



Elements for a Culturally Appropriate Marriage Enrichment Program for Black Africans: Enhancing Sustainable Healthy Relationships

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Abstract

This research addresses the call to enhance the well-being of couples, families, and communities mitigating the vast falling apart of family structures. Marriage enrichment programs (MEPs) are much needed in South Africa, to alleviate increased divorce among Black couples, who hitherto lack instruction on healthy functioning marriages; mostly seeking help once several problems already escalated, complicating marital interventions. Moreover, practitioners, often unskilled and lacking in numbers, face challenges to address the high need for intervention, especially on a one-to-one basis. Here we report on culturally appropriate elements, to be included in an MEP, suitable to prevent, intervene, support, strengthen and preserve marriages, grounded on empirical international and current South African research. A mixed-methods approach, with a pre- & post-test experimental design, was used. Qualitative interviews with 2 social services professionals, 2 leaders, 5 couples, and quantitative pre- & post-tests with couples exposed preferred contents. Findings suggest an amalgamation of empirical research and traditional and modern practices. Secondly, interventions, educational and preventative, employed by traditional leaders, social services, family practitioners, curriculum developers, and health professionals can be applied collectively, cross-culturally, managing more couples at once. Findings advance the application of knowledge directed at practice and policy issues, positively progressing healthy relationships.

Keywords: Black Africans, couples, culturally appropriate, marriage enrichment, social sciences