

SEPTEMBER 1, 2020



REPORT ON A 2-DAY WORKSHOP HELD AT THE
SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE IN ASOKORE-
MAMPONG, KUMASI, GHANA.

THIS REPORT WAS PREPARED BY MS.DOROTHY OSEI

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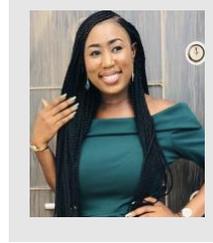
TEAM MEMBERS:

Kwabena Fosu Lartey (Chief Coordinator)



Kwabena is a youth activist, aspiring social policy and development consultant and a certified health education specialist.

Sylvia Okyere (Public Relations Officer)



Sylvia is an Adolescent Health promoter who currently volunteers her expertise with several organizations

Dorothy Osei (Projects Coordinator)



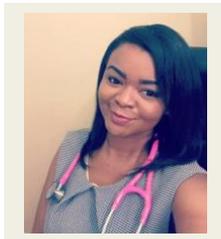
Dorothy Osei is a researcher with experience researching on HIV/AIDS among MSMs. She aspires to be a Public Health Consultant.

Ato Edusah (Media Coordinator)



Ato is a graphic communications expert and has experience conducting health research in local communities.

Flora Danquah (Fundraising Coordinator)



Flora is an adolescent and reproductive health enthusiast who believes that every young person deserves a second chance.

Freda Aidoo (Liaison Officer)



Freda, an aspiring emergency physician and Public Health Activist, has passion for inspiring young hearts to greatness.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

On the 2nd and 3rd of July, 2020, the aHnonymous GH team were invited to conduct a workshop for 14 caregivers at SOS Children's Village located at Asokore Mampong, Kumasi in Ghana. At exactly 9:00am on Thursday, 2nd of July, 2020, the team arrived at the village's premises to begin the programme. The programme was held at the conference room of the village. Facilitators of the training included Mr. Nii Aryiku, Senior Nursing Officer/Mental Health Professional at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) Hospital and Miss. Dorothy Osei, the project coordinator of aHnonymous GH.

2.0 EVENT

2.1 DAY 1

The first day began with an introduction from the SOS Program's manager and Head of the Village Mr. Eric Laate. He admonished caregivers to pay attention and ask questions pertaining to the changes they see in the children as they grow. He then invited Mrs. Mavis Agyemang who introduced the facilitator for the day, Mr. James Nii Aryiku to the caregivers.

Mr. Aryiku began the session by commending the caregivers on their great job of giving care to the children and together with the caregivers, decided on a mix of English and Twi language for the presentation.

He then presented on the various changes that occur in adolescents as they age, including social changes, emotional changes, cognitive changes and sexual changes. On social changes, he emphasized the need for adolescents to fit in and feel that they are respected. He admonished mothers to encourage these social changes because adolescents spend most time with their peers than their caregivers.

On emotional changes, he highlighted that adolescents had the tendency to become irritable and admonished the caregivers to be mindful of what they say to the adolescents in their care at this particular stage. He encouraged the caregivers to employ positive reinforcement techniques since these were more likely to yield positive benefits than using negative reinforcement. He added that

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raining insults on adolescents could dampen their spirits and sometimes result in them building resistance which could be very detrimental to their upbringing.

On the cognitive changes, he pinpointed that most adolescents are curious and want to know all the things that are happening around them.. He explained that their decision making process is usually short-term compared to that of adults. He continued that they preferred instant gratification without paying much attention to the risk involved. He emphasized that their minds are opened for everything at the adolescent stage irrespective of outcome. He encouraged mothers to take the opportunity to teach them the risks and benefits of each decision that the adolescents would take at that stage.

On sexuality, he highlighted that a child's experiences in childhood had the potential to influence their sexual life in adulthood. He added that sexuality does not only talk about having sex but also embraces the sexual differences that exist in each individual.

He encouraged caregivers to have regular sex education talks with their children and in situations where they could not do it by themselves, using locally available resources that their children would feel comfortable with. He also refuted the idea that when children are educated about sex, they are much likely to indulge in it when they grow into adolescents. He justified that when such education is not given, the children tend to seek them elsewhere. He encouraged mothers to communicate with their adolescents about love, healthy relationships, the emotions that emanate from having healthy relationships with others, and possible unintended consequences from sexual relations such as sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy.

He elucidated that the best way for mothers to help adolescent to deal with sexual urges and fantasies was to empower them. He argued that mothers could help adolescents channel their sexual energy by giving them tasks that can bring them pleasure and also reward them appropriately in order to reinforce the behaviour. He further said that such children can be used to train other children through peer networking.

He again instructed the mothers to make use of moments to communicate to adolescents rather than using formal approaches. He said that making it formal makes it difficult for them to open up to adults.

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He then informed mothers to put their adolescents into smaller groups and share ideas related to their sexuality using open minded approaches devoid of personal beliefs or values.

He stressed on the need to help adolescents control their sexual urges by discussing them so as to empower them to take charge of their life.

He ended the session with a question and answer session.



2.2 DAY 2

The second part of the workshop was on the boosting immune system and this began around 10.30am on the 3rd of July, 2020. Mrs. Mavis Agyemang introduced the facilitator of the day, in the person of Dr. Kwabena Fosu Lartey to the participants.

Among the topics he presented on were the immune system, factors that affect the immune system, ageing and remedies for boosting immune system.

He started by defining what is meant by the immune system and highlighted that the immune system protects humans against infections. He explained that factors such as ageing, lifestyle, genetics and one's environment also affects the functioning of the immune system. He highlighted that one could show signs of weakness in one's immune system by some health conditions such as stunted growth, frequent diarrhea, recurrent chest infections and recurrent infections in the ear.

Again, he stated that diseases like HIV, Diabetes and Cancers could weaken the immune system by talking in-depth about each of these conditions .

He commented that menopause also affects the immune system due to a fall in the production of hormones that are protective against strokes, heart attacks and others.

He solicited from mothers on the factors that can aid an individual to maintain a good immune systems. Below are some of the responses they gave;

- To eat a well-balanced diet
- To get adequate amount of sleep
- To exercise regularly
- To take in fruits and vegetables

He commended the mothers for their answers and elaborated on each of the responses. On sleep, he recommended that adults between the ages of 26-64years rest for 7-9 hours daily. He stressed that the hours can be broken down throughout the day and were cumulative. He also recommended at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity in a week to stay fit and reduce the risk of diseases such as hypertension. He then spoke about the foods that are rich in nutrients such as

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vitamins, zinc, iron etc. and encouraged participants to take at least 8 glasses of water each day in order to stay hydrated and healthy.

He also admonished mothers to try their best to avoid smoking and also to reduce their alcohol intake because excess alcohol damages the lymphocytes and leucocytes that aids in disease prevention.

He then informed mothers to adhere to medical regimens and to desist from drug abuse and self-medication because it had the potential of damaging the functioning of their immune system.

On nutritional supplements, he recommended the intake of fruits and vegetables in order to get the naturally required nutrients. He then ended his presentation with a question and answer session.

After this presentation, there was a brief presentation on measures that can be put in place to break the chain of COVID-19 done by Miss. Dorothy Osei. Among these measures were practicing good hand hygiene (hand washing), cough and sneeze etiquette, wearing of face-masks, cleaning and disinfecting of environments and physical distancing.





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3.0 BUDGETING

The entire workshop was fully funded independently by the SOS Children's Villages. A comprehensive report can be obtained from them by emailing mavis.agyeman@sosghana.org.

4.0 IMPACT

A total of 14 care-givers benefitted from this workshop, and a post-workshop survey done to assess impact. More than 80% of participants demonstrated an increase in knowledge relevant to the topics presented.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The workshop was very educative and insightful and the team looks forward to having more of such programmes in the coming months.

An electronic report of the event can be accessed at <http://www.ahnonymous.org/category/downloads/>