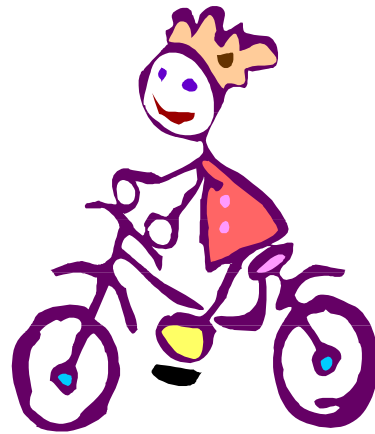
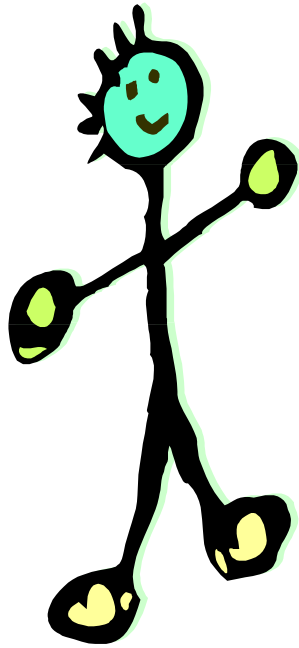


SOUL Buddyz

tomorrow is ours

Soul Buddyz 2 Messages



General Series Messages

Soul City believes that media significantly influences social norms. Given this, we are careful to ensure our media makes a positive contribution rather than perpetuating and reinforcing a negative status quo. This does not have to mean political correctness, diminished drama or sanitised scripts. The series is open to dealing with these issues in a positive way that raises debate. The following areas are key in this regard.

Community Activism

The Soul City series is committed to fostering a spirit of community activism as an essential component of development. Our messages should be conveyed where possible and where appropriate, through community action.

Gender Sensitivity and the Empowerment of Women

Some of the Series Four topics (such as "violence against women" and "youth sexuality") address gender issues specifically. However, gender issues tend to be central to most development concerns. For example in poorer communities, where women collect water and the source is often located some distance from home, women are reporting a high incidence of rape. Improvements in the status of women have been shown to greatly improve a nation's health and social indicators. Our series is therefore careful to take into account gender issues and stresses the importance of the empowerment of women.

Our series should take care not to perpetuate gender stereotypes or objectify women and, although not to the exclusion of men, should include the portrayal of women and young girl characters as strong role models. Similarly, the portrayal of non-sexist men and good communication in relationships between men and women is also important.

Positive parenting

Encouraging parents to communicate positively and more openly with their children is also an important background message.

Violence and guns

There is a growing body of evidence on the impact of violence in the media. For this reason we are reluctant as a series to perpetuate images of violence and guns as consequence free and glamorous.

Racial Stereotyping

The series is committed to the spirit of non-racism and racial stereotyping is to be avoided at all costs.

Victim Blaming

Very often people want to make healthy, positive choices but are constrained by obstacles in their environment. For example people may want to immunise their children but can't afford transport to the clinic. Many people may want to wash their hands before eating but don't have access to clean safe water. These are all important considerations and one of the reasons why we believe community activism is important. A strong voice in civil society is often what affects these structural changes. Similarly, we prefer to convey messages through positive role modelling where possible and we avoid pointing fingers at individuals and labelling them ignorant.

Avoid Conveying Messages Through Fear

It has been shown that messages conveyed in a manner that maximises fear, often results in audiences ignoring or blocking that message by finding some way to convince themselves that it applies to people other themselves.

Alcohol, cigarettes and drugs

The glamorisation of these substances in the media has been identified internationally as contributing to increased consumption, especially by young people, thus we endeavour at all times to deglamourise tobacco and alcohol, and do not show characters drinking and smoking unless it is related to a message. In addition we avoid showing advertising of alcohol and tobacco unless it is commented on and is part of the message. The role modelling of cool and hip young people enjoying life without the use of either alcohol or tobacco, is we believe a very important underlying message.

Series messages

1. I am unique and have my own strengths and weaknesses - we are all different and special in our own way.

All people are deserving of respect irrespective of age, gender, religion, race or state of health or impairment. They have strengths and weaknesses just like you.

2. Children have choices and have a right to say no to things they think or feel are wrong or harmful

- Saying no to something you don't want to do can be hard:
- Say no and be firm
- Give a clear reason why you say no
- Believe in yourself and your decisions
- Talk to a friend, parent or teacher who will understand

3. Children have rights

These rights are enshrined in our constitution and in the convention for the rights of the child (South Africa is a signatory to this convention)

4. Children have responsibilities

It is important to serve the community to which one belongs and to recognise that my actions or lack of actions influence and affect others.

Underlying themes

1. children can be part of the solution.
2. seeking an environmental solution rather than individual solution
3. peers can have positive interaction / peer pressure can be positive.

Disability Messages:

Messages for Children

1. Making disability visible

Disability is often hidden in our society, not that there is no disability, but because the society hides disability. Children with disabilities have the right to participate fully in life. They have the right to be seen as ordinary individual children. We should celebrate children's diversity, while focussing on all children's positive attributes. All children need to be encouraged to take on an inner journey of growth to be able to come to terms with who they are. [article 23 of the UNCRC]

2. Children with disabilities have the same rights as other children

[article 2]

- Children with disabilities have the right to live a full and productive life
- Children with disabilities have the right to be loved and nurtured for who they are.
- Children with disabilities have the right to schooling, and the choice of inclusion into main stream schools, bearing in mind that the choice should be in the best interests of the child
- Children with disabilities have the right to recreation
- Children with disabilities have the right to safety and protection from abuse

[article 23]

3. Children have impairments - society disables them

Social attitudes and structural barriers often ensure that children with impairments are disabled.

Children need to recognise the negative effect their attitudes and behaviour has on children with impairments

Children need to learn to communicate positively with children (and adults) with impairments and never to make assumptions

- Children should not assume that they know what is best for others
- Children should not assume that others understand what their needs are - they need to communicate their needs

Children need to recognise the role the physical and social environment plays in disabling children with impairments further.

Messages for Adults

1. Find out the facts about disability.
2. Adults are role models. Do not discriminate. Treat all children in the same way.

3. There are things parents and teachers can do to assist children with mild learning disability to remain in mainstream schools.

Background

Soul Buddyz 2 will continue with the messages from Soul Buddyz 1 on the issue of disability. The series however will focus on learning disability. The major issues around disability still remains discrimination and isolation and lack of inclusion of children with disabilities in all spheres of life.

There are different levels of learning disability ranging from mild to severe. For the purpose of the series and our messages on inclusion we will focus on mild learning disorders, where children can be in a regular classroom with additional support and special attention. The series will also not focus on children with attention deficit disorder and in turn avoid dealing with the controversy of Ritolin.

There are several competing definitions of learning disability. For the purpose of Soul Buddyz 2 we will use the central issue of *children not learning as expected or predicted*. In addition, learning disabilities are related to **internal/intrinsic factors** i.e. genetic predisposition, brain injury, maturational delay and chemical imbalances; **external factors** i.e. cultural disadvantages lack of opportunity, poor instruction, parental abuse/neglect and **unknown factors**, which is interrelated.

It is estimated that there is a disability prevalence rate of 5% in South Africa.¹ It is also estimated that 70% of learners with disabilities are not in schools. Currently, learners in special schools only make up 0.34% of school enrolments. More boys than girls appear to be affected by learning disability - 72% boys and 28% girls.² These statistics make it imperative that we promote the inclusion and integration of children with disabilities in schools where possible and society in general.

List of common characteristics of learning disabilities³

- disorders of attention: hyperactivity, distractibility, poor concentration ability, short attention span
- failure to develop and mobilize cognitive strategies for learning: lack of organisation, active learning set, meta cognitive functions
- poor motor abilities: poor fine and gross motor coordination and general clumsiness, spatial problems
- perceptual and information processing problems: difficulty in discrimination of auditory and visual stimuli, auditory and visual closure, and sequencing
- oral language difficulties: problems in listening, speaking, vocabulary, and linguistic competencies
- reading difficulties: problems in decoding, basic reading skills and reading comprehension

¹ CAAC, (2001), Literature review: learning disabilities

² CAAC, (2001), Literature review: learning disabilities

³ ibid

- written language difficulties: problems in spelling, handwriting and written composition
- mathematics difficulties: difficulty in quantitative thinking, arithmetic, time, space, and calculation facts
- inappropriate social behaviour: problems in social skills, emotional problems, and establishing social relationships

Inclusion: what is required?

There are several things that teachers and parents are able to assist learners with mild disability to remain in an ordinary school.

Teachers firstly, need information on what to look out for and to be encouraged to identify affected learners. Often learners with disabilities are only picked up in middle school. They can role model positive interaction by ensuring that affected learners are drawn into the learning process, which often doesn't happen. They can identify the special needs like a special timetable to help remind the learner. They can re-organise the class so that learners assist each other. And very importantly, teachers can liaise with parents of learners.

Parents need to understand that they can assist their child. Children with learning disabilities can learn. They just learn differently and at a different pace. Parents can help organise their child's life e.g. timetable to remind them of what they have to do for school and during the day. They can encourage their children to read by reading to their children or if they can't read to take their children to reading sessions at the library or encourage siblings to read to each other. Encourage their children to do additional activities like sport, which will assist with building self-esteem and create opportunities to socialise.

RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

Messages for CHILDREN

1. Prejudice and discrimination is wrong.

Respect and accept people that are different from you. Because other people are different from you does not make you better or less than them. All cultures across the world have some form of 'ubuntu', which guides how they behave towards other people. All people want to be respected. *Treat people how you want to be treated, even if they are different from you.*

Many times we only talk about our differences, but people across the world have many things that are common like welcoming and making new comers feel at home. *Welcome people that are different from you.*

2. Let us celebrate our differences and similarities.

All people are different from one another. We are different in many ways - in our appearance e.g. big or small; racial groups; where we come from e.g. rural area or another country; religions we practice; the language we talk; the food we eat; how we learn or dress; if we are rich or poor; whether we are female or male; our abilities; etc. *All these differences make the world an interesting place. We can learn from children who are different from us.* They may have interesting things in their culture that we don't have like the food they eat or the songs they sing. Traditionally, not everyone ate pizza or hamburgers and chips. And now it is something eaten across the world and people love it.

It is wrong to make children who are different from us feel bad.

It is good to speak more than one language. It can help to communicate with children from different communities in South Africa and across the world. Sometimes children speak English differently from other people because it is not their first language. Do not tease them, they cannot help sounding different.

You can be friends with children that are different from you.

3. Learn about other people in South Africa and other countries.

The media is only one source of information and does not always reflect the whole story.

South Africa has many different kinds of people living in it, who have different ways of doing things. In the past, apartheid was used to keep people from different cultures apart. Many people did not know what other people practiced or why they did things in a certain way. People were ignorant and had many myths about people that were different from them. There have been changes in our country and many people are meeting people that are different. *It will help you to understand other children if you learn about their culture.*

There are many people from other countries in Africa and elsewhere who live in South Africa for different reasons. Many children are forced to leave their countries with or without their parents and family because of war, conflict and discrimination. Because of this, some children are living in South Africa alone without family and parents. *If you know people from other countries find out why they are living in South Africa. This will help you to understand what is happening outside of South Africa.*

4. Children can learn to communicate how they feel positively, even if they disagree with someone who is different from them.

Violence is not a solution. *Learn to tell people how you feel.*

Children can show care for people that are different from them.

It is ok to talk about racism. We come from a history of racism and we need to talk about how it affected and still affects us, so that we can avoid those mistakes of history.

Messages for ADULTS

1. All adults are role models and children copy their behaviour and attitudes.

Adults need to be aware of the language they use to talk about other people, especially in front of children. Do not blame other people, especially people from African countries for problems in your community.

2. Learn the facts about people from other countries.

We are part of the global world and dependant on each other. People from other African countries are living and working in South Africa for different reasons. Many countries in Africa are experiencing wars that are partly related to their history when they were colonised. Prior to 1994, many South Africans lived in exile in countries in Africa as part of that country's contribution to fighting apartheid, many Africans feel that South Africa should welcome them in their hour of need until the situation in their country is resolved.

Also, in terms of the South African constitution and other international conventions South Africa have legal responsibilities with regarding to providing social services for refugees. In fact, there are only 65 000 refugees in South Africa, compared to hundreds of thousands in other African countries like Tanzania.

Plus all children's messages

Background

Racism and xenophobia refers to discrimination towards, stereotyping and exclusion of people on the basis of colour, ethnicity or country of origin. Many children in

South Africa experience racism and xenophobia, especially children from other African countries.

South Africa is a society in transition. The transformation project that we embarked upon after 1994 has many challenges. South Africans have to learn to live with each other without the previous legislative boundaries, which isolated different racial groups and left South Africa's diverse population with very little positive interaction with each other. Apartheid has had traumatic consequences, which has affected all different spheres of life. It needs to be stated however that although problems experienced by children and adults in this process can be or are racist by nature, Soul Buddyz will frame these issues as one of the range of issues of diversity and differences that South Africans as a whole needs to deal with.

Children in schools, especially children from different racial backgrounds in suburban and former white schools are affected. These schools now have a more diverse learner and sometimes teacher population. In a study done by Vally and Dalamba⁴ 62% (1075) of 1729 learners from 60 schools reported having racial problems at their schools.

Some of the areas where learners are experiencing racial problems are:

1. The school culture - this is especially experienced in the areas of sports and religion, where schools have not changed any previous practises to accommodate their more diverse learner population.
2. Language is the other major are of the school culture, which is listed as problematic. Often proficiency in the dominant language at the school is used to separate learners e.g. in reading groups, which inevitably take on racial dimensions because the dominant language is often the 2nd, 3rd or 4th language of some learners.

Jansen⁵ also states that school governing bodies are an important area, which reflects some of the racial issues at schools. He states that many governing bodies have remained the same and do not reflect diversity of the parent population. This is particularly important because of the governing body do have some power to make recommendations with regard to changes e.g. the sporting codes. In fact, in one case they were involved in trying to remove a teacher not of the dominant group at the school.⁶

Children are also exposed to other children's experience of racism through the media like the incidence of the girl that was painted with silver paint in Northern Province, the killing of Tshepo Matloga in the Northern Province and Vryburg schools.

At the same time the majority of South African children still live in singular race townships with very little exposure to other races, with exposure being mainly

⁴ Vally, S. and Dalamba, Y., (1999), Racism, 'racial integration' and desegregation in South African public secondary schools: a report on a study by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), Johannesburg, SAHRC

⁵ Jansen, J., (2001), Dealing with differences in South Africa, A Critical review of literature and experiences on racism, prejudice and xenophobia in South African schools, Soul City

⁶ Jansen, J., (2001), Dealing with differences in South Africa, A Critical review of literature and experiences on racism, prejudice and xenophobia in South African schools, Soul City

through the mass media. Often the only contact is through shops, restaurants and work. Relationships that people had prior to 1994 and which in the main has remained the same, are such that the majority black people being in the powerless position.

These are just some of the factors challenging South Africans in the process of building new relationships with each other.

Africa has many different countries and people, with a very long history. There are many good things about Africa, not just wars and poverty. In the scientific world it is believed that the first people of the world lived in Africa. The Egyptians contributed to the scientific world in many ways like discovering the numerical numbers we use today. Kofi Annan, the present UN secretary general is from Ghana. Currently, many sport stars, especially soccer stars and music personalities come from Africa. In fact, there are many African players who are in teams like Manchester United and Leeds United. In fact, there many African players who play for South African teams.

But, Africa was also conquered and colonised and divided up into countries where people from different countries and different cultures and backgrounds were forced to be together, and the minerals and resources were taken out of Africa without compensation. These are some of the reasons African countries are poor and there are so many wars.

There was lots of crime and unemployment long before some people from Africa came to live in South Africa. Not all people from other African countries are involved in crime and in fact some people from other African countries are creating and providing legal jobs for South Africans. We can learn from other African people about small businesses. *Why do we treat people from African countries differently from people from America and Europe?*

All children who live in South Africa have the right to education, health, food, housing and a safe environment. But, children also have the responsibility and choice to treat all people with respect and dignity. According to the South African constitution all children, including refugee children have rights. South Africa also signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in June 1996. This convention guarantees the rights of all children. South Africa also passed the Refugee Act of 1998, which guarantees children rights to education and other social services. *Our constitution and these conventions make it the legal responsibility of the South African government to provide for all children living in it's borders*

Presently, children who are from other African countries living in South Africa face discrimination at school, in the community and at government institutions. They are isolated, teased, called names like 'makwerekwere' and bullied.

Racism and xenophobia are issues that face people across the world. In South Africa given our history and the current experiences of people from other African countries living in South Africa, we have a particular obligation to openly address these issues. Soul Buddyz 2 will aim to promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Message for Children

1. You have the choice to not use drugs.

It is 'cool' to not use drugs even if your friends or other children are using it.

Many children feel pressured to smoke or drink because they think it is cool or their friends tell them that they are not 'cool' when they are not doing it. But, in fact it is a very small group of children that are doing it and there are other things that make you cool. A 'true clever' thinks about tomorrow and not only about today.

Many children will try to smoke or drink alcohol because they are curious, but there is no guarantee that you will not become addicted if you use it all the time, even if it is only because it makes you feel relaxed, but it also make you smell, affect your skin, give you headaches and can make you behave that is it not 'cool'.

2. There are other ways to deal with stress than smoking and drinking and taking other drugs.

Taking cigarettes or alcohol to help you cope or relax will only help for a short while. After a while it will become crutch and you can't go without it. *There are other ways to relax like dancing, listening to loud music, going for a walk, doing exercise, reading, making music, writing stories or songs, etc.*

3. Ask for help if you have problems.

It is important to deal with problems. Smoking and drinking and drugs will not let it go away. In fact, it may give you more problems later on. Talk to someone about your problem - your friends, your parents or sister/brother or aunt or granny. You can also talk to your teacher or another adult that you trust. In many communities there is also a social worker that you can talk to. If you don't want to talk, maybe *you can write down what is bothering you and how you are feeling.*

You can also phone the free CHILDLINE number 08000 55555 and talk to someone without them seeing you.

4. It is important to know the facts about cigarettes, drugs and alcohol.

Substances can make you feel nice and relaxed fro that moment. But, it can also make you feel ill, vomit or give you headaches. Different people react differently. Find out the facts about cigarettes, drugs and alcohol. If you take substances *there are immediate effects, short term and long term effects that you should think of.*

5. You can make friends even if you don't use alcohol, cigarettes or drugs.

Sometimes children feel that they need to do things like smoke or drink in order to make friends. *True friends will not force each other to do things to prove friendships.*

6. Advertising make drinking look so 'cool', but they don't tell you what will happen after drinking for a while.

Advertisements are made to sell the product. It creates associations with the product like sports and sex, that it helps solve problems and helps with stress. Advertisements also create the impression that individuals who consume products are adventurous, fun loving, adult and rebellious - everything that many young people would like to be seen as. *They have to convince people to drink; it only shows the 'nice' part of drinking alcohol. Drinking can affect your concentration, can make you feel ill so that you miss school and make you unpleasant to people. It can also make you look silly. Does alcohol really help with stress? Would Lucas Radebe be able to play a good game of soccer on Saturday after drinking on Friday?*

Messages for ADULTS

1. Find out the facts about alcohol, cigarettes and drugs.

Alcohol and cigarettes are also harmful. Find out what the signs and symptoms are of using substances. Find out where to go for help if you think your child is abusing substances. There is a difference between using and misusing/abusing substances.

2. All adults are role models.

Children copy what adults do. We all contribute to the idea that alcohol relieves stress. Adults would often after a hard day at work, come home and comment and consume some form of alcohol as a way to relax. This sends out a message to children that alcohol will help with stress. *It is wrong to send children to buy alcohol or cigarettes.* Children will not believe adults about the effects of drugs if adults smoke or drink in front of them or send children to go and buy for them. Sending children to go buy gives children the opportunity to get access and to experiment. *It is illegal to sell alcohol to children under 18 years or cigarettes to children under 16 years.*

3. Parents and caregivers should get involved in their children's lives.

Know your children's friends. Take an interest in your children's lives. Your children's interests will change as they grow up. Make sure that you know what is happening in your children's lives all the time.

4. Parents and caregivers should talk to their children more openly about alcohol and drugs.

Adults should talk to children about alcohol, cigarettes and drugs from an early age. You might be the only source of factual information for your child. Avoid overreacting if you find out if your child is experimenting. All children are curious. *If, however you suspect your child has got a problem, find help.*

Background

Very little information is available on substance usage for the age group 8-12 years. Most of the studies that have been conducted on the issue have been with adolescents and adults. In the absence of studies with our target audience, the findings of those studies will be used for Soul Buddyz 2.

Children appear to have knowledge, access and do use in varying degrees substances ranging from alcohol, cigarettes, dagga, mandrax, rave drugs, petrol, glue, benzene, cough mixtures, grandpa's, donkey dung, etc. (Clacherty and Associates, 2001)⁷.

Alcohol

Several of the studies in the literature however indicate that alcohol is South Africa's first drug of choice. In a study done by Visser and Moleko (1999)⁸ 27% of 460 grade 6 & 7 learners had contact with alcohol and 14% had drunk alcohol in preceding 14 days to get drunk. Parry (2000)⁹ in the South African Health Review lists a study which indicates that 28% of South Africa's 15 years and older report using alcohol - 45% of men and 17% of women. Although the drinking patterns differ across race and gender, it is still the major drug of choice.

Both the SACENDU (July 1996 - December 1999)¹⁰ and National Non-Natural Mortality Surveillance System(2000)¹¹ reports list alcohol as the dominant substance of abuse and is the major cause for treatment admissions(%), trauma(61%)/ hospital admissions (1 in 4), conflict leading to abuse (69%), violence (74%), crime - car theft and housebreaking (70%) and accidents.

These statistics indicate the need to pro-active deal and prioritise the issue of alcohol as a focal area. In dealing with the issue of alcohol the concept of 'binge drinking'¹² needs be kept in mind, where young people drink heavily particularly over weekends and holiday periods. At the same time it needs to be kept in mind that there are racial and gender differences with whites having the highest alcohol consumption rates and African and Asian females having the lowest rates¹³.

Some of the consequences of consuming large amounts of alcohol over time are:

- depression
- anxiety
- poor self-esteem
- retarded psychological development, especially if one start consuming at a young age when still establishing individuality and learning coping and decision-making skills

⁷ Clacherty and Associates, (2001), The

⁸ Visser, M. and Moleko, A.G., (1999), High risk behaviour of primary school learners, MRC Urban health and Development Bulletin

⁹ Parry, C. (2000) Alcohol and other drugs (Chapter 8), SA health review, Health Systems Trust

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¹² Ziervogel et al (1998), A Qualitative investigation of alcohol drinking among high school students from three communities in the Cape Peninsula, South Africa, International Quarterly of Community Health Education, Vol. 17(3), pg. 271-295

¹³ Parry, C. (2000)

- irrational and aggressive behaviour
- diseases of the liver, gastro-intestinal and nervous system
- road traffic accidents
- violent crimes
- child abuse
- domestic violence
- industrial accidents

Tobacco

Although few studies examine the issue of tobacco usage, in one of the few studies that included tobacco Flisher et al (1999)¹⁴ found in a study with 2930 learners from grade 8 and grade 11 that of the sample 27% had used cigarettes, 31% had used alcohol, 7% had used cannabis in previous month. Several studies have also indicated that tobacco together with alcohol is often the first substance of use before moving onto other drugs. Although the Tobacco Regulations should impact on advertising, age restrictions on sales and smoking in public spaces, which in turn should impact on accessibility and social norms, the enforcement of these regulations remains an issue. The regulations will not remove or impact significantly on tobacco as one of the first substances with which young people and children experiment with.

Although there appears to be a difference between races with regard to what drug is first used, all respondents started either with alcohol or cigarettes before moving onto any other drug, of which usage is much lower. The above statistics form the basis for the decision to concentrate on the substances of alcohol and tobacco in the Soul Buddyz 2 series. However, because of the easy access and availability of dagga, petrol, glue, benzine and over the counter drugs, these will also be included in the series. Also, children's knowledge and experience of mandrax in their environment makes it impossible to exclude it as a substance for comment.

Reasons children uses substances

Different studies have listed several reasons for young people's usage of substances. Some of these are:

1. To relieve stress - although young people list this as a reason, the question should be asked to what extent is this a learned behaviour through adult role models.
2. For fun and enjoyment - with this point we need to take into consideration the role of media in promoting substances as 'cool'
3. Helps to forget problems and a coping mechanism.
4. To boost sense of self and feel good and give confidence.
5. To have a good body - particularly girls using tobacco for 'slimming'
6. Curiosity and need to experiment.
7. Pressure from peers - to become or remain friends.
8. Easy access - in the home and shops.
9. To challenge parental authority.
10. Using substances is viewed as a sign of being an adult.

¹⁴ Flisher, A.J., et al, (1999), Substance use by adolescents in Cape Town, prevalence and correlates, 11th National conference of the SA Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Cape Town (1999)

11. Parents and adults in their immediate environment use substances.
12. Unhappy and unstable family situation.

It needs to be acknowledged that it is *the interaction of different social reasons* (like exposure and access to substances, lack of recreational facilities, lack of social support, housing problems, crime, poverty, unemployment, break-up of extended family, society in transformation) *and individual reasons* of sense of powerlessness, need for acceptance, genetic predisposition and level of happiness that leads to children and young people using substances.

Places of access

One of the main reasons children and young people use substances are the easy access that they have to the substances. In different studies young people have listed the following as places of easy access:

- parties and fun events (youth and adult)
- shops (being sent by parents to buy for parents)
- informal sector e.g. shebeens (being sent by parent)
- schools
- in the community e.g. parks, corners
- clubs

Use, misuse and abuse

There needs to be a distinction between use, misuse and abuse. Many people use substances for some of the very reasons listed above by young people for their usage. However, the literature points out that very few people would go on to misuse and later become addicted to substances.

Pre-adolescents and adolescents are in a stage of their development when they experiment and trying to define themselves separately from their parents. Many children in this stage of development experiment with a range of substances. It needs to be acknowledged that experimenting with substances is part of young people's development process. Very few pre-adolescents and adolescents would move on to misuse or become addicted. Although there are young people that become addicted and are currently in rehabilitation, Soul Buddyz will focus on use and misuse of substances. The challenge to provide children with information and alternatives and positive role modelling, which will assist them to deal with the complex individual and social reasons that lead children from experimentation to use of substances.

At the same time, it needs to be acknowledged that experimenting and usage have positive immediate effects like feeling relaxed cool or being accepted by your friends. Another challenge for the series is to acknowledge the positive consequences, whilst reflecting the negative short term and long-term effects.

Consequences on life

Pre-adolescents and adolescents need to understand that usage and misuse of substances could have consequences on their lives. Some of the consequences of continued use and misuse are:

- impact on school performance, absenteeism, repeating a grade
- reduced ability to concentrate and memory functioning
- slowed psychological functioning

- reduced ability to deal with stress and to make decisions
- feeling less in control and engaging in unsafe sexual behaviour
- being at risk of violence or becoming violent towards others, including family members
- engaging in crime to maintain the habit
- influencing how one relates to other people
- loss of potential
- detachment from people and activities that used to provide enjoyment

HIV and AIDS

Messages for CHILDREN

1. Talk openly about HIV and AIDS.

Children can talk to their friends and adults about HIV and AIDS. Boys and girls can also talk to each other.

2. Find out the facts about your body, relationships and HIV and AIDS.

It is not true that you can get HIV from sharing food or cups and plates with someone who is HIV positive. HIV and AIDS are different. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. You can have the HIV virus and live for a long time before you get AIDS, especially if you eat healthy and do exercise. When you have AIDS, the HIV virus has made the body very weak and it cannot fight illnesses like diarrhoea, flu, TB, pneumonia, etc. anymore.

Relationships are not just about sex. It also involves emotions. Think and talk about what your emotions might be and if you are ready to deal with it, before you decide or let someone pressure you into having sex.

3. You can prevent yourself from getting HIV.

There are only 3 ways in which you can get HIV: (a) having sex without a condom; (b) from mother-to-child during pregnancy and childbirth and through breastfeeding; (c) using unsterilised needles and equipment. You can abstain from sex and wait till you are married. You can also decide to have sex (with a condom) later in life when you can cope better with the emotional demands of sex. If you are having sex, use a condom every time you have sex. Do not let your girlfriend or boyfriend pressure you to have sex or to have sex without a condom.

If you have been abused, talk to someone you trust as soon as you can. You can talk to your older brother or sister, your parents, your teacher, your aunt or Gogo or your priest. They can help you find help because abuse is wrong.

4. It is wrong to discriminate against children and adults who have HIV or AIDS or who have family who have HIV or AIDS.

Do not tease or isolate children who are infected or who has family who has HIV or AIDS. It is wrong to hurt children because of HIV and AIDS.

5. Make friends with children who has lost a parent or who is lonely and share with them.

All children want to have friends. Girls and boys can be friends. Play with all children or invite them to your home to share meal with your family.

6. Find ways to support children who are experiencing difficulties.

You can help them with schoolwork like keeping notes when they cannot be at school or helping with homework. Together with your friends and other children at school you can also collect money and groceries and clothes, which you can donate to organisations, which helps children in need. Ask your school to start a food garden to help children who do not have food.

You can also help them at home like washing dishes so that they can also have time to play. Make time and together with friends help at your local clinic.

7. All children have the right to dream and hope for a better future.

Girls and boys can be whoever or whatever they want to be.

8. Ask for help if you have problems.

There are people in your community like your priest or teacher or social worker that can help you with your problem(s). Sometimes you have to talk to someone that can tell you about people that can help. Boys can also ask for help.

9. You can learn skills to care for someone who is sick.

Caring for someone who is sick can be hard. Some things you can do: Boys can also care for people who are sick.

Messages fro ADULTS

1. Talk openly to children about HIV and AIDS and death.

Children need to know the facts and cope better if adults tell them the truth.

Children need to know what HIV and AIDS is; they need to know how people get HIV and how they can protect themselves from it.

Children also need to be prepared for death of their parents. Death is part of the life cycle. They need to know who will look after them; what will happen with school and where they will stay when their parents are gone.

2. Find out the facts about HIV and AIDS.

You or your children will not get HIV from being in the same house or sharing food with children or adults who has HIV or AIDS or who lives with someone who has HIV or AIDS.

3. Adults are role models.

Children copy what you do as an adult. Treat children and adults with HIV or AIDS or who is living with someone who has HIV or AIDS with respect and do not discriminate and isolate them.

4. Help and support family and neighbours who are living with HIV and AIDS.

You can help with cooking, cleaning or just visiting. You can also make sure that the children in families affected by HIV and AIDS continue to go to school.

5. Encourage children to help other children and adults.

Children can help other children with their schoolwork or small tasks around the house like cleaning the yard or fetching water. They can also just read to the person who is sick.

6. All adults, especially teachers, health workers and religious leaders have responsibility to help and support children and families who have HIV and AIDS or who are living with someone who has HIV or AIDS.

Learn the facts about HIV and AIDS. Schools and religious organisations can start day care facilities so that children who have lost their parents can continue with their schooling and do not stay at home and look after younger siblings. Unemployed parents can also be encouraged to give time and help at the day care facilities or helping with food gardens. Help children to access grants that will relief some of the poverty that they are experiencing.

Teachers have specific responsibilities:

1. Accept all children and do not isolate, belittle or discriminate against any child.
2. Be approachable to all children. Many children do not have an adult to talk to about their problems.
3. Provide children with facts and refer them to other organisations that can help.
4. Help children to get ID who do not have. DO not turn children away from school if they do not have an ID or school fees or uniforms or books.
5. Encourage learners to help each other.
6. Encourage parents to get involved in the school.
7. Motivate your school to develop a HIV/AIDS policy that will assist both learners and teachers.

Background

The challenge of HIV with regard to 8-12 year olds is two-fold: (1) to provide information, influence attitudes and role model skills with the aim of limiting the spread of the disease and (2) to promote support for children who is infected and affected by the disease.

The latest HIV/AIDS statistics - 15 - 19 year olds have highest rate of new infections. Because a new pool of children enter into this age cohort all the time, the need to continue prevention messages is essential.

The challenge of an infection rate of an average of 22% in our population is that many children will lose their parent(s), older siblings and extended family members to the disease. It is estimated that there will be between 9-12% orphans due to AIDS by the year 2015.¹⁵ Whilst death due to HIV and AIDS is an issue in the long term with concerns with regard to the welfare of children once death has occurred, there is also the concerns of what happens to children when their parents are alive and sick. HIV and AIDS impact on children's lives on different levels prior to death.

Impact of HIV/AIDS on children lives

Discrimination and isolation

Children experience discrimination at all levels of their lives.¹⁶ Within the extended family children are isolated and discriminated against when it comes to sharing of food, inclusion in social gatherings, being tasked with more household chores than other children, etc. This occurs whether or not they are positive and when their parent(s) is positive.

Within the community, in the church and schools, infected and affected children are teased, bullied, isolated and not allowed to participate in events. Although there is some support, in the main religious leaders, health workers and teachers are either actively involved in discrimination or through their inactivity and silence endorsing discrimination. The challenge therefore is not only to promote support and care for people affected by HIV/AIDS amongst children but also to move adults and specifically key people like teachers and religious leaders within communities.

Education

Although children infected by the disease have negative experiences at school, the following comments in the main talks to the experience of children who has family members living with HIV and AIDS. Children are affected whether they are attending or not attending school.

Children that are able to attend school, often have problems in concentration. This is either because they are worrying about their sick parent(s) at home, are hungry because there is no income at home to provide for food, or fear response from teachers because they don't have school fees, school uniforms, exercise books or have not been able to do their homework because they were taking care of the sick parent or siblings. When attending school children also experience discrimination by both teachers and other children.

In many cases children however are not attending school consistently or at all because they are caring for the sick and dying parent; or are forced not to go to school because of lack of money for school fees or schools sending them home because they do not have uniforms or books. Of particular concern is that of the rights of girl children, because often they are the one's to stay out of school to care for the sick and dying. This will impact on the long-term economic independence of these girls, which internationally has shown to have dire consequences for women's quality of life.

¹⁵ Smart, R., (2000), Children living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa – A Rapid Appraisal

¹⁶ Clacherty (2001)

The poverty experienced in their families also forces children to seek employment at earlier ages, with girls also engaging in sex work to earn an income to care for the family or their siblings.

Child headed households

Many times parent(s) do not disclose their status to their children for fear of the stigma attached to the disease and wanting to protect their children from possible discrimination. This leads to parents not talking to their children and preparing them, practically and emotionally, for death when it does occur.

Often the eldest child takes on the role of the provider and carer after the death of the parent(s) because extended family members are overburdened and not able to absorb children or do not want to take the children in because of the misinformation about HIV/AIDS. Children in these households therefore also do not have adult supervision and care, which according to resilience theory assist children to cope with adversity.¹⁷

Children in these households often live in abject poverty with little or no support from family or the community. This affects children emotionally, their sense of self-worth, ability to continue education and materially.

The issues listed above are only some of the around the impact of HIV/AIDS on children. All these issues however also have an emotional aspect which impacts on children's sense of self worth.

Smart¹⁸ lists the following as the needs of children who have lost parent(s):

1. Physical and material - food and food security; housing, clothing and bedding; health care
2. Intellectual - education and income generating skills
3. Psychosocial - parenting; friends and recreation
4. Non-discrimination and legal protection

Apart from the involvement of a caring adult, resilience theory¹⁹ proposes that there are factors that can assist children to cope with adversity. These are:

- trusting relationships
- emotional support outside the family
- beliefs in God and morality
- school achievement
- sense of being lovable
- sense of autonomy

The research done by Clacherty's²⁰ and others shows that children who are affected by HIV/AIDS are challenged in each of these areas. The challenge of Soul Buddyz is to challenge discrimination, promote care and support, challenge community leaders to take action to assist children to overcome some of the adversity they face due to HIV/AIDS.

¹⁷ Report on seminar on the training needs for children and HIV/AIDS , 2000, University of Natal Pietermaritzburg

¹⁸ Smart (2000)

¹⁹ Report, University of Natal Pietermaritzburg (2000)

²⁰ Clacherty and Ass. (2001)

Environment

Messages for CHILDREN

1. **Everything makes up the environment.**

The environment is not just the land, animals, plants, water and air. *People, the way society is organised, what and how trade and sell and the natural resources are all interconnected and make up our environment.*

2. **You can make the difference.**

Everyone has the responsibility to protect the environment. You can throw your litter in a bin and not on the street. Together you can make the area safer for children by playing in groups or cutting the long grass around the school or places where children play.

3. **Children have the right to a clean and safe environment.**

Air and water pollution are two major factors which impacts on children's health. Due to lack of access to electricity some people are forced to make a fire in their home and in some of our communities there is a lack of proper sanitation provision and waste disposal, which leads to pollution that affects children. Industrial activity also contributes to pollution which impacts on health e.g. waste disposal into rivers manifest in water borne disease like cholera and respiratory diseases like asthma. As individuals, families and communities we can take action to make the environment clean and safe for children.

4. **We can re-use, recycle, reduce and repair all the paper, plastics, cans, food and water we use everyday.**

All the material we use everyday can either be re-used or recycled *for income generation or to water the garden or create compost.* Plastics cannot break down into smaller pieces like potato skins without help. We can use less plastic, use a box or a bag that you can use more than once when we shop. Plastics can also be used for projects or to make things to sell like hats or you can collect cans to make money for your school. Write on both sides of the page. Paper is made of wood. Many trees are cut down to make the paper we write on. In this way we not only keep our communities clean, but also save our resources for future generations.

5. **My actions today will effect tomorrow.**

We must take care of our natural resources and think how we live and interact. Our actions not only impact on ourselves and our community, but also our country and other countries across the world. We must make sure that what we do today, whether it is to build something in our community, generate income to alleviate poverty, must take into consideration that children in later years also have the right to a clean, safe and healthy environment. Our natural environment is also a source of income for our country. It can attract many tourists and create many jobs for South Africans.

Messages for ADULTS

1. Everyone has the right to a clean environment.

Do not dump your dirt in the street, your neighbours' backyard or in a poorer community. Teach your child to respect the environment and not dump. Pay for services which will help your local council to help you keep your community clean.

2. Together government, adults and children can take action to make their environment cleaner and safer.

Many children feel unsafe in the environment that they live in e.g. long grass around the school and places where they play or gangsters using the available playground. Grass can be cut and adults should accompany/ watch over children at their play areas. Adults from other communities also go into poorer areas to dump their dirt without thinking about the impact on the children that live in that community. Do not dump your dirt in other people's places. *Development should not only be about short-term needs. We should think about how our communities are planned to not have a negative effect on the environment.*

3. Think about what and how much you buy, how you dispose of waste and re-use material.

Adults are role models. Children copy what adults do.

4. Talk to your children and be involved in your child's life.

It is important that adults talk to children about the things that happen in the social and natural environment. With greater involvement in children's lives, adults will get a better understanding of some of the problems children face in the environment.

Background

Often the concept of environment is limited to the idea of green spaces, animals and plants. There cannot however be a separation between people, the biophysical world they occupy and the social issues that every society faces. A more developed definition of environment includes the interaction of people, how society is organised, the economic and political factors and our biophysical world.

The environmental problems that South Africa experience are socially, economically, politically and biophysically related. Issues of pollution, littering, poor waste management are biophysical by nature. Examples are: air pollution in most of east Johannesburg because of heavy industries; in Mpumalanga due to emissions from Eskom plants; in Port Elizabeth because of an incinerator located close to a residential area.²¹

Economic related problems are poverty and deprivation, which leaves people with few alternatives of not depleting natural resources, which results in poor soils and deforestation. Environmental problems also arise out of developments like malls and fast

²¹ Molose, V., (2001), Environment, environmental issues, risks, concerns and responses in the South African context

food outlets with high consumption rates, which impacts on natural resources, creates waste and contributes to the disappearance of open spaces and increase storm water run-off.

Some of the environmental problems in the social sphere are the high levels in violence in the home and community, lack of adequate housing, poor water and sanitation provision and the threat of HIV/AIDS. The high illiteracy rate also reduces the capacity of communities to identify and solve environmental problems.

According to Molose(2001), Discrimination and oppression usually forces oppressed people to live on marginal lands which puts pressure on the ecological life support systems. And it is political decisions, which results in disparities in society. According to Molose, in South Africa there is an urban bias in political decisions, which has negative impacts on the biophysical environment.

In the main, "South Africa's environmental problems are socio-economic and political in origin and effect."²² Environmental problems affect children's health and development in the following ways:

- poor waste management systems results in serious health risks e.g. illegal dumping of domestic, medical and industrial waste, blocked sewerage drains, which results in harmful chemicals seeping into the water system causing diarrhoeal diseases like cholera and polluting the air which manifests as respiratory related diseases, runny noses, red eyes, cancer and headaches.
- Inadequate water supply and sanitation services and lack of access to other services like electricity limits choices to practice basic health and hygiene. Limited, badly built or non-existence of toilets at schools make them unsafe places for children. It is one of the places where children are bullied, abused/raped and robbed.
- Noise pollution due to transportation e.g. airplanes, hooting; occupational practises e.g. factories and road construction and in communities e.g. animals, do it yourself projects, continuous parties have psychological impact like stress, tiredness, headaches and hypertension; overexposure could lead to partial or permanent hearing loss; and limits productivity in workplaces and schools.
- Lack of safety in the home because of hot surfaces and objects within children's reach, electrical wires and poisons like paraffin are hazardous for children. Lack of safe places results in children playing in the road. When there are playgrounds it is often occupied by gangsters making it unsafe and don't have proper waste management systems, which results in broken glass and other materials lying around causing diseases, disability, etc.

There is a need for awareness of a broader understanding of the environment beyond 'green' issues. Adults and children need to understand how their actions impact on the social and biophysical environment, and health and development. Some of the present environmental problems South Africa experience can be addressed through community and individual action. Resource usage needs to not only address

²² ibid

short term needs, but also consider long term issues like development for tomorrow, poverty alleviation and contribute to job creation.

At the same time South Africa's natural environment also has great potential for the tourism and thus job creation market. Children should be encouraged to think about the tourism industry and jobs within the environmental sector e.g. environmental law, environmental management, environmental education, waste management, journalism, permaculture and environmental theatre and arts.