

Families Matter! Programme



Type of intervention



Classroom



Groupwork



Public Education

Target group/s, level/s of prevention and sub-group/s:

Primary Prevention

Communities
/ Families

Parents | Adults (18 years+) | Male & Female | Public Education | Classroom Setting | Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, DR Congo, Rwanda, Namibia, Nigeria and Malawi, and Haiti

Target population

The purpose of FMP is to give parents and caregivers the knowledge, skills, comfort, and confidence to discuss sex-related issues with their children. FMP is for parents and caregivers of children ages 9-14 years and FMP2 is for parents and caregivers of children ages 15-19 years.

Delivery organisation

FMP was adapted from the US evidence-based intervention Parents Matter! This program was shown in a randomized controlled trial to promote effective parent-child communication about sexuality and sexual risk reduction. The intervention was adapted for use in Kenya in 2003 and 2004 and renamed Families Matter!

Mode and context of delivery

The purpose of FMP is to give parents and caregivers the knowledge, skills, comfort, and confidence to discuss sex-related issues with their children. FMP is for parents and caregivers of children ages 9-14 years and FMP2 is for parents and caregivers of children ages 15-19 years.

FMP applies adult learning principles and utilizes a mixture of structured learning experiences, discussion, audiotapes, role plays, and group exercises. In addition, a combination of verbal and visual instruction techniques are incorporated in the curriculum to meet auditory and visual learning preferences.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

FMP is delivered in a small group setting using two trained and certified facilitators per group (one male and one female) who share equal responsibility for delivering the curriculum.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

The intervention increases parental awareness and parenting skills through a series of seven weekly three-hour sessions. Parents and caregivers are also asked to bring their child to a designated session in order to practice the communication skills learned during the intervention. The goal is that, upon completion of the program, parents and caregivers will feel more competent and comfortable in addressing issues related to sex and violence prevention with their children. FMP is unique in that it does not dictate what parents and caregivers should say to their children but instead guides them in defining the values and messages they want to convey.

Description of intervention

FMP Sessions and Goals

Session 1: Introduction to FMP and Steps to Understanding Your Child

- To provide parents and caregivers with an understanding of the purpose and goals of the Families Matter! Program
- To increase parents' and caregivers' awareness of the situations their children face that may put them at risk and the important role they play in keeping their children safe and healthy.
- To introduce parents and caregivers to the physical, emotional and social changes their pre-adolescents are going through and the need to provide guidance and support to children during this important period

Session 2: Good Parenting Skills

- To help parents and caregivers understand that their children need and value their guidance and support during this difficult period of adolescence
- To provide parents and caregivers with information and strategies to protect and guide their children through this important period
- To help parents and caregivers practice general parenting skills that support their children and protect them from risky situations

Session 3: Parents' Role in Educating their Children about Sexuality

- To make parents and caregivers more aware of the need for them to be sex educators for their children
- To increase parents' and caregivers' understanding of the physical and reproductive changes their children will be going through during puberty and adolescence
- To help parents and caregivers to define their values about sex and to learn ways to communicate their values to their children
- To provide parents and caregivers with tools and strategies for communicating with their children about sex

Session 4: Information to Increase Comfort and Skills in Discussing Sex and Sexuality

- To provide parents and caregivers with information on family planning, STIs, HIV and AIDS and other sexual health issues
- To provide parents and caregivers with direct linkages to community health resources
- To increase parents' and caregivers' comfort and skills in discussing difficult sex-related issues with their children, including HIV stigma and disclosure

Session 5: Discussing Sexuality and Pressures Children Face

- To continue improving parents' and caregivers' comfort in discussing sex and sexuality with their child
- To give parents and caregivers an opportunity to work on their communication skills with their child
- To introduce parents and caregivers to pressures their children face from peers, partners and adults, such as pressure to have sex, that could keep their children from reaching their life goals

Session 6: Understanding Child Sexual Abuse

- To raise parents' and caregivers' awareness about child sexual abuse
- To increase parents' and caregivers' understanding of their role in preventing child sexual abuse
- To increase parents' and caregivers' awareness of their role in protecting and supporting their children when responding to child sexual abuse

Session 7: Guiding and Supporting Adolescents Living with HIV

- To increase family and community members' understanding of challenges facing adolescents living with HIV, including those related to stigma, disclosure, adherence, and healthy relationships
- To help family and community members strengthen their skills to provide guidance and support to adolescents living with HIV around issues of stigma, disclosure, adherence, and healthy relationships
- To provide family and community members with information about living with HIV, Anti-Retroviral Therapy, and resources in their community to help adolescents living with HIV

Evaluation

FMP was adapted from the U.S. evidence-based intervention, Parents Matter! The Parents Matter! Program (PMP) was developed based on research conducted on the parent-child communication patterns of African American families in the U.S., which highlighted the critical role of parent-child communication about sex topics in prevention of adolescent sexual risk.

PMP was rigorously evaluated using a randomized controlled trial with African American parents of preadolescents ages 9-12. The results of this trial showed that parents in the intervention significantly increased the number of sex topics they discussed with their preadolescents and increased their knowledge, skills, comfort, and confidence in communicating with their preadolescents about these sex topics. Publications and presentations from the research on PMP are available upon request and additional information about PMP is provided on the National Prevention Information Network (NPIN) website: <http://www.cdcnpin.org/parentsmatter>.

In 2002, the Institute of Tropical Medicine (Antwerp, Belgium), in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Kenya Medical Research Institute, identified PMP as a promising intervention to address the expressed need for improved adult-child communication about sexuality. In 2003-2004, formative work was conducted to culturally adapt and pilot test PMP in Western Kenya. The adapted program was renamed the “Families Matter! Program.”

From 2004-2006, an outcome evaluation of FMP was conducted using a pre/post intervention design. Evaluation data were collected from 375 parents and their children at baseline and one year post-intervention. The intervention’s effect was measured on six composite scores reported separately by parents and their children, comprising of parenting (monitoring, positive reinforcement, relationship) and parent-child communication (sexuality education, sexual risk, communication responsiveness) variables. Evaluation results showed the adapted evidence-based parenting program retained its effectiveness, successfully increasing parenting skills and parent-child communication about sexuality and sexual risk reduction.

Additional FMP evaluations have been conducted in Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

References

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