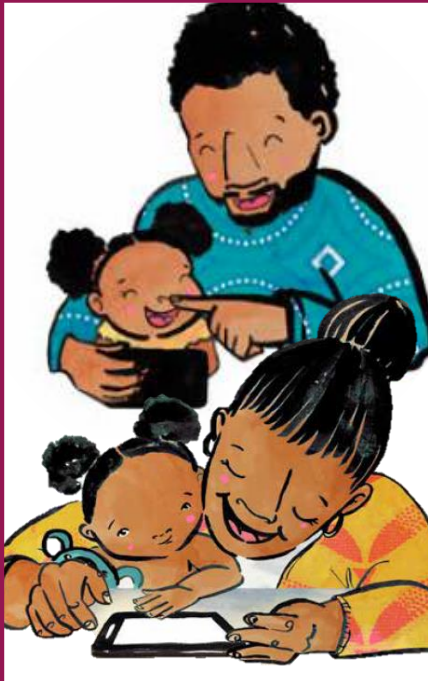


Sharing Stories:

A digital intervention to support parents and caregivers of young children in the COVID-19 era



The **LEGO** Foundation

Marguerite Marlow

Institute for Life Course Health Research

Stellenbosch University, South Africa

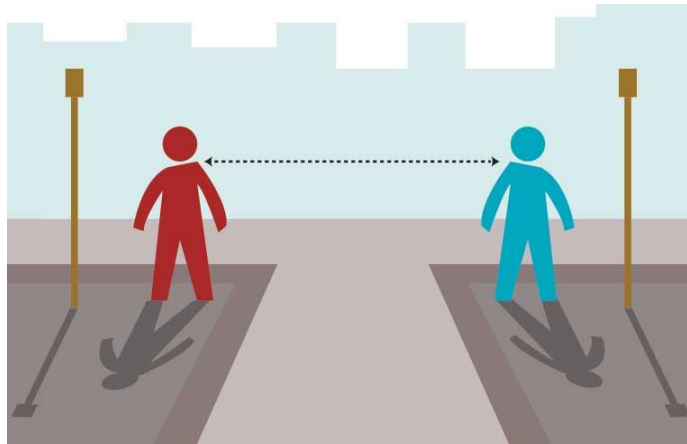
Parenting in a pandemic



Challenges:

- lack of childcare
- keeping children safe
- keeping children stimulated
- dealing with loss of income
- coping with household stress

How to support parents?



The Sharing Stories Intervention:



A fully **digital** group-based intervention, delivered over **WhatsApp**

Parent engagement through digital books



Support for caregiver's mental wellbeing

It's okay to ask for help!

It is not always easy to manage stress, worry, or sadness by yourself. If you feel stuck, know that it is okay to ask for help.

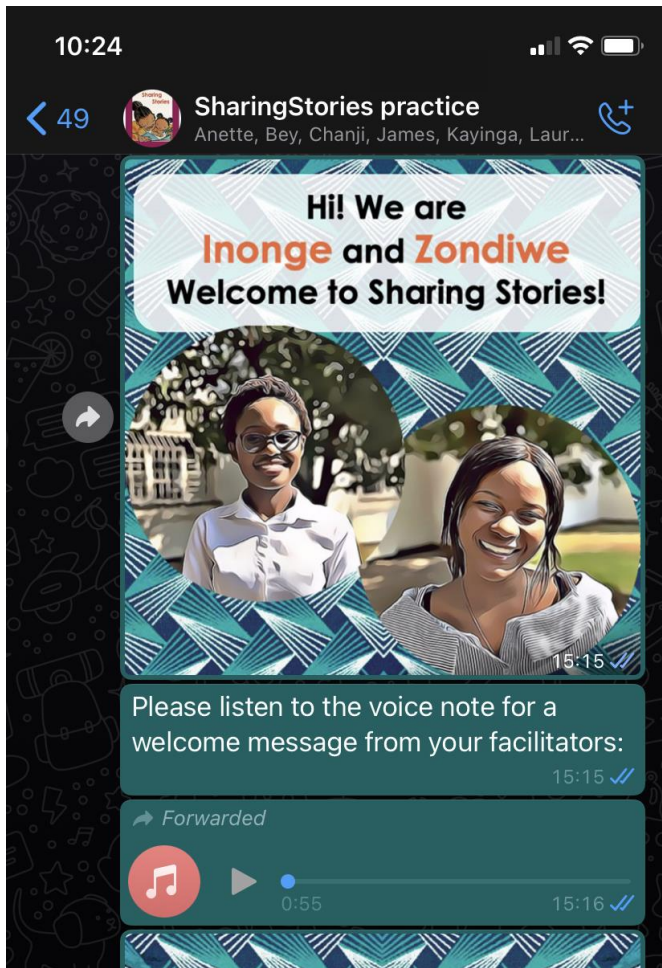
Talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling, and they may be able to help you. Sometimes just by talking with someone else, you might feel better.

The infographic is framed with a colorful, patterned border. It features two illustrations: one of a person with a sad expression and a speech bubble containing a cloud, and another of two people talking, with a speech bubble between them.

Delivery:

Group-based, delivered over **six weeks**

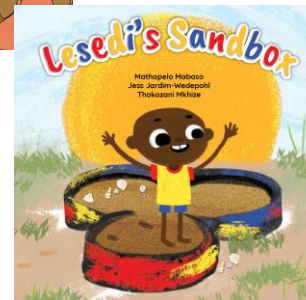
Caregivers are enrolled into **WhatsApp groups** (30-40 parents per group),



A weekly WhatsApp **group chat session** is used to deliver the intervention content, complimented by recap messages throughout the week



Caregivers receive two **digital picture books** a week

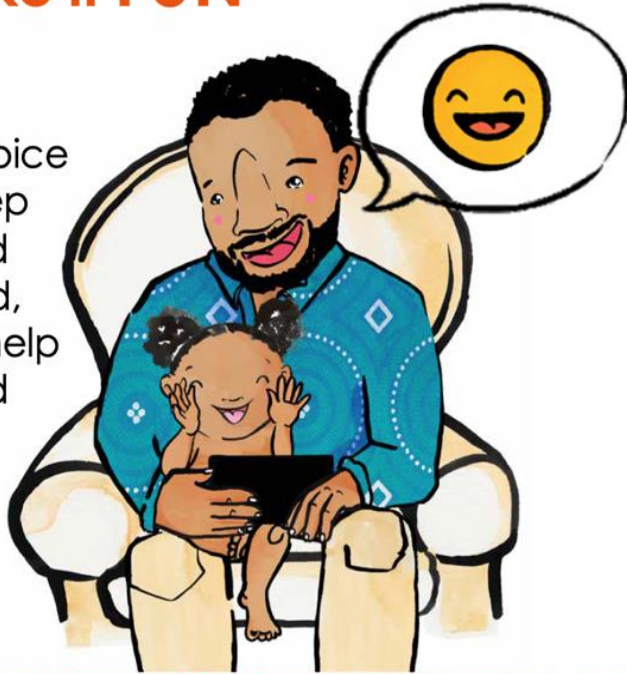


Playful, responsive parenting:

When sharing stories...

Use a lively, playful voice
to make it **FUN**

A lively voice helps keep your child interested, and will help your child learn.



When sharing stories...

Respond in a positive way!

Kindness helps
children feel safe
and confident, which
helps them learn



Examples of WhatsApp intervention content:



Watch this video for an example of a lively voice. Even if you might not understand the language, you will be able to hear from the sound of her voice how to make it lively and playful.



Let's hear from the group! Do you think your child will enjoy this activity?



participants
respond



Learning something new can be a bit scary and even intimidating while at the same time exciting. How are you feeling about trying this out?



participants
respond



Do you have any questions about how to sit, or how to use a lively voice?



participants
respond

Playful, responsive parenting:

When sharing stories...

Follow your child's lead.



Take notice of what your child is interested in and talk about it.



When sharing stories...

Mimic the actions in the story with your child



So, if the book characters are hugging, you could give your child a hug.

Playful, responsive parenting:

When sharing stories...

Talk about the feelings you see in the pictures

Use the pictures to talk to your child about different kinds of feelings and why people might feel a certain way



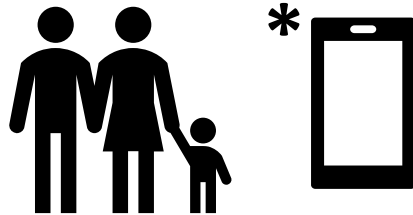
Quality time is when you:

- Focus your attention on your child
- Take turns with your child
- Praise and encourage your child
- **Have fun together!**



Program development and testing:

 **Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania**



**Parents and
caregivers of young
children (9mo-3yrs)**

*access to smartphone



child language and
socio-emotional
development



positive, responsive
parenting



parenting stress,
mental health and
wellbeing