SERIES FOUR

MESSAGE BRIEF

OVERVIEW

Soul City: Institute for Health and Development Communication is a South African NGO that was established in 1992 to harness the power of the mass media and to promote health and development in South Africa and beyond. Twelve years ago the Institute developed its first multimedia communication vehicle namely Soul City targeted at the general public. Post the screening and evaluation of Soul City Series 3 the findings presented stated that children and young people under the age of 16 were watching the adult series. It was out of this revelation that Soul Buddyz was born targeted specifically at children.

Soul Buddyz in partnership with SABC Education is a multimedia intervention aimed at 8-12 year olds, their parents, teachers and caregivers. Soul Buddyz like Soul City is a mass, health promotion intervention which uses television, radio and print to disseminate its messages using the edutainment model. The reason for the use of this model is that edutainment is accessible, popular and yet still serious enough to carry persuasive social messages. Edutainment models pro-social behaviour in a way that it fosters self-identification and self-reflection leaving audiences with a sense of having choices in bringing about change in their lives.

Health Communication Model

Soul City acknowledges a range of health and development communication models that are applicable in raising awareness, increasing knowledge and influencing attitude in promoting social behavioural change. The model applied by Soul City takes cognisance of individual and social environmental factors involved in the capacity of an individual to make choices. Soul City's interventions are imbedded in a health promotion framework and draws on a number of social behaviour theories[1]. **See Appendix A.**

Pro-social Messages and General Themes

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 Equity:

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[1] Soul City: a sustainable edutainment vehicle facilitating social change (S. Goldstein, G. Japhet, S. Usdin, E. Scheepers), Health Promotion Journal of Australia 2004

- The 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.
- The construction of manhood and gender, in general, has been identified as an on-going theme for Soul City to deal with in all its series. As a guiding principle, within each topic and each series, space for dialogue and reflection has been created to enable men and society to question men's prevailing attitudes and practices.

Positive parenting

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

Violence and guns & Violence against Women

- 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.
- The Series to contribute to a social climate in which violence against women is viewed as unacceptable.
- The Series to encourage people to recognise violence against women as everyone's problem and to take action to combat it.

Racial Stereotyping & Xenophobia

- The series is committed to the spirit of non-racism and racial stereotyping is to be avoided at all costs.
- Xenophobia: This problem is manifesting itself across a range of areas. HIV and AIDS, crime, unemployment is the 3 areas in which South Africans believe foreigners have a role to play. Moreover, foreigners tend to be demonized in the public mind. This underlying message can be broadened to incorporate the tolerance of diversity.

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 modeling where possible and we avoid pointing fingers at individuals and labeling 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 and cigarettes

- The glamourisation of these substances in the media has been identified internationally as contributing to increased consumption, especially by young people, thus we endeavor at all times to de-glamourise 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 modeling of cool and hip young people enjoying life without the use of either alcohol or tobacco, is we believe a very important underlying message.

<u>Making disability visible</u>

- People with disability form at least 12.64 percent of the South African population. South Africa has traditionally had formalised manners of discriminating against people with disabilities by separating them from mainstream society though having institutionalised education and employment specific for them as a segment. An informal form of discrimination has traditionally come from a belief that disability was a punishment from God which led parents to hide children with disabilities and not having them participate in normal life and not expose them to formal education. Soul City believes in showing people with disabilities in series and also telling stories through them.

Parallel universe
- Human studies have revealed that many people have more than one world views from which interpret life. While they may be open to unpack and understand factual information around disease, they might also have other things they believe (often spiritual and fatalistic) bring about problems such as disease. Acknowledgement of this dual-existence is crucial in developing health communication materials. This has implication of taking into account and addressing the multi-cultural nature of audiences. This is particularly the case in South Africa where people depend on both modern methods of healing as well as traditional herbal and spiritual interventions of addressing physical and psychosocial problems.

  The parallel universe is also about aligning the children (Soul Buddyz) and adult (Soul City) series. The series should talk to each other e.g. the clinic should be the same and some of the characters the same. This is a place where there is intersection.

Soul Buddyz 4 covers the following topics:
1. Trauma as a result of exposure to violence as a victim or witness as experienced by children
2. HIV and Aids prevention with a focus on gender
3. Road Safety

Below are the topics which were covered in the last two series:
Soul Buddyz 1
1. Disability
2. AIDS and Sexuality
3. Trauma- Intentional and Unintentional trauma
4. Children's Rights

Soul Buddyz 2
1. Racism and Xenophobia
2. Substance Abuse
3. HIV and AIDS
4. Disability- specifically learning disorders
5. Environment
6. Children and justice

Soul Buddyz 3
1. Financial Literacy and Management;
2. Nutrition in South Africa and Lifestyle;
3. HIV and AIDS: Education, Educators and Learners;
4. Gender, Sexuality and Masculinity: Perspective on the Issue of Masculine Gender Identities;
5. Gender, Sexuality and Masculinity within the context of disability

HIV and AIDS Prevention Messages

Children who are the primary target audience of the Soul Buddyz were born and grew up in the era of the HIV and Aids epidemic. Research and interventions on how this epidemic impacts on children indicates focus has been put on the treatment, social security and other areas that encourage support of children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.

The incidence figures as reflected in the Human Sciences Research Council HIV Prevalence Survey[2] which claims more and more young people are getting infected with HIV. 260 000 of children under the age of 15 years were estimated to be HIV positive with an estimate at least 106 741 households being headed by children who have been orphaned as a result of HIV and Aids[3].

The literature review reports that there is scarcity of programs that deal with prevention and awareness for children of this age group. The only program that exists at a fundamental level is the Sex Education curriculum within the Life Orientation program. There are a number of factors that can be said to contribute to such lack of interventions.

Fears of parents

The research also highlights another disturbing trend among parents. Many parents are reported to be reluctant to talk to children about sex. One course of this reluctance is the fear that this will encourage children to actually have sex while other parents also feel inadequately equipped to do this effectively. Many parents also appeared to wish innocence upon children and rather turn a blind eye to the possibility, and sometimes reality that children are experimenting with sex.

Another aspect which is an obstacle to open communication is the issue of generational hierarchies that have made talking about sex difficult between parents and children. Traditional forms of sex education have been strongly focused on gendered sexual socialisation and faith-based and traditional lobbies present opposition to forms of sexuality education out of line with their views[4].

The role of educators
The current Life Orientation curriculum is rather detailed on sex education but a lot of educators expressed reluctance to speak to children about sex as they also feared it will encourage them. It is important to note that there are high rates of infections that have been recorded among educators. The HSRC Survey points the rate of infected educators

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[2] HSRC/MRC/CADRE HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey 2005[2]
[3] Child Gauge 2005, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town
[4] Youth Sexuality and HIV& AIDS Prevention: A literature review, Lynn Hewitt (for Soul City IHDC)

at 12.7%. This could also be indicative of the inability of some educators to protect themselves from contracting the disease.

Sex, HIV and relationships
There are numerous ways in which HIV is transmitted from person to person but sexual transmission is the most common. The implication arising from this is that transmission occurs most commonly in the context of relationships (whether long term or very temporary). According to the literature review, the majority of young people interviewed in the Anglican Church[5] research as well as other research quoted in the literature review stated that they understood sexual intercourse to happen within the context of romantic relationships. They also seemed to have an expectation that romantic relationships are fleeting and that you can move form one to the next. An inference can be drawn from this that young people anticipate having a number of sexual partners in their lifetime.

Gender socialisation
A major complication in terms of how sexual partners can prevent HIV infection is the influence of gender roles and identities of men and women, girls and boys in relationships. South Africa is still struggling with issues of gender imbalances when it comes to personal lives of the individuals.

Boys are socialised to take risks and this risky behaviour brings with it praise and approval from peers this tends to extend to the manner in which they relate with girls. When questions about boys' perceptions of girls these are the responses they came up with:

Girls are fly, beautiful and they like to play, and they like boys and some of
They don't wash themselves. Boys are jealous, they like sex and girls, they
Are criminals and they just like to make a nuisance of themselves.
Girls are talkative while boys like to beat them up. (Boys, KZN, informal
settlement)

Rights of passage to womanhood and manhood
The Soul Buddyz fourth series research points to the challenge faced by boys to have sex to prove that they are men. This has also transpired not only to be the case for girls but the challenge for them is also that they have to have babies
The pressure to prove manhood was also born testimony to in the formative research where boys were stating that being a virgin is not something acceptable among their peers.

Some boys would want to have sex so that you are not labeled "Kgope", that
Is why most boys would want to have sex so that they are not called names.
(Boy, Limpopo, rural)

The expectation of proper behaviour was laid on the girl child who is expected to protect her virginity while it appears that boys are actually encouraged to have girlfriends and

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[5] Fikelela AIDS Project 2005

explore their sexuality. Most parents also seemed to believe that the girl should bear the burden of taking care of the baby once she had gotten pregnant.

Children and the concept of time
Developmentally children between 8 and 12 perceive and experiences time differently. Please include some more theory here so that it is bedded. Children perceive the time differently from adults. The sense of time can be understood to be slightly exaggerated as compared to adults. The concept of a long-term relationship, for an example, can be a period of two months. They also have the tendency to see the future as something that is very far for them to be concerned about.

Understanding child development will help communicators design projects and messages that a child is emotionally ready to handle. This information will help in recognizing how differently people at different ages respond to motivators, process information, and interact with their environment[6].

Force in sexual relationships
The disturbing finding of the research was the fact that children believe that force to have sex forms part of relationships and none of the children seemed to perceive this as the criminal act that it is:

Here this boy forces this girl to love him. He hits the girl. (Girl, Limpopo, rural)

You can tell her that you wish to show her something in the fields, you take her there when it gets dark then when you get there you push her down and have sex with her. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

When I'm with my girl friend I force her to have sex with me, when she gets to her parents, she tells them that I raped her and this got me into trouble because she did want to have sex with me. (Boy, Limpopo, rural)

But once you in that position that you can't say no. If you say no he might accept it but sometimes he might rape you. It's almost like you have no choice. (Girl, W.Cape, suburban)

Age and sex

HSRC Survey also found that young South African women are more likely to have male partners who are at least five years older than they are. Older men have a higher HIV prevalence than younger men, and therefore young women with older male partners increase their chances of getting HIV. This skewed balance of power due to age and experience between the sexual partners makes negotiating safe sex more difficult for girls and puts them at greater risk of being infected. Adding to this the above mentioned gender challenges exacerbate the nature of the problem.

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[6]Developmental Concept (Erickson, 1963)

One could have easily hoped that the cumulative effect of exposure to information that has been put out would have by now equipped children with the basic information of HIV and Aids prevention. Contrary to that, the children's responses to being asked how they can protect themselves from getting infected with HIV prove the need to such basic information to be communicated more.

She can take HIV/AIDS pills.
She can take her treatment properly. (Girls, KZN, informal settlement)
She must eat vegetables. (Girl, Gauteng, informal settlement)
How can this boy protect himself from contracting HIV/AIDS?
He can take treatment
H must go to hospital and get 'introvirils'
He must exercise. (Boys, Limpopo, rural)

Children say they are curious about the sexual act and how it feels. Children these days are highly sexualised due exposure to sexual content in the media as well as the high rate of sexual abuse. Many of them will eventually find out for themselves even though many say they ready to engage sex. Communicating prevention messages need to be done with a focus of encouraging healthy, supportive and nonsexual relationships between boys and girls. An emphasis also needs to be made on the role of teachers and parents in demystifying the sexual act while empowering children to know that they can control their sexual lives and their future.

<u>Soul Buddyz television drama priorities:</u>

- Choice and consequence
- Promoting thinking of future
- Parents as role models

SERIES OBJECTIVES

Objectives for Parents
- **To talk to children about relationships but guide children about relationships**
- **To learn about children's rights and responsibilities so they can teach the children.**
- **To be positive role models of sexual and relationship behaviour**
- **To treat boys and girls equally and allowing boys and girls to both achieve their best.**

Objectives for girls
- **To have healthy and supportive non-sexual relationships with boys**
- **To be empowered to make informed choices about relationships and sex**
- **To delay having sex until they are older**
- **To understand their sexual rights and responsibilities**
- **To not allow their friends to pressurise them into having sex**

Objective for boys
- **To have healthy and supportive non-sexual relationships with girls**
- **To understand their sexual rights and responsibilities**
- **To delay having sex until they are older**
- **To not allow their friends to pressurise them into having sex**
- **To stand up for their beliefs of respecting girls and women**
- **To not pressurise or force girls to have sex with them**

Objectives for communities
- **To talk about how HIV and AIDS is affecting their members**
- **To promote prevention of infection by utilising existing resources for information about testing, care and support and treatment**
- **To help children who have been made orphans and vulnerable as a result of HIV and AIDS**

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS

Parents are role models of behaviour in relationships
- Children learn more form what you do as opposed to what you say. Try to portray positive behaviour (TV/print)
- Spend time with children as mothers and fathers
- Treat boys and girls equally and allowing boys and girls to both achieve their best (all media)
- Love your girls and boys equally (all media)
- Give both girls and boys time to play and be children (all media)

Talk to children about sex and relationships between males and females (TV/radio)

- Having good emotional relationships makes it easier to talk about difficult issues with children. Be involved in your children's lives (TV/radio/print)
- Tell children about the different ways that their bodies will change and grow.(print)
- Answer your children's questions openly and honestly
- Taking advantage of the talk on sex as the opportunity to instil values, morals and imparting life skills
- Talk to children about relationships between males and females
- You need to talk about sex in the context of relationships by dealing with issues respect, intimacy and healthy relationships
- Encourage children to have healthy non-sexual cross-gender relationships

Learn about children's rights and responsibilities

- Learn the difference between rights and responsibilities (all media)
- Learn how to discipline and guide your children within the rights and responsibilities framework (print)

MESSAGES FOR CHILDREN

Messages for boys

Make your own choices about relationships and sexuality

- It's okay for a boy to be a virgin (radio)
- You can have sensual feelings but it does not mean you have to have sex with someone (radio/print)
- Not having sex does not make you less of a man or boy or a sissy (all media)
- Having an erection does not mean you have to have sex (print)

You do not have to be afraid or ashamed of having different opinions to those of your friends

- Speak out if you do not like how other boys tease and abuse girls. (all media)
- You are not controlled by your friends and you can make different choices with regards to the kinds of relationships you have with girls or other boys (all media)

MESSAGES FOR GIRLS

Make your own choices about safe relationships and sexuality

- It's fly/cool/good not to have a sexual relationship (all media)
- It is safer to have a relationships with boys your own age (tv)
- Not having what other people have is not shameful so you don't have to get into sexual relationships to get things (radio/print)

It is important for girls to know and understand their bodies
- You and your friends can find out information on how your bodies are made (print/radio)
- Girls are also curious about what their private parts look like. It is okay for you to want to know more about your body (print)
- It is risky for girls to fall pregnant when they are younger than 18 years of age as their bodies are not ready yet (radio/print)

You must speak out when someone is forcing or pressuring you to do something you do not want
- Respecting older people does not mean you have to do things that hurt you (radio/print)
- You don't have to feel afraid to tell the boy have relationships when you do not like what he says or does (tv/radio)
- Tell an adult you trust or phone CHILDLINE at **0800055555 (all media)**

MESSAGES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Girls and boys can be in supportive non-sexual relationships (all media)
- It is normal for boys and girls to have sexual feelings. You do not have to feel guilty or ashamed that you have them.
- Having fun in relationships is not about sex
- It is not cool/fly to force someone to hug, kiss, or force them to have sex with you
- It's cool/fly to have one relationship
- If you have a relationship, you can hug and kiss.
- Girls are not in relationships to get things and money from men and boys. They want a someone to be friends with, to talk to and share things with

Find out information about HIV and AIDS and how to prevent it (radio/print)
- You *have* to ask questions about sex related issues
- You and your friends can help each other to find the right information about safer sex from the clinic, the library and other information resources
- Speak to your parents and teachers about sex, HIV and AIDS

You and your friends can make better and safer choices (all media)
- It's not cool to keep quiet when you see your friends put themselves at risk
- It's not cool to keep quiet when you see your friends being disrespectful
- Boys and girls have the right to say no or yes and the responsibility to respect themselves and each other.

Background

Crime and violence can be said to have become part of the daily lives of South Africans over a period of time. Even though crime is an intentional phenomenon and many democracies battle with it, what is more disturbing with the South African situation is not only the crime rate but the high levels of violence that accompany it.

Violence cuts across all socio-economic classes but poverty has been recorded to be a major contributor to the high levels of trauma as a result of exposure to crime and violence. The high prevalence of violence in homes, communities and in media images exposes children to an abnormality and risk to a degree that trauma has been deemed a social norm in the country.[7]

Violence has been defined by the World Health Organisation as *the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation*.[8]

The South African Constitution under the Bill of Rights provides every child with the right to be protected form maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation[9]. There are other examples of pieces of legislation that grant children protection form abuse and violation such as the Child Care Act. More legislation is under construction that seeks address the rights of children to safety such as the Sexual Offences Bill and the Children's Bill. A comparatively analysis of such legal and constitutional provisions against the crime statistics on murder and assault paint a different picture on the safety of children in South Africa.

The Child Protection Units of the South African Police Services that cater for children are reported to receive an excess of 35 000 child abuse reports per annum.[10] Rape, murder and assault have become known in South Africa as 'social fabric' crimes because so many of these offences are committed by people known to one another in familiar environments.[11] Children constitute the most vulnerable group in contemporary democratic society.

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[7] Check lit rev for this reference…..
[8] World Report on Violence and Health
[9] Bill of right Section 28 (1) d, Soul African Constitution
[10] Are we failing the best interest of the child by Prof H. Conradie, UNISA Dept of Criminology
[11] ISS Crime Index volume 5

The South African Police Services (SAPS) reported a total of 15650 cases of child rape, with 5859 (37.4%) referring to children under 12 and the remaining 62.6% referring to victims aged 12-17 years in 2002.

The danger with such degrees of exposure to trauma lies not only on the physical consequences but also the psychological impact of trauma which can range Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression and the effect on the schoolwork. Consequences that should be more of concern for the society include self-hatred, a deep distrust of community and society, a lack of sense of safety in the world and a damaged internalized sense of morality and notions of caring for others

In the formative research with the target audience by Soul City, parents, teachers and children related a strong sense of fear for the safety of their children. Parents even indicated that even though schools are safe places for children, they still feared sexual abuse from teachers. Below is a quote for a parent:

> *It is like at school you will find a teacher or a school principal raping a school child promising her money which at the end the future of the child is destroyed.* (African, Rural, Limpopo, Female)

Children are also exposed violence in their homes and community environments. Areas where shops and taverns are situated were sighted as dangerous thus evoking fear in children.

The introduction of children's rights has also brought confusion for parents as to how they should discipline children. Many parents do not know of different ways of discipline other than the traditional method of corporal punishment. It is for this reason that they feel that children are disrespectful. This sense of disempowerment is increased in the context of a partriarchical culture where children are seen and not heard. Also, a lot of the parents have been exposed to trauma in their own lives that they have not found constructive ways to deal with it

In as much as the participants in the groups verbalised and the findings of the literature research have stated that trauma has become a "normal" part of society, people need to be empowered to know that they can contribute to a safer way of living. The concept of safety also needs to be unpacked and demystified more. Adults and children need to be introduced to mechanisms through which can contribute to such safety while mobilising for utilisation and implementation of existing government services to promote safety.

Series Objective
Objectives for Parents
1. **To seek help**
2. **To support their children in trauma**
3. **To be actively promote safety in their homes and their communities**

Objectives for Children
1. **To be aware that they have the right to be safe**
2. **To talk about their feelings**
3. **Support their peers when going friends who are going through trauma**
4. **To learn violence free methods of dealing with problems**

Objectives for schools
1. **To motivate schools to identify ways in which could assist children who are struggling with trauma**
2. **To work together with parents in addresses children's problems**

Messages for parents

Talk to your children about safety at home and in your community (all media)
- Take an interest and listen carefully to your child and their feelings.
- Children often cannot describe or say what their "big feelings" are. Regularly talk to your children about how they are feeling. Watch their behaviour for any difference like increased fighting at school or not concentrating because they may be acting out what they feel inside
- Talk to them about danger zones e.g. open fields, large crowds, publics toilets etc

Parents need to seek help for themselves and their children (radio/media)
- You can find out information about family supportive services
- If you are planning to have children, find out information about rights and duties of parents and children before.
- Speak to other parents about alternatives to corporal punishment, parenting skills and positive discipline, respect as well as rights and responsibilities of both parents and children
- Work with your children's teachers to in supporting your children when they are going through difficulties

Parents and caregivers can make children feel more secure (all media)
- Educate children about the various resources available to them in your community
- Discuss a safety plan with them – teach them the phone number of a neighbour or discuss a safe place they can go to if you are not around, find older children or friends to accompany the child when they feel afraid.
- Make sure the child always knows how to get hold of you. You can buy them a phone card that they can use or emergency.

Different parts of the environment pose different levels of danger to children (all media)

- It is illegal to send children under the age of 18 to buy alcohol and it also puts them in danger.
- Discuss with your child how you can make their environment safer for them.
- Try and not send your child to the shop when it is dark. If you have to, make sure they are accompanied by another adult you trust.

Work with others in your community to create a safe environment (all media)

- Parents can be active in creating a safe environment for children
- They can work with other community members to take action against unsafe places
- They can have discussions with schools about making schools violence free zones
- They can lobby the local council to make roads safe and to close illegal drinking places
- They can take turns to look after children making sure that a responsible adult is caring for children all the time
- Together with other parents identify what is threatening the safety and security of different members of the community
- together with other parents , actively campaign for your safety and that of your children
- Raise awareness around safety issues through local structures
- You can come together with other parents to boycott unsafe places as a collective
- Shopkeepers are parents too and should help in keeping their shops and areas around them safer for children

MESSAGES FOR CHILDREN

Children have the right to live free from fear and abuse (all media)
- Tell an adult you trust if someone is touching you in a way that is uncomfortable or hurting you. Abuse is never the child's fault, and what happens to an abuser if he gets caught is not your fault

Children have the right to voice their feelings (all media)
- It's Ok to feel sad.
- Try and explain to the other person what you are feeling.
- Try to understand what the other child or adult is feeling
- You can find ways to tell someone how you feel without using violence.

Talk to someone about how you feel (media)
- Find an adult you can trust and tell them what you are feeling
- If you feel continue telling a trusted adult(s) until s/he is believed.
- tell your parents when you don't feel safe –going to the shops or to school
- If something happens to you tell someone.
- Try to write down how you feel if you can't say it

- If you don't have someone you can talk to, phone CHILDREN on 0800055555

You don't have to use violence to solve problems, you can learn other ways (all media)

- It is much easier to solve problems when you are calm. Before you do or say anything breathe slowly and count to ten
- Think of ways that will help you and the other person feel good, it is OK to admit that you are wrong or that you are sorry
- You can learn to cope with situations you cannot change by knowing how/where to get help, resourceful numbers,

Good friends support each other (all media)
- Good friends talk and listen to each other
- Good friends are concerned about their friend's safety.
- Relax by doing things that make you feel better (keeping active, having fun, breathing, painting and drawing as well as playing)
- Listen to your friends when they tell you about things that have happened to them and don't gossip about it to other people.
- Help friends to seek help
- Create groups where to can talk to each other about how you feel
- If you do not have someone you can talk to, Call **CHILDLINE** at **08 000 55555** because they have adults who will listen.

MESSAGES FOR SCHOOLS

Schools can work with the community to promote safety (all media)
- Schools can help communities to define trauma as they experience it in their community
- Parents and teachers should talk about the school, children and safety
- Schools can communicate problems faced by children to community
- Schools can become a platform for stakeholders to raise issues
- Open up community dialogue on issues of rights and responsibilities

Schools can help children who are dealing with trauma (media)
- Teachers can learn to identify signs, and then refer.
- Identify resources available in the community and draw up a list for referring people.
- Identify children going through trauma and refer them and their families
- Teachers can help by referring children to resources
- Educate parents and children about trauma and its effects on children.
- Work with families and community workers in supporting children by also linking with NGO's and other groups
- Form support groups at schools for teachers, learners and parents

- Create interest groups to promote hobbies and other interesting activities for children

ROAD SAFETY

Background

Globally 1, 2 million people are killed and between 20 and 50 million are seriously injured or disabled as a result of road traffic crashes every year. According to the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP), over seventy-five percent (75%) of estimated global road casualties occur in developing and transition countries, even though these have only 32 percent (32%) of total motor vehicles[12].

Of all road users, children are the most vulnerable due to their physical and cognitive skills not being fully developed and their smaller stature which makes it hard for them to see and to be seen. According to the World Health Organization estimates for 2002, there were 180 500 children killed in road crashes. Some 97% of these child road deaths occurred in developing countries[13]. The level and pattern of child road injury is linked to differences in road use. In Africa, children are more likely to be hurt as pedestrians and as users of public transport. More boys are reported to get injured than girls as society tends to refer to boys as "outdoor children"[14] and are allowed to venture outside the home and adult supervision more than is done with girls it was also found that most of these deaths and injuries occurred near the home.

Overview: South Africa
The scale of death and injury due to road crashes can be said to have reached disaster proportions in South Africa, and the country has been ranked 'fourth worst in the world'[15] It is estimated that about 12 000 people die every year on the roads – about 36 people die every day and 100 are seriously injured. 7 000 people are maimed or permanently disabled every year[16].
The cost of traffic collisions in South Africa is approximately R36 billion per year[17] which makes the need for awareness campaign on safe road use more necessary.

Causes of road crashes
The causes of road crashes can be broken down into combinations of:
1) The conditions of the road,
2) Problems with vehicles involved and
3) The behaviour of drivers, cyclists and pedestrians

[12] Global Road Safety Partnership Robertson Commission report 2006
[13] WHO World report on road traffic injury prevention
[14] RMTC Road Traffic and Fatal Crash Statistics 2003-2004
[15] Moira Winslow, Drive Alive, quoted in Sunday Times, 18 December 2005, p 6

[16]RMTC Road Traffic and Fatal Crash Statistics 2003-2004
[17] CSIR website

This driver behaviour error can be further broken down into:
- Speed;
- Driving under the influence of liquor and/or a narcotic drug;
- Fatigue, and
- Driver incompetence
- Improper road usage of roads by pedestrians

Why are children so vulnerable?

According to Dr van As, director of the Child Accident Prevention Fund of South Africa, children are particularly vulnerable because, in comparison to adults, their heads are much larger in proportion to their bodies. As pedestrians, children's heads are the point of impact, whereas in adults, the body is the point of impact. This makes children vulnerable to head injuries, which tend to be more lethal than body injuries. 67% of all road crash fatalities in 2004 were children between the ages of 0 to 14 years.[18] Children are physically, psychologically, perceptually and cognitively limited in their safe participation in traffic.

According to the formative research conducted for the Soul Buddyz series, children are acutely aware of the danger facing them as road users on a daily basis. This results in an overwhelming sense of fear.

"I worry a lot when we walk on the tarred road. We walk on the side of the road. There are many of us who walk there and there are cars that come at such speed. So we are afraid that they will knock us." Girl (12), rural

Developing countries and road crash fatalities
Within poor countries, poor people – represented by pedestrians, passengers in buses and trucks, and cyclists – suffer a higher burden of morbidity and mortality from traffic injuries. A deduction can be drawn from the above factors that road safety can be regarded as a socio-economic problem resulting in a lack of traffic safety education and actual experience of the road.

Another problem that can be attributed to socio-economic imbalances is the availability of recreational and playing facilities for children. Children in townships and informal settlements do not have adequate space and facilities to play so they use the road as a playground. Parents in the literature review also expressed this concern:

> *"Our children are not safe when playing on the road. I think that there should be playgrounds so that children will not have to play on the streets." (Urban Western Cape)*

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[18] National Injury Mortality Surveillance System (NIMS) 2004

In spite of the many challenges sited by the children in the formative research, many of them have, however, devised mechanisms to be safer on the roads.

We do speak to the young children in our group that we should no longer cross under the bridge because it is not safe. We ask the younger children to wait for us after school so we can help them cross the busy road on the bridge. They don't watch out for cars when they walk on the bridge. (Girl, Gauteng Township, 11-12)

They should walk on the very far end of the side of the road so that cars cannot bump the. (Boy, NWP, 8-10).

Findings from both qualitative and quantitative research are proof that having to use the road is a fatal risk for everybody. The fact that children are at highest risk necessitates urgent intervention by the Soul Buddyz series. The change of reference to incidents on the roads from accidents to crash (because accidents imply that they are not avoidable) empowers road users to understand that changing attitude and behavior can improve safety

Series Objectives

Objectives for Parents
- To play a part in promoting road safety awareness with and for their children
- To become role models for proper usage of roads

Objectives for Children
- To become agents in promoting road safety
- To speak out against dangers they are exposed to as road users

Objectives for Schools
- To put safety mechanisms in place to secure children on the road
- To work with parents in addressing children's safety as road users
- To implement the Road Safety curriculum

MESSAGES FOR CHILDREN
There are ways you can keep safer as a pedestrian on the road (all media)
- Always walk on the right hand side of the road because you need to see the vehicles coming towards you.
- Walk on the pavement where it is available
- Assist younger children by walking facing oncoming traffic while holding the smaller child with your right hand. This prevents them from running into the road When you help a younger child hold them on the side away from the traffic.
- Walk in groups because it is safer and ensure to walk one behind the other to form a single line on busy roads

Practice safer ways of crossing the road (all media)
- Always cross at the traffic lights, corners, block pedestrian crossing and places that have signs to show that you can cross
- Look for cars coming from both sides of the road, listen for sound of any car that might be coming and keep looking until you crossed safely
- also ask for help from older children and adults to cross the road

It is important to see the cars on the road and make sure that you are seen by the drivers (all media)
- Crossing at a bend on the road that where you cannot see the car around the corner.
- Wear bright coloured clothing or white clothing or reflective material so that drivers can see you on the road even when it is dark.

There are things you can do to make yourself safer as a passenger in the car (all media)
- Always wear a seatbelt when you are in a vehicle, even when you are sitting in the back seat or going on a short distance trip.
- Always sit in the back passenger seat

Talk to your parents about what happens on your way to school or shop (all media)
- Your parents need to know when you are afraid of certain people or places
- Tell your parents if you feel unsafe in the transport that you travel with to school and ask them to speak to the driver/owner of the vehicle

Talk to your school about how to keep children safe on the road (all media)
- Ask your parents and teachers about what the different signs of the road mean and what you should do when you see the signs.
- Find out how to establish a scholar patrol or school warden project from the Department of Transport

- Volunteer to be in the scholar patrol (if you are the right age)
- Work together with your friends your parents and teachers to find safer routes to school

Children can make a difference (all media)

- Children can remind parents/adults to wear their seatbelts.
- Children can write down the registration numbers of speeding vehicles and vehicles that don't respect the rules of the road and report them at this toll free number
- Talk to your friends when you see that they are not using safely and correct methods of walking and crossing
- Roads are very dangerous place to play. You and your friends can find safer places to play where there are no playgrounds.
- Accepting lifts from people you do not know can get you into danger. Rather walk even if it is going to take longer to get where you want to go*.*

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS

Practice safe and legal methods of driving and take responsibility for your passengers (all media)

- Driving slower at or below the required speed limit is safer because it makes it easier and quicker for the car to stop in time
- Always put your seat belt on when you are in a car
- Only drink 2 drinks if you have to drive. Ask someone else to drive or give you a lift if you know you are going to drink more.
- Ensure that your passengers wear a seatbelt at all times
- Young children need to use a car seat until they at least six or seven years of age. After that special booster seats are recommended according to their age and weight It is the law that children under 12 should not sit in the front passenger seat – it is the most dangerous seat in the car.

You can teach your children about road safety by demonstrative good behaviour (all media)

- Always cross the road safely and use traffic lights and proper crossing places
- Be careful not to use bad language or resorting to fighting with other drivers when driving especially when you have children in the car.
- Try to demonstrate safe road use for your children until they are old enough to cross alone.

You can get support for your child's school to adopt safe road use policies and activities (all media)

- Speak to the school about starting scholar patrol
- Encourage drivers in your community to lower the speed limit to no more than 30 kilometres per hour when driving near a school and in residential areas

- Motivate for safe school zones and include the local authority to support this.
- Encourage the school to form walking groups
- Encourage the teaching of road safety
- Work jointly with other parents and the school to ensure that children use safe transport to and from school.
- Volunteer at your children's school to help learners to be safe.

Help children to be safer on the road (all media)
- There are a number of perceptual skills that are not yet fully developed in children who are 9 years old and under, e.g. they are not yet able to tell exactly how far things are from them therefore, they should not be allowed to be on the road on their own.
- Adults can escort children to and from school.
- Make sure that children are wearing bright coloured clothing or white clothing or reflective material so that the cars can see them clearly on the road.
- Help all children who need to cross the road
- Speak to the owner and driver of the taxi to adhere to safety measures
- Lobby local government to put up road signs and speed humps on the roads and lower your driving speed in areas around the school.
- Start walking groups with parents in the community

MESSAGES FOR SCHOOLS (all media)
- Children need to be more visible on the road so they can be safer. Reflective material can make them more visible. Encourage your school management team, SGB or safety committee to include reflector material in the school uniform.
- Children are under a lot of stress on the way to and from school. They are often afraid of being involved in a crash or being victims of crime, they also fear being punished for being late at school.
- Schools need to establish scholar patrols to facilitate safe crossing around the school.
- Schools can reward special school taxis that keep good standards of safety.
- Lobby local council for lower speed limits and warning signs regarding pedestrians around the school
- Implement the Road Safety Education in the Life Orientation curriculum and enforce safety policy around road safety