

# Khululeka Grief Support

A brief history



## Beginnings

Khululeka is a Non-Profit Organisation started in February 2005 by 6 women, Heather Ferris, Rosemary Frith, Brendah Gaine, Lucille Lückhoff, Nontobeko Moni and Gail Smith. These women collectively brought their experience from a range of disciplines including social work, child psychology, palliative care, community child care work, nursing and education. They were responding to HIV and its disruptive effects on families, which were, by 2005, already a significant reality.

An estimated 5.2 million people were living with HIV and AIDS in South Africa by 2008 – more than in any other country. It is believed that in 2008, over 250,000 South Africans died of AIDS. One of the practical outcomes of this epidemic was that by 2008 there were approximately 1.4 million AIDS orphans.

Khululeka developed bereavement training in response to the needs of caregivers and teachers caring for and working with children and adolescents who had suffered from the death of a parent or sometimes multiple family members through HIV and AIDS. They also started running peer Grief and Loss Support Groups for bereaved children and adolescents.

## Bereavement programmes for children and teens

Khululeka also has an excellent track record working in schools and directly with at risk children and adolescents in the form of grief support groups, holiday clubs and individual counselling and referrals.

Khululeka received a Silver Award during the annual DSD Youth Excellence for programmes delivering services to youth in the Western Cape in 2016.

Khululeka has built a reputation for excellent programme development and implementation. The proven value of its programme is enhanced with the [Abangane](#) Curriculum (a support group model for adolescent girls).

USAID Southern Africa and Global Fund have recognised Abangane as a group based intervention for Adolescent Girls and Young Women and it is currently being rolled out by HIVSA, Future Families and NACOSA.



## Training and mentoring

Khululeka has trained and mentored thousands of child sector professionals, para professionals and non-professionals in government institutions, NGOs and CBOs on the recognition and support of bereaved children and adolescents since its inception in 2005. Organisations include but are not limited to the following:

- Khululeka has been in partnership with the Provincial Department of Social Development since 2006. DSD has adopted the Khululeka model of peer Grief Support Groups as an efficient method to provide assistance to OVCs. DSD funds a range of NGOs and CBOs in the child sector across the province of the Western Cape to facilitate Grief Support Groups. Khululeka's mandate is to train and mentor staff of these funded NGOs and CBOs to enable them to run these peer Grief Support Groups.
- In 2019 2020 NACOSA and HIVSA facilitators in Gauteng, North West and the Western Cape were trained in implementing the Abangane Teen Girl Grief Support Programme.
- In 2018 Khululeka trained all the school social workers employed by WC Education Department across all 8 districts of the WC. They were particularly interested in tools and activities to facilitate difficult conversations in a short term intervention, and the training was really well received.
- In 2018 2019 Khululeka trained all the Child Welfare Athlone social workers and some social aux workers and community development workers. This was focused particularly on dealing with stress and caseloads and still providing an emotionally caring environment for children and teens.
- In 2017 and 2016 Khululeka trained social workers and Child and Youth Care Workers from most of the Child and Youth Care Centres across the Cape Town metro. This training was focused on how to remain calm and caring and how to support deeply traumatised children and their carers.
- In 2017 WC DSD asked Khululeka to pilot a training and mentoring programme for social workers in the Metro South to learn to facilitate grief support groups for the parents of children who had been murdered. The social workers all successfully facilitated their first support group, after initially being very nervous and apprehensive.
- In 2015 and 2016 the Department of Basic Education in the Free State contracted Khululeka to train teachers across the province. These workshops focused on how to deal with personal stories of trauma and how to calmly manage a classroom.



## Strategic plan

Khululeka's strategic plan includes staying a specialist organisation that builds the capacity of other organisations to deliver grief and bereavement support. Therefore building a community of excellent practice across South Africa, so that all disadvantaged children and teens have access to emotionally supportive adults who are able to facilitate difficult conversations about loss. Khululeka aims to create supportive environments that are responsive and compassionate, and that enable children and youth who have lost someone important in their lives to heal. Khululeka's overall goal is to create spaces and places for children and youth to deal with their grief, loss and trauma.

This goal is pursued through:

1. Training and mentoring of child sector staff in the recognition and support of bereaved children and adolescents across South Africa.
2. Direct services to bereaved children and adolescents including grief and loss support groups, bereavement counselling and therapeutic services across Cape Town.