A Storytelling Program for Women Living with HIV in an Informal Settlement in Kenya: Addressing Psychological Trauma, Depression and Stigma


Abstract

Awareness of HIV and AIDS in Kenya is high but stigma is still experienced among women living with HIV. The supportive environment in support groups is correlated with reducing apprehension and depression among people living with HIV although psychological issues are not adequately addressed. A randomized control study with the intervention of narrative approach was carried out for Women living with HIV. Eligibility included a score of above 21 on the Impact of Event (IES-R) Scale, severe depression (CES-D) and scored high on the Internal Stigma Scale (HIV ISS). A structured group therapy session using narrative approach was conducted weekly for twelve (12) weeks for five groups of ten (10) members each. The finding was a reduction in the impact of event for all intervention groups on the Impact of Event Scale (IES-R). On the depressive scale, all members in the intervention groups moved from severe depression to moderate 37(75%) and mild 13(25%). The stigma scale indicated that 30(60%) of the participants improved to moderate and mild while 20(40%) remained with severe stigma. Group therapy should be structured and adopt the narrative approach for women living with HIV. This will complement measures to reduce trauma from the impact of event, depression and internal stigma.