



Y-TALK

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Empowering Young People for Life, Leadership & Service



Message from NGS - extract from presentation made at World Alliance of YMCAs series by world leaders Session 1.

As we enter the extended shutdown introduced by our President, Cyril Ramaphosa, as a national movement we are discovering who we really are. At national level, the Covid-19 crisis has forced us to innovate in many ways. As the YMCA we have found ourselves spending more time with our strategic partners than before, working on meaningful collaboration with government; churches; ecumenical and other non-government organisations. Covid-19 has forced us back to the world of our founder, George Williams. YMCA was established in a moment of need. It is in such times that innovation is generated; that God gives us visions to respond to moments of human crisis. The spiritual requirement in such times is increased prayer; seeking discernment and wisdom about how to respond as YMCA. The question on everyone's mind is "how do we re-invent ourselves in the light of the Covid-19 crisis?"

The full presentation can be viewed @ <https://www.ymca.int/resilient-ymcas-leaders-talks/>

Local YMCA Response to Covid-19

PMB YMCA

We are continuing with our support for the men's and women's shelters in the Pietermartizburg city centre.

Our work in the shelters is much needed as this is new terrain for everyone. Never would we have imagined a situation where street people were all gathered together under one roof as we all grapple with how best to deal with the situation. Numbers have fluctuated due to people leaving and we now have 27 in the female shelter and 243 in the male shelter. The challenges are many and are complex, often interrelated. At the same time as dealing with basic needs, we have drug withdrawal, mental

illness, emotional trauma release and boredom! What a lot to juggle. But the PMB YMCA team is working well with other organisations to cover all this. One thing we are still finding after a few weeks into lockdown, is lack of understanding among the group housed in the shelters as to and why they are even here.

Imagine a person who hustles and lives on a 10 street area; who is addicted and has say untreated bipolar... now sober, in pain, frustrated and having to get his head around a coronavirus sweeping the world in pandemic proportions. We are there. Doing as much as we can.

Athlone YMCA

When lockdown was extended, we went into action and called in our rehab team to assist with screening and social distancing in Gugulethu, Nyanga and Samora Machel (Oliver Tambo Drive). We quickly mobilized and joined in. Here is our process:

1. Home-based carers are sent out to do screenings in the community. Clients who show symptoms are identified and sent to the testing site.
2. At the testing sites, clients are screened to determine if they have covid-19 symptoms or if they have flu-like symptoms.
3. Individuals with covid-19 symptoms are then tested and educated on the virus and isolation.
4. Their contact lists are also taken prior

to testing.

5. Once results are received, calls are made to the positive case as well as individuals they were in contact with, to monitor symptoms.

So if some of you are closely following the news and government briefings – this is exactly how it is being played out on the ground.

Two community health care workers have been exposed directly and are in self-isolation. One of the residents who volunteers at the Athlone SAPS, is in quarantine at the YMCA.

The risks are real for us. We know this every day when we go out to work. And we do this as we are playing our part.

The Y-Justice programme, funded through Sweden YWCA/YMCA and Swedish Mission Council, has established an Emergency Fund to support Y-Justice programme activities in South Africa.

My experience of YMCA during Lockdown

It's been a pleasure to be in a place with security and reliable facilities during this challenging time. I appreciate the constant information sharing that is practiced here. The space created by the team has been conducive to calm, especially with all the panic in the world. We could improve on the schedules for chores (some chores end up never being done). A more balanced roster, where work is shared more equally would be beneficial (some guys I think are overburdened!). Some rules about, for example, when does one need to shower after being outside need to be a little more clear and communicated to everyone. Otherwise, all seem well. Mutual respect is there, and a spirit of family.

Thanks. — TREVOR NGEBO

My experience of YMCA as a YMCA resident during the Covid-19 shutdown in Athlone.

YOUTH: Phumla Khuzwayo, PMB YMCA

Hello everyone! I would like to share some of my experiences along with colleagues at the PMB YMCA. We are supporting in the 2 shelters in PMB, one male and one female. Today I will focus on the female – some are street people, others are sex workers. We spend a lot of time talking about issues that affect them. They tell heart-breaking stories of how they got into this life of street living and sex work. For most, they say they left home to follow a man. Some left babies behind. They are reliving this pain because most of them buried it or constantly push these thoughts away through drugs. They tell heart-breaking stories of violence, rape, exploitation and fear on the streets. Again, the pain is raw as they are only allowing themselves to feel it now. They have space now to feel. To remember. But also to laugh, relax, think about themselves and the future. So we really focus on how to adapt to change, interpersonal skills, appreciating themselves and each other and us as their support. We play board games, enjoy edutainment like dance. And we talk.



Phumla is the Youth Justice Coordinator at PMB YMCA

YOUTH: Nicole Morgan, Cape Flats YMCA

Hi everyone. It is day 19 of lockdown and I am chilling at home with my family.

When I look outside, all I see are people breaking the rules. Kids are playing, teenagers are roaming the streets, elderly walking around. People are looking everywhere for places to buy cigarettes and wine as if it's all they need in this tough time. People don't realise how serious these things are.

Another issue is that it's only day 19 and people are worried that they are not going to have enough to eat for the next few days.

The high prices that people are paying for wine, illegally, is ridiculous, because that money could help with food for whole families to survive this crisis. But that is addiction. Or for others, is it that they don't care?

My experience with the YMCA has taught me that I have to look deeper into the way I live and that poverty causes more poverty. I also learnt of ways to try and change the way people live by giving a helping hand in our

communities. Most of all, I have learnt how to deal with change and adapt. This is so important right now. We have to keep ourselves safe and we must stand together to fight this pandemic right now on earth.



Lockdown Poetry

Blessing, UKZN Student YMCA

Lockdown is not a permanent barrier,

we have a bridge. All doors may seem shut and locked but pretty soon, we will put that lock down. So defeat it shall be, but we are not prepared to lose. So wash down your sorrows, sanitise your emotions, give love and laughter; that's the medicine.

Dear everyone, I know this is not the right time to talk about life... Cause everyone is facing a deadly knife, pointed towards the chest, about to rip those cages open and aimed at the heart, so we all gonna die? No. We not gonna die as yet but this is our time. Let's show the world we are stronger... We can fight this... Enhance the sense of hygiene, remain isolated. Though it may trigger some depression and loneliness but... Till this storm is over, infected or not, we are still affected. It's all around us, next to you, miles away whatever the case might be, But if we remain ignorant, one of us is gonna be the next case. So give me some space, to express myself. No wait come closer. I want to infect you with words of poetry. The world is giving us a chance to reconcile with the good we lost. The least we can do, is to list our goals, prepare our fists, stand on our knuckles and fight.

Exercise your mind, shape your personality, sharpen all your edges.

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Check this out on YouTube

<https://youtu.be/TW7uXtSt730>

How you feel inside
is also important

#CopingWithCOVID:
Session 2

If you are feeling lonely, depressed or anxious...please got to SADAG @ www.sadag.org

