

# Group Support Psychotherapy for Depression Treatment: The Mediating Role of Stigma Reduction



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# Conflicts of Interest:

- None

# Outline of the presentation

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-  **The Challenge of HIV Stigma and Discrimination**
-  **The Potential of Psychotherapy in Stigma Reduction**
-  **Our Approach:** Harnessing Cultural Strengths
-  **The Cluster Randomized Trial of Group Support Psychotherapy**
-  **The Mediating Role of Stigma Reduction**
-  **Implications for health service delivery in Uganda and Beyond**

# The Challenge of HIV Stigma and Discrimination

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- ✚ Despite medical advances, stigma and discrimination persists in Africa
- ✚ Individuals face isolation, depression, and decreased quality of life
- ✚ This affects social interactions and adherence to treatment protocols.
- ✚ Stigma permeates other settings - education, workplace, justice system
- ✚ Addressing HIV-related stigma is essential for attaining SDGs & ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

# The Potential of Psychotherapy in Stigma Reduction

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✚ Psychotherapy is a potential avenue to address and alleviate this stigma.

**Corrigan et al et al.2018**

✚ However, the application of psychotherapy faces unique challenges in Africa

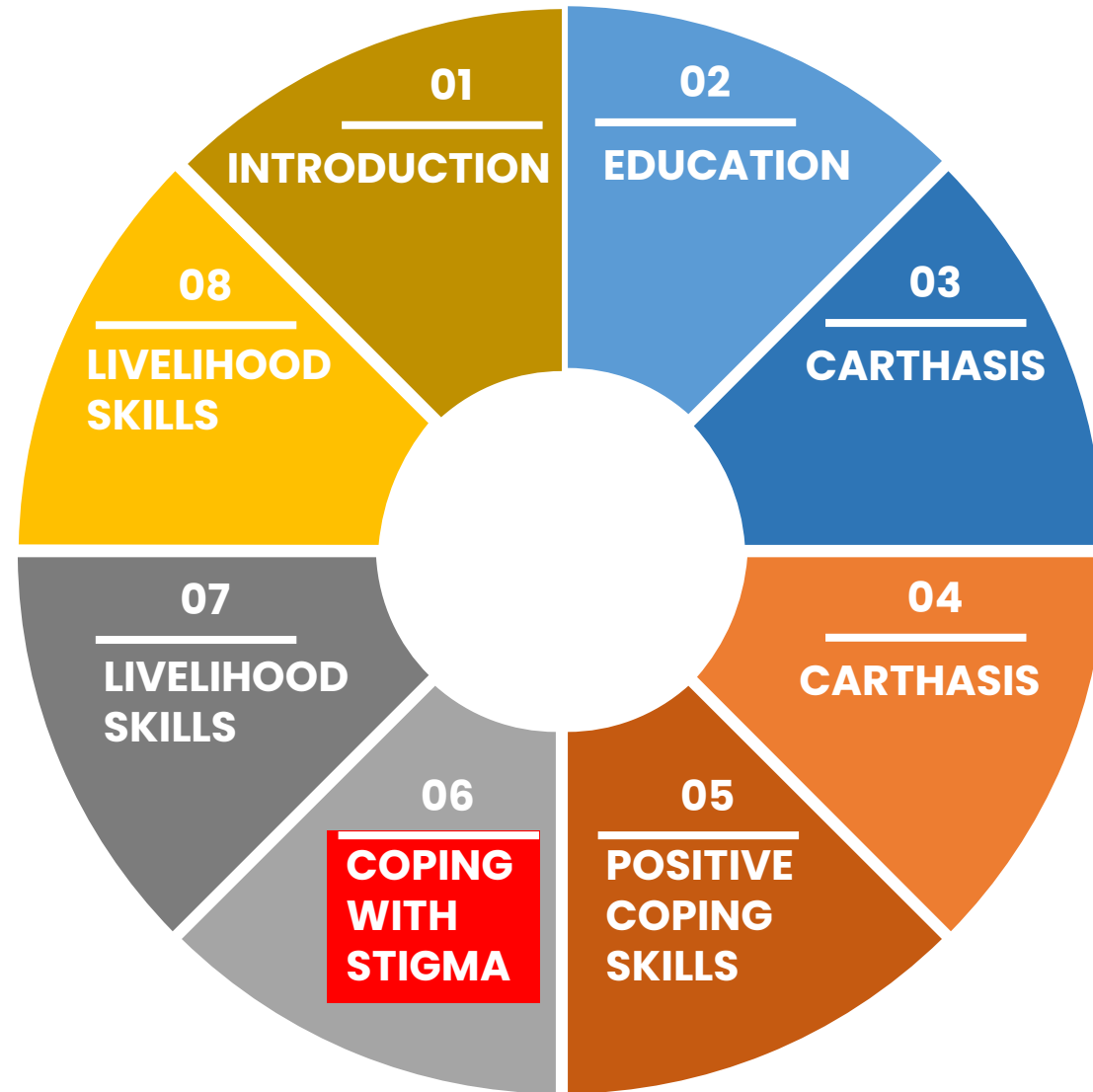
✚ Cultural misconceptions about mental health, a shortage of trained therapists, & structural barriers, Inadequate funding & policy gaps

✚ Yet, opportunities also exist.

✚ Policy reforms, community education, and investment in training and infrastructure to make psychotherapy a viable option in Africa

**Nakimuli-Mpungu et al;2023**

# Our Approach: Group Support **Psychotherapy**:



- Increase awareness & understanding of stigma and discrimination
- Provide support through shared emotional support, coping strategies

- Income generating skills development empower group members
- Challenge negative thoughts to foster positive identity formation

# The Cluster Randomised Trial:



Thirty clusters (HIV clinics)



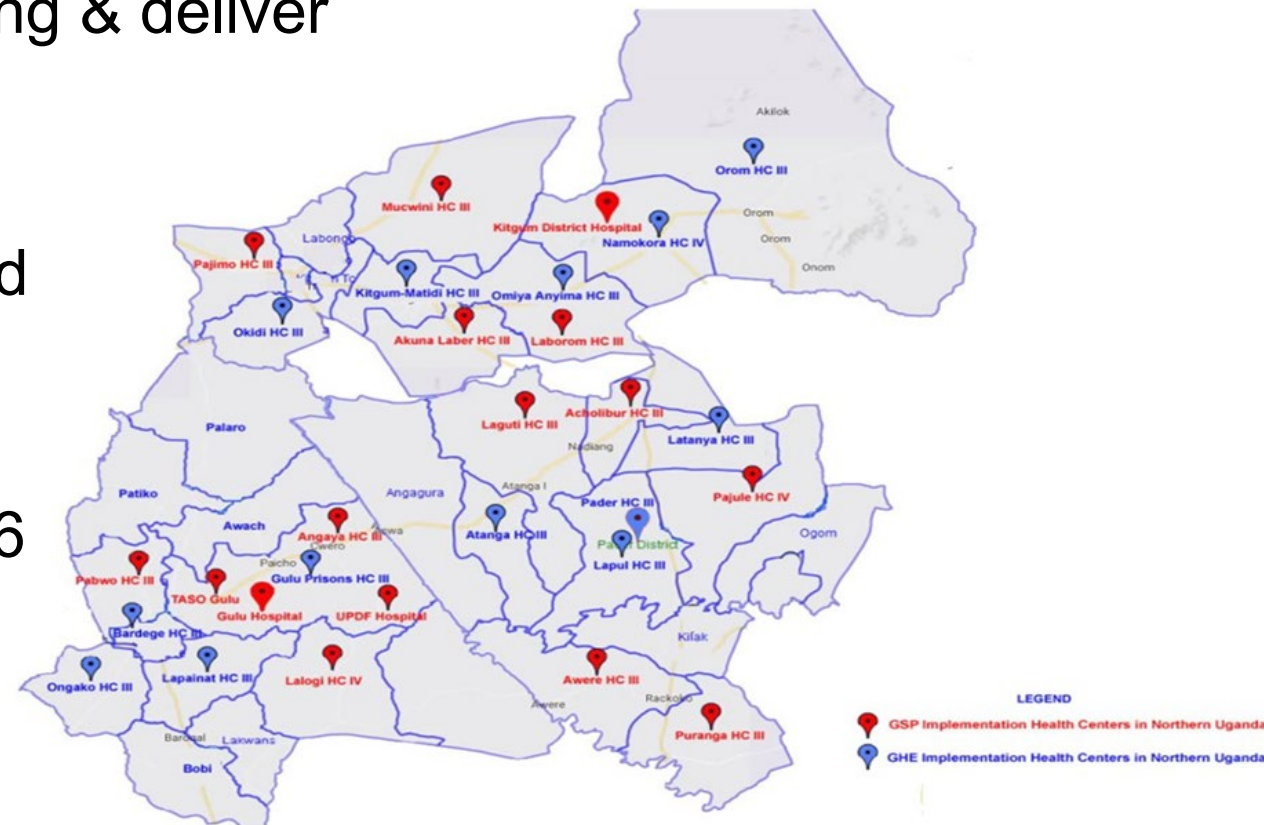
Randomly assigned to receive training & deliver GSP(N=15) or GHE(N=15)



Both interventions were implemented over 8-weeks.



Follow-up data was collected every 6 months for a period of two years



# Secondary Analyses

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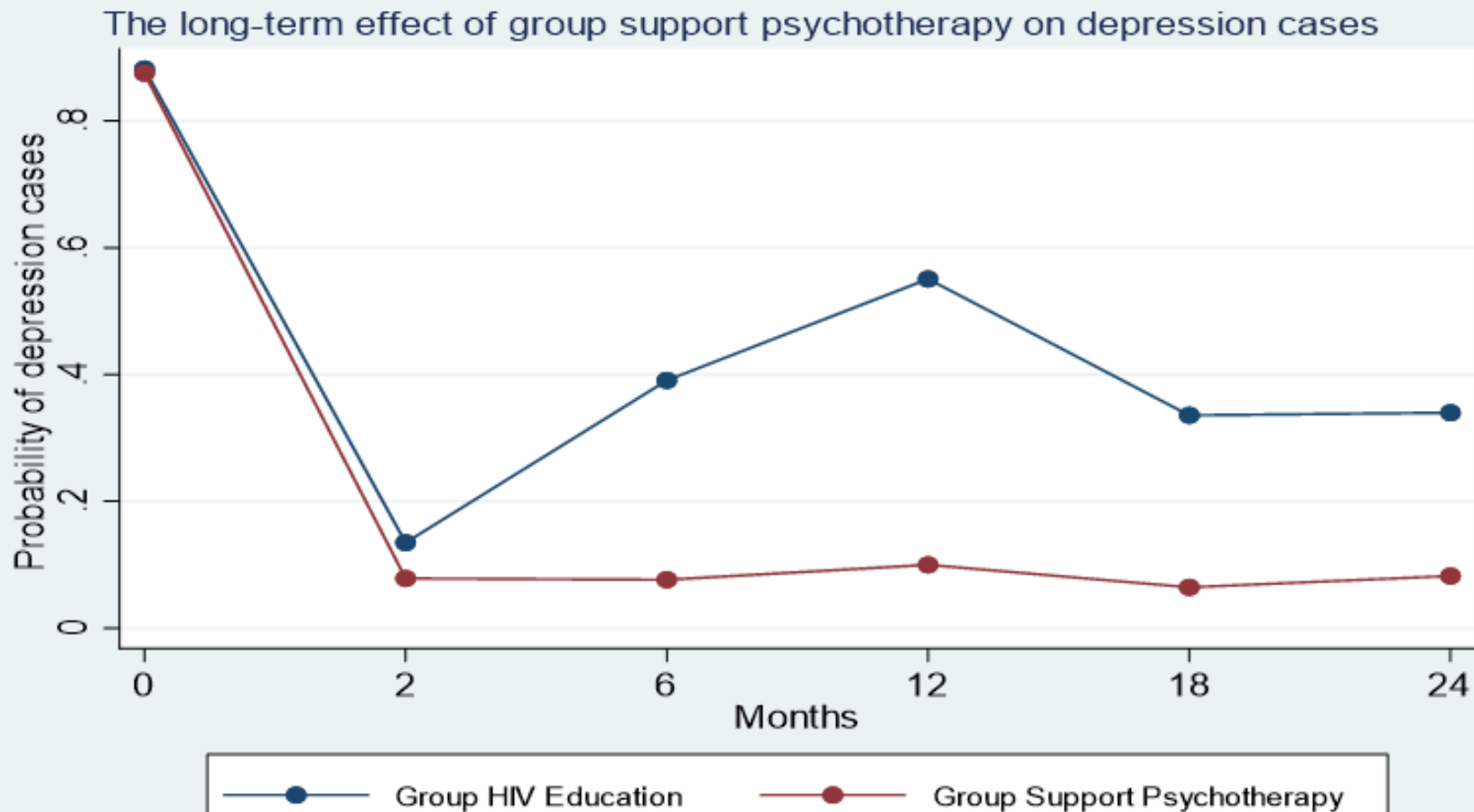
Examine the Mediating Role of Stigma Reduction in the impact of Group Support Psychotherapy on Depression



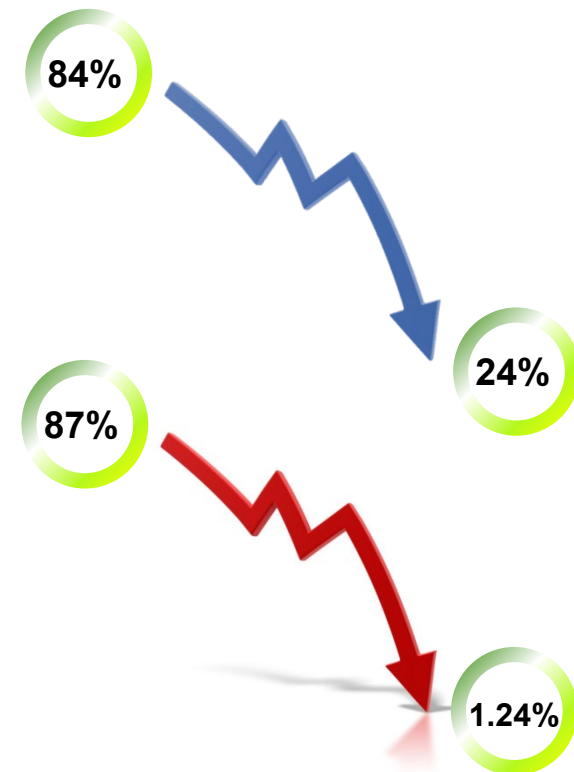
# Baseline data(N=1140)

	High stigma levels (N= 657)	Low stigma Levels (N=483)	Chi-square or T-test	P-value
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>	342(52.05)	270(55.9)	1.65	0.20
<b>Female</b>	315(47.95)	213(44.1)		
<b>Depression scores( Mean, SD)</b>	14.0(3.97)	13.13(3.88)	-3.07	<b>0.002</b>
<b>Function scores( Mean, SD)</b>	4.20(2.79)	6.09(2.75)	10.83	<b>&lt;0.0001</b>
<b>Suicide risk scores(Mean, SD)</b>	5.03(1.53)	4.51(1.43)	-5.74	<b>&lt;0.0001</b>
<b>AUDIT scores (Mean, SD)</b>	6.58(10.38)	4.79(7.53)	-3.17	<b>0.001</b>
<b>Social Support scores(Mean,SD)</b>	39.16(20.59)	50.09(16.96)	9.42	<b>&lt;0.0001</b>
<b>Self-esteem scores (Mean, SD)</b>	11.01(8.15)	17.39(6.30)	14.16	<b>&lt;0.0001</b>

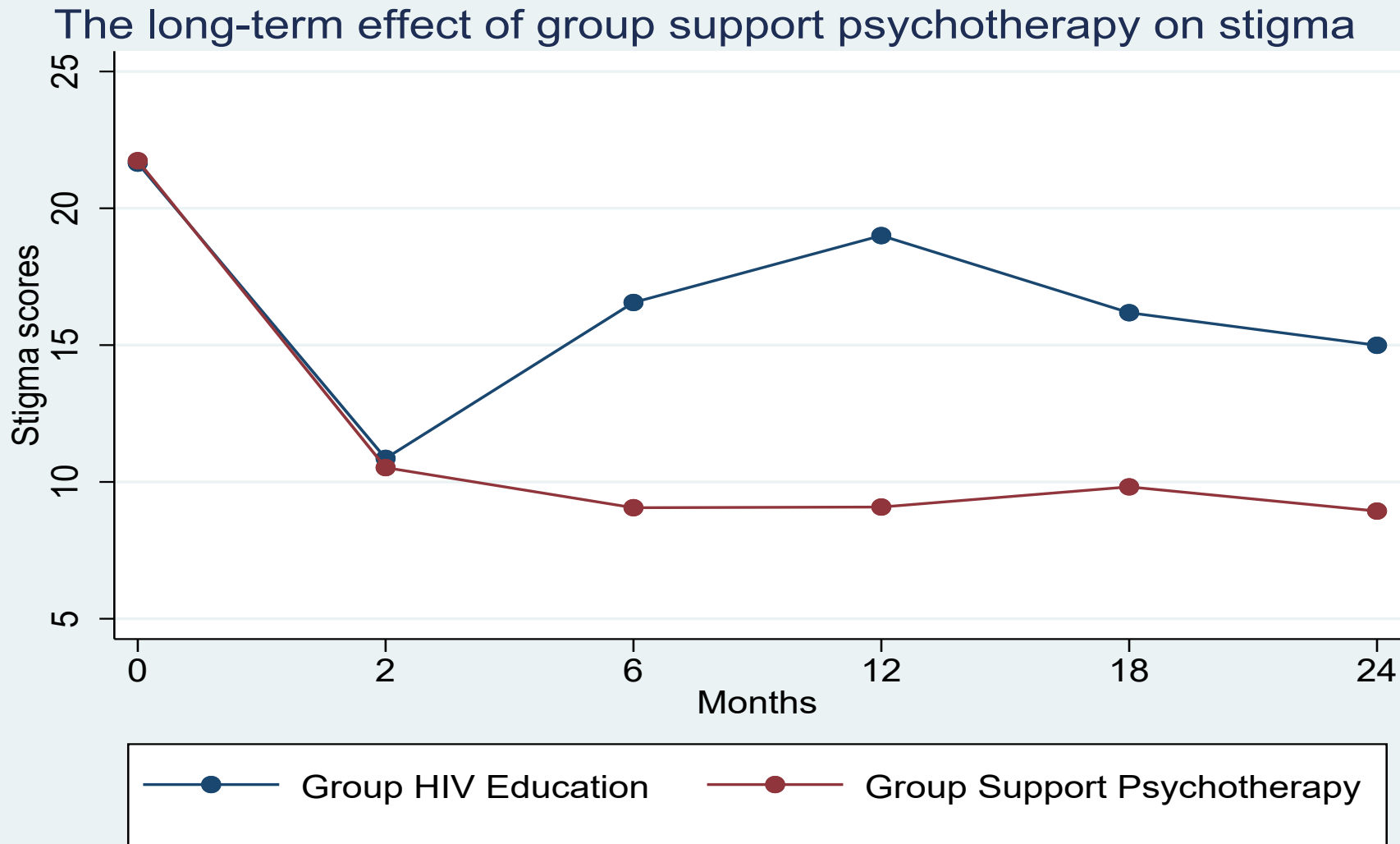
# GSP Treats Mild to Moderate Depression:



99% are depression free at 6 months and 24 months



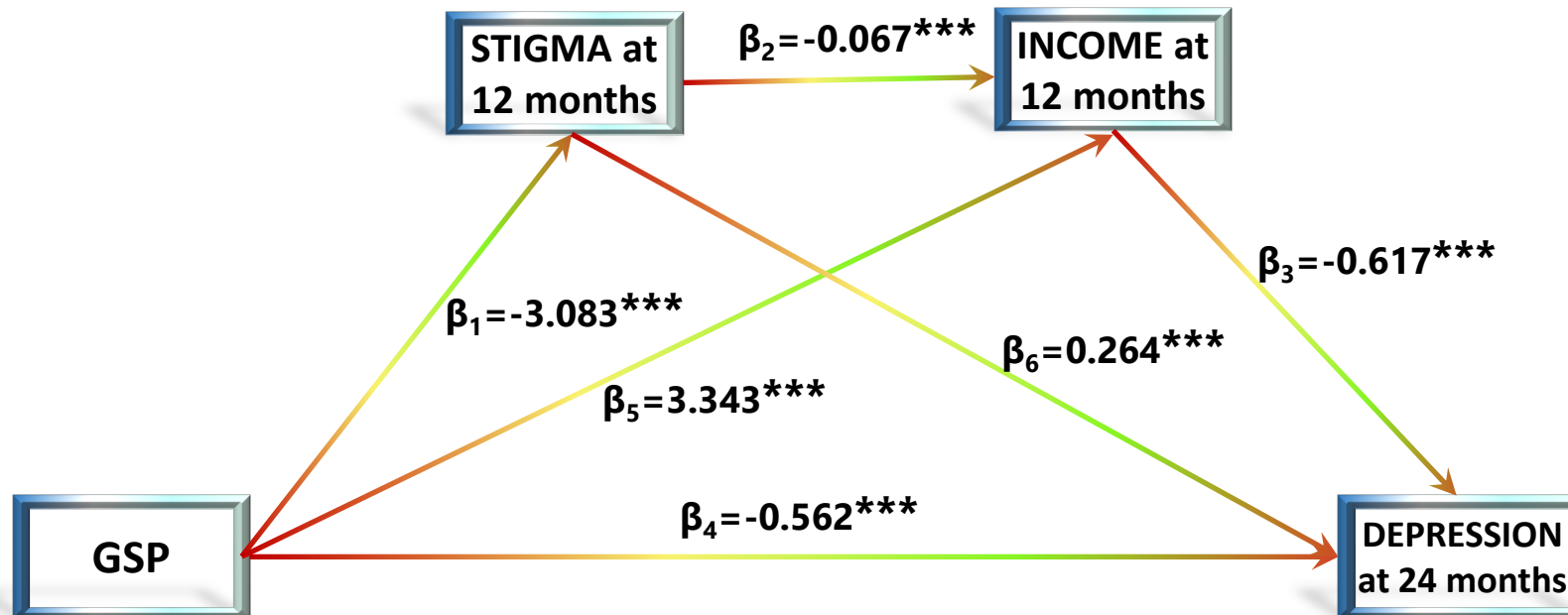
# GSP Leads to Stigma Reduction:



Mean stigma scores at 0 months and 24 months



# Healing depression through stigma reduction & income generation



# Mediators of GSP effects on Depression

	$\beta$	S.E	95%CI	P-Value
<b>Intervention → Stigma(T2) → Depression(T3)</b>				
Indirect effects through Stigma	-1.289	0.108	-1.501 - -1.076	<0.001
Total effects	-1.420	0.187	-1.791 - -1.058	<0.001
<b>Intervention → Income generation (T2) → Depression(T3)</b>				
Indirect effects through income generation	-2.088	0.098	-2.281- -1.895	<0.001
Total effects	-2.226	0.192	-2.602- -1.849	<0.001
<b>Intervention → Stigma(T2) → Income generation(T2) → Depression(T3)</b>				
Indirect effects through stigma & Income	-3.370	0.122	-3.619 - -3.135	<0.001
Total indirect effects	-4.301	0.173	-4.641 - -3.961	<0.001
Total effects	-4.440	0.245	-4.921 - -3.959	<0.001

# Plausible Explanations of GSP effects

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- Enhanced Social Support
- Shared experiences leading to mutual understanding and empathy
- Enhanced coping skills empower PLWH to manage stigma-induced stress and anxiety
- GSP helps in reaffirming the participants' self-worth and identity beyond their HIV status.
- Enhanced knowledge reduces self-stigma and fosters self-acceptance, contributing to improved mental health.
- Engagement in social and productive activities diminishes the focus on stigma
- The safe space created by GSP allows for the expression of emotions and challenges related to stigma without judgment.

# Implications for Health Service Delivery

Addressing depression contributes to better HIV care & management

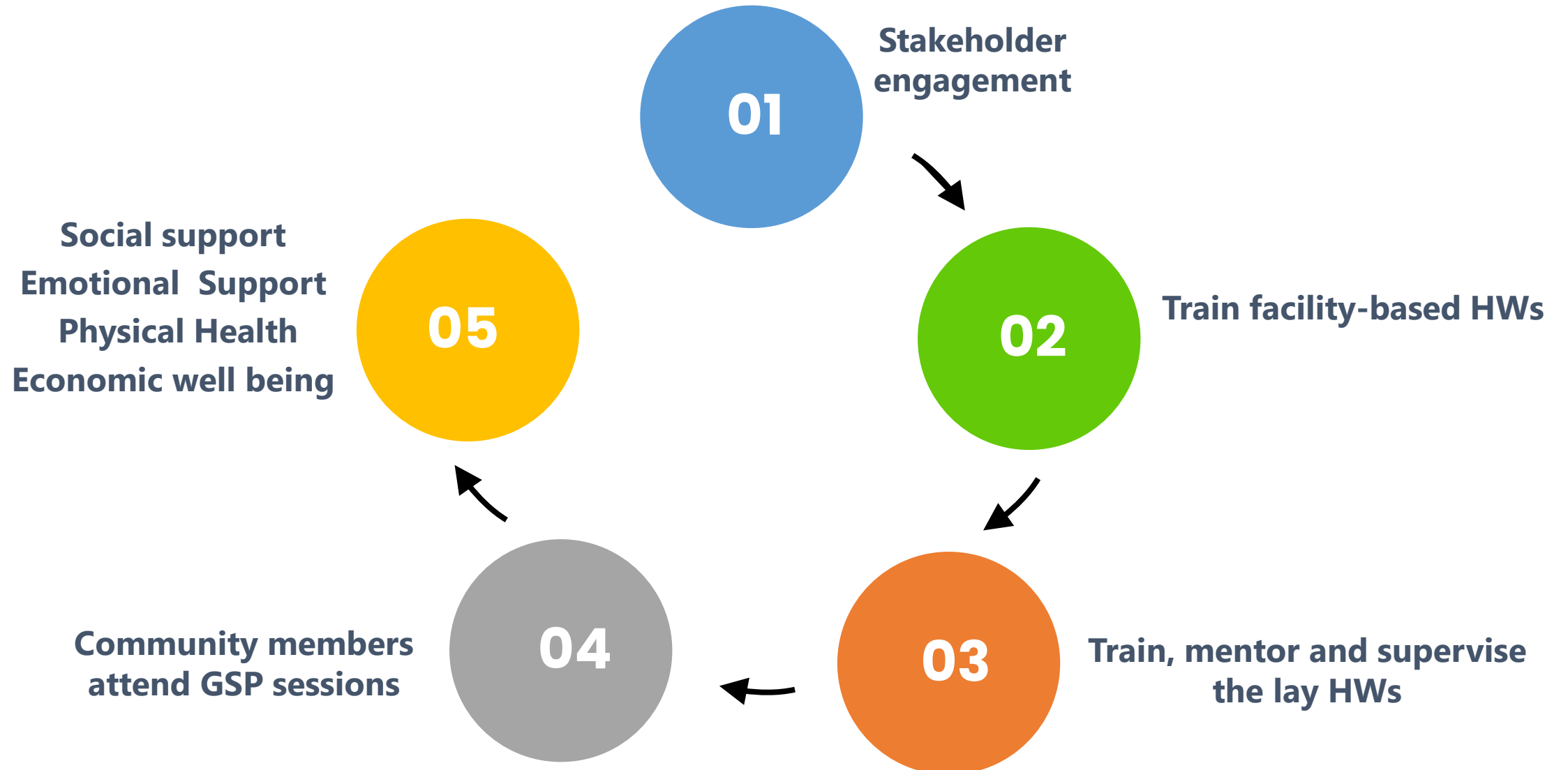
GSP should be integrated in standard HIV Care Protocols & Chronic disease management

The importance of a supportive stigma free environment for PLWH

Mental health capacity building for all health workers is a must

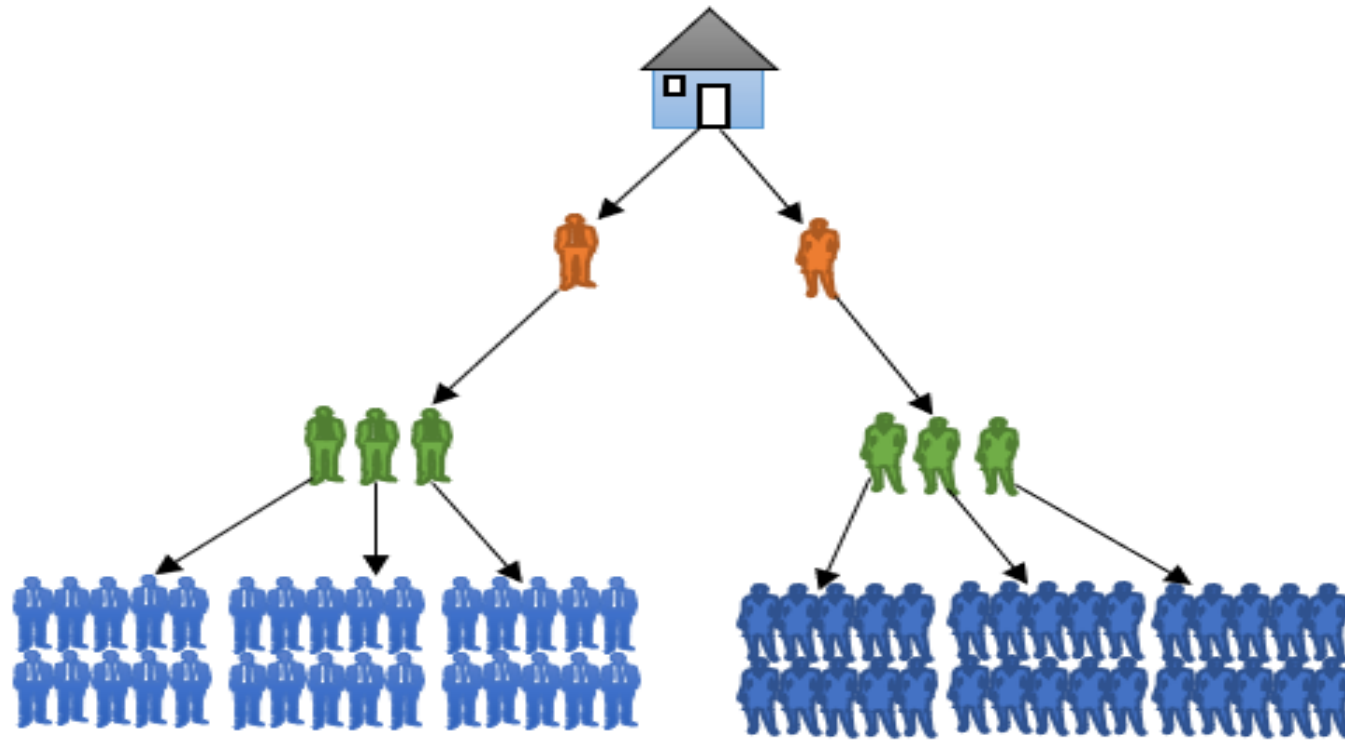
The importance of income generation in the African context to create economically vibrant communities

# Theory of Change:





# Train the Trainer Approach:



## KEY



- Health worker







- Lay health worker



- Client



- Health center

One  treats 50  (clients) in a year therefore, the Six  treat 300  (clients) in a year

# Competence based Curriculum

Competence Domain	Knowledge	Skills	Attitude
Initial Contact & Rapport Building	Describe basic communication skills required for effective Counselling	Applies Principles such as active listening	Able to express a warm non – judgemental attitude
Screening	Describe characteristics of depression	Performs screening to distinguish mild from severe depression	Appreciates the usefulness of screening
Intervention delivery	Describes how GSP works to prevent depression	Applies Intervention techniques for mitigating depression	Expresses confidence during delivery of intervention
Self Care	Able to identify signs of personal distress	Applies self – care principles	Able to stay calm and confidently address strong release of emotions during sessions

# Lessons Learnt:



**Selection of  
health workers  
is critical for  
successful  
implementation**



**Support  
supervision  
and  
mentorship  
facilitates  
delivery of  
group sessions**



**Health workers  
are very busy  
and have a huge  
work load**

# Way forward:

## ONLINE GROUP SUPPORT PSYCHOTHERAPY COURSE

Empowering health workers & lay people to conduct in-person or virtual group therapy

**19TH-30TH JUNE, 2023**

**07:00 PM - 9:00 PM**



**CONTACT: [admin@seek-gsp.org](mailto:admin@seek-gsp.org)**

## ABOUT THE BOOK

This book stands as a comprehensive guide to the intricacies of group support psychotherapy. Delving deep into its theoretical foundations, the book meticulously outlines the structure and dynamics of this therapeutic approach. It does not merely stop at explaining the conceptual background; it serves as a practical roadmap for group therapists. Each session is elaborated upon, detailing the content to be covered, the methodologies to employ, and the approach to take, ensuring that therapists have a clear path to follow.

Furthermore, the book emphasizes the pivotal role of participants in the therapeutic journey. Beyond the confines of each group session, it provides directives on what is expected of participants, ensuring continuity in the healing process. This element ensures that individuals are actively engaged, not just during sessions, but also in the intervals, fostering a holistic approach to healing and well-being.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr. Etheldreda Nakimuli-Mpungu stands out as a distinguished Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Makerere University in Uganda. With a primary emphasis on developing culturally tailored psychotherapy for HIV patients battling depression, she pioneered a cost-effective group support psychotherapy initiative. This ground-breaking program not only heightened medication adherence but also facilitated better viral suppression among its participants.

Her commendable efforts on the global stage have garnered her significant accolades, such as the 2016 Elsevier Foundation Award and Uganda's National Independence Medal of Honor. Furthermore, her contributions were spotlighted when she was listed among BBC's 100 Most Inspiring and Influential Women in 2020. It's also noteworthy that in 2021, her group-support psychotherapy approach was endorsed by the World Health Organization, being highlighted as an African Mental Health Innovation deserving of broader implementation.

Educationally, Dr. Nakimuli-Mpungu's prowess is evident in her qualifications – she has a medical degree, a Master of Medicine in Psychiatry, and a PhD in psychiatric epidemiology. In 2023, her expertise was further acknowledged when she was welcomed onto the WPA Psychotherapy Section Executive Committee. Additionally, she proudly represents Uganda on the World Federation of Psychotherapy Council.



HEALING TOGETHER

ETHELDREDA NAKIMULI - MPUNGU

# HEALING TOGETHER

A GUIDE TO GROUP SUPPORT PSYCHOTHERAPY (GSP)



ETHELDREDA NAKIMULI - MPUNGU, PHD

# Way Forward

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1

Build mental health capacity of health workers in other African countries

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Scaling GSP to other African countries

2

Evaluating tele-support psychotherapy for youth

3

Conduct similar studies in young people living with HIV


4

Engage with World Federation of Psychotherapy

# Conclusion

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 In conclusion, our research urges us to reorganize healthcare as a more integrated, holistic endeavor.

 Addressing mental health issues like depression and stigma is not optional but an integral part of Holistic Health Care.

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# Thank You





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