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Early Childhood Program to promote good family mental health and well-being across the life course

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By 2020, maternal depression will be the leading cause of disability among women globally (WHO, 2018). Mental health problems in pregnancy and following childbirth are roughly twice as common in low income countries as they are in high income countries (Fisher J, Cabral de Mello M, Patel V, et al, 2012). There are huge economic and human costs attached to a global failure to take action (Global Alliance for Maternal Mental Health, 2018). Untreated maternal mental health problems can have a wide range of effects on women, their children, partners and significant others (WHO, 2018). Advances in research on how mental health across the life course is influenced by parental mental health and the parent/carer – infant relationship has led to perinatal and infant mental health being a global health priority (WHO, 2018; UNICEF, 2017).

The Mashonaland east province under Goromonzi district is a pre-urban and a rural setting in Zimbabwe where mental illness is not well understood.

SPANS was set up to address these issues and we undertake to:

- Educate parents and caregivers about the importance of good parental and infant mental health
- Offer early child care mental health consultation and promotion for families
- Identify parental and infant mental health problems early via screening families in the first 3 months of booking their pregnancy