

CHAPTER 6: Community Education Strategies on Prevention and Control of Domestic Violence

The purpose of developing these strategies was to help educate communities on the prevention and control of domestic violence affecting married people in Zimbabwe. The strategies were developed basing on the major findings of the study. One of the strengths of this study was detailed narrations from participants, leading the study to be able to use that information to develop intervention strategies as the responses entailed narrations of experiences and possible solutions suggested by the participants. The strategies targeted married women, family members, community members, church leaders and traditional leaders. The study ensured that strategies were appropriate for the targeted community in terms of affordability, cultural acceptability, easy adoption, sustainability and having the potential to protect the rights of married women. The strategies targeted the married women experiencing domestic violence, to protect the married women, empowering them, the family members and the community on the protection order and their rights.

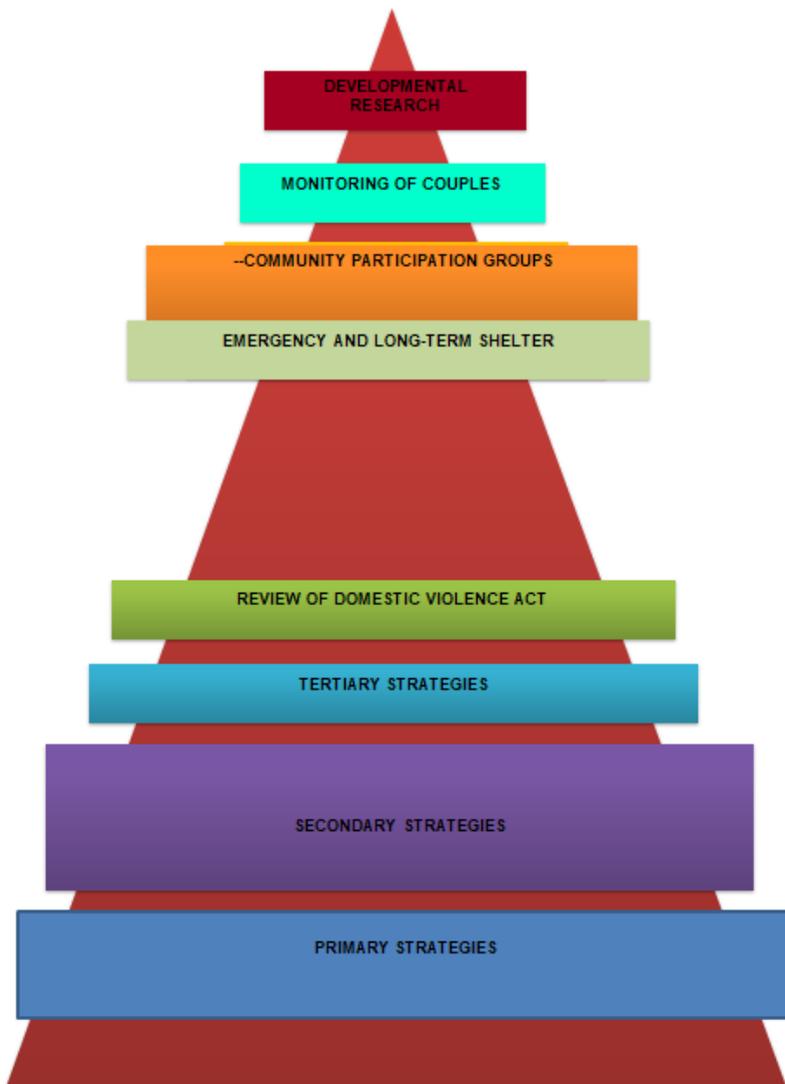


Figure 14: The Proposed Strategies are illustrated in the pyramid of strategies

When Zimbabweans citizens are empowered with adequate information on the prevention and control of domestic violence, they

would be able to make positive decisions that would enable them to make efforts to reduce the incidence of domestic violence affecting married women. Knowledge enhancement through awareness campaigns sometimes influences positive behaviour change and consequently reduces some of the psychological, social and emotional distress symptoms encountered by married women experiencing domestic violence. Awareness campaigns require the full participation of the family members, traditional leaders and church leaders for them to succeed as these groups remain important and influential constituency in Zimbabwe. Domestic violence is however justified by custom and religion under a patriarchal world view that has no place in any democratic space. All stake holders should have sufficient tools such as training and data to be able to tackle domestic violence at all levels in Zimbabwe. However, Kivulin Women's Rights Organisation (2011-2015) state that increased education and awareness campaigns among Citizens should be able to condemn domestic violence against women. There is need to raise awareness campaigns, making a pledge to say no to violence (Victorian Government, 2012:9).

Therefore, existing primary prevention efforts are often directed towards population groups such as married women and the girl child. Use of targeted population excludes other important stakeholders who must be included. Law enforcement groups such as Police officers and traditional leaders need to be included in the primary prevention and encouraged to become ambassadors of domestic violence prevention. If community members are not aware that domestic violence exists in their community, they usually do not get involved in condemning it.

Therefore, community members need to be actively involved in the prevention and control of domestic violence as it requires the effort of everyone for it to be eradicated. According to the research findings, community members were identified as the important drivers of

programmes that provide safety of women and all the victims of domestic violence. In addition, community members should facilitate programmes that educate and conscientize people to guard against domestic violence and informing authorities of any incidences they come across.

Secondary strategies should be offered immediately after an occurrence to victims of domestic violence. This could be done through individual counselling and educational groups. Victims and perpetrators of domestic violence are called to attend the counselling sessions and encouraged to have a dialogue. Treatment should be readily available for complications or disorders due to domestic violence.

The strategies are based on identification of domestic violence perpetrators and victims, controlling behaviour of the affected parties and harm. In addition, perpetrators are punished, and victims are treated. Increase of reporting of domestic violence cases to the church leaders, to the traditional leaders, to the police, social institutions such as health personnel and local government is encouraged. Police should respond swiftly and effectively to domestic violence, proposing new laws and holding perpetrators to greater account and enhancing court proceeds.

This stage targets the victims and perpetrators after domestic violence is evident and it strengthens the capacities of various institutions. In addition, by-laws that address domestic violence are enacted and strengthened.

The Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 5: 16) enacted on 26th February 2007, became operational on 25th October 2007 needs to be reviewed. The Domestic Violence Act makes provision for the protection and

relief of victims of domestic violence and provides for matters connected with or incidental to that.

The Act to be kept under constant review since the problem of domestic violence in Zimbabwe continues to increase despite the Zimbabwean Government having a constitution that protects the rights of women; the families are often ignorant of them. The rights of the constitution should be upheld without disrespecting the role of communities, and their indigenous knowledge.

Providing emergency and long - term shelter for the victims so that they can get emergency medical care, medical examination, support and protection from domestic violence. This approach provides real services to community members in need.

Families can be referred to the community partnership groups so that they can put a plan together to prevent and control domestic violence. This approach creates a powerful voice for social change, the voice of those who are directly affected by domestic violence. The approach is also an initiative for violence free families.

Community should build confidence to report family violence (Victorian Government, 2012: 5).

The informal dinners can provide non-threatening settings for intimate conversations. Discussions can include topics such as environmental safety and hazards and issues to do about building the capacity of family, friends and neighbours to prevent domestic violence. There is need to engage dedicated family violence advisors and family violence liaison officers (Victorian Government, 2012:5). This approach provides opportunities to learn new skills and apply them to personal and community life and closing domestic violence.

Development of community leaders through workshops, in-service training and seminars delivering messages that domestic violence is everybody's business. Development of community leaders builds a sense of ownership and a transforming effect on the married women's lives breaking their cycle of domestic violence and isolation and leading to new opportunities for education and involvement of others in the community. Community members should be educated. This approach promotes empowerment and leadership development.

Cases of domestic violence are resolved by monitoring the couples within the community through home visits and educating them on their day to day living. Community leaders and church leaders are responsible for that job. Observed conflicts needs counselling of both parties, explaining dangers of domestic violence to the family community and the nation at large. According to Fullwood (2002:4), when people are educated, they think differently about the problem and owning the issue or problem. This approach promotes family counselling and reconciliation.

Developmental research promotes women's safety, and it strengthens family unity. It also adds value to the nursing practice, nursing education and community nursing practice. In addition, developmental research helps community members to be able to understand how and why domestic violence happens. Through developmental research community members are empowered to change attitudes and behaviours, promoting respectful nonviolent relationships and promoting gender equity (Victorian Government, 2012:8). According to Wolfe & Jeff (1999:134) Developmental Research may restore normal development process among individuals and minimize the risk of further experiences of domestic violence.

Chapter 6 discussed the development of strategies for educating communities on the prevention and control of domestic violence. It

adopted the Maslow's hierarchy of needs to show that primary prevention was the first need for the prevention and control of domestic violence among married women. This primary need alludes to the major role to be played by traditional leaders and the church.