

DISCUSSION

Participants are used to doing physically hard work daily and find it difficult to function without their normal routine. Furthermore, they are used to being capable of providing for their families' needs and their perception is that they have failed as breadwinners for their families and that they are worthless. The high levels of frustration and underlying depression can lead to destructive behaviour which, in this situation, can be directed at the self and the family, and can be regarded as a possible risk. It is often the women who need to be the lightning conductors in these situations and deal with the feelings of their husbands and their children. Possible risk behaviour can include matrimonial violence, family violence, and even suicide and/or family murder. Participants expressed their concern about this and eagerly wanted to know how to identify risk behaviour among their colleagues and friends. The financial emergency basically entails the loss of a meaningful cash flow to meet daily obligations. The participants also find it difficult to be dependent on food aid and experience the receipt of food parcels as exceptionally humiliating. The fact that they perceive mine management, the government and the general public as uninvolved makes them feel even more betrayed, helpless and isolated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It has been fully realised that the needs of all involved in such an action need to be taken into consideration, and that the physical and immediate needs must receive attention first before the focus can shift to counselling and other higher order activities.
- Since these situations normally take on crisis proportions, assistance should take place at a multidisciplinary level and this is an opportunity to let team work really develop at ground level among all the disciplines involved in the best interests of the community. Social Work, Psychology, Nursing and Theology are specifically mentioned when such a team is compiled.
- Volunteers can fulfil an important role in these situations, because there are many practical aspects that need attention. In this respect, manning the information counter, unloading and distributing the food parcels, and taking general care of the families come to mind.
- However, it is recommended that counselling, be it in individual or in group context, should be done by social workers and psychologists. Lay counsellors can cause more damage in such crisis situations than give assistance.
- The counselling sessions, be it individual or in group context, afford an opportunity to unload emotions, and mere involvement can already bring relief from negative feelings and prevent certain destructive behaviours. Such sessions are strongly advised for the future.
- Since large numbers of people are normally involved in these situations, it is only logical that the primary focus should be on the total community in order to determine the needs within the community. Following this, group work can commence and only those who are not prepared to participate in a group or those whose problems are of an extremely personal nature can then be involved in individual counselling. Group work creates the opportunity for members to identify with one another and help in dealing with one another's anxieties, and more group sessions in such situations are recommended for the future.
- An information brochure should be compiled which, amongst other things, conveys the most essential information to those involved. In this case, two brochures were compiled which contained the following information: basic and practical information such as resources in the community, which resources make provision for which type of emergency, contact numbers

of resources, the normal responses of mourning after trauma and loss, and the subsequent high-risk behaviour that can arise from it.

- Regular communication between the labour unions and members is absolutely essential so that members know exactly what the labour unions are prepared to do in such crisis situations and what members' responsibilities entail. In this way, all kinds of false rumours that simply cause uncertainty to increase, and leave people under an erroneous impression, are nipped in the bud.
- Assistance by a financial expert regarding financial planning can be strongly recommended. In this way those involved can be guided to make realistic financial decisions. Most of the participants are desperate for cash, which can lead to their making desperate and impulsive decisions with negative long-term consequences.
- Assistance should be given in seeking alternative employment, such as making available facilities for sending and receiving faxes and for making photocopies. Compiling Curricula Vitae for a possible new job is also experienced as a huge challenge. Certain members are of the opinion that an alternative job is the only solution for them, but they are unable to afford the administrative processes in applications for work because of a lack of cash, and they also feel that they are only trained to do their current work, thus they do not stand a good chance of obtaining another job.
- Recreation opportunities for participants and their families should be encouraged, such as making available a gymnasium. Members expressed this need and it would be a good thing in terms of neutralising high levels of frustration. However, joining the gymnasium has financial implications, which once again places it beyond the reach of participants.
- Spiritual support is essential. Some participants mention that spiritual care alone cannot put cash in their pockets, but most of them did indeed indicate that this crisis affects them at the spiritual level and that they need support. Ministers and church leaders should reach those involved across denominational borders at the spiritual level. A considerable number of participants indicated that they draw a huge amount of energy from their faith, church activities and caring groups. Hence it would be helpful to give more attention to this aspect and even to organise a joint prayer occasion.
- The media can be used effectively in this process to make the public aware of the crisis in the area, which can possibly promote support for those involved.
- Information, counselling and practical assistance regarding health and obtaining medication, especially for chronic medical conditions, are essential.
- Stronger cooperation between the different interest groups who render services in the area and coordination of the existing services are extremely essential.
- Presenting a day for women during which they are exposed to motivational talks, individual discussions, group discussions and refreshments is an excellent idea and should be presented as part of such an action.
- On such a women's day provision should also be made for a child-care service so that the women can genuinely feel special and can give their full attention to the contents of the day – completely detached from their normal domestic duties.

- The needs of older children, and especially adolescents with their unique needs, should also receive attention, and group sessions can fulfil an important role here.
- A commuting service 2 to 3 times per day between Stilfontein and Klerksdorp would be helpful.
- Handing out food parcels and clothing must be handled with great care, since participants are sensitive to the situation and feel humiliated by it, in spite of their gratitude.
- Once finality has been reached about the future of the mine, a follow-up session is recommended. This would be meaningful.

SUMMARY

Although these findings do not necessarily represent the total population, they do nevertheless give an indication of the psychosocial circumstances that were prevailing in Stilfontein and can surely be generalised to any similar situation in the country. In this article, apart from the analysis of the specific situation, the aim of the investigation, concept definition and research methodology were also taken into account. The project planning, the psychosocial situation analysis with the men who were retrenched, as well as the course of the group work sessions, received attention. Following this, the women's day, arranged for the women in the community, was discussed based on the data of the questionnaire, as filled out by the women. Furthermore, certain strengths that came to the fore from the community were also discussed. A discussion of the total investigation followed, after which the focus moved to recommendations for similar situations that can occur in the future. The most important conclusion that was drawn from this was that an inclusive approach is of cardinal importance in dealing with poverty and unemployment.

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