

PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING SERIES

Psychosocial Care and Support Mainstreaming Guidelines



Psychosocial Wellbeing For All Children

Mainstreaming refers to the process of addressing a particular issue or approach within and across as many areas and levels as possible (e.g., at the level of national policy, institutional policy, programmes, procedures, and human resources) so as to have maximum impact. We hope that this guideline which centers around mainstreaming psychosocial support is useful to practitioners and organisations working in a variety of programmatic areas. We also hope that these guidelines result in greater numbers of children feeling emotionally and socially supported in all areas of their lives.

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Foreword

REPSSI is a regional non-governmental organisation working with partners to promote psychosocial care and support (PSS) for children affected by HIV and AIDS, poverty and conflict in East and Southern Africa.

Throughout its work with governments, civil society organisations, communities, families and children, REPSSI has learnt a number of lessons. One of the lessons learnt is that stakeholders working with children often treat psychosocial support as an independent aspect of childcare that should have its own vertical programming. This approach has not maximised the psychosocial support benefits that children receive. REPSSI has adopted the mainstreaming approach in order to maximise the reach of children with psychosocial services, as well as to ensure that approaches to vulnerable children's programming become more holistic, sustainable and adequately embrace the voices and concerns of the target population. These guidelines are not “cast in stone” but are an aid to start the mainstreaming process.

It is hoped that REPSSI partners and other stakeholders working to improve the wellbeing of children will find these mainstreaming guidelines useful and inspiring.

REPSSI Psychosocial Support Mainstreaming Guides

This particular guideline is a “generic” mainstreaming guideline, one that is offered as a “one size fits all”, so that any organisation working in any programmatic area, may be guided to mainstream psychosocial support. REPSSI however, has also developed programme-specific mainstreaming guides which offer more specialised information to assist organisations to mainstream psychosocial support into the following programmes and approaches:

- Conflict and Emergency Settings
- Early Childhood Development
- Education Sector and Schools
- Economic Strengthening
- Home Based Care
- Nutrition
- Paediatric HIV and AIDS Care
- Child Participation to assist in mainstreaming



Introduction

From a programmatic point of view, mainstreaming psychosocial support is a powerful concept and tool to help your programme make sure that as many children as possible have access to psychosocial care and support, and in as many areas of their lives as possible.

The impact of HIV and AIDS, often together with poverty and conflict, is not just economic and biological. Many programmes have continued to focus on the more visible impacts of these crises, e.g. feeding programmes for orphaned children, ARV programmes for HIV-infected people, cash transfers etc. However the impact of HIV and AIDS, poverty and conflict is also spiritual, social and emotional. REPSSI advocates that child-related services, programmes and policies need to respond holistically to all the needs and rights of children. It is also important that psychosocial care and support programmes are not only specialised stand-alone programmes. REPSSI advocates for social and emotional needs of children to be addressed in an integrated manner. This entails mainstreaming psychosocial care and support through the review and transformation of all facets of programmes and organisations.

By mainstreaming psychosocial support, we try to make sure that the child feels socially and emotionally supported in every part of life – at home, in the classroom, on the playground, in the street, on the way to school, at the clinic, at the soup kitchen, at the kids club etc. Mainstreaming psychosocial support means making sure that this “stream or river” of wellbeing flows widely, strongly and continuously in and around the child.

“Through mainstreaming PSS, we try to make sure that in every part of life, the child feels socially and emotionally supported.”

Understanding Psychosocial Support

As a person or organisation interested in mainstreaming psychosocial support, it is helpful to develop a common understanding of the terms psychosocial support and psychosocial support mainstreaming. You may wish to discuss and add to the working definitions provided below.

What is psychosocial wellbeing?

Psychosocial wellbeing is about the connections between the child, its family, community and society ("social"). It is also about how a child feels and thinks about him or herself and about life ("psycho"). It is often linked to the African concept of "ubuntu" – "I am, because we are, and we are, because I am".

Such wellbeing includes many different aspects of the child's life, such as physical and material aspects, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual aspects. The focus of psychosocial wellbeing is not just on the individual, but on households, families and communities.

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“All children require protection and nurture that meets their nutritional needs and ensures their health, affectionate relationships with stable caregivers that support their developing psychological and social capacities, and ongoing interactions with encouraging adults that promote their language and cognitive development. As they grow, children need friendships with same-age peers and to be members of formal cultural institutions, including educational, play, social and/or religious groups.”

EXTRACT FROM "WHERE THE HEART IS"

RICHTER, L, FOSTER G, & SHER, L. (2006). WHERE THE HEART IS, MEETING THE PSYCHOSOCIAL NEEDS OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV/AIDS. THE HAGUE. THE NETHERLANDS: BERNARD VAN LEER FOUNDATION.

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What do we mean by psychosocial support?

Psychosocial care and support is about helping children, families and communities to improve their psychosocial wellbeing. It is about encouraging better connections between people, and building a better sense of self and community. It is expressed through caring and respectful relationships that communicate understanding, tolerance and acceptance. It is about promoting everyday consistent care and support in the family and community.

What is psychosocial support mainstreaming?

Psychosocial support mainstreaming is about looking at all aspects of programming, policy development and organisational development, always keeping in mind children's psychosocial wellbeing. It involves incorporating psychosocial support elements into:


- policies and procedures
- programme design and activities
- planning and budgeting
- capacity building and human resource development
- monitoring and evaluation
- networking with government sectors and institutions.

This is especially important for organisations working to

mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS, poverty and conflict on children and their families and communities.

Psychosocial support is more comprehensive than psychosocial integration. With integration we are trying to include topics around psychosocial support in every activity of the organisation. For example if you were running a workshop on accessing treatment for HIV and AIDS and you wanted to integrate psychosocial support, you might include a session on the emotional and social needs of children accessing such

treatment. With psychosocial mainstreaming, we try to look at every aspect of the organisation (for example from staff care, to PSS training for staff, to ensuring that you have links with other PSS specialist organisations) and how to build into its functioning and programmes ways that try to support children and their families emotionally and socially. Mainstreaming psychosocial support also involves a commitment to continuing learning about this evolving field.



Case Example: In South Africa, Druscilla van Niekerk, a senior English and Science teacher at Eikendal Primary School in Cape Town, South Africa, has always worried beyond the call of duty, around the wellbeing of the children whom she teaches. She's always had an understanding that there are so many psychosocial issues that get in the way of effective learning and teaching. If only she could address these, this would not only make her life easier, but begin to address the obvious worries carried by her learners.

Rather than do hero booking "after school", thereby increasing her already considerable workload, she used hero books during teaching time, across the curriculum. To teach geography, children read hero books made by other children in other countries, and to teach history, they explored their own family trees and histories. Writing their own hero books also contributed to a range of language, writing and life orientation outcomes. They also chose a problem or obstacle that stood in the way of their goal in life and explored how they might have more power over this obstacle.

About the process, she says, "I got to know the problems the children are dealing with in their lives. When they shared, the rest of the class would support them. They would hug one another, you could see them encouraging one another. You could see them being more caring and accepting each other more."

Levels of Psychosocial Support

There are many different forms of psychosocial support (PSS). These may be offered at different levels to support children, families and communities. The following model may be used to consider the various levels at which psychosocial support may be structured.

The more one focuses on the lower levels of this pyramid, the more impact one has on more children. Interestingly, a recent survey by REPSSI and UNICEF¹ showed that many organisations specialising in psychosocial support are focusing their work on levels 3–5. REPSSI is encouraging more organisations to focus on levels 1 and 2 to mainstream psychosocial support into schools, clinics, feeding programmes and various government policies in order to reach more children.

The next section of the guide will help you to assess your organisation in terms of its focus on psychosocial support at the different levels. It looks at the focus of psychosocial support in your strategic leverage (linked to the level called “advocacy” on the right), your programming, project methods, tools and the skills or knowledge about psychosocial support in your organisation in relation to levels 2–5 shown on the right.

¹ Brakarsh, J, What has Love Got To With IT, the State of the Response: Psychosocial Support Programming for Children in the Context of HIV and AIDS in the Eastern and Southern African Region, Draft 2008

5. Specialised Mental Health Services:

Psychiatric, clinical psychological, specialised traditional healer services for the few children with more severe responses

4. Focused Support:

Additional non-specialised support for children who are not coping and who are showing signs of distress

3. Family and Community Support:

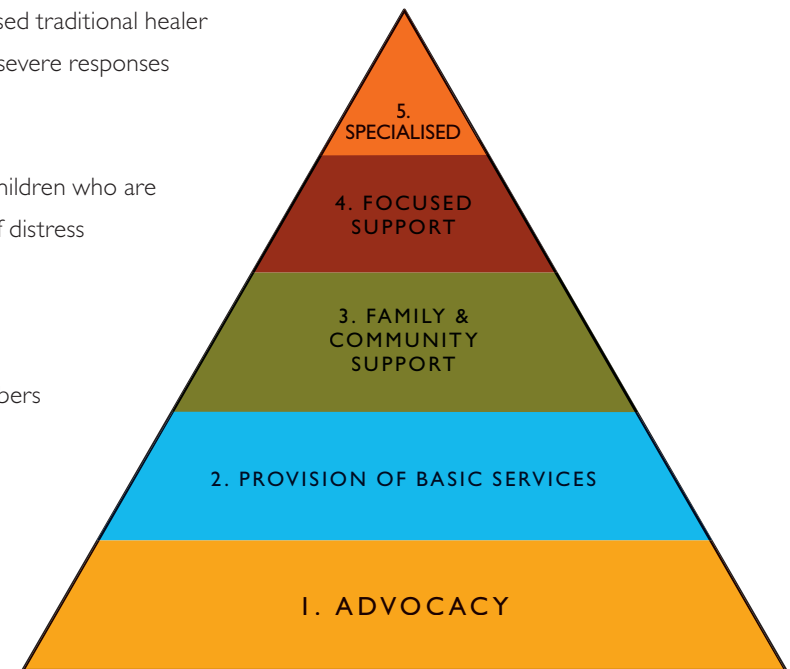
Everyday care and support provided by caregivers, friends and community members

2. Provision of Basic Services:

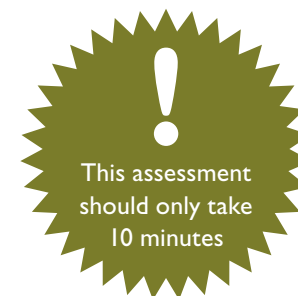
Shelter, food, health & education, into which PSS needs to be mainstreamed, to reach many children and support ways of coping

1. Advocacy:

Influencing policy and changes to the social conditions that affect the wellbeing of millions of children



Assessing the Role of Psychosocial Support in Your Organisation



Your organisation may already have some of its focus on psychosocial support. Use the mainstreaming organisational assessment tool to work out where you already have a strong mainstreamed focus on psychosocial support and where you would like to develop your capacity further. Simply put a tick at each level to show the stage your organisation is at regarding psychosocial support (PSS) mainstreaming.

If your psychosocial support focus is still developing, you are not alone! In a recent survey by REPSSI it was found that most partners needed more support to develop their psychosocial support focus.

Case Example: In 2007 REPSSI asked the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund to send out the Psychosocial Support Assessment tool to their NGO partners working with children. The 20 selected partners were able to identify their gaps in psychosocial support and went on to develop action plans for mainstreaming psychosocial support into their organisations. Follow up showed changes in their budgets and programmes to include a stronger focus on psychosocial support in their work.

Mainstreaming Psychosocial Support Rapid Assessment Tool

Organisational Focus Area	Limited PSS Focus	Emerging PSS Focus	Innovative & Extensive PSS Focus
1. Strategic leverage	Not much referral and linking with specialised PSS services or other organisations supporting specific needs of children and families. <input type="checkbox"/>	Severe cases are referred for specialised PSS. <input type="checkbox"/>	Regular interaction and referral with other organisations focusing on PSS and on particular needs of children and families. Joint advocacy work to address policy changes affecting children. <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Programming	Programme plans do not focus much on PSS and there are no guiding policies. <input type="checkbox"/>	Programmes do make use of some PSS principles and refer to these in the design of policies. <input type="checkbox"/>	Programmes are designed around PSS principles and there are clear policies promoting PSS in all programmes. <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Project methods & tools	Not much use is made of PSS methods and tools in projects. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some PSS methods and tools are used, but these are a bit outdated or used now and then. <input type="checkbox"/>	Updated PSS methods and tools are applied systematically for various situations. <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Skills & knowledge	Very few staff have an understanding of PSS. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some staff have a solid understanding of PSS and guide others in the organisation. <input type="checkbox"/>	All staff members have a basic understanding of PSS and there are specialized staff to support others in their PSS work. <input type="checkbox"/>

I. Strategic Leverage

The first level (strategic leverage) of the Mainstreaming Psychosocial Support Rapid Assessment Tool in the table on the previous page covers the extent to which your organisation works strategically with others to maximise the psychosocial impact of your work. This assessment is based on the following sets of principles which are emerging from evidence-based practice in the psychosocial support sector.

Psychosocial support networking and strategic leverage principles

This set of principles deals with ways to maximise the impact of psychosocial support. Here are some ideas, bearing in mind the pyramid diagram shown previously:

- Try to design programmes and policies so that they reach the majority of children, rather than investing too many resources in a few children;
- Focus on changing public / government services as they affect many people;
- Identify and use existing policies and programmes to promote children's wellbeing;
- Critically analyse existing policies, plans and instruments to see if a stronger focus on psychosocial support is necessary;
- International conventions, regional commitments, and national policies on children, should be used as frames of reference for psychosocial support mainstreaming;
- Promote collaboration between different organisations and departments to ensure that children's different needs are met;
- Identify and form strategic partnerships to make specific changes;
- Mobilise the support of influential people.

“Mainstreaming PSS involves trying to reach the majority of children with everyday quality care, rather than offering a few children specialised support.”

The assessment tool on the right goes into this first level of the rapid assessment tool in more detail.

Strategic leverage assessment tool

Here are the same principles that were presented above turned into some simple questions. They should help you to check how your organisation is doing with regard to finding strategic networking partners and points of leverage which impact on the psychosocial wellbeing of many children.

Use the column on the right to score 2 (yes), 1 (sometimes) or 0 (no).

Your answers to the questions should highlight the areas that your organisation might wish to strengthen in future. Try to use these questions and the principles to guide your organisation to find more strategic ways of supporting children and their families.

REPSSI is currently developing a psychosocial support Advocacy Handbook to support organisations wishing to increase this focus.

Focus Area	Questions About Psychosocial Support Strategic Leverage	Yes (2) Sometimes (1) No (0)
Networking	<p>Do you belong to any networks or groups of organisations focusing on the wellbeing of children?</p> <p>Do you regularly contact other organisations working with children to discuss ways of working together?</p> <p>Do you exchange materials with other organisations working with children?</p>	
Advocacy	<p>Are you trying to change any particular government policies or programmes which affect children's wellbeing?</p> <p>Do you support others involved in policy development and advocacy work?</p>	
Holistic Focus	<p>Do you support children, caregivers and communities to engage in income-generating projects or to access social grants so as to enhance their capacity to cope financially?</p> <p>Do you refer people to other organisations supporting the basic needs of children (e.g. safety, shelter, education, health care, nutrition)?</p>	

2. Strengthening Psychosocial Support in your Programming

The second level of the Mainstreaming Psychosocial Support Rapid Assessment tool focused on psychosocial support in programme plans and policies. This is about how much the principles of psychosocial support are applied when your organisation designs and implements its own specialised programmes. Here are some recommended psychosocial support practices to guide your programme and policy development.

Psychosocial Support Programme Principles

Evidence-based practice and research on psychosocial support have come up with several recommendations about how to

promote psychosocial support programming. These principles are summarised below:

Attitudes

Psychosocial support approaches aim to:

- Promote respectful ways of interacting with children, families and communities. Building a sense of dignity is important in developing a sense of wellbeing.

Participation

Psychosocial support approaches aim to:

- Consult children and families about what types of support would be appropriate and helpful, and how they could be involved.

Social Support

Psychosocial support approaches aim to:

- Draw on and enhance existing constructive cultural, social and spiritual ways of coping and developing
- Promote support and care of children and youth towards one another as a way of fostering connections and building a sense of self and community.

Family Support

Psychosocial support approaches aim to:

- Draw on and enhance existing connections and relationships that the child has with trusted caregivers (e.g. rather invest in helping caregivers to support children than bring experts in from outside to work with children).

For more in-depth reading, please see the REPSSI Psychosocial Wellbeing Series called “Psychosocial care and support for young children and infants in the time of HIV and Aids: A resource for programming”.

- Enhance at least one caring relationship with an adult who is able to provide consistent support in the child's life
- Promote within the child and family a sense of control (versus helplessness) during times of difficulty.

Emotional Support

Psychosocial support approaches aim to:

- Promote stability and routine in the child's life, especially during difficult times
- Promote safe spaces for reflection of past experiences as a way of learning and growing from these experiences
- Focus on positive achievements and coping to build the child's sense of self
- Try to give children enough time to play and participate in sport, as this contributes to children's social, emotional and cognitive development.

This means that even if you are not offering a specialised psychosocial support programme, but are involved in other forms of programme work, mainstreaming psychosocial support would draw on the above learnings.

The aim of all psychosocial support interventions are to address children's issues and needs in a holistic manner and to place psychosocial interventions inside wider developmental contexts such as education or health care. This will create an integrated developmental approach to promoting psychosocial wellbeing.

If psychosocial support interventions remain stand alone, without links to family and community interactions, and to other programmatic areas, they have limited potential to effectively contribute to the psychosocial wellbeing of the individual and the group. For example, many interventions that are not planned or conceived as psychosocial support interventions have been recognised as having significant impact, like the provision of food and water and the construction of shelter.

What sets psychosocial support interventions apart is:

1. the deliberate and explicit focus on bringing together psychological factors and social inclusion, and not focusing on either material, psychological, spiritual or welfare support; and
2. that programmes don't just focus on children as individuals, but include their families and the place of the children in the wider community.

Once again, the tool below allows you to explore your psychosocial mainstreaming capacity along the axis of Strengthening Psychosocial Support in your Programming in more detail

Your responses should give you a rough indication of the steps that you have begun to take or still need to take in integrating psychosocial support into your programmes for children.

Ethical Considerations

In developing programme plans and policies for your organisation, the following ethical considerations are highlighted with particular reference to psychosocial support:

- try to work on prevention of exposure of children to further suffering, rather than only focusing on alleviating the suffering of those already exposed to harm;
- respect privacy and avoiding stigmatising children affected by particular situations;
- be sure that you have the consent of caregivers and relevant authorities before implementing any programmes affecting children;
- refer children for specialised support where needed;
- have reflection processes to ensure that resources used by the organisation are directed to maximise the benefits for children.

Mainstreaming psychosocial support doesn't mean that you have to start specialising in work with children, but rather that you think how you can improve what you are already doing to better support the holistic needs of children and caregivers where you are already working.


The next section, on project methods and tools, offers some concrete ideas on ways of mainstreaming and integrating psychosocial support into your existing programmes.

Psychosocial Support Programming Assessment Tool

Here are some questions for assessing the extent to which you use psychosocial support principles in your programmes. Use the column on the right to score 2 (yes), 1 (sometimes) or 0 (no).


Focus Area	Questions About Psychosocial Support Programming	Yes (2) Sometimes (1) No (0)
Attitudes	Do your staff deal with all the children and adults you work with in a respectful way that builds their dignity?	
Participation	Do you involve the caregivers of all the children you work with in planning and feedback about all the activities the children are involved in? Do you facilitate child or youth participation activities, e.g. children's committees, children's or youth organisations etc?	
Social support	Do you engage in activities that support connections between people or improve the social environment of children's lives? Do you draw on existing constructive cultural, social and spiritual ways of coping and developing? Do you build the capacity of community-based structures (e.g. CBOs, schools, childcare structures) to support children and caregivers in their community? Do you encourage children and youth to support one another?	
Family support	Do you focus on strengthening the capacity of families to care for their children? Do you try to keep families together, unless there is clear evidence of harm or danger within a family? Do you facilitate linkages between children and their families at all times, so as to strengthen safety nets for children?	
Emotional	Do you provide a safe space for children to talk about their experiences, thoughts and feelings related to their lives and circumstances? Do you focus on the strengths and resources of the child and family (their achievements and positive assets)?	





Case Example: VSI is an organisation of Tanzanian children aged between 13–20 years (most of whom have lost their parents). Younger children between 7 and 12 years of age have organised themselves into another organisation, “Rafiki Mdogo”. The youth elect their own leadership, enlist new members, and meet regularly to discuss issues and organise events or work. Replication is also taken on and driven by the members.

The mobilisation of children into their own organisations is prioritised as a key PS strategy. Once mobilised, children themselves identify priorities such as food security, education, prevention etc and put the priorities into practice. According to their priorities children are trained in prevention, in farming (Mobile Farm School), in economic activities (VSI bank). Very stressed children can get support in counselling



Case Example: Hero booking is a process in which children are invited to make a book in which they are the author, the illustrator and the main character. They are asked to identify a challenge or obstacle in their life, something that is standing between them and their goals. They can see how this problem has power over them, but also how they might have power over this problem and how they can overcome it.

Dikwankwetla means “heroes”, and this is how the group see themselves as in the face of the AIDS pandemic. Their slogan is “Children Are the Future, Give Them Their Rights”. Recognising that the Children’s Bill, once enacted, will be the single most important and comprehensive

piece of child-related legislation in South Africa, the University of Cape Town’s Children’s Institute and REPSSI worked together with experts – including children – to establish working groups on a range of issues addressed in the Bill, including children’s rights, parental rights and responsibilities, protection, abuse and HIV/AIDS. In 2004, they took their hero books to law makers in Parliament and shared their opinions about the Bill, drawing on their own life experiences as clearly articulated in their hero books. They made recommendations on provisions of the Bill, which they believe did not adequately address children’s needs. The hero books were also used in Dikwankwetla’s wider advocacy campaign.

3. Project Methods and Tools

Aside from following those basic principles of psychosocial support in programming, your organisation may be inspired to facilitate some specific projects or to use some specific tools around psychosocial wellbeing of children. This section tries to give you some ideas about recent methods and tools that have been found useful.

Psychosocial Support Methods and Tools

REPSSI and its partners have tried to document and collect some of the innovative tools being used in psychosocial support work with children. Introducing these tools into your organisation – or into the everyday practices of schools, clinics and other institutions you work with – is a powerful way to mainstream psychosocial support. This table provides a simple introduction to the tools, but there are specific courses and handbooks available on many of these listed in the table.

Tool	Focus	Use
Body Maps	Body Maps have been used to help children describe their health and responses to medication.	Psychosocial support in groups but also used for advocacy to mainstream into healthcare systems.
Hero books	Hero books lead groups of children through a series of autobiographical story-telling and art exercises to find solutions to personal and social challenges they face.	This tool may be used with children and youth living in situations of conflict or affected by loss and have also been used for advocacy to influence policies and legislation surrounding children.
Journey of Life	This is a community mobilisation tool to enhance community support for children. It uses drama, art, songs and discussion to develop new skills.	The tool may be used with caregivers and community based structures. It may be used with people with varying levels of education.
Memory Books	Memory books may be used in helping children to gently prepare for the departure of a parent and processing feelings around living with new caregivers. It can include life stories of parents and ancestors, letters, photographs and drawings. Memory books may help children to remember to take their medication.	Memory books may be used with children facing loss or affected by the loss of someone close to them. They may also be used with children who are taking regular treatment.

TABLE CONTINUED OVERLEAF

Tool	Focus	Use
Memory Boxes	Memory boxes are similar to memory books, and may contain articles that were precious to parents and which evoke positive memories.	Memory boxes may be used with children and youth facing loss or affected by the loss of someone like a parent.
Structured Group Psychosocial Support Programme	Group sessions may be facilitated with children in schools or in the community. The sessions focus on a range of topics such as HIV prevention, dealing with loss, coping skills and personal dreams.	This therapeutic tool was developed by people working with children affected by conflict, abuse, HIV and AIDS.
Talking Books	The talking book allows groups of people with similar challenges to listen to one another and share strategies and resources.	This tool may be used with individuals, groups and families.
Tracing Book	Tracing books are wellness journals which are based on the body map exercises. It is a bio-medical psychosocial tool that may be used to help patients and caregivers gain a sense of empowerment over illness, treatment literacy, adherence, disclosure and communication.	This tool may be used with children directly affected by illness. It may also be used with their caregivers and medical support people
Tree of Life	A narrative tool for helping people who have experienced hardships in their lives to step into stories of hope, celebrating life, the relationships and gifts that they have.	This is a therapeutic tool that requires facilitation by an experienced counsellor. It may be used with children, youth and adults who have been through difficult experiences.
Kids Club Manual	The concept of Kids Clubs borrows heavily from the thinking behind traditional children's organised groups, and seeks to enhance this thinking by exploring the potential that clubs have in enhancing children's psychosocial wellbeing.	This manual is designed to train Kids Club leaders in starting and managing Kids Clubs. The training seeks to help participants understand that Kids Clubs are a link in the chain of community and family day-to-day care and support for children.
Mobilising Children and Youth into their own Child- and Youth-led Organisations	Interventions designed to improve the wellbeing of children outside of the school system typically are able to reach only relatively small numbers of children. By mobilising children into their own child- and youth-led organisations it is possible to reach much higher numbers of children.	Child-led associations can develop social awareness and organisational skills of children. They also empower children by giving them a voice in their own affairs and can be especially powerful in advocacy efforts. They are especially important for developing the personal and interpersonal (psychosocial) skills of marginalised children.

Psychosocial Support Methods and Tools Assessment

Here are some questions for assessing the extent to which you use psychosocial support methods and tools in your programmes.

Respond to the checklist by indicating Yes or No or Sometimes to the given questions. Use the column on the right to score yourself 2 (Yes), 1 (Sometimes) or 0 (No).

Focus Area	Questions About Psychosocial Support Methods and Tools	Yes (2) Sometimes (1) No (0)
Methods and Tools	<p>Does your organisation make use of a range of tools to promote individual, family, group and community psychosocial support?</p> <p>Which tools are you currently using on a regular basis?</p>	

REPSSI and its partners have developed extensive materials on the above-mentioned tools. You can visit their website on www.repssi.org.za to download some of the materials or find out more about other resources. The following section also provides ideas on how to build the capacity of your staff in psychosocial support.

Case Example: A tracing book is a scaled down version of a life sized body map. A sheaf of blank pages may be put together to make up a hand bound patient held file in which the patient is able to track and communicate ongoing physical and emotional changes in his or her body and mind. After one week, on the first sheet of tracing paper, an infection might be recorded and marked on the left thigh. By week 2, it might have gotten smaller or bigger. A TB related cough might find expression on the chest. With the patient's consent, the doctor might sketch out a lung onto the page. A change in environmental status for instance being forced to live outside on the street as

a result of disclosure of HIV status might be recorded as a note outside the body. In these and other contexts, communication between doctor and patient, and between patient and household members, and between support group members might be enhanced.

Tracing books have been used to influence medical practice by enhancing doctor-patient interactions and by facilitating communication. They help to empower patients and overcome language and literacy barriers. The tracing books are, in effect, a patient-centered medical file and offer an innovative opportunity to combine treatment information

with more psychosocial aspects such as fear, disclosure, and stigma. They are an example of how PSS has been mainstreamed into health care systems where the focus is often on the disease or illness rather than on the person. Tracing books were first piloted amongst a group of patients at Masiphumelele Clinic in South Africa (2003) and are now being used in Tanzania and Zambia.

The case example shows how the tool was used to support a psychosocial mainstreaming process within the medical health setting.

4. Skills and Knowledge

In the Mainstreaming Psychosocial Support Rapid Assessment tool there was a section on staff capacity. In order to mainstream psychosocial support into your organisation it may be helpful to identify a few key staff members who are able to be developed to support others in their psychosocial support work. It is preferable to identify staff who have a natural inclination and passion for psychosocial support. There is a wealth of training and courses available and it is worth investing in staff who are then able to transfer the skills and ideas to other colleagues.

Existing psychosocial support courses

Here are some of the manuals and courses currently available on psychosocial support.

Manual / Course	Focus	Source and Use
Children at Risk Certificate	This course covers human rights based approaches to working with children, and includes modules on child care and support, community development and programming.	Developed by REPSSI in partnership with UNICEF, this comprehensive course is suitable for fieldworkers and project managers working with children, families and communities affected by conflict, displacement, poverty and HIV and AIDS.
Early Childhood Development	This manual provides guidelines for addressing issues at family, community and household level, promoting everyday care and support.	The manual was developed by REPSSI and may be used with childcare workers and facilitators promoting psychosocial support in early childhood development.
Introduction to Mainstreaming Psychosocial Care and Support	A facilitator's manual to promote skills development in psychosocial support. It covers a wide range of topics including working with families and communities, dealing with stigma and discrimination, child abuse etc.	This trainer's manual was developed by REPSSI and may be used in developing psychosocial support trainers.
Living with "x". A Body Mapping Journey in the Time of HIV and AIDS: A Facilitator's Guide	This manual guides facilitators through the process of developing body maps with groups.	The facilitator's manual was developed by REPSSI and may be used in training people on the use of body maps.

Most of these resources may be downloaded free of charge from www.repssi.org

Visit the site to stay in touch with the latest developments in the rapidly advancing psychosocial support sector.

Manual / Course	Focus	Source and Use
Journey of Life Manuals	This is a series of 3 manuals containing a facilitator's guide, action workshops and picture codes.	The manuals were developed by REPSSI and may be used with people wishing to learn to facilitate the Journey of Life.
Mainstreaming Psychosocial Support into Emergency and post Conflict Settings	This draft guideline sets out the context in which psychosocial support mainstreaming may be used.	Developed by REPSSI, this tool may assist organisations working in the conflict sector wishing to mainstream psychosocial support into their work.
Making a Hero Book: Facilitator's Guide	This manual takes you through the process of facilitating a group of children through a series of autobiographical story telling and art exercises to create their own hero books.	Developed by REPSSI, the guide may be used with facilitators working with children.
Memory Box Manual	This manual outlines approaches to memory work with children and families.	Initially developed by Jonathan Morgan and NACWOLA women of Uganda, the manual may be used with facilitators interested in learning more about memory work.
Psychosocial Care and Support for Young Children and Infants in the Time of HIV and AIDS: A Resource	This manual provides comprehensive guidelines for psychosocial support work with children.	Developed by REPSSI the manual is valuable to anyone wishing to learn more about psychosocial support work with children.
Tree of Life Manual	This manual sets out how to go about using the narrative-based Tree of Life tool.	Developed by REPSSI, the manual and tool may be used with experienced facilitators.

Psychosocial Support Skills and Knowledge Assessment

Here are some questions for assessing the extent to which you have updated psychosocial support (PSS) skills and knowledge in your organisation. Respond to the checklist by indicating Yes (2), No (0) or Sometimes (1) to the given questions.

Focus Area	Questions about Psychosocial Support Skills and Knowledge	Yes (2) Sometimes (1) No (0)
Staff Training	Does your organisation offer systematic PSS training for all staff and volunteers? Does your organisation support staff to attend further specialised PSS training courses, workshops and exchange meetings?	
Mentoring	Does your organisation offer mentoring and support for people involved in PSS work?	
Staff Competence to Deliver Training	Do you have competent staff who are able to train others in PSS approaches?	

Monitoring and Evaluation

Psychosocial Support Monitoring and Evaluation Tool

Putting in place psychosocial support mainstreaming monitoring systems is valuable as it reflects a commitment to learning and quality programming. The REPSSI psychosocial support mainstreaming checklist given on the right can be used as a monitoring tool to check progress towards the desired mainstreaming objectives. This tool can also be used as a pre and post assessment to see whether or not an organisation has successfully mainstreamed psychosocial support. These questions may be useful to ask again after six months of ongoing engagement to assess your progress at the four different levels of psychosocial mainstreaming.

Organisational Focus Area	Limited PSS Focus	Emerging PSS Focus	Innovative & Extensive PSS Focus
1. Strategic leverage	Not much referral & linking with specialised PSS services or other organisations supporting specific needs of children & families.	Severe cases are referred for specialised PSS.	Regular interaction & referral with other organisations focusing on PSS & on particular needs of children & families. Joint advocacy to promote the needs & rights of children.
2. Programming	Programme plans do not focus much on PSS & there are no guiding policies.	Programmes do make use of some PSS principles & refer to these in the design of policies.	Programmes are designed around PSS principles & there are clear policies promoting PSS in all programmes.
3. Project methods & tools	Not much use is made of PSS methods & tools in projects.	Some PSS methods & tools are used, but these are a bit outdated or used now & then.	Updated PSS methods & tools are applied systematically for various situations.
4. Skills & knowledge	Very few staff have an understanding of PSS.	Some staff have a solid understanding of PSS & guide others in the organisation.	All staff members have a basic understanding of PSS & there are specialised staff to support others in their PSS work.

I. Psychosocial Support Strategic Leverage Assessment

Focus Area	Questions for Reflection	Yes (2) Sometimes (1) No (0)
Networking	<p>Do you belong to any networks or groups of organisations focusing on the wellbeing of children?</p> <p>Do you regularly contact other organisations working with children to discuss ways of working together?</p> <p>Do you exchange materials with other organisations working with children?</p>	
Advocacy	<p>Are you trying to change any particular government policies or programmes which affect children's wellbeing?</p> <p>Do you support others involved in policy development and advocacy work?</p>	
Holistic Focus	<p>Do you support children, caregivers and communities to engage in income generating projects or to access social grants so as to enhance their capacity to cope financially?</p> <p>Do you refer people to other organisations supporting the basic needs of children (e.g. safety, shelter, education, health care, nutrition)?</p>	

2. Psychosocial Support Programming Assessment

Focus Area	Questions for Reflection	Yes (2) Sometimes (1) No (0)
Attitudes	Do your staff deal with all the children and adults you work with in a respectful way that builds their dignity?	
Participation	Do you involve the caregivers of all the children you work with in planning and feedback about all the activities the children are involved in? Do you facilitate child or youth participation activities e.g. children's committees, children's or youth organisations etc?	
Social Support	Do you engage in activities that support connections between people or improve the social environment of children's lives? Do you draw on existing constructive cultural, social and spiritual ways of coping and developing? Do you build the capacity of community-based structures (e.g. CBOs, schools, child care structures) to support children and caregivers in their community? Do you encourage children and youth to support one another?	
Family Support	Do you focus on strengthening the capacity of families to care for their children? Do you try to keep families together, unless there is clear evidence of harm or danger within a family? Do you facilitate linkages between children and their families at all times, so as to strengthen safety nets for children?	
Emotional	Do you provide a safe space for children to talk about their experiences, thoughts and feelings related to their lives and circumstances? Do you focus on the strengths and resources of the child and family (their achievements and positive assets)?	

3. Psychosocial Support Methods and Tools Assessment

Focus Area	Questions for Reflection	Yes (2) Sometimes (1) No (0)
Methods & Tools	Does your organisation make use of a range of tools to promote individual, family, group and community psychosocial support? Which tools are you currently using on a regular basis?	

4. Psychosocial Support Skills and Knowledge

Focus Area	Questions for Reflection	Yes (2) Sometimes (1) No (0)
Staff Training	Does your organisation offer systematic PSS training for all staff and volunteers? Does your organisation support staff to attend further specialised PSS training courses, workshops and exchange meetings?	
Mentoring	Does your organisation offer mentoring and support for people involved in PSS work?	
Staff Competence to Deliver Training	Do you have competent staff who are able to train others in PSS approaches?	

After about six months or one year, it is helpful to assess the way you have mainstreamed psychosocial. This is done to see whether psychosocial support is institutionalised in your organisation and the desired change among your target population – are the children and their families benefiting from psychosocial support mainstreaming?

Should you have need for more information on PSS mainstreaming, contact your nearest PSS trainer or the REPSSI office and website at www.repssi.org

Conclusion

Mainstreaming psychosocial support is not a one-off activity but an ongoing process. It can enrich your programme work while enhancing the impact of your organisation. Once your organisation has successfully mainstreamed psychosocial support in one area or programme, consider mainstreaming psychosocial support in another areas or programmes. We hope that you are able to continue referring to these guidelines to help you in the psychosocial support mainstreaming process.

REPSSI Psychosocial Support Mainstreaming Guides

If you would like to extend your PSS mainstreaming, please remember that REPSSI has also developed programme specific mainstreaming guides to assist organisations to mainstream psychosocial support into the following programmes and approaches:

- **Conflict and Emergency Settings**
- **Early Childhood Development**
- **Education Sector and Schools**
- **Economic Strengthening**
- **Home Based Care**
- **Nutrition**
- **Paediatric HIV and AIDS Care**
- **Child Participation**

Please visit www.repssi.org for more information.



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