

# Development of the Abangane Teen Girl Grief Support Curriculum



The Abangane grief support curriculum is Khululeka's most important success. Abangane was developed under Khululeka's leadership in partnership with local South African and international specialists. It is the only South African grief support group model that shows clear published and peer reviewed evidence for impact.

Abangane is the result of a 5 year PEPFAR funded programme. Khululeka partnered with Child Welfare Bloemfontein & Childline Free State from 2012 to 2017 where Khululeka trained and mentored facilitators to implement grief support groups, and they implemented the support groups. These started as the more generic support group model and then it developed into one specifically aimed at teen girls. Over time it also became more scripted to ensure that all the facilitators followed exactly the same programme. Khululeka extensively trained and mentored the facilitators (social workers and aux social workers) on Abangane.

A Randomised Controlled Trial of the Abangane Support Group Programme was conducted by the [Highly Vulnerable Children Research Center \(HVC-RC\)](#) of the U.S. based Tulane University.

This study found that teen girls demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in their mental health compared to the wait-listed participants, including a decrease in problematic grief, depression symptoms and attention problems. These findings were published in peer reviewed highly acclaimed journal [The Lancet, 24 April 2017](#).

The programme has since been refined and further improved, which could result in even more robust effects. However, to achieve these results, it is important to ensure that the Curriculum is followed precisely and implemented by appropriately trained facilitators.

Khululeka developed a detailed training programme to train organisations in the implementation of the [Abangane programme](#).

Both USAID Southern Africa and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (South Africa Portfolio) now recognise Abangane as a valuable group-based intervention for Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW). The programme is currently being implemented with grant funds from both donors via HIVSA, Future Families and NACOSA targeting communities with a very high HIV burden. Abangane is very well positioned to be an important layer of services to help AGYW to acknowledge grief and loss, tackle mental health and promote coping skills.