

Grandmoms Bare their Soul on Complexity and Struggles of Caring for Positive Kids

Murewa - Zimbabwe: Twenty-five (25) women mostly in rural Murewa, Zimbabwe revealed the hidden complex fears and struggles they go through daily as they give love, food, shelter and care to their young ones who are HIV positive. The workshop organised by Rozaria Memorial Trust with support from AJWS gave an opportunity for caregivers to have information and skills building session, facilitated by a professional child counsellor and nutritionist from Murewa District Hospital.

Most of the fears and struggles are made worse by lack of adequate and empowering information and skills and the sheer poverty that defines their daily existence. Caregivers expressed how they are overly cautious as the positive kids play with other children. In school some of the children are discouraged or barred from sporting activities. Some care-givers expressed fear of contracting HIV as they go through the daily tasks of care, body washing, cleaning an open bruise, a task which a persons ordinarily undertakes.

How do you disclose to the child that he or she is positive? At times at the health centre, the health-worker talks more to the caregiver than the children. Some children have been on HIV medicines such as ARVs since they were born, and now they are old and have started to ask questions. How do you handle disclosure within the family? What are implications of disclosure to the child? If somehow the rest of the family knows, how will they relate to the child? Will the child still be welcomed?

“Many grandmothers just sighed deeply as they shared on sexual health of adolescents grandchildren who are positive. They are not sure whether these young people will have fulfilling and natural relationships, what about children, and what if their HIV status is known and they are rejected. This was a heavy discussion that requires in-depth exploration, continued dialogue”, stressed RMT Coordinator Kudakwashe Dizha. It was recommended that positive boys and girls should hold their own dialogues, explore their fears and be supported so that they positively affirm their sexual development.

Most of the participants de-cried the impact of poverty on their responsibility as caregivers. It tough-going providing the food, medicine, school fees, clothing. At the same time they called for continued skills building on HIV and AIDS and how they can continue to strengthen their skills. They called on RMT, other organisations and the government to channel more support to the poor communities, and especially addressing the needs of women and the girls.

Rozaria Memorial Trust (RMT) supports innovative initiatives that promote education, health and entrepreneurship for women and young people in poor communities. RMT was founded in memory of the late Mbuya Rozaria Marumisa - Dizha, who embodied the principles of caring, sharing and innovation.

For further information and experience sharing, kindly contact:
Kudakwashe Dizha; Coordinator; RMT; P.O.Box 114, Murewa, Zimbabwe
Tel/Fax: 263-78-22835; Email: rozaria@africaonline.co.zw, [@rozariatrust](https://twitter.com/rozariatrust) or blog: rozaria.wordpress.org