Ntombi Vimbelza!
One-year post-intervention outcomes from a sexual violence prevention intervention pilot study on South African public higher education campuses

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Define, context, circumstances and drivers/risk/vulnerability of sexual violence experienced by female students

Identifiable modifiable drivers/risk factors/vulnerability factors

Decide on mechanisms of change

Identify how mechanisms of change will be delivered

Test and adapt intervention

Collect sufficient evidence of effectiveness to proceed to a rigorous evaluation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modifiable risk factors</th>
<th>Sensitisation about risk</th>
<th>Ability to assess and act in risky situations</th>
<th>Self confidence/empowerment</th>
<th>Adapting to new environment, consumerism and limited resources</th>
<th>Sensitisation about gender</th>
<th>Access to services and the law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assumptions</strong></td>
<td>Increased risk of sexual assault in social events, increased by alcohol</td>
<td>Awareness of verbal, nonverbal or physical resistance strategies, and practicing them gives confidence to deal with risky situations</td>
<td>Poor self-esteem and poverty are obstacles to withstanding peer pressure associated with risky sexual behaviours</td>
<td>Pressures of the new environment to demonstrate freedom and have material items drive binge drinking, partying, multiple partners and transactional sex which is risky for SV; students are not equipped for independence and life on a budget, depression follows stress about work, relationships and finance</td>
<td>Value and status determined by gender norms, inequitable gender norms increases risk of sexual assault, rape myths drive stigma and allow rape</td>
<td>Lack of awareness of reporting procedures fuels impunity</td>
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<td><strong>Intervention</strong></td>
<td>Build awareness that anyone can become a victim</td>
<td>Skills to assess risky situations; skills to avoid harm and resist attacks</td>
<td>Build a healthy sense of self, boost self-confidence, increase self-efficacy, assertive communication skills, communicate sexual choices, negotiate safer sex</td>
<td>Stress management, talking about depression, and how to get help, basic guide to budgeting</td>
<td>Gender sensitization, challenging gender norms and roles, norms related to sexual encounters, rape myths and patriarchal privilege</td>
<td>Sexual rights, laws on SV and GBV, sources of support, how to access support after rape or IPV</td>
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Intervention description

Ntombi Vimbela! is a term that means girl/woman resist, restrain, block, or deter

- Ten * 3.5-hour workshop sessions outside academic hours
- Peer-cofacilitation and ongoing supervision + debriefing
- One workshop a week
- Groups of 20 participants
- Participatory learning approaches in a manual
  - Brainstorming
  - Individual
  - Reflection
  - working in pairs and small groups
  - Big group discussion
  - Games and energizing activities

Ntombi Vimbela!

1. Getting to know each other
2. Lets assert ourselves
3. Sex and consent
4. Women, Men and relationships
5. Violence against women and support
6. Maintaining well being
7. Assessing sexual assault risk
8 & 9. Resisting sexual assault
10. Dealing with material pressures
Piloting Ntombi Vimbela!

- Pilot participants:
  - 118 Black African
  - First year undergraduate female students
  - Age 18-30 years
- Research sites:
  - 5 South African TVET colleges and
  - 2 historically disadvantaged universities
- Workshops delivered by 17 peer facilitators
Post 12 months remote data collection

- Data was collected remotely during COVID-19 lockdown
- Qualitative data
  - 35 telephonic IDIs were conducted by trained research assistants, using semi-structured interview guide
- Quantitative data
  - Participants were given data vouchers
  - Pre-post analysis
  - Baseline data collected in person-REDCap
  - Follow up data collected using a structured questionnaire loaded onto KoboToolBox
Shifts in gender beliefs and relationship dynamics

“I used to find it difficult to stand my ground and argue with my partner, when he says I won’t do a certain thing then I don’t do it because he is a man and he takes care of me financially so why should I say no including sexual things, I thought I should always agree with him. But the NV! workshops taught me that it doesn’t matter if he is taking care of me or what, it’s about me and we need to understand each other, love each other and respect each other and also respect each other’s decisions. Now, we both decide on what to do and we communicate very well like he let me say what I want, and I let him say what he wants and then we decide on what to do. When we are together, I am able to tell him when I do not like a certain thing and if he does not listen, I am able to be bold so that he can see that I am serious about that.”
"P: Sometimes, he would do sexual things I didn’t like. I would not know what to say and how to respond but I would just keep quiet. But after I attended NV! workshop, I decided that I will have to stand up for myself and how I feel, so I told him that I don’t like the things you do and always say to me. You must stop it.

F: How did he take it?

P: He apologised, and we resolved the issue and it never happened. Now, when one of us wants something, we just talk as adults and we agree, we don’t force each other. We talk about how things should be when we are having sex. So, I was telling him what I like, and he told me how he likes things to be done and we are both happy now.
Exiting abusive relationships

“P: The last time I saw my boyfriend, he was drunk, and he was carrying a knife, he came to my place at night and I thought to myself that he will never stop this, it’s better if I end the relationship with him before I am the next one on the statistics of girls killed by their boyfriends. I did not like it so I decided to leave him alone so that I can live my life and focus on my studies. I told him that he did this for the first time, for the second time, and now it was his third time, so because he has done this for too long, I told him it is better if we no longer see each other and break up for the sake of my life because he was also aggressive and he once showed me another side of him that I did not know.

F: Mm.

P: He did not want to accept that but I couldn’t change my decision. He did not like my decision because he was always following me, but I had already decided to leave him because I was also looking at what is happening in our country about girls being killed by people, they are in a relationship with, but I managed to leave him. I was not shy or scared to do that even though he was following me, I told him that if he doesn’t back-off I will report him to the police. He has been quiet now even though I wouldn’t be sure of what he is thinking right now.”
Verbal resistance

“So, my friend and I normally go to this other internet café and the guy there was doing some nasty things to me when I ask for his assistance, but I was able to defend myself. He would touch me and make comments about my beauty, so I told him to stop. Firstly, I told him to stop as I don’t like what he is doing. He did not stop so I screamed and other people looked at him and saw what he was doing, so he stopped. Yes, because he is much older than me. Yes, he stopped!”
Physical resistance

“I was walking on the streets and then came this guy who propose me a lot from home and then he just grabbed my hand and was asking why I don’t talk to him. I told him that you know what I already told you that I don’t like you and I do not want to talk to you. I was trying to walk away so he grabbed my hand and that’s where I applied that hammer fist technique to say get off me.”
Improved vigilance and strategies to minimise sexual assault risk

“... before the NV! I was not that cautious about things like to always check if there is anyone following me, I was not paying attention to other things but now I am aware and I am very cautious, .... I am more aware than before”;

“NV! has been helpful because I have learned that as a person you must always be cautious especially when you are on the road at night, you must always look around and check if there is anyone following you and I have learned that walking alone in a dark place is dangerous and that when you go out with someone you must alert the people you know and give them address.

“NV! helped me because I am now very cautious and I don’t go out at night and I avoid dark spaces, but when I do, I always carry pepper spray. I don’t even accept a lift. When a man I don’t know offers me a lift, I just say no thank you. Just a straight no that I don’t want the lift. If I have to take a taxi at night, I do check if it is mostly males inside because I don’t feel comfortable inside a taxi with most males because they might pretend to not know each other yet they are up to something”
# Quantitative findings

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<th></th>
<th>BASELINE (N=98)</th>
<th>12 MONTHS POST</th>
<th>p-value</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mean/n</td>
<td>mean/n</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rape myths score</strong></td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>0.046</td>
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<td>(low=less victim-blaming)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender attitudes score</strong></td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>0.026</td>
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<tr>
<td>(high=more equitable)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual self-efficacy</strong></td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>0.028</td>
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<td>(high=good)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Depression score</strong></td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>0.010</td>
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<td>(high=more depressed)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-esteem score</strong></td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>0.095</td>
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<td>(high-high self-esteem)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship control</strong></td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>0.112</td>
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<tr>
<td>score</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(high=partner less</td>
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<tr>
<td>controlling)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Experienced Sexual</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.254</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPV in past 12m (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Experienced any sexual</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violence in past 12m (%)</td>
<td></td>
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Key takeaways

- Data builds on qualitative evidence collected through end of workshop FGDs and shows evidence of NV!’s enduring promise at 1-year post-intervention
- The findings show that NV! holds promise as a campus intervention for sexual assault risk reduction in South Africa
- Ongoing work involves strengthening NV!s mental health focus and adapting for LBQ
- Next phase of our work will involve evaluating NV! effectiveness and pathways to change in a randomised control study
Acknowledgements

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