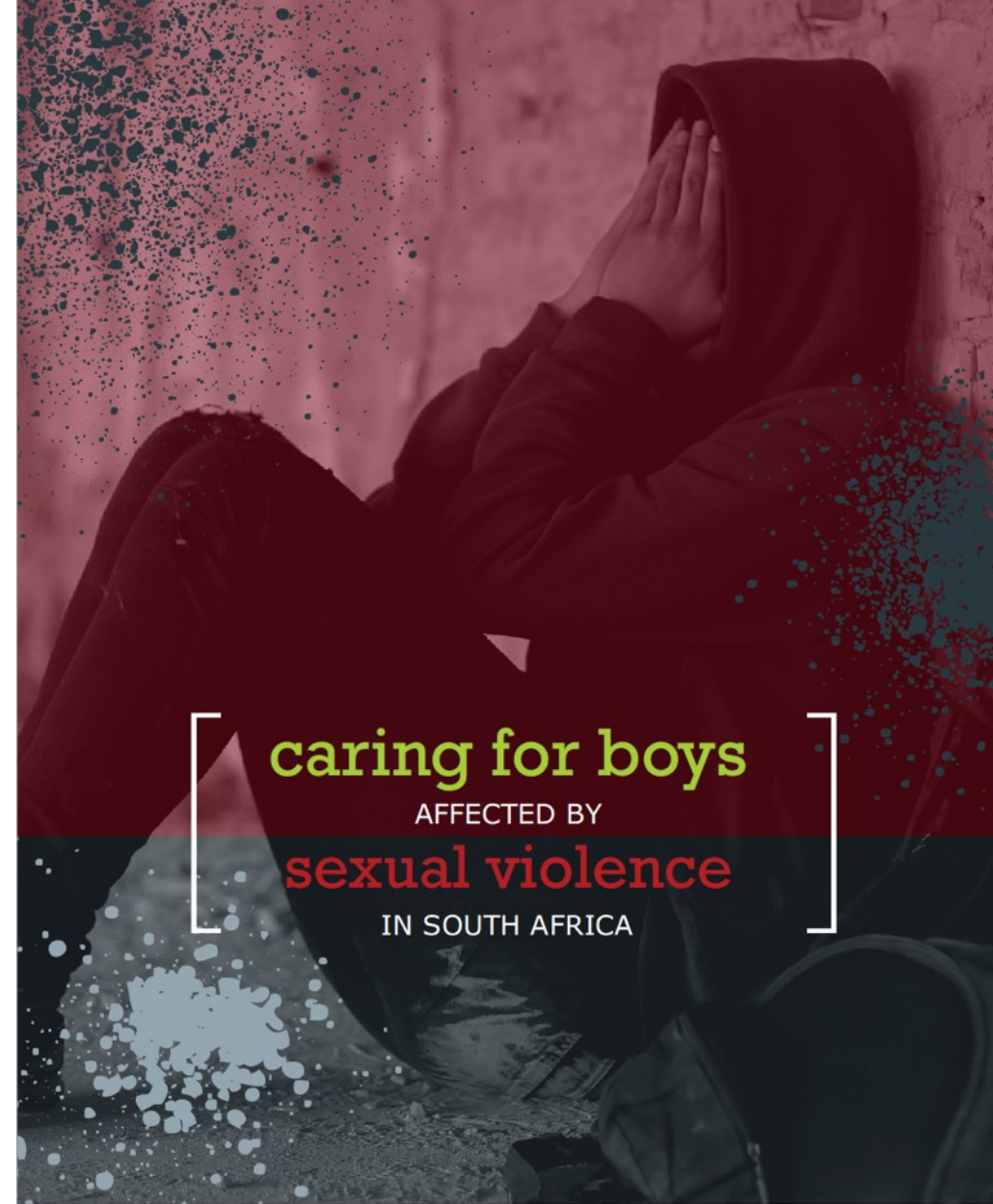


WELCOME

Please ensure your video is off and your microphone is on mute. Thank you.

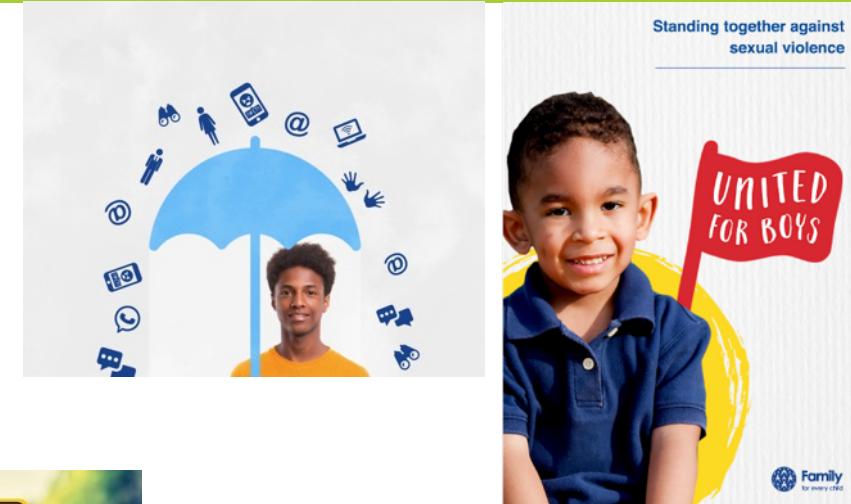
Programme

- Introduction
- Overview of global research
- Research in South Africa
 - Methodology
 - Findings
 - Risk and protective factors
 - Recommendations
- Questions and answers



About Family for Every Child

- A diverse, global alliance of 41 local civil society organisations in 37 countries
- As an alliance we work with the millions of children in extended family care, alternative care, detention, and those on the move or without adequate care in their own families
- Our goals: preventing family separation, strengthening families, ensuring high quality alternative care when needed and protecting children outside of any care
- Our two recent campaigns: United for Boys
Blue Umbrella Day Campaign
www.blueumbrelladay.org
- [RISE Learning Network Community](#)



Context: Caring for Boys Affected by Sexual Violence Global Scoping Study

Practice Exchange on child sexual abuse among member organisations in 2017 in the Philippines

- Purpose: to gain better understanding on social norms around gender influencing care of boys affected by sexual violence and what is already being done

Global scoping study entitled [Caring for Boys Affected by Sexual Violence](#) in 2018

- A reference group guided the design of the study: Philippines, Cambodia, Nepal, India and Indonesia



Design, methodology and ethics

Caring for Boys Affected by Sexual Violence



Specific questions:

- What exists on the drivers of sexual violence affecting boys?
- What promising or best practice interventions exist with evidence of demonstrable effectiveness?

The study explored both:

- Sexual abuse experienced by boys, including sexual exploitation, and
- Harmful sexual behaviour of boys
- Collectively referred to as sexual violence
- Why both: NOT to imply one leads to the other

Terminology:

- *Harmful sexual behaviour of children is sexual activity where one individual has not consented, or where their relationship includes an imbalance of power, for example due to age, intellectual ability, physical ability or impairment (disability), or physical strength*

Methodology and ethics:

- Review of 100+ documents in English, Spanish and French
- 20 semi-structured key informant interviews
- Ethical protocol designed and used

Findings and recommendations

Findings

- Sexual violence affecting boys remains largely **unknown, unacknowledged and not responded to**
- **Addressing gendered social norms** is critical as they:
 - influence perceptions of boys' vulnerability
 - obstruct disclosure, identification and recognition of harm and support
 - Some groups of boys are at **heightened risk**
- Sexual violence can be a cause or consequence of **family separation**
- A focus on **prevention** of family separation **and reintegration**
- **Child protection systems** need to better meet the needs of boys
- Response **services appear to be lacking** for boys and **may not be appealing**
- **Any intervention needs to be scalable and involve children** in design

Recommendations

- In-depth **qualitative research with meaningful participation**
- Further **learning through research and well-evaluated pilot interventions**



Caring for Boys: primary research findings Asia and Zimbabwe



A collective approach to research design and methodology

Objectives:

- identify common and context-specific knowledge
- identify effective or strong potential interventions for prevention and response
- raise awareness on this issue

Design:

- qualitative, using range of participatory techniques & traditional methods
- Asia:

Ethics

- an overriding priority with a research & ethical protocol specific for the study

Overview of Findings:

Asia:

- The notion of “real men”
- Boys and sexuality
- Boys and sexual abuse – victims and actors
- Support available for boys affected by sexual violence

Zimbabwe:

- Boys are tougher and stronger
- Boys are sexually assertive, heterosexual, dominant and in control of their emotions

The recent webinar recording where these research were shared can be found in this [link](#).

You're invited

to join the social network
for child rights practitioners



Changemakers
for children

changemakersforchildren.community

INTRODUCTION TO SOUTH AFRICAN RESEARCH



caring for boys
AFFECTED BY
sexual violence
IN SOUTH AFRICA

Research questions

Masculinity and sexuality

- How are masculinity and sexuality socially constructed?
- How are the dominant notions of masculinity reflected in the lived experiences of boys?
- How are the dominant notions of sexuality reflected in the lived experiences of boys?

Sexual violence

- What are the links between the dominant notions of sexuality and masculinity and sexual abuse of boys?
- What are the links between the dominant notions of sexuality and masculinity and harmful sexual behaviour of boys?

Interventions

- What support and interventions exist for boys affected by sexual violence?
- What are people's experiences of accessing support and interventions?
- What gaps exist?



Methodology and ethics

- Collaboration between CINDI and Childline
- Ethical approval through HSRC Research Ethics Committee
- Two research sites - Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal
- Qualitative research
 - ✓ Literature review
 - ✓ Focus group discussions
 - ✓ Individual interviews

| Data collection method and sample group | Number of participants | | | Total |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------|----------|------------|
| | KZN | Limpopo | National | |
| Individual interviews with boys affected by sexual violence | 6 | 6 | | 12 |
| Individual interviews with mothers of boys affected by sexual violence | 6 | 6 | | 12 |
| Individual interviews with men from the general population | 4 | | | 8 |
| FGD with boys from general population | 8 | 8 | | 16 |
| FGD with girls from general population | 8 | 8 | | 16 |
| FGD with mothers from general population | 19 | 12 | | 31 |
| Key informant interviews | 2 | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| Total | | | | 103 |

Data collection and analysis

Data collection

- Use of participatory tools
- Vignettes to allow for emotional distance
- Conducted by a known social worker with existing trust relationship
- Risk assessment
- Social workers were experienced in the field of work and received additional training

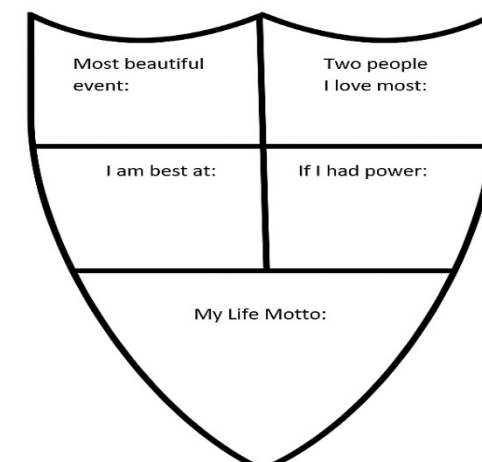
Data analysis

- Interviews were recorded, translated and transcribed
- Transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes in the data

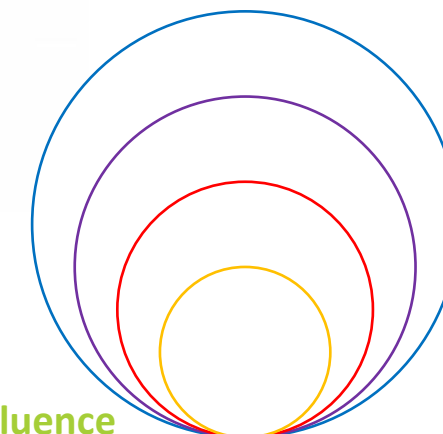
Tree of life



Shield of protection



Spheres of influence



Limitations

- Whilst providing valuable insight, the study cannot be seen to be representative of boys affected by sexual violence in South Africa since data collection was limited to two sites and involved participants from one racial group
- Careful consideration was given to depersonalising questions as much as possible and using participatory methods to allow for emotional distance; however the sensitive nature of the research may still have felt threatening to some respondents
- In addition, for mothers and boys affected by sexual violence some questions may have resonated closely with their own experiences. This was noted in low engagement with certain questions by individual respondents, although this was not consistent across sample groupings

Literature review

- 2016 UBS Optimus study: 36.8% of boys reported some form of sexual abuse
- Childhood sexual abuse risk factor for experiencing AND perpetrating other forms of violence (significant for boys)
- Personal norms about inequitable gender relationships and views on rape also significant determinants in violence perpetration
- Quality of the female caregiver's relationship with the child a protective factor
- Boys report experiencing more non-contact sexual violence and coercion
- Boys tend to externalise their responses to violence as victimising behaviour
- Boys' experiences of sexual violence are not always identified as abusive
- Peer pressure significant influence in forcing boys to engage in unwanted sex or in HSB towards others

FINDINGS: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS OF MASCULINITY AND SEXUALITY

caring for boys
AFFECTED BY
sexual violence
IN SOUTH AFRICA



How are masculinity and sexuality socially constructed?

Men and women, boys and girls had uniform views of what it means to be male

- 5 “Ps”: preferred, powerful, providers, protectors, procreators

“The man is the head in all things, this is the quality of a man.”

“You need to be able to provide get a good job and when you take a wife be able to afford. Also, be able to take care of them. After that the responsibility of a man is that he needs is to be able bare a child and take care of his responsibilities.”

Boyhood has its own social construction

- Specific “boys’ work”, respect of elders, competition in peer groups (hypermasculinity)

“We don’t put him in the kitchen because when he does everything, he will not know his role at home as a boy.”

“Listen and listen. Respect it must be at the top.”

How are masculinity and sexuality socially constructed?

“Real men” are heterosexual

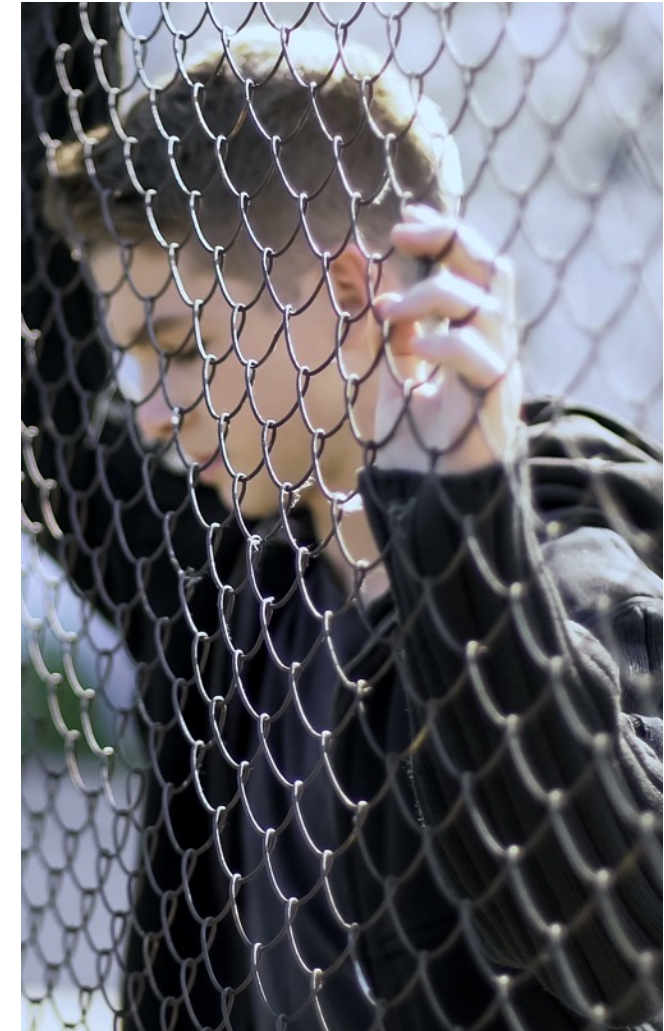
- Homosexuality unacceptable, unnatural, learnt or a disease
- Male sexuality defined in relation to social constructs of masculinity, e.g. sexual virility
- Relationships between boys and girls also described in relation to social constructs of masculinity

Boys learn about masculinity mostly at home from other men (fathers and social fathers)

“There is an isiZulu saying that says, ‘The road to walk is guided by those that have been on a similar road before’...”

Boys learn about sexuality mostly outside of the home

- Main place boys learn about sexuality is the media
- Concerning number mentioned pornography



How are social constructs of masculinity reflected in the lived experiences of boys?

Men and boys experience a lot of pressure to perform

- Boys and men described feeling a lot of pressure from the high expectations of responsibility and success placed on them

“Pressure I would say starts from a very young age....”

“...they boast about having girlfriends when you don’t have one and they will say you’re not into things. They also force you into doing things that you don’t want to do.”

The lived identities of men and boys can be very different to what is idealised

- Male lived identities linked to violence, disrespect, stupidity, pride, stubbornness, money wasting, substance abuse and crime

“They say that boys are dogs, they are not loved...”

“[Men] are abusive, drunkards and problematic people in society...”



How are social constructs of masculinity reflected in the lived experiences of boys?

Mothers find it harder to connect with and parent sons, yet boys consider their mother a close source of support

- Mothers felt disempowered to parent their boys, often linked to absence of a father
“Boys are just observed; parents do not keep them close and spend time with them...”
“If my mom were able to come to my school, I would tell her about the boys that bullied me ...”

The involvement of men in boys lives is important

- Particularly in relation to learning about masculinity, social fathers play a big role

Social norms around masculinity are recognised as sometimes harmful

- Boys experience the greater freedom given to them as lack of care
- Mothers noted is can deny them an adequate response
“We are too overprotective when it comes to female children and we think that the male children are male and therefore can take care of themselves.”

How are social constructs of sexuality reflected in the lived experiences of boys?

Early sexual debut is not desirable, although acknowledged

- Adults acknowledged early sexual debut is common but still considered it neither acceptable nor desirable
- Sex was often referenced alongside child-bearing rather than love or affection

Many boys are involved with pornography

- Little to no parental supervision of online use was apparent

“The one was chatting going around showing the pictures, the other one saw that it his girlfriend, they fought and started hating each other...”

Mothers find it hard to talk to their sons about sex

“We are unable to talk [about sex] to them [boys] that is why they end up taking it from the street.”

Boys are not considered to have control of their sexual urges

“It is because, when some boys wants to have sex nobody can stop them because they have decided that they want to have sex.”

FINDINGS: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS IN RELATION TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND BOYS

caring for boys
AFFECTED BY
sexual violence
IN SOUTH AFRICA



How do dominant notions of sexuality & masculinity link to *sexual abuse* of boys?

Boys are less supervised than girls

“Boys can look after themselves and take responsibility for protecting themselves.”

Sexual abuse in general is not well understood and even less so for boys

- Grooming was understood but not sexual abuse such as exposing children to pornography or asking a child to undress.

“... a male is not a person created to be penetrated.”

Boys are thought to be less harmed by sexual abuse than girls

- Focus was on physical not emotional consequences: pregnancy and STIs

“It is worse, for women it is worse because they are abused in the same area that they need for giving birth”.

- Little acknowledgement of emotional trauma of sexual abuse for either boys or girls
- STIs at times recognised for girls, not recognised as a possibility for boys at all

How do dominant notions of sexuality & masculinity link to *harmful sexual behaviour* of boys?

Harmful sexual behaviour between boys is often linked to homosexuality

- Very strong link that emerged frequently in the research.
- Some confusions regarding male physiology: such as anal penetration will rupture the appendix
- When psychological consequences were recognised, these were most frequently associated with the taboo on homosexuality

“It’s worse because in the end this child growing up would end up attracted to males. He would not have grown up to have feelings for males. He will end up living believing that he is a female and It’s alright for him to sleep with males.”



How do dominant notions of sexuality & masculinity link to *harmful sexual behaviour* of boys?

Failure to disclose linked to negative consequences

- Failure to disclose abuse was linked to a number of negative consequences for the victim such as poor self-esteem and self confidence. It was further recognised that these negative consequences could extend through adulthood

“.....the more you are silent about what upsets you it’s the more it hurts you psychologically. Psychologically you end up a drug addict whilst you avoid thinking about what happened.”

Boys need to have sex to prove themselves

- Peer pressure appears to play a considerable role in sexual activity, to the extent that several boys referred to feeling forced to engage in (sometimes violent) sex with girls.

“Another case maybe that someone is under peer pressure, because his friends are laughing at him saying that he has never had sex, that might cause someone to want to have sex so bad that he ends up even raping a girl.”

FINDINGS: SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS

caring for boys
AFFECTED BY
sexual violence
IN SOUTH AFRICA



How do people respond to sexual violence affecting boys?

Sexual violence is recognised as wrong, although not always reported

- People mentioned shock, anger, hurt and betrayal as common response to sexual violence
- But there was some disagreement over what should be done. Some believed one should deal with this within the family

“It can be resolved between the two families. [The] parents are supposed to meet and talk about it and then sit [the offending youth] down and give him counselling. They should try show him the dangers of this act where he can end up.”

- Other options were discussed such as reporting to the police, social workers. A few people felt keeping quiet was acceptable. These responses were mostly linked to feelings of shame. The potential for family conflict was recognised
- Possible barriers to reporting included disbelief, social taboos around homosexuality and anticipation of poor service provider response

How do people respond to sexual violence affecting boys?

Boys are blamed for being victims of abuse

There was some subtle victim blaming from some respondents, but this was not consistent

"...the right way would have been for [the victim] to leave the offender and go back home."

People know where to get help in their community



What support & interventions are available to boys who are victims of sexual abuse?

Families were not always seen as a source of help

- Views on discussing abusive experiences within families mixed. Some felt this was helpful and supportive, some unhelpful, blaming or lacking in confidentiality. Uncles in the community were seen as a source of help. Boys might find disclosure to families difficult and fear being blamed
“I do not normally share my problems with my family, and because you tell one person and they pass it on to others”.

Trusted friends

“...it easier to speak to a friend because they are mentally in the same age group and they can understand each other.”

“Siblings play a big role in supporting their friends and other siblings because some parents are not easy to speak to.”

Peer groups

- Were sometimes seen as helpful

External sources of support

- Childline and social workers were mentioned as helpful

What support & interventions are available to boys who are actors in HSB?

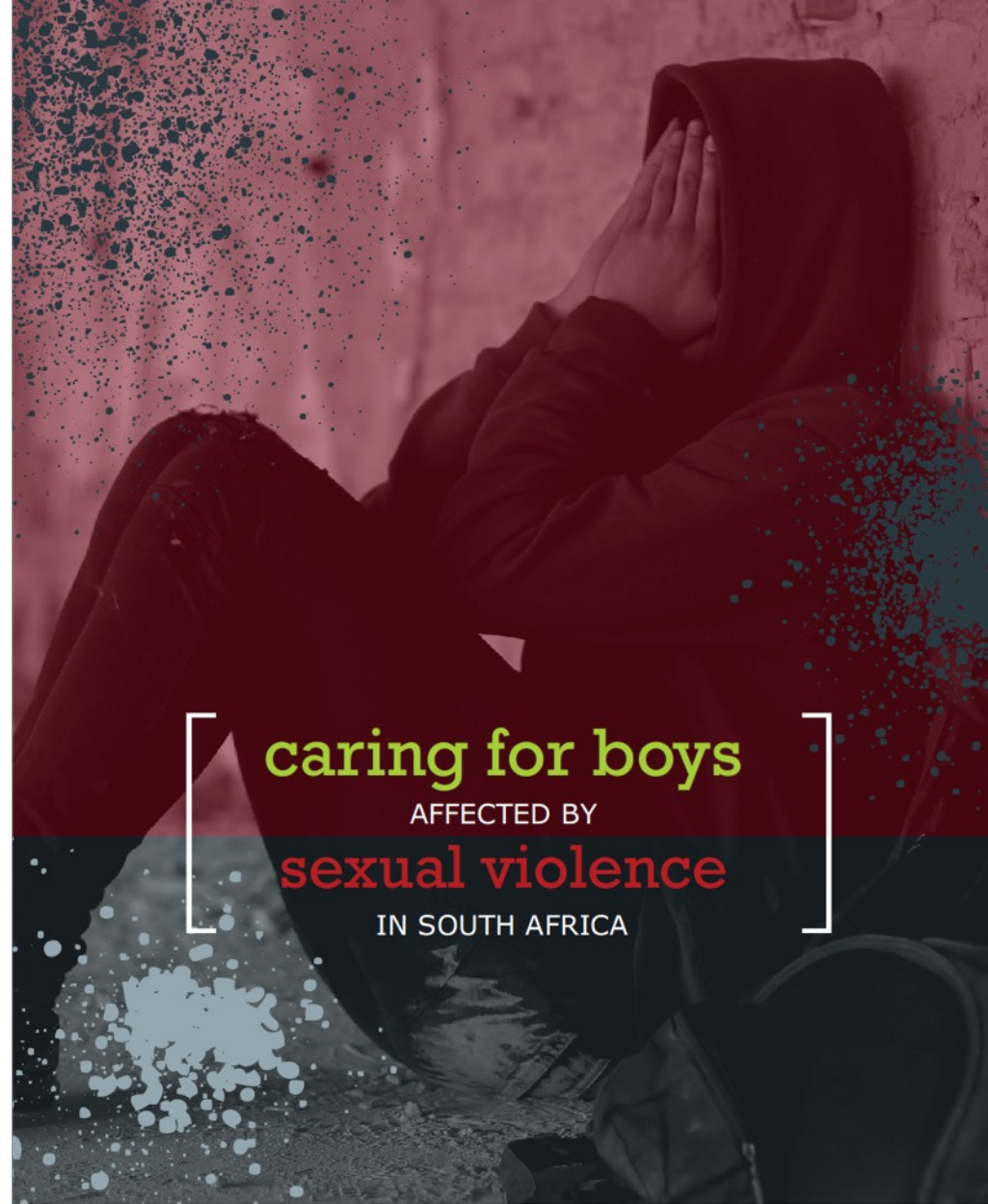
Families

- Male responses towards actor focus on punitive measures - social exclusion, threats and violence, female respondents more “gentle” and proposed more relational and correctional responses
 - But sometimes based on a lack of knowledge of sexual functioning
- “You need to remind him that his body parts are not to be used at once and be finished, they are there for the rest of his life he must not be in a hurry to use them otherwise he will end up abusing them.”*

Helpful and unhelpful interventions

- Families, friends and community members were seen as potentially helpful
- Trust was seen as important to enable disclosure and helpful interventions. Community meetings and life skills education were both mentioned as important sources of information and help
- External support such as the Childline boys’ camps and mediation were seen as very relevant
- Some resources were unpredictable in their responses to reports of abuse, for example the police
- Harsh punishment was not seen as useful: *“a stick will never speak the truth so I do not want that situation.”*

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS: RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS IDENTIFIED



caring for boys
AFFECTED BY
sexual violence
IN SOUTH AFRICA



Protective factors identified

Parental knowledge about sexual violence

- Parents who understand sexual violence are assumed to be more likely to seek help

Having a trusted friend or confidante

- Highly valued by both adults and children although many do not have this person in their lives

Responsive parent-child relationships

- Importance of parental supervision, instruction and care for boys was acknowledged by many
- Open communication and spending time with boys enabling factors in prevention and disclosure

Life skills programmes at school

- Seen by parents as potentially useful in educating children about abuse and the need for these programmes articulated by adults and children

The involvement of fathers and social fathers

- Fathers and social fathers play important roles in teaching masculinity and sexuality, providing guidance and support, helping with problem solving

Responsive, community-based support for boys affected by sexual violence and their families

- Confidentiality and knowledgeable, informed responses important in service provision

Risk factors identified

Little parental supervision of television and online use

- Lack of online safety and supervision and the normalisation of pornography

Lack of quality, accessible child-care options

- Limited choices for quality childcare, particularly for older children
- Few adults expected sexual violence to take place in the context of trusted relationships

Enforcing respect and obedience to elders

- Norms of respect for elders can make it difficult for children to refuse sexual advances or remove themselves from an abusive situation if the actor/perpetrator is older

Hierarchies of masculinity

- Male-male relationships characterised by teasing, ridicule and social exclusion
- Masculine hierarchies of power may place some boys more at risk than others- correlation between boys being shorter for their age and increased risk of CSA (Richter et al. 2018)

Risk factors identified

High levels of violence

- Violence was pervasive in the data at many levels
- Boys need to be seen as victims too, violence perpetrated by other males, girls & mothers

Greater freedom given to boys

- Lack parental supervision and involvement
- Risk of exposure to violence, drugs, alcohol

Polarised views of boys and girls

- Limited space for alternative discourses about gender and sexuality
- “Violating” inclusion and exclusion factors used to control unhealthy peer group spaces

Grooming and non-contact sexual abuse not always recognised

- Sexual violence mostly limited to penetrative acts, in turn limited to the rape of girls
- Grooming was seen as wrong and harmful but less so for boys than girls
- Little understanding of non-contact sexual abuse was apparent, although literature review foregrounds a greater risk to boys for non-contact sexual abuse and coercion

Risk factors identified

Focus on girls only as vulnerable denies boys an adequate response

Focusing only on the physical outcomes of abuse

- Focus on physical harm limits the harm to girls and penetrative sexual violence This further distances the abuse of boys from being recognised as harmful

Sex and sexuality are not talked about at home

- In the absence of accurate and sound guidance from home, most boys are learning about sex from the media and their peers, both recognised promoters of unhealthy masculinity and sexuality.
- Children may be exposed to adult sexual activity in the household which may increase their risk to abuse and developing age inappropriate and/or sexually harmful behaviour

The absence of responsive and appropriately resourced structures in communities

- There is a need for external supports for parents, caregivers and children to facilitate and advise on appropriate responses to the challenges of parenting boy (and girl) children and the management of emerging sexual maturity and harmful sexual behaviour if and when it occurs

RECOMMENDATIONS

caring for boys
AFFECTED BY
sexual violence
IN SOUTH AFRICA



Recommendations

Recommendations for families

Families should be enabled, through a supportive policy and service delivery environment, to carry out their parental and caregiving responsibilities in:

- Ensuring boy's and girl's online and media use is safe, monitored, restricted to age-appropriate content and that children know where to seek help if they are exposed to harm online
- Ensuring boys and girls are kept emotionally and physically safe and when their safety is in danger appropriate help is sought
- For both boys and girls, spending time with them, talking to them (including about sex and relationships) taking an interest in their activities, friends, hopes and dreams and supporting them in good and bad times

Recommendations for community members, cultural and religious leaders

- Ensuring rites of passage which help boys and girls transition from childhood into early adulthood, provide accurate and appropriately messaged information around gender, sexual orientation, sex and relationships so as to avoid reinforcing harmful social norms and protect the rights of all children

Recommendations for CSOs

- Specifically recognise the differing vulnerabilities and trauma responses of boys and girls to sexual violence, address gendered social norms which contribute to these vulnerabilities and have specific safeguarding policies and procedures in place for boys and girls
- Provide community education on the different sexual acts that constitute sexual violence, as per the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 5 of 2015, including both contact and non-contact sexual acts; how boys and girls may be vulnerable to and affected by these crimes in different ways; and the reporting obligations and responsibilities of community members and families outlined in South African legislation
- Deepen understanding amongst families and communities of the long-term physical, emotional and psychosocial impacts of sexual violence on both boys who are victims as well as those who are actors and the role families can play in their healing
- Recognise the differing parenting needs of boys and girls, encourage the caregiving involvement of fathers (not just their financial provision), promote responsive parenting and the elimination of harsh discipline

Recommendations

Recommendations for the media

- The media, in particular local media, must accept their responsibility in ensuring content is safe for children and does not perpetuate gendered social norms which increase boys' and girls' vulnerability to harm

Recommendations for the Government of South Africa

- Ensure that intersectoral and multifaceted violence prevention policies and programmes do not delegitimise violence against boys through the exclusive focus on girls, the labelling of boys as perpetrators or the lack of explicit recognition of the different vulnerabilities and responses of boys and girls to sexual violence
- Adequately resource programmes that work with boys who are victims of and/or actors in sexual violence given existing evidence in research of the link, for boys, between victimisation and/or exposure to violence and its later perpetration. Particular attention must be given to the long-term nature of these types of programmes and the need to concurrently address interconnected wider psychosocial contributors (including gendered social norms) to maximise outcomes

Recommendations

Recommendations for the Government of South Africa cont'd

- Ensure that life orientation programmes continue to be implemented in schools; that lessons are ringfenced within timetables and cannot be used for other lessons; are taught by an appropriately trained and skilled teacher; encourage the participation and engagement of children in discussions, including between genders; have content which focuses on equitable norms around sex and relationships; explicitly recognises the vulnerability of both boys and girls to sexual violence; and promotes emotional literacy in children
- Ensure that corporal punishment in the home is prohibited as per current amendments to the Children's Act no. 38 of 2005 and that appropriate policy and services are developed, budgeted for and implemented at the scale required to support responsive parenting and positive discipline in families for the safeguarding of boys and girls from conception to adulthood

QUESTIONS?

caring for boys
AFFECTED BY
sexual violence
IN SOUTH AFRICA



THANK YOU FOR
JOINING US

LINK TO THE
THE REPORT WILL BE
EMAILED

ALSO AVAILABLE ON
CHANGEMAKERS FOR
CHILDREN



caring for boys
AFFECTED BY
sexual violence
IN SOUTH AFRICA