Memory Book Interventions with Orphaned Children in South Africa, Kenya, and India: A Global Partnership

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Learner outcomes:

1. Explore the background and major components of the implementation and evaluation of the Memory Book intervention with orphaned children.

2. Examine potential practice implications, including collaborative global partnerships, related to the project's results for children, particularly orphaned children, who have experienced loss and grief.

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Study Purpose

Explore and compare the lived experiences of orphaned and vulnerable children in India, Kenya, and South Africa who have utilized the *Memory Book* intervention.
Background

- “Lived experience” for orphaned and vulnerable children
- Prolonged grief threatens children’s holistic health – body, mind, and spirit
- *Memory Books* – a psychosocial support program intervention for grief recovery (King et al., 2009)
“Telling their story”

South Africa

Kenya
Dreams

South Africa

I wish....
I can go to new york
I wish I can be soccer player
I wish I can see my sponsor
Cultural Context for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children in South Africa, Kenya & India

- **South Africa**: HIV/AIDS
  - Post-apartheid issues

- **Kenya**: War & Violence
  - HIV/AIDS

- **India**: Poverty
  - HIV/AIDS
Literature Review

- **Childhood traumatic or complicated grief (CTG)**
  (Cheney, 2015; Crenshaw, 2005; Demmer & Burghart, 2008; Morantz & Heymann, 2010; Thupayagale-Tshweneagae, 2012)

- **Developmental issues due to prolonged grief**
  (Cluver et al., 2012 & Schuurman, 2003)

- **Grief interventions**
  (King et al., 2009; Fournier et al., 2014)
Methods

- Qualitative phenomenological study design
- Multi-site study – 6 children’s homes in 3 countries (South Africa, Kenya & India)
- University of Portland, USA IRB study approval
- Focus group interviews conducted with children (n=66) & their caregivers (n=6)
- Analysis method and rigor
## Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Sites (N)</th>
<th>Children (N)</th>
<th>Ages 10-13 (N)</th>
<th>Ages 14-17 (N)</th>
<th>Caregivers (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Results & Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOUTH AFRICA</th>
<th>INDIA</th>
<th>KENYA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>IDENTITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>RELATIONSHIPS</strong></td>
<td><strong>IDENTITY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Family, Biological/New; Friends, Teachers</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life goes on</td>
<td>Friends, Teachers</td>
<td>My favorite thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELATIONSHIPS</strong></td>
<td><strong>IDENTITY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family, Biological/New; Friends, Teachers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMOTION</strong></td>
<td><strong>COPING</strong></td>
<td><strong>COPING</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing contents of book; Activities; access to book; spirituality</td>
<td>Sharing contents of book; activities; access to book; spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COPING</strong></td>
<td><strong>HOPE</strong></td>
<td><strong>HOPE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies; spirituality, sharing contents of book</td>
<td>My dreams; Value of book</td>
<td>My dreams; Value of book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOPE</strong></td>
<td><strong>EMOTION</strong></td>
<td><strong>EMOTION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of book; My Dreams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Exemplars</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| South Africa | “I am special because there is none like me.” ~child  
“I am black. I am special. I am different [from] others.” ~child    |
| Kenya     | “I like English because I learn how to speak well and I can write a good letter.” ~child  
“This is my, myself.” ~child pointing to his drawing. |
| India     | “My mother has a problem in the eyes. She lost one eye that’s why all are calling us blind woman, blind woman. You have very bad family that’s why they are [hating] hatred us.” ~child  
“I am …playing very good games here. I am liking these games very muchly. But in this happiest things I have a sad story. I lost my father at the youngest days…so my mother brought me here.” ~child |
## Relationship Exemplars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Exemplars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>“ …at the beginning [working with memory books] was really like a relationship thing…in doing it together we got to know them [children] better.” ~ care giver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>“A letter to my late Dad. Dear Dad, thank you for everything…” . ~child.</td>
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<td>“When they talk positively about their teachers they really mean it because some teachers are like mothers to them…..” ~care giver</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>“…this is my father. He is no more.” ~child</td>
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<td>“And she she’s not a friend, she’s like my sister.” ~child</td>
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## Coping Exemplars

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>“Everything was about sharing, and in so many ways to have something that’s theirs that they can share was quite good.” “They’d talk about what they were writing”. ~care provider.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>“The teacher that I love is called Madame_______, I love her because she helps me so that, to sort out my problems”. ~child</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“..dead people…culturally you don’t talk about them. But it is not good culture because children need to know that their parents died…the children saying the best part of the book was when they wrote to their parents, dead parents.” ~ caregiver</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>“I am watching this book everyday, and what I’ve written I read and I [journal about] journaled myself about my life.” ~child</td>
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<td>“Even for me now I feel when I was small I wish I had a memory book which I could keep a long time”. ~care provider</td>
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# Hope Exemplars

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| South Africa | One child stated she would keep her book “forever”, another child “until I die.”  
One young girl dreamed of [her] “wedding day.” |
| Kenya | “Imagine a child who has been bereaved who has lost parents and then you come to school and you are beaten and …..caned.” ~ care giver  
“I want to become a good teacher…when I grow up and become a teacher I become good to other children who are like me.” ~child |
<p>| India | “Coming here….I’m weeping everyday. I want to go away from here…but a brother [telling me] you should keep here because your life will be very much enjoyed…but better life. Hearing his voice I am staying here.” ~child |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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</table>
| South Africa | “I look at the pictures and writings and stuff and think about what’s happened and then…..[I am] just fine.” ~child  
“It’s difficult [for some of the children] to accept their…..background, because their parents are deceased, they don’t know their background, they’re HIV positive…and it’s difficult to accept.” ~ caregiver |
| Kenya   | “My father died and I was very angry.” ~child  
“It helped me because sometime I didn’t know how to explain to the children that their parents died…to really be open to the children…help them to understand…when a child is in months or weeks the child will not feel the comfortable hands that held him…..so the child actually feels the pain.” ~ caregiver |
| India   | “Here all people lonely and my friends house also have no father and mother. I’m very happy in this house.” ~child  
“Nobody is coming to us. Nobody is loving us. That’s why we are very pain in my in our hearts.” ~child |
Discussion

**Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**  Theoretical Framework  
* (Silton et al., 2011)

- Primary themes of identity and relationship emerged for all 3 countries

- Coping and hope were second-tier themes for all countries encompassing a spiritual emphasis in all three countries

- Emotion was ranked as the lowest theme for India & Kenya, but a mid-range theme in South Africa
Implications: Intervention

Storytelling and drawing through Memory Books can offer an inexpensive, accessible and protective resource to enhance resilience for these children (Scalletti & Hocking, 2010; Wood, Theron, & Mayaba, 2007)

Global implementation of intervention
Implications: Resilience

Resilience - defined as “a process of recovering from, adapting to, and/or remaining strong in the face of adversity” (Masten, 2001)

- Growth of research on the role of culture in resilience in past two decades (Masten, 2014)

- Self-worth helps the child feel more hope, agency, and personal control (Masten & Wright, 2010; Skovdal & Daniel, 2012)
Implications: Resilience

Social ecological model of resilience - 7 factors necessary to enhance resilience in youths across cultures including:

- Access to supportive relationships and a sense of cohesion with others
- Development of identity and a positive self concept

(Unger et al., 2007; Unger, 2011; Unger, 2012)
Limitations

- Disparity in sample size and number of interviews between countries
- Data collection access issues and challenges in poor & high crime areas
- Cross-cultural issues, particularly in contexts of secrecy and stigma of grief
Recommendations

- Global applications present opportunities for partnerships between settings

- Ongoing need for evaluation of effectiveness of Memory Book intervention implementation and evaluation
  - Further study related to cultural and political norms

- Collaborative action research opportunities with indigenous nurse researchers and caregivers for OVCs in these countries


References continued


