

Eldorado Park and Surrounding Areas Hotspots for Substance Abuse

By Charity Ngalwa
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The scourge of substance abuse and addiction continues in Eldorado Park and surrounding areas of Freedom Park, Kliptown, Klipspruit as well as Slovo Park and has now become a terrifying pandemic.

The abuse of substances remains at the heart of most of the social problems prevalent in the Eldorado Park community and surrounding areas. Some of these social issues are domestic violence, sexual violence, child abuse and neglect, gun violence especially through gang wars and gangsterism as well as school shootings.

The Community of Eldorado Park currently has resource centres running prevention, intervention and treatment programs: These centres are Come Back Mission based in Ext 2, The Substance Abuse Treatment Centre by the Dept of Social Development based in Ext 9 Clinic and South African National Civic Association Eldorado Park Branch based in Ext 6.

According to parents with children who use drugs, there are not enough institutions that offer long-term solutions for the problem because even when get rehabilitated they return to the same environment making relapse easier. "My daughter no longer goes to school and often disappears for days", said one parent who prefers to remain anonymous.

Many parents complain about a lack of support and resources and say this contributes to the escalation of the problems.

The organisations on the other hand say parents do not commit to their children's recovery from addiction and see it as the responsibility of the organisations instead. One SANCA staffer said parents often expect them to perform 'magic' and emphasised that recovery from substance addiction is long which requires all parties including the recovering addict, their family as well as community-based organisations to work together to find long-term solutions.

The Come Back Mission is currently working with partner stakeholders to implement a Substance Abuse Action Program where they select 20 parents with children at risk of substance abuse as well as those who already abuse substances.

During the bimonthly strategy meetings led by the Eldorado Park Community Intervention Group parents shared stories about the impact of the Substance Abuse and Addiction on their families. Each parent was asked to speak on what support they needed. One parent said, "I need counselling and therapy, my 9-year-old son has been recruited to distribute to drugs to his school mates."

Substance abuse and addiction continue to terrorise our vulnerable communities which are already contending with other social problems prevailing in black communities. Will there ever be an end in sight? We can only hope.

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