

Endorsement of Child Trauma conference

The high level of gender-based violence against women and children is particularly alarming and continues to have a devastating and lasting effect on survivors. It also harms families across generations, as well as communities, and constitutes one of the key drivers of the HIV epidemic in Southern Africa. The high incidence of sexual violence against children (60% of reported rape cases¹) is particularly distressing and it undermines social and economic development; it reinforces intergenerational cycles of poverty and inequalities, and the realisation of human rights.

With the necessary political will and appropriate adequate resources, violence against children could be radically reduced and managed. Human rights treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)² and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)³, as well as the local laws of Southern African countries, guarantee women and children the right to live their lives free from violence. Currently, however, significant gaps continue to exist between international standards endorsed by the governments, national laws and policies, and what women and children experience on a day-to-day basis.

There is an urgent need for national action to protect women and children from all forms of violence. However, governments acting alone will not be able to produce all the changes needed to address such a serious, prevalent and deeply entrenched problem as violence against women and children. Realising the long-term vision of all women and children living free from violence requires the involvement of all levels and segments of society. The 9th Annual Trauma Conference in June 2017 will make a significant input in the country's efforts to prioritise work for, the prevention of, and response to violence against children. The Trauma Conference promise to effect the necessary platform for game-changing partnerships that could result in social change.

By bringing together researchers, interventionists, community agencies, and policy makers to focus on the science, community partnerships and policy formulations of child trauma the Conference makes provision for interventions based on the newest evidence and research for what works, also how effective are different types of interventions in preventing violence are; what are the knowledge gaps; and what is the scalability of interventions.

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¹ NPA. 2016. TCC statistics.

² United Nations General Assembly. 1979. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249, p. 13. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3970.html> (Accessed 4 August 2015).

³ United Nations General Assembly. 1989. Convention on the Rights of the Child. United Nations, Treaty Series. Available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx> (Accessed 4 August 2015).