

## Parent-Child Communication: Community Based HIV/AIDS Response Strategy among Young Persons

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**Abstract :** Issue: Communication between parent and child is important and necessary. Poor parenting and lack of openness and communication between parents and their children contribute to the increasing rate of HIV infection among young persons between the ages of 10-25. The young person, when left on their own are at the risk of misinformation from peers and from other sources. Description: Parent-Child Communication (PCC) was designed as a key component of a community-based HIV and AIDS intervention focused on young persons by Elderly Widows Orphans Family Support Organisation. Findings from the preliminary community-level process indicated that the lack of parent-child communication militates against young persons adopting and maintaining healthier sexual behaviors. An integrated youth strategy consisting of youth Peer Education/Facilitation and PCC was used to bridge this gap. The process involved an interactive parent-child forum, which allowed parents and children to meet and have open and frank discussions on the needs of young persons and the role of parents. This forum addressed all emerging issues from all parties and created better cordiality amongst them. Lessons Learnt: When young people feel unconnected to their parents, family, or home, they may become involved in activities that put their health at risk. Equally, when parents affirm the value of their children through open interaction, children are more likely to develop positive and healthy attitudes about themselves. Creating the opportunity for this interactive forum is paramount in any intervention program focused on young persons. Conclusion: HIV and AIDS-related programmes, especially those focusing on youth, should have PCC as an integral, essential component. Parents should be vehicles for information dissemination and need to be equipped with the capacity and skills to take on the onerous task of talking sexual reproductive health and sexuality with their children and wards.

**Keywords :** aids, communication, HIV, youth

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