

CHAPTER 3

THE EFFECT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON MIDDLE-CHILDHOOD

1. INTRODUCTION

The child's socialization is largely dependent on his interaction in the family context and the family is his initial and primary socializing environment. By learning adjustment within the family situation, the child learns to accept the family's norms and value systems. Lewis (1999:83) and De Witt & Booyesen (1995:17) stated and summarize the value of the family as follows:

- The family is an extricable part of God's plan for humanity. When there is any departure from this plan, those who are part of it fall prey to a myriad of psychological and sociological problems. Basic attachments to parents and to friends are important parts of a young child's development Bee (1998:350). Very often this is absent where family violence is prevalent.
- The family is the source of individual security, identity and a feeling of belonging for each family member. According to Read (2002:36) family relationships contribute to the child's feelings of security, and where there is a loss of family togetherness there is also a loss of security (Zimmerman & Thayer, 2003:39). The family is where family members develop a sense of values, single-mindedness and a sense of purpose.

The family is the only context in which family values and personal identity can be communicated. A child who grows up without strong family ties will find it difficult to maintain meaningful personal and family relationships as an adult.

In South Africa it is already stated during 1999, that violence is one of the main causes of trauma in the lives of children (Lewis 1999:83). More and more children are entering counseling due to various traumas and related difficulties. All children experience difficulties while growing up and these difficulties range in how severe they are. Lewis (1999:5) also states that stress, crisis and trauma are terms often used to describe these difficulties.

The child in the middle-childhood developmental phase does not have the cognitive ability to know what is right or what is wrong in parental behaviors Campbell (in Boikanyo & Donnell, 1997:98).

2. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ITS ROOTS

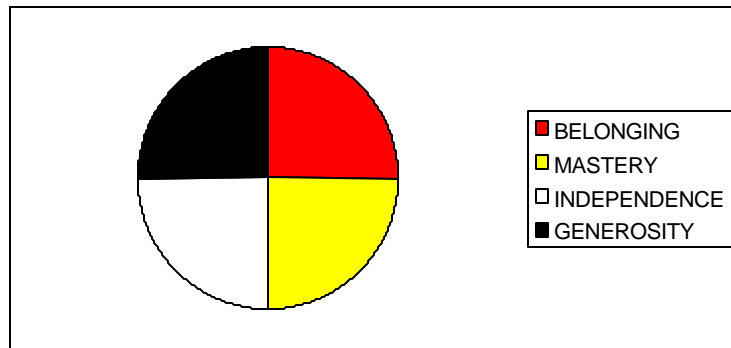
One of the most commonly agreed on causes of family violence is that it is learned. Violence is a learned pattern of behavior that has its roots in early childhood experiences. A child who sees his own mother beaten by his father is likely to grow up to abuse his wife. Likewise, the abused spouse is more apt to have had a violent father than a nonviolent father. Brinegar (1992:22) states that people are creatures of habit. If violent behavior was the everyday experience while growing up, it becomes the pattern of our adult relationships, the role models of the parents are repeated.

Children need people in their lives who help them gain courage to face difficulties without becoming overwhelmed and discouraged. Brendtro & Du Toit (2005:15) writes that when growth needs are met, children have positive outcomes and when growth needs are frustrated, children show problems. These growth needs are ensuring that basic needs are met. Environments that fail to provide **belonging, mastery, independence and generosity** cause great pain to children and are toxic to positive development. Due to the lack of interest from the parents in addressing the basic needs they often feel cut off from human **belonging**. Though bright and creative, have no outlet for **mastery**; powerless to control their own life, could not develop responsible **independence** and although **generous** in their spirit they often had no opportunity to be of value to others.

Brendtro & Du Toit (2005:43) describe the circle of courage as the resilience code because it translates strength-building research into a concise and understandable format. The resilience code is more than a metaphor; it describes universal human

growth needs. The key landmarks of the journey to resilience outcomes are the same as the Gestalt principles and concepts. The key landmarks are **belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.**

Figure 1 : The circle of courage



The above figure refers to the circle of courage that reflects the cycle that the child goes through to develop self-support. It is broken up in the following:

Belonging is developed through opportunities to build trusting bonds of human attachments.

Mastery requires opportunities to creatively solve problems and meet goals for achievement.

Independence is fostered by opportunities to grow in responsibility and autonomy. The move from family support to individual support is encouraged.

Generosity is shown through opportunities to show concern in acts of kindness and altruism.

Children growing up in violence often do not have their basic needs met and do not development attachments and this causes fragmentation in the circle of courage because they feel that they do not belong. Belonging forms the basis of the circle of courage. When belonging is not met children seek belonging in peer and gang groups that often portray a negative sense of belonging.

Violence in the family serves as a training environment for children this is reinforced by Boikanyo & Donnell, (1997:98) who writes that violence in the home is the breeding –ground of violence in society. Violence within the wider society is related to experiences of violence in middle- childhood and the family, which are socialized into a cycle of violence, Campbell (in Boikanyo & Donnell, 1997:98). A child in the middle-childhood phase does not have the cognitive abilities to know what is right or what is wrong in parental behaviors. If the father uses a belt, it must be okay. If the mother slaps the child in the face, it must be okay. If the father and mother cuss, scream and hit each other that must be how boys and girls treat each other.

Parents do not awake in the morning and consciously think, “Today I will abuse our children.” Parents end up abusing their children for many reasons. Emotionally immature parents seldom understand their child’s behavior and stages of development. A baby would not understand a command to stop crying. They cry for specific reasons. It is their communication to the world that they need something – to be fed, changed, held or protected.

Another reason that parents abuse their children is lack of parenting skills and education. They don’t know how to raise a child, this is especially visible in most teenage parents. Many abusive parents are repeating the model they experienced as children. Poor self-image, stress, alcohol and other drug problems, and social isolation contribute to child abuse. A family that is living near other relatives and neighbors is more open to observation and intervention, whereas an isolated family is less influenced by social standards.

Socio-cultural predisposition includes the child’s geographic environment. A city or town, for example Athlone, with a high crime rate teaches fear and distrust. It also can influence a child’s experimentation with breaking social rules. If the consequences of antisocial behaviors are not taught, children don’t learn

accountability for their actions. Socio-cultural predisposition also includes a child's educational experiences, friendships, peer pressures, church teachings and politics. Children play at stabbing, kicking, chasing, beating and 'catch and rape'. Rapcan (2000:66) states that 'catch a rape' is a game played by young boys, aged nine to twelve in township school, where a young girl is sought out, cornered and 'raped'. On many occasions it goes beyond rough play to physical assaults and murder. According to Rapcan (2000:66) examples of these flourish as reports of child on child abuse increases. More recently in Kensington township in the Western Cape according to Rapcan (2000:66), ten children aged between ten and fourteen, beat to death a boy aged ten. At another school in Wynberg, a group of students played a game and battered to death a 13-year-old. So the area and the violence that the child is exposed to where he lives also impact on the child.

3. CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

3.1 ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG ABUSE

According to Brinegar (1992:27) alcohol and other drug abuse precipitates violence in 50% or more of all domestic abuse because these individuals who use alcohol and drugs are more prone to violence than those who don't. A parent can be like two different people, with and without the effects of alcohol and drugs. Sober, the parent is gentle and kind; intoxicated, he may become aggressively punitive and cruel. Substance abuse escalates a person's loss of control and diminishes the ability to think rationally.

Though alcohol and other drug abuse may not be the cause of violence, supporting evidence suggests a positive correlation. Rapcan (2000:65) agrees that alcoholism is commonplace while people seek coping mechanisms for lives of hopelessness. Children grow up with this kind of domestic trauma as a way of life, unquestioned and accepted in the face of worse violence on the streets, as gangsterism increases.

3.2 LIFE CYCLE STAGES

Violence is most likely to occur in young, immature relationships. Seventeen-year-olds are hardly prepared for marriage, let alone child rearing. When a teenager or very young mother or father has a baby, the baby's natural immaturity will be in conflict with the parents' youthful immaturity and lack of parenting education. Barnette (1996:131) touches on the stages in the family and says that no family stays the same for long. Boundaries move and often members of the family come and go, and the family changes. Changes of any kind are hard to cope because it entails adjustment with for the middle-childhood child, especially when it is related to grieve.

3.3 THE NATURE OF VIOLENCE

Sigmond Freud (in Brinegar, 1992:31) believed that violence and aggression are instinctual and inescapable facts of human existence. Violence is innate – that is, it is inherent in the genes of the species. Whereas Fromm (in Brinegar, 1992:35) has stated that violence is learned behavior. Existing research does not indicate the overlap and effect of the life cycle of the parents, the marital developmental stage, the type of family and family violence.

3.4 POWER

May (in Brinegar, 1992:33) mentions violence and aggression are only symptoms of what's wrong with our society and not the disease. The real disease is powerlessness". May states also that in family violence is most apt to occur between persons who are closely tied emotionally and, therefore, vulnerable to each other. May (in Brinegar, 1992:33) states that in counseling children with violent outbursts and hostile statements, 90% of these cases, the child has been abused,

either physically or emotionally, or both. A child who feels powerless will set up power struggles with powerful behavior.

Rapcan (2000:56) also discusses power where men have created for themselves in society, institutionalized power, a domestic hierarchical structure that places them at the head, rather than at the side of their female partner. They also go on by saying in our child-rearing practices we teach a of discipline. Statements like: “Listen to your father” and “Obey your elders”, are said to children on a daily basis. Without realizing it, we are setting our children up to blindly accept this power and unquestioningly obey authority.

3.5 STRESS

Stress is seen as a real problem in family violence. Stress is a precipitating trigger of family violence. For example if mom and dad are in severe conflict or breakdown, the family is in severe conflict or breakdown. Children who grow up in bad marriage homes have a dysfunctional model of what a family can be. Violence is seen, heard and felt in the way parents communicate with children and to one another. Often the child is directly abused as the victim of the bad marriage. In cases of divorce the disintegration of family leads to a child living his life in different compartments and this according to Gestalt causes fragmentation. Boundaries can also be overstepped in the process because of other roles that will kick in and this might affect the child’s security even further. (Morgan 1985:30; Herbert & Harper-Dorton 2002:154)

3.6 LACK OF PARENTING EDUCATION

Our education system is designed to produce responsible young adult for entry into the world as contributing citizens. Various questions arise: “What about parenting education? Who teaches teenagers how to be parents? Who about infants,

child development and stages of behavior. Who teaches about alternatives to corporal?" A substantial percentage of educators have become hostile towards children as their training has not equipped them to cope with children who have been exposed to excessive violence. Many children are in need of some kind of trauma counseling, but sufficient services do not exist. Corporal punishment in the school system supports child abuse and contributes to the problem of family violence we are facing today. Although the Western Cape Education Department (2002:1) has banned corporal punishment in 1996, some educators still feel it should be practiced.

Children need encouragement! Discipline can be experienced without physical punishment. The parent who is well educated in parenting skills and child development does not need to spank. The potential for violence exists within everyone and the choices between nonviolence and violence is a conscious responsibility. Once this responsibility is accepted, teaching can proceed.

3.7 MILIEU DISABLED FAMILIES AND CULTURE

According to Van Staden and Van der Westhuisen (2000:194) there are less privilege and poor families with regard to their cultural backgrounds. Different forms of families exist depending on their race, color, language, ethnicity and ability to survive. Chronic deprivation, neglect and milieu disability is often carried over to adulthood. They also state that milieu disability overlaps with social and economic status a of certain population group.

With regard to the culture of the poor family there are more overlapping than differences in these families with regard to instability, unemployment, school dropouts and low socio-economic status. With regard to the school drop outs when such children comes from these homes and enters school they are already

disadvantaged. Due to the background experiences of these children there is a lack of preparedness with regard to the traditional requirements of school for the so-called middle-class child.

With the result there is maladjustment, deviant behavior, physical inabilities and learning delays. Early development for these children is very important and if there are hardly any stimulation at home due to poverty, violence and socio-economic status the above behavior patterns could be expected. Chazan (in Van Staden and Van der Westhuizen, 2000:195) quotes that: “early development is extremely important for cognitive development... the very young react more sensitively than has previously been supposed to both stimulating and depriving conditions in their immediate environment ... young children can benefit from highly specific and specially planned stimulation; deprived children lack the constant and usually appropriate stimulation which the typical ‘middle class’ or ‘advantaged’ child receives, through close personal interaction with adults, suitable play materials and experience of language; they are likely to spend their early years in an intellectual vacuum.”

Factors influencing thus the milieu-disabled child are the physical milieu, availability of space, life style, culture and intellectual level of parents. Other factors that contribute are family routine with regard to the meeting of needs (eating time, sleep time, bath time), family interaction and the coping of problems and crisis. When the interaction between the milieu-disabled parent and child do exist it is normally of a low quality because of the lack of skills and the cognitive and language development of the parent. Due to the noise level in the house the child receives very little feedback and correction when he begins to speak. The child is therefore not prepared with the language requirements when entering school. His language and background experiences lack of motivation and intellectual stimulation thus for the milieu disabled child means a cognitive backlog especially

with regard to concept formation and generalizing. Milieu-factors affects thus cognitive functioning.

Van Staden & van der Westhuizen (2000:198) also mention that the community where these families live makes it difficult for a couple and family with children to function as a unit due to chronic tension and problems. Due to the exposures these people had new families start and these problems are predicted for them. Other factors that characterizes these families are:

- Unstable marriages and divorce;
- Separation;
- Illegitimate relationships and living together;
- Neglect of children;
- Free time is not being spend productively. Initiative and facilities often do not exist;
- Lack of religion and education around religion;
- Overspend and misuse of money does exist;
- Latest brands are purchased to compensate for the low income, which is material goods, and not strengthen the culture of family members;
- The role of the father disappears while the mother fulfills both roles;
- Alcohol and drugs are used; and
- Violence is often used as a means of coping with the above.

For the middle-childhood child in multi-problem families, where violence is prevalent, things does not turn out the way they want it to be, because the mother is often overloaded, helpless and feels depressed. This makes it difficult for the child to develop his cognitive, affection and communication skills at home. At school the child also experience negative response and feedback of the teacher due to expectations to achieve. Young children thus find themselves in peer groups where they are often accepted for who they are.

4. TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Family violence can be seen in various things. According to Zeena (2004:1), (<http://www.northstar.k12.ak.us/scholls/tan/health/family/james.html>) family violence can be seen in various things. It can be mental or physical abuse. Physical abuses can be child abuse, sibling abuse, elder abuse, and domestic abuse. Mental abuse can be emotional and child abuse. Domestic violence occurs in the following categories:

4.1 **Physical abuse** as stated in the W.C.E.D (Western Cape Education

Department) (2001:12) and Rapcan (2000:80) is any physical action toward another person: pushing, hitting whipping, biting, holding down, throwing, slapping and spanking. Physical violence can produce bruises, concussions, welts, broken bones, and broken lives. When a person is hit in any way by another human being, it is demeaning and he also receives a message of worthlessness. Many abused persons turn to physical violence, leading to fail marriages and broken homes, alcohol and other substance abuse, homicide, crime and even suicide. Brinegar (1992:13) states that 90% of criminals in the United States reported being abused as children.

According to Lewis (1999:98) children who are subjected to physical punishment are more likely to be aggressive to siblings, to bully other children at school, to take part in aggressive behavior in adolescence, to be violent to their spouses and children in adulthood and to commit violent crimes. Already five years ago Lewis (1999:98) suggested to reduce the levels of violence in society, children need to be taught to use alternative ways to solve problems. The need for explorative services is also very important

4.2 Sexual abuse as stated in W.C.E.D (Western Cape Education Department)

(2001:14) and Rapcan (2000:90) means any unlawful physical act of a sexual nature and includes indecent assault, sexual harassment, attempted rape and rape. Sexual abuse may occur between a married couple as marital rape. Any sexual abuse toward other family members is considered incest. Incest is ultimately that there are no boundaries, no responsible limits within which to live a normal, healthy sexual life.

According to Rapcan (2000:50) an interpol survey in 1994 found that South Africa has the highest incidence of reported rape in the world. The police and Rape Crisis Cape Town have reported the following statistics.

- During the first six months of 1996, 23, 806 rapes were reported to Child Protection Unit. This was an increase of 23,3% from 19, 310 reported cases during the same period in 1995. According to this statistics, someone is raped every 12 minutes and of the 23, 806 cases in 1996, 8, 864 victims were under 18.
- Rape Crisis Cape Town reported that during 1995, only 59% of the women who they saw, reported the rape to the police and 53% knew their assailants (Cape Times 1997, January 22).

4.3 Psychological or Emotional abuse according to W.C.E.D (Western Cape Education Department, 2001:15) and Rapcan (2000:83) can be the most difficult to detect and to intervene on. There are various kinds of emotional abuse like:

- constant criticism,
- ignoring a child,
- insulting,
- swearing at a child,
- labeling – lazy, stupid, fat, just like your father,
- comparing children,

- favoritism (in families and in classrooms)
- minimizing achievements,
- invasion of privacy,
- talking about a child as if they are not there,
- being forced into adult roles, and
- black-mailing and bribing children to do something against their will.

4.4 Destruction of property means that violence against family members often is expressed in the destruction of their favorite property, something that is very often of value to the person. Violence of property usually represents a prelude to physical violence Rapcan (2000: 13).

4.5 Violence in the community especially in the township areas are also impacting on children and the families. When observing children at play in these communities, it is hard to see a school playground where children are not imitating violence of some kind.

Through observation it seems that many families are in chaos and the rate of attempted suicide amongst teenagers has increased. More and more children are becoming homeless as they choose to survive on the streets, rather than remain in a chaotic, violent family. “In a society where domestic violence or community violence is seen almost daily, where men have an enormous amount of aggressive power over their female counterparts, where the judicial response is inappropriate and far too many times ineffective, where poverty is all pervasive and education is compulsory only until you are able to find a factory or supermarket job, sexual abuse has become a crime of opportunity” Rapcan (2000:66). This is what the reality is about in most of the township areas. This organization also adds that for every action in society there is a reaction. One must not only look at men’s power to abuse but also examine the cause. If a child is discouraged from ‘feeling’, he

cannot experience himself as a whole. Sinay (1998:23) says that in Gestalt the whole is very different from the sum of its parts.

Research of Rapcan (2000:66) indicates quite clearly that adult offender of child sexual abuse seldom rehabilitate. The task of professionals is to start with the socialization of young boys that encourages sensitive behavior as a natural part of the humanity. As the researcher has observed that there is a need for crying, hugging, loving behavior, helping around the house and playing with dolls should be allowed for boys as much as it is for girls.

4.6 Intra-personal violence often refers to violence within a person due to often negative feedback that is received from family, peers, educators and those with whom the child is in contact with. This often leads to the child not being accepted, and do not accept himself and with the result do not take the necessary responsibility and tends to blame his circumstances and other people with whom he lives. From a Gestalt perspective in working with the here and now the move from external support to self-support is encouraged where the child takes responsibility and look at internal alternatives for change to take place.

Every year millions of children witness violence in their homes. Seeing and hearing violence among family members hurts children in many ways because they do not have to be hit to feel the pain of family violence.

(<http://www.scottsman.com/Missour>).

Literature through the web (<http://www.scottsman.com/Missour>) states that the costs of family violence are high. It takes a severe toll on children, many develop serious physical, mental and emotional problems. These web information on children in South Africa (2004:2) states that children in one third of households are exposed to domestic violence. Literature from the above web also states that without intervention, the effects can last a lifetime. This creates thus a cycle of violence

handed down from generation to generation. Children from violent homes may grow up to come the next generation of adult abusers and victims. It affects everyone. The problems caused by family violence, crime and broken families hurt every person, family and community. The web (<http://www.scottsman.com/Missour>) states that for the middle-childhood child to grow up in a violent home, it means:

- Chaos in the home: The children may never know what to expect at home. Their parents' mood can change instantly from loving to enrage.
- Fear and tension: The daily anger and violence create a living nightmare for the children. They may grow up being afraid of everything and trusting no one.
- Danger: Often, the children are the intended victims of one or both parents. Other times, they get caught in the middle and are hurt or killed by accident.
- Confusion: The children often receive mixed messages. For example: at school they learn hitting is wrong, at home they learn that hitting is used to "solve" problems and to protect yourself as a person.
- Isolation: Often, an abusive parent shuts off the family from the outside world. And the children may withdraw from their peers and other adults too.
- Hopelessness: The children often blame themselves for the violence but they feel powerless to prevent, stop or escape from it. This often in turn affects the self-image.
- Love or Hate Relationship: They may feel protective of an abused parent. But they may also resent him or her for not stopping the abuse. Sometime the children may feel close to the abuser or, other times, they may hope he or she goes away or dies. They may feel guilty for not being able to rescue the family or for loving someone who is abusive.

According to Tucker et al. (2004:2-5) children-witnessing violence in the home use violence as a way to resolve conflict in their lives. When parents hit, punch, scream, call names and are abusive to each other, the cycle or generational perpetuation of violence has begun. Tucker et al (2004: 2-5) demonstrate the **behavior response** of children coping with family violence:

Behavior response of the middle-childhood child due to domestic violence

<p>Runaways:</p> <p>The child decides to avoid the violent behavior between family members, they can run away. Life on the street has to be better than life at home.</p>	<p>Sexual Harassment:</p> <p>As adults, the cycle of violence continues, often in a subtler manner, none the less inappropriate, in the form of sexual harassment in an effort to regain control in their chaotic world.</p>
<p>Violence on the streets:</p> <p>These children, who have been taught by the violent family to always react with violence, then have bred a child who brings violence to the streets. What else do they know in their world? Positive role models have been missing for conflict resolution.</p>	<p>Use of pornography:</p> <p>Pornography has its share of victims as well. Not only is there an exploiter, the pornographer, but he is profiting from the vulnerability of others. This industry is far from a victim phenomenon. Many publications catering to this market are directly linked to child-prostitution rings and provide others with names of available youth and sex-tour operations.</p>
<p>Substance Abuse:</p> <p>Many of these children cope by numbing themselves, and go deeper in to the world of substance abuse as a form of escaping their misery.</p>	<p>Teenage Pregnancy:</p> <p>Young people in search of someone to love may deliberately become pregnant to have a child they think will love them unconditionally.</p>

<p>Food Addictions:</p> <p>Bulimia, anorexia and bingeing/purging are also form of control that a child does to their body because their world is so out of control. It is also a form of self-abuse. Thereby perpetuating the cycle of violence upon them.</p>	<p>Violence at school:</p> <p>Violence at home translates to violence in school. Since 1998, there have been numerous slayings at school by students who solve their problems with weapons, not words.</p>
<p>Sexual assaults:</p> <p>A child who has witnessed family violence understands one thing. That is that relationships are about power and power control and who has the power. One form of absolute power is sexual domination and assault.</p>	<p>Truancy:</p> <p>If there is no support at home, if the parents are engaging in violence as the answer to their problems, a logical choice for child caught in this cycle is t leave, wonder, find fantasy outlets and avoid school.</p>
<p>Date rape:</p> <p>Another is forcible rape, or date rape on our campuses. Children from violent homes, who have the absence of love and nurturing, then love in the only form they know – violence, control and anger.</p>	<p>New generations of violent families:</p> <p>The cycle of violence ends at home. The cycle of peace begins there as well. Each of us has a responsibility towards children to assess our stressful lives, daily and make choices for peace. Children do not do as it is said, they do as adults do.</p>

The above is very often find in reality and the cycle of violence continues. For the middle-childhood child with his abilities, needs behavior what is expected in this developmental phase coming from milieu-disabled family where domestic violence is a way of life, from a Gestalt perspective, the child lives in fragmentation.

5. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN A VIOLENT SOCIETY

Children have a right to live peacefully, without threat to their safety, so that they can survive, be protected and develop their full potential according to the web (<http://childrensrightcentre.co.za>). They also have the right to participate in decisions that affect them, in family, school and society, and so have the right to learn life-skills that will help them make appropriate choices, to enable them to live more safely, (UN Conventions on the right of the child, 1989: 26)

In the South African society it seems that according to the needs and rights of every child are adversely affected by the culture of violence. Literature (<http://www.childrensmovement.org.za/situationmain.htm>) states that many people carry guns. Through observations it seems that the news is full of true stories of violence and violent scenes on “entertainment” television are increasing in number and becoming more and more explicit and horrific. The above web states that it is these violent images that remain in the children’s memories. There is a worrying trend that the sexual scenes, in themselves are inappropriate for children and often include violence. The above web (<http://www.childrensmovement.org.za/situationmain.htm>) also states that the high levels of child abuse are increasing dramatically and that children who have been hurt are more likely to hurt others.

Information on the web (<http://www.childrensrightscentre.co.za>) states that when children’s rights are met in a strong, loving home and supportive environment, they can generally cope with viewing or reading about some violence in the media. They can also usually cope with one or two isolated hurts. What is important to note is that these children do not form a “world view” or outlook on life that accepts violence as normal, and they do not look for violent answers to their concerns for safety and protection.

In the townships like Athlone area a large number of children there do not have a foundation of a stable, caring family to support them. Instead, violence starts in the home, and becomes the norm. It then continues as a widening spiral of violence in schools where they experience violence from peers and also from teachers in spite of legislation banning corporal punishment, (WCED, 2002:1). It spreads further and deeper into their lives if they live in violent communities with alcohol, drug abuse and crime. Literature (<http://www.childrensrightscentre.co.za>) indicates that children are caught up in a spiral of violence where they are not protected and cannot develop fully. They lack opportunities to break out of the spiral, and recover from the hurts they have suffered, and often grow up to perpetuate violence – starting off as victims and ending up as perpetrators.

6. CONCLUSION

In summary Brinegar (1999:6) states and the researcher would like to reinforce that family violence must be alleviated to protect not only its victims, but also social order and community safety, which are being threatened as well. The state of the family reflects the state of society. For a better and safer community, family violence needs to stop. Boulding (in Brinegar 1999:6) states that the home is where people first learn to live with one another, where they learn to love, hate, get angry, fear and forgive. The home needs to change in order to teach how to love and work with others, how to handle emotions, and how to forgive. With these lessons mastered, children will be able to develop their full potential. Lewis (1999:90) agrees that the family environment is often seen as a place where children are nurtured and sheltered, yet many children are at risk of being victimized by their parents. Boikanyo & Donnell (1997:89) also support this view in saying that the family is generally supposed to be the safe haven, the refuge from the vagaries of the external world ... the opposite is true.

The child, who is hit, sooner or later hits back, wither physically or by other methods – power struggles, behavioral problems at home and at school, hitting or bullying other children, withdrawing into isolation, running away, promiscuous behavior, alcohol and other drug abuse, and even suicide. The society gets what the society give.

In conclusion the researcher would like to say that the theoretical research that was discussed needs to be investigated on an empirical level during the research. This would include the roots of domestic violence; causes of violence such as alcohol and drug abuse, the life cycle stages, the nature of violence, power, stress, lack of parenting and milieu-disabled families and also their culture. Types of violence such as physical-, sexual-, psychological and emotional abuse, and destruction of property, violence in the community and intra-personal violence and the rights of children in a violent society.