



## STORIES of HOPE

### SOUTH AFRICA

#### Preventing HIV by Challenging Gender Norms



Nkonzo Khanyile, a participant in the PEPFAR-supported Men as Partners program, serves as a role model to his younger brother, Mzwakhe.

*Nkonzo explained, "If every man in South Africa can adopt the attitude of Men as Partners, it will help big-time. ... It has made me brave enough to step out of the box."*



The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR) supports the most diverse portfolio of HIV/AIDS prevention strategies of any international partner, including the ABC approach – Abstain, Be faithful, correct and consistent use of Condoms – to prevent sexual transmission. The ABC approach, developed in Africa, is an evidence-based, public health approach that provides information so people can decide how to protect themselves.

With support from the Emergency Plan, the Men as Partners program in South Africa uses ABC messages with a special emphasis on reaching men and challenging behaviors that put women at risk. Rabu Raletsemo, from Men as Partners, explained, "Most of the time when people look at HIV/AIDS programs, they associate them with women. So, by challenging gender stereotypes, for instance to say to men, 'It's a health risk to have multiple partners.' If men understand that they have a role to play in challenging gender stereotypes, [that] they have a role to play by understanding the importance of maybe usage of condoms, or promoting abstinence, that helps in reducing the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS."

Nkonzo Khanyile, a 25-year-old man from Soweto, is a living testament to the Men as Partners program. After attending a workshop presented by the program, Nkonzo's outlook on HIV/AIDS, gender and relationships changed dramatically. Nkonzo serves as a peer educator for Men as Partners, discussing the risks of unprotected sex and multiple sexual partners. He explained, "If every man in South Africa can adopt the attitude of Men as Partners, it will help big-time. It will help in the reduction of HIV/AIDS. It will also help the reduction of domestic violence. It has made me brave enough to step out of the box." Nkonzo was recently promoted to serve as the National Youth Trainer for EngenderHealth South Africa, the organization overseeing the implementation of the Men as Partners program.

**The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief**

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