

Addressing Violent Discipline by Parents in Post-War Kosovo

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The 1998-1999 genocide committed against Albanian Kosovars in Kosovo resulted in major social disruptions and high rates of trauma among survivors. Parents who have been exposed to traumatic events throughout their lives have an increased likelihood of using harsh and punitive discipline with their children. UNICEF's 2013-14 Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey found that 61.4% of Kosovar children younger than 15 had experienced physically or psychologically aggressive discipline by caregivers in the previous month. We assessed the impact of Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting among a sample of 121 parents (94% mothers; 6% fathers) in Kosovo. The program aims to increase parents' knowledge of child development, empathy, and skills in resolving conflict with their children non-punitively. At post-test, most parents reported that the program will help them to: use less physical punishment (81.9%); understand their children's development (90.7%); communicate better with their children (95.9%); understand their children's feelings (92.4%); control their anger (91.9%); and build stronger relationships with their children (96.7%). Most (90.7%) were satisfied with the program and their support for physical punishment decreased significantly from pre- to post-test. The results suggest that the program may be helpful in reducing violence among parents deeply affected by trauma.