

# COVID-19 Response: Children in Distress Network (CINDI) South Africa



Let them talk about their worries.

Be open and invite them to discuss what they may have heard and how they feel.



#StopTheSpread

Sources: www.who.int www.cdc.gov

## COVID-19 CONTEXT

South Africa confirmed its first coronavirus case on 5th March 2020, and national lockdown was imposed on 27th March. The Government responded to the crisis early, giving the country time to prepare for a potential rise in cases. The crisis has highlighted the extreme inequality within the country; 80% of the population will find it impossible to abide by the rules and regulations set out by the Government to tackle the crisis. The preparedness of the health system would be insufficient, should the number of cases and deaths rise significantly. Testing has also been insufficient. As of the end of May 2020, the country is at level 3 of its phased lockdown approach.

## ABOUT CINDI

CINDI was founded in July 1996 as a multi-sectoral network of over 200 South African civil society agencies (non-governmental organisations, community based organisations, faith based organisations, local and regional government departments).

CINDI champions the rights of vulnerable children and their families by bringing together this strong, diverse network of local organisations to implement a wide range of effective and sustainable programmes for vulnerable children.

Find out more: [www.cindi.org.za](http://www.cindi.org.za)

## PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

### For children and care givers

Following the end of the national lockdown resulting from the COVID-19 crisis CINDI and local partner NGOs Dlananathi, Singakwenza and Jelly Beanz have distributed a visually engaging booklet which focuses upon the mental health of children and care givers as well as some practical tips for coping with the crisis. The content of the booklet is wide-ranging. It includes guidance on COVID-19 symptoms, prevention and testing, as well as mask wearing and instruction on creating masks. It provides advice around coping with stress and worry, and signposts readers to where they can get help. It highlights the topic of child abuse and gives advice around prevention. Finally, it provides ideas for activities to do with children, and includes space for children to create stories or draw pictures about how they are coping with lockdown and the changes in their life. These leaflets will be distributed alongside food parcels to the most vulnerable families in communities, who may not have ready access to the internet.

### For community health workers

CINDI has again collaborated with local NGO Jelly Beanz to create a psychosocial support (PSS) training manual for community health workers who have been on the frontline during this crisis; those involved in testing and tracing for example, and those who will have been working with families where children may be at risk of experiencing violence or abuse. The guide covers topics such as the impact of trauma on, and mental health needs of, children and families during this time. It provides guidance on ways of working with children in the current context. It also provides information about children's different developmental stages, in relation to how that will impact frontline workers' approach to their work. It looks at how workers can support children to deal with illness and loss. Finally it provides advice about how parents and care givers can best support children at this time. This will be complemented by counselling support. CINDI sees potential to develop this resource to provide online training.

## ADVOCACY

CINDI took part in research on social protection in 2015, alongside Family Members Challenging Heights and Uyisenga Ni Imanzi, which has allowed them to advocate more effectively for changes to social grants for children in alternative care.

A network of organisations recently petitioned the Government to use the social grant network to make additional payments to vulnerable families. In April 2020 the Government agreed to increase the child support grant for 6 months to assist vulnerable families across South Africa, so they will now receive additional income through this social protection cash transfer.



## OTHER TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES

- 1 Leaflet: Coping with worry during Covid-19**  
This was adapted from Family Member Conacmi and has been shared with partner NGOs.
- 2 Food parcel drops**  
These go to vulnerable families and include leaflets and children's masks.
- 3 Survey**  
This has been given to community and care giver groups, to find out more about their core concerns at this time. The results help to inform CINDI's programme planning.
- 4 Social grant payments**  
CINDI is monitoring social grant payments to ensure vulnerable families can access the new economic support implemented by the Government (including increased cash transfers for children in foster and kinship care).
- 5 Building networks**  
CINDI works collaboratively with other organisations across networks to support local services for children.
- 6 Child participation**  
CINDI plans to invite children to draw their experiences; this therapeutic tool, adapted from Family Member Paicabi in Chile, will help children to express their feelings.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Family for Every Child is a diverse membership network of civil society organisations based around the world.

How We Care is an innovative platform for those working with children and families, across the globe, to share their practice. Our vision is that through the exchange and learning facilitated by How We Care, organisations' family care practice and programming will be strengthened, with improved outcomes for the children they support.

Sign up here: [www.howwecare.community](http://www.howwecare.community)



Healthy worrying can help us to be prepared...but sometimes we can worry too much” (from CINDI’s booklet for children and care givers).



By practitioners, for practitioners.

