



Youth Mental Health Stigma Reduction in South African Urban Centers Through Community Workshops, Social Media Campaigns, and Psychological First Aid Training

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Abstract

Youth mental health stigma is a significant issue in South African urban centers, where access to care is limited and societal attitudes towards mental illness contribute to stigmatization. The study employed a mixed-methods approach including pre- and post-workshop surveys to assess changes in stigma levels, focus group discussions to gather qualitative insights into attitudes towards mental illness, and statistical analysis of survey data using linear regression models with robust standard errors. A statistically significant reduction ($p < 0.05$) was observed in perceived stigma associated with mental health issues after the workshops (mean decrease from 62% to 48%), indicating a positive impact on attitudes towards mental illness among participants. The interventions were effective in reducing youth mental health stigma, which is crucial for improving access to and utilization of mental health services. The findings support the implementation of community-based initiatives as part of comprehensive mental health strategies. Public health programmes should integrate psychological first aid training into existing structures such as schools and community centers, alongside social media campaigns targeting youth influencers. Future research could explore long-term effects and scalability of these interventions.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan, Urbanization, Social Determinants, Community Engagement, Mental Health Literacy, Psychological First Aid, Stigma Reduction Strategies*

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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