

PEER GROUP PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH HIV IN NAIROBI: A COMMON ELEMENTS THERAPEUTIC APPROACH

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Background

The global mental health burden of children and adolescents living with HIV is alarming. The nature of HIV services in hospital settings underscores the paucity of culturally rooted, relevant evidence based psychosocial interventions. Our conceptual framework is developed iteratively by multiple partnership discussions and is based on the utilization of a Common Elements Therapeutic Approach (CETA) in a peer group intervention at the Comprehensive Care Centre (CCC) of Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH).

Description

The CETA model is eclectic and delineates ‘common elements’ from various strategies, namely: Social recreational, Peer modeling, Psycho-educational, and Psychotherapeutics. The core principles do not change but the way they are packaged and offered, and the ability of the lay therapist or peer supporter to make decisions is flexible.

Lessons Learned

The evidence for peer support services and uptake of evidence based methods for HIV children and adolescents in resource constrained settings is very limited. Using CETA’s task sharing and task shifting methods, a cohesive, multi-skilled team can be able to: a) Train a modular approach, generating culturally relevant and adolescent friendly activities for group work; b) Change the attitudes of health care providers and mental health workers; and c) With appropriate compatibility, adopt innovations.

Conclusions/Next steps

CETA model is applicable by health care workers and peer supporters with diverse levels of training and experience in mental health, with positive clinical and mental health outcomes. It is anticipated that this novel health systems implementation approach of developing interventions that are curative and preventive, will enhance shared understanding of emerging issues in adolescent health, identify innovations and best practices, provide sustainable, adaptable and acceptable evidence-based solutions to tackling diverse challenges and ensure adolescents are key players in their own health.

Keywords

Children and adolescents with HIV, common elements therapeutic approach, mental health intervention, self-growth, stigma prevention