

RESPONDING TO CHILDREN IN DISTRESS THROUGH PLAY THERAPY



**FLORENCE MUENI:
AMANI COUNSELLING CENTRE & TRAINING INSTITUTE.**

BACKGROUND

Amani Counselling Centre & Training institute is the pioneer Counselling centre in Kenya founded in 1979 and is involved in

- COUNSELLING
- TRAINING
- OUTREACH

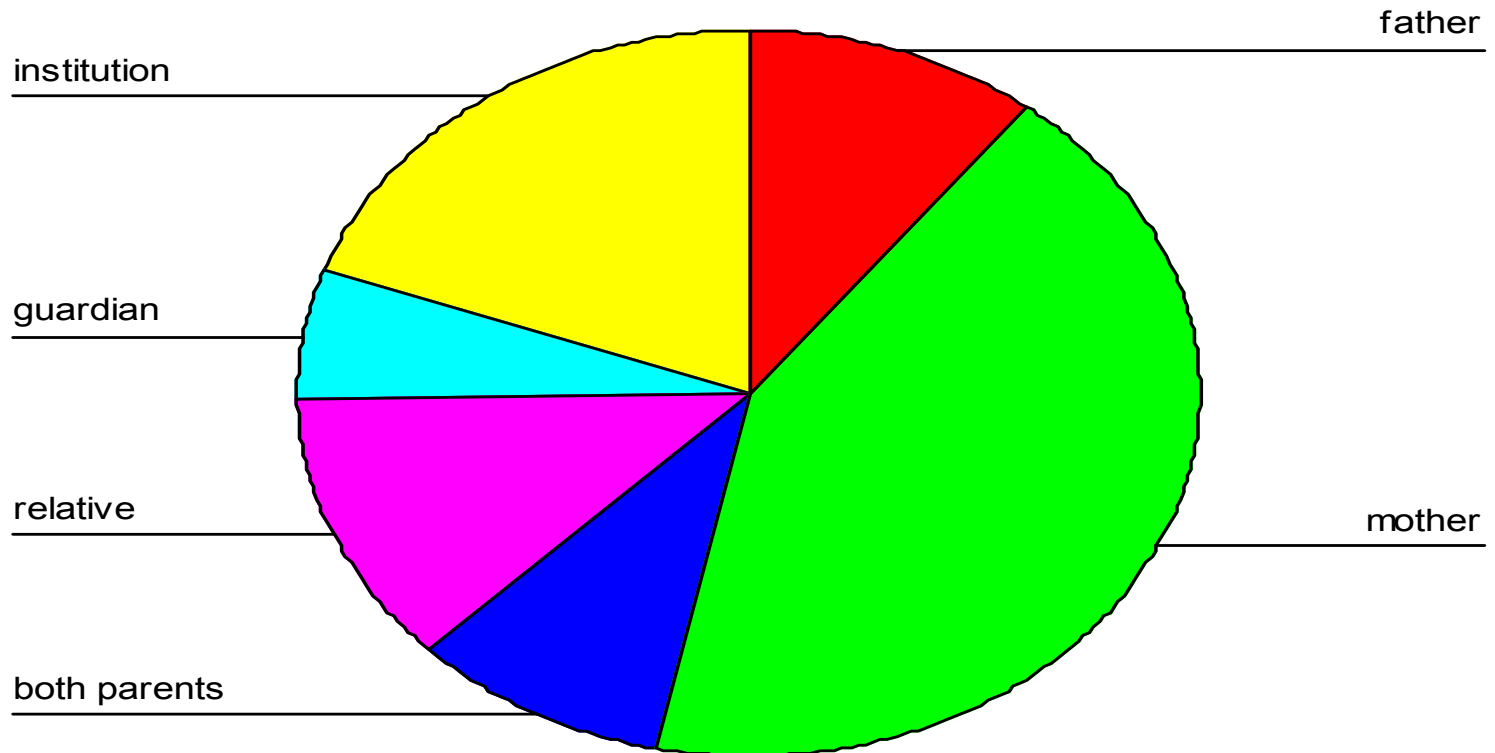
Clients by age group 2005-2009

Age group	Frequency	Percent
3-5 Yrs	24	11.4
6-8 Yrs	51	24.3
9-12 Yrs	72	34.3
13-15 Yrs	57	27.1
16-18 Yrs	6	2.9
Total	210	100.0

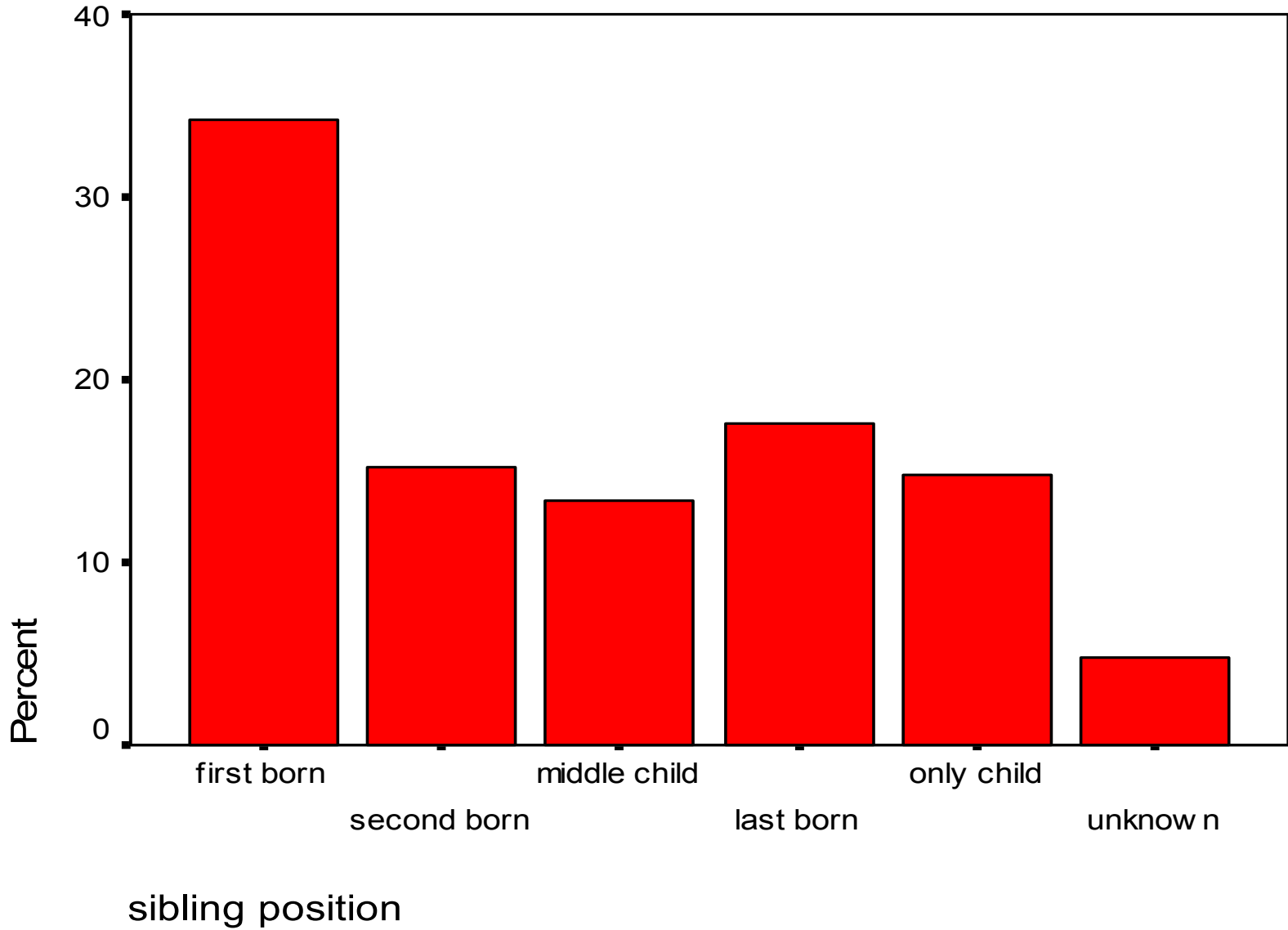
Distribution of Child clients by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	100	47.6
Female	110	52.4
Total	210	100.0

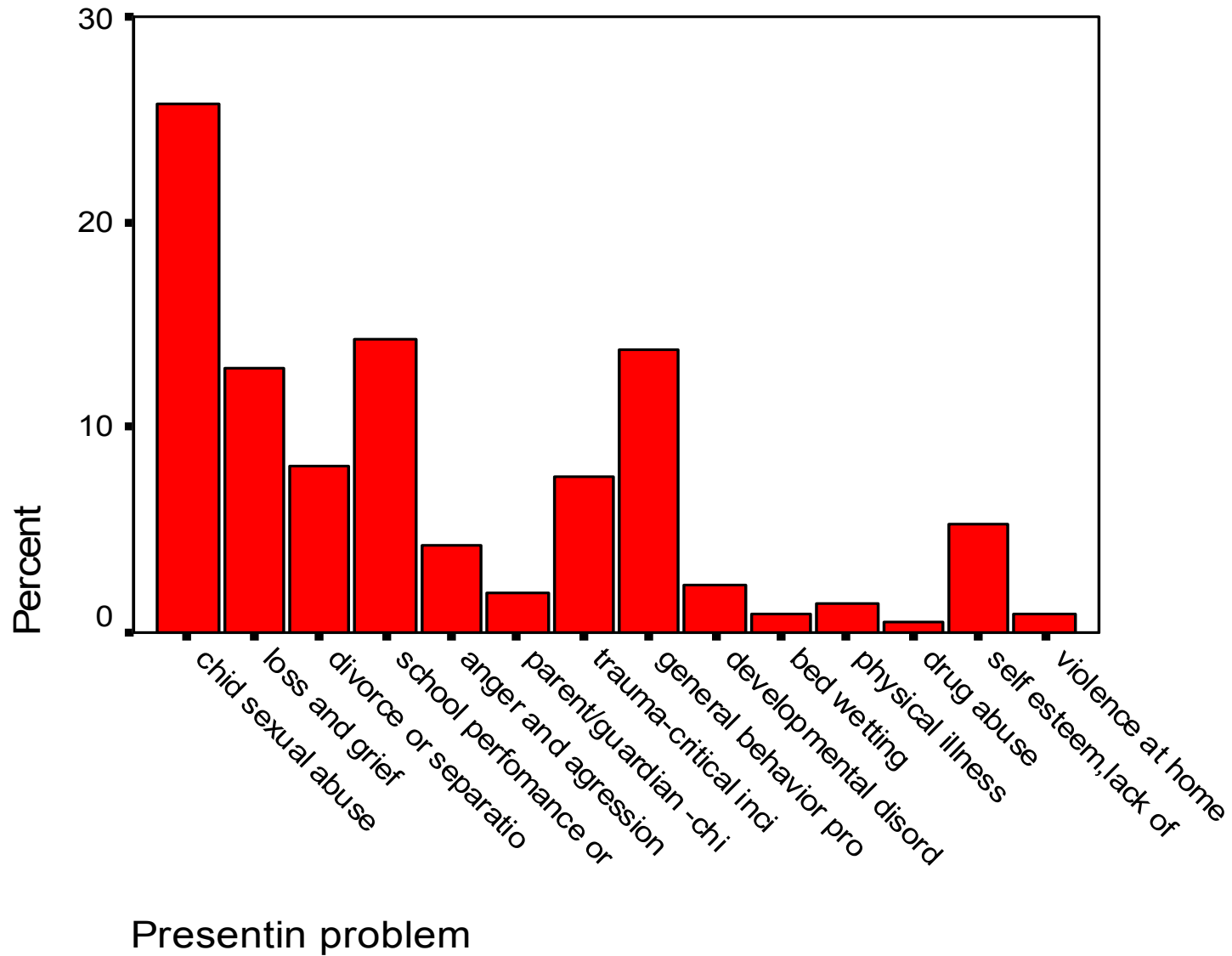
Who refers children to Amani?



Client profile/Characteristics



Presenting Problems



AMANI PLAY THERAPY PROGRAMME:

- A response system to children in need of psychological support following distressful experiences.
- The child's natural means of expression (PLAY) is used as a therapeutic method to assist him/her cope with emotional stress & trauma.

THERAPEUTIC POWER OF PLAY: THE AMANI EXPERIENCE

- Play provides the child with an excellent opportunity to bring their feelings to the surface, learn how to cope.
- 'Enter into a child's play and you will find the place where their minds, hearts, and souls meet' Virginia Axline

The process

- Referral
- Interview with the parent (s)
- Initial Meeting with the child
- Working sessions
- Consultations with Parents
- Preparing for termination
- Termination/Review session (s)

Helps the child experience and identify emotions



Gives the child sense of power



Play provides an avenue for relieving trauma



Has helped many children Work through Grief



Release pent up emotions



The Royal road to the Child's unconscious



Relieve Problems



- Understanding Relationships



Understanding Relationships



Mastering fear & anxiety



Nurturance



Develop Ego Strength



The Challenges

- Premature termination- withdrawal by parents/guardians due to:
- Lack of finances/They have no time to bring the child
- The family would rather use the money to buy food for the child

The Challenges

- They feel that the child is taking too long to get better
- The presenting symptoms have disappeared so they do not see the need for more sessions
- They do not wish to make the necessary adjustments for the child's sake

The Challenges

- Fear that others may perceive them as 'weak parents'
- Paucity to Research
- Supervision in Play therapy
- Lack of Training

CHILD'S EXPERIENCE OF THERAPY

- 'Do other children come here?'
- 'Can I bring my sister?'
- 'Now I know what this place is for. This is a place where Children come to be listened to right?'
- 'This is my special place'
- 'I come here to play and talk'

CHILDREN EXPERIENCE OF THE PLAYROOM & THERAPIST

- ‘When my mum said she was taking me to counselling I was very scared, I thought I would find an elderly lady, with curly hair, big specs and a purple suit, who would ask me many questions.’

*Parting shot to play therapists:
Loose the purple suit!*