



GUYANA RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD ASSOCIATION

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Monthly Report

Implementing Partner: Help & Shelter

Reporting Month: September 2014

Target Region(s): 3 & 4

Community Facilitators: Linda Hustler; Colin Marks

Overview of the Activities and/or interventions for the reporting period

Session Title	# of Persons Met		Age Range	Site	Community
	Male	Female			
<i>FP and effects on family, health, relationships, family size & economic security</i>		32	16-25	Sophia Vocational Centre	Sophia
<i>Exploring the link between DV and FP</i>	2	11	19-60+	Cummings Park Community Centre	Sophia
<i>The male role in FP</i>	9		18-42	Home of a resident	Sophia
<i>Benefits of FP on individuals, relationships, community & society</i>		27	18-40	Sophia H/C	Sophia
<i>Benefits & Methods of FP with emphasis on the Pill</i>	1	15	15-25+	Bell West Multi-Purpose Building	Bell West
<i>Benefits & Methods of FP with emphasis on the Pill & Positive Parenting</i>		12	15-25+	Bell West H/C	Bell West
<i>Benefits & Methods of FP with emphasis on the Pill & Positive Parenting</i>	1	15	15-25+	Canal # 2 H/C	Canal # 2
<i>Benefits & Methods of FP with emphasis on the Pill & Positive Parenting</i>	1	17	15-25+	Good Intent H/C	Good Intent
TOTAL	9	129			

Major Output

Achievements; outcomes

- Facilitator shared with 32 female students the various factors that impact the stability and welfare of the family unit and some possible solutions or alternative course of actions to counter this. Various methods of family planning were also explored and large families were identified as a major factor that leads to stress in the family unit and even contributes to violence and dysfunction.
- Information was shared that provided students with statistics on the state of the expanding global population especially in the poorer territories and its overall effects on financial and health resources of the family. There was general agreement that larger families without proper spacing of the children did affect education, health, economics and social wellbeing of the family.
- Out of the total group of young female students, from the catering, craft, and IT classes of the Sophia Vocational Training Centre, 87% stated they preferred to use condoms as their method of family planning.
- Female students were able to identify some consequences of bad choices as it relates to healthy relationships, gender equality and FP such as; women ending up in relationships where there was violence and therefore not able to make certain choices for themselves, because the male is always seen as having the power in relationships; without education it's hard to know how to make choices about family planning; unwanted pregnancies leaves no choice but abortion – which is a risk for other health problems and sometimes death; bad choices can put you at risk of sexually transmitted diseases including syphilis, gonorrhoea, herpes; medical complication can occur when 'home remedies' are used for FP prevention
- Female students were also able to identify some positive consequences of good choices- healthy sexual practices secures the health of both partners; gender empowerment for women means financial security for the family
- Facilitator, after discussions and feedback from students reinforced the point that indeed lack of information, early sexual activity and lack of family planning, many times lead to gender based violence in families.
- Family Planning definition was shared and participants engaged in sharing their views on the impact of prudent family planning.
- Early exposure to sex education was highlighted as critical because most young people who started families had no previous knowledge about family planning or even sexuality
- The illustrative visual WHO/ Decision-Making Tool for Family Planning that provided information on the various methods of contraception. myths, facts and cultural implications attached to prevention of pregnancy was shared with students and was found to be very instructive and served to expand the knowledge base of the student participants.
- A group of men ranging from 18-42 were introduced to the concept of on self-awareness and the core attributes that influence an individual's deep understanding of self. The 4 petal seven shapers model was used as a tool to explore the key factors which helps to shape an individual-

biology, feelings, thinking, self- moving ability, future, past and environment another tool used was the Johari Window on Self.

- The facilitator was able to identify and get the male participants to link how the role of men in family community & society- identified by male participants as leader, provider and protector of family responsible for influencing other young men, ensuring the respect and health of spouse, providing a home for family, disciplining, will be affected if the man does not first plan how to manage the family unit.
- Some of the challenges men face when there is no family planning were identified as Insufficient fund to sustain the family; violence in the home; health problems and the risk of STI / STDs; men deserting the family; men seeking several partners to relieve stress; a sense of shame if the family is viewed as “poor”, health problems if the spouse has to do an abortion, frustration
- Facilitator was able to reinforce that both male and females should be involved in family planning and family planning should be discussed by intimate partners as customary practices of males initiating a family can also result in considerable health risk for the female partner which can have long term impact on family life.
- Overwhelming view of male participants was that the male condom was the “safest” choice of a FP method.
- Participants were able to list factors which facilitate the prevalence of DV such as intergenerational family violence; violence experienced as the norm from early childhood; frustration caused by several young children and unhelpful husband; poverty and lack of education; low self-esteem; males acting out abusive behavior patterns they witnessed as children; young females forced into marriage for economic reasons, and how the listed factors can be linked to FP and preventing unwanted pregnancies especially when there is a pattern of abuse in the intimate partnership.
- Participants were able to identify several aspect of DV, which they feel have deep rooted implications and relevance for the use of FP methods such as multiple partners; financial abuse by spouse; poverty; SRH; managing house work and children simultaneously by one partner; lack of extended family support
- There was overwhelming agreement among participants that when a couple is able to plan the spacing of their children there is greater scope for stronger emotional and intimate ties in the relationship
- The majority of participants stated their choice of prevention was the use of the male condom. This method they felt was the safest
- Health care providers at the Sophia Health Clinic expressed their thanks to Help & Shelter’s facilitator for this type of engagement especially for pregnant mothers who access services at the clinic regularly.
- A brief background of the UNFPA/GRPA project that addresses the unmet need of FP at the community level through the spreading FP messages and advocating for prudent use of FP methods, resulting in healthier and economically secure family units especially for young teenage mothers was shared at the pre-natal Sophia Health Clinic.

- Out of the 27 pregnant mother in attendance, 6 or 22% of them were on their second pregnancy with spacing of less than 3 years. Eight (8) or 30% of pregnant mothers disclosed having undesirable relationship with their spouses and did see FP as a very relevant choice post-delivery. Some of the more vocal pregnant mothers, signaled their intention to bring their spouses to be part of the next FP session scheduled for October.
- The Senior nurse at the Sophia Health Clinic was very grateful for the female condoms distributed which she says is “catching on” among the women visiting the clinic for supplies
- 2 boxes of male condoms/ 20 female condoms / 6 FP posters / 90 FP brochures were distributed at the Sophia Health Centre after an interactive session with pregnant mothers
- The Ecological Model was used successfully with pregnant mothers to explore what FP means from the individual and relationship level to its impact on community and society’s health and welfare. Facilitator’s sharing of personal experiences set the atmosphere for sharing and exchange of information among participants.
- Brochure on the definition, types, methods and available FP techniques was distributed and discussed in detail.
- The most popular, known and used methods were male and female condoms, the injection and the pill among pregnant mother at the pre-natal clinic
- Pregnant mothers and 1 father attending the Canal # 2 pre-natal health clinic were given information on reasons for using a FP method after pregnancy. As a result 1 mother, who had believed in having children one after the other on a yearly basis, committed to trying a FP method which best suits her and sharing this information with others; a father who wanted more children, was informed of temporary FP methods to prevent pregnancy which could be reversed at any time said he and his wife would consider FP; while another pregnant woman shared her FP method using the standards days (rhythm) method ie knowing her ovulation period and abstaining from sex, a method without any side effects
- The participants shared some of their understanding of what is meant by positive parenting
- Misconceptions among pregnant women that when they want to stop having children they would not get pregnant; that the pills can prevent them from HIV or other STI’s and if they miss a day using the pill a condom can be used as a backup plan were clarified
- Seventeen (17) women and one (1) male are now aware of how FP can help save on finances as a result of spacing of children as participants had identified the lack of finances as the major parental challenge they were facing
- Participants were encouraged to access the FP services mentioned during session at the Canal #2 Polder, Bell West & Good Intent H/Cs or the West Demerara Regional Hospital WDRH.
- Participants were referred for further services to the Probation and Welfare office at Phoneix Park Poudroyen WBD.

Common Themes

The common issues encountered, concerns being raised, information gaps.

- After one of the session a participant approached the facilitator and explained that she had taken 2 abortions so far and she was really glad for the discussions, because she is fearful that she may not be able to get pregnant when she is in a stable relationship. The student was advised to first exercise the choice of a preventative method and she should also do a physical check up to confirm her health status. She confirmed that she will do the checkup, GRPA contact numbers were shared with her
- 15 female participants, representing almost half of all participants, intimated that though they were in relationships, they were having major concerns with their partner's level of intimacy and commitment so prevention is of utmost importance to them.
- One of the participants who was a mother of two, remarked that she did try the "safe period" method but confessed that still had gotten pregnant
- One student stated that she feels one of the safest methods of prevention when the female is powerless in a relationship is the injection as it can be done in secret
- One participant stated that some parents demonized sex even though they knew it was natural and children were going to get involved anyway. She further stated that knowing about sex and FP can help youth live healthier life styles and avoid abortions.
- Other topics of discussion were-impact of an unwanted pregnancy; SRH and positive life styles; influence of pornography among young males; male role models and responsible behavior; understanding how pregnancy affect the female
- Both males in the session echoed that it is the lack of communication between partners which spirals into abusive language and actions which makes it unlikely for any discussion on how to plan the family and defer having children to take place in the context where other aspects of problems in the relationship have been unresolved. Adding children to an already volatile situation increases the chance for the prevalence of abuse in the family.
- Other discussions were focused on how very large families contributed to domestic violence in the home especially when the adults were ill- prepared for parenthood.
- One participant mentioned that she had tried the injection but started to put on weight which caused other health concerns. Another participant explained that in her case when she tried the injection she began to lose weight rapidly and this had social and psychological effects on her personally.
- Other topics introduced and discussed were: family health; parents' education; religious beliefs; partner insecurities; gender suppression; family economic status
- The participants were also able to identify and share how they can better their parenting skills through effective communication.
- Not much is ever talked about FP among families; this was the feedback which I received from the participants. Most of the parenting skills were handed down from their parents and it is believed to be the right methods
- Many questions were raised regarding the use of the pill. One major concern was the need for VIA screening in the Bell West area

Major Challenges

- The group took a time to be really become interactive as they expected a “teaching” experience where they came to be given information. The interactive type environment was relatively new to them.
- The only challenge was trying to get misconceptions of FP properly understood
- The snacks were not enough at one of the session.

Recommendations