Waves for Change Covid-19 update 14 May 2020
Current situation/STATS: Day 50 of national lockdown (in South Africa) – as from 27 March to current date:

As of 1 May 2020 SA was moved to Level 4 of the lockdown – which allowed for slightly more businesses to be open.

President Ramaphosa announced last night (13/05/20), that Level 4 restrictions will be slightly amended until the end of May (to try and safely boost economic recovery), and then South Africa will move to Level 3 as of 1 June – the regulations and details of Level 3 are still to be outlined. Areas with large outbreaks and hot spots may be placed on a different level to the rest of the country.

Despite a lot of criticism and some mistakes, I personally believe that Ramaphosa continues to show strong leadership. We as a country have a massive task ahead of us and there are some areas that could have been and still could be better managed and implemented but I do believe he has helped to save a lot of lives by his swift, firm and decisive actions.
Numbers in SA: as of 14 May 2020
- Confirmed COVID-19 cases 12074 (active cases 7101)
- Deaths 219
- Recovered 4754
- Tests done 386352 (over 15000 tests per day)

Numbers in the Western Cape:
- Confirmed COVID-19 cases 6767 (active cases 4367)
- Deaths 117
- Recovered 2283
- Tests done 73589

Numbers in the Eastern Cape:
- Cases 878
- Deaths 24

Numbers from some of the Western Cape Communities where W4C participants come from:
- Khayelitsha: 927 cases
- Mitchells Plein: 649 cases
- Muizenberg (and surrounds - Southern): 636 cases
W4C continue to deliver a youth friendly mental health service and continue to spend on most of the same budget line items and ensure all of our staff continue to receive a full salary. Our team have been incredible throughout this time and have responded with energy, passion and creativity during this challenging period. We are regularly reviewing our income/projections and cash flow alongside our Board, but for the short to medium term future, and whilst everyone continues to add so much value, we will continue to keep every member of our staff supported and employed.

We have worked with our funders and where necessary we have reallocated budget line items (transport, food and other site costs) in line with our Covid-19 response and emergency plan – we have also negotiated the allocation of underspends, exchange rate gains and favourable interest rates to ensure that our response is measured, responsible and sustainable in the long term. Ideally we prefer not to delve into reserve funding and are committed to maintaining a minimum of 4 months operational costs ring fenced at all times.

Along with the flexibility of current funders, W4C is also running an ongoing Covid-19 campaign to raise additional funds for the specific emergency response related needs that we have.
W4C is determined to make sure that our organisation is adding as much value as we can during this time. Our initial needs assessments - via calls to parents/children/community leaders and community mapping - has shown us that mental health needs of children are an even bigger priority than ever before and therefore our remote service - with resources translated into local languages - voice notes in local languages and more recently - even short videos in local languages - are helping children to maintain contact with safe adults, practice coping strategies with their families - and maintain a sense of control and belonging during this time.

W4C is acutely aware that although debrief psychologists and emotional regulation is critical during this period - without meeting families basic needs, children and young people will be at a much greater risk of abuse and mental health challenges and so it felt very important to collaborate and work alongside a wider support network. Voucher systems are being explored for long term support - but it was essential to do initial dry good drop offs door to door to build trust with families, reach those who do not have phones, and to do a full safeguarding audit in all homes to inform our next steps.

Our experience is showing us that those worst affected seem to be families who were working in informal sectors/jobs where employers were not paying UIF and therefore their employees protections are not there. This includes many of our participants whose parents were working as security guards/in restaurants/as domestic workers etc. These families were not claiming prior to Covid-19 and are now experiencing enormous delays with getting any state support or accessing any other food parcels - it is very difficult for families to have gone from a place of working and being self sufficient to feeling helpless and worried about the future. There have also been glitches with the SASSA grant system which is causing even more chaos and daily challenges for families.
The situation for foreign migrants is also very worrying. W4C have been exploring ways for us to be more inclusive of these groups in our service for a while now but we have not as yet rolled out a process to integrate this group meaningfully or formally in our service. Some of the children referred to us are from foreign migrant families and the translation of our lessons into Shona is a good start to us becoming even more inclusive. We are very aware that these families have no access to any government support in the form of grants or social welfare payments and we are determined to give direct support to the children in our service from this neglected population.

Details of the W4C appeal and how we are adjusting our services to support the communities in which we work:

- **Data and devices (smart phones)** – essential tools to enable our team to work remotely and continue the delivery of child friendly mental health services, not only to our child participants, but to their families as well, making it a household level intervention. We are providing monthly uncapped data packages to our coaches and we are working hard to upgrade some devices that cannot be used for this.

- **De-Brief psychologists** – since the start of lockdown regular 1:1 check ins with all coaches to support them during these challenging times. De-briefs are part of our normal operational budget but we have increased the sessions at each site, allowing the de-brief psychologist the ability to do a minimum of 2 check ins (1:1) per coach per month.

- **Senior coach mentoring** – together with SA Yes, we are providing the external support and guidance needed to assist our senior coaches in planning more long term for their futures beyond W4C. Regular mentorship sessions are set up between by SA Yes and our coaches, and regular feedback is received.
• Emergency food relief support – the successful delivery of over 1500 food parcels to our cohort of children and their families (+/- 1100 parcels in the Western Cape and +/- 400 parcels in the Eastern Cape). The food parcels were delivered to their door to ensure families remained safe. Communities have become very volatile and there have even been queues for miles and large groups of people waiting for hours to receive their parcels. We wanted to avoid this to ensure we also adhered to social distancing. Our teams were equipped with PPE as required and did not have any physical contact with the families. We were able to use this opportunity to do some safeguarding checks and follow up on families and children's welfare, as well as inform families of other support available. In South Africa there have been concerning reports of increases in gender based violence and child abuse since the lockdown – emergency support numbers are shared when doing drop offs as well as in the WhatsApp groups.

• Needs assessments – by doing door to door delivery of the food relief parcels, we were able to conduct a more in-depth needs assessment of the families in our service and can now plan and coordinate additional help and support that is needed – we are exploring options, but this may be in the form of food vouchers that can target families as they need them.
WhatsApp groups managed by our coaches and supervised and supported by our Site Managers and programme and safeguarding teams, have been created. We have created guidelines for coaches to refer to when delivering our service in this new way.

All children's families, including those on the Autism spectrum, are now part of WhatsApp groups (those with phones) and can also access our curriculum via a zero rated platform.

Our coaches send 2-3 short exercises every week to parents from each of our referral partners who interact and support each other to practice activities with their children at home - including trauma informed mindfulness/meditation, fitness and other coping skills.
We are creating a nice community feel about mental health and how to promote it during this difficult period. This comment below shares some feedback from a parent.

Many families are not able to claim benefits as employers were not paying UIF in informal jobs/sectors, and therefore levels of stress in the homes are higher than ever as the lockdown continues and Covid-19 numbers continue to rise.

The W4C tools are being shared and used by the whole family and in the wider communities...

Riano Desane 2 W4C Zerilda
It was a bit tirering for me who is not used to it but while we did it the neighbors children came to join in with us and after a while two of the parents also joined in so I told them we must move to a bigger area so that we can distance ourselves from one another, I did not allow those without a mask to take part. It was fun after all thank for the idea guys, keep up with the good work.

3:51 pm
Our W4C curriculum has been overhauled in order for the same principles of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to be delivered remotely and away from the beach – Ash, together with our Programme Team (Aviwe, our Site Managers and coaches), have adjusted the material we use to train our coaches, as well as the material the coaches use to deliver the W4C service. These lessons are shared with our coaching teams 3 times a week, and then in return are shared by our coaches to their wider communities (using interactive WhatsApp groups).

All resources are shared in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa, and we are currently translating some into Shona. You can even do a Take 5 using Makaton sign language (especially created for children on the Autism spectrum).

We have had great feedback from children and parents and we are learning and adjusting all the time.

Our new resources can be found on our website and can be used far more widely than before.

We have partnered with other NPO’s and civic organisations to share our resources wider, on a zero rated data platform, making them easier to access and more inclusive.
Get Involved – Do Your OWN Powerhand!

Record your own (max 2 min) clip of you describing and doing a Power Hand. The purpose of the video you share is to explain to others how to do the Power Hand and to encourage them to also try it. You can either do your Power Hand on your own, or with your family. We would like to create some excitement about and around our tools and this will be a huge help!

In these challenging times, we know many children and young people are being exposed to extremely high levels of stress and uncertainty, but we believe in this generation and know from experience in our service that if young people are supported with the right tools and access to consistent caring adults, they can be incredibly resilient. At W4C we want to offer an alternative narrative to the one of 'violent perpetrators' or 'helpless victims' that we see all too often. Our remote mental health service is being delivered by 40 incredible 18 - 25 year olds living in the same communities as the children they are supporting, and experiencing many of the same challenges. These young people are trained and supervised by W4C and skilled debrief psychologists to provide a culturally relevant and community led mental health service - they are continuing this critical work during Covid-19 lockdown and we'd love you to get behind the incredible work they are doing.

By recording your own ‘Powerhand’, we know the W4C coaches will feel seen and be inspired to continue delivering this service. It will also play a vital role in supporting children and families who are receiving and using the resources to keep prioritising their mental health and making time to use these evidence based activities in their daily lives. It will also be so exciting for them to see someone they recognise, or someone new and can look up to doing the same activities that they are at home!

Now you try...

• Read the ‘Powerhand Guide’ so that you understand the purpose of the activity and how to do it.
• Watch the video which shows 2 of our coaches explaining the Power Hand and gives you an example: https://www.waves-for-change.org/resources/
• Share yours with us
Building Your Power Hand

The Power Hand activity is an opportunity to practice recognizing our strengths. When we recognize our strengths, we feel hopeful and resilient, which helps us make healthy choices and manage our thoughts, emotions, and actions. This has a positive impact on our mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Below are the steps for the Power Hand activity, which can be done anywhere, anytime, to help us feel calm and strong.

1. With your eyes closed, take five slow and deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth. While breathing, focus on relaxing your muscles, and feeling comfortable in your body.
2. Once you feel comfortable, hold one hand out in front of your body in a relaxed manner.
3. As you take a deep breath in, use the index finger of your other hand to trace the outline of your thumb.
4. When you get to the tip of your thumb, think of one of your strengths. This is something you like and value about yourself. When you think of the strength, gently squeeze your finger tip—this will help you remember this strength.
5. In your own time, continue to take deep breaths, and focus on a strength of yours at each finger tip, until you have completed your Power Hand. If you can’t think of five strengths, start with just one or two as you can for now.
6. When you have built your Power Hand, take three deep breaths in and out, and remind yourself of your strengths you have just identified. Focus on how thinking of these strengths makes you feel, and how you could use your Power Hand in the future.
7. When you are ready, gently open your eyes.

Remember: this is an activity you can use to feel resilient and hopeful, and to remind yourself of your values, whenever you need to!
Recent Media Links


- BBC World Service: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKJBXZPo_qk


- W4C Autism is my Superpower: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXCdcVaBhsc