Programme Name: heCareZA

heCareZA Social Media Analytics Report 4

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Introduction

This report aims to generate a deeper understanding of gender discrimination through an analysis of public social media. In it, we provide an overview of our research into the online conversation about men and women in South Africa. The findings discussed in this report are shared with other researchers, practitioners and digital activists to inform policy and practice. They are also used by the heCareZA programme to engage men in self-reflection and healing through creative communications and dialogue facilitation. The long term goal of the heCareZA programme is to engage with thousands of men and support them to effectively promote gender equality, dismantle the cycle of gender discrimination and curtail the perpetration of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) through online and offline dialogue facilitation.

The development of masculinity in the digital era is an area of immense interest, the use of memes, sharing of content from influencer accounts and other forms of online content may have real world implications on men's conceptualisations of masculinity and subsequently their behaviour (Shefer & Ratele, 2023).

We describe our research process, including the creation, testing and refinement of an online research query to be used as a benchmark in our ongoing social media comparative analysis. Relying on quantitative and qualitative research findings, this report is the latest instalment in a series of reports written in support of the heCareZA programme. We use data metrics to provide a high-level overview of the broad conversation about the relationships between men and women in South Africa. Through the exploration of this data, our team identified three focus areas for a content deep dive: (1) parenting, (2) transactional sex, and (3) consent.

To support the heCareZA programme, opportunities to engage are also identified and a summary of findings is presented.

The primary source of data for this report was sourced from the social media platform, Twitter. Recent estimates drawn from Twitter's advertisement reports in early 2022 indicate that 2.85 million South Africans are active on the social media platform.[1]

Trigger Warning: This report contains sensitive content, such as discussions of sexual violence and abuse, which may be triggering to readers.

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[1] https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-south-africa

heCareZA Programme Overview

The programme is aimed at men and focuses on disrupting the narrative that perpetuates harmful gender attitudes, social norms and standards. We know that "hurt people, hurt people" (attributed to Charles Eads, 1959[2]). Accordingly, rather than judging men or alienating them through hostile engagement, we focus on deepening our understanding of their experiences and of gender discrimination through online social media in South Africa. Moreover, we harness these platforms as dynamic spaces to foster relationships with men through online dialogue and to engage them as allies in order to reduce gender discrimination and violence. The first step in this transformative process is to conduct in-depth online research to investigate conversations about the interactions between men and women taking place on social media in South Africa. This knowledge will inform our future work that engages men.

Findings Summary

The points below provide a summary of what is contained in the report:

- The report provides an overview of the volume, engagement, and peaks in the conversation, as well as the top themes and keywords that emerged.
- The conversation remained relatively stable in relation to previous reporting periods, although there was a notable peak in mentions towards the end of the month.
- The report identifies four peaks in the mention[3] volume, with the highest peak occurring on June 28. This peak was driven by retweets of tweets by influencer accounts and focused on themes such as women's accomplishments and beauty, controversial figures and incidents, social media discussions, posts about missing persons and sexual offences, and general statements and wishes.
- Topics around exploitation, health, discrimination, misogyny and love resonated with users during the reporting period, evidenced by heavy engagement.
- Additionally, the report delves into specific content deep-dives, including parenting and issues of discipline as abuse, transactional sex, and consent. It explores real-life examples, reactions, and perspectives surrounding these sensitive topics, highlighting both negative and nuanced sentiments expressed by social media users.
- The research report provides a comprehensive analysis of the social media conversation between men and women in South Africa, shedding light on key themes, influential accounts, and public sentiments.

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[2] https://slate.com/culture/2019/09/hurt-people-hurt-people-quote-origin-hustlers-phrase.html
[3] Mention: A piece of web-based content that matches the keyword terms defined in your query string or posted to/from a social channel. This could be anything from a tweet to a news webpage to a comment on a YouTube video.

It offers insights into the dynamics and prevalent issues within the online discourse, particularly regarding gender-related discussions and the presence of misogynistic content.

- A key insight is that a large number of people may consider marriage to be an incentive-based transaction that can financially negatively impact a person. Online conversations containing views about marriage can function as a gateway into conversations around misogynistic views.
- A number of influencers appear to be making use of content that engages people to grow their followership. It appears that controversy such as sparking a Twar (Twitter war) attracts engagement, so making controversial statements may be being used as a deliberate tactic of some influencers. This includes producing content which contains misogynistic views.
- Financial means appears to be an underlying factor that determines certain behaviours in the interactions between men and women. For example, being in a long-term relationship but not being married could be due to being unable to afford the wedding.

Methodology: Step-by-Step Research Process

Using a query designed to capture the broad conversation about interactions between men and women, this report covers February 2023. Stieglitz and colleagues (2018) identified four distinct phases in social media data analysis: (1) discovery, (2) collection, (3) preparation, and (4) analysis. Below, we describe how these phases guided our research project.

Step 1: Data Discovery

- The first step in data discovery was to draw up a list of keywords designed to isolate the broad conversation about interactions between men and women in South Africa on social media. The research and dialogue facilitation teams contributed to this list collaboratively through a shared spreadsheet. The research team focuses on quantitative analysis while the dialogue team focuses on qualitative analysis of the conversation(s).

- To create this list, the research team drew on existing knowledge combined with desktop research, a literature review and a quantitative, analytic review of social media.

- Concurrently, dialogue facilitators recorded relevant insights and keywords gained through their exploratory online dialogue facilitation.

- Our preliminary keyword list comprised 52 words in isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, Afrikaans, English, and slang.

- We entered this list of words into a social media analytics tool to create a query into conversation about interactions between men and women on public social media in South Africa.

- We used this preliminary query to publish our chapter "Mapping Gender Norms in Public Social Media: A South African Study" (Treffry-Goatley et al., 2022).

Step 2: Data Collection

- We "collected" the resulting data using our social media analytics platform.

Step 3: Data Preparation[4]

- We 'prepared' the data for analysis by refining the query. Query refinement entails sifting through the data set while looking for posts that are not relevant to interactions between men and women in South Africa. At this stage we also look at relevant posts that have not been included.

- If and when our team finds that some words could be added or removed, they are resolved by introducing additional keywords and/or exclusionary terms to the query. This allows us to analyse as much relevant conversation as possible (see Appendix B). Conducting this iterative process has allowed researchers to build onto the initial 52 keywords that were used for the "Mapping Gender Norms" study.

- With the goal of delivering the most useful insights possible in this report, we created libraries of categories and tags to focus on the parts of online conversation that were most relevant for this project. This development of the categories and tags was based on two factors:

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[4] New keywords and exclusions are identified both at the query and tag level on an ongoing basis.

1. *Prominence* - this is assessed quantitatively, using a dashboard that allows us to visualise data points, and qualitatively, using researchers' expertise, desktop research and dashboard work.

2. *Relevance* - a qualitative assessment of whether a focus area is important enough to the strategic goals of the heCareZA project to be included. Our team makes this determination based on subject matter expertise in South African social media dynamics and whether or not further research into the focus area is likely to provide valuable information for the ongoing heCareZA Programme.

Step 4: Data analysis

- We built a dashboard in our social media analytics platform to support our data analysis. This tool produces metrics according to volume, trending topics, news stories, and unique authors in relation to the keyword list.

- Thematic analysis involves studying the emerging patterns in the data and exploring how units of meaning connect to form themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can highlight individuals' perspectives, ideas and experiences, and can be used to generate fresh insight into the social dynamics behind human behaviour. Accordingly, we analysed the collected data thematically to interpret the data and to gain insight into dominant themes and trends.

- The goal of this analysis is to better understand what was said during the reporting period. Thematic analysis was conducted both at the query level and the tag (focus area) level.

- Based on trends observed over the course of several months, an author watchlist section was added.

Research Overview

Based on our social media analytics software, this section provides a high-level overview of the broad conversation between men and women taking place on public social media in South Africa, with special consideration given to our key thematic focus areas namely, Fatherhood, Lobola/Magadi & Cultural Practices, GBV & Misogyny, Hate Speech & Gendered Assumptions and Men & Mental Health, although not all focus areas are present in each report.

Volume and Engagement

For the month of June 2023, a total of 386 040 mentions were recorded. This sample was obtained by applying the heCareZA query using a social media analytics tool. The total number of mentions rose by 5% compared to May 2023. The mentions were generated by 86 090 unique authors, which is an average of 4 mentions per author (see Figure 1). The number of unique authors rose slightly, by 1%, from 85 240 authors in May 2023.

These metrics suggest that the conversation is relatively stable, which has also been observed in previous reporting periods (February 2023 report, 20 November 2022 - 31 January 2023). In March 2023, the volume of mentions in the conversation rose to 469 117, which was a 16% increase compared to February 2023. This is likely because of current events in the news that drove the increased mention volume.
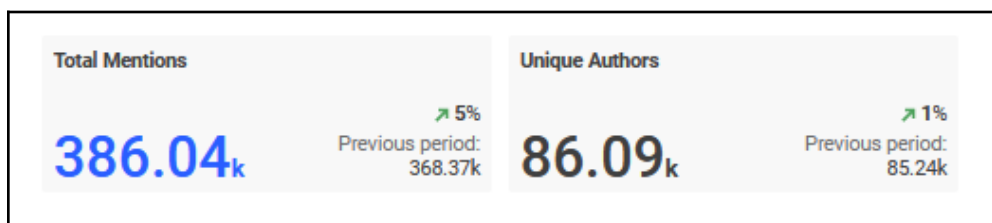

Figure 1: Total Mentions returned in our dataset

Mention Volume Peak Analysis

There were four peaks in the "Mention Volume" metric of the conversation. These occurred on 6 June, 14 June, 18 June and from 27 to 29 June. The highest peak in mention volume occurred on 28 June. This peak comprised 16 027 mentions and can be seen at A in Figure 2. The peak is driven by retweets of tweets by influencer accounts.
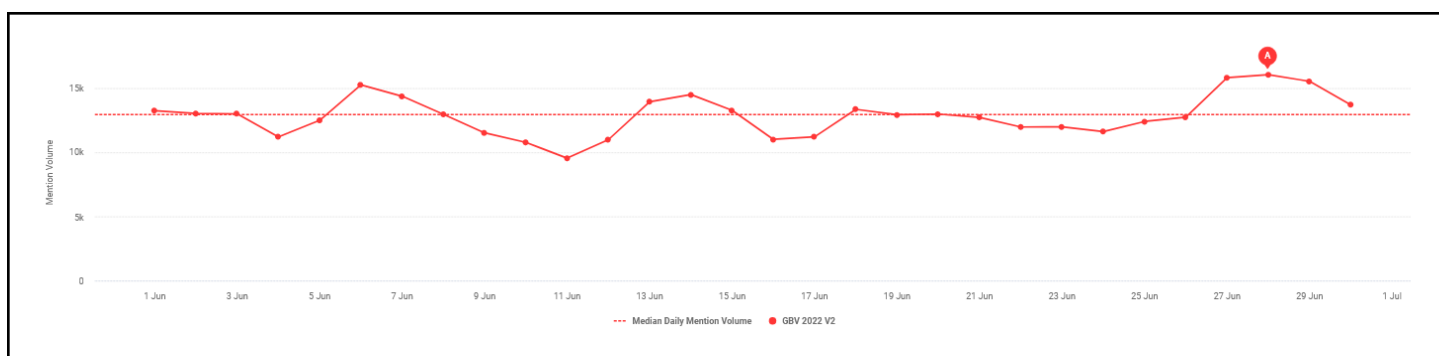

Figure 2: Mention Volume over Time

The most common themes occuring in Peak A can be summarised as follows:

- Women's accomplishments and beauty: There are multiple headlines that celebrate and showcase achievements, beauty, and crushes on women.

- Controversial figures and incidents: Headlines and content mentions referencing controversial public figures, such as a DJ facing a protection order from his ex-wife. There are also mentions of alleged abuse and assault incidents.
- Social media discussions: Some content refers to various discussions and opinions on social media platforms, including stereotypes about men and women's roles and preferences.
- Posts about missing persons, sexual offences and human trafficking.
- General statements and wishes: Several expressions of the importance of supporting families and individuals with limited resources, acknowledging the challenges faced by marginalised groups, and promoting social awareness and justice.

The tweets contributing to the peak at A largely contain negative ideas about women expressed by men. Images 1 to 4 below are example tweets that were retweeted widely.

In image 1, a popular influencer account tweets an image of two dogs as a comparison of what women versus men look like after 'enjoying life to the fullest' by sleeping with multiple partners. Because of the nature of the images chosen, the tweet appears to be evoking a stereotype about sexual promiscuity to convey that women look exhausted after sleeping with multiple partners while men look more muscular and appealing. This tweet was retweeted over 800 times, thereby amplifying the stereotype into the conversation. A 2023 study that was aimed at promoting health and well-being through sleep found that while partnered sex led to greater sleep quality, there were no differences found between the genders of the 256 male and female participants[5].

Image 1: Comparison of genders after sex with multiple partners

[5] The influence of sexual activity on sleep: A diary study (Carlotta Florentine Oesterling, Charmaine Borg, Elina Juhola, Marike Lancel, 2023): https://doi.org/10.1111/jsr.13814

Another tweet by the same influencer claims it is easier to find another good woman than fix a 'bad one' (see Image 2). The tweet refers to 'bad women' as *hoes*, a word that is derived from a derogatory term for sex workers. This tweet was retweeted over 550 times and has had 230 300 views. This suggestion could encourage men that rather than dealing with issues that may arise in a relationship, it would be easier to find a woman who is perhaps more agreeable and docile.

Image 2: Tweet about moving on

In a tweet about marriage (see Image 3), a different influencer comments on a video in which a woman says that she would not get married again in her twenties because she outgrew her spouse. The male influencer weighs in saying there's no incentive for men to get married because after supporting your spouse to elevate herself, she can decide that she has outgrown you and divorce you and receive a favourable divorce settlement. The comment was well received with more than 46 000 likes revealing that a large number of people may consider marriage to be an incentive-based transaction that can financially negatively impact a person if they don't grow at the same rate as their partner. General tax structures and tax benefits can contribute to patterns of marriage, household formation and labour division[6].

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[6] The Lock-in Effect of Marriage: Work Incentives after Saying "I Do" (Michael Christl , Silvia De Poli and Viginta Ivaškait˙e-Tamoši, 2022)

Image 3: No incentive to get married

In a tweet by another male influencer, he weighs in on a woman's tweet about overcommunication saying "women finding out women are crazy". The initial tweeter did not provide more information about the situation, so it is not clear how he arrived at the conclusion presumably that another woman had said she was overcommunicating (refer to Image 4). This comment seems to be stereotyping women's behaviour by dismissing it as being crazy; and that women should therefore not be taken seriously[7].

Image 4: Tweet about over communication

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[7] http://femlegaltheory.blogspot.com/2011/11/bitches-be-crazy.html

Top Phrases and Keywords

The top phrases and keywords (Figure 4) reflect the most commonly returned keywords and phrases from posts that were collected by our HeCareZA query during June 2023. The most prominently mentioned phrases and keywords were:

1. People: 21274 mentions
2. Love: 16875 mentions
3. Black: 15232 mentions
4. Good: 13639 mentions
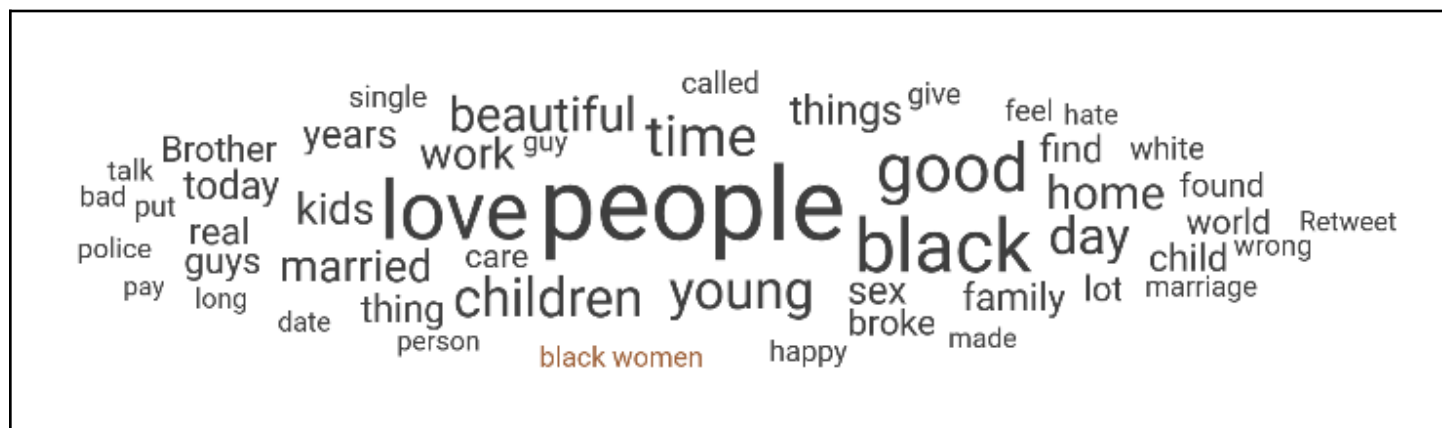5. Young: 10600 mentions
6. Children: 10589 mentions

Figure 4: Top phrases and keywords

In the conversation about "people", high reach content included:

- Human trafficking: A tweet warning about job scams that are targeting young people, particularly in the teaching profession, and the importance of contacting relevant authorities to prevent human trafficking.
- Financial Exploitation: In an episode on the TV show, 'I blew it' a woman receives a large sum of money and uses it to pay lobola for her mother, only to be charged excessively by her uncle.
- HIV and Aids: New statistics on HIV prevalence in South Africa were released. Some users on social media gave their perceptions about why the numbers are rising. This included speculation that attributed it to the phenomenon of blessers. One Twitter user weighed in to challenge that and provided other reasons that the numbers could be rising.

● Discrimination, Misogyny and Hate Speech: Various instances of discrimination and hate speech towards certain groups, such as Xhosa women and women.

Figure 5 contains a tweet by a woman with comments by men. Her tweet contains the keywords "people" and "black". In it, she expresses frustration with 'I'm the exception to the rule' life experiences when systemic issues are being discussed. She provides examples. The comments mostly demonstrate her point.

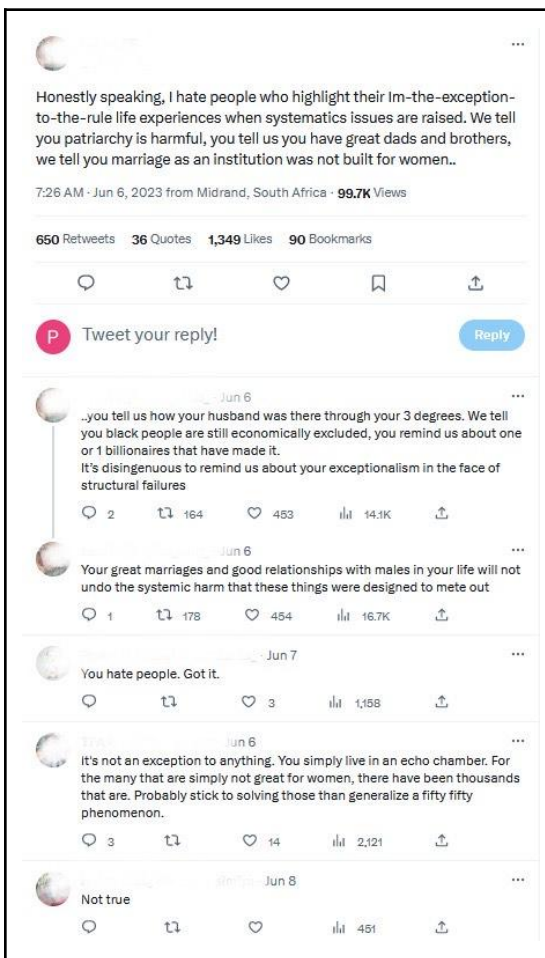*Figure 5: Tweet about exception to the rule experiences as detracting from discussion about structural failures*

In the conversation about "love", high reach content included:

● Expectations in relationships: Several headlines discuss what women expect from men in relationships, including sincerity, affection, attention, respect, and love. This theme revolves around the expectations women have for their partners.

- Co-parenting: Co-parenting is mentioned a couple of times, indicating a positive and successful co-parenting relationship between couples. This theme highlights the importance of healthy and harmonious co-parenting for the well-being of the children involved.
- Self-love and empowerment: Various headlines touch on the importance of self-love, embracing one's own attributes, and breaking societal expectations. This theme emphasises the need for women to prioritize their own happiness, success, and personal growth.
- Love scams: There are multiple headlines mentioning love scams and women who have been swindled by men promising to turn blank notes into real currency. This is a common theme throughout the list.
- The complexity of love: Many headlines explore the complexities and challenges of love. This theme delves into topics such as cheating, abusive relationships, the impact of past experiences on relationships, and power dynamics within romantic partnerships.

South Africans enjoy a good love story in which the couple overcomes the odds to have a beautiful wedding. In one story, a radio station made it possible for a couple who had been together for 23 years to get married (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Dream wedding for couple who could not afford it

In another story (see Figure 7), 702 radio had a discussion on a video that has gone viral of a woman who confessed her love to her male best friend and kissed him. This was a TikTok challenge. Some found it controversial as a social media challenge and others thought the video was sweet.
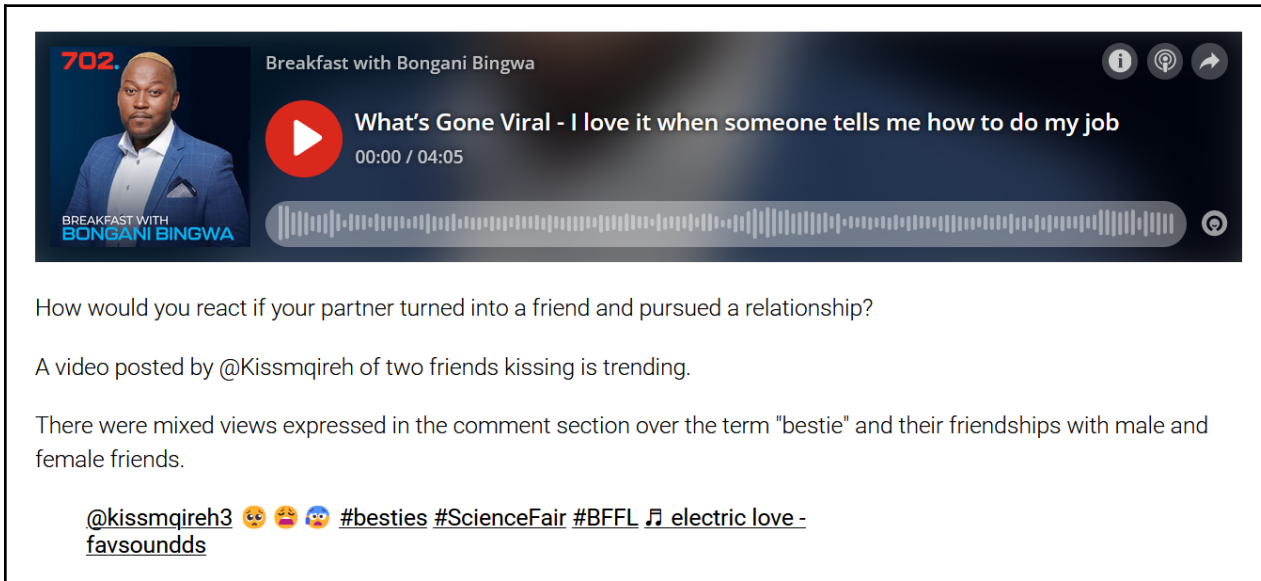
Breakfast with Bongani Bingwa

What's Gone Viral - I love it when someone tells me how to do my job
00:00 / 04:05

How would you react if your partner turned into a friend and pursued a relationship?

A video posted by @Kissmqireh of two friends kissing is trending.

There were mixed views expressed in the comment section over the term "bestie" and their friendships with male and female friends.

@kissmqireh3 😳 🥵 😨 #besties #ScienceFair #BFFL 🎵 electric love - favsoundds

Figure 7: TikTok challenge video that went viral

Topic Wheel

The topic wheel (contained in Figure 8) visually depicts the frequency at which keywords from the heCareZA query appear in the dataset. The inner ring shows the most commonly used keywords and phrases during June 2023. The outer ring expands on each segment in the inner ring by showing the keywords or phrases used in combination with it. As was the case in prior reporting periods (20 November - 31 January, February, March 2023) the key topics were men and women.
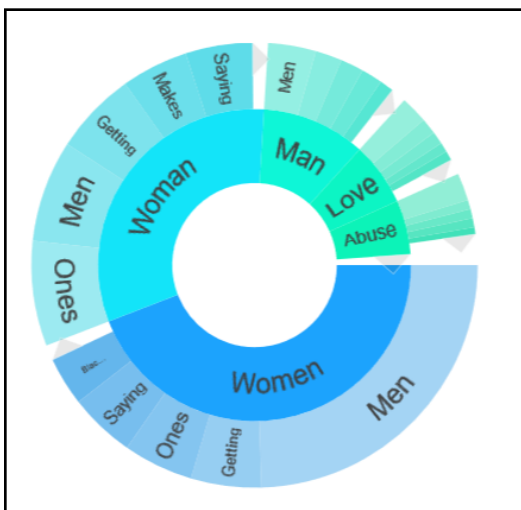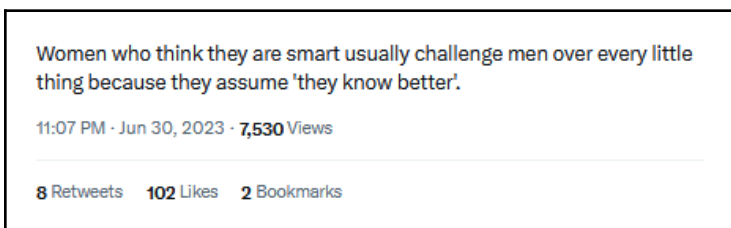

Figure 8: Topic wheel that represents the frequency of keywords from the dataset
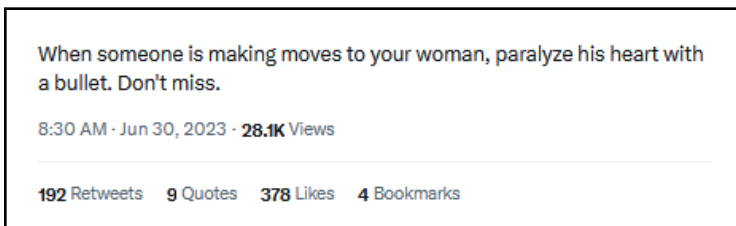
The compilation of tweets (contained in Images 5 to 10 below) are drawn from the topics wheel. The tweets contain perspectives on men and women in relationships, the role of intelligence, experience, responses to infidelity and birth control.

In the segment 'women' interacting with the subsegment 'men', there was a tweet expressing a view about intelligent women who "challenge men over every little thing because they assume 'they know better'". (see Image 5). The account which tweeted this appears to be that of a young woman from the Eastern Cape.

Women who think they are smart usually challenge men over every little thing because they assume 'they know better'.

11:07 PM · Jun 30, 2023 · 7,530 Views

8 Retweets   102 Likes   2 Bookmarks

Image 5: Tweet about women who think they are smart

The tweet in Image 6 below contains violent 'advice' that if someone is making moves 'to your woman', you must shoot them and not miss. The tweeter regards a woman as being a man's property. When this screengrab was taken, this tweet had been liked 378 times and retweeted 192 times.

When someone is making moves to your woman, paralyze his heart with a bullet. Don't miss.

8:30 AM · Jun 30, 2023 · 28.1K Views

192 Retweets   9 Quotes   378 Likes   4 Bookmarks

Image 6: Dealing with infidelity

A popular influencer account tweeted "If she's a good woman, you wouldn't have met her single at 30, they would have picked her from 18-28. The experience she got all these years is what makes her a good woman today." Refer to Image 7. This implies that she was not a 'good woman' and the experience she has gained from dating other men is what has made her good. It sets up normative ideas about what it is that makes a woman a 'good woman' through a man's perspective and does not make any room for the woman's personal preferences. It is not part of the influencer's logic that the woman who is single at 30 has decided to not engage in any relationship based on her own free-will. The post over-simplifies the reason why women in their 30s are single and perpetuates the idea that they have been "left on the shelf" because they were not chosen

by a man between the ages of 18 and 28. This narrative positions women as having little to no agency over their personal life as they sit around and wait to be pursued by a man.


Image 7: Women who are single at thirty

Another topic that came up was that of birth control. In a tweet (see Image 8) responding to the question "Why does it always fall on the man to wear a condom when there are female condoms too?", another person replies "1 man can impregnate 9 women every day for 9 months. Those are 2,430 pregnancies. One woman can only get pregnant once within nine months, even if she beds 9 men every day within 9 months. That's only 1 pregnancy. I think the society's looking at the wrong gender for birth control". This reply received 636 100 views and 3531 retweets.

Image 8: Tweet that shows an exchange of ideas about men and women

In the exchange contained in Image 9, there is a discussion about body count and trauma. The initial tweet says that men prefer women with a lower number of sexual partners (body count) because they are less likely to have trauma. The tweeters exchanging views appear to be mostly male. A woman weighs in with a perspective that men are not immune to trauma. In response to her perspective, the initial tweeter weighs in
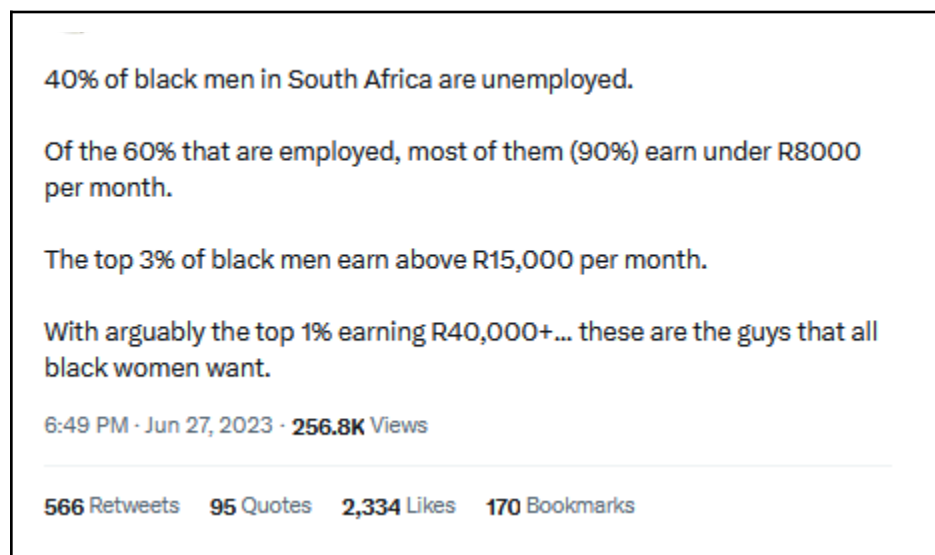
that women want men who have sexual experience and while men are not immune to trauma, more sexual experiences works as an advantage for them, but as a disadvantage for women. This contemporary logic supports a more traditional view of the social virtue of purity among women while social norms grant men a greater extent of sexual freedom.
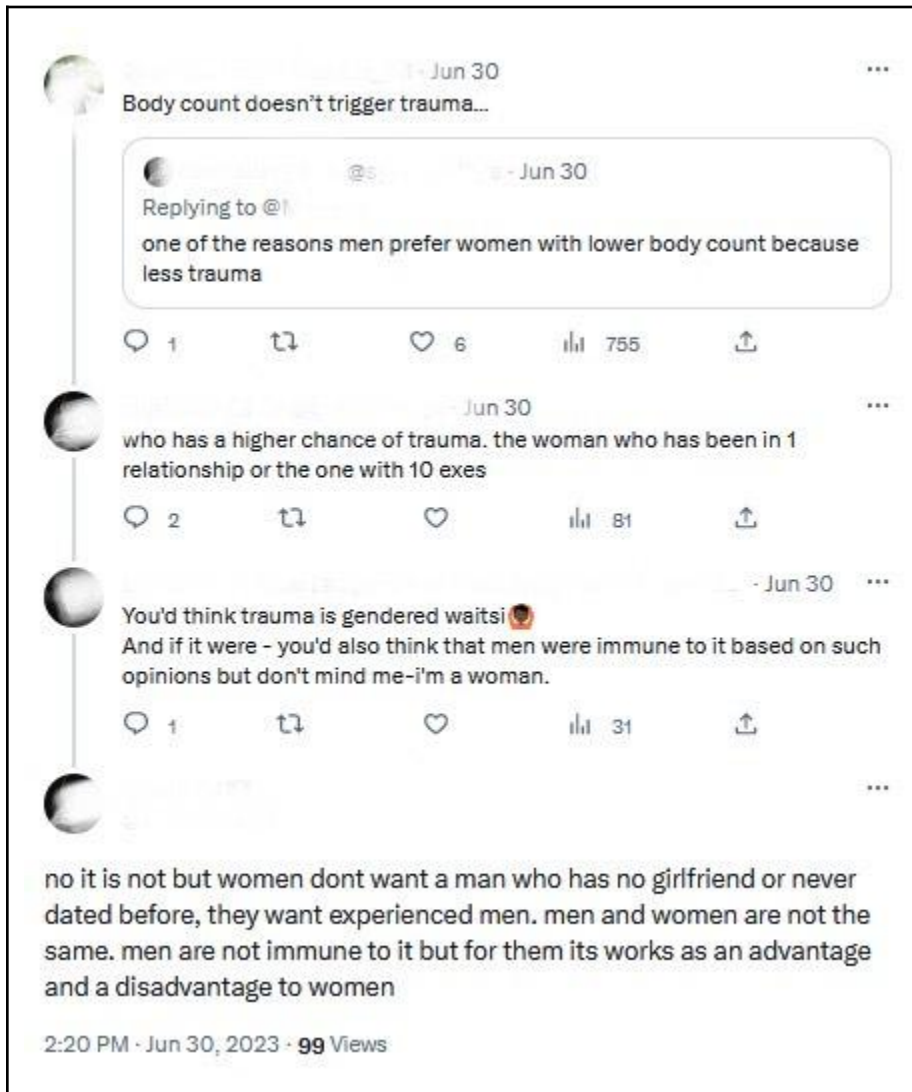
Image 9: Tweet exchange about sexual experience

In the subsegment 'black women', a tweet by an influencer stands out (see Image 10). He speaks about unemployment, saying that the top 3% of black men in South Africa earn above R15,000 per month and the top 1% earn above R40,000. His view is that it is this top 1% of black men who all black women want. This line of reasoning is prejudicial and paints black women as being materialistic. His tweet which was liked 2334 times and retweeted 566 times.

The influencer seems to use controversy to attract his followership. For example, he refers to himself as God. It appears that some of the topics and statements that he chooses are designed as conversation gambits to start a "twar" (Twitter war).

40% of black men in South Africa are unemployed.

Of the 60% that are employed, most of them (90%) earn under R8000 per month.

The top 3% of black men earn above R15,000 per month.

With arguably the top 1% earning R40,000+... these are the guys that all black women want.

6:49 PM · Jun 27, 2023 · 256.8K Views

566 Retweets   95 Quotes   2,334 Likes   170 Bookmarks

Image 10: Tweet about men's desirability linked to income

Content Deep-Dive

Trigger/Content Warning: This portion of the report deals with sensitive subject matter related to abuse, issues of unclear consent and transactional sex.

Parenting: When Discipline is Abuse

On 9 June, a video was shared which depicted an abusive interaction between a father and his child (see Figure 9). The video contains multiple instances of the father assaulting the child while the mother records the incident and pleads with the father to stop. Context from within the video indicates that the child was struggling in their English class at a prestigious and expensive school, which is reiterated by the father as the cause of the physical abuse. The original poster of the tweet and video asked whether this behaviour "is considered good or bad parenting."

Figure 9: Screenshot portion of the video wherein a father physically assaults his son

Responses to the video varied, with some individuals expressing that they had grown up in a similar environment and attributed their discipline and success to similar behaviour by their parents, with one particular post indicating that the expense of private schooling justifies anger at one's child's results (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Posts which indicated that the behaviour shown in the video constituted "good parenting"

Other accounts which engaged with the post indicated that there exists no valid reason to abuse a child and called for an investigation to be launched against the father. Further responses indicated that abuse of this nature leads to the breakdown of a family and may perpetuate a complex cycle of violence in the lives of those affected (see Figure 11). Recent literature on a potential "cycle of abuse", interpersonally and from parent to child has focused on investigating inequitable power in relationships, the risk of perpetration, future exposure to, and socio-economic risk factors related to interpersonal and gender-based violence[8] .

[8] Barnett et al., 2018 ; Dixon et al., 2008 ; Jaffee et al., 2013 ; Kaufman & Zigler, 1987 ; Malinosky-Rummel & Hansel, 1993 ; Durrant, 2012 ; Plummer & Cossins, 2016

Figure 11: Posts which indicated that the behaviour shown in the video constituted abuse

In South Africa, physical abuse against children, whether at home or within a school environment, otherwise known as corporal punishment, is illegal[9]. While the practice of corporal punishment has been called a violation of the rights of the child by the World Health Organisation[10], this progressive legislation and protection of the rights of the child currently exists in only 65 countries[11]. Importantly, legislative directives and protections often exist in tandem with violations in lived reality, this is especially important in South Africa where the risk of exposure to and prevalence of abusive behaviour remains high[12]. This disconnect is expressed in the positive sentiment espoused by some accounts toward corporal punishment in Figure 10.

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[9] https://ci.uct.ac.za/law-reform-childrens-act-childrens-act-latest-developments/landmark-moment-child-rights-south
[10] https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/corporal-punishment-and-health
[11] https://endcorporalpunishment.org/countdown/
[12] Mahlangu et al. 2021 ; Meinck et al., 2016

Transactional Sex

Later in the month, on 27 June, two separate posts were shared on sex, concerning transactional sex and issues of informed consent respectively.

The initial post concerned a story supposedly relayed by an Uber driver (see Figure 12), in which the driver notes that lately he has noticed matriculants engaging in transactional sex, the purpose of which is related to monetary reasons. Notably, the text messages and caption in the post seem tinged with a xenophobic slant and the use of language which does not relay direct concern for the girls involved but rather invokes a strong sense of judgement. The account which posted the content qualifies their concern by stating, "I won't even mention what some married women do for money…"

Transactional sex has seen reinvigorated research interest in academic spheres. From early studies concerned with the phenomenon of "taxi queens" to the systemic and structural study of the transactional environment, it has proven an ongoing concern. Transactional sex is distinct from sex work in that agency and power differ. Sex of this nature has been linked to higher exposure to the contraction of HIV, discrimination and potential exposure to interpersonal violence. It is important to note here that transactional sex is a systemic outcome, related to socio-economic indicators, the push and pull effect of social pressures and the need to access vital resources, and that not all instances of transactional sex are the result of inequities of power between participants[13].

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[13] Ranganathan et al., 2016 ; Strebel et al., 2013

Figure 12: A 2-part post which relays a story of exploitation

Commentary in relation to the post in Figure 12 was two-fold.

A perspective emerged in the replies focused directly on the assumption that the girls involved were engaging in transactional sex for the purposes of seeking luxury items. Furthermore, the idea that the "lifestyle" of today, the behaviour of South African influencers, as well as comparison between the behaviours of men and women within the country was utilised to express disagreement with the situation.

In one post (see Figure 13), an account which focused on the "lifestyle" of today made reference to the Enyobeni Tavern tragedy[14], where 21 children, one as young as 13, lost their lives. The sentiment expressed in this tweet, of a generational fault, carried through the remainder of the tweets, where wide-reaching claims were made against South African women and girls. Often viewed through a sexual lens[15] or through the lens of deprivation, this is most notable in the following tweets, where reference is made to "future wives", the idea that

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[14] Enyobeni Tavern Tragedy
[15] See heCareZA Report 3 for more on how a sexual lens is used to frame perspectives on traditional practices

South African women are to be seen as a "problem" and an expression that South African men are being ridiculed by women.

Figure 13: Tweets made in relation to the idea of transactional sex which held a negative sentiment

Alternative perspectives on the relayed story were more nuanced (see Figure 14). Replies here sought to bring to light systemic factors that may push young girls into transactional relationships. Among these, issues of potential driving factors related to poverty, hunger and abuse were raised.
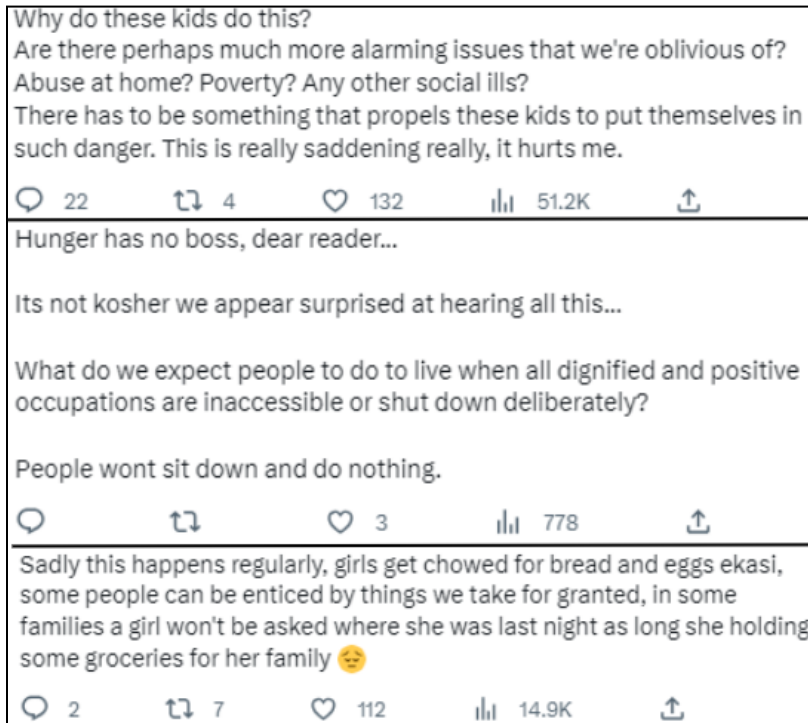
Why do these kids do this?
Are there perhaps much more alarming issues that we're oblivious of?
Abuse at home? Poverty? Any other social ills?
There has to be something that propels these kids to put themselves in such danger. This is really saddening really, it hurts me.

22   4   132   51.2K

Hunger has no boss, dear reader...

Its not kosher we appear surprised at hearing all this...

What do we expect people to do to live when all dignified and positive occupations are inaccessible or shut down deliberately?

People wont sit down and do nothing.

                        3   778

Sadly this happens regularly, girls get chowed for bread and eggs ekasi, some people can be enticed by things we take for granted, in some families a girl won't be asked where she was last night as long she holding some groceries for her family 😔

2   7   112   14.9K

Figure 14: Tweets in relation to transactional relationships which held a more nuanced sentiment

Consent

During the course of the afternoon of 27 June, a popular influencer account shared a screenshot of a video which had begun to go viral on various social media platforms (see Figure 15). The video depicts two individuals, with explicit sex between them, outside a tavern. Over the course of the video, it becomes increasingly more visible that one or both of the individuals are intoxicated, this is most noticeable with the woman involved who spills her drink and begins to cover her face as the individual taking the video continues to make comments and record the incident.

The caption of the post by, can be translated as: "This latest trending video of a girl being f***** in a bar you can actually see that the poor girl was very drunk. I'm sure the guy took advantage of that and then they took videos of her. A girl is not supposed to get crazy drunk. The things you do at groove[16]!"

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[16] Groove is a colloquial term for a party, club or tavern where people drink and dance.
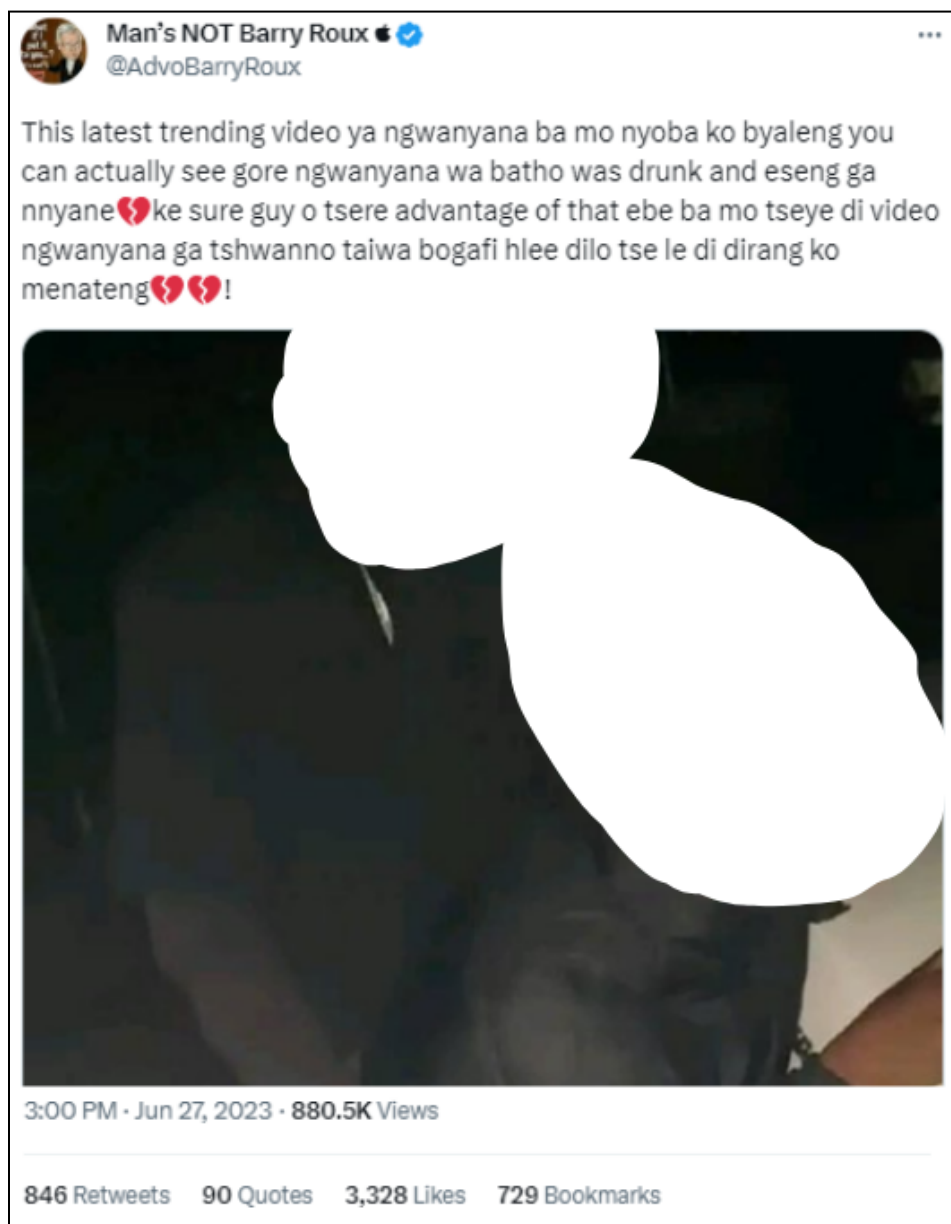
Figure 15: @AdvoBarryRoux posts a screenshot of a supposedly trending video depicting questionable consent

Under the screenshotted frame, accounts began to post the video in the comments section and began to reply to the content shown. Before sharing the perspectives found in the replies, it is necessary to understand consent in sexual or other physical interactions. Consent refers to the active and uncoerced agreement to engage in sexual activity that is freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic and specific[17]. In South African legislation, consent cannot be given if one or more participating individuals are under the influence of drugs

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[17] https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/relationships/sexual-consent, for more see: Tea & Consent (Video)

and/or alcohol and/or any other substance where the individual's consciousness and or judgement is adversely affected[18].

Posts which took the perspective that the content in the video was consensual varied in their assumptions, with some indicating that both individuals were drunk and as such consent could not be established. Another class of posts began to emerge in the replies, which demonstrated a misunderstanding of consent and incorporated victim blaming in their comments (see Figure 16).

These posts focused on stereotyping and essentialising women, this is most evident in the post to the left which denies any sexual assault and states that "they do this all the time", another post in the collage expresses the same sentiment and uses the exact same example of alcohol and hot wings as an identifier to dismiss any perceptions of rape. Another poster indicates that they see no resistance from the woman in the video. Submission or a lack of resistance does not imply consent[19]. One post sought to normalise the questionable consent in the video by stating that South African women initiate this behaviour when drunk and that "the guy did what every party animal would…". On a policy level, one response to this type of incident, is to consider changing the liquor trading hours.
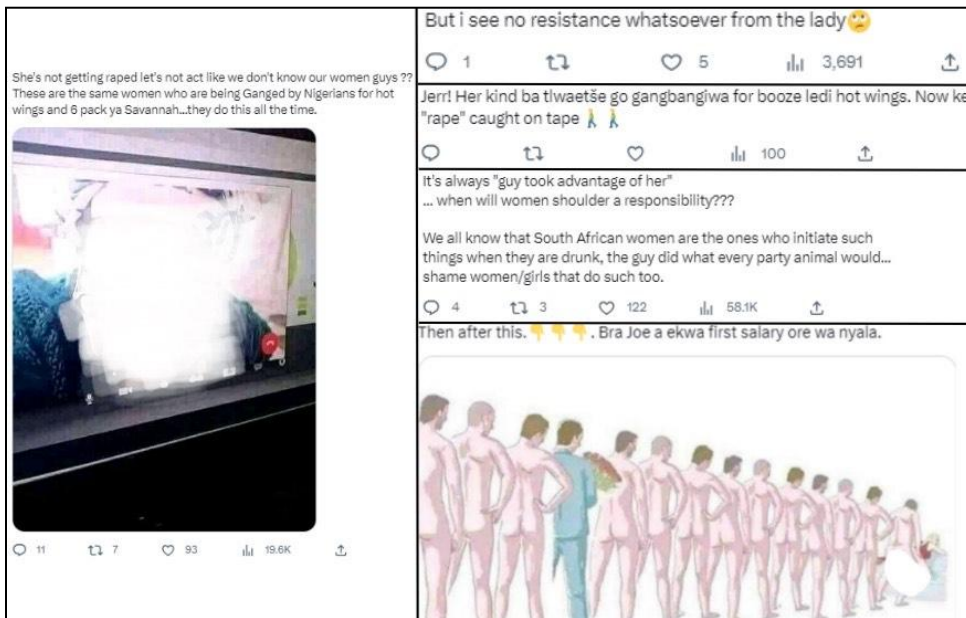

Figure 16: Posts which perceived the content in the video to be consensual

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[18] Criminal Law (Sexual Offences And Related Matters) Amendment Act, No 32, 2007 for more on consent, see: Law For All: Sexual Consent in South Africa
[19] RAINN: What Consent Looks Like

Other replies to the video contained posts which sought to caution against assuming consent (see Figure 17). These posts incorporated more nuance and an understanding of affirmative consent, noting that substances may impair judgement and that this may in turn affect whether or not an individual can appropriately consent to sex.

This is rape. Really hope police follow up on this 🙄🙄

💬   🔁   ♡ 6   📊 1,526   ↥

Why I say this is "Rape", if you're under the influence of Drugs and alcohol, these things impact decision-making and blur consent. When drugs and alcohol are involved, clear consent cannot be obtained. An intoxicated person cannot give consent.

💬 30   🔁 1   ♡ 166   📊 62.6K   ↥

I saw that video, this is definitely wrong and people think this is funny. This is unacceptable at all cost. Taking advantage of women because of going too intoxicated is the worst thing ever a man can do because tomorrow it's gon be you and him in court for rape 🤦

💬 16   🔁 1   ♡ 198   📊 50.3K   ↥

I don't think she's powerless to stop the guy but she's too drunk to properly weigh the consequences of what she's doing.

The same can be said for the guy. I also don't think he intends to make her do anything she doesn't want to do, in his mind I think it's consensual. Tough

💬   🔁   ♡   📊 4,633   ↥

Figure 17: Posts which cautioned against assuming consent

Opportunities for Engagement

- According to South African law, punishing a child by hitting them is abuse. There is an opportunity to generate engagement about corporal punishment, specifically with parents who still administer corporal punishment thinking that it is good parenting. Engaging about these entrenched beliefs may allow some to understand that physical abuse during formative years is associated with negative patterns of behaviour in adulthood.
- There is an opportunity to engage men about a range of relationship related topics including how to support a partner who is experiencing trauma from past experiences of gender-based violence, birth

control, positive parenting, child maintenance and managing finances. These are themes that came up in the conversation and where misogynistic views were part of the conversation.

- As this report highlights, some male influencers are perpetuating stereotypes about rape; consent and sexual engagement under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs and about women; and money in which women are seen as being materialistic and interested in men mostly because of money. There is an opportunity to engage these views with both men and women.

- The HIV and Aids related conversation online could be a theme to focus on in a future report.

- There is a positive form of influencer that has emerged which are mental health professionals and coaches who share useful content online such as attachment theory, positive psychology, dealing with narcissistic abuse and a range of other topics. These influencers play a role that supports people and makes the online space less toxic. There is an opportunity for HeCareZa to consider partnering with such influencers who can be regarded as allies. Some examples of influencers include:
  - Dr Ramani Durvasula is a popular psychologist (see website, Youtube channel and Medcircle).
  - Laura M is a South African mental health coach and speaker (see Twitter handle and website).
  - Jeremie Lotemo is a coach who focuses on masculinity (see Instagram account and linktree).
  - Nozipho van Heerden is a finance professional who blogs (see Talkingmoneywithnozi).
  - RiseUp Against Domestic Violence assists both female and male survivors of domestic violence. RiseUp has an active online presence on social media (see Facebook group) which challenges prevailing stereotypes.

Dialogue Facilitation

The Dialogue Facilitation team is responsible for facilitating direct and indirect dialogue online that; 1) encourages critical engagement with mis- and disinformation, 2) calms negative, toxic or frenetic narratives, and 3) prevents and heals social ills perpetuated through hate speech or the promotion of violence. This is achieved through skillfully designed engagements that consist of bringing people into a process of self-reflection and healing at scale.

The impact of these efforts is increased by engaging with change agents through a variety of different platforms to train and mobilise citizens to facilitate online dialogue. This includes the use of Turn.io to train change agents in dialogue facilitation and the team takes shifts to monitor the platform for opportunities to engage. Turn.io is an interactive additional platform for dialogue facilitation training and resources. To look at the menu individuals can WhatsApp "hi" to +27 (60) 011-1011 or click on this link to go there directly. The team

is responsible for creating dialogue facilitation Canva designs to facilitate conversations online. The dialogue facilitators provide insights into online conversations and narratives internally to the other units within the CABC.

We harness social media platforms as dynamic spaces to foster relationships with men through online dialogue and to engage them as allies in order to dismantle gender discrimination and violence. Fathers are an important focus group of the project as men will be changing harmful gendered norms of behaviour for the benefit of themselves, and for the improved safety and wellbeing of their children and partners. Additionally and critically, for sustainability and long term impacts, modelling these new attitudes and practices to sons and daughters so that they are likely to adopt the practices as they grow up, thus fundamentally disrupting the intergenerational transfer of misogynistic practices.

Dialogue Facilitation Metrics

Total mentions		Total impressions		Total reach	
132	> 0% Previous period: 132	**336.55k**	↗ 39% Previous period: 242.06k	**283.02k**	↗ 19% Previous period: 238.48k
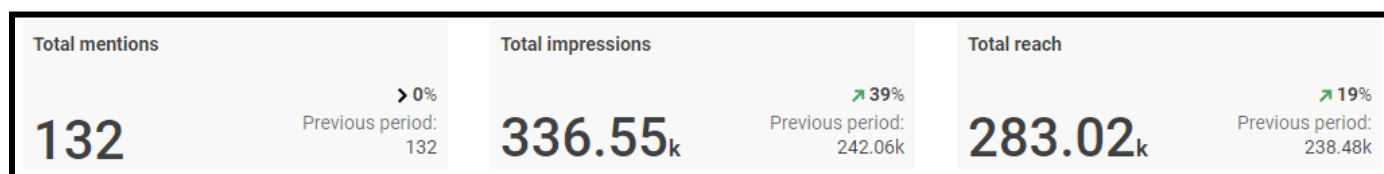
Figure 18: Total mention volume of heCareZA directed dialogue

Figure 18 above represents the CABC Dialogue Facilitation team's total activity, inclusive of retweeted content from 1 June to 30 June 2023. Over this period, the facilitators posted and commented 132 times with an overall spread metric of 336,550 impressions, and a reach of 283,020 accounts. Reach is heavily influenced by post engagement and traffic for the author or site in question. Our social media analytics platform's proprietary algorithm uses each of the available metrics and applies various content source specific assumptions, based on previous observed behaviour, to infer how they may translate into the number of individuals that are likely to have seen a given post.

Using Report Insights in Dialogue Facilitation

The third heCareZA Research Report provided valuable insights that the dialogue facilitation team utilised in their dialoguing and discussions, as well as social media design creation. These reports serve as a strong basis where facilitators gain a deeper understanding of the broader online conversation which guides our own work. This section aims to show how we leveraged the insights from the second report to actively seek out additional online conversations and respond effectively. One of the key insights from report 3 touched on lobola

and the intentions behind traditional practices and how they may have changed or misrepresented through the passage of time. Another insight reflected the difficulties men face in society that lead to emotional trauma - in one engagement, a facilitator conveyed this to an individual in response to a post by an influencer that stated that men should not show women emotions. As well as creating several CANVA designs targeted at conversations on masculinity and mental health.

No it doesn't, No one here disputed it. We're addressing why men are more "successful"

💬 1   ⇄   ♡   📊 14   ⬆

But Kyle, if women attempt suicide more often than men, then the answer to why they are more successful is simple - they use more successful methods (as the article you linked explains).

💬 1   ⇄   ♡   📊 21   ⬆

The means are indeed relevant yes, you are correct! But another factor to take into consideration is that issue of seeking help and talking to people? If 10 people commit suicide today, and we save 4 because they managed to find the assistance they need before its too late...

💬 1   ⇄   ♡   📊 12   ⬆

that's a win right?

💬 1   ⇄   ♡   📊 14   ⬆

Yes it is a win but it's irrelevant to what this woman was saying.

Dialogue Facilitation Designs

Men, Take action against violence when you see it and when you are able to oppose it.

"You don't raise heroes, you raise sons, and if you treat them like sons, they'll turn out to be heroes, even if it's just in your own eyes"
Walter M. Schirra. SR

"Fathering makes a man, whatever his standing in the eyes of the world, feel strong and good and important, just as he makes his child feel loved and valued."
— Frank Pittman.

MENTAL HEALTH
Men mental health can create Conflicts and violence in couples and in the Household .

IT'S OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP

heCareZA Dialogue Deck

Figure 19: heCareZA Dialogue Deck

The heCareZA team has put together a Dialogue Deck for digital activists to explore and make their responses their own. The dialogue deck is a collection of sample tweets with responses from the dialogue facilitators that allies can use to see how facilitators approach a statement and frame their own responses to similar tweets as well as use for inspiration and an example for their own dialoguing. By making these decks freely available online, allies are able to engage on Twitter using the dialogue methodology and critically engage and dialogue with those who make harmful statements. Dialoguing is a way to help and support men who are caught or stuck in spaces that encourage hatred and violence toward women. This deck will help you change men's ideas of women and help men express themselves differently. View the heCareZA Dialogue Deck here.

We shared the Dialogue Deck on our Digital Activism WhatsApp group to inspire the members to get involved in online conversations. Are you currently involved in gender-based violence prevention? We would love to hear from you. Send us an email and join the heCareZA Collective. Email us at info@hecareza.co.za

Reach Out for Help

Lifeline: 021 461 1113
GBV Command Centre: 0800 428 428
Rape Crisis Centre: 021 447 9762
Sonke Gender Justice: 021 423 7088

You can also send a please-call-me to a Social Worker by dialling *120*7867#

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Appendix

Appendix A: heCareZA Ethical Considerations

In our work, we abide by specific ethical principles to ensure that we do no harm. We are particularly influenced by the recommendations made by the Partners for Prevention in their report, "Using social media for prevention of violence against women." (Liou, 2013). Below we list these recommendations and explain how they relate to our work.

Anonymity and confidentiality: All research findings will be sufficiently aggregated to ensure that no one community or individual can be identified. Where case study findings are presented, we will change sufficient detail to ensure that the source of the information cannot be identified. In our study, we focused exclusively on content that is publicly available. Nonetheless, we are aware that the boundaries between public and private are dynamic and often blurred in the social media space (Markham, 2018). For example, although social media users may consent to sharing their content publicly and with "third parties" at the point of sign up (Samuel & Buchanan, 2020; Williams et al., 2017), they may not agree to their words and personal identities being subject to academic scrutiny and publication. Therefore, to ensure our research is ethically responsible and that we protect the privacy of social media users, we do not include their names, Twitter handle or profile picture.

Stigmatisation: We will be scientifically rigorous in our dissemination of research findings and highlight that GBV and VAW are cross-cutting phenomena that exist in all communities and socio-economic groups. We will reiterate that these issues do not exist in one setting and are not perpetrated by specific ethnic groups.

Retraumatization and counselling: The heCareZA programme involves the facilitation of dialogue from an empathetic perspective. Rather than judging or shaming men, our facilitators are trained to support constructive conversations amongst men that address the cycle of violence, problematic social norms, and challenge discriminatory language and actions, from outright insults to sexist jokes. Moreover, we encourage perpetrators of GBV to reach out for healing.

Since this is a sensitive topic, and mental health is a growing concern among South African men we regularly post contact numbers for the GBV Command Centre, who has 24/7 counselling for survivors and perpetrators or to the non-profit, free counselling service of Families South Africa (FAMSA). In the event that we identify anyone that needs more comprehensive support, we always refer them directly to these same support

services. Lastly, we also share appropriate referral contact numbers on the heCareZA website and on our regular social media posts.

Informed consent: In our analysis of mass data on public social media, we will not be able to ask everyone for consent. However, as mentioned above, all of this data is publicly available and will be rigorously aggregated to ensure that all identities and communities are protected.

For the change agents, we will send a message to men who speak out against GBV online, and we will invite them to visit the website or join the Facebook group. The nature of the Facebook group is that they can leave the group at any time without any negative repercussions.We will not seek informed consent from all Facebook group members.

Appendix B: Exclusions

```
NOT ("uncle waffle*" OR "imali"OR Labola OR "DiepCity" OR Isithembu OR NoBhuti OR
Showmax OR TheWife OR YomZulu OR YomXhosa OR Inja OR Umshado OR Igcwale OR Mnakwethu
OR "Ari Lennox" OR Uyihlo OR "Ubaba Wakho" OR #ad OR bbnaija OR bbmzansi OR sundowns
OR mamelodi OR "hook ups" OR
"sugar mommy" OR"sugar mamas" OR"strings attached" OR"find a blesser" OR"dating for
singles"OR #teamnaturalhair OR #skeemsaam OR #voteforlasizwe OR
#yourkeytofinancialfreedom OR #singleandmingle OR #nofuxxgiven OR #podcastandchill OR
#squarerootcreatives OR "Meghan Markle" OR "Jeremy Clarkson" OR "Buckingham Palace"
OR "World Cup" OR "Super Cup" OR "Section 89" OR Ramaphosa OR Zuma OR State OR RET OR
Football OR "Prince Harry" OR Messi OR Morocco OR #BBTitans OR #BigBrotherTitans OR
DM OR "Follow & Retweet" OR #thewifeshowmax OR #t20worldcup OR crypto OR #eth OR #btc
OR NFT OR #gamblingtwitter OR #bitcoin OR bitcoin OR #nsfwtwt OR #fifaworldcup OR
#betredemption OR #gvfip OR #NBA OR #tiktok OR #NFL OR #Soccer OR #Win OR President
OR ANC OR God OR Jesus OR Rwanda OR Kagame OR "Heavenly Father" OR Pope OR Pray* OR
Holy OR John OR Psalm* OR EFF OR DA OR Christ OR Meghan OR Substance OR Drug OR
Church OR Uganda OR Saudi OR @MiaCathell OR Tax OR Euro* OR AOC OR Fascist OR Dudula
OR PSAF OR Xeno* OR race* OR Balenciaga OR Politic* OR Citizens OR Vote OR Zimbab* OR
#PhalaPhala OR "Phala Phala" OR "State Capture" OR Apartheid OR ZanuPF OR CR17 OR
Immigration OR OUTA OR Bank OR Apple OR Android OR #Unplayable OR Netflix OR
#PutSouthAficansFirst OR "Put South Africans First" OR Monarchy OR Eskom OR
Loadshedding OR #supportlibraries OR "Please Retweet" OR #Ostfuza OR Ukraine OR
Russia OR "Big Brother" OR COVID* OR Corona* OR #PremierLeague OR "Manchester United"
OR #Nigeria OR biafra OR Nigeria OR Holocaust OR Taliban OR Afghanistan OR Iran OR
"African National Congress" OR "Economic Freedom Fighters" OR "Democratic Alliance"
OR #enoughisenough OR #StandUpSA OR #womensart OR #womeninbusiness OR #phyna OR Bloat
OR #savewarriornun OR #davidukpo OR #beatriceekweremadu OR #runningiwthtumisole OR
#fitness OR Amapiano OR Afrobeat OR Studio OR #Sete OR song OR #Python OR #ai OR
#womenintech OR #blackexcellence OR #LuthuliHouse OR #BBTitians OR #womenwhocode OR
#NYEEdition OR #datascience OR #malibongwe OR #machinelearning OR #Renewal OR Rwandan
OR Pre-season OR "Tory Lanez" OR Belinda OR Migor OR "Belinda Migor" OR Pitbull OR
"Riot Police" OR "Timothy C. Roth" OR Roth OR "Chris Brown" OR "#rho*" OR #grammys OR
@loveisland OR #onemorefan OR #hazardsofvalentinesday OR SONA OR #sona2023 OR
#reddwarf OR #ZeeNunewXVamino OR #KataBiz OR #mufc OR "black history month" OR
#blackhistorymonth OR taehyung OR "Black seed" OR rhodurban OR "Tshepi Vundla" OR
"Map Editor" OR MK* OR "Super Nintendo" OR hibernation OR cock OR "andrew tate" OR
"man* city" OR Arsenal OR Chelsea OR Earthquake OR NTA OR Assam OR "Leonardo
DiCaprio" OR "Viola Davis" OR Casemiro OR "Cory Booker" OR Bruno OR Ronaldo OR
#PoliceTrainees OR #Project10K OR continent:"NORTH AMERICA" OR continent:"EUROPE" OR
continent:"ASIA" OR continent:"SOUTH AMERICA" OR continent:"OCEANIA")
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