

The lived experiences of psychologists working in correctional centres in Gauteng,
South Africa

by

SHONITHA HARRIPERSADH

submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF M E FOURIE

MARCH 2022

Declaration

Name: **Shonitha Harripersadh**

Student number: **3405-860-5**

Degree: **Doctor of Psychology**

The Lived Experiences Of Psychologists Working In Correctional Centres In Gauteng, South Africa

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



SIGNATURE

11 March 2022

DATE

Abstract

Psychologists are one of the groups of professionals tasked with the quintessential role of correcting offending behaviour through a rehabilitation process, thereby curbing the rate of recidivism and enhancing societies. However, the turnover rate of psychology professionals in the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has become a significant concern over the years. The number of psychologists employed in the DCS is relatively low in relation to the number of offenders incarcerated at the correctional centres. This becomes a challenge in providing effective rehabilitative services to offenders. To make sense of the high turnover rate, this study explored the lived experiences of psychologists working in the Gauteng Region correctional centres. A qualitative, interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) was employed to explore and interpret how psychologists experience, perceive and make meaning of themselves and their world within the correctional context. Purposive sampling was employed to select a sample of thirteen (13) participants, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences within the correctional context. The transcripts were analysed using IPA methods to interpret and derive meanings about the participant's experiences. Nine (09) master themes and 47 superordinate themes were identified and extensively discussed. The outcome of the study clearly identified the reasoning's / motivations as to why psychologists choose to resign from the DCS after working for only a limited period. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations have been provided that will assist the DCS in the implementation of an effective retention strategy for psychologists.

Opsomming

Sielkundiges is een van die groepe professionele persone wat die hoofrol het om oortredende gedrag deur 'n rehabilitasieproses reg te stel en sodoende die tempo van herhaling te beperk en samelewings te verbeter. Die omsetkoers van sielkundige professionele persone in die Departement van Korrektiewe Dienste (DKD) het egter oor die jare 'n groot bekommernis geword. Die aantal sielkundiges wat in die DKD in diens is, is relatief minder in verhouding tot die aantal oortreders wat by die korrektiewe sentrums opgesluit is. Dit word 'n uitdaging om effektiewe rehabilitasiedienste aan oortreders te verskaf. In 'n poging om sin te maak van die hoë omsetkoers, het hierdie studie die geleefde ervarings van sielkundiges wat in die Gauteng Streek korrektiewe sentrums werk, ondersoek. 'n Kwalitatiewe, interpretatiewe fenomenologiese benadering (IPA) is aangewend om te verken en te interpreteer hoe sielkundiges ervaar, waarneem en betekenis van hulself en hul wêreld binne die korrektiewe konteks maak. Doelgerigte steekproefneming is gebruik om 'n steekproef van dertien (13) deelnemers te kies en semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude is met elke deelnemer gevoer om 'n dieper begrip van hul ervarings binne die korrektiewe konteks te verkry. Die transkripsies is met behulp van IPA-metodes ontleed om die deelnemer se ervarings te interpreteer en betekenis af te lei. Nege (09) meesters temas en 47 superordinate temas is geïdentifiseer en breedvoerig bespreek. Die uitkoms van die studie het duidelik die redenasies/motiverings geïdentifiseer oor hoekom sielkundiges kies om uit die DKD te bedank nadat hulle vir slegs 'n beperkte tydperk gewerk het. Gebaseer op die bevindinge van die studie, is aanbevelings verskaf wat die DKD sal help met die implementering van 'n effektiewe retensiestrategie vir sielkundiges.

Kakaretso

Sehlopha sa dingaka tsa mahloko a kelello ke se seng sa dihlopha tsa bohlokwa tse itshupileng haholo ha re tla lefapheng la Tlhabollo ya Batshwaruwa (DCS), haholo jwang ha re tla tabeng tsa ho leka ho fokotsa botlokotsebe le ntshetso pele ntlafatsong ya sechaba sa rona. Ke ka hona re bonang Lefapha la Tlhabollo ya Ba Tshwaruwa (DCS) le tsitlalleng ho hira ditsebi tsa mahloko a kellello ho leka ho lwantshwana le taba ena ya botlokotsebe bo jeleng setsi ha ka na. Ho bonahala e le taba e tla nka nako e telele pele e tla loka hobane dipalopalo di bothsa e le hore lenale la dingaka tsa mahloko a kelello le tlase haholo ha re le bapisa le lenane la batshwaruwa ba leng ditlamong ka sena sebaka. Ka hona ho batla ho ba boima ho lefapha ho fana ka tshebeletso tsa otlohileng ha re tla ntlheng ya thlabollo ya batshwaruwa. E le ho leka ho utlwisisa kapa ho na ho fihlela sehlohlolong sa ditaba ha re tla ntlheng a sitisang tlhabollo ya batshwaruwa. Ke ka hona ke ileng ka nka qeto ya ho etsa dipatliso ho latela sengolwa sena (research/study), ka hona ke bile le dipuisano le dingaka tse sebelletsang lefapha la Tlhabollo ya Batshwaruwa tlase ho Profinisi ya lebatowa la Gauteng. Mme dipatlisiso tse di entswe ho latela mokhoa o bitswang (Qualitative Research) mme wa qapodiswa ka mokgwa wa boleng o bitswang feela ho re ke (IPA: Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis) ho leka ho ba le boiphihlelo kapa boitsibelo ba ho re na dingaka tse tsa mahloko a kelello di fihlela jwang moelelo mosebetsing wa bona ha re tla mosebetsing wa bona wa ho hlabolla batshwaruwa. Ke ngaka tsa mahloko a kellello tse ka bang (13) leshome le nang le metso e meraro tseo ke ileng ka kena dipuioanong le tsona e le ho seka seka taba ya tlhabollo ya batshwaruwa. Dipuisano tsaka le bona di ile tsa qapodiswa ho latela mokgwa wa (IPA) ho leka ho utlwisisa ho re dingaka tse tsa mahloko a kelello di fumana moelelo jwang mosebetsing ona wa bona o boima wa ho hlabolla batshwaruwa. Mme dipuisanong tse ke fihlelletse lenane la dihlooho tse ka bang robong (09) le tse (47) mashome a mane a metso e supileng tse ka sehloohong tseo sengolwa kapa thuto ena e di

hlalositseng ka botebo. Ka hona dipatlisiso di bontshitse ka botlalo mabaka a etsang hore dingaka tse na tsa mahloko a kellelo di phumane di tsamaya lefapheng la tlabollo ya batshwaruwa ka morao ho sebetsa nako e kgutshwane haholo lefapheng ka baka la ho senatefelwe ke ho etsa mosebetsi wa bona wa tlabollo ya batshwaruwa. Mme ho ya ka dipatlisiso tsa sengolwa sena ke lekile ho tla ka metjha eo lefapha la Tlabollo ya batshwaruwa e ka latelang ho fokotsa tshubutlhellano eo dingaka tsa mahloko a kellelo di tsamayang ka yona lefapheng.

Dedication

Keep going, and don't stop

Your last words of motivation to me

This one's for you, dad (Rathilall Harripersadh).

A promise fulfilled

I miss and love you

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I give thanks to my Almighty Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for opening all doors for me to complete this degree. I am humbled in Your presence.

I am grateful to my ancestors for their continuous guidance and watchful eye over me.

I am thankful to UNISA and the DCS for the opportunity to conduct this study.

Professor Fourie, my words will not do justice to express my gratitude. I feel so blessed to have been supervised by you. Your prompt responses, consistent motivation and encouragement, especially during trying times, gave me the courage to continue and complete the thesis. I am still in awe that a supervisor of your calibre exists. I am truly humbled, appreciative and highly grateful for this shared journey with you. From the bottom of my soul, I thank you, Prof Fourie.

My darling husband, Collin Govender, thank you so much for being my fortress of strength, my mentor, advisor, constant challenger and darer. You dare me, and I do it. Thank you for standing by my side and cheering me on. You have truly displayed patience and tolerance when I needed to focus on my studies. For all the sacrifices you made, I am humbled and grateful. You are truly a one in a million kind of husband, and I'm grateful for your love. I love you, hamesha and forever.

Ishaan and Shain (my brothers) you supported me and made this journey easier by providing assistance whenever I needed it. I am truly grateful. I love you both. Eeren (my brother), your emotional support, constant advice and encouragement reminded me of daddy's talks with me. Thank you for those private moments shared between a brother and sister. It meant so much to me. I love you, brother. Shyan (my littlest brother), I am grateful for your texts and messages that motivated me to go on. I love you. My parents-in-law, thank you for your prayers and emotional support. Jade and Nichola, thank you for all the assistance you

rendered during the transcription process and for the love and support you gave me. I love you both.

Zodwa, my research pal, thank you for the shared journey of travelling together to gather data for our studies during one of the most turbulent weather conditions experienced in Gauteng. Having you by my side and bumping ideas off each other made the research journey much easier. Thank you, dear friend.

Heartfelt gratitude to my friend Kgomotso and colleague Pando for assisting me with the translation of the abstract. I am so grateful. A huge thank you to all my colleagues from Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area for cheering me on.

Last but not least, I extend a huge bundle of gratitude to all the participants of the study who availed themselves for the interviews despite their busy schedules. I commend each one of you for your brutal honesty and for sharing your lived experiences with me.

I am because you are. God bless you all abundantly.

Contents

Declaration.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Opsomming.....	iii
Kakaretso	iv
Dedication.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Chapter One – Setting the Context	18
The History of Psychology in South Africa	20
The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) in Relation to Psychology.....	27
Employment Opportunities and Challenges for South African Psychology Professionals	30
Psychology in Relation to Public Service in South Africa	33
Correctional Services and the Role of Psychology within the Correctional Context.....	35
<i>Registered Counsellors</i>	38
<i>Psychometrists</i>	41
<i>Clinical Psychologists and Counselling Psychologists</i>	42
<i>Educational Psychologists</i>	43
The Rationale for the Study	45
Research Problem and Research Questions.....	49
Aims and Objectives of the Study	52
Research Design	53
Definition of Terms	54
Chapter Summary	55
Overview of the Remaining Chapters.....	56
Chapter Two – Literature Review.....	59
Defining Lived Experience.....	60
<i>Lived Experiences of Student Psychologists (From Being to Becoming)</i>	60
<i>Lived Experiences of Practising Psychotherapists in Various Contexts</i>	64
<i>Lived Experiences of Psychologists Working in International Correctional Centres</i>	75
<i>Lived Experiences of Professionals Working in South African Correctional Centres</i>	83
Chapter Summary	93
Chapter Three – Theoretical Framework.....	96
Social Constructionism.....	96
The Shift Begins (from Analytical Methods to a Meaning-making Process)	97
Defining Social Constructionism.....	98
Origins of Social Constructionism.....	100
Key Characteristics of Social Constructionism	101
<i>Language</i>	102
<i>Culture and History</i>	104
<i>Discourse and Disciplinary Power</i>	106
<i>Power Relations</i>	107

<i>Relativism</i>	108
An Ontological Perspective of Social Constructionism	109
An Epistemological Perspective of Social Constructionism in Relation to this Study	111
Social Constructionism in Research Studies	112
Chapter Summary	115
 Chapter Four – Research Methodology	 117
Qualitative Research	118
Phenomenological Research Design.....	120
<i>Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)</i>	120
Key Elements of the IPA as a Method of Research Inquiry.....	121
Setting Context for the Sampling	124
Sampling	127
Data Collection Methods	128
Analysis of Data	133
Trustworthiness and Credibility	134
Ethical Considerations	136
Reflexivity: My Role as Colleague and Researcher	137
Chapter Summary	140
 Chapter Five – Presentation of Findings.....	 142
Demographical Information of the Participants	142
Presentation of the Findings	144
<i>Master Theme: The Alluring Prospect</i>	147
Superordinate Theme: DCS Employment Opportunities	148
Superordinate Theme: Personal Interest.....	149
<i>Master Theme: The Adjustment Process</i>	151
Superordinate Theme: Absence of the National Psychological Directorate.....	151
Superordinate Theme: Learn on the Job.....	152
Superordinate Theme: DCS Training versus Peer Supervision.....	154
Superordinate Theme: Mental Preparation.....	156
Superordinate Theme: Struggles with the System.....	156
Superordinate Theme: Old School of Thought versus New School of Thought.....	158
Superordinate Theme: Certain Officials want to be paid an Uber Fare	159
Superordinate Theme: Stuff Can Change Very Quickly, and Things Can Go Bad Very Quickly.....	160
Superordinate Theme: Feelings of Helplessness to Effect Genuine Rehabilitation	161
<i>Master Theme: Access to Resources</i>	164
Superordinate Theme: Access to Training	164
Superordinate Theme: Scarce Stationery and Office Furniture.....	165
Superordinate Theme: Unreliable Information Technology.....	166
Superordinate Theme: Unavailability of Psychometric Tests	167
Superordinate Theme: Inadequate Offices and Group Rooms	168
Superordinate Theme: Shortage of Human Resources	170
Superordinate Theme: Wearing of Uniforms versus Unavailability of Uniforms.....	171

Superordinate Theme: Time Management versus Correctional Centres'	
Operational Demands.....	172
<i>Master Theme: Safety and Security</i>	173
Superordinate Theme: Feelings of Being Unsafe.....	174
Superordinate Theme: Threatening Behaviours from Offenders	175
Superordinate Theme: The Need for Self-Defence Training	176
Superordinate Theme: The Need for a Permanent Security Official.....	176
Superordinate Theme: The Need for Safety Equipment.....	178
Superordinate Theme: Escorting of Offenders and Psychologists versus Psychologists Escorting Offenders	178
<i>Master Theme: Overwhelming Workload (Quantity versus Quality)</i>	181
Superordinate Theme: Thrown Into Doing Admin Stuff	181
Superordinate Theme: Meeting the Target: Annual Performance Plan (APP)..	182
Superordinate Theme: Psychological Reports.....	183
<i>Master Theme: Professional Identity Crisis</i>	186
Superordinate Theme: Security Setting Compromising a Confidentiality Profession.....	186
Superordinate Theme: Ethical Dilemmas	187
Superordinate Theme: The Hats We Wear	189
Superordinate Theme: An Unrecognised Profession.....	190
Superordinate Theme: Being Micro-Managed versus Flexibility	192
Superordinate Theme: Deterioration of Clinical Skills	194
Superordinate Theme: Even the Healer Needs Healing from Burnout	195
<i>Master Theme: Power in Resilience</i>	196
Superordinate Theme: The Effect of Vicarious Trauma on Mental Health	197
Superordinate Theme: Desensitisation	199
Superordinate Theme: Debriefing, Therapy, and Supervision as a Coping Mechanism	200
Superordinate Theme: Peer Support from Psychologists versus Power Struggles within the Correctional Centre	202
Superordinate Theme: Discord versus Solidarity with Social Workers	205
Superordinate Theme: Developing Resilient Behaviours.....	209
Superordinate Theme: Acquired Behavioural and Psychological Implications.....	210
Superordinate Theme: A Reflective and Cathartic Experience	212
<i>Master Theme: Reframing the Profession of Psychology within the DCS</i>	214
Superordinate Theme: Nurturing Relationships	214
Superordinate Theme: Providing a Valuable Service.....	215
Superordinate Theme: Work Satisfaction.....	217
Superordinate Theme: Honing Skills.....	218
Superordinate Theme: Working With a Unique and Interesting Population.....	219
The Use of Various Theoretical Approaches.....	220
Superordinate Theme: Remunerative Work Outside of the DCS (Private Practice): Unique to the South African Correctional Context.....	220
Superordinate Theme: A Context for Research and Training	221
Superordinate Theme: Taking the Initiative and Effecting Change	221
<i>Master Theme: Possible Retention Strategies</i>	223
Superordinate Theme: Remaining in the Service of the DCS	224
Superordinate Theme: Further Academic Development within the DCS	226
Superordinate Theme: The Need for Continuous Support	226

Superordinate Theme: Closing the Gaps to Meet the Needs of Correctional Psychologists	228
Chapter Summary	232
Chapter Six – Discussion of the Findings.....	233
The Findings	234
<i>Master Theme: The Alluring Prospect</i>	234
Superordinate Theme: DCS Employment Opportunities	234
Superordinate Theme: Personal Interest	236
<i>Master Theme: The Adjustment Process</i>	237
Superordinate Theme: Absence of the National Psychological Directorate	237
Superordinate Theme: Learn on the Job	238
Superordinate Theme: DCS Training versus Peer Supervision.....	239
Superordinate Theme: Mental Preparation	240
Superordinate Theme: Struggles with the System.....	241
Superordinate Theme: Old School of Thought versus New School of Thought.....	242
Superordinate Theme: Certain Officials want to be paid an Uber Fare	244
Superordinate Theme: Stuff Can Change Very Quickly, and Things Can Go Bad Very Quickly	246
Superordinate Theme: Feelings of Helplessness to Effect Genuine Rehabilitation.....	248
<i>Master Theme: Access to Resources</i>	250
Superordinate Theme: Access to Training	250
Superordinate Theme: Scarce Stationery and Office Furniture.....	252
Superordinate Theme: Unreliable Information Technology.....	252
Superordinate Theme: Unavailability of Psychometric Tests	253
Superordinate Theme: Inadequate Office and Group Rooms.....	253
Superordinate Theme: Shortage of Human Resources	254
Superordinate Theme: Wearing of Uniforms versus Unavailability of Uniforms	256
Superordinate Theme: Time Management versus Correctional Centres’ Operational Demands	256
<i>Master Theme: Safety and Security</i>	257
Superordinate Theme: Feelings of Being Unsafe	258
Superordinate Theme: Threatening Behaviours from Offenders	258
Superordinate Theme: The Need for Self-Defence Training	260
Superordinate Theme: The Need for a Permanent Security Official.....	261
Superordinate Theme: The Need for Safety Equipment.....	262
Superordinate Theme: Escorting of Offenders and Psychologists versus Psychologists Escorting Offenders	263
<i>Master Theme: Overwhelming Workload (Quantity versus Quality)</i>	265
Superordinate Theme: Thrown Into Doing Admin Stuff	265
Superordinate Theme: Meeting the Target: Annual Performance Plan (APP)..	266
Superordinate Theme: Psychological Reports	268
<i>Master Theme: Professional Identity Crisis</i>	269
Superordinate Theme: Security Setting Compromising a Confidentiality Profession	270
Superordinate Theme: Ethical Dilemmas	271

Superordinate Theme: The Hats We Wear	273
Superordinate Theme: An Unrecognised Profession.....	275
Superordinate Theme: Being Micro-Managed versus Flexibility	276
Superordinate Theme: Deterioration of Clinical Skills	277
Superordinate Theme: Even the Healer Needs Healing from Burnout	278
<i>Master Theme: Power in Resilience</i>	279
Superordinate Theme: The Effect of Vicarious Trauma on Mental Health	280
Superordinate Theme: Desensitisation	282
Superordinate Theme: Debriefing, Therapy, and Supervision as a Coping Mechanism.....	282
Superordinate Theme: Peer Support versus Power Struggles	283
Superordinate Theme: Discord versus Solidarity with Social Workers	285
Superordinate Theme: Developing Resilient Behaviours.....	286
Superordinate Theme: Acquired Behavioural and Psychological Implications.....	287
Superordinate theme: A Reflective and Cathartic Experience	289
<i>Master Theme: Reframing the Profession of Psychology within the DCS</i>	290
Superordinate Theme: Nurturing Relationships	290
Superordinate Theme: Providing a Valuable Service.....	291
Superordinate Theme: Work Satisfaction.....	292
Superordinate Theme: Honing Skills.....	293
Superordinate Theme: Working with a Unique and Interesting Population.....	293
Superordinate Theme: The Use of Various Theoretical Approaches	295
Superordinate Theme: Remunerative Work Outside of the DCS (Private Practice): Unique to the South African Correctional Context.....	295
Superordinate Theme: A Context for Research and Training	296
Superordinate Theme: Taking the Initiative and Effecting Change	296
<i>Master Theme: Possible Retention Strategies</i>	297
Superordinate Theme: Remaining in the Service of the DCS	297
Superordinate Theme: Further Academic Development within the DCS	298
Superordinate Theme: The Need for Continuous Support	300
Superordinate Theme: Closing the Gaps to Meet the Needs of Correctional Psychologists	300
Chapter Summary	303
 Chapter Seven – Summary, Limitations and Recommendations.....	305
Summary of the Study	305
Limitations of the Study	307
Recommendations.....	308
 Chapter Eight – Narrative Reflections of My Lived Experience of Working in a Correctional Centre	313
An Unexpected Calling.....	313
The Training	314
A Whole New World... My Transition into the Correctional Centre	317
Coming into Ranks	319
The Unofficial Registered Counsellor	324
Transition from Counsellor to Clinical Psychologist	324
Community Service in the DCS	326
To Wear Uniform or Not to Wear Uniform... The Paradox	327

A Threatening Situation.....	328
My Participation in the National Lifer Task Teams	328
My Transition from Community Service Psychologist to a Permanent Psychologist in the DCS	330
The Workload.....	331
A High-Risk Environment.....	332
Supervision as Therapeutic Relief	333
Attendance at Conferences and CPD (Continuous Professional Development) Workshops	334
Investing in Relationships.....	335
A Life-Altering Catastrophe... The Coronavirus Pandemic (Covid-19)	336
Conclusion <i>A Journey from 'Being to Becoming'</i>	337
References.....	339

List of Tables

Table 1

The DCS-Gauteng Region 126

Table 2

Demographical Information of Participants..... 143

Table 3

List of Superordinate and Master Themes 145

List of Appendices

Appendix A: UNISA Ethics Approval Letter	367
Appendix B: DCS Ethics Approval Letter.....	369
Appendix C: Information Sheet	370
Appendix D: Informed Consent Form for Participants.....	371
Appendix E: Interview Schedule	372

Chapter One

Setting the Context

Life itself is a meeting between the individual subject and the collective past, the organism and the genetic heritage. So it is in psychology where at some point in the career of every psychologist their personal journey merges with the historical journey of psychology itself.

(Engelsted, 2017, p. 4)

The turnover rate of psychology professionals in the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) in South Africa has become a significant concern over the years. Psychologists are one of the groups of professionals tasked with the quintessential role of correcting offending behaviour through a rehabilitation process, thereby curbing the rate of recidivism and enhancing societies (Department of Correctional Services, 2005). The occupation of psychologists in the DCS is considered a scarce skill and critical due to the invaluable services rendered to offenders in addressing their rehabilitative needs. However, the number of psychologists employed in the DCS is relatively low in relation to the number of offenders incarcerated in the correctional centres. Furthermore, the incessant crime rate has generated significant challenges such as overcrowding and inmates yet to be sentenced but being held in correctional centres. The offenders, however, are not the only population in the correctional centres that experience the pains and challenges of overcrowding. Such challenges are forcefully heaved onto the caretakers of the correctional system, who are compelled to bear the burdens of their workload. Correctional officials are expected to work in confined units that house a large number of offenders with only minimal official human resources. Moreover, the healthcare professionals such as nurses, social workers,

psychologists as well as educationists are expected to assist as many offenders as possible with minimal resources.

Botha and Pienaar (2006) conducted a quantitative study involving 157 employees of the DCS from a management area situated in the Free State province in South Africa. The study aimed to establish the dimensions of occupational stress of employees and the role of psychological strengths, namely, work locus of control and affect in the experience of occupational stress. The participants of the study consisted of internal and external custodial officials, administrative personnel, artisans, and professionals. A major finding of the study indicated that the severe overcrowding in correctional centres was one of the factors that played a huge role in the stressors experienced by the sample of correctional officials. The officials were expected to perform duties that did not form part of their job description. There was insufficient personnel and they were forced to deal with crisis situations. Another major finding was the lack of resources including inadequate salaries, the lack of recognition and motivation, and physical threat.

Bergh (as cited in Botha & Pienaar, 2006) argued that South African correctional centres were facing an additional crisis because professionals were also being affected by the continuous stress experienced in correctional centres. Bergh further predicted that this will result in professionals resigning from their positions in the correctional centres consequently increasing the employee turnover rate and ultimately creating profound negative implications for the DCS and the management of offenders. However, despite efforts made by the DCS to retain psychologists, the turnover rate remains a challenge and ultimately impedes the rehabilitation process of offenders. It cannot be disputed that psychologists form a pivotal component of the DCS organisation, and their skills are vastly necessitated. To understand the role and significance of psychologists working in the DCS, it is crucial to discuss the history of South African psychology.

The History of Psychology in South Africa

Engelsted (2017, p. 4) stated that, “psychology is the quintessential life science for at least four seasons. Life itself is a meeting between the individual subject and the collective past, the organism, and the genetic heritage. So it is in psychology where at some point in the career of every psychologist, their personal journey merges with the historical journey of psychology itself.” In acknowledging this statement, it becomes imperative to highlight the historical foundations of psychology in South Africa and how it became an established discipline. Psychology has developed into an independent discipline over the past 100 years (Annet et al., 1974). The discipline transcended over the decades, becoming a relevant field of practice within various contexts (Belkin & Skydell, 1979). Psychologists have since become closely invested in studying and understanding the intersectional relationships between brain function and behaviour and the environment and behaviour (American Psychological Association [APA], 2011). After the Second World War, psychology vastly expanded when numerous students chose to conduct research and applications in psychology (Belkin & Skydell, 1979). The history of psychology in South Africa became inextricably linked to international psychology (Lionel, 2014). Many South African psychologists travelled abroad to obtain PhDs and came into contact with prominent international psychologists. Jan Christiaan Smuts, the Prime Minister of South Africa in 1919-1924 and 1939-1948, was internationally regarded as the first important and influential South African psychologist. Smuts, however, was a lawyer by profession who also had a notable interest in psychology and made significant contributions to the field. Smuts contributions led to extensive engagements and correspondences with Alfred Adler, Kurt Koffka and Fritz Perls. Adler was an Austrian medical doctor, psychotherapist, and founder of the school of individual psychology; Koffka a German psychologist and Perls a German psychiatrist and psychotherapist. Gordon Willard Allport was an American psychologist who also engaged

extensively with South African psychologists (Lionel, 2014). Seedat and Lazarus (2014) thus maintained that the discipline of psychology in South Africa became firmly rooted in Western ideology.

Consequently, South African psychology emerged as an offspring of Western structures and was entrenched in a pool of Euro-American knowledge and prescripts, thereby alienating indigenous knowledge systems. Moreover, South Africa's historical milieu of Apartheid ensured that Western psychological discourses and prescripts were positioned to reinforce oppression in the vast majority whilst supporting the interests of the dominant white minority (Seedat & Lazarus, 2014). Politics and race thus became the defining characteristics within the South African context and formed an integral role in South African psychology (Lionel, 2014). Seedat and MacKenzie (2007) emphasised that South African psychology aligned itself within the framework of scientific racism, preserving the permanent residence of Eurocentric psychology, colonialism, and subsequent Apartheid practices.

Seedat and Lazarus (2014) further argued that such practices ultimately resulted in racially skewed systems of knowledge production, research, and services rendered. Van Ommen (2008) concurred that institutional silence was viewed as consent for discriminatory practices. Thus, the field of psychology became a significant contributor to historical exploitation practices. Barnes and Cooper (2014) also discussed the role of (Apartheid) psychology in an interview held with Sathasivan (Saths) Cooper, one of the political prisoners incarcerated on Robben Island (situated in the Western Cape of South Africa) during the Apartheid regime. Cooper (as cited in Barnes & Cooper), confirmed that psychologists in the employ of the Correctional Services in South Africa at the time attempted to beguile the political prisoners with various enticements such as extra meals, receiving letters from families, and being moved to single cells if they co-operated with the practices of the system (Barnes & Cooper, 2014).

South African psychology, however, rapidly grew in the 1920s when a British psychiatrist, John Dunston, was appointed as the first Commissioner of Mental Hygiene and the first part-time Professor of Psychiatry at the University of the Witwatersrand Medical School. Dunston returned to the country after an extensive tour abroad and facilitated the employment of psychologists, introduced various interventions, and standardised intelligence tests for South African conditions (Long, 2013; Seedat & MacKenzie, 2007). Dunston did not have an appreciation for South Africa's non-white counterparts, hence the focus of psychology centred on the 'white realm'. According to Seedat and MacKenzie (2007), South African psychologists silently supported the racialist divide by providing services only to a selective population of the country without so much as critically questioning the fairness of segregation. The social equality of poor whites and their sexual relations with other race groups was of critical concern. This directed the launch of the Carnegie Commission's Poor White Study, which became a significant achievement for the discipline of psychology (Long, 2013).

Seedat and Lazarus (2014) argued that the study arose from a racially motivated concern based on class divisions amongst the white Afrikaner population. Seedat and Lazarus further contended that the psychologists involved in the study articulated that these class divisions were disintegrating a unified white community and facilitated the socialisation process of poor whites with Africans. The psychological component further provided recommendations on the government's policy of workplace and social segregation. The study provided psychologists with the opportunity of using and demonstrating their battery of psychometrics in addressing the concerns in which they were outstandingly successful. At the same time, though the study also attempted to maintain white privilege and a cohesive community despite the harsh reality of an increasing class divide and inter-racial comradeship (Long, 2013; Seedat & Lazarus, 2014). In 1946, the National Institute for Personnel Research

was established. Psychologists in the air force were employed to conduct a state-funded study on how the African labour workforce could be maximally exploited for the benefit of white businesses. South African psychology thus ultimately conformed and prescribed to the standards set by the Apartheid regime (Long, 2013).

In 1948, the South African Psychological Association (SAPA) became the first professional psychology body to be established with a constituency of 34 members. In 1957, a non-white psychologist named Josephine Naidoo applied to be a member of the association and was refused membership due to the colour of her skin. In 1962, black psychologists were finally allowed to become members of the association, which subsequently led to the resignation of several white psychologists (Lionel, 2014). According to Lionel, SAPA allowed the membership of black psychologists to gain acceptance and continuous international engagement whilst at the same time minimising contact with black psychologists. Evidence of this was witnessed at the 14th SAPA annual meeting, where the usual official dinner did not take place to prevent the equal socialisation of black and white psychologists.

On 23 June 1962, the psychologists who had resigned from SAPA established a 'whites only' psychological association known as the Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA) (Lionel, 2014). Subsequently, at the beginning of the 1970s, there was a discernible political shift and the ultimate steady decline of the Apartheid regime. South Africa produced its first black psychologist, Chabani Manganyi, who wrote about the black experience of political oppression (Long, 2013). In 1983, the two psychological associations merged to become one professional body known as the Psychology Association of South Africa (PASA). Although this association was established for the membership of all psychologists, it was still under the leadership of the Afrikaner and consisted of predominantly white psychologists (Lionel, 2014).

Lionel (2014) stated that the academic boycott in conjunction with the fall of the Apartheid regime played a significant role in transforming South African psychology, and consideration was given to the mental health needs of black South Africans. Black and white psychologists were forced to engage on an equal platform. Due to PASA's inability to respond to the needs of the majority of black South Africans and the lack of new memberships, a new body was formed in 1994 known as the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA). During the late 1980s and early 1990s, a group of psychologists held discussions on the relevance of psychology practices during Apartheid. These discussions established what came to be known as the 'relevance debate' (Macleod, 2004).

Psychological practices during Apartheid South Africa were subsequently accused of providing unjust services, being culturally biased and not facilitating processes to introduce change (Macleod, 2004). The search for relevance in psychology resulted in the emergence of empowerment, especially in communities. The call for relevance in psychology since 1994 focussed on establishing a multi-racial demographical profile of psychologists and actively responding to representative policy concerns (De la Rey & Ipser, 2004). After the establishment of PsySSA, which became the first non-racial psychology organisation, a special issue on black authorship was published in the South African Journal of Psychology. This issue featured articles written by black psychologists. The entire editorial process was handed over to a black editorial group (De la Rey & Ipser, 2004).

Whilst the early history of South African psychology was firmly rooted in excluding black psychologists from professional bodies and the exclusion of mental health needs for the black population, black psychologists have since transcended into leadership roles within the psychological association and mental health care has become unprejudiced and available to all South Africans (Lionel, 2014). Stead (2002) asserted that the transformation of South African psychology has led to various positive changes, and psychologists such as Seedat (as

cited in Stead, 2002) have argued for a liberatory knowledge in making psychology more meaningful in diverse contexts to assist the needy. South African psychology has since renewed the criteria for professional registration, created mental health projects amongst others addressing poverty, violence, gender issues and HIV/AIDS (Stead, 2002).

Subsequently, the relevance and transformation of psychology in South Africa has been a contentious issue of concern since the 1970s as psychologists have been arguing that psychological theories change to fit the South African context rather than remain obligated to Western prescripts (Long, 2013). In addition, Long (2013), Macleod (2004), Seedat and Lazarus (2014), Van Ommen (2008), and other authors raised the concern that despite the transformation of South African psychology, questions regarding the relevance of psychology for the majority of South Africans are still a considerable concern, especially because it is moving at such a slow pace and continues to pose a challenge. Macleod argued that although much has changed in South African psychology since 1994, much remains the same.

Decolonising the discipline of psychology has resulted in long and arduous struggles that Long (2016) attributed to the demographics of the profession. According to Long, most of the psychologists in the field are white. In addition, the selection criteria utilised for selecting students into professional training programmes, the uneven racial composition of the selection panels and the skewed racial demographics of registered psychologists and counsellors still pose a challenge (Long, 2013, 2016). Furthermore, white psychologists tend to stay away from the concept of African psychology as it may create uncomfortable memories of Apartheid practices (Long, 2016). Consequently, there is a shortage of registered psychologists who can speak the African languages (Long, 2013).

Similarly, Leopeng (2019) highlighted that psychology students who conduct community work tend to link it as work with *African clients*. White psychotherapists are perceived as requiring additional protection when rendering services in African communities

to their African clients. Leopeng argued that such perceptions might create more harm to the client's experience of psychotherapy. Notably, Pillay (2016, 2017) accentuated that the discipline of psychology chose to be silent when the country experienced some of the most significant social changes, such as the 'fees must fall' campaign which took place in the year 2015 at the University of Cape Town and other universities as well as the carnage of striking miners at Marikana in the year 2012. Pillay (2016) argued that it was during these decolonisation movements that the discipline of psychology could have come to the fore and provided a supportive role. Instead, only a fraction of the number of psychologists chose to participate in media debates surrounding these events.

Regrettably, South African psychology appears to have shifted its focus from community responsibilities towards market relevance. Pillay (2016) emphasised that silence is a form of acceptance and the discipline of psychology chooses to remain quiet during critical conversations, thus inadvertently imposing harm on the very people they are supposed to help. Kagee (2014) concurred that even after decades of South Africa becoming a democratic country, there are still considerable ruptures in the socio-economic and racial sectors, which hinder progress to creating a just and even society. Unfortunately, history has shown that the discipline of psychology has created the reputation of being a follower rather than an active and debatable participant of prescribed discourses and has dismally failed to understand and benefit the people (Long, 2016; Pillay, 2017). Kagee (2014) contended that it is time for the field of psychology to come to the fore and make an indelible mark in assisting the country to deal with issues such as gender-based violence, child abuse, substance abuse and risky sexual behaviours, all of which are deep-seated in the vast concerns of the country's socio-economic inequality, issue of racism, gender inequality and political corruption.

Although the process of transforming South African psychology is moving slowly, Pillay (2017) argued that the discipline of psychology could be decolonised by following

approaches such as indigenisation, accompaniment, and denaturalisation, including approaches of cultural and liberation psychology. In other words, knowledge produced locally must be included to change current standard psychology practices, which will be relevant and reactive to South African realities. In addition, Long (2016) contended that the definitions of *being African* are perceived as exclusively racial and cultural, making it complex for the diverse population of psychologists to include themselves in this field. *Being African* has little to do with racial and cultural exclusivity but instead speaks to the continuous class oppression and material exploitation (Long, 2016).

Furthermore, Leopeng (2019) stated that psychotherapy could be decolonised and made more relevant for all South Africans if psychologists displayed compassion and, as a united entity, expelled the roots of subjugation and discrimination, which prevent the prospect of African psychology. Leopeng alluded to the promotion of a dialogical psychotherapeutic process that considers the socio-political and economic factors of the client's lived realities rather than Western psychology that psychologises experience and requests solutions from the client. Assessment tools also need to be developed and made relevant to the South African context taking into consideration the diversity of the South African population (Leopeng, 2019).

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) in Relation to Psychology

In 1974, the field of psychology became a recognised profession for all South Africans (Van Eeden et al., 2016). The discipline has become well-established and is currently one of the twelve professions governed by a statutory body known as the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). Psychologists are guided by the Health Professions Act No. 56 of 1974 (Government Gazette, 2011). The HPCSA dictates the laws and regulations regarding registration, scope of practice, education and training, ethical

dilemmas, professional development, and adherence to the quality of healthcare in South Africa (HPCSA, 2008). The mission of the HPCSA is to provide quality healthcare standards for all South Africans. HPCSA's vision is to enhance the quality of health within the 12 professional boards by establishing healthcare standards for training and discipline in the professions registered with the HPCSA.

Furthermore, a goal of the HPCSA is to ensure ongoing professional development to maintain the competence of all registered professionals and foster compliance with the set standards (HPCSA, 2008). According to the HPCSA (n.d.), one needs to acquire a master's degree in psychology and be trained and skilled in the field before registering with the HPCSA as a registered psychologist practising within a specific scope of psychology. As indicated in the Health Professions Act No. 56 of 1974 (Government Gazette, 2011), there are various scopes of practice within the profession of psychology. The Health Professions Act No.56 of 1974 (Government Gazette, 2011) adheres to specific regulations that define the scopes of practice in psychology. According to the Government Gazette (2018), the scopes of practice recognised by the HPCSA in the profession of psychology are outlined as follows:

Clinical Psychologists, "providing comprehensive bio-psychosocial healthcare across the lifespan; assessment, diagnosis, evaluation, and treatment of mild to severe and complex psychological problems and health disorders; and delivering a range of therapeutic interventions with demonstrated effectiveness in treating mental, behavioural, cognitive and health disorders" (Government Gazette, 2018, p. 5).

Counselling Psychologists, "promoting the personal, social, educational and career functioning, and well-being of individuals, couples, families, groups, and communities; psychological assessment, diagnosis, and case formulation; and intervening through therapeutic interventions to prevent and alleviate life challenges, including maladjustment, bereavement, trauma, psychological crises and mental" (Government Gazette, 2018, pp. 5-6).

Educational Psychologists, “promoting the learning, academic performance, and the behavioural, social, emotional and career development of learners of all ages, especially children and young people in school, educational, family and related contexts; psychological and educational assessment, diagnosis, formulation and intervention; and working directly with learners, parents, families, educators and other persons who teach and care for learners, to address learning difficulties, social and emotional problems, disability and mental health disorders affecting learners” (Government Gazette, 2018, p. 6).

Industrial Psychologists, “enhancing the behaviour and functioning of people, groups, and organisations to assist people pursuing meaningful and enriching work, by applying psychological principles in the assessment, diagnosis and intervention of human behaviour and to facilitate organisational flourishing; and intervening in issues of critical relevance to organisations, including career development, talent management, coaching, recruitment and selection, training, organisational development, organisational ergonomics and design, change management, organisational ethics, performance, potential, behavioural economics, wellness, occupational stress management and work-life balance” (Government Gazette, 2018, pp. 6-7).

Research Psychologists, “conducting scientific psychological research; development of evaluation procedures, including psychometric instruments particularly for the South African context; and development, evaluation and monitoring of psychological research methods, theory, policy, and practice” (Government Gazette, 2018, p. 7).

Neuropsychologists, “assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation of persons of all ages with neuropsychological disorders; and rehabilitation of such persons” (Government Gazette, 2018, p. 7).

Psychometrists, “performing psychometric assessments in a variety of contexts; administering, scoring, interpreting, report-writing and providing feedback based on

psychometric assessments; and contributing to the development of psychological tests and procedures particularly for the South African context” (Government Gazette, 2018, p. 7-8).

Registered counsellors, “Psychological screening and assessment for low intensity, short term psychological interventions with individuals, couples, families and groups, aiming at enhancing personal functioning in a variety of settings; and promoting psychological wellbeing, including prevention particularly in underserved communities” (Government Gazette, 2018, p. 8).

Employment Opportunities and Challenges for South African Psychology Professionals

The employment opportunities for individuals in organisations have become a great concern in recent years. Organisations are inclined to employ people who are trained, skilled, experienced and in a competent position to optimise the organisation’s performance (Coetzee, 2008). Coetzee described employability as an individual’s ability to be granted admission, adjust, and produce in the work environment and incessantly strive to initiate and generate work by using their occupation-related and career meta-competencies. Coetzee defined career meta-competencies as, “skills and abilities such as behavioural adaptability, identity awareness, sense of purpose, self-esteem and emotional intelligence, which enable people to be self-directed learners and proactive agents in the management of their careers” (p. 10). These career meta-competencies invoke additional skills, which thus increase employability and competency in a specific field of work. Despite being trained and skilled in the field of psychology, psychology professionals in South Africa appear to experience more employment challenges than opportunities.

Although positions for psychology professionals are available within the public and private sector, they are limited. A survey conducted in 1994 by Richter et al. (1998) to determine employment opportunities for psychology graduates indicated that whilst the

professional psychology population increased, employment for these professionals remained limited both in the public and private sector. Employment opportunities were available in the broad social sciences, but such positions were not acknowledged on a professional level. This meant that graduates could obtain employment on a general level rather than being employed as a psychologist. Richter et al. argued that the practice of psychology in South Africa would remain a challenge due to the high level of qualification and professional registration required to practice in the field of psychology. Furthermore, Richter et al. contended that the number of qualified psychologists produced each year is not nearly enough to meet the needs of post-apartheid South Africa. Painter and Terre Blanche (2004) accentuated that whilst thousands of undergraduate psychology students apply for selection into the post-graduate psychology programmes, only a handful are selected annually for professional training in the field of clinical psychology.

A study was conducted in 1993 by Pillay and Petersen (1996) amongst registered clinical and counselling psychologists to determine their opinions and attitudes to transforming mental health policies to meet the needs of the majority of South Africans. The study indicated that most of the participants who voluntarily responded to the questionnaires were white English- and Afrikaans-speaking psychology professionals. Furthermore, most of the participants were in private practices and practised almost exclusively in urban areas, with their clientele consisting of people from the white community. The study suggested that the white urban population received greater access to psychological services than black rural communities.

Pillay and Petersen (1996) argued that such inequalities need to be addressed and rectified if psychologists expect their services to become more accessible to all citizens. The authors also acknowledged that language and cultural differences play a significant role in making psychological services inaccessible to the majority of the South African population.

Learning a black language and understanding black cultures were not enough to address the inequities in the psychology profession. Hence more black psychologists are needed to address the challenge (Pillay & Petersen, 1996).

Over a decade later, Baloyi (2008) emphasised that even though several African student psychologists enrol for the psychology programme, the training provided to student psychologists mostly encompasses the dominant Western ideologies with little consideration given to African local knowledge construction. In addition, the impression created is that psychology and psychotherapy can only be studied and implemented from a Western perspective. Consequently, psychologists working with African clients are bound to adopt and utilise Western theories and practices in psychotherapy that may not be relevant and reflective of their clients' realities (Baloyi, 2008).

Furthermore, Nobles et al. (2016) highlighted that African 'knowing' and 'being' are deeply entrenched in practices of Ubuntu (what it means to be human), language and reasoning, epistemic justice, and indigenous knowledge systems. These are integral in understanding the African way of life and being and therefore cannot be excluded from the psychotherapeutic process. Baloyi and Ramose (2016) argued that it is imperative that African psychology and psychotherapy be reframed from an African worldview and that psychologists are trained from an ontological and epistemological African perspective. Baloyi and Ramose (2016) further argued for South African universities to register a psychology curriculum that incorporates an African epistemological paradigm that includes *moya* (a term which conveys different meanings within different contexts), an essential, indigenous African concept in the provision of psychological services from the African viewpoint.

The affordability of psychological services for the majority of the South African population is another concern that poses a continuous barrier as psychologists dedicate their

work to clients who are on medical aid or prepared and able to pay cash for the services rendered (Pillay & Petersen, 1996). Furthermore, Young (2013) highlighted a challenge that has become an issue of controversy amongst counselling psychologists. In September 2011, the Professional Board for Psychology in South Africa announced an amendment that provided scopes of practice that are more detailed than the previous descriptions. The new scope of practice for counselling psychologists has triggered an outcry amongst counselling psychologists as they have become limited in what they can and cannot do in psychological practice. Young highlighted that many counselling psychologists who make their living through private practice by providing psychotherapy to their clients are now concerned about the implications of the new scope of practice for counselling psychologists. Many counselling psychologists have since been left in a state of confusion and inactivity. Studies have shown a need for the production and employment of psychology professionals to address the current needs of the South African population (Pillay & Petersen, 1996; Richter et al., 1998; Young et al., 2016). However, it becomes a futile effort to train and skill several students in the field of psychology when there are only a limited number of employment opportunities in both the private and public sectors.

Psychology in Relation to Public Service in South Africa

The injustices and racial discrimination during the Apartheid era created many disadvantages for the majority of South Africans of colour, including mentally ill patients. However, according to Swanepoel (2011), post-apartheid gave rise to the development, implementation, and establishment of the Bill of Rights, Human Rights Commission, and the Mental Health Care Act 17 of 2002, which sought to address the inequalities of the past by ensuring that the rights of all people, including mentally ill patients are protected. According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), which is a sovereign, democratic

state, every citizen of South Africa is entitled to equal rights, privileges, and benefits as stipulated in the Constitution. This includes the right to psychological integrity and access to healthcare services. The Constitution further emphasised that, “the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights” (Republic of South Africa, 1996, p. 13). The Mental Health Care Act 17 of 2002 (Government Gazette, 2002) was established and implemented to recognise the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), which further prohibits unfair discrimination against people with mental or other disabilities. The Mental Health Care Act 17 of 2002 (Government Gazette, 2002) was developed to provide guidance, rules, and regulations in the treatment of people accessing public mental health services, for example, in psychiatric hospitals, police services and correctional centres. The Mental Health Care Act 17 of 2002 (Government Gazette, 2002) acknowledged the need to promote and render effective mental healthcare services to maximise mental well-being.

Although healthcare services have improved over the years, mental healthcare is still among the most neglected services regarding the right to healthcare services (Swanepoel, 2011). A national survey conducted upon the request of the Psychology Board revealed that although psychology practitioners perform work in public services such as Health, government schools, Basic Education, Correctional Services, Military, Police, Social Development and Labour departments, the percentage of psychology practitioners operating in these sectors are much lower than those in private practice (HPCSA, 2017). The study also highlighted that psychology practitioners engage most of their time in private practice compared to time spent in public service. Nevertheless, the study also discovered that a substantial percentage of psychology practitioners perform voluntary community work, with educational and counselling psychologists being the most active groups.

Correctional Services and the Role of Psychology within the Correctional Context

The DCS is a government organisation that falls under the umbrella of public service in South Africa. During the transformation into a democratic South Africa and the implementation of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), organisations were compelled to restructure and realign their objectives to form a fit with the country's constitution. Hence, the DCS name change from the Department of Prisons to the Department of Correctional Services that initiated a paradigm shift with the key focus being the rehabilitation of sentenced offenders. The DCS has since been tasked with maintaining safe and secure custody of sentenced offenders whilst correcting offending behaviour through the process of rehabilitation. Subsequently, the vision and mission statement of the department was developed to encompass the key focus of rehabilitation (Department of Correctional Services, 2005). The vision of the DCS is, "to be one of the best in the world in delivering correctional services with integrity and commitment to excellence" (Correctional Services, 2005, p. 73). The mission statement of the DCS, which was compiled in 2002, is centred on rehabilitation. The DCS, in collaboration with external stakeholders, aimed to focus on correcting offending behaviour whilst promoting social responsibility that will empower change in the offender. The DCS further aims to transform correctional centres to promote security, correction, care, and development services that are conducive and in line with basic human rights. Another objective is to empower and train correctional officers in line with the new paradigm shift so that every correctional official can aid the process of offender rehabilitation (Correctional Services, 2005).

Various authors have provided definitions or descriptions of the term 'rehabilitation'. According to Adler et al. (as cited in Matetoa, 2012), rehabilitation may be defined as social and psychological interventions that assist in reducing re-offending behaviours. Manganye and Phetlho-Thekisho (2016) described rehabilitation in a correctional environment as a

process that attempts to address an offender's history and various current factors of an offender's criminal traits. Tewksbury (as cited in Kheswa & Lobi, 2014) echoed a similar description but emphasised that rehabilitation may be viewed as a life-enduring process in which the offenders take responsibility to gain insight and awareness into their implicit behaviours by participating in psycho-educational programmes and subjecting themselves to a reconstructive process so that they may reintegrate into their communities. Cullen and Gendreau (as cited in Qhogwana, 2017) reiterated that rehabilitation should not be viewed as a preventive or restraining process but rather as a carefully planned and clear process that addresses defiant behaviours and thought processes as well as the psychological, educational, and various other needs of the offender that are understood to have played a role in the offender's criminal behaviours.

Similarly, the DCS described rehabilitation as a process that requires the combined effort of both government initiatives and societal responsibility and values in addressing offending behaviour. Rehabilitation of sentenced offenders within the correctional system is viewed as a holistic process whereby various role players involve and encourage offenders to develop and transform at all levels of their functioning, such as social, moral, spiritual, physical, work, educational, and mental functioning (Department of Correctional Services, 2005). Matetoa (2012) highlighted that rehabilitation within the DCS is defined as the establishment of an empowering environment which firstly maintains the human rights of every offender, secondly enables the process of forgiveness and healing, and thirdly motivates offenders to cultivate positive belief systems which prescribe to societal norms.

Kheswa and Lobi (2014) also indicated that the process of rehabilitation in South African correctional centres assists offenders to take responsibility for their actions, thus enhancing the healing process. Matetoa (2012) emphasised that the process of rehabilitation in the DCS is viewed as providing offenders with the relevant education and skills to enhance

their quality of life upon release and lead crime-free lives. Manganye and Phetlho-Thekiso (2016) accentuated that rehabilitation within the South African correctional context is all-encompassing of the academic, biological, social, psychological, and religious characteristics of an offender. Qhogwana (2017) concurred that the process of rehabilitation should be viewed holistically with shared responsibility amongst all role-players.

One of the key service delivery areas that play a crucial role in the rehabilitative process is a programme called Care. According to the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (Department of Correctional Services, 2005), Care is a needs-based service designed to meet the needs of the offender's physical, spiritual, social, and psychological wellbeing. These needs can only be met if the stakeholders are employed by the DCS and work together towards achieving the set goal. The DCS continually strives to ensure that various medical healthcare professionals (nurses and doctors), spiritual care workers (pastors), social workers, and mental health professionals (clinical and counselling psychologists) are permanently employed at the various correctional centres across the country.

According to the psychological services webpage found on the DCS's website (www.dcs.gov.za), all offenders, probationers and parolees have equal access to needs-based psychological services. The primary role of the psychologist employed in the DCS is to provide interventions in the form of psychological programmes that assist the offender to adjust to the correctional context, develop coping skills and prevent re-offending behaviour. For the purpose of this study, psychologists in the employ of the DCS will be referred to as correctional psychologists. Therefore, in trying to fulfil the vision, mission, and objectives outlined in the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (Department of Correctional Services, 2005), psychology has become one of the components that play an integral role in the rehabilitation process. The DCS acknowledges that the role of psychology within the context of corrections is significant. Some psychology professionals registered within the

various categories are also employed within the DCS but may function in a different capacity such as a correctional official. The employment opportunities in the DCS relating to some of the various categories of psychology and the challenges facing some of the professional categories are outlined below:

Registered Counsellors

The scope of practice for registered counsellors was created specifically to provide affordable mental health care services to low-income and less fortunate communities in South Africa (Elkonin & Sandison, 2006; Rouillard et al., 2015). A need for this category resonated with the call from community psychology to provide a service that diverts from the biomedical model, which focused on individual mental health to creating a psychological service that is valid for the realities of individuals and groups residing in diverse communities (Fisher, 2017). As a result, the scope of practice for registered counsellors in South Africa came into effect in December 2003 (Abel, 2007; Abel & Louw, 2009). However, since the inception of the registered counsellor category, only a small number of individuals registered with the HPSCA as registered counsellors. This number steadily declines with each year (Abel & Louw, 2009).

A survey conducted by Elkonin and Sandison (2006) involving 84 students who graduated with the degree for this specific category between 2002 and 2004 at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (situated in Port Elizabeth, South Africa), highlighted that very few individuals registered with the HPCSA as registered counsellors. Instead, most of the graduates pursued postgraduate studies or worked in various places in different capacities. Elkonin and Sandison found that although graduates professed value in the category of a registered counsellor, they experienced difficulty with registration in the category and finding employment in this specific field public and professional lack of knowledge of the scope of

practice for registered counsellors. Hence registered counsellors appear to experience various struggles in pursuing their expected roles (Abel, 2007; Rouillard et al., 2015).

The scope of practice for registered counsellors was subsequently revised in September 2011 so that registered counsellors would be effectively utilised to close the gaps in mental healthcare. The new scope of practice indicated that registered counsellors may conduct psychological screening, primary mental status screening, basic assessment, and psychological interventions to improve the individual's psychological functioning (Rouillard et al., 2015).

Considering this, Rouillard et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative study involving 12 counsellors registered with the HPCSA on iRegister on the HPCSA website to explore the perceptions of registered counsellors concerning their role within the South African context. The outcome of the study revealed that although registered counsellors viewed their roles as being valuable, they experienced negative perceptions and uncertainty about the changing scope of practice. Registered counsellors felt unrecognised by other mental health practitioners and experienced public ignorance regarding their roles as registered counsellors.

Similarly, the study conducted by Abel (2007) revealed that only half of the counsellors who are registered with the HPCSA are in effect working in their field of practice. Abel and Louw (2009) concurred that only 46% of registered counsellors are working in their field of practice while others work in various other capacities. The findings of the study conducted by Abel (2007) further emphasised that it is very challenging to find career opportunities for this profession. The study further found that most registered counsellors worked in private practice and the public sector whilst others executed functions in non-governmental organisations, educational centres, private organisations, and clinics. Registered counsellors who were not employed within their scope of practice attributed this to not finding employment within this profession. They, therefore, functioned in alternative

fields as human resource practitioners, administration clerks, cashiers, cleaners, and au-pairs. Others remained unemployed.

Abel (2007) argued that unless viable solutions are pledged, the employment opportunities for registered counsellors will continue to remain bleak. Notably, a qualitative study was conducted by Joubert and Hay (2020) involving 18 alumni participants from the North-West University situated in Potchefstroom, South Africa to explore the perceived psychosocial and educational effect on educational communities with individuals who completed their Bachelor of Education Honours degree in Educational Psychology. The study revealed that most of the participants obtained work as teachers and conducted counselling on a part-time or secondary basis. The registered counsellors' perspective was found to be limited because most of the participants were teachers who provided minimal counselling services. Joubert and Hay called for extensive marketing of this category of professionals. Both Abel and Louw (2009) and Fisher (2017) raised their concerns about the ability of this category to live up to and deliver on its intended expectations.

Considering the above, registered counsellors can play a critical role in the DCS and aid in the process of rehabilitation. They would also be able to reduce the workload of correctional psychologists and enhance the components of Psychological Services within correctional centres. However, the DCS does not have established and funded posts for registered counsellors. Professionals registered under this category may work as registered counsellors to assist in the psychological components, but the relevant officials must first grant approval. But they will not be remunerated according to the category of the profession owing to the lack of funding for these positions. Furthermore, registered counsellors may be employed within the DCS as support staff within various directorates but they will function in a different capacity to that of a registered counsellor such as a functional personnel official.

Psychometrists

Psychology, psychometrics, and assessment played a controversial role in Apartheid South Africa. Psychological testing was aligned to support Apartheid practices. However, post-apartheid, such injustices had to be addressed and, as a result, created the need for research and practice that addressed the negative effects of these injustices. Consequently, psychometric tests were developed and standardised to cater for South Africa's diverse population. Additionally, psychologists were more mindful than ever to develop and utilise psychological instruments that were fair and unbiased. However, despite transformations in the field, psychological testing remains a contentious issue as it is perceived as restrictive for the culturally diverse population of South Africa (Laher & Cockcroft, 2013).

Accordingly, the work of a psychometrist also entails conducting psychological assessments and reporting on the outcome of the results (du Preez & Jorgensen, 2012). According to Mulder et al. (2013), a student who has completed an Honours degree in Industrial Psychology may register as a psychometrist with the HPCSA. As a professional, a psychometrist may practice independently and in various contexts rendering a specialist function (Van Eeden et al., 2016). However, it is essential that the registered psychometrists have the knowledge and reliable helping skills when providing services in diverse contexts to assist distressed clients (du Preez & Jorgensen, 2012; Mulder et al., 2013). In addition, it is expected of psychometrists to disclose any limitations of the psychometric testing and be mindful in using assessment techniques and results appropriately (Mulder et al., 2013). Regrettably, akin to registered counsellors, employment opportunities for psychometrists seem limited in South Africa (Van Eeden et al., 2016).

A survey was conducted by Van Eeden et al. (2016) with student psychometrists who were registered in the Department of Psychology at the University of South Africa (UNISA) to explore if the training of student psychometrists contributed to the relevance of this

professional category in relation to the demographical profile of student psychometrists, the scope of services provided and the content of training programmes. The survey findings indicated that there are limited training opportunities for this category of professionals, which is directly linked to the limited job opportunities in some university departments.

Employment opportunities appeared to be also affected by costs, contexts, and geographical areas. Some of the work contexts also required skill sets not included in the training process of a psychometrist. Furthermore, the survey highlighted the perceptions of student psychometrists who are seen as posing a threat to psychologists. Although there was a considerable need for psychometrists in an educational context, only a small number of student psychometrists from the study sample were in placements within educational departments, schools, and other educational institutions (Van Eeden et al., 2016). The authors of the study emphasised that finding employment after registration as a psychometrist was a great problem.

The DCS does not have funded and established positions for registered psychometrists. Instead, this category of psychology professionals may be employed within the DCS as functional personnel members rather than registered psychometrists. It is not uncommon that these professionals may be recruited to function in a specific directorate solely for their skills as psychometrists; however, they may not be acknowledged by the title of a psychometrist in the DCS.

Clinical Psychologists and Counselling Psychologists

The training in clinical psychology in South Africa is generally of a high standard. This claim is substantiated through several indices, including the rate of employment of locally trained clinical psychologists in high-income countries (Pillay et al., 2013). Employment opportunities for clinical psychologists in South Africa extend over a range of

contexts. Some clinical psychologists are generally self-employed or form part of a psychological practice and they are employed both in the private and public sectors. Clinical psychologists function in mental health institutions, hospitals, schools, and counselling centres. Others choose to work in an academic context as university lecturers or focus on research and community engagement. Clinical psychologists may provide services as consultants in various contexts or function as expert witnesses in court (UNISA, 2017).

Counselling psychologists have acquired both skills and knowledge during their training that places them in a position to render individual and group therapy in a range of contexts (Young et al., 2016). Many counselling psychologists work in private practices and university counselling centres in South Africa, rendering therapy to individuals. According to Young et al., counselling psychologists also venture into the areas of social justice work, health psychology and community-based public health interventions. However, Young et al. maintained that although counselling psychologists can make an indelible mark in the areas of social justice and community health, they will remain confined to private practice for as long as there is no funding for community-based public health interventions.

Clinical psychologists and counselling psychologists are considered a scarce skill or critical occupation in the DCS. This group of professionals are even headhunted when positions become available. An occupation-specific dispensation was also created as a means to retain this group of professionals. Clinical psychologists and counselling psychologists play a vital role in the rehabilitation process of offenders and conducting risk assessments.

Educational Psychologists

Based on the scope of practice for educational psychologists, one would presume these professionals function within academic environments such as schools and universities and assist learners with learning and intellectual disabilities or challenges (Sharratt, 1995).

Pillay (2020) concurred that the primary role of educational psychologists is to enhance the lives of children and their families by facilitating human learning and development through the processes of assessment, diagnosis, intervention, psychopathology, research, and practice. However, according to Sharratt (1995), it became apparent that the functions and roles of educational psychologists need to be enhanced and restructured to meet the current needs of all South Africans.

Sharratt (1995) posited that there was a call for educational psychologists to shift their focus from the traditional individual-learning problems to become actively involved in the schooling processes, community support and educational policy-making. This would lead to a restructuring and enhancement of educational psychology, ultimately creating a more-broad based practice. Educational psychologists would thus become engaged in various processes and enhance their roles through new methods and skills. Similarly, Pillay (2020) highlighted that most South African educational psychologists conducted private practice by primarily focussing on conducting psycho-educational assessments and child psychotherapy. Pillay emphasised that educational psychologists also provide psychological services to adults, which has been an issue of contention for many years.

Consequently, the number of educational psychologists in South Africa is only a fraction compared to the 18+ million children who need psychological and educational services. In addition, there are not enough black educational psychologists in South Africa. Pillay (2020) argued that this becomes an issue of concern, especially when predominantly black schools in need of the services do not receive the necessary support from psychologists who mirror the racial and cultural demographic of their communities.

The DCS employs educationists (qualified teachers) to render educational services to offenders. Although educational psychologists may play a valuable role in rendering services to offenders, this category of professionals is not necessarily considered critical. Clinical

psychologists and counselling psychologists are the only registered categories considered critical occupations in the DCS. Although correctional psychologists are considered a scarce skill, only a limited number is employed in the DCS, most commonly, clinical psychologists and counselling psychologists.

Correctional psychologists play an active role in the offender rehabilitation path. Some of their primary functions include conducting assessments, diagnosing, and providing treatment for sentenced offenders, probationers, and parolees (Department of Correctional Services, 2005). Correctional psychologists provide individual, group, couple, and family therapy, including structured programmes like the anger management programme to sentenced offenders (www.dcs.gov.za). However, due to the limited number of psychologists working in correctional centres, not all offenders receive psychological treatment. Priority is given to suicide risks, court referrals, psychiatric patients, youth, and females, aggressive and sexual offenders and offenders who request to consult with a psychologist.

The Rationale for the Study

The increasing crime rate, overcrowding in correctional facilities, mental illness, and substance abuse among offenders has resulted in a greater need for mental health professionals to render their services within correctional contexts (Magaletta et al., 2007). The role of psychologists in public service organisations especially regarding the correctional context has grown over the years, creating greater opportunities for permanent employment. A study conducted by Boothby and Clements (2000) indicated a growing demand for the employment of psychologists in American correctional centres. However, despite the high vacancy rates, Boothby and Clements (2000) emphasised that it was a challenge to retain psychologists and that measures need to be put in place and new strategies developed to attract and retain psychologists.

MacKain et al. (2010) also conducted a quantitative study to investigate the factors contributing to the high vacancy rate in psychology positions at the North Carolina Department of Correction in the United States of America. The participants comprised 72 psychologists who completed and returned a job satisfaction instrument. The findings of the study indicated that apart from the salary earned, participants were also interested in health insurance and job security. Furthermore, perceived organisational support and relationships were also aspects that participants equated to job satisfaction.

A qualitative study was conducted by Levy (2002) to identify the barriers and incentives for improving recruitment and retention strategies of Maori in the field of psychology in New Zealand. Samples of 17 Maori psychologists from psychology departments in all universities in New Zealand were represented. Apart from working at the universities, these participants performed simultaneous roles in various other sectors. The findings of the study highlighted the barriers of Maori participation in psychology, namely the absence of Maori participation, reliance on Western paradigms in psychology, difficulty in gaining admission in the psychology training programmes and general barriers for Maori students. The primary incentive identified for Maori participation in psychology was the creation of environments for Maori participation.

Interestingly, the study conducted by Levy (2002) also identified that the Department of Corrections as of 21 May 2002 employed 58 psychologists; however, only one psychologist was identified as Maori. Furthermore, the study highlighted that in 1997, the Maori inmate population comprised 49, 4% of the total inmate population. Levy stated that the Department of Corrections offered bursaries to Maori clinical psychology students to attract more Maori students to work for the Department of Corrections. Also, that the success of this effort on the part of the Department of Corrections did not reflect well, considering that only one Maori psychologist was appointed during that specific period.

Furthermore, consideration should also be given to other factors which significantly contribute to the high vacancy rate and the retention of psychologists in corrections. For example, Malkina-Pykh (2017) conducted a quantitative study with a sample of 87 correctional psychologists from 22 correctional departments across Russia to examine the associations between secondary traumatic stress, job burnout and several psychological variables, namely world assumptions and locus of control as experienced by correctional psychologists. The results of the study highlighted that burnout and secondary traumatic stress in correctional psychologists were significantly positively related and aggravated by each other. The study revealed that the actual level of burnout increased with the increased secondary traumatic stress and decreased with increased psychological variables such as the world's altruism and meaning, the worthiness of self and general locus of control.

Curtis and Day (2013) conducted a quantitative study in Australia to investigate attitudes and values associated with forensic psychology in corrections. A sample of 30 correctional psychologists was identified, 15 of whom had undergone specialist forensic training, while the other 15 held qualifications in other fields of psychology. Most of the sample had worked in a correctional setting. The study aimed to understand whether forensically trained psychologists had a stronger sense of forensic identity, held better corrective attitudes towards offenders and had a stronger sense of belonging and commitment to the organisation than psychologists with no forensic qualification. The study revealed no significant differences between forensically trained and other psychologists concerning professional identity, sense of belonging, organisational commitment, or levels of workplace stress. Curtis and Day commented that the sample size was relatively small and that with a larger sample size, such differences could materialise.

The South African correctional system is not immune to the challenges experienced internationally. The White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (Department of Correctional

Services, 2005) acknowledged the challenges it faces in adhering to the new paradigm shift geared towards rehabilitation. The DCS realised that its mandate is twofold: to ensure a safe, secure, and humane environment while facilitating the process of rehabilitation. To meet the mandate, an effective human resource strategy is necessitated. In the past, personnel in various categories, rendering services to offenders, had not been trained and equipped with the necessary skills to perform their new job descriptions aligned to the new paradigm shift. Consequently, the department continues to face significant challenges in retraining its personnel to meet the needs of the new paradigm. The DCS further acknowledged that the ongoing training of personnel is needed to handle the demands of such a unique environment, which at times can be threatening (Department of Correctional Services, 2005).

The transformation in the DCS further brought with it major human resource development challenges such as trying to align the existing personnel with the new paradigm shift as well as develop suitable recruitment, promotion, and retention strategies to retain the various categories of personnel, for example, psychologists, social workers, and nurses who play an integral role in delivering services aligned with the rehabilitation process (Department of Correctional Services, 2005). Fourie (2015) argued that South African correctional centres are indeed experiencing complex challenges of high vacancy rates for social workers and psychologists. Fourie further emphasised that apart from the high vacancy rate, the annual turnover rate of psychologists is a matter of concern as these professionals are one of the key deliverers of services in the rehabilitation process. The turnover rate of psychologists disrupts the rehabilitation processes and affects the correctional system (Fourie, 2015). To retain its professional personnel, the DCS implemented the occupation-specific dispensation (OSD) as a retention strategy for psychologists working in correctional centres. However, despite the attractive package, retaining psychologists within the DCS remains a

considerable challenge. Many psychologists resign after serving only a few years in the department, with the notion they are heading towards greener pastures in their careers.

However, as indicated by Fourie (2015), this poses a constant problem for the correctional centres as they become inundated with the challenge of addressing the backlogs of life-and determinate-sentenced offenders' psychological reports, which are compulsory for the consideration of parole for the offender. Those psychologists who do remain in the service have no choice but to carry the burden of a larger workload. Furthermore, any kind of psychological intervention rendered by the psychologists, be it individual or group-based interventions that can aid in the rehabilitative process is minimal as the professional personnel are inadequately staffed to cater for the effective rehabilitation of offenders, as priority is given to the assessment of offenders for parole consideration. It thus becomes evident that retaining psychologists in correctional centres has become a constant challenge and thus probes us to ask the question, "What are the factors that motivate psychologists to resign from working in a correctional context?"

In an effort to answer this question, I chose to conduct this study to understand the lived experiences of psychologists within correctional centres. The findings of this study could ultimately provide the DCS with more relevant information in making sense of the experiences, including the resignations of psychologists working in correctional centres. This study also aimed to identify effective retention strategies that may assist the DCS in retaining the services of psychologists for a longer period.

Research Problem and Research Questions

The White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (Department of Correctional Services, 2005) was developed in line with the Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996), the Correctional Services Act (Act No 111 of 1998) and the South

African integrated justice system, to rehabilitate sentenced offenders, providing them with a second chance to become moral citizens and curb the rate of recidivism (Department of Correctional Services, 2005). To make the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa a functioning reality, the DCS developed and implemented six financial programmes (Department of Correctional Services, 2005). The financial programme called *Corrections* aims to address the criminal behaviours of sentenced offenders. *Security* as a programme was established to ensure the safety of offenders, officials, and the community. The *Facilities* programme aims to ensure the establishment and maintenance of services conducive for sentenced offenders. The programme called *Care* provides for the mental well-being of offenders by permitting admission to social and psychological services. The *Development* financial programme aims to provide sentenced offenders with the development of the necessary skills. The sixth programme, called *After-care*, attempts to ensure effective reintegration of released parolees into the community (Department of Correctional Services, 2005). The DCS acknowledges that it faces many challenges in attempting to implement the six financial programmes. However, it continues to strive to find means and strategies in achieving its objectives. To meet the objective, as set out by the financial programme, which is *Care*, the DCS created and funded positions for social workers and psychologists.

Psychologists are one of the primary internal stakeholders who play a quintessential role in the rehabilitation of offenders. As a clinical psychologist working in a correctional centre, I am fully aware of the current job description and duties of a psychologist in corrections. The duties entail providing therapeutic rehabilitation programmes to sentenced offenders, rendering individual therapy to offenders based on self-referrals, referrals from other professionals, case management committees, parole boards, and recommendations from the ministerial office.

Furthermore, correctional psychologists are expected to conduct psychological assessments with life-and determinate-sentenced offenders to determine the level of risk for re-offending behaviour. Such recommendations are provided to the parole boards and play a pertinent role in the decisions made by the parole board regarding the parole or release of an offender. Psychologists are also expected to attend the various meetings within the centre and participate in administrative tasks, which in essence, can be mundane and time-consuming. The DCS accepts and understands the relevance of psychologists within the correctional system (Department of Correctional Services, 2005). Hence, the field of psychology has, over the past years, been considered a 'scarce skill.' Efforts were made to develop and implement the OSD for psychologists employed by the DCS. It was anticipated that an increase in the salary of psychologists would help to retain this specialised group.

Furthermore, to address the backlog of life-sentenced offender psychological reports, that became a national outcry, the headhunting strategy was implemented to fill vacant psychological positions as quickly as possible. However, to date, the retention of psychologists working in correctional centres has become a significant concern and a massive problem for the DCS as turnover rates of correctional psychologists continue to escalate (Fourie, 2015; Matetoa, 2012). Having worked within the confines of a correctional centre since the 26th of September 2000, operating in various positions and ranks, with my most recent title being that of a clinical psychologist, I have, like many other officials, observed the 'comings' and 'goings' of psychologists working in correctional centres. I have termed their continuous entrance and exit from the DCS as 'a feast and famine period.'

The creation of this phrase came to mind after I witnessed, year after year, psychologists being appointed in the DCS, and within a period of approximately one to five years, one psychologist after the other would tender their resignation until only a minimal

staff complement was left to handle the massive workload. Therefore based on the research problem, the following research questions guided this study:

- 1) Why do psychologists decide to work in a correctional centre?
- 2) How do psychologists go about preparing for a career in a correctional centre?
- 3) How do psychologists perceive their world within the confines of a correctional centre?
- 4) How do psychologists perceive the value of the services they provide within the correctional centre?
- 5) What resources are available to psychologists working in correctional centres to perform their functions adequately?
- 6) What are the advantages of working as a psychologist within a correctional centre?
- 7) What are the disadvantages of working as a psychologist within a correctional centre?
- 8) What are the common challenges psychologists have experienced in correctional centres?
- 9) How do psychologists experience and cope with vicarious trauma within a correctional centre?
- 10) How do the experiences gained within the correctional context affect/enhance other aspects of the psychologist's life?

Aims and Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to explore and describe the lived experiences of psychologists working in correctional centres in Gauteng, South Africa. Furthermore, the study aimed to identify effective retention strategies that the DCS could consider, approve, and implement to ensure longer retention periods for psychologists working in correctional centres.

The objectives of the study were to:

- Explore and identify the reason/motivations why psychologists choose to work in correctional centres.

- Investigate and explore the methods in which psychologists prepare themselves to work in a correctional context.
- Investigate and explore the training approaches and skills provided to appointed psychologists before rendering psychological services in a correctional context.
- Explore and describe the factors which contribute to the stressors experienced by psychologists working in correctional centres.
- Investigate, explore, and describe how psychologists working in correctional centres cope and adjust to the psychological and emotional stressors they experience regularly.
- Explore and describe how correctional psychologists experience the contributions and impacts of the correctional centres concerning the performance of their duties.
- Explore the meaning of being a correctional psychologist rendering psychological services to an atypical population of offenders.
- Investigate, explore, and describe how working in a correctional context affects/enhances other parts of the psychologist's life.

Research Design

The research approach chosen for this study was qualitative as it provides a rich, detailed description of the participants' lived experiences working in the correctional centres (Sarantakos, 1988). A qualitative, interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) was employed to explore and interpret how psychologists experience, perceive, and make meaning of themselves and their world within the correctional context. Purposive sampling was employed to select the sample of participants, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences within the correctional context. The transcripts were analysed using IPA methods to interpret and derive meanings about the participants' experiences. The study brought to light the

reasoning/and motivations why psychologists choose to resign from the DCS after working for only a relatively short period. Based on the findings of the study, identified and effective retention strategies have been recommended and will be proposed to the DCS for their approval and implementation.

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been identified and will be used in the chapters that follow. Some terms are in the White Paper on Corrections (2005) and will be explained using the White Paper on Corrections (2005) as a guide.

- White Paper on Corrections:** This is an official book that discusses the paradigm shift and strategic objectives of the DCS, with the rehabilitation of offenders being its core focus. The White Paper on Corrections further guides the implementation of its key service delivery programmes to bring the rehabilitation process to fruition.
- Correctional centres:** The official term used to describe what was once known as ‘prisons’. The restructuring of prisons as correctional centres to aid the rehabilitative process whilst still maintaining the safe custody of offenders forms part of the strategic plan of the DCS.
- Rehabilitation:** This has the core business of the DCS. The White Paper on Corrections (2005) emphasises that every incarcerated person has the potential to change and

become a better citizen of this country if equipped with the necessary set of skills and resources.

Offender:

Any person who has committed an act of crime, found guilty by the Justice System, and sentenced to imprisonment. An offender is thus placed in the safe custody of the DCS.

Correctional psychologist:

A clinical or counselling psychologist who is in the employ of the DCS and renders psychological services to offenders.

Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the concerns and implications of the high turnover rate of psychology professionals in corrections. Emphasis was placed on the quintessential role with which correctional psychologists are entrusted to ensure the effective rehabilitation of offenders. Various studies were discussed in this chapter, highlighting contributing factors and stressors which have consequential effects on the retention of correctional psychologists. The chapter further acknowledged that the DCS faces several challenges such as overcrowding, stressed officials and a high turnover of professional staff such as psychologists.

As the aim of the study was to explore the lived experiences of correctional psychologists, it became imperative to trace the history of psychology in South Africa and how it became an established discipline. The HPCSA represents the psychological fraternity, and its role in the field was delineated. The chapter also reviewed the employment opportunities for all psychologists and the challenges facing psychology professionals. Psychology in relation to public service in South Africa was outlined, and concerns

surrounding mental health care were articulated. The quintessential role of psychology within Correctional Services was deliberated, and the lack of funded and financed positions for some of the other categories of psychology professionals were considered. The rationale of the study explained the challenges experienced by the DCS in retaining the skills of psychologists in correctional centres.

The high vacancy and turnover rate of these professionals create dire implications for the department. Thus, emanating from the rationale and problem statement, this study aimed to explore the lived experiences of psychologists working in correctional centres. The objectives of the study attempt to identify, explore and investigate various factors which contribute to the lived experiences of correctional psychologists. The research design for the study is qualitative and was briefly outlined. The definition of terms that will be used throughout the study has been explained.

Overview of the Remaining Chapters

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter Two, provides a critical discussion of studies conducted both internationally and nationally on the lived experiences of psychologists working in various contexts. The focus is then directed towards international research that explicitly discusses the lived experiences of psychologists working in correctional contexts. The review is then narrowed to related research conducted in South African correctional centres. Comparisons will be made to highlight significant gaps in the literature.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

This chapter provides an integrated discussion on the theoretical framework, namely social constructionism, in which this study is grounded. This chapter attempts to highlight the shift from analytical methods to a meaning-making process in research methods. The definitions and descriptions of social constructionism are delineated and the origins of social constructionism are provided. The key characteristics of social constructionism are detailed. Furthermore, social constructionism will be reviewed from an ontological and epistemological perspective in relation to the study.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

Chapter Four aims to provide a detailed account of the research method employed. The research adopted a qualitative method, and the validations for qualitative research are discussed along with the research design, data collection methods, the sampling used and the analysis of the data. Furthermore, it discusses credibility, ethical considerations, and reflexivity.

Chapter Five: Presentation of the Findings

Chapter Five presents the findings. Whilst maintaining the anonymity of the participants, the demographical information of each participant is presented and discussed. In addition, the chapter presents relevant verbatim quotes from the participants' transcripts, and the emerging Superordinate Themes and the Master Themes are presented.

Chapter Six: Discussion of the Findings

This chapter discusses the findings of the unique lived experiences of psychologists working in the South African correctional context.

Chapter Seven: Summary, Limitations and Recommendations

Chapter Seven concludes with a summary of the research project and its limitations. The recommendations of the study are comprehensively provided as possible retention strategies for the consideration and implementation by the DCS.

Chapter Eight: Narrative Reflections of my Lived Experience of Working in a Correctional Context

This chapter is additional and provides an integrated and reflective account of my 21 year and ongoing journey of working in the DCS.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The huge stigma I have witnessed mental health professionals attaching to staff experiencing mental health issues is incomprehensible to the point that I've tried vehemently to hide the fact I have mental health problems.

(Anonymous as cited in Gough, 2016, p. 23)

Work is considered an inherent part of an individual's life. It is through work that we can achieve personal wealth, gain meaning and structure in our everyday life as well as create a sense of belonging, which ultimately aids in improving self-esteem. Therefore, work is important not only for providing financial resources, but it also plays an integral role in mental health and well-being (Tangvald-Pedersen & Bongaardt, 2017). Psychologists are skilled professionals able to work in various contexts. One would assume that being in such a profession would entail living a 'hale and hearty' existence. However, literature concerning the lived experiences of psychologists encapsulates an entirely different perspective by stressing that the profession creates more harm than good for the professional involved (Gilroy et al., 2002; Giovazolias & Davis, 2001; Gough, 2016; Nel & Fouché, 2017). Moreover, Corey et al. (as cited in Nel & Fouché, 2017) referred to psychotherapy as a 'hazardous profession.' Due to the nature of their work, practising psychologists are overwhelmed with various demands and stressors that inevitably affect their emotional well-being (Nel & Fouché).

The literature review endeavours to provide a detailed account of the lived experiences of psychologists working in various contexts, both internationally and nationally. The literature review will then filter its focus to highlight international research conducted in

corrections with the spotlight on psychologists working in correctional centres and then on research conducted in South African correctional centres and, more specifically, around psychology in South African correctional centres.

Defining Lived Experience

To research the lived experiences of psychologists working in various contexts, it is necessary first to understand what lived experience is. Although there is no general definition for lived experience, descriptions of the term remain consistent with one another. Husserl (as cited in Tangvald-Pedersen & Bongaardt, 2017) described lived experiences as encounters, as they are experienced in one's own awareness and being able to describe these experiences in detail. Van Manen (2016) concurred with Husserl by stating that lived experience is the bringing of elementary experiences to consciousness by going to the sources that have encountered these experiences. Van Manen expatiated that wisdom is a collection of experiences that one gains from having lived life deeply. It is this very experience that is pursued in attempting to understand the lived experience of psychologists working in various contexts.

Lived Experiences of Student Psychologists (From Being to Becoming)

The journey towards becoming a psychologist is long and arduous, with various academic stressors that demand immediate attention. Nel and Fouché (2017) stressed that psychology master's students are all too familiar with the high levels of stress that can affect their training process and clinical practice. Furthermore, psychology master's students may unearth various psychological issues in themselves either through practising psychotherapy, learning about methods of self-analysis, or having to balance their role of student and professional.

Additionally, Gough (2016) and Laidlaw (2018), also indicated that mental health professionals such as psychologists might find themselves gravitating towards careers in mental health because they themselves had probably encountered a wounding experience at some point in their lives. Gough substantiated her statement by reviewing a survey conducted by Barr (as cited in Gough, 2016), which concluded that 73.9% of mental health professionals had encountered at least one or more upsetting experiences, which eventually led to them becoming mental health professionals. The survey further revealed that 65% of 73.9% of mental health professionals encountered distressing personal experiences rather than indirect hurtful experiences.

Furthermore, Huynh and Rhodes (2011) discussed literature that reported that psychotherapists had significantly higher rates of negative childhood experiences and parentification than other groups of professionals. To make sense of past negative experiences concerning career choice, Huynh and Rhodes conducted a qualitative, narrative inquiry study in Australia with 15 psychology students aged 18-37 years who had commenced junior psychology courses. The aim of the study was to explore connections between past negative experiences concerning career choice. The findings of the study affirmed that disturbing experiences during childhood and adulthood were an influencing factor in participants' career choices. However, having encountered negative experiences during childhood and adulthood, participants developed empathy and a need to want to help others. Some participants found that their personal experiences of therapy were helpful to them and therefore chose to aspire to the profession of psychology. Paradoxically, participants who did not have good experiences with their therapists chose the profession to prove that they could be better in the field. Other participants reported choosing psychology after observing role models and receiving specific career advice. However, a significant

number of participants had positive experiences of working in the profession, which ultimately led them to their career choice.

In contrast to Huynh and Rhodes (2011), Nel and Fouché (2017) emphasised that the negative encounters that student psychologists experience instantaneously create a despondent atmosphere of their lived experiences. They thus conducted a study to explore the positive experiences of becoming a psychologist. Nel and Fouché argued that apart from all the negative experiences extensively documented in the literature, student psychologists also encounter remarkable positive experiences. Nel and Fouché conducted a qualitative (IPA) study to document the positive experiences of one South African master's student aged 39 years old. Three interviews were conducted with the student throughout one year. Emanating from their study, Nel and Fouché identified several positive themes such as constant personal reflection, personal growth, openness towards experiences, positive relationships with others, finding purpose in life and autonomy.

According to Nel and Fouché (2017), constant personal reflection is an essential positive experience in the journey from being to becoming a psychologist. Personal growth is a continuous process in which the student psychologist becomes aware of their own thoughts and motives as being part of the process. Being open towards experiences and difficulties and making meaning of both enjoyable and unpleasant experiences forms part of the process towards becoming a psychologist. Nel and Fouché further emphasised that it is through the training process that positive, healthy relationships are fostered and developed into support systems. The ability to become self-accepting, feel a sense of unique worth, find meaning and purpose in life, and become independent are part of the positive experiences that student psychologists take with them in their ongoing journey of life (Nel & Fouché, 2017).

Laidlaw (2018) also conducted a qualitative research among 34 South African clinical and counselling psychologists who studied or worked in various therapeutic contexts within

the country. The purposive sample of psychologists constituted student, intern, and early career, experienced and senior psychologists. The aim of the research was to examine how participants chose psychology as a career, how they experienced their journey as a psychotherapist over time and their experiences of therapeutic work. The findings of Laidlaw's study identified several themes, namely *jewels from the ash heap* which revealed that significant developmental experiences contributed to participants' reasons for becoming psychotherapists, *selecting the X factor* which refers to selecting students who are best suited to the profession of psychology and who would be trainable as psychotherapists, *managing Hydra-like casework* described participants views of therapeutic work as increasing in complexity, especially with the consultation of more clients over time, and the *phase of elders' wisdom* which is the last theme, was a unique finding as some participants had been consulting with clients for over 40 years and were perceived as a source of wisdom that could pass on their knowledge and experience to those currently in positions of authority, the very same positions that the elders once occupied (Laidlaw, 2018).

Laidlaw (2018) further emphasised that the sample of participants experienced their work as rewarding, purposeful, and a passion that gives meaning to life. Laidlaw made it apparent that in understanding life is a journey filled with trials and tribulations, a psychologist's lived experience does not end upon becoming a psychologist. Instead, it is only the beginning of another chapter in their professional journey, and the lived experiences they encounter along the way can be both rewarding and overwhelming.

On the other hand, Baloyi (2020b) argued that it is an injustice to suppress epistemological representation by excluding indigenous knowledge from the psychology curriculum, especially when it is fundamental to the African individual's ways of being, knowing and doing. Baloyi argued for student psychologists to gain knowledge in both African and Western discourses in psychology. Johnston (2015) concurred that it is thus

expected from psychologists to render ethical and receptive service to clients taking into consideration the various cultural backgrounds (Johnston, 2015). Notably, Baloyi (2020a) accentuated that the training for student psychologists in South Africa should also be reflective of the diverse, indigenous, and cultural realities of its population. Baloyi argued that Western colonial perspectives predominantly make up the training curricula for student psychologists and strongly called for psychology in Africa and especially South Africa, to include *swa moya* (meaning life discerning power of the soul) as part of the psychology curriculum. Baloyi highlighted that quintessentially, this is the staunch reaffirmation of what it means to be an African.

Lived Experiences of Practising Psychotherapists in Various Contexts

The people of South Africa have experienced a unique history and encounter problems that may sometimes be exclusive to the South African context. Psychologists are trained to utilise a combination of approaches that become integral when working with the South African population. However, most South Africans suffering from psychological problems reside in rural communities and cannot afford to pay for psychological services. Most psychologists are in urban areas, working in private practice.

Geffen (2013) conducted a study to explore the discursive practices of clinical psychologists in private practice. The qualitative study was conducted with nine practising psychologists working in the Cape Metropole situated in the Western Cape of South Africa. Geffen employed discursive analysis to analyse the interviews conducted and identified three interpretative repertoires, namely self-presentation as concerned citizens, constructions of the South African context as overwhelming, and constructions of the psychology profession as a market phenomenon. Geffen argued that South African psychologists have the skills to render effective services to rural communities, but very few are willing to move into the

communities. Geffen suggested that although psychology in South Africa has evolved to become inclusive of all South Africans, it is the psychologists who need to alter their mind-set and bring about the change for the discipline to be effective and applicable for all.

Consistent with the findings of Geffen (2013), Williams (2007) reiterated that psychological services in South Africa are skewed and do not meet the needs of the majority of the population. Williams argued that the influences of Apartheid health policies are still apparent in South Africa today. Williams favoured community psychology which is considered an appropriate method to address the inequality created in the field of psychology. Williams stressed that psychologists could play an invaluable role in communities by raising awareness and providing psycho-education on topics related to mental health. However, psychologists do not show motivation to participate in community psychology. Williams indicated that psychologists need to be remunerated for the services they provide, hence practice in areas where their services can be afforded. The shortage of funding thus creates a challenge and poses a barrier to the effective practice of community psychology. Besides private practice, some psychologists also venture into the world of academia.

Subsequently, Du Plessis et al. (2013) explored their own lived experiences as professionals starting a new academic career. The three authors, aged 30 to 40 years, chose to conduct a qualitative IPA study in which they engaged in a discussion about their own experience as practicing clinical psychologists entering the world of academia. At the time of the study, all three authors worked at the University of Johannesburg, situated in South Africa. The central themes that emerged from their study were the nuts and bolts of academia, surviving versus thriving, and that it is always personal. Being new to academia, Du Plessis et al. experienced the transition as challenging (the nuts and bolts of academia). The authors had to learn to negotiate demands centred on lecturing, attending meetings, course coordination and research. It became a challenge for them to venture into a new world

with new rules. The authors further stated that navigating their new world was only the beginning. They soon realised that they had to immerse themselves completely in academia (surviving versus thriving), not just working in it but becoming an academic.

The third theme, it is always personal, reflected the authors' personal decisions to embark on the academic journey, which included having to incorporate the academic self and the professional self into a new identity. Overall, Du Plessis et al. (2013) discussed their lived experience as unsettled, uncertain, and anxious. The authors' lived experience resulted in the expansion of their identities to include a representation of themselves as academics.

It is evident that psychologists play a vital role, be it in private practice, communities, academia, mental health institutions or any organisation where they may work. However, psychologists, first and foremost, are human and, also experience their own diagnosable, psychological, and emotional problems. Psychosocial problems have a way of negatively or positively influencing the professional's functioning and ultimately affecting their independent practices or any organisation where the psychologist may work.

Pope and Tabachnick (1994) conducted a study in the United States of America with a sample group of 476 psychologists from various categories (clinical, counselling, psychotherapy, and independent practice) who were registered with the American Psychological Association (APA). The quantitative study aimed first to explore psychologists' beliefs about problems that led them to seek therapy and their experiences in therapy. Second, to determine if therapy was viewed as a valuable resource in participants' development as therapists and if participants would report if they had undergone therapy or not. Third, to determine if participants believed that personal therapy should be a requirement of the graduate training programmes. The study also aimed to determine participants' views on mandated therapy by licensing boards as a condition for practicing therapy (for psychologists who transgressed professional conduct) and if mandated therapy will be

effective or not. According to Pope and Tabachnick (1994), the outcome of the study indicated the following:

First, apart from other psychological problems such as relationship problems, self-esteem issues, anxiety, and work-related problems (the list is by no means exhaustive), around two-thirds of participants (61%) reported experiencing at least one episode of clinical depression. One out of five participants reported attending therapy for depression. Other participants (29%) reported being suicidal and 4% reported attempting suicide at least once. The majority of participants (86%) reported experiencing therapy as helpful and that it increased their self-awareness and self-knowledge. However, 22% of participants reported that therapy had been harmful. Some of the harm caused as reported by participants' was the violation of their rights to informed consent, dual relationships, and enmeshment. Furthermore, 6% of participants reported being sexually touched by their therapists. Some therapists provided sexual responses with no physical contact. Other participants (14%) reported that their therapists were sexually attracted to them. More important, 26% of participants reported being cradled or held by their therapists. One in five psychologists reported still being in therapy (Pope & Tabachnick, 1994).

Second, most of the participants reported that therapy improved their skills as therapists. They were able to learn from the methods and techniques used by their therapists in terms of what works for patients and what is inadequate. Third, 70% of participants articulated that student psychologists should be required to attend therapy as part of the psychology graduate programme. Almost half of participants (54%) agreed that personal therapy should be made a conditional requirement by licensing boards for psychologists prior to obtaining their practising licence. Although 87% of participants agreed that licensing boards should mandate therapy as a requirement for practising therapy (for psychologists who

violate the professional standards), only one-third believed that mandated therapy would be effective (Pope & Tabachnick, 1994).

Pope and Tabachnick (1994) emphasised the need for more research in the role of therapy in training, professional conduct, development, and support of psychologists. Consistent with the findings of Pope and Tabachnick, Huynh and Rhodes (2011) stressed that whilst the profession of psychology requires psychologists to always display ethical conduct, psychologists conducting therapy will always be susceptible to substantial risks. Huynh and Rhodes claimed that psychologists' professional judgement might be compromised at times resulting in the probability of unethical behaviour. The sexual attraction that therapists may feel towards their clients, as mentioned in the findings of Pope and Tabachnick (1994), is 'taboo' or unethical. However, sexual attraction towards clients is worth mentioning as it is an occurrence in therapy that is considered part of the therapists' lived experiences.

Notably, Giovazolias and Davis (2001) conducted a study on the experiences of sexual attraction of counselling psychologists towards their clients and its effect on the therapeutic process. The study was conducted in the United Kingdom with 122 counselling psychologists working in independent or private practice. The outcome of the study revealed that most psychologists did experience sexual attraction towards at least one client. The study further displayed that the percentage of female psychologists who experienced sexual attraction towards a client was higher (58.9%) than the male psychologists (41.1%) who participated in the study. The percentage of psychologists who experienced sexual feelings towards the same gender client was 10.75%.

Giovazolias and Davis (2001) emphasised that 39% of the study population of psychologists experienced feelings of anxiety, guilt, and shame for experiencing sexual feelings towards their clients, whilst 45% of psychologists acknowledged, accepted, and considered their attraction to their clients as a normal feeling. The study also revealed that

27.4% of psychologists chose to deal with the situation independently and not discuss their sexual attraction towards their clients with their supervisors or anyone else. Giovazolias and Davis claimed that it is not uncommon for counselling psychologists to experience sexual attraction towards their clients as the therapeutic process unfolds and that such attraction is a common experience among both male and female counselling psychologists. The authors also affirmed that experiencing sexual feelings towards clients can be uncomfortable for the therapist and that the therapist should consider opening up and talking about their feelings.

Consistent with the recommendations made by Pope and Tabachnick (1994), Giovazolias and Davis (2001) also provided valid suggestions by stating that graduate programmes should cover such issues adequately and extensively during the training process of psychologists. Furthermore, training programmes for psychologists which aid in the promotion of self-disclosure and allow for the exploration of sexual feelings towards clients should be developed and conducted within a safe and conducive environment.

Additionally, a study conducted by Gilroy et al. (2002) provided similar findings to that of Pope and Tabachnick (1994) concerning psychological problems experienced by psychologists and psychologists' perceptions of seeking personal therapy. Gilroy et al. (2002) conducted quantitative research to explore the prevalence of depression in a sample of 425 counselling psychologists who were members of the Counselling Psychology division (Division 17) of the APA. The study revealed that the most frequent diagnosis given to the sample of psychologists was dysthymia.

Gilroy et al. (2002) affirmed that psychologists experienced various psychological and emotional problems ranging from depression, anxiety, substance use, and relational problems. Moreover, the authors identified that depression had adversely affected psychologists' professional functioning. Depressive symptoms rendered the psychologists inattentive to their clients. The psychologists also experienced physical exhaustion, lack of

energy and the inability to recall information and effectively continue with the therapeutic process.

In the same way that psychologists who experienced sexual feelings towards their clients defaulted in seeking personal therapy (Giovazolias & Davis, 2001), some psychologists who experienced depression also failed to seek personal therapy due to embarrassment, injury to their status and loss of clients (Gilroy et al., 2002). The psychological community is assumed to be closely knit, and psychologists meet with each other in professional and personal settings on a regular basis. This also made it difficult for psychologists to seek therapy from another psychologist. Furthermore, Gilroy et al. (2002) explained that there is a preconceived impression amongst psychologists that they should be a healthy representation of what constitutes mental health. Such attitudes lodged obstacles in the path of the psychologist in need of their own therapy (Gilroy et al., 2002).

Furthermore, Kaslow (as cited in Gilroy et al., 2002) mentioned that psychologists who enter personal therapy might demean their therapist's knowledge and interventions. They may also become resistant to the therapeutic interventions or appear antagonistic and critical of their therapists. However, Laidlaw (2018) purported that personal therapy offers multiple benefits personally and professionally. On a personal level, one can work through unresolved inner conflicts whilst on a professional level, one is able to develop a greater capacity of empathy for clients, amongst others. In addition, personal psychotherapy for intern psychologists becomes a meaning-making process of their passion for the field of psychology and enduring the training process, which is a significant stage in becoming a psychologist (Laidlaw, 2018).

Although depression may be experienced negatively and affect a professional's functioning, Gilroy et al. (2002) also included the positive effect of depression on a professional's functioning. In their study, Gilroy et al. also reviewed the subjective

experiences of psychologists who suffered from clinical depression and the positive outcomes of attending personal therapy. Through attending personal therapy psychologists developed an appreciation for empathy, psychological warmth, and genuineness towards their clients. Psychologists also felt attuned to the needs of the clients and showed increased sensitivity to their client's problems.

Consistent with the findings of Pope and Tabachnick (1994), Gilroy et al. (2002) found that personal therapy also provided psychologists with the opportunity to observe and learn about other effective clinical methods. Psychologists also developed patience, increased tolerance, and self-awareness towards their clients after undergoing their own therapy. Moreover, psychologists claimed to experience greater knowledge and understanding of depression after experiencing its effects first-hand and being treated for it.

Of note is that before seeking their own therapy, psychologists were not keen on their clients taking medication for the depressive symptoms experienced. However, post-therapy, psychologists had an increased appreciation and respect for the role medication played in the recovery process from depression (Gilroy et al., 2002). Consistent with the suggestions made by Giovazolias and Davis (2001), Gilroy et al. (2002) also emphasised self-care being made an integral part of the professional training process. They stressed that if such measures are implemented from the onset of the training process, it will enhance psychological well-being amongst psychologists, create the opportunity to seek personal therapy when the need arises and develop social support from colleagues, thereby reducing stigmatisation and criticism.

Gough (2016) emphasised that mental health professionals have also recognised stress and emotional exhaustion. Jordaan et al. (2007) concurred that burnout is a common stress-related condition experienced among helping professions. Freudenberger (as cited in Jordaan et al., 2007) described burnout as a state of fatigue that results from a sustained commitment to a service that has become a way of life. Maslach et al. (as cited in Jordaan et al., 2007)

further explained that burnout is a condition that consists of three parts, namely emotional exhaustion (feeling overwhelmed and burdened in addressing others' emotional problems), depersonalisation (becoming disengaged and adopting a negative attitude towards clients) and reduced personal accomplishment (feeling unsuccessful in one's own capability). Burnout is not a symptom that develops overnight. Instead, it develops when working in stressful conditions over an extended period (Jordaan et al., 2007). The effects of burnout have not gone undetected among psychologists. Burnout can cause severe consequences such as rendering psychologists ineffective in providing psychological services. Furthermore, it can have a negative impact on other aspects of a professional's life (Jordaan et al., 2007).

Jordaan et al. (2007) thus conducted a quantitative study with 238 South African clinical and counselling psychologists to explore burnout and its correlates. The sample of participants was required to complete an internet survey which included a biographical questionnaire, the Maslach Burnout Inventory, and the Brief Coping Orientations to Problems Experienced. The outcome of the study revealed that approximately half of the participants experienced moderate to high levels of burnout. The correlation between coping strategies and burnout was also examined. Jordaan et al. found that behavioural disengagement was a significant predictor of all three components of burnout.

According to Jordaan et al. (2007), behavioural disengagement refers to limiting or giving up any attempt to cope with the stressor. The study found negative correlations between the coping strategy of behavioural disengagement and burnout. Jordaan et al. attributed their findings to the increased rate of severe psychological disorders experienced by South Africans in general. Jordaan et al. emphasised that psychological disorders such as post-traumatic stress, alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence and sexual offences have become rampant in South Africa, resulting in many practising psychologists having to work with clients who suffer from severe psychopathology. Jordaan et al. argued that working with

clients suffering from severe psychopathology can render psychologists emotionally exhausted, thereby increasing the probability of experiencing burnout.

Notably, an international study was conducted to explore stress and emotional exhaustion among mental health professionals. Prosser et al. (as cited in Gough, 2016) conducted a quantitative study in 1996 among 121 mental health professionals comprising nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, occupational therapists, and social workers who worked in a hospital ward in London. The outcome of the study revealed that mental health professionals experienced high levels of exhaustion. However, the study also discovered that mental health professionals, who worked in the community, experienced significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion compared to the hospital ward staff. Gough emphasised that the rate of absenteeism amongst mental healthcare professionals is higher than any other sector. This could be attributed to the significant increase in challenges such as burnout, stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion that mental health professionals encounter on a regular basis (Gough, 2016).

Gough (2016) asserted that mental health professionals suffering from mental health problems might refuse to disclose their information because they fear being defamed and rejected. Gough explained that although some mental health professionals have attempted to discuss their mental health problems on social media such as blogs and websites, the information is usually shared in a manner that does not reveal the identity of the mental health professional. Gough (provided a quote in this regard which was expressed on social media by an anonymous mental health professional suffering from bi-polar disorder, “the huge stigma I have witnessed mental health professionals attaching to staff experiencing mental health issues is incomprehensible to the point that I’ve tried vehemently to hide the fact I have mental health problems” (Anonymous as cited in Gough, p. 23). This clearly emphasised that the mental health professional did not feel safe to self-disclose.

Synonymous with other studies conducted (Giovazolias & Davis, 2001; Gilroy et al., 2002), Gough (2016) also highlighted that self-disclosure versus stigmatisation plays a significant role in whether a mental health professional will be willing to open themselves up for support and treatment. Gough stressed that as self-disclosure appears to be widely accepted and creates the opportunity for others to want to self-disclose, stigmatisation becomes the barricade that prevents the self-disclosing process from occurring. The cycle of isolation and inaccessibility for support and treatment is thus perpetuated.

In contrast, a study conducted in Malta among Maltese psychologists who work in public mental health services and form part of a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) revealed that these psychologists primary source of work satisfaction was derived from performing therapeutic work with clients (Pilkington & Sciberras, 2018). Pilkington and Sciberras explained that these psychologists felt appreciated by their clients when they saw improvements in therapy and gained learning experience working with clients suffering from a diverse range of mental illnesses. However, in as much as performing therapeutic work brought them satisfaction; it also created negative emotions such as frustration and exhaustion in working with challenging types of pathology. Suicide amongst their clients and working with severe pathology appeared to negatively affect the psychologists to a point where it also affected their personal lives (Pilkington & Sciberras, 2018).

The lack of training of psychologists to work with the severity and complexities of cases also appeared to contribute to their experiences of working in a public mental health service. Another contributing factor that created negative emotions amongst the participants was the implicit acceptance that the psychiatrist was the most important professional within the MDT. This was reflected in the management, administration, and clinical decisions regarding the clients. Thus, the participants working in the Malta public health service felt irrelevant, powerless, helpless, unacknowledged, unvalued, and demotivated. The study

revealed that issues arising from the system rather than working with clients were in fact the main reasons for the negative emotions experienced amongst participants. Ultimately, the results suggested that participants working in public mental health services found their experiences both painful and rewarding. The negative experiences resulted in some participants leaving the public mental health service (Pilkington & Sciberras, 2018).

In conclusion, the literature on the lived experiences of psychologists ranging from student psychologists to psychologists working in various contexts both internationally and nationally clearly indicates that the lived experiences of psychologists both on an international and national level voice similar encounters. However, unique to the South African context was the inequalities of the profession of psychology, which were legitimatised in the Apartheid era. Despite the transformation in the field of psychology after Apartheid, psychologists practising in South Africa, whether intentional or not, continue to encourage the skewed proportion in relation to the services rendered to the majority of the population. Having explored the lived experiences of psychologists globally, the discussion will now focus on the lived experiences of psychologists working in international correctional centres.

Lived Experiences of Psychologists Working in International Correctional Centres

Criminal behaviour has resulted in many correctional centres worldwide being overpopulated (Ainsworth, 2000). The punitive approach appeared to have disparaging effects and did nothing much except increase the rate of reoffending. Ainsworth emphasised that the rates of reoffending behaviour can be reduced by addressing the contributing factors that played a role in the criminal act. International studies were conducted over the years to glean data on reducing offending behaviour upon release (Baglivio et al., 2018; Doyle et al., 2019; Farmer, 2019). According to Baglivio et al. (2018), matching the criminogenic needs

of juvenile offenders to optimal interventions within juvenile justice residential programmes in relation to the number of services provided may reduce reoffending behaviour. In addition, Doyle et al. (2019) emphasised that fostering good relationships with family members play a significant role in the rehabilitation of female offenders. Furthermore, Farmer (2019) accentuated that most male offenders upon admission into a correctional centre already have a history of substance use which usually played an integral role in the crime committed. Subsequently, the quality of prison-based treatment for alcohol and drug treatments was evaluated. The availability of prison-based therapeutic community treatment was recommended for all offenders who have a history of substance use.

Correctional organisations have since geared themselves to change their focus from a purely punitive approach to a rehabilitative strategy. Rehabilitation of offenders thus became the guiding philosophy for many countries (Ainsworth, 2000). In England, for example, political and social pressures to reduce the rate of crime and address offending behaviour has resulted in an increase in the employment of forensic psychologists in correctional services over recent years. The HM Correctional Service, situated in Durham, England, is one of the largest single employers, employing over 600 psychological personnel, with 100 graduates being employed annually. These psychologists play an integral role in structured group work interventions, individual therapy with life-sentenced offenders, assessing and reducing the level of risk for reoffending, managing suicidal offenders and being advisors to negotiators in hostage incidents. These psychologists are further trained and develop the skills and expertise to meet their mandate (Towl, 2003). However, what works for one country may be experienced differently for another.

Haney (2002) stated that developments in American correctional centres have resulted in increased offender psychological harm over the past decades. These developments include the implementation of policies that affected the rules of incarceration and the downward

spiral of rehabilitation which ironically is supposed to be an important objective of incarceration. Most of these changes, however, were introduced to address the dramatic increase in the offender population, which resulted in overcrowding within the correctional centres and ultimately affected conducive living conditions and offender safety and placed the correctional management at risk. Offenders were thus greatly restricted to access rehabilitation programmes.

To survive and adapt to the correctional context, and with limited access to adequate rehabilitation, these offenders unknowingly cultivate modifiable behaviours and undergo psychological changes exclusive to incarceration. Haney (2002) emphasised that these conditions result in repressed conflict amongst offenders, amplified tensions and heightened fear and threat within the correctional system. Haney further stressed that harsh confinement of offenders and limited access to mental healthcare result in severe psychological consequences for the offenders.

Research has shown that thousands of mentally ill offenders are housed in correctional centres in the United States of America (Appelbaum et al., 2001). Although incarceration itself becomes a stressor for many inmates, the overcrowding challenge further contributes to the enhancement of serious symptoms and ultimately leads to disruptive and unruly behaviour. Offenders with mental disorders experience a breakdown of coping skills in such environments and cannot function adequately. Often, they contravene the rules of the correctional system, creating problems for correctional management. Offenders with mental disorders thus become problematic to the correctional personnel, especially when they engage in acts of self-mutilation and suicide. Such behaviours are a threat to the safety and security of the correctional system and affect the daily functioning and activities whilst producing hostile and aggressive correctional environments. Moreover, such behaviours result in increased stress for the correctional employees working at all levels. Hence, the stress of

dealing and coping with offenders with mental disorders regularly contributes significantly to the inherent stress of the job (Appelbaum et al., 2001).

Senter (2006) also asserted that correctional centres are stressful environments. Given the nature of the work correctional officials perform within correctional centres daily, it is not uncommon that they experience stress and occupational burnout. Consequently, correctional officials, educationists and nurses working within the confines of correctional centres tend to experience decreased job satisfaction and stress due to the unpredictable nature of the correctional environment (Senter, 2006). If such conditions occur within the correctional contexts, one's curiosity is peaked as to how do correctional psychologists experience the correctional environment, especially in providing rehabilitative services under such conditions. Our focus is drawn to public service psychologists, with specific reference to psychologists working in correctional centres.

Senter (2006) highlighted that psychologists working in correctional centres have a twofold role to play. Although correctional psychologists are therapists attending to the psychological needs of offenders, they also must ensure safe custody and security of the offenders incarcerated at the centre. Gang activity, sexual violence, the suicide of offenders and riots in the correctional centres are some of the environmental stressors that come with working in a correctional context. Psychologists also must address the shortage of staff, high caseloads, and correctional administration. Moreover, correctional psychologists are compelled to experience vicarious trauma when dealing with criminal and manipulative behaviours, suicidal ideations, and personality disorders, which form part of some of the offenders' therapeutic processes.

Correctional psychologists are further predisposed to distress, role confusion and burnout, which are the eventual consequences of dealing with clinical practice stress-related factors whilst maintaining the practices of the correctional environment. Therefore, the role

of correctional psychologists is much more complex and challenging (Magaletta & Perskaudas, 2016). Broomfield (2008) affirmed that correctional psychologists experience enormous challenges when working in correctional centres. Psychologists are compelled to attend to the large number of caseloads, which leaves them feeling overwhelmed. This results in another challenge of not being able to provide adequate psychological services to all offenders. Correctional psychologists must be able to perform their duties with many restrictions placed on them by the correctional management.

For example, psychologists may only consult with an offender for therapy within specified time frames. Another major concern for psychologists is that they are expected to abide by the rules and regulations of their professional councils and adhere to correctional policies that do not always correlate with each other. This creates ethical dilemmas for psychologists, placing them in a tough position, if not a double bind (Broomfield, 2008). Psychologists also experience challenges when attempting to develop a therapeutic relationship with offenders as they are already distrustful towards the correctional personnel. Psychologists are sometimes viewed as informers who promise confidentiality but report on relevant matters regarding the offender to the correctional management, such as gang activities, being in possession of contraband articles or threatening harm to another offender. Broomfield asserted that it is therefore inevitable that psychologists will experience high levels of stress and burnout from the nature of the work, the demanding roles that psychologists are compelled to subscribe to, the lack of time and adequate resources, the organisational environment and having to work with the some of the most atrocious offenders within a restricting environment.

Senter (2006) indicated there is minimal research on correctional psychologists. Senter's research conducted in Texas, United States of America, thus aimed to examine occupational burnout and work-related stress among correctional psychologists to fill the gap.

According to the findings, psychologists working in correctional centres compared to psychologists working in Veteran Affairs, public psychiatric hospitals, and university counselling centres experienced higher levels of occupational burnout and less job satisfaction. Senter also emphasised that research conducted amongst correctional psychologists indicated that they were dissatisfied with administrative duties, lack of funding and lack of appropriate supervision. Senter further reiterated that psychologists who have worked with sex offenders have also reported experiencing stress, depression, burnout, and exhaustion.

In contrast, however, a study conducted by Scheela (2001) in Minnesota, United States of America, with therapists working in an outpatient sexual abuse treatment programme, indicated that, while not denying the adverse effects of working with sex offenders, the therapists found it satisfying and rewarding. For some psychologists, these positive experiences which involved the challenge of the work, working as a team, facilitating offenders' growth and change and making a difference in the community, compensated for the negative effects such as the lack of funding, the media, and the attitude of the community and the consequences of failure. However, it cannot be assumed that working with sex offenders in an outpatient setting can be equated to working with sex offenders in a correctional centre.

In addition, the Institute of Criminology in Australia held a seminar in January 1982 for psychologists working in the criminal justice and legal systems to bring to light relevant issues for discussion and resolution. Priest and Piotrowski (1983) presented a paper at the seminar in which they discussed one of the challenges they experienced as psychologists working in Australian correctional centres. Priest and Piotrowski highlighted that the issue of boundaries of psychologists working in correctional centres and the lack of knowledge by correctional personnel concerning what psychologists have to offer and what they can and

cannot be expected to do created challenges for the psychologists with various components including the parole boards. Priest and Piotrowski emphasised that the role of psychologists within correctional centres needs to be clarified for the boundaries to be maintained and respected. If such roles are clarified to correctional personnel, it would make an enormous difference in the harmonious and effective working relationships between correctional psychologists and correctional personnel.

Correctional officers play a unique role in the correctional system and the MDT involved in the rehabilitative process of the offenders; they significantly rely on the observations and information that the correctional officers provide. The correctional officers are the personnel that spend the most time with offenders. They are equipped to determine if an offender is behaving inappropriately or is showing signs of mental disturbance. Apart from referring offenders to the MDT and providing necessary information, the correctional officers also play a significant role in providing security to the MDT personnel. Although correctional officers and mental health practitioners have been trained differently, working within the confines of a correctional system has created much in common between them.

The two groups should be able to relate and work well together, especially if they are made knowledgeable on the role of the correctional psychologist (Appelbaum et al., 2001). Broomfield (2008) asserted that correctional populations are continuously rising hence the dire need for the recruitment of more mental health practitioners. Broomfield further stressed that although such positions become available within the correctional centres, psychologists will avoid filling these positions due to concerns regarding offenders' demonstrative and unstable behaviours as well as organisational challenges, which are frequently encountered in correctional centres.

In contrast, Broomfield (2008) attempted to provide encouragement to potential correctional psychologists, stating that working in a correctional context with a unique

population will contribute to life experience and growth as a psychologist. Despite the positive side of the coin, psychologists are not prepared to work in a constantly threatening environment, and if they do, it is not for a long time. Hence the turnover rates of correctional psychologists remain relatively high. Broomfield also noted with concern that correctional centres are indeed dangerous and threatening environments where one must always be extremely cautious and alert. Although it is undisputed that psychologists have been trained and made knowledgeable in their field of practice, not enough attention is given to properly preparing and equipping them to work in a correctional environment which is unique.

In their studies, Senter (2006) and Magaletta and Perskaudas (2016) provided recommendations that could assist correctional psychologists deal with the emotional challenges experienced and possibly contribute to retention within correctional systems. Senter (2006) recommended the development and implementation of an effective burnout reduction programme. Magaletta and Perskaudas (2016) postulated that correctional systems need to develop and sustain a conducive environment for the participation of its officials in order for offenders to experience an effective and healing, therapeutic process. Correctional personnel need first to be aware of the common challenges they face in this unique context and make time for normal self-renewal processes. Consciousness and awareness of the challenges of working in a correctional context are of utmost importance. Magaletta and Perskaudas emphasised that continuous education and training of correctional personnel, feedback sessions, and peer supervision play an integral role in the self-renewal process.

In conclusion, although psychologists working in international correctional centres encounter experiences (burnout, stress, depression, exhaustion and organisational challenges) similar to psychologists working in various contexts globally, two significant and unique experiences encountered by international correctional psychologists are the vicarious trauma to which they are subjected and the ethical dilemma they face concerning the rules and

regulations of the professional councils versus the correctional policies. The literature review that follows will discuss the lived experiences of professionals working in South African correctional centres.

Lived Experiences of Professionals Working in South African Correctional Centres

Apartheid, a South African conception, which segregated its people based on the colour of their skin, was doused when the country became a democracy in 1994. The country laboured tirelessly to heal and restore social justice amongst the nation. However, despite the changes that affected the country in a positive way, many present-day South Africans continue to experience the challenges of poverty, unemployment, and poor education. Nevertheless, as with international countries, these criminogenic factors contribute significantly to the violence and crime rate in South Africa, which has escalated in recent years and continues to rampage communities. According to Naidoo and Mkize (2012), South Africa has the highest number of incarcerated offenders compared to all African countries. It ranks as the seventh-highest country in the world for the number of incarcerated offenders.

The DCS has been mandated by the South African Constitution and other laws and policies to ensure that offenders are incarcerated in an environment that is conducive and respectful to human dignity and the treatment of offenders (Gender, Health, & Justice Research Unit, 2012). Offenders entering the correctional system should be developed and rehabilitated rather than only punished for the crime committed. Rehabilitation is aimed at correcting offending behaviour and restoring the offender to that of a law-abiding citizen through the professional assistance of psychologists, social workers, educationists, healthcare workers and other role-players working in the correctional context (Matetola, 2012; Mguni, 2011).

In contributing to the objectives of the Constitution of South Africa, the White Paper on Corrections (Department of Correctional Services, 2005) stipulated that offenders be provided with both social and psychological services to promote their well-being and mental health. Psychological services became an integral branch in the DCS and fall within the National Directorate of Psychological Services, situated in Pretoria, South Africa. The aim of the Directorate of Psychological Services is to ensure that offenders receive psychological services at their correctional centres. Psychologists employed at the various centres attempt to meet the Directorate's goals because they promote mental health and emotional well-being to the offenders to rehabilitate them so that successful reintegration of offenders into the communities can be effectively facilitated (Muthaphuli, 2008). Psychologists form part of the offender rehabilitation path (ORP). They conduct clinical interviews and assess and diagnose offenders upon their admission into the correctional centres to ensure that they receive the appropriate treatment based on their individual needs.

Psychologists render therapeutic programmes to offenders and conduct individual psychotherapy with offenders who have been self-referred, referred from another professional, unit manager or external service provider. The purpose of having a correctional psychologist is to strengthen and enhance offender rehabilitation through individual, group, or family therapy. Psychological treatment of offenders further assists in eradicating the adverse effects of imprisonment that offenders usually experience, especially those serving long-term sentences. Through therapeutic psychological interventions, psychologists working in correctional centres aim to curb reoffending behaviour by directly addressing the problems experienced by offenders who are most likely to re-offend when granted parole (Muthaphuli, 2008).

However, the duties of psychologists working in correctional centres can be exhausting and challenging. Clinical psychologists serving community service are given the

opportunity to render their services at correctional centres. These posts were introduced in 2005 to address the concerning shortage of psychologists in DCS. Rohleder et al. (2006) were part of the first intake of psychologists to perform their community service within five different correctional centres in the Western Cape and reported several challenges they experienced. Rohleder et al. stated that the lack of resources or scarce resources such as office space, basic office equipment and telephones posed a huge challenge and raised ethical concerns. Safety and security were of utmost concern, especially for the two female psychologists who were expected to render services to maximum security male offenders. Because of staff shortages, Rohleder et al. were frequently compelled to perform their duties without any security. One of the psychologist, including two other female community service psychologists, reported being threatened by male offenders.

Another challenge was the unclear role of psychologists in correctional centres. Personnel, in general, did not know what the role of psychologists entailed, and this created several challenges for the psychologists. Rohleder et al. (2006) were thus expected to provide reports to the parole boards after consulting with an offender for only one or two sessions. They further experienced the lack of support from the DCS, which was later validated by the lack of response to their many complaints and requests they had registered. Rohleder et al. also discussed the emotional challenges they experienced, such as fear and anxiety due to threats from offenders; isolation and alienation, in that they were expected to render services that were far from their homes and had to relocate for four months without any emotional support to counteract the distress they experienced; anger, as they felt forced into performing their community service within a correctional context; and helplessness, as they felt that their situation was not going to change for the better (Rohleder et al., 2006).

In their concluding comments, Rohleder et al. (2006) emphasised that community service for psychologists in the DCS may not be an opportunity for development for

psychologist and the healthcare system, but rather far more destructive. Due to their challenging experiences in the DCS, these psychologists blankly refused an offer to fill the vacant permanent posts, including the post of Head psychologist at one of the correctional centres in the DCS.

Social workers are also professional bodies that play an integral role in the correctional system (Mguni, 2011). The DCS social workers provide social work services that focus on the challenges that offenders experience both in personal and family relationships (Herbig & Hesselink, 2012). Social workers play a critical role in enhancing the offender's social functioning, which results in the successful reintegration of the offender upon release into the community. This group of professionals provides services ranging from individual counselling to group programmes that address social problems (Herbig & Hesselink, 2012). The programmes include the life skills programme, adjustment to imprisonment, HIV/AIDs programme, substance abuse, conflict resolution programmes, and many others which are considered rehabilitative interventions that enhance the offenders' social functioning whilst in a correctional centre and upon release from the correctional centre. These programmes are provided to the offenders based on their individual needs. In addition, the services of the social worker are available to all offenders and remand detainees (Mguni, 2011).

Furthermore, Mguni (2011) emphasised that the primary duties of the social work services within the correctional centres are to assist the offenders develop and grow their potential by employing exterior means to improve the offender's social functioning. Thus, social workers form the connection between the family and the offender to strengthen family bonds. When an offender is supported by their family, there is an internal need to reform and reintegrate into their community upon parole (Herbig & Hesselink, 2012; Mguni, 2011). According to Mandisa (2007), parents of young offenders are expected to participate in programmes, restorative justice and aftercare services. These services are necessary for the

rehabilitation of offenders and aid in preventing re-offending behaviours. It is thus expected of parents to provide support to young offenders. However, due to challenges experienced within family systems, for example, substance abuse, domestic violence, and loss of employment, most parents and families are unable to provide the support (Mandisa, 2007).

Furthermore, social workers who work in a correctional centre need to possess the ability to work in a restricted, high security, complex environment with offenders who have committed heinous crimes (Mguni, 2011). Thus social workers need to form a fit with the correctional system and apply their knowledge and expertise of their field to assess and plan suitable interventions for each consulted offender. Apart from their many other duties, social workers and psychologists are respectively required to provide social work, and psychological reports to the parole boards to consider the suitability of offenders for parole. However, according to Mguni, this is not always possible due to the high caseloads that leave social workers and psychologists overwhelmed with negligible time to assess offenders. Mguni reiterated that social workers and psychologists are expected to consult with offenders beyond their stipulated caseload. This creates another challenge regarding the effective rehabilitation of offenders. In addition, the DCS is experiencing a shortage of professionals such as educationists, social workers, and psychologists (Cilliers & Smit, 2007).

Similarly, Mguni (2011) also identified that the turnover rate for social workers is also high. Mguni highlighted that social workers leave their employment at the DCS to join other companies, including leaving the country to work in other countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. This also creates a challenge for the DCS as it directly affects the offenders' development and rehabilitation process (Mguni, 2011). Furthermore Cilliers and Smit (2007) argued that rehabilitation would remain ineffective for as long as offenders attend the various services solely for parole consideration rather than out of interest or to genuinely rehabilitate.

Matetoa (2012) further deliberated on the occupational challenges experienced in the DCS, stating that specific career groups were more affected than others. The highest vacancy rates and termination rates were amongst healthcare workers, psychologists, and social workers. Matetoa argued that the high vacancy rates amongst professional staff create enormous perturbations in the correctional system, reducing effective development and rehabilitation of offenders (Fourie, 2015; Matetoa, 2012). As a result, the DCS is unable to actualise its core objectives in bringing its mission of rehabilitation into practical fruition (Matetoa, 2012).

Correctional officials are also expected to perform tasks such as facilitating programmes to offenders without being trained for this purpose. These additional tasks further put a strain on the correctional official who must perform security-related duties and assist in the development of the offender (Mguni, 2011). In addition, correctional officials must contend with the serious overcrowding challenges which exacerbate the stressors they experience. The shortage of correctional officials especially in relation to the number of offenders in a correctional centre, the physical threats by offenders, and the lack of recognition are all contributing factors to the stressors experienced by correctional officials (Botha & Pienaar, 2006; Department of Correctional Services, 2021). Pieterse (2019) concurred that the challenges correctional officials experience are indeed unique, and both male and female correctional officials are confronted with similar security risks and challenges.

Matetoa (2012) emphasised the same sentiments as Mguni (2011). She stated that in some cases, psychologists and social workers are not readily available to assist offenders. The correctional official is expected to help the offender and resolve their problems. Matetoa (2012) argued that for corrections in South Africa to meet its set objectives, a greater emphasis needs to be placed on correctional officials in terms of the role they play, their

leadership positions, and their training. The duties of a correctional official are extensive and challenging (Department of Correctional Services, 2021; Matetoa, 2012; Pieterse, 2019). Not only do correctional officials have to maintain law and order within their respective correctional centres, but they must also understand the policies and procedures and maintain optimal compliance in sub-optimal conditions. Correctional officials have a duty to treat offenders with decency concerning their basic human rights irrespective of their own views and biases (Matetoa, 2012).

Correctional officials have been trained to understand that their primary duty is to ensure the safe custody and security of offenders. This becomes a challenge when correctional officials must form a fit with the rehabilitation process of offenders whilst maintaining the security and safe custody of offenders (Matetoa, 2012). This requires a shift in the correctional official's mind-set by becoming familiar with the offender's treatment plan and forming an integral part of it (Matetoa, 2012). Such interventions by the correctional official may be viewed as unreasonable as it takes away from what they were initially trained to do.

Although the DCS has envisaged creating a safe and secure correctional environment with rehabilitation being the key focus, the DCS is challenged with the lack of resources needed to effectively rehabilitate offenders and prevent recidivism (Bantjies et al., 2017). Furthermore, correctional centres in South Africa that houses both sentenced and unsentenced offenders are obliged to experience challenges concerning overcrowding, gangsterism and violence. Like research conducted internationally, the problem of overcrowding in South African correctional centres exacerbated psychological stress, mental disorders, assaults, and sexual abuse amongst offenders. Overcrowding thus factored in the reduction of rehabilitation, with only a few offenders receiving the essential psychological and psychiatric attention (Bantjies et al., 2017).

A study conducted by Naidoo and Mkize (2012) at a correctional centre in Durban, South Africa, on the prevalence of mental disorders in the correctional population, indicated a significantly high percentage of offenders diagnosed with an Axis 1 disorder, with the most common disorder being substance use disorders. Other mental disorders include bipolar, depressive, and anxiety disorders. This is consistent with the international study conducted by Appelbaum et al. (2001). Naidoo and Mkize (2012) also realised that most offenders with Axis 1 disorders were never diagnosed or treated in the correctional centre. The study also identified that in terms of mental health resources, there were vast inconsistencies concerning mental healthcare needs and the services that were available.

According to the Gender, Health, and Justice Research Unit (2012), South African female offenders are highly susceptible to mental disorders due to violent and sexual abuses they may have experienced prior to incarceration. Female offenders who need mental healthcare and rehabilitation programmes only consult with a psychologist upon request and experience limited access to psychological services. There is only one or no psychologist to render services to female offenders. The Gender, Health, and Justice Research Unit acknowledged that the DCS is insufficiently resourced to address the needs of all offenders and recommended that female offenders be prioritised and consulted on a regular basis.

Based on the high prevalence rate of suicide amongst offenders in South African correctional centres, Bantjies et al. (2017) conducted a study at one medium and one maximum correctional centre in Cape Town. The aim was to explore how mental health professionals experienced working with suicidal offenders in the correctional context. A sample of 10 health professionals, including doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, and social workers, were interviewed. The study concluded that correctional centres were not therapeutic environments. Health professionals experienced a lack of collaboration, integration, and support. The lack of resources played a crucial role in fulfilling their

mandates. Participants ultimately felt anxious, powerless, unhappy, and despondent due to the lack of resources, which compromised their work abilities. The study further highlighted the significant breach between the stipulations of the current policy and the actual practice within South African correctional centres (Bantjies et al., 2017).

In as much as the challenges experienced by psychologists and other professionals working in the DCS appear to be challenging and arduous, support structures within various levels were implemented to provide room to address such challenges. For example, at a national level, the Directorate Psychological Services in the DCS created a national forum called the Indaba for all the DCS psychologists. The Indaba is usually held annually, and depending on the agenda, the Indaba extends over one day or two days. The Indaba customarily takes place before attending the annual psychological conferences held by PsySSA (Psychological Society of South Africa [PsySSA], n.d.).

All the DCS psychologists are provided with transport, meals, and accommodation during the Indaba and PsySSA conferences. These expenses are paid from the budgeted funds of the Directorate Psychological Services and the various management areas where the psychologists work. During the Indaba, all the DCS psychologists working in the various regions come together to discuss and engage on successes achieved, challenges experienced, and best practices as a way forward. One psychologist from each region is expected to prepare and present the successes and challenges experienced at their management areas during the Indabas. This psychologist was usually the psychologist regarded as the coordinator for their respective management areas.

Some of the most common themes which took precedence at the Indabas were the concerns or challenges surrounding safety and security of psychologists, overwhelming workload due to shortage of psychologists within the various management areas, standardised group programmes for sentenced offenders, and HPCSA regulations versus the DCS policies

and procedures and the ethical dilemmas experienced. These themes are discussed in length, unfortunately with no possible solution or outcome as the same challenges prevail year after year. The successes discussed are but few. One of the successes highlighted in the year 2019 were the measures psychologists in a specific management area put in place that assisted them and their centre in reducing the rate of suicide among offenders.

The Indaba creates an opportunity for the DCS psychologists to relate to one another regarding the successes and challenges experienced and provide guidance, support, and, where possible, solutions. It is a source of comfort and a safety net for all psychologists working in South African correctional centres. The Directorate Psychological Services in the DCS further ensures that all psychologists working in the DCS attend the annual psychological conferences such as those held by PsySSA.

In a further attempt to provide support to psychologists in the various management areas within the regions, The Director of Psychological Services initiated the National Lifer Task Team (NLTT) to assist psychologists in the various correctional centres to reduce the number of life-sentenced offender assessments reports that have been backlogged (Department of Correctional Services, 2017/2018). Three-hundred-and-forty-four risk assessments were completed by the task teams. Such support systems from the Directorate Psychological Services create relief for the DCS psychologists working in correctional centres. On a management area level, one Principal Psychologist (Manager) of Psychological Services in the DCS identified the need to support the psychologists working in the correctional centres.

The Manager of Psychological Services took the initiative to gain approval from the Area Commissioner of the Management Area for the psychologists to leave work once a month at 13h00 to attend their own supervision. Furthermore, the Manager of Psychological Services invited external service providers to the management area every quarter to render

group supervision to all psychologists working in the management area. It must be mentioned that this support measure was implemented from the initiative of one manager in one Management Area. Such support measures are not necessarily valid for all management areas in the country.

The literature on the lived experiences of professionals working in South African correctional centres proves similar to international research. Professionals working in South African correctional centres experience various emotional and psychological problems. However, the only literature available on the experiences of psychologists working in correctional centres is based on the experiences of community service psychologists who have attempted to provide a rich and detailed account of their experiences after serving only one year of working in correctional centres. The literature on research conducted in correctional centres focus more on offenders, mental disorders or working with suicidal offenders. This clearly illustrates a gap in the literature concerning psychologists working in South African correctional centres. This study therefore attempted to address this gap by exploring the lived experiences of psychologists working in South African correctional centres.

Chapter Summary

To begin, the literature review endeavoured to provide a detailed account of the lived experiences of psychologists working in various contexts, both internationally and nationally. Literature on the lived experiences of psychologists ranging from student psychologists to psychologists working in various contexts has been discussed in much detail. The lived experiences of psychologists both on an international, and national level prove to encounter similar experiences. However, within the South African context, the inequalities in psychology were legitimatised in the Apartheid era. Despite the transformation in the field of

psychology post-apartheid, psychologists practising in South Africa, whether intentionally or not, continue to encourage the skewed proportion in relation to their services rendered to much of the population.

Second, the literature review filtered its focus to highlight international research conducted in corrections with the spotlight on psychologists working in correctional centres. Psychologists working in international correctional centres encounter experiences like psychologists working in various contexts globally. However, two significant and unique experiences emerged, namely vicarious trauma to which international correctional psychologists are subjected and the ethical dilemma they face in relation to the rules and regulations of the professional councils versus the correctional policies. The literature on the lived experiences of international correctional psychologists is minimal.

Third, the literature was narrowed to focus on research conducted in South African correctional centres and specifically, around psychology in South African correctional centres. Literature concerning the lived experiences of professionals working in South African correctional centres, although limited, proves like international research. However, the only literature available on the experiences of psychologists working in correctional centres is based on the experiences of community service psychologists. Literature on research conducted in correctional centres focuses more on offenders, mental disorders or working with suicidal offenders.

The literature review thus clearly indicates that a gap exists concerning the literature on psychologists working in South African correctional centres. This study therefore attempted to address this gap by exploring the lived experiences of permanent psychologists working in South African correctional centres. It is also anticipated that the findings will provide an all-inclusive interpretation of the lived experiences of permanently employed

psychologists in DCS. The following chapter (Chapter Three), will discuss the theoretical framework, namely social constructionism, in which this study is grounded.

Chapter Three
Theoretical Framework
Social Constructionism

Man is a social product.

(Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 79)

According to Adom et al. (2018), the theoretical framework in any study is significant as it forms the foundation of theoretical constructs upon which a study is constructed. A study employs a relevant theoretical framework that will serve as a plan or guide for the research. Grant and Osanloo (2014, p. 12) used a metaphor, “a blueprint of a house,” to describe the application of a theoretical framework in research. Green (2014) similarly emphasised that frameworks produce a map for a study and aid in the construction of research questions. Green asserted that the theoretical framework in conjunction with other parts of the research provides a strong foundation for the study and contributes to the validations provided in the findings of the study. A theoretical framework is founded on an existing theory and reflects the assumptions of the current study (Adom et al., 2018). Collins and Stockton (2018) accentuated that a theoretical framework becomes the thread that connects the current information and previous philosophies about multifarious phenomena. It further seeks to delineate the researcher’s epistemological stance.

Moreover, Grant and Osanloo (2014) and Green (2014) stated that although the theoretical framework is an integral part of any research, it is also the part that is negligibly mentioned. This chapter, thus, discusses social constructionism the theoretical framework that grounded this study. Social refers to the theory of reality and knowledge creation (Airo, 2021, p. 93).

This chapter will highlight the shift in research methods over time. Second, the various definitions and descriptions of social constructionism will be delineated. Third, it is essential that the origins of social constructionism be provided. The key characteristics of social constructionism will be detailed. Furthermore, social constructionism will be reviewed from an ontological and epistemological perspective in relation to this study. I also highlight a few examples of research informed by social constructionism as motivation for positioning this study in the existing body of research knowledge. Hence it is anticipated that this chapter will bring to light the validations of the theory concerning this study.

The Shift Begins (from Analytical Methods to a Meaning- making Process)

Psychologists, over the years, have extensively focussed on analytical methods of research and have considerably overlooked the fact that research participants are indeed human and therefore not mechanical in the way they react to their environments (Durrheim, 1997). Lock and Strong (2010) accentuated that individuals are social beings who experience the world in all its manifestations, contributing to the individual's growth from *being to becoming*. Raskin (2002) further argued that the history of psychology has always placed focus on the individual without taking into account contextual and cultural factors. Raskin affirmed that in acknowledging various cultures, contexts, and languages. In the same way, multiple realities are also constructed within these boundaries of culture, context, and language. Schutz (as cited in Cunliffe, 2008) concurred that every individualised personal experience is constructed through social interaction. Therefore, human beings are not makers of their own individualised information but are shaped and formed by the world and the experiences they encounter with others (Lock & Strong, 2010).

Consequently, the constructionist perspective was met with opposition and created controversy among physical scientists who subscribed to empirical and scientific knowledge

as the objective truth (Misra & Prakash, 2012). The research practices in mainstream psychology have since been challenged, and over the past decades, meaningful human activity in psychological research has become widely acknowledged (Burr, 2015). Many theorists have since shifted their focus from an analytically scientific approach in psychological research to human meanings and how they come to be constructed through social interactions (Burr, 2015; Cunliffe, 2008; Durrheim, 1997; Misra & Prakash, 2012).

Hence, social constructionism is one such terminology that is used to discuss several related theoretical approaches that do not view the world as a set of already established precepts, but rather, the world has come to be what it is through the participation of shared exchanges (Burr, 2015; Gergen, 1985). Social constructionism includes the multiplicity and diversity in our shared world and relies on the socially constructed realities and the ways in which it is maintained, and how it evolved (Gergen, 1985; Misra & Prakash, 2012). The emphasis is ultimately placed on relational activities and the meanings arising from such relations. Hence, relationships play a crucial role in the relational process between individuals as the realities constructed during these processes become significant meaning-making processes (Gergen, 1985). Unlike other approaches grounded on empirical, scientific, and objective so-called facts, social constructionism may be regarded as a science of social action originating from a particular style of thought (Geldenhuys, 2015). The word 'social' in itself makes one reflect on relationships and the interdependent nature of such relations. Furthermore, the word 'construction' evokes thoughts of creating, building, formulating, and assembling.

Defining Social Constructionism

There is no universal definition for social constructionism. Instead, several authors have attempted to describe the approach. Although expressed differently by various authors,

these descriptions are relatively similar (Burr, 1995). Galbin (2014) concurred that different writers had provided several descriptions; however, social constructionism comprises two distinct features. It discards conventional information about the nature of mind and theories of causality. Instead, social constructionism focuses on the intricacies and interconnectedness of individuals within their communities. Galbin described social constructionism as a theory of sociological knowledge and communication that attempts to understand the world through progressive mutual creations. Gergen (as cited in Galbin) defined social constructionism as a perspective that views the collective and relational activities as significant contributors to human existence. Burr (2015) further argued that the fundamental principle of social constructionism is based on how we understand ourselves and our world as a creation of human thought rather than entrenched in observable external reality.

Andrews (2012) stressed that social constructionists are invested in the construction of knowledge and where meaning is shared within societies which exist both in subjective and objective reality. Harris (2006) pointed out that the central premise of social constructionism is that meaning is not innate and that social constructionists are invested in how people create and apply the knowledge they come to know. Cunliffe (2008) agreed that human beings and their social realities are closely intertwined and overlap whilst continuously being shaped and shaping each other through everyday interactions. According to Raskin (2002), social constructionism developed into a framework invested in relationships with its primary focus on actively shared meanings that originate when interactions are involved. Geldenhuys (2015) stated that, when put together, social constructionism can be viewed as a framework interested in interactional practices as a means of engaging and understanding the world.

Origins of Social Constructionism

Social constructionism originated from various academic backgrounds, such as social philosophy and sociology of knowledge. The sociology of knowledge examined knowledge that was constructed through socio-cultural processes. Subsequently, attention was drawn to systems of thinking about social reality, which eventually formed the foundation for social constructionism. However, the essential characteristics of social constructionism were initially established in sociology. Hence, various disciplines such as sociology, linguistics, communication, anthropology, and psychology, began using this approach in their fields of study (Allen, 2004; Cunliffe, 2008; Galbin 2014). Galbin (2014) further emphasised that George Herbert Mead played a significant role in the development of social theory.

Mead created the term ‘symbolic interactionism,’ which is embedded in the view that people’s individualities are shaped through social interactions with others (Galbin, 2014). Berger and Luckmann (1966) focussed on the works of several prominent figures. However, the authors were greatly influenced by the work of Mead and his development of symbolic interactionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Galbin (2014) emphasised that Berger and Luckmann (1966) became significant contributors to social constructionism when they wrote the book, *The Social Construction of Reality*. In their book, Berger and Luckmann (p.79) contend that, “Man is a social product” and reality is socially constructed.

Knowledge thus examines the process in which the constructed reality occurs. The work of Berger and Luckmann 1966 has since gained momentum and was adapted and refined by other academic movements (Galbin, 2014). Weinberg (2009) stated that social constructionism has since thrived in the field of social sciences because social constructionism has continuously confirmed that phenomena such as gender, race, pathology, science, and sexuality are a result of socio-cultural and socio-historical processes. Hence,

social constructionism is considered a wide-ranging concept held together by extensive belief systems (Lock & Strong, 2010).

Key Characteristics of Social Constructionism

Social constructionism has several key characteristics, which makes it a powerful theoretical framework on which to ground this study. Social constructionism is non-reflexive and approaches conventional thinking of the world with a critical stance, thereby rejecting an all-knowing approach. Social constructionism emphasises that critical reflections allow for the questioning and exploring of the different forms of knowledge constructed and the understanding and interpreting of the subjective effects compared to the all-knowing approach of how the world is (Andrews, 2012; Burr, 1995, 2015; Lit & Shek, 2002). As the researcher conducting this study within a correctional context, I had to adopt an unknowing position and continuously reflect on my own understandings and prejudices and that of the participants.

Social constructionism emphasises that knowledge is renewed by the process of social interaction. Our knowledge of the world is continuously constructed through our daily interactions. Lit and Shek (2002) considered Bateson's view on living systems and state that interactions within such systems are reciprocal and cannot be linearly interpreted. The reciprocal nature of social interaction over time results in the creation of constructed realities. Social construction thus becomes absorbed in the meanings of these interpreted realities. It is through these social interactions that our knowledge is made a reality (Burr, 1995, 2015; Lit & Shek, 2002). Social interaction occurs in many ways. Most common, however, is language (Burr, 1995, 2015). Moreover, social constructionism purports that knowledge and social action go hand-in-hand (Burr, 1995). The social processes result in abundant possible social

constructions of the world. Each construction comes with a different action. Hence, some patterns of social processes are sustained whilst others are excluded (Burr, 1995).

Language

Dickens (2004) stated that language plays an integral role in human interactional processes and constructing stories. Dickens used the term 'language games' to refer to stories that adapt and are created according to the evolving rules. Pittaway et al. (2017) accentuated that language is hereditary and forms a connection between entities, contextual spaces, people, experiences, and awareness. Concepts become ingrained in language and are passed down through interactional processes. It is by using these concepts that human beings have come to understand the world and make sense of their existence. Hence language is considered a source of knowledge even though knowledge is also embedded in culture and history.

Burr and Dick (2017) and Gergen (1985) similarly stated that social constructionism views language as having an essential role as our perception of the world and everything within it is embodied in language. Language is a collective action in which people can construct, describe, and make sense of their world. There is power in language which is constantly evolving, and every time words are spoken, a reality is created. Lit and Shek (2002) and Raskin (2002) concurred that people use language to talk about themselves concerning their understanding of their world, which ultimately defines their experiences in each context. Words are used to achieve an intended outcome and not just describe an event. Language and thought are not viewed as two separate entities; instead, language is the communicator of our everyday thoughts. Offenders, officials, and particularly correctional psychologists communicate their thoughts about the world through language.

Lock and Strong (2010) further argued that meaning and understanding forms the central feature of human activities. Language thus facilitates how people may have different social experiences of interactions. Through shared agreements meaning is ascribed to social interactions. Airo (2021) highlighted that concepts such as power, crime, deviance, and discrimination are some topics of interest that are being researched from a socio-cultural use of language rather than through empirical methods. Airo further asserted that reality is formed and interpreted through language and communication.

Social constructionism is thus based on two fundamental principles, namely the role of language in constructing knowledge and the social nature of knowledge creation. These principles cannot exist without each other and overlap even though they may conceptually differ. Language becomes the medium between people, whereas social interactions are the knots that connect human behaviour. Whilst mainstream psychology did not show an appreciation for the importance of language, social constructionism in qualitative research methods chooses to interrogate language as it is through language that emotions, attitudes, and our inner world are conveyed during the interactional process (Burr & Dick, 2017).

One of the primary reasons this study is grounded in social constructionism is because language provided the opportunity for offenders, officials, and correctional psychologists to make meaning and sense of their experiences within their correctional systems. Their inner thoughts and meanings were conveyed through language. A collaboration of their current realities in terms of how they viewed and experienced their work environment, as communicated through their language, will also assist in creating opportunities for the development and transformation of future realities (Burr & Dick, 2017; Geldenhuys, 2015).

Culture and History

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966, p.122), “As man externalises himself, he constructs the world into which he externalises himself. In the process of externalisation, he projects his own meanings into reality.” Correia (2020) explained that members of a specific community naturally generate a common understanding of the world which becomes a continuous process of partnership based on indefinite shared respect and agreement for as long as they still form part of that community. Correia further argued that inherently distinctive factors and the influence of socio-cultural factors should not be viewed as separate from each other. Instead, environmental factors have importance as they influence the inherently distinctive factors.

Geldenhuys (2015) similarly emphasised that emotions invoked in humans are considered socially constructed, creating meaning in a given context. The difference, however, is that emphasis is not given to everyone with their innate individualities. Instead, importance is given to human nature as continuously transforming in different contexts and relations over time. Socio-cultural factors significantly influence an individual’s behaviour, especially in continuous, shared, interactional contact with others. It is through this process a social system becomes established (Correia, 2020). Correctional psychologists continuously give and take from their work environment. In this process, they learn behaviours and develop various reactions and emotions concerning specific contexts and relationships. These learned patterns become continuous patterns that replicate other patterns that become unique only to the correctional community (Geldenhuys, 2015).

Through this social process, the correctional psychologists share what has been learned in new relationships, for example, with new psychologists entering the system. The correctional psychologist is viewed as a correctional psychologist only concerning the correctional system and the relational processes of which they form a part. The study,

therefore, explored how the emotions and reactions of correctional psychologists, in various contexts and relations, within correctional environments have developed and transformed over time (Geldenhuys, 2015).

The world is characterised and classified according to socio-cultural and socio-historical processes, and meaning-making is ingrained in these processes considered time- and place- appropriate. The framework thus emphasises that through the interactional processes in which people engage, history is eventually shaped. Our understanding of the world becomes embedded in specific history and culture. Thus, in attempting to make sense of a particular situation, one will need to reframe it from within the period of history in which it occurred and the culture by which it was bound at the time. The meaning-making process thus becomes bound in specific culture and history and may not necessarily be relevant in any other context. Human beings become self-defining and socially constructed beings engaging in shared experiences as they prescribe to socio-cultural norms and prescripts (Burr, 1995; Burr & Dick, 2017; Lit & Shek, 2002; Lock & Strong, 2010).

For example, there was a time when the DCS constituted prisons and incarcerated prisoners. During this period, prisons were considered a place of punishment and strict and safe custody of prisoners had to be maintained. However, over the past decades, the DCS has incurred a paradigm shift. Rehabilitation has become its core business. Prisoners are now regarded as offenders, and prisons are known as correctional centres. The DCS is aimed at rehabilitating offending behaviours. Hence the role of psychologists, social workers and other stakeholders becomes imperative within this context.

Furthermore, Foucault (as cited in Burr & Dick, 2017) coined the term ‘governance,’ which refers to the systems put in place to control and manage the masses. According to Foucault (as cited in Burr & Dick, 2017), such prevailing processes are directly accountable for the existing groupings that have come to be established.

Discourse and Disciplinary Power

Mohammed et al. (2021) described discourse as a body of knowledge that also produces and creates specific classifications of thought. Knowledge and power are connected by discourse. Burr and Dick (2017) described discourse as a culturally significant category of belief systems that help make sense of interactional processes and the world itself.

Mohammed et al. (2021) emphasised that discourse goes through the process of elimination and is at times met with controversy as the knowledge generated may be accepted by some and rejected by others. Mohammed et al. argued that specific discourses become prevalent or acceptable and are used as a method of silencing behaviours that pose a challenge to authority. Hence, discourse is also distinguished by its productive power. In other words, a discourse has the power to influence our thoughts and behaviours (Burr & Dick, 2017). Rees et al. (2020) discussed two forms of social constructionism central to productive power. The first form is micro-constructionism which refers to the language or regular talk spoken through an interactional process. The second form is called macro-constructionism and refers to the productive power of language based on collective, material structures, associations, and organisational practices.

Zajda (2020) added that power is made acceptable in social processes through discourse that emphasises current realities. Language and social processes articulate discourse exploration in power relations. Mohammed et al. (2021) argued that often, influential people use discourse as a tool for power. Social influencers thus maintain discourse by regenerating current and established social structures through assortment, elimination, and dominance.

Krzyżanowski (2020) highlighted that a grouping and division contrast becomes prevalent in disciplinary power as a means of subduing socio-cultural, socio-historical, and social interactional processes into segments so that they can be visible and improved. Hence,

disciplinary power describes the willingness of people to adhere to societal standards (Burr & Dick, 2017). Rehabilitation as discourse has the productive power to influence thoughts and behaviours of correctional centres, officials, psychologists, social workers, and other stakeholders who assist offenders in improving themselves, thereby reducing re-offending behaviours. Disciplinary power, on the other hand, is enshrined in the policies and procedures of the DCS to influence the decisions taken and the officials who work for the organisation.

Power Relations

Power creates positions in society which ultimately results in levels of authority between various groupings (Burr & Dick, 2017). Adorjan (2019, p.171) stated, “Power is as power does.” Power can transform unpredictably. One of the most significant advantages of social constructionism is that it views power from an apolitical lens. Rees et al. (2020) maintained that multiple realities construct shared meanings, and these understandings join in preserving power relations. For example, correctional officials promoted to higher ranks within the correctional context are viewed as managers with the considerable power to make decisions. Lower-ranking officials will have to abide by the decisions taken. These power relations also exist between various professionals within the correctional context, such as psychologists and social workers. Lock and Strong (2010) also argued that language becomes intertwined in power relations as people use language to dominate, suppress or state their claim within a specific context.

For this study, I understood that as a researcher, my influence on the participants, the questions asked and the analysis of the data collected, is considered a valuable process. However, even though I was part of the meaning-making process, I needed to abide by strict ethical guidelines during the data collection process to be continuously mindful of power relations and to the imbalances of power between myself and the participants, my anticipated

expectations and possible intimidation of individuals to participate in the study (Rees et al., 2020).

Relativism

Butowski et al. (2021) asserted that knowledge is relative and generated through social interactional processes. Burr and Dick (2017) emphasised that there are multiple perspectives, and each one bears true for any given point in time. Rees et al. (2020) emphasised that relativism from an ontological stance assumes that reality is constructed and communicated through language and our awareness. Language and power are not seen as separate but rather become intertwined with these perspectives making it relevant for that specific time and place. Geldenhuys (2015) purported that social constructionism also maintains that knowledge is constantly evolving and transforming in relation to how the members of a specific community continue to process such knowledge. This knowledge will be the objective truth for such a community until new knowledge is formed and accepted. Thus, knowledge created in history may be true for that time and knowledge created today will be the truth for this time.

Social constructionism, therefore, recognises that no one truth or reality is the absolute truth or reality. The truth and reality for one correctional psychologist in a correctional centre may be viewed and constructed entirely differently by another psychologist. Correctional psychologists working in correctional systems thus have unlimited access to the realities of their current correctional communities, and no other person or psychologist will ever be able to understand best the correctional world the way correctional psychologists do (Geldenhuys, 2015).

Psychologists can only truly understand their world by forming relationships and encountering relationships with their correctional environment. Knowledge is thus

continuously constructed in an ongoing relational process, producing meanings in relationships that have no beginning and no end. It is through this meaning-making process that the correctional system continues to develop new knowledge as well as rules to govern it (Geldenhuys, 2015). Knowledge within the community of psychologists concerning their correctional environment becomes significant. It is thus regarded as accurate, impartial, and rational for the members of this community that are jointly contributing to its construction. It is through this process that a culture becomes established within the correctional community (Geldenhuys, 2015).

An Ontological Perspective of Social Constructionism

An ontological perspective of social constructionism significances that reality is multidimensional. This may include thoughts, feelings, practical materiality, experiences, and language. Understanding the various forms of reality leads to the construction of different types of knowledge (Pittaway et al., 2017). Social constructionism from an ontological perspective does not view the world as an object but rather as a shared and agreed construction of interactional realities of what constitutes the world. According to Haslam (2004), organisations are social structures, and how psychologists define themselves within such structures will ultimately play an integral role in how they behave. Pittaway et al. (2017) highlighted that the reality of everyday life is structured as it is based on common sense reality which becomes taken for granted over time. Rees et al. (2020) similarly added that from an ontological perspective, our understanding of our social world is not something that is discovered. Instead, it is humanly constructed in conjunction with the history, the community, thoughts, and language.

Geldenhuys (2015) concluded that social constructionism is not grounded in objective, scientific facts. Instead, its core interest lies in the meanings people create in

understanding themselves in relation to their worlds. Multiple social realities are therefore constructed and exist, since reality is a social construct, and each person constructs a reality different from the next. Furthermore, no one reality is considered more accurate than the other as all realities are equally significant, appreciated, and accepted. These realities are viewed as interdependent constructions that occur and derive meanings only when viewed in relation to each other. The primary concern of this framework was to explain the developments and changes that correctional psychologists used to describe, clarify, or comprehend the correctional environment in which they work. From an ontological perspective, the framework expressed and highlighted the collective ways that correctional psychologists understand their correctional environment as it is (Gergen, 1985). Thus, the realities and narratives of participant psychologists working in the various correctional organisations were considered socially constructed and were not viewed as objective and independent. Instead, it comprised of their subjective truth. The participants were able to narrate their experiences to me as the researcher within their respective correctional settings for the purpose of this study. How participants narrated their experiences and events became the most meaningful aspect. It was viewed as the social construction of each participating psychologist. It was accepted without their constructions needing to be validated through scientific research, as in the case of a positivistic approach. The interviews had to be conducted within the participants' respective correctional settings in which they work as sharing their experiences in its specific context brought to light pertinent issues such as how the participants understand themselves and make sense of their world, for example, issues of identity, responsibilities, and power relations to mention a few (Geldenhuys, 2015; Rees et al., 2020).

An Epistemological Perspective of Social Constructionism in Relation to this Study

According to Rees et al. (2020), social constructionism as viewed from an epistemological stance accentuates the process of how we know what we know about the world. The authors emphasised that the world is constructed through social interaction, and subjective truths are viewed as a shared collaboration between people. Taylor, S.P. (2021) pointed out that an epistemological perspective does not view individuals' experiences as an inactive quantifiable concern of an exterior corporeal domain. Instead, as dynamic progressions of understanding the world. Geldenhuys (2015) added that an epistemological perspective views knowledge as constructed through social processes. Pittaway et al. (2017) emphasised that human beings communicate using signs, symbols, and language to express their inner world and thoughts subjectively. It is through language that they can bring to light and share with others their vision and aspirations for the future. Pittaway et al. reiterated that different processes within subjective realities are continuously occurring; however, it is through the medium of language that these processes are communicated.

Rees et al. (2020) stated that language and behaviour plays an integral role in constructing truths. An epistemological stance of how we know what we know privileges, language, discourse, and behaviours. In language understanding is conveyed. Furthermore, a person learns how to be an ideal participant in the world through the construct of language. There is no absolute control as social realities are constructed within specific times and places. Therefore knowledge represents the different construction of realities of each psychologist and thus creates room for various perspectives. Knowledge, when viewed through the lens of social constructionism, can never be objective but is seen as a subjective perspective. Knowledge becomes part of the relational process that is interdependent and is articulated in relationships.

Bøe (2021) summarised that our understanding of the world and how we choose to live are our own constructions consisting of our involvement in shared interactions that include both epistemological and ontological aspects of reality. Rees et al. (2020) highlighted that epistemology takes form in research through the methodology and methods. The research methodology directs the research questions and study designs of the research. Social constructionism ensures that research is carried out in a reliable, fair, credible, transparent, and reflexive manner. In this study, the participants' transcripts were viewed as a narrative of talk and action. The transcripts themselves were viewed as a written representation of the narrative, which is a verbal construction. From a micro-constructionist perspective, the transcripts of narratives contained very detailed information of how verbal language was presented in the form of laughter, pauses, and so on. From a macro-constructionist perspective, the participants' narratives with themes and discourses provided an epistemological way of knowing and understanding their subjective experiences (Rees et al., 2020).

Social Constructionism in Research Studies

Over the years, various studies have followed a social constructionism lens. A few have been selected and highlighted in this section as motivation for using social constructionism as a theoretical framework for this study

Swords and Houston (2021) explored the concept of recovery in mental health and how it is conceptualised by the participants within an Irish context. The participants comprised services users, family members, policy influencers and multidisciplinary staff in the south-east of Ireland. The research aimed to evaluate the extent to which a recovery approach informed practice in this specific context. They further aimed to examine how the different professionals viewed the concept of recovery. Based on the findings, Swords and

Houston also plan to provide recommendations and conclusions to enhance the implementation of a recovery-oriented approach. The research design was qualitative and consisted of interviews and focus groups. Swords and Houston have not yet finalised the research but have written this article to discuss their reflexive journey in planning and carrying out their research. They specifically reflect on how the epistemological and ontological perspectives informed their research thinking.

Sword and Houston (2021) shared their experiences of being a practitioner and then a researcher and found it imperative to document and examine their experiences. Hence the aim of their review was to augment awareness of how other researchers in their studies approached recovery in mental health from a social constructionist perspective. Swords and Houston conclusively highlighted how social constructionism provided a foundation for the current dissertation of recovery in mental health. Moreover, Swords and Houston provided a detailed account of the value of social constructionism in their research. They argued that the theoretical framework could generate novel perceptions and knowledge for social scientists and care professionals dealing with personal recovery.

Paula-Ravagani et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative study underpinned by a social constructionist framework on using theoretical models in family therapy. The researchers viewed their study as a social practice in which knowledge was socially, historically, and culturally produced whilst taking into consideration the researcher's subjectivity. The study focussed on the construct of language in human interactional processes and how it reproduces and transforms social realities. The participants consisted of 14 family therapists working in Brazil. One of the inclusion criteria for participation was that they had to be working as a family therapist who facilitated training in family therapy underpinned in social constructionist thoughts and ideas. They also had to be affiliated with the Brazilian Association of Family Therapy (ABRATEF) in the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Paula-Ravagani et al. (2017) conducted semi-structured, individual interviews with the participants to explore the interactional account with social constructionism, how the framework was used in clinical practice, and the challenges experienced. Paula-Ravagani et al. considered the interview process part of discursive practice that viewed the interactional process between the researcher and participant. Meanings and subjective realities were thus produced. The data analysis process identified emerging changes in the participants' practices through the interaction with social constructionist ideas. Social constructionism contributed to the naming of two different discourses namely conciliatory and eclectic discourse. The analysis revealed that the participants interplay between the two forms of discourse during the interviews. Paula-Ravagani et al. concluded that the analysis of their research by no means focused on any individual but instead on the discourse that the individuals use to derive meaning concerning social constructionism in their clinical practices.

Hlophe et al. (2017) explored learners' constructions of bullying in a South African school context. Hlophe et al. viewed social constructionism as a relevant theoretical framework as it stresses the importance of discourse and social relations as central to which learners' identities and bullying are constructed. The research was conducted in a co-educational secondary school in the Hammarsdale area, situated on the border of Durban in South Africa. The utilised purposive sampling to select six learner participants aged 13 to and 16 years old. The participants consisted of both bullies and victims of bullying. Semi-structured questions were utilised in both individual and focus group interviews. The data were analysed by first translating the native language, isiZulu, into English. They were then analysed through an inductive process whereby patterns and themes were generated to understand learners' construction of bullying in the school context. The study recommended that the education policy and influencers review learners' understanding and experiences of bullying to create measures that will make schools safe and equitable for all learners.

Adams (2014) explored intimacy experiences of long term heterosexual adult coloured couples living in a low-income semi-rural community in the Cape Winelands situated in South Africa. Adams conducted the qualitative study to gain an understanding of couple intimacy as experienced and expressed by the 30 participants. The sample comprised 15 couples (30 participants) who had been married or living together for at least two years. Adams utilised semi-structured interviews to collect the data. All the participants were individually interviewed to ensure truthfulness about their experiences in the relationships. The data were analysed using Braun and Clarke (as cited in Adams, 2014) thematic analysis method, and several themes were identified. Adams' (2014) underpinning of social constructionism as a theoretical argument viewed intimacy as a social construction moulded by numerous influences and social contexts.

Chapter Summary

Social constructionism supports research that appreciates unveiling, exploring, and authenticating various constructs (Lit & Shek, 2002; Galbin, 2014). The chapter thus endeavoured to bring to light the validations of the theory concerning the study first by highlighting the shift in research methods over time and how social constructionism came into being. Second, various definitions and descriptions of social constructionism by several authors were provided. The origin of social constructionism was also delineated. The key characteristics of social constructionism were detailed. Social constructionism was further reviewed from an ontological and epistemological perspective in relation to the study.

Furthermore, as motivation for grounding this study in the theoretical framework of social constructionism, a few examples of research that have been grounded in social constructionism have been highlighted in this section. Moreover, social constructionism has been identified as an appropriate framework to ground the study as it permits the exploration

and discussion of how psychologists made meaning of their experiences within the correctional contexts. It further delved into understanding how they reflected on their experiences, language their thoughts about their relationships within the environment, developed knowledge and a sense of identity in relation to their unique correctional environments. The following chapter (Chapter Four) will provide a detailed discussion on the research methodology.

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

The participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world.

(Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 53)

According to Van Manen (2016), human life is a phenomenon that seeks continuous knowledge and reflections to comprehend its multifaceted and enigmatic being. The phenomenon of life can never be fully explained by one philosophical theory alone. However, a human science approach attempts to recognise and understand the range of experiences that humans encounter, which ultimately provide meanings in the way they come to understand their world. From a phenomenological perspective, human science research emphasises the role of curiosity and continuous questioning about people and the way they come to understand the world in which they live. Van Manen emphasised that human science research attempts to take a soft, poignant, understanding, and sensitive stance to expose the variety of meanings ascribed to a specific phenomenon under study. This chapter will therefore provide a detailed account of the research method employed in this study.

This study adopted a qualitative method and a phenomenological research design, namely interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The key elements of the IPA will be deliberated and the sampling, data collection and data analysis method will be discussed. This chapter will also discuss the trustworthiness and credibility of the study, the ethical considerations, and my role as researcher and colleague will also be considered and explained through reflexivity.

Qualitative Research

According to O'Neil and Koekemoer (2016), qualitative research has grown extensively within the international field of psychology. Qualitative research may be described as an active, interpretive, exploratory discovery that focusses on the subjective world of participants within their natural, social setting (Hanurawan, 2012). Biggerstaff (2012) also delineated the concept of intersubjectivity as shared constructs which provide meaning and understanding for participants functioning together within a specific context. Qualitative research is an approach that seeks to understand how people make meaning of their world within a specific context, either using experiences, biographies, case studies, interviews, artefacts, cultural texts or observations (Hanurawan, 2012). Through its diverse methods, qualitative research provides rich and detailed accounts of the studied phenomena and may also be beneficial in studies related to health service delivery (Biggerstaff, 2012; Hanurawan, 2012).

Qualitative research has also been found to play an essential role in highlighting problems in work contexts. It focusses on the present-day, subjective experiences of employees, which in the past has been significantly ignored (O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). Most recently, qualitative researchers have been summoned to conduct research in work, and organisational settings as qualitative research provide information that cannot otherwise be achieved through quantitative research (O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). Although a similarity exists between quantitative and qualitative research, as both are considered empirical methods and involve the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, these approaches are undeniably different from each other (Ponterotto, 2005).

While quantitative research uses the hypothesis, which is usually stated from the onset of the research, the qualitative approach uses research questions that are refined and developed during the research process (Biggerstaff, 2012). Quantitative research requires

strict and careful control of observed variables, whereas qualitative research uses a broad range of methods to interpret participants' experiences within a specific context (Ponterotto, 2005). Quantitative research also uses specific statistical methods to determine group means and variances in large samples. In contrast, qualitative research findings are presented in participants' own words to describe their experiences of the research phenomena and rich, detailed data are obtained irrespective of the sample size (Ponterotto, 2005). Qualitative research can provide credible, in-depth data. It uses minimal resources and provides a platform through which implicit issues are brought to the fore (O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). A distinctive characteristic of qualitative research, however, is that it is reliant on and grounded in a particular theoretical framework relevant to the selected study (Ponterotto, 2005), as in the case of this study, which is informed by social constructionism.

It is from this point of departure that this study sought to explore and describe the lived experiences of psychologists working in correctional centres. By taking a social constructionist, subjective approach to reality, I anticipated that reality is a transactional process consisting of continuous negotiations by the participants' within their respective correctional centres and that each participant has their own understanding, meaning, and way of sense-making within the expansive correctional organisation. Each participant can then make sense of their reality. Moreover, to understand the language participants' used in the process of sense-making, the ways in which they narrated their experiences, their methods of negotiating a shared understanding and the nature and influence of such a shared collaboration (Cunliffe, 2008).

Qualitative research thus provided me with the opportunity to understand how psychologists make sense of their experiences within the confines of a correctional context (Sarantakos, 1988). From a social constructionist perspective, Geldenhuys (2015), Correia (2020), and Cunliffe (2008), argued that collective realism, identity, and knowledge are

influenced by socio-cultural, socio-historical and language factors. Qualitative research thus permitted me to delve into and gain a deeper understanding of the participating psychologists and correctional centres social, cultural, and historical context by conducting the interviews and immersing myself in the various correctional centres where the participants work (Alpaslan, 2013; Biggerstaff, 2012).

Phenomenological Research Design

Phenomenological research was the design for this study. Phenomenology can be described as the study of a particular group of people within a specific context and the meanings they ascribe to a studied phenomenon (Hanurawan, 2012). O’Neil and Koekemoer (2016) also affirmed that phenomenology attempts to explore and describe the in-depth, lived experiences of participants within a given context, thereby revealing meanings attributed to participants’ experiences. Biggerstaff (2012) further emphasised that phenomenology in psychology delves into how participants first and foremost come to understand themselves and their lived experiences in correctional centres and the meanings derived from it. A phenomenology research design was suited to explore and describe the lived experiences of psychologists in terms of how they construct their realities and make meanings within their correctional context (Hanurawan, 2012). A phenomenological research design also assisted me to bring to light the unspoken issues revealed during the research (Biggerstaff, 2012).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Methodology refers to the methods utilised in facilitating the research (Ponterotto, 2005). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used in this study. This method was developed in the United Kingdom by Jonathan Smith to explore participants’ subjective experiences and social perceptions thoroughly (Biggerstaff, 2012). The theoretical

foundations of the IPA originated from the work of Husserl, a European phenomenological philosopher. Husserl combined the theory of interpretation and symbolic interactionism to construct a philosophical science of consciousness (Biggerstaff, 2012). The central aim of an IPA study is the meanings created by the specific experiences of participants. In this study, the IPA thus supported the exploration of participants' personal experience and their perception of a specific account or event as opposed to an objective account of an event (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

According to Smith and Osborn (2008), a researcher should play a dynamic and active role in the research process and they are involved in a two-stage interpretation process, or what Smith and Osborn termed a 'double hermeneutic.' In this process, "the participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 53). As the researcher, I had to immerse myself in the interpretation process to understand and make sense of how the participants understood their world.

Key Elements of the IPA as a Method of Research Inquiry. The IPA comprises several key elements making it an appropriate method of inquiry for this study. The IPA is inductive in that it uses a bottom-up, rather than a top-down approach. The IPA does not create hypotheses and is therefore not contaminated by previous expectations. Importance was thus given to the exploration of meanings that participants ascribed to their lived experiences within their respective correctional centres (Reid et al., 2005). The participants were viewed as the experts of knowledge within their respective correctional centres. Through their experiences, they could narrate their stories in detail to me by using their own words and expressing themselves freely.

As the researcher, I was thus able to gain a better understanding of the participants' feelings and thoughts as they told their stories (Reid et al., 2005). It was imperative that I conduct an extensive and systematic analysis of the participants' descriptions. The participants' meaning-making process formed the essence of the analysis. Although the analysis process focused on the idiographic study of participants, it also delved further and explored the shared interpretations of experiences among participants (Reid et al., 2005). Based on the participants' subjective experiences, the analysis of the descriptions is interpretative, and the results presented are not stated as facts (Reid et al., 2005). The IPA is reflexive in that it allowed me, the researcher, to consistently reflect on my role throughout the research process (Reid et al., 2005). The IPA is both meticulous and flexible and can be used in a variety of studies. It has since become a commonly used method in studies that aim to explore the meanings that participants ascribe to their interactional experiences within a specific environment (Biggerstaff, 2012).

Various studies used the IPA as a method of inquiry and analysis. For example, Pilkington and Sciberras (2018) investigated the lived experiences of psychologists working in mental health services in Malta. They supplemented the title with the phrase, 'an exhausting and exasperating journey.' The study highlighted meanings ascribed to seven participants' experiences of working with clients and within the set-up of an MDT. Pilkington and Sciberras conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews, and data were analysed using systematic IPA methods. In addition, the rigorous and systematic IPA method of analysis also revealed a hidden theme. Participants appeared more distressed by negative feelings arising from the system, especially with regards to the functioning of the MDT, in comparison to their client-work. Participants' client-work appeared balanced and was perceived as a source of satisfaction as well as a source of stress.

Bertrand-Godfrey and Loewenthal (2011) explored the lived experiences of psychotherapists and counsellors working in a correctional context in the United Kingdom. Bertrand-Godfrey and Loewenthal utilised an IPA epistemology and method of analysis to derive meanings from eight participants' experiences of working in correctional centres. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and the analysis of the descriptions generated several themes. These themes ranged from the challenges of creating and maintaining boundaries, facing the specificities of a correctional environment, focusing on the therapeutic relationship, focusing on the self, and choosing to work in the correctional system. The IPA study further revealed the strong feelings that participants' felt towards the correctional system, the clients or within themselves. Interestingly, the study also documented that despite the challenges experienced and adverse correctional conditions, most participants felt they were emotionally and psychologically equipped to work in these conditions, unlike some of their former colleagues. Furthermore, participants understood their unique and unusual work context and acknowledged that it would require much effort on their part. However, they were still willing to continue working in a correctional centre (Bertrand-Godfrey & Loewenthal, 2011).

In South Africa, Moodley (2009) conducted a study on the effects of burnout as experienced by volunteer lay counsellors (VLCs). Moodley's study aimed to explore and describe burnout as experienced by the volunteer lay counsellors. In-depth interviews were conducted with five counsellors working at HospiVision, within the Steve Biko Academic Hospital in Pretoria. The participants' subjective experiences, as expressed in their stories, generated several themes including motivation for engaging in volunteering, the meaning of burnout, the effects of burnout, precipitating factors, protective factors and self-sacrifice and burnout.

Moodley (2009) highlighted and provided a deeper understanding of the VLC's experiences of burnout which would not have otherwise been reflected had a quantitative method been utilised. The IPA system of inquiry was valuable in extracting rich, detailed descriptions of the participant's experiences.

Setting Context for the Sampling

As the aim of this study was to explore the lived experiences of psychologists working in correctional centres in Gauteng, South Africa, a brief context of the correctional organisation is necessary. The DCS is located within six regions, namely; Limpopo/Mpumalanga/North West, Free State/Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, and Gauteng. These regions are overseen by the National Head Office located in Pretoria. According to the 2018/2019 DCS Annual Report (Department of Correctional Services, 2019), there are 46 management areas located within the six regions. These management areas consist of 243 correctional centres. However, only 235 correctional centres are operational. The other eight are closed either because of dilapidation or because upgrades are in progress. The correctional centres are supervised by the heads of centres who report directly to the Area Commissioner of the specific management area. The Area Commissioners, in turn, report to the regions, namely the Regional Commissioner of the Region, who in turn, provides feedback to the relevant directorate at the National Head Office of the DCS.

According to the 2016/2017 DCS Annual Report (Department of Correctional Services, 2017), 161054 inmates were incarcerated within the 243 correctional centres. The 2018/2019 DCS Annual Report (Department of Correctional Services, 2019) indicates an increase in the inmate population, with 162875 inmates incarcerated within 235 correctional

centres. The number of inmates includes both sentenced and unsentenced offenders and comprise both male and female offenders.

The 2016/2017 DCS Annual Report (Department of Correctional Services, 2017) further documented 94 psychologist positions on the approved establishment to provide services for inmates within the correctional centres. As of 31 March 2017, 83 psychologists were permanently employed in the DCS. The vacancy rate as of March 2017 was 11.7%. During the 2016/2017 period, there have been 23 terminations due to the resignation of psychologists, and the turnover rate was 24.7%. The 2018/2019 DCS Annual Report (Department of Correctional Services, 2019) indicates 97 approved psychologist positions. During this period, 79 psychologists were permanently employed in the DCS. The vacancy rate had increased from 11.7% in 2017 to 16.5% in 2018/2019. The number of terminations of psychologists' had also increased from 23 in 2017 to 29 in 2018/2019. The turnover rate of psychologists had significantly increased to 36.7% in 2018/2019.

In addition, the DCS Annual Reports indicate that the Gauteng region has a greater number of permanently employed psychologists than the other regions. The correctional centres located in the Gauteng region also have numerous life-sentenced and determinate-sentenced offenders who require psychological interventions before consideration for release on parole. For these reasons, I conducted research with psychologists employed within the Gauteng region correctional centres. Table 1 below provides a summary of the relevant information about Correctional Services located in the Gauteng region.

Table 1. The DCS-Gauteng Region

Region	Management Areas (08)	Correctional Centres (26)	Total number of inmates: (sentenced and unsentenced including males and females)	Approximate number of permanent psychologists working in correctional centres
GAUTENG	Johannesburg (JHB)	- Medium C - Female - Medium B - Medium A	36911	Approx. 31
	Baviaanspoort	- Maximum - Emthonjeni Juvenile - Medium		
	Krugersdorp	-Krugersdorp CC		
	Leeuwkop	- Medium A - Medium C - Juvenile - Maximum		
	Modderbee	- Devon - Modderbee - Nigel		
	Boksburg	- Juvenile - Heidelberg - Boksburg		
	Zonderwater	- Medium A - Medium B		
	Kgoši Mampuru II (Pretoria)	- Female - Central - ODI - Local Remand Detention Centre - Atteridgeville - Maximum		

- Information extracted from the DCS Annual Report 2018/2019 (Department of Correctional Services, 2019) and the DCS website (www.dcs.gov.za).

Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area (Pretoria) was not part of this study because I was a permanently employed clinical psychologist working at Kgoši Mampuru II-Central Correctional Centre at the time of this study. This management area was excluded to eliminate any form of researcher bias. Having worked in the DCS for over 21 years (from the year 2000 and ongoing), it seemed befitting to include a chapter which is additional (Chapter Eight) of my lived experience within a correctional context.

Sampling

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of psychologists working in correctional centres. As psychology is considered a critical occupation or scarce skill in the DCS, clinical psychologists and counselling psychologists have been permanently appointed over the years. According to Hanurawan (2012), participants should meet the inclusion criteria of a study. In this study, the inclusion criterion consisted of both clinical and counselling psychologists who have been employed in the DCS for at least one year rendering their professional services to both sentenced and unsentenced offenders. According to Vuuren and Maree (as cited in Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999), purposive sampling is used to select a specific type of population. Purposive sampling was thus employed to select the sample group.

As nine psychologists from the Kgoši Mampuru II Management Area could not be included in the study due to the reasons previously mentioned, only 22 psychologists in the region were approached to participate in the study. Furthermore, although one psychologist consented to be part of the study, she was unfortunately ill on the day of the interview and therefore could not participate. Two newly appointed psychologists from a different management area did not meet the inclusion criteria for the study and could also not participate in the study. Four permanent psychologists from another management area stated

that they were busy with the backlog of offender risk assessments and did not have the luxury of time to participate in the study. The sample thus consisted of 13 permanently employed psychologists working in various correctional centres within the Gauteng region. As per social constructionism, each psychologist participating in the study was viewed as the expert of their experiences within their respective correctional context. The demographic of each participant will be delineated in the presentation of findings in the next chapter.

Data Collection Methods

I have been employed by the DCS since the year 2000 and have previously conducted a study in the DCS. Therefore, I am familiar with the policies and procedures relevant to conducting research in the DCS. Written approvals from the training institution, namely the University of South Africa (UNISA) and the DCS, were obtained to conduct this study. The Director of Psychological Services based at the DCS National Head Office resigned in October 2018. At the time of the study (and to date) no one had been appointed to fill the vacant position. I was, therefore, unable to secure the support from the directorate to assist in informing all psychologists about the study and encouraging their participation.

However, during the 2019 Annual Psychological Conference (PsySSA - 2019) in Johannesburg (4 – 6 September 2019), I engaged with psychologists working in the Gauteng region of the DCS about the study. I also used the monthly CPD Workshops held by the Vista Academy in Pretoria (which most of the Gauteng DCS psychologists attended) to promote this study. The response from correctional psychologists to participate in the study was encouraging. On 18 October 2019, I informed my internal guide (allocated to me by the DCS ethics committee) via email of my intention to travel to the various management areas to conduct the interviews with willing participants. My internal guide sent out an email and my DCS ethical clearance letter to all management areas informing them of my intention to

conduct this study at their respective management areas. I also communicated telephonically with the psychologists in the various correctional centres to secure a suitable timeframe.

The travel time to each correctional centre was approximately two hours. The interviews were conducted over five days (between 5 December and 11 December 2019). Unfortunately, parts of the country experienced severe rainfalls during this week. Gauteng was no exception, and some parts of Gauteng experienced flooding, which made travelling to the correctional centres distressful. However, I arrived safely at each correctional centre even though I could not always be on time. Nevertheless, the participants were very accommodating and, met me at the entrance of their respective correctional centre upon arrival.

Negotiations at the point of entry into the centres were minimal as the participants provided the necessary information to the relevant gatekeepers in advance. I was then escorted by the participants to their offices to conduct the interviews. Some offices were situated in areas that were safe and conducive for the rendering of their duties, whilst others were situated deep within the correctional environments and clearly posed significant security risks. Whilst some correctional environments provided a conducive environment for the interviews, most were extremely noisy. These noises came from the sound of food trolleys being pushed to and from the units, the raucousness of offenders in the corridors and the conversations and laughter of officials. The participants and I had no alternative but to speak very loudly to one another to be heard. Furthermore, some of the interview processes were disturbed by the barging in of offenders or officials who needed assistance from some participants. As the researcher, I felt rushed through some interviews for fear that the interview may be moments away from being interrupted again.

It should be mentioned that during the designing phase of my research, I had perused through several phenomenological studies to gain a better understanding of how to formulate

questions for the interviews. The following two research studies are an example of how the researchers formulated their questions for their studies, which assisted me in the formulation of questions for my research interviews.

The first research conducted by Dollarhide et al. (2012) was a phenomenological study to explore the conditions that create meaningful therapeutic connections between the counsellor and clients. The participants consisted of 14 unmatched counsellors and clients. Dollarhide et al. hailed from the Ohio State University. The participants were practising professionals who were licenced to work in the state, and they were enlisted from various community organisations. The participants consisted of first-year counsellor education students who had undergone counselling as a client. Dollarhide et al. stated that their finalised interview questions were compiled from a series of consultations, reflections, and modifications to fully explore the participants' experience. The researchers used caution in the phrasing of their questions and zoomed in on participants' experiences of healing after therapeutic disclosure rather than the painful experiences raised during the therapeutic sessions. Dollarhide et al. also requested the assistance of expert readers to review the questions for the appropriateness of the study. A few examples of the questions as compiled by Dollarhide et al. during the interviews are highlighted below:

Counsellor Questions

- *Describe a time during a counselling session in which you felt as if you were seeing the client's painful experience first-hand when you felt a deep or profound understanding of the client during a counselling session.*
- *What do you call that sense of deep understanding?*
- *How did that deep sense of understanding feel to you?*
- *Describe where in your body you experienced it.*

- *Without using any counselling jargon, describe what you say and do when a client is expressing painful memories or painful thoughts.*
- *What did you do that was powerful or profound to you in the moment?*

Client Questions

If you have felt an intense sense of sadness and pain during a counselling session:

- *What was it like for you?*
- *How did your counsellor handle it?*
- *What was most helpful in that session?*
- *What would be most helpful to you during a counselling session when you are feeling an intense sadness during counselling?*

Dollarhide et al. (2012) analysed the data collected using phenomenological reduction, and the results identified that both clients and counsellors experiences were similar.

The second research study was conducted in the United Kingdom by Horton and Macve (as cited in Horton et al., 2004) and related to the major changes in insurance accounting. The participants consisted of 36 senior professionals who experienced significant contact with the new accounting numbers. Horton and Macve (as cited in Horton et al., 2004) utilised semi-structured interviews to better understand the reasons and implications of the current variations in the accounting policies. They argued that the semi-structured interviews allowed participants flexibility to discuss and highlight areas of particular interest. It also enabled responses that could be extensively explored. Prior to the study, however, Horton and Macve (as cited in Horton et al., 2004) perused literature on the study and brainstormed ideas on questions that should be asked. After that, the questions were independently reviewed and amended by another researcher. The resulting questions formed the questionnaire sent to the

participants for review. A few examples of the questions as compiled by Horton and Macve (as cited in Horton et al., 2004) during the interviews are highlighted below:

- *Has the regulatory authority taken the ideas/ wishes of the industry into account when implementing the Directive — and how have they (if at all) consulted the industry and the accounting profession?*
- *How will the Directive change current practice?*
- *Do you have any specific comments?*
- *Do you think we have omitted an important or interesting aspect of the Directive?*

Horton and Macve (as cited in Horton et al., 2004) emphasised that these interviews allowed them to significantly understand core themes, performance, and beliefs and how these shaped the discussions.

In keeping with the methods used in previous studies, the data collection method in this study were primarily semi-structured interviews with participants. Before the interviews, I researched various studies on the lived experience of psychologists working in correctional centres. This information was also used to form part of my literature review. I considered the various themes and challenges emanating from other studies and created a set of questions on an interview schedule (*Appendix E*) to guide the interview process. After that, I engaged with other psychologists who were not involved in this study to ascertain what they would value as appropriate questions. These were incorporated into my interview schedule and submitted to my research supervisor for his amendments and approval. Hence, the interview questions were compiled to allow participants to explore their lived experiences of working in a correctional centre without coercing them into any alluded deductions (Dollarhide et al., 2012). I was also transparent and informed the participants that although I am a colleague who works in the DCS, I was wearing the cap of a researcher to conduct this study. My role as researcher and colleague will be discussed further, under the subheading *Ethics*.

I summarised the purpose of this study and the interview and discussed the information sheet with each participant so the participants understood their rights. I used the first few minutes to informally talk to the participant to make them feel at ease as some participants appeared anxious or tense about the process. I ensured that the participant was comfortable with me as the interviewer before I could begin asking any of the questions on the interview schedule. My aim during the interview process was to facilitate and guide the interview process rather than dictate to the participant how the interview process was going to take place. I followed up on interesting themes that the participant mentioned and probed where possible for more details, delving deeper into areas of interest and concerns as discussed by the participants. Although I already had an idea of the type of questions I wanted to ask in the interview, my main aim was to venture deeper into the psychological and social world of the participants to bring to the fore deeply hidden information. The questions on the interview schedule served only as a guideline and were asked in any order depending on how the participant responded (Smith & Osborn, 2004). I made use of an audio recorder and recorded the interviews. Approval from the DCS was provided for me to use a tape recorder within the respective correctional centres. The recorded interviews were subsequently transcribed verbatim (Smith & Osborn, 2004).

Analysis of Data

Each transcript was analysed systematically using IPA methods, as discussed by Smith and Osborn (2004). Through the process of interpreting participants' transcriptions, I was able to derive meanings about participants' experiences and feelings (Biggerstaff, 2012). I began with the first transcript and searched for themes that arose from it and I repeated this for each participant. I then connected the themes from all the transcripts to form superordinate themes. Once I completed this process, I then attempted to seek patterns

between the cases to form master themes. The master themes, with examples of each theme, will be presented and discussed in Chapters Five and Six respectively. The master themes were then translated into a narrative interpretation.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

According to Morrow (2005), qualitative research ensures that studies conducted from different paradigms, epistemologies, and disciplines embrace several principles of quality. These quality standards may be termed credibility, rigour, or trustworthiness. The wholeness of qualitative research is evaluated based on the theoretical framework in which it is grounded and the standards of the discipline. A range of criteria has been recommended to offer trustworthiness in qualitative research, grounded in a constructionist/interpretivist framework (Morrow, 2005). Authenticity criteria, as discussed by Morrow, include:

- Fairness – requires that various constructs of reality be sought and appreciated as valid. The sample of participants provided constructions of their experiences of working in correctional centres. Every participant's construction was regarded as valid and equally important.
- Ontological authenticity – suggests that participants' constructs of reality are developed, seasoned, widened, and explained. Participants who have worked in a correctional centre for at least one year have gained experiences and therefore hold the expert knowledge revealed in their detailed descriptions of their experiences.
- Educative authenticity – necessitates that participants are better able to understand and appreciate the social constructions of others. Participants work with other psychologists and officials in the same correctional centres and may experience similar and different situations as their colleagues. Participants

were, therefore, made aware that their construction of an experience may not be the same as their colleagues' and that all constructions, however different, should be respected, understood, and appreciated.

- Catalytic authenticity – suggests the magnitude to which an act is encouraged. Participants were asked to share their challenges in their narrations and the extent to which they attempted to resolve them.

The trustworthiness of a study also includes dependability which emphasises that if a specific method was supposed to be followed, then such a method should be strictly maintained and followed through (Morrow, 2005). A colleague practicing in psychology was chosen to verify the themes identified during the data analysis process. The themes were also reviewed by my supervisor, and this maximised the accuracy of the themes identified. It also created an opportunity to provide adequate checks for misrepresentation of the data (Babbie, 2013). Following the IPA method of analysis, I ensured that this process was rigorously and meticulously conducted. Triangulation is another critical component for ensuring trustworthiness. Triangulation entails capturing the data correctly regarding the number of viewpoints (Morrow, 2005).

Additionally, by conducting reflexivity as the researcher, I understood how my own experiences could have affected the research process. By integrating theory and practice, I developed an enhanced and deeper understanding of fairness and impartiality in participants' descriptions and meanings of their experiences (Morrow, 2005). Context, culture, and rapport played an essential role in how participants made meaning of their experiences.

Research is considered credible when it can demonstrate in one or more ways the study was designed to maximise the accuracy of identifying and describing what is being studied, especially as judged by the groups of people being studied (Babbie, 2013). The credibility of a study further embraces subjectivity (Morrow, 2005). Therefore, the strategy

that was employed to maximise the credibility of this study involved prolonged engagement with and persistent observation of the participants (Babbie, 2013). By investing sufficient time in the interview process, I established and built rapport with the participants. Simultaneously, the participants were able to feel and build enough trust and confidence in me as the researcher, which ultimately allowed for the sufficient study of the research context.

Ethical Considerations

According to Babbie (2013), ethics are based on principles of morality as deemed acceptable by social norms, which dictate what is accepted as right and wrong. Community agreements surrounding ethical behaviours in daily life create successful living within a particular society. Babbie emphasised that researchers be cautious and mindful of the agreement reached between themselves and the place of intended study regarding ethical behaviour in research. In this study, the HPCSA Form 223, rules of conduct pertaining specifically to the profession of psychology were adhered to (Government Gazette, 2006). Ethical issues surrounding the research such as gaining approval for ethical clearance from the training institution, namely UNISA and the DCS, were conducted as well as gaining approval for the use of a recording device. Since the study involved human subjects, an information sheet regarding transparency and disclosure about the research process and its findings was provided and discussed with all participants and the DCS from the onset (see *Appendix C*). Informed consent from each volunteering participant was obtained (see *Appendix D*). Participants were informed that they were free to remove themselves from the interview process at any given time should they not feel comfortable continuing. Participants' right to confidentiality was also discussed with them. Their rights to anonymity were

maintained by ensuring that no identifying information is mentioned in writing of this thesis. This will prevent any victimisation, harassment or harm and ensure participants' well-being.

The interview process caused no distress to the participants. If anything, some participants mentioned that it was a good debriefing session. Nevertheless, I did have contingency measures if the participants experienced distress. I would have immediately stopped the interview and assisted the participant to recover from the distressful symptoms. I would have also referred the participant to a clinical psychologist for possible intervention and debriefing if necessary (Smith & Osborn, 2004). However, the participants themselves are clinical or counselling psychologists with supervisors or therapists with whom they probably would have felt more comfortable to reflect on the possible distress. The data were also correctly secured and kept strictly confidential.

Reflexivity: My Role as Colleague and Researcher

Jootun et al. (2009) emphasised that reflexivity is one of the support structures in qualitative research that brings to the fore the amount of influence the researcher may have, whether intentional or not, on the study's findings. Jootun et al. further highlighted that reflexivity enhances the research quality as it makes me, the researcher, aware of their stance throughout the research study. Breuer et al. (2002) further stated that the subjectivity of the researcher integrally plans research. Correspondingly, Perry et al. (2004) emphasised that it is important for researchers to acknowledge that they are human and although subjectivity is often viewed as a source of bias to be eliminated, human nature will inevitably display some degree of emotional involvement in the research. As such, they will always be emotionally involved with the social world of which they are part and researching. I found this to be relevant and valid for me as I am an insider researcher who has acquired extensive

knowledge over the years of working for the DCS. This, for me, meant that I was emotionally involved in investigating the phenomena under study.

Tang (2006) used the concept of commonality to describe shared contextual factors that may assist a researcher to develop a closer understanding of the research under study. Perry et al. (2004) pointed out that where such situations exist, it is important for the researcher to recognise and appreciate the potential impact of their involvement in the study. Having worked for the DCS for over two decades, an integral part of my identity took form within this environment and thus created strong emotional ties for me and some of the participants. Furthermore, I have certain privileges that may not be easily acquired by an outsider who may want to conduct the same research. Having worked in the correctional context, I have the value of shared experiences. Nevertheless, I did not take such experiences for granted and continuously built and forged stronger relationships, nurturing trust amongst my colleagues. The participants felt they could trust me, and they did not feel that they could not disclose information to me. As a colleague and insider, I also had greater access to the correctional centres and the participants. Even so, I still needed to establish initial levels of trust to create more open interactions with correctional centre personnel and participants. I also had to constantly negotiate and renegotiate my positionality as a colleague and researcher (Labaree, 2002).

Additionally, Perry et al. (2004) emphasised that it is crucial to understand the concept of involvement-detachment. This refers to the ability of the researcher from the onset of the research to become aware of one's own emotional involvement that has caused sensitivity to the study and thereby allow deliberation for possible methods of handling the research to seek to reduce the implications and make the most of the potential benefits of involvement. LaSala (2003) and Labaree (2002) also pointed out that being an inside researcher may come with potential benefits/advantages and biases/challenges of which a

researcher needs to be aware. LaSala (2003) claimed that the potential to over-emphasise specific issues might fail to observe emerging information about the group under study. On the other hand, over-emphasis on specific issues may result in potential bias and could limit the findings of the study. Also, inside researchers may find themselves failing to probe or explore certain phenomena as mentioned by the participants as the researcher may assume to understand the participants' views. Inside researchers could also develop countertransference towards the participants, which could distort interpretations.

Furthermore, Kanuha (2000) discussed the challenges she experienced when conducting intensive interviews. Kanuha stated that as a researcher, one would be required to distance themselves from the study and the participants. Kanuha emphasised that indeed it is a contradiction to maintain connections whilst at the same time distancing oneself from the participants under study. Kanuha discussed how she felt and how her own experiences came to the fore when she heard the participants' experiences. Kanuha expressed that the researcher must separate their own experiences from those of the participants and understand the distinctive role as a researcher. I was also able to relate to the concerns mentioned by the participants and even found myself nodding in agreement with some of the challenges they mentioned. It was also at those very moments I became aware of my actions and attempted to refrain from reinforcing any participant conclusions thereby avoiding any repercussions that could impede on the research process and the outcome of the study (Berger, 2013; LaSala, 2003).

Moreover, Tang (2006) remarked that the role of researcher and counsellor could sometimes become blurred, particularly when participants narrate their experiences and emotions are revealed. The researcher may find themselves taking on the power of a counsellor's role. I also continuously moved back and forth in this study, repositioning myself as a colleague and researcher (Labaree, 2002). I recall three interviews lasting

approximately two hours each. It was almost as if the participants used the interviews to debrief. I also found myself creating this *conducive space* to allow the participants to *let it all out* and, by default, take on the role of a colleague/psychologist. Although I was aware of the shifting of my role from researcher to colleague/psychologist among the different participants, it seemed unavoidable.

Tang (2006), however, referred to this back and forth movement of roles as an essential part of the process, especially when interviewing marginalised individuals. Tang further emphasised that the researcher is not to be held responsible for the emotions evoked in the participants; however, specific situations such as these will require sensitivity and thoughtfulness from the researcher. Tang argued that by taking emotions seriously, the researcher can substantiate self-reflexivity as truth-seekers and critically evaluate self as a researcher. Subsequently, self-knowledge and sensitivity was crucial for the duration and completion of this study (Berger, 2013).

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology of the study, its qualitative approach to explore and describe the lived experiences of psychologists working in correctional centres, the validations for qualitative research, and the phenomenological design in the form of interpretative phenomenological analysis. The method of data collection was primarily semi-structured interviews with participants. A brief context of the correctional organisation was provided. The study included both clinical and counselling psychologists who have been employed in the DCS for at least one year. Purposive sampling was thus employed to select the sample group. Each transcript was analysed systematically using IPA methods. This chapter further explored the trustworthiness and credibility of the study. Ethical issues

surrounding the research were considered. Reflexivity was used to enhance the thoroughness and ethics of this study.

The following chapter will include a detailed presentation of the findings.

Chapter Five

Presentation of Findings

The researcher should select quotes that are poignant and/or most representative of the research findings.

(Anderson, 2010, p. 3)

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of psychologists working in correctional centres in Gauteng, South Africa. It was anticipated that in exploring the lived experiences of the participants, various themes would be highlighted, which could provide motivations as to why it is considered a complex task to retain the services of this group of professionals in the DCS. Subsequently, this chapter begins with the demographical data of the participants. Anderson (2010, p. 3) stated, “The researcher should select quotes that are poignant and/or most representative of the research findings.” Hence, relevant quotes from the participants’ transcripts and emerging superordinate and master themes will be presented and discussed in this section of the study.

Demographical Information of the Participants

The interviews were conducted with 13 permanently employed psychologists within their respective correctional centres. The semi-structured interviews commenced by initially asking participants about their demographical information and thereafter proceeded to the research questions. Table 2 below illustrates the demographics of each participant.

Table 2. Demographical Information of Participants

Race	Gender	Age	Years permanently employed in the DCS	Scope of practice of participant			Category of correctional centre				Type of correctional centre	
				<i>Clin</i>	<i>Coun</i>	<i>Ed</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Med</i>	<i>Adm</i>	<i>Juv</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
P 1. Caucasian	Female	40	02	X				X			X	
P 2. Coloured	Male	32	02	X			X				X	
P 3. Caucasian	Female	31	01	X				X			X	
P 4. African	Female	31	02	X			X				X	
P 5. African	Female	28	01	X				X			X	
P 6. African	Female	28	02	X					X		X	
P 7. Caucasian	Female	31	03	X			X				X	
P 8. African	Female	40	11		X							
P 9. African	Female	52	09			X				X	X	
P 10. African	Male	29	03	X				X			X	
P 11. African	Female	35	03	X				X			X	
P 12. African	Female	59	04		X			X			X	
P 13. African	Male	50	09		X			X			X	

- Information was provided by participants of the study during the interview process.

Clin = Clinical

Coun = Counselling

Ed = Educational

Max = Maximum

Med = Medium

Adm = Admission

Juv = Juvenile

M = Male

F = Female

The demographical information illustrates that the participants consisted of a vast population of female psychologists compared to male psychologists who are permanently employed in the DCS. The correctional centres are categorised according to the security classification of the incarcerated population of offenders. For example, when a sentenced offender is admitted into the correctional centre, such offender is assessed to determine the level of security risk and needs with which they may present. The sentenced offender is then

incarcerated in the appropriate correctional centre. Offenders fall within the classifications of minimum category (offenders who need to serve up to two years in a correctional centre prior to release are incarcerated in pre-release centres), medium category (offenders serving sentences for non-violent crimes and short term sentences are incarcerated in medium correctional centres), and maximum security categories (correctional centres which incarcerate high risk, notorious offenders with violent crimes are incarcerated within maximum-security correctional centres) (www.dcs.gov.za).

Presentation of the Findings

After finalising the interviews, participants' transcripts were analysed using the IPA as the most appropriate research method. The participants' responses to the interview questions generated several superordinate themes, that when clustered together, formed master themes. A comprehensive table detailing the overall superordinate and master themes is displayed below (See Table 3). Subsequently, the superordinate themes and master themes will be tabulated, and participants' responses will be presented under each superordinate theme. These themes are by no means separate from one another. Instead, they are, in fact, intertwined and interlinked with one another.

Table 3. List of Superordinate and Master Themes

Superordinate Themes	Master Themes
DCS Employment Opportunities	The Alluring Prospect
Personal Interest	
Absence of the National Psychological Directorate	The Adjustment Process
Learn on the Job	
DCS Training versus Peer Supervision	
Mental Preparation	
Struggles with the System	
Old School of Thought versus the New School of Thought	
Certain Officials want to be paid an Uber Fare	
Stuff Can Change Very Quickly, and Things Can Go Bad Very Quickly	
Feelings of Helplessness to Effect Genuine Rehabilitation	
Access to Training	
Scarce Stationery and Office Furniture	
Unreliable Information Technology	
Unavailability of Psychometric Tests	
Inadequate Office and Group Rooms	
Shortage of Human Resources	
Wearing of Uniforms versus Unavailability of Uniforms	
Time Management versus Correctional Centres' Operational Demands	
Feelings of Being Unsafe	
Threatening Behaviours from Offenders	
The Need for Self-Defence Training	

The Need for a Permanent Security Official	Safety and Security
The Need for Safety Equipment	
Escorting of Offenders and Psychologists versus Psychologists Escorting Offenders	
Thrown into Doing Admin Stuff	Overwhelming Workload (Quantity versus Quality)
Meeting the Target: Annual Performance Plan (APP)	
Psychological Reports	
Security Setting Compromising a Confidentiality Profession	Professional Identity Crisis
Ethical Dilemmas	
The Hats We Wear	
An 'Unrecognised' Profession	
Being Micro-Managed versus Flexibility	
Deterioration of Clinical Skills	
Even the Healer Needs Healing from Burnout	
The Impact of Vicarious Trauma on Mental Health	
Desensitisation	Power in Resilience
Debriefing, Therapy, and Supervision as a Coping Mechanism	
Peer Support versus Power Struggles	
Discord versus Solidarity with Social Workers	
Developing Resilient Behaviours	
Acquired Behavioural and Psychological Implications	
A Reflective and Cathartic Experience	
Nurturing Relationships	
Providing a Valuable Service	
Work Satisfaction	

Honing Skills	Reframing the Profession of Psychology within the DCS
Working with a Unique and Interesting Population	
The Use of Various Theoretical Approaches	
Remunerative Work Outside of the DCS (Private Practice)	
A Context for Research and Training	
Taking the Initiative and Effecting Change	
Remaining in the Service of the DCS	Possible Retention Strategies
Further Academic Development	
The Need for Continuous Support	
Closing the Gaps to Meet the Needs of Correctional Psychologists	

- The superordinate and master themes which emerged from participants' responses during the interview process.

Master Theme: The Alluring Prospect

Superordinate Themes	Master Theme
DCS Employment Opportunities	The Alluring Prospect
Personal Interest	

The superordinate themes, namely DCS employment opportunities coupled with the participants' personal interests, instantaneously made me reflect on a few words from a poem written by Mary Howitt (as cited in Baldwin, 2019), "Will you walk into my parlour? said the spider to the fly." The poem narrates a story of a spider that enticed a fly to enter his web by drawing on all the enjoyments the fly would experience. The fly became filled with curiosity and to fulfil his personal needs, was eventually lured into the web and experienced the

consequences. Similarly, the participants in this study were enticed by the DCS attractive employment package which consisted of a bursary, a stable employment and a good salary. According to participants, such benefits provided financial stability to complete their studies and thereafter obtain permanent employment, an opportunity that could not be denied. Furthermore, by working in a unique environment such as a correctional centre, the participants' interests would be fulfilled, and they would have ultimately acquired their dream jobs. Hence, the alluring prospect became the contributing factor for deciding to work in a correctional centre. However, as I delve further into several other emerging themes, the theme of *the alluring prospect* will be implicitly elucidated.

Superordinate Theme: DCS Employment Opportunities. Participants were asked why they decided to work in a correctional centre. The responses provided by six participants highlighted that the DCS provided employment opportunities such as bursaries, an attractive salary package, job stability and employment experience.

P1. DCS came to talk to us about corrections.

P2. It was an opportunity that provided stability for me. I was looking for a stable job.

P6. For me, that decision came because of my bursary... I had to work at a Juvenile Centre. I thought it would be a good idea once they absorb me into their system that I have a prison experience. So that's how I chose Correctional Services just because of the bursary and to gain experience.

P8. It was not by choice (Laughs). I had a bursary from the department, and then I had to do my community service after I finished my studies, and I just happened to stay on afterwards.

P11. I got a bursary from Correctional Services. Part of the contract was that since they paid one year for me, I must work one year for them, so that's how I eventually got into Correctional Services. It was because of a bursary.

P13. I think I came to Correctional Services, not because of good and bad things, but it was just because of the salary. It was better than where I was at that time then I came here.

Superordinate Theme: Personal Interest. Although the DCS employment opportunities were one of the reasons almost half of the sample chose to join the organisation, most participants did display a personal interest for the correctional environment. Whilst some participants stated that it was a preferred choice and saw themselves as an instant fit for the environment, others exhibited a keen interest and curiosity in criminal thinking and forensic work. Moreover, some participants indicated the need to make a difference in the lives of offenders through the process of rehabilitation, thereby creating change.

P1. I actually wanted to be in a forensic setting, so forensics was my passion. Instant fit.

P2. It made me curious as to what the other side of the field looked like. Offenders who are actually housed in correctional centres and what psychiatry looked like in that domain.

P3. I've always been interested in criminology and psychology and the combination of that... I had the choice to stay at the police or to come back to DCS. I chose to come back, and I think that says a lot.

P4. Working with offenders actually opened my eyes 'cos it was one population that I never worked with, but coming here made me realise the work that we need to do as clinical psychologists. That's why I'm still here.

P5. So, a correctional centre for the criminally insane because I've always felt like that was where I wanted to be. There was really no other option for me really.

P7. I've always been interested in the criminal or the human thinking, especially I think from a criminal and forensic aspect.

P9. ...when I'm here I will make a difference...maybe my presence here will assist them a lot.

P10. ...this has been an interest of mine...I wanted to work in DCS. My first option was DCS. I thought maybe as a psychologist I would have more impact in working with this marginalized community. My preferred choice.

P12. I decided to work here in correctional facilities to understand the life for offenders and how one can contribute towards the rehabilitation of the offenders.

The DCS may have provided employment opportunities but participants' personal interest in the field of forensics and corrections essentially contributed to them becoming a part of the correctional system.

Master Theme: The Adjustment Process

Superordinate Themes	Master Theme
Absence of the National Psychological Directorate	The Adjustment Process
Learn on the Job	
DCS Training versus Peer Supervision	
Mental Preparation	
Struggles with the System	
Old School of Thought versus the New School of Thought	
Certain Officials want to be paid an Uber Fare	
Stuff Can Change Very Quickly, and Things Can Go Bad Very Quickly	
Feelings of Helplessness to Effect Genuine Rehabilitation	

Upon employment in the DCS, the participants' experienced several encounters highlighting that it is indeed an adjustment process to work in a correctional environment. Several superordinate themes emerged, namely the absence of a psychological directorate, learn on the job, DCS training versus peer supervision, mental preparation, struggles with the system, old school of thought versus the new school of thought, certain officials want to be paid an Uber fare, stuff can change very quickly, and things can go bad very quickly, and feelings of helplessness to effect genuine rehabilitation. These superordinate themes are presented below.

Superordinate Theme: Absence of the National Psychological Directorate. It is common practice for the DCS to establish the active presence and participation of Directorates to ensure the smooth functioning of various components that ultimately form the structure of the organisation. However, during the interviews, two participants raised the

concern of not having a point of reference. The participants articulated that there was no Psychological Directorate. The DCS is made up of various branches responsible for reporting on the six key delivery areas. These branches are further extended to form Directorates that report on specific parts of the key delivery areas. Psychological Services falls under the key delivery programme called Care. The National Head Office of the DCS comprises the various Branches/Directorates. Although a physical structure of a directorate was present, there was no Director appointed to head the directorate. Hence no direction could be mapped forward for newly appointed psychologists who had no alternative but to create their own way of knowing and doing.

P5. We don't seem to have a boss, guys (laughs). The previous director left. The head office structure...And it would be nice if that head was a psychologist that understood that psychology needs more than just the psychologists at DCS, risk assessments and do therapy and do groups and like a structure would be nice because I feel like all of us have structure in our own prisons and then as a whole there's nothing.

P9. There was no psychological directorate. Head office there was nothing. Regional office, there was nothing.

Superordinate Theme: Learn on the Job. Participants were asked to respond on what they did to prepare themselves for a career as a correctional psychologist. Most participants stated that they did nothing to prepare for a career in this specific field. Instead, some participants commented on performing community service in the DCS, which served as preparation for the permanent position of psychologist. Nevertheless, some participants stated that even community service was insufficient to prepare them for a career as a correctional

psychologist. Three participants attempted to prepare for the position by enquiring from officials who worked at correctional centres and were provided with the wrong information. Other participants entered the correctional system with only the training acquired during their Master's degree.

P1. Nothing. So, I did my comm serv at DCS and that prepared me for the setting.

P2. ...It's something that you have to learn on the go and often there isn't training for it so..., I really found that preparation took place while I resumed the job basically.

P3. I didn't do anything specifically. I just had my studies, my masters. Also doing my community service in DCS obviously did prepare me a little bit...not a whole lot of preparation.

P4. I did a bit of research where I consulted with some of the officials I knew that were working here in correctional services... and to be honest, I got the wrong information (laughs).

P7. There wasn't anything specific that I did.

P8. Nothing. I did not know what to expect (laughs). I wasn't sure what to expect.

P9. Coming here I never had any, any, any, any experience or knowledge or skill.

P10. I mustn't lie, I did nothing because I didn't really know what was expected of me..., so I was little prepared when I came here. I felt I was thrown into the deep end.

P11. (Shoo), actually I was not prepared at all..., I just arrived on the first day and that was that. So, there was no preparation at all from my side.

P12. Fortunately, I did my internship in the correctional facility...

P13. Nothing...I didn't prepare myself to come here. I just came as myself, not knowing what I was going to find.

Superordinate Theme: DCS Training versus Peer Supervision. Participants described the DCS training and skills they received upon being appointed as a psychologist in their respective correctional centres. The responses were unanimous. Participants explained that they received minimal or no training from the DCS regarding their role as a psychologist working in a correctional centre. Some participants, however, mentioned attending security-related training whilst others stated that they are still waiting for training. Participants commented that instead of training, they received basic orientation and supervision from their peers appointed before them. The peer supervision provided them with the assistance they needed to continue their duties. It thus became apparent that peer supervision compared to the DCS training played an integral role in the orientation of participants. However, all participants had no alternative but to learn on the job.

P1. ...DCS did not in any way train me in any shape or form. The previous psychologist... she showed me the admin part of it... Because my colleague was willing to help me and assist me...

P2. Besides the false promises? (Laughs)...The only training that I had gotten up until this point is really learning about how policies work in DCS and where my role fits into it....

P3. ...there was like a day or two, about gangsterism like a mini-workshop...that I attended. ...the other psychologist...would provide a bit of, I would say in brackets, supervision...

P4. ...there wasn't any orientation that was done. The only thing that we did was the induction. It was also electronic where you had to go through the policies...

P5. ...so far, I've done the CIP training. I'm still waiting for my pepper spray training... the basic how to handle yourself training (laughs)...it's mainly the policies that I kind of got introduced to.

P6. Upon my appointment because we were quite a closed group so the older psychologists would orientate us, but it was informal. ...but there was some kind of, I could, say peer supervision.

P7. There was a (sic) sexual violence, sexual offender's course. There was another permanent psychologist...That was very helpful in terms of giving me a lot of information and showing me where to go, who (sic) to speak to.

P8. None. I wasn't even given any training. I was basically thrown into the deep end, and they said there's your office, here are your targets. Deliver (laughs).

P9. There was nothing. There was just a group of psychologists whom they appointed before I came in here. They would try their level best to organise and who were helping. It was like peer supervision kind of a thing.

P10. Ever since I've been here, I have not received any formal training from the Department of Correctional Services to prepare me. The only thing that has happened is like the peer training that I received from a senior psychologist here.

P11. There was no training provided. It was mainly an orientation around a Centre that I was working at...but there was no actual training or inductions specifically for a psychologist in a correctional centre...fortunately, I had two supporting psychologists who were always there.

P12. I attended one...The gangsterism that is taking place inside. We didn't go to the training outside where other officials or professionals have been trained before. But currently, there is (sic) no serious trainings given.

P13. I attended the basic training. It was two weeks. Just a general training. That included everything pertaining to Correctional Services. I've never received a training pertaining to my role as a psychologist.

Superordinate Theme: Mental Preparation. Two participants expressed having to mentally prepare themselves through spirituality or therapy for their working environment.

P4. Honestly, I saw a psychologist myself....If you're a believer, before I enter, I say my prayers. When I leave, I'm relieved that the day is done but it's all about you being cautious.

P6. So, in terms of my mindset, I had to prepare myself in terms of like security, my mindset, what I had to do, how I conduct myself when I'm inside the correctional centre.

Superordinate Theme: Struggles with the System. Participants raised their concerns of experiencing struggles with the DCS system. One participant referred to the system as being *broken*, whilst the other used the concept of *schizophrenic parenting*. The system, guided by strict policies and procedures, appears to create quite a struggle as

participants find it difficult to implement and monitor change. Most participants expressed frustration and wondered why they still chose to work in the DCS and put up with the struggles they faced.

P1. ...trying to fit into a system that's very broken with very little officials knowing what they do so basically just doing a lot of their work for them.

P2. ...being in DCS, I find that that concept of schizophrenic parenting comes up much more in my mind, in a sense that there's no real, clear, definable boundary about what is required of a psychologist in this environment.

P4. ...my struggle was with the system on its own.

P6. Some days you feel very frustrated, sometimes you question yourself why am I working in this place as well but then you remember your reasons...

P7. I think working in Correctional Services, you can be very easily frustrated by the system how it does or doesn't work. So, you have to ...pick your battles and try to be resilient.

P8. ...so even if you want to implement something...it is quite a challenge because then you are always reminded you are working in a security institution and policy says this, and you have to work within those guidelines. It's not easy to do anything outside those guidelines (sighs)...Uh it's frustrating...it's frustrating, and you can only do so much...

P9. ...Sometimes when you want to do this, and you are stopped because of 1, 2, 3. It impacts on me.

P10. ...You get frustrated at everyone and you get frustrated at the system...Because of the system, the way it's structured, it actually prevents you from being a highly effective psychologist.

P11. ...It's also frustrating to the point where I've considered leaving many times as well because it gets too frustrating. But you want to do this, but you can't, and most of the things is beyond is my control. It's not something that I can necessarily control or do something about it. And the frustrating part it's almost like having to fight so it has a toll on me negatively.

Superordinate Theme: Old School of Thought versus New School of Thought.

Participant Ten explained that one of the challenges experienced is the resistance by some officials to accept that, apart from being criminals offenders are also human beings. Although the DCS focuses on the process of rehabilitation of offenders, some officials are experiencing difficulty accepting the change in the status quo, which ultimately impedes the work that participants are striving to achieve. Hence, Participant Ten emphasised there is always a clash between the new school of thought (rehabilitation of offenders) and the old school of thought (security and safe custody of criminals).

P10. ...you find officials who have a complete different mentality, who perceive inmates as criminals and they should be treated as criminals. So, when you try to work with regards to rehabilitation, there's a lot of resistance because we trying to rehabilitate offenders from psychologist and social work side and we were trying to treat them as human beings as much as possible. But on the other side, on the corrections side, they're still treated as criminals. So, there is always that clash and there is always that back and forth between us and officials. The old school of thought vs the new school of thought and unfortunately, there's a lot of resistance towards the new school of thought...

Superordinate Theme: Certain Officials want to be paid an Uber Fare.

Corruption appears to have a ripple effect in the DCS as some participants expressed that the corruptive behaviours of some officials tend to impede their daily functioning. Participant Five mentioned that offenders are expected to pay officials if they are escorted to participants for their psychological needs. Similarly, corruptive behaviours by officials appear to affect the basic needs of some participants who are no longer allowed to bring their lunch into the correctional centres due to officials smuggling drugs in the meals to sell to offenders thus spoiling things for all.

P5. ...Certain officials want to be paid an Uber fare to bring the offender for his session. I got this information from the offender's and then the one day I ...was escorting him (offender) back, and then in the middle of the passage I ran into one of the officials. I was like, 'please can you help me because you going to his section. Please can you help me take him down the passage?' Then he's like, 'No. If I'm going to go with him, he knows the fare. I was like, 'I'm sorry, what?' And he's like, 'No. He knows what he needs to do in order for me to take him to the section.' And I was like, 'Okay first of all, you can't say that in front of me. Now that you have, it worries me because that means you making them pay to come and see me and you making them pay for you to take them back.' Then he's like, 'No, but he knows the procedure.' I'm like, 'No, that's not procedure'.

P12. I think there was one official who was found with drugs being put in the Quarter (a quarter loaf of bread with chips, polony and cheese et cetera). So, from that time, they (management) ended up stopping everybody. How do you produce good results when you are working on an empty stomach? There is a

tuck shop inside, but another thing is that you know with the economy being bad, you can't keep on buying every day. There are no fruits, so you have to buy similar things every day. I don't know when the process of going back to normal will happen.

P13. I think the main challenge is a problem caused by other officials. If I want to eat, I have to go to the parking, and we park so far away, so I think that's the one thing that is annoying. We seem to suffer because of other official's behaviour. You can't bring your food. And the other thing, you can't bring your phone because of other officials who are not faithful because if we can all be allowed to bring our phones, then others will sell them to the offenders.

Superordinate Theme: Stuff Can Change Very Quickly, and Things Can Go Bad

Very Quickly. Four participants concurred that the DCS is a challenging environment in which one must adjust continuously, ranging from the surprise searches to not being able to enter the correctional centres with a bag, to the constant noises in the background and, of course having to work with a notorious population.

P3. (1). They can lock the prison because it's like a search or so stuff ...and that's what makes our context very unique is that stuff can change very quickly, and things can go bad very quickly. And then you have to be adaptable and change your schedule.

P3. (2). ...I'm not allowed to carry a bag, which can be searched at any time. But that's one of the rules. It's a bagless society.

P4. Unfortunately, there's nothing we can do with the noise.

P6. ...because here you work with offenders who had done something wrong, you know. So, it was quite different in that way.

P11. I didn't know what type of population they were. The different crimes, I just knew they were in for different crimes but what I don't know. I just got referrals, and I had to see the clients. It was hectic. (Shoo), at first it was a bit challenging.

Superordinate Theme: Feelings of Helplessness to Effect Genuine Rehabilitation.

Seven participants shared their helplessness to effect lasting rehabilitation in their respective centres. During the interviews, Participant Two mentioned the concerns with rehabilitation several times stating that the lack of facilities and managerial problems imposes on the psychological processes of rehabilitation. It further impedes work production and therapeutic outcomes, thereby leaving participants feeling discouraged and excluded. Participant Four, felt that the DCS does not recognise and value the work that psychologists are doing, which can lead to feelings of frustration. Participant Seven mentioned that too much time is focussed on completing lifer reports, which ultimately leaves little time for genuine rehabilitation to occur. Participant Nine spoke of feeling excluded. While some officials are willing to aid in the rehabilitative process, others are more security-minded and enforce security policies that fly in the face of the rehabilitative process.

Participant Nine further stated that the DCS appears to focus on security rather than rehabilitation. Participant Ten emphasised the challenges with running group programmes and stated feeling limited in providing effective services. It was Participant Thirteen who mentioned the need for a multidisciplinary team that could affect lasting rehabilitation but stated that unfortunately, it is a failure on the part of professionals not to come together and effect the change. It, therefore, became evident that participants were left feeling helpless to

render effective services that could bring about true rehabilitation for offenders. It also became clear that various factors such as managerial problems, infrastructure, security needs and lack of co-operation from various role-players tend to leave participants feeling helpless in effecting change.

P2. (1). ...because of the lack of facilities, rehabilitation doesn't take place in a smooth, linear way which it's supposed to...how do you sign off an offender to a medium facility and how do you sign off somebody to Parole Board knowing that you haven't really helped them?

P2. (2). As much as policy is there and the understanding of what rehabilitation is, infrastructure and managerial kind of problems don't really allow for us to follow through on rehab, and those are the kinds of challenges that I sit with on a day-to-day basis.

P2. (3). ...Especially in rendering your skills as a psychologist... So, these things do affect your output, and they do affect the quality of the job you do, and it's almost you become very disheartened and also disenfranchised as well because here you are. You are coming in with a skillset. This massive skillset, and you can only apply ten per cent of it.

P4. ...I feel like DCS does not see that they are valuable...Because psychological health is also important as your physical health as well. So, it's, quite frustrating that at times we're not recognized for the work that we do...

P7. I think unfortunately there is a lot of time that we spend doing lifer reports and that sort of thing. So, we don't do as much rehabilitation as I think we either should be doing or that is needed.

P8. Each centre is run differently, and some officials are understanding, and they let you be and they very helpful. Some officials will constantly remind you that this is a security institution. You can't do that, and you need to forget about certain things you want to do.

P9. So sometimes we are left out. We are not allowed to perform our duties the way we want to perform it. I might have decided to like have a group, but in the process I get stopped because of the security issues. ...so, at DCS, the focus is much on security than on rehabilitation.

P10. ...it then becomes very difficult for us to render group-based services, which then limits us to only having to do individual services.

P13. I think it's a failure by us as professionals to not organise ourselves in terms of forming interdisciplinary teams. That is lacking. So, as a result, I think we are not servicing the offenders with the best of our ability because we are not meeting as professionals and maybe share on how we should work with the offenders. I mean the social workers, the nurses and the multidisciplinary. It's not active... But we do not really sit together and share the knowledge as professionals.

Subsequently, the superordinate themes presented above clearly indicate that being in the employ of the DCS comes with a unique set of challenges that require a continuous process of adjustment.

Master Theme: Access to Resources

Superordinate Themes	Master Theme
Access to Training	Access to Resources
Scarce Stationery and Office Furniture	
Unreliable Information Technology	
Unavailability of Psychometric Tests	
Inadequate Office and Group Rooms	
Shortage of Human Resources	
Wearing of Uniforms versus Unavailability of Uniforms	
Time Management versus Correctional Centre's Operational Demands	

The Master theme: *Access to resources* became a resounding topic with most participants who aired their concerns about various resources to which they have limited access. The participants consistently maintained that they lack or have limited resources to perform their duties. These various resources are mentioned under the superordinate themes that arose from participant responses.

Superordinate Theme: Access to Training. Three varying viewpoints from three different participants came to the fore concerning access to training. The first participant claimed that attending training is never an issue in that specific management area compared to the other two participants who emphasised that the DCS has little resources to accommodate their training needs and that specific courses must be approved, which can be a take up much time.

P1. I'm allowed to go to training. I attend all the trainings that I need to, case conferences. So, for me personally, at this management area, we have resources.

P2. ...the reality of it is that because there's so little resources allocated towards DCS in terms of finances, a lot of that fell by the way-side.

P6. Sometimes you want a specific course, and they're not willing to fund that. Like with us, I could say its standard that you go to PsySSA, and if you want to do something that is different, out of your own interest, the whole writing memos, getting approval, sometimes not getting approval, it's just a long process.

Superordinate Theme: Scarce Stationery and Office Furniture. Whilst one participant felt that resources are not a limiting factor in that specific correctional centre, two participants used terms such as *beg*, *borrow*, and *being lucky* to acquire resources such as stationery from their respective correctional centres. Two participants mentioned that sometimes they must procure the stationery for themselves to get the work done. One participant raised the concern of having to use old furniture. Thus, the lack of basic office needs appears to be a nagging concern that participants must endure.

P1. I can actually get whatever resource I want within reason. I don't think it's a limitation for us specifically. We have quite a big budget, and we have a budget that we can access as well. So, I've got everything I need.

P5. Pens, stationary we have... sometimes (psychologist) has to beg, borrow from, I'm not even sure where, but then she comes with paper, and you're

grateful because there's not enough resources. So, you share as much as possible.

P7. I have a very cooperative centre. I'm very lucky. They're very respectful. They are very eager to assist me where I need assistance, so I'm lucky in that sense.

P8. The furniture is old... I would say then because you spend so much time trying to get the basic things, it can take away from you delivering a quality service sometimes.

P11. ...the funds, this year, we got nothing in terms of finances and funding. So, in terms of resources, I would say it's very limited even the stationary, it's limited. You have to buy your own pens and things like that. Whatever you need to get by.

P13. There was no budget for stationery, particularly for this financial year. So if I need a pen I have to buy it myself.

Superordinate Theme: Unreliable Information Technology. Eight participants of the study unanimously agreed that access and maintenance of information technology within their various correctional centres is unreliable. Even if they have computers in their offices, various issues arise. For example, it might be outdated, not working, no access to the internet, the printer does not have ink, or there is only one printer for the entire component. The list is long, with issues ranging from using their last drum, lack of toners to unavailability of audio-visual equipment for group work.

P3. Well, I need my computer to work. For a while, it did not work, for like two to three weeks. I need my computer to work, my emails, I need

communication. That's also how referrals are sent to me through hospital or CMC.

P5. Computer, printer we have, sometimes there's no ink.

P7. The printer sometimes won't work, or the internet doesn't work, which can be quite limiting... But I also don't have any computers on my floor because the office got flooded. I know there's no ink, so once this one runs out, I don't know what we gonna (sic) do.

P8. Some of the centres, they are somewhat equipped, but then the equipment is also outdated. Old computers, old technology, no access to internet.

P9. For now, my printer isn't working, so I struggle sometimes to get ink, so you can imagine when I want to print a report, the kind of challenges that I'm experiencing.

P10. So, for the whole psychology department we have only one printer. ... The toner has been an issue. We don't have a drum. So, if the drum finishes, then no, we have no facilities to print.

P11. The main thing is internet. For example, we need access to do research, read up on different materials and so forth, but we don't have the resources.

P12. In the group session, there must be the audio-visual equipment's (sic) that you have to use, and we just improvise in the sense that the groups are being conducted here in our offices.

Superordinate Theme: Unavailability of Psychometric Tests. Three participants raised their concerns about the unavailability of psychometric tests, which they believe would assist with their work. One participant stated that they must improvise whilst another relies

on information collected in interviews provided by families and the case management committee (CMC) to compile assessment reports.

P9. ...Like assessment tools and everything, we don't have. So, we really don't have resources you just have to improvise as a psychologist.

P11. ...Also, in terms of maybe psychometric tools that might deem necessary for certain things, we don't have resources for that.

P12. ...we don't even have psychometric tests. So, it takes long for you to assess because you just rely on the interviews....on collateral information from the families...from the CMC. So, it takes long in that way because we don't have those tools. The personality ones, the cognitive, those that can maybe assess the behaviour. I think those are mainly very important in this setting or in this environment.

Superordinate Theme: Inadequate Offices and Group Rooms. Nine participants related their experiences of working in limited spaces, especially when they render services such as group programmes. One participant waited for over a month to receive an office. Two participants share office space with other officials. Others improvise and use the offenders' kitchen or church to run group programmes. Another participant mentioned using the office to accommodate 10 to 15 offenders for group programmes. One participant stated that the offices had to be divided to create space for the psychologists in their centre. One participant complained of a leaking ceiling when it rains, and the office gets flooded. Another participant mentioned that they experience regular power outages, which negatively affect their work production. It became apparent that most participants work with the bare minimum needs to ensure work productivity.

P1. *We have very limited space, as in offices and office space.*

P3. *It took more than a month to actually have an office. So, for the first month, I sat in HR and watched YouTube videos and got paid a salary, but it was very frustrating.*

P4. *...I share an office... When I do have offenders in the session, whether it's raining like today, my door is always open... So at least there can be some visibility cos my windows are not that long... I need to bear the cold so we can do the work....*

P5. *Sometimes space is a problem because if you gonna need to do a group of 20...the only space is in the kitchen at a certain time...So you have your office...to at least accommodate 10, 15 offenders with chairs around you, bring in benches...we don't have a group room!*

P6. *...sometimes you struggle, even with the basics, even with the office space. So, I think yeah, I've gotten to a point where you don't complain a lot.*

P8. (1). *The ceiling is leaking, when it rains then your office is flooded...There are not enough offices or group rooms. Offenders are sitting sometimes practically on top of each other. You have to share your space with other officials.*

P8. (2). *...I've been in this post for four years. I still don't have an office...I've had to share an office space for the last four years basically... I've been in 3 different offices in that space.*

P10. *...We don't have group rooms. ...We've got a problem with the lights. Since 2017, it's been a recurrent problem. We always have problems with power outages. So, if there are no lights, you can't use a computer.*

P11. Even with office space, we've had to divide offices so that all the psychologists can have proper space to render services. It's bare minimum.

P12. We don't have the proper room for group sessions... where we can render the services positively or effectively.

P13. It's just what we miss is a bigger room for groups and equipment for groups. That's what we really need.

Superordinate Theme: Shortage of Human Resources. Four participants emphasised the need to employ more human resources. Psychologists are employed in the DCS to render psychological services to offenders. However, Participant Two mentioned that they were requested to assist in the debriefing of officials when another official passed away as they do not have an employee assistance programme available at their centre. Participant Six mentioned that there is only one psychiatrist who works on rotation at their centre and various other centres. This becomes problematic as offenders complain about not receiving their medication, and it affects the therapeutic process. Participant Six further stated a lack of correctional officials at their correctional centre. Participant Seven stated that being the only psychologist in that specific centre can be quite demanding, and services cannot be rendered regularly. Participant Twelve shared similar sentiments, stating that it is difficult for just two psychologists to meet the demands of the centre and that more psychologists need to be employed.

P2. Just recently, we were asked to help with debriefing of members, post the passing of another member because of how thin resources are in Corrections... where they don't really have the ability to call an EAP immediately when crisis hits...

P6. (1). Some of us have to refer to a psychiatrist, and I think if I'm not mistaken, we have one psychiatrist to rotate, so it's an issue. Clients complain about medication, not getting medication in time, so it affects how you work with your clients...

P6. (2). ... like in terms of staff members we are limited.

P7. ...I'm also the only psychologist in the centre and its long-term offenders, so they are quite demanding of therapy in a sense. So, I find that I don't get to see them as often as I want to or that I should.

P12. When coming to human resources, it is very difficult for us as psychologists as we are only two... We need more human resources, more psychologists to be employed.

Superordinate Theme: Wearing of Uniforms versus Unavailability of Uniforms.

The DCS is a uniform-wearing organisation and expects every employed person, whether a correctional official involved in ensuring security in the institution or belonging to a professional group such as social workers, educationists and psychologists, to wear a uniform. Participant Three mentioned that even though the DCS is demilitarised, it still performs functions that stem from the militarisation era, such as attending the parades (morning assembly of officials) and wearing ranks (insignias on uniforms). Participant Eleven emphasised that even though uniforms was scarce, the participant was somehow expected to have a uniform which she received as 'hand me downs' from various officials to comply with the regulations.

P3. DCS, is supposed to be demilitarised, but it's not at all if you still have parade, and we still wear ranks and all of that.

P11. There was no uniform, but somehow it was expected, so then I got uniforms for myself, from different individuals who gave me their uniform.

Superordinate Theme: Time Management versus Correctional Centres'

Operational Demands. Participants brought to the fore the issue surrounding time management and having to meet operational demands at the same time. Participant One stated that inappropriate demands are placed on them, resulting in an inconsistent workload that needs to be managed. Participant Four also mentioned that time to hold sessions becomes challenging due to the meetings they must attend in the correctional centres. The participant also emphasised these meetings have no relevance to their work. Participant Eleven, on the other hand, stated that the day only begins after 09h00 as offenders are brought in late for their sessions which ruins a planned schedule. Participants are, therefore, of the view that they are unable to set structured daily programmes as the centres operational demands take precedence over their work.

P1. (1). Time management because of all the other operations going on. So physical time management becomes difficult...Just demands on our time in a short notice, inappropriate demands that the centre would make.

P1. (2). Time management problems because there will be days that I can't do anything, which means there will be other days that I have too much on my plate. Therefore, it becomes an inconsistent workload that I need to manage.

P4. My biggest challenge is time. Time to start with the sessions...because you have to sit in board meetings where they're talking about security, about blankets, and it has nothing to do with myself. You've got several meetings that you sit in...So, you end up working at home.

P11. ...so, meaning most cases we start working past nine that's how late they bring in the offenders... By that time, you've lost a lot of time. By that time, the frustration has kicked in, and you had a plan for your day, and by that time, it's ruined.

Evidently, the lack or limited availability of resources are a massive challenge for participants who have no alternative but to function within their means when rendering services to offenders.

Master Theme: Safety and Security

Superordinate Themes	Master Theme
Feelings of Being Unsafe	Safety and Security
Threatening Behaviours from Offenders	
The Need for Self-Defence Training	
The Need for a Permanent Security Official	
The Need for Safety Equipment	
Escorting of Offenders and Psychologists versus Psychologists Escorting Offenders	

Safety and security appeared to be a resonating Master Theme as participants expressed their feelings of being unsafe, their experiences of threatening behaviour from offenders and their need for self-defence training. The participants also described their challenges regarding their need for a permanent security official to be posted within their components and acquiring access to safety equipment for participants' protection. Participants described their experiences and concerns surrounding the escorting of offenders. These superordinate themes are delineated below.

Superordinate Theme: Feelings of Being Unsafe. Participants' feelings of being unsafe were clearly articulated as *cautious, terrifying, and unsafe* due to the lack of adequate security to protect them. One participant mentioned working in an office that stands alone with no security for protection. The participant went to the extreme of saying that if an attack occurs they may be in trouble before any help can arrive. Other participants refused to consult with unescorted offenders due to previous security incidences. Clearly, this indicates that the correctional environment in which participants are working requires extra vigilance and alertness and leave participants feeling constantly unsafe.

P4. ...it's by the grace of God that we do the work that we do because there isn't much security that is put to make sure that we are safe... When I leave, I'm relieved that the day is done but it's all about you being cautious.

P6. ...the gang activities, the stabbings and stuff and also seeing some of your colleagues being hurt in the process as well because you thinking am I next, what's gonna happen next so you always on alert, you're very uncomfortable as well, so you constantly have to be conscious....the offenders that get referred are quite dangerous, and you have to sit there with a brave face and pretend as if you're not scared...

P10. It's quite terrifying. There's always that issue of, am I safe enough?

P11. We took a decision as a team of psychologists, social workers and other professionals that if there's no escort, we won't see offenders because we've had incidents where we were not safe at all.

P12. Our offices, they are not adjacent to one another. They stand alone because that's my office here. I don't see what is happening in the other

psychologist's office and he doesn't see what is happening in my office. If there is any attack of sorts, then I might be in trouble before I get any help.

Superordinate Theme: Threatening Behaviours from Offenders. Participants raised the concern that they have come under threat from offenders during the daily performance of their duties. Some participants agreed that the threatening offenders' behaviours are attributed to the information they receive from the members of the Parole Board. The latter disclosed to offenders that psychologists are responsible for their release on parole or their 'further profiles' (further incarceration in the correctional centre). Offenders thus become aggressive and display threatening behaviours to psychologists.

P1. Threats to me as a person because of the position that you get placed in from, for example, parole board telling offenders that you (the psychologist) are the person that's going to let them (the offender) go and then they (the offender) place the same value on you as they do on the parole board...

P10. As psychologists, we've had inmates coming here threatening us. One inmate came to threaten us because the parole board had given him a further profile. I don't know what was said to him, but he came to threaten us. The situation could have escalated very quickly and to get help when we're in the belly of the prison, how long it's gonna take EST (Emergency Support team) to come into the prison and intervene.

P11. There are risks in terms of the perceptions that are given to offenders, the miscommunication but also the security.

Superordinate Theme: The Need for Self-Defence Training. Participants clearly articulated that they are not trained in security and self-defence despite working in an environment that requires such skills. Two participants mentioned that they do not know how to defend themselves should anything untoward happen as they are not provided with the training that security officials receive. Participant Six, on the other hand, took the initiative to pay for self-defence classes, thereby becoming equipped with the necessary skills needed for protecting oneself in a security environment.

P4. Bear in mind that I don't know how to defend myself if something would happen.

P6. I've taken it upon myself to like take security into your own hands. I went for the self-defence classes in order for me to be on top of my game.

P10. Given the fact that as a psychologist, we are not trained like officials in terms of self-defence.

Superordinate Theme: The Need for a Permanent Security Official. Participants expressed their dire need for permanent security officials to be placed in their respective psychological components. Participant Three expressed that this need has not yet been fulfilled even though it is a directive that is clearly emphasised in their psychological services procedure manual. Participant Six, on the other hand, mentioned that offenders could be aggressive in sessions and that this can pose a threat for the participants who are compelled to manage the security and the session alone because no security official is present. Furthermore, participants expressed that despite raising this issue on numerous occasions, the concern has continued over the years. They emphasised that if a security official is provided to them, it is not permanent. Some participants are female psychologists whose safety is

constantly compromised because of the absence of a security official. Hence, participants expressed psychologists' need for a security official is an ongoing conflict in their correctional centres.

P3. We need a security officer outside our offices. That has not happened... I don't see that happening. So that's maybe one need that is there that's not being fulfilled. And it's actually, I think, in our psychological services procedure manual.

P4. ...So, you just get to consult an offender and carry on. So, there isn't security that is provided to us.

P6. Your clients could turn out to be quite aggressive in the session. Sometimes you are left alone with the client, and you will have to make a plan in that moment, so I think security is the biggest thing.

P10. And we've raised that numerous times that we need an official to man the gate in the passage so that there's someone controlling the movement. It happens one day, then, for the rest of the month, it's not happening. ...Ever since 2017, there was literally no security. We did make a lot of noise this year to the management and they said they're going to help. And the official who has been placed at the gate, literally came in three times, only three times for a person controlling the movement of the inmates.

P11. Most of us, on most days, we don't have an official to look after us when we rendering services. As you saw when you came in, there was no official, and it can go on for days and days like that ...Most days actually we end up compromising with a passage full of offenders and just us. The majority of us are ladies, and we just have to continue rendering services.

Superordinate Theme: The Need for Safety Equipment. Participants expressed their needs to access proper security equipment for their own protection. Two participants mentioned that the only security equipment they possess is a whistle to blow should they feel threatened. There are no panic buttons, pepper sprays or Tazer guns available to participants for their protection. Participant Ten mentioned that no training is provided on how to use the security equipment—as there is no security equipment. Participant Twelve reiterated that the resources in the correctional centres are not up to scratch, and therefore, participants lack the appropriate security equipment.

P4. I only have this whistle that I've asked them (security officials) if an offender jumps on me. How am I going to blow this if he has his hands on my neck? So, we don't have any panic buttons that we can press.

P10. Obviously the issues of safety, that you're not trained or given resources to protect ourselves if a riot was to break out. You know, the only thing we have is a whistle to blow. We know if at least we had a pepper spray or a Tazer gun or whatever that you could feel, you can protect yourself. We don't have those things.

P12. The resources are not 100%. We are supposed to have panic buttons in case there is any challenges, or maybe you feel like you are not safe, just to press that panic button in order to get help as soon as possible. So, we don't have.

Superordinate Theme: Escorting of Offenders and Psychologists versus Psychologists Escorting Offenders. The DCS has always clearly articulated that officials escort offenders to the psychologists for their consultations. However, according to

participants, this is not the case in their respective correctional centres. The response from Participant One and Four clearly described how challenging it is for a psychologist to get an offender to their office for a consultation. Participant Eleven mentioned that they must *fight* to have offenders escorted.

Furthermore, if offenders are brought to the psychologist for a consultation, they are just dropped off, and the official returns to the unit, leaving the offender alone with the psychologist. Moreover, Participant Ten indicated that psychologists are also not escorted by security officials to the various units to render group programmes to offenders. Instead, psychologists are expected to protect themselves on their way to and from the units. Participant Ten also indicated that they had no choice but to render the group programmes to approximately 30 offenders in a confined space without any security official to afford protection.

On the other hand, participants mentioned that it had become common practice for them to escort the offenders to their offices for a consultation. Furthermore, participants mentioned that they are constantly being told that there is a shortage of correctional officials to escort the offenders to the psychologist. Consequently, participants must take the initiative, whether dangerous or not, to escort the offenders themselves to proceed with their daily duties.

Escorting of offenders and psychologists:

P1. ...So, breaking through that whole system of getting the whole system to work together to get the offender physically to you.

P4. So, to get an official to open up for them (offenders) to bring them here, it's a challenge. Others (offenders), they come on their own. No one escorts them.

P10. (1). ...We are not escorted. We just go there on our own...Initially, it has been quite horrifying ...You're sitting in this smallish room with 30 odd offenders, and you're just sitting there alone.

P11. ...So having to fight for escorts, security, because it's not always available.

P12. What's supposed to be happening is that the officials, when escorting offenders, they are supposed to be sitting outside the office and just observe what is happening even though they do not hear what we are saying. But what happens is that sometimes they just drop them and go back and want us to phone them after an hour or after a session to come and take them back. That is not supposed to be happening.

Psychologists escorting offenders:

P5. The common challenge in the centre is getting offenders to come to a group because you'll call a section, 'Okay, we'll bring them.' They don't come. Eventually, you just walk up there because otherwise, you not going to get anything done.

P10. (2). ...more often than not, we always get the response that, 'We (Officials) are short staffed so the only way would be for you (psychologist) to come and fetch your client.' We've heard that on numerous cases... It becomes a huge issue.

Evidently, participants experience considerable challenges concerning their own safety and security within the correctional centres in which they work.

Master Theme: Overwhelming Workload (Quantity versus Quality)

Superordinate Themes	Master Theme
Thrown Into Doing Admin Stuff	Overwhelming Workload (Quantity versus Quality)
Meeting the Target: Annual Performance Plan (APP)	
Psychological Reports	

Three pertinent superordinate themes were derived from participant responses, namely; thrown into doing administrative tasks, meeting the target (annual performance plan) and psychological reports. Participants articulated that the administrative workload takes away from the therapeutic services they are expected to render to offenders. Participants further wondered whether they were performing a quantity or quality service to the offenders who are their clients.

Superordinate Theme: Thrown Into Doing Admin Stuff. Participants appeared to have entered the correctional system with a pre-conceived notion that their work would be exclusively clinical and therapeutic. However, they found themselves *thrown into doing admin stuff* (Participant Ten). This appeared to be a shared concern amongst participants as they articulated that they must attend several administrative meetings rather than conduct therapeutic work.

P3. All of these meetings you have to attend.

P4. To my surprise, there's a lot of work that needs to be done here. You don't even have time for yourself.

P8. You spend more time in meetings instead of actually doing therapeutic work.

P10. (1). ...the other big one is being thrown into administrative work. When I came here, my focus was gonna be in doing groups, and doing reports, and doing therapy. But you find that you become thrown into doing admin stuff... and then having to sit in meetings for Dev and Care (Development and Care Component) to confirm the stats. That's four days in a month that's dedicated...Because most of the psychologists are being thrown into administration work, going to meetings, going for the management meetings, and that takes a big chunk out of our therapeutic work. And for me, it is truly quite frustrating.

Superordinate Theme: Meeting the Target: Annual Performance Plan (APP). A resounding superordinate theme echoed by participants was meeting the annual performance plan targets set every year by the Psychological Directorate at the National Head Office. These targets indicate how many new offenders a psychologist is expected to consult in a month. Every offender is considered as a new client upon initial consultation. Subsequently, every consultation with the same offender is considered a follow-up or repeat and cannot be included as new in the monthly performance of the psychologist. Therefore, apart from consulting with follow-up offenders, psychologists are also expected to meet their set targets by consulting with new offenders monthly. The participants expressed that they find themselves seeking quantity to meet the targets rather than performing a quality therapeutic service to offenders.

P1. The higher directorate has a lot of other expectations from us which they put on us which we do.

P3. ...sometimes it feels like I'm chasing targets and I want to do more quality work...At the end of the day, your target is expected to be made. So, the target is set by Head Office then communicated to us through the Region. I'm supposed to see a certain number of new offenders, but the person only counts as new if you've seen him once. So, I can see that person a hundred times, for example, and he will only count as new once...The target is sometimes a bit difficult to reach because you have all of these moving parts in a correctional centre.

P4. ...We have these targets that are really ridiculous (laughs) that we need to meet, where you need to see an x amount of offenders on a monthly basis. On top of that, you need to follow up with the old offenders that you saw from the previous month... But mostly, the work that you do is quantitative just to reach the target.

P10. The issue of groups was obviously because of meeting targets...this whole hype is about seeing a certain number of offenders a month... no one cares about the effects, the effectiveness of the service that we render. If I'm expected to see 28 new offenders, I cannot get 28 new offenders to do good therapy in a month, and the following month we just get new offenders. So, we just do a psychoeducational group so that you can get your targets because if you don't perform, then there's a lot of noise.

Superordinate Theme: Psychological Reports. Participants expressed that apart from meeting the monthly targets and conducting therapy, they are also inundated with

conducting assessments and writing risk assessment reports for life- and determinate-sentenced offenders. Participants further mentioned that the DCS have in the past been served with court judgements that require an offender to be considered for parole after a specific period. At the time of the study, participants shared their frustrations of having to comply with the Phaahla Judgement.

According to Participants Four and Ten, an offender by the name of Phaahla took the DCS to court (Phaahla V Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, 2019) as he believed he should have been considered for parole from the date he began awaiting trial rather than from the date he was sentenced. The offender won the case, and all offenders who fell within the period of the Phaahla Judgement were then considered for parole. This meant that all the offenders within this category had to be assessed by a psychologist. As there are only a limited number of psychologists in each management area, this resulted in a backlog of assessments and overwhelming workload and pressure on the participants.

P3. ...sometimes I work weekends on reports...and of course a lot of pressure with lifer reports and determinate sentence reports.

P4. (1). ...and also, we have these assessments that we have to complete for the parolees, so it's quite a lot. We recently received information regarding the Phaahla Judgement now, where we have a backlog of work of lifers that we need to assess. The Phaahla Judgement, what happened is, there was an offender named Phaahla who took DCS to court...So what he was complaining about is that they didn't recognise him when he was already in the system and still on trial...So, it's for those who were still in the system still going through the trial and were eventually found guilty or convicted and perhaps sentenced a bit later. It has added tremendously to the workload cos

now they need those reports ASAP. So, we need to see those offenders and assess them and make recommendations.

P4. (2). *I wish I could give more attention to the offenders in terms of quality. If I could spend more time because now that I'm assisting with the Phaahla Judgement, there are other offenders that I've haven't seen that are follow-ups. So now you end up having a backlog of therapy that you have to prematurely end for a period of time or prolong for a period of time, which is not what I would really like.*

P10. *I don't know much about the Phaahla judgement. All I know is that I think the courts awarded that the Phaahla individual...he should be considered for parole...which then impacts on all the other individuals who are then sentenced within the same time period, which means all of those offenders need to be seen by a social worker or a psychologist because they have to be considered for parole...but obviously now the impact this has had on us is that we've been working with different van Vuuren and the van Wyk cases (court judgements). I don't know how other centres do but it does take a lot of time ...compiling reports.*

P11. *Always when things go wrong they think it's always the professional's fault. For example, when reports are late. I remember there was a time when there was an issue with the Phaahla cases. The reports were late. Only to find they referred the client a week before but next week they expected the report.*

P12. *We have to deal with so many offenders, so many reports that have to be written after the assessments and the now there is a long list of Phaahla cases*

where we have to make sure that we speed up the process and it is not easy.

It's so challenging because there's no miracle that we can perform.

These superordinate themes clearly indicate that participants are experiencing an overwhelming workload within their centres, which they perceive as being quantified by the DCS rather than providing a quality service.

Master Theme: Professional Identity Crisis

Superordinate Themes	Master Theme
Security Setting Compromising a Confidentiality Profession	Professional Identity Crisis
Ethical Dilemmas	
The Hats We Wear	
An Unrecognised Profession	
Being Micro-Managed versus Flexibility	
Deterioration of Clinical Skills	
Even the Healer Needs Healing from Burnout	

Professional identity crisis became the most appropriate Master Theme as participants communicated experiencing several challenges which contradicted what they believed to be true for them and their profession in the DCS. The superordinate themes highlighted above are encapsulated in the Master Theme of the professional identity crisis that participants experience and will be delineated below.

Superordinate Theme: Security Setting Compromising a Confidentiality Profession. Participants expressed that the work they do is confidential. However,

maintaining confidentiality in a correctional context has proven difficult as information is disseminated by specific role-players such as the Parole Boards or Case Management Committee (CMC) to the relevant offenders. Furthermore, the lack of resources, such as printers, compromises the confidentiality of the various reports compiled by participants who have no alternative but to print the reports at other offices. Participant Nine also stated that therapy work is affected when offenders are pulled out of sessions due to security-related matters. Hence, a security setting such as a correctional centre comprises a confidentiality profession.

P1. My personal disadvantage is the security setting which makes a confidentiality profession extremely difficult to do.

P2. ...or when you have to give reports to Parole Board or CMC(Case Management Committee) and I have to explain that this report is yours, it's not the offender's and then get questioned as to why... It really does affect the quality of work.

P9. (1). My computer is working, but I don't have a printer. I have to walk around to other officials' offices and knowing the confidentiality of my report. Then I have to run around making sure I print my report. So sometimes, you know, you can even forget to delete. So, you can see now.

P9. (2). You have an appointment with a client. Instead of completing the session, you have to stop because they need to do searching. So it does impact on my work as a psychologist.

Superordinate Theme: Ethical Dilemmas. Participants articulated the dilemmas they experience with regards to adhering to their scope of practice which is governed by the

HPCSA, whilst at the same time attempting to comply with the DCS policies and regulations. Participant Two mentioned that on most days, one is left wondering if one is not breaching their code of conduct as per HPCSA regulations. Participants further explained that the DCS is only concerned with the DCS policies and expects participants to do things that are contradictory to the HPCSA regulations. This places participants in ethically-comprised situations.

P2. ...instead of understanding that we (psychologists) come with a scope of practice and that scope of practice regulates what we can and cannot do. So you find yourself in a very difficult ethical position on most days and having to drive out of here thinking, did I actually do what I was supposed to do, or am I crossing a line.

P5. Our ethics don't matter, by the way; only policy matters.

P9. When you work in DCS as a psychologist, remember we are governed by the Health Professions Council of South Africa, and DCS also has its own expectations, so the challenge that I sometimes experience is that the department will expect you to do things that is unethical when it comes to Health Professions Council.

P10. ...I mean you have to comply if a person who is more senior than you in terms of rank demands that you right now drop everything and go to this meeting or drop everything and go and represent your department in this meeting... but not understanding the impacts that has on the therapeutic work that we are employed here to do.

P11. If they want something from you, whether it's right or wrong, we must just do what they want... I found myself having to compromise a lot...

Superordinate Theme: The Hats We Wear. Several participants raised the issue of the multiple roles they are expected to enact while performing their duties. Participants mentioned that apart from being a psychologist, they are also expected to be a manager and comply with the directives of the position. Despite wearing the insignias of an Assistant Director (which indicates a managerial position), participants do not manage subordinates and state that this thus creates confusion and becomes conflicting at times.

P1. I think for me, it comes down to wearing 50 different hats...The psychology part of my job is minuscule. ...my duties are manager related...The same 50 hats that I have to put on is the blurring of my profession....

P2. ...realising that not only am I a clinical psychologist but also I'm being hired as a manager and how working as a manager in the experience of it superseded what I'm actually doing as a clinical psychologist...So I find myself being a manager, being an advocate, being a shop steward....

P3. I completely see myself as a professional. I don't see myself as a manager because I don't manage anybody. There's nobody who works for me. There's nobody that works underneath me. I don't have any subordinates. So that is obviously confusing and conflicting at times...

P4. You have multiple roles. You end up doing the work that you're not supposed to do. I'm a chairperson of CMC...They will ask me...because you're a psychologist and you have studied, please come and type in your English. So, I have to assist them with that. You're a unit manager...

P5. ...you're an advocate most of the time for something or for someone. You are constantly having to define what it is that we are actually meant to be doing...But it's often about managing.

P8. On top of being a psychologist, you expected to be in a managerial position.

P11. The different caps that I have to wear, somehow I feel the value of my services become limited... and then the rank that I'm wearing for psychology is an ASD, for the assistant director rank...if you wear this rank, automatically, you are a manager. So, meaning for managerial meetings I had to attend. I had to participate as a manager even though I came in just a psychologist.

Superordinate Theme: An Unrecognised Profession. The profession of psychology has been an integrated part of the DCS for many years now. However, participants unanimously articulated that psychology as a profession has not been given much recognition in the DCS. Neither officials nor offenders clearly understand the role of a psychologist within a correctional context. There is also no clear distinction about what is required of a psychologist in the correctional environment. Participants believed that both officials and offenders must be provided with the necessary education so that they can understand the profession of psychology and its role in the DCS. Furthermore, participants stated that they had been left feeling rejected as their advice and suggestions on specific issues are not considered or taken seriously due to the strict policies that do not leave much room for change. Participant Thirteen also shared with concern that once one works for the DCS as a psychologist, there appears to be no room for growth in terms of climbing the levels within the DCS.

P1. Your profession is not recognised in this environment. As a professional, you are working with other non-professionals in a sense. So, your work becomes very difficult because you need to explain what your profession is. What you do, what you need from them, and they can't give it to you because it's not what their work is. Their work is security. Their work is punishment; their work is everything that our work is not.

P2. ...there's no real, clear, definable boundary about what is required of a psychologist in this environment.

P3. Well, officials don't always know what I do, both officials and offenders, and it's a constant sign for education... So, I think in terms of psychology, I feel a bit lonely and not really supported.

P4. Coming from a department where its psychologists in a hospital environment, where you are acknowledged as a professional and coming to an institution where you are not recognised for your work, it was quite frustrating for me.

P5. My manager apparently is Operational Support who has no idea what psychology does, who has no idea what social work does.

P6. Sometimes when you get rejection that when you want something that is legit and would benefit your clients, it's kind of makes you feel down.

P8. ...I think they (officials) are not that open to change unless the leadership is open to change. You can't come in with radical and or new ways of doing things that are seen as radical or not fitting with how correctional services should be run. You learn very quickly that even if you have some ideas ...just keep them to yourself because not much is going to come of it anyway. There's a lot of red tape...

P10. If correctional officials are going to drive this agenda that psychologists are for crazy people, this then filters down to the other inmates and they are going to start stigmatising people who see psychologists.

P11. Some officials do not understand our role and what we do.

P13. Once you are employed as a psychologist, it's like you will die as a psychologist. There is no progress in terms of development but not in the sense of acquiring new knowledge but development in terms of levels.

Superordinate Theme: Being Micro-Managed versus Flexibility. Participants Five and Eleven raised concerns about being micro-managed by other managers to the extent that their every movement needed to be reported. These participants had also been reprimanded on occasions for not adhering to the DCS regulations. Participant Eleven in particular, appeared to be extensively micro-managed as the participant mentioned having to redo the code of conduct training because the length of their hair was below the collar.

Furthermore, Participant Eleven raised concerns about the being micro-managed during load-shedding and fumigation. Psychologists are expected to lock themselves in their offices and sit in the dark until the lights go on. Alternatively, they can sit in their cars and come into the centre when the electricity is back. Moreover, Participant Eleven stated that when the offices are fumigated, they are expected to work in their offices on the same day. Despite complaining that the substance affects them, Participant Eleven was requested to provide a medical certificate to substantiate the claim.

Contrary to the concerns raised by Participants Five, Ten and Eleven, however, Participant Seven stated that they work independently and are not micro-managed by anyone. Participant Seven mentioned that they are trusted to do what they need to do, and this is one aspect that creates an enjoyable working environment. It thus became apparent that

correctional centres appear to operate differently from each other. Whilst some participants feel extensively micro-managed, others appear to have a certain degree of flexibility.

P5. *...I had an IOD (injury on duty). I reported it to the Manager:*

Psychological Services about what was happening with the physio and everything...I didn't communicate it to my Operational Support. I got flack,

that, 'I am your manager. You can't report things to the Manager:

Psychological Services. I am your manager in the centre. You need to report things to me.'

P10. *We feel like psychologists and social workers in this environment are not cared for as long as we come here, and you do your work, and you render services...*

P11. (1). *...every little thing that you do, especially in our management area, you have to report every little movement... if I were to go out now...I can't just go, take my bag and come back. I need to report that I'm going out to our Development and Care Coordinator. I think having to report every little thing, it's tedious and also every little move we are being watched... You have to comply. So that room in terms of flexibility is not really there.*

P11. (2). *They are strict in the Management Area. I remember I had a certain hairstyle. It was basic, simple, but because it was below the collar, they made a big issue about it...to the extent where my Development and Care Co-ordinator was involved. I had to redo the code of conduct training just because of that.*

P11. (3). *We have requested that if there's load shedding, may we please leave, but they said no, we must stay within our offices. So, what we do we*

just stay in the offices, lock the door, stay in the dark. We can't go anywhere, or alternatively, they say if you want to go out, maybe go to your car and when the lights come back on, then return to your offices.

P11. (4). Even with issues around fumigation. They fumigate, and we are not allowed to leave. I even told them after that fumigation, I got dizzy, so I really can't. Then they like, 'you must go to the doctor and bring a medical certificate as proof that this fumigation is not good for you.' Then soon after, it's, 'no, actually the spray is not poisonous.' You can go out 5 minutes and then go back...If you feel you have a problem, go to your car, come back, continue but there's no going home.

P7. So, I see myself working quite independently as well, which I enjoy. I quite like that I'm not micro-managed. I'm trusted that I'm capable and competent to do what I need to do. So, I really enjoy that aspect of it.

Superordinate Theme: Deterioration of Clinical Skills. It was interesting to note the response from Participant One that because of all the duties that psychologists must perform (as mentioned previously), for example, doing administrative tasks, attendance of meetings and psychological reports, clinical skills tend to deteriorate as only the bare minimum psychology is practiced at the correctional centres thereby leaving little room for *cutting edge psychology*. Participant One stated that it becomes the onus of the psychologist to keep abreast of the latest developments in psychology and attend the relevant training regularly otherwise psychologists' clinical skills just become blunted down even further.

P1. It's not psychology as a spectrum that you do therapy and see clients for your whole day. It's not that. It deteriorates...It does get blunted down and

blunted down. So, you need to keep it sharp by going to training, going to professional bodies, speaking to colleagues, and doing a lot of reading and self-study to keep it sharp. Otherwise, you just fall into the groove of doing the bare minimum psychology, not cutting-edge psychology.

Superordinate Theme: Even the Healer Needs Healing from Burnout.

Participants clearly expressed having symptoms of burnout such as tiredness and fatigue and the need for debriefing or personal supervision. However, participants expressed that most therapists do not know what it is like to work in a correctional centre and hence could not possibly understand what a correctional psychologist experiences daily and thus would not be of much help. Furthermore, there is an expectation from participants that the DCS should provide the services of personal supervision or debriefing to participants, but according to Participant Nine, this does not happen.

P2. ...you have to find containment elsewhere often at your own expense...Most psychologists have their own therapists ...or their own supervisors that they see, but I think in DCS, it's something very specific because of this environment. So, most therapists who do debriefing and stuff like that don't really know what you go through on a day-to-day basis.

P4. Also, personally, you burn out. You become really, really tired. At the end of the day you're so exhausted.

P9. But for me in particular, I think and I believe that as a psychologist working in this kind of environment, I was supposed to get debriefing more often but that's not happening.

P11. Honestly, I get fatigued a lot. I get really tired...

It thus becomes apparent from the superordinate themes that issues of confidentiality comprising ethics, working in multiple roles with no recognition or acknowledgement and being micro-managed by other managers are highly contentious concerns that participants experience within their centres. Furthermore, the blunting of clinical skills and experiencing burnout is a reality that participants are compelled to endure.

Master Theme: Power in Resilience

Superordinate Themes	Master Theme
The Impact of Vicarious Trauma on Mental Health	Power in Resilience
Desensitisation	
Debriefing, Therapy, and Supervision as a Coping Mechanism	
Peer Support from Psychologists versus Power Struggles within the Correctional Centre	
Discord Versus Solidarity With Social Workers	
Developing Resilient Behaviours	
Acquired Behavioural and Psychological Implications	
A Reflective and Cathartic Experience	

Participants expressed encountering various challenges whilst working in a correctional environment. Over time, these challenges tend to change the way a person comes to view their world, and new behaviours are learned to adapt and cope. Participants expressed that having to experience the effect of vicarious trauma, becoming desensitised over time, experiencing power struggles and discord with their colleagues, including developing behavioural and psychological implications, has eventually led to them developing resilience. Furthermore, participants mentioned that they rely on both formal and informal debriefing,

therapy, and supervision as a coping mechanism to deal with the daily challenges they experience. Participants further expressed finding the interview process in this study reflective and cathartic experience that made them feel better.

Superordinate Theme: The Effect of Vicarious Trauma on Mental Health.

Several participants expressed that the harsh reality of working in a correctional centre is that one must listen to the details of the crimes committed by offenders. These crime stories result in traumatisation for participants who must deal with the residual trauma long after the session concludes. Participants stated that such trauma *scars* have a lasting effect on a person's mental health and personal relationships. Participant Three mentioned consulting with a psychiatrist and taking psychiatric medication to cope and be effective. Others mentioned feeling drained, having nightmares, and suffering from psychological disorders because of vicarious trauma. However, despite experiencing vicarious trauma daily, participants still go back and continue with their duties as normal whilst dealing with the negative effects of it on their own.

P2. ...When you start doing parole reports, and you start unpacking those elements...you get exposed to hectic stuff, hectic stuff...And then you sit there with that residual trauma, and you are like, what the heck...and that doesn't get debriefed. That doesn't get taken away from you, and that's the harsh reality of working in a correctional centre... these things can scar you.

P3. ...it is traumatizing...what this offender did to these people were extremely intense. So that was the first time I cried writing a report, and...at the end I kind of felt strange about it cause I was like, wow, I really took this home. And so, some stories stick with you...I also have a psychiatrist, so I'm also on

psychiatric meds to help me cope and be more like an effective human being. It affected my mental health and also relationships in a way... I've also been isolating myself a bit from friends... just literally want to eat and sit in front of the TV.

P4. *...You know, at first, it used to freak me out...it doesn't stop you going through the scene in your head that this has happened.*

P6. *...but there's one or two that can really impact on you where you go home feeling heavy, emotionally drained and you're like I don't want to do this...*

P8. *You get traumatised yourself number one, you get shocked at what human beings can actually get up to...Other people I worked with who would tell me sometimes that they were having nightmares basically because of what they heard from the offenders.*

P9. *It's hectic, I tell you. I don't deal well with the inmate who offended a child...I'm the only psychologist in this centre, so it means despite how I feel about an offender who has offended a child, I has to sit with that person, and it really affects me so much...I don't feel good, and definitely, I take it home with me.*

P10. *My very first case was of this guy who had raped a five-year-old, suffocated her and gouged out her eyes and took out part of her brain. It was a muti kind of killing...and this was really traumatizing...no one can prepare you for the kind of experience....so, you start having this anxiety issue....Since I've got here, I've started having anxiety issues. Sometimes it's uncontrollable which I had to start managing...the very first month I was here...I started with nightmares, getting horrific dreams and very vivid dreams.*

P12. ...it really feels bad sometimes when you listening to the stories of killing people, put them in the oven, stuff like that, it's very sad.

P13. ...other stories they are very traumatic. They traumatize you. If you listen especially how the offender committed a crime, so you are kind of being traumatised.

Superordinate Theme: Desensitisation. Participants mentioned that the crime stories they hear in sessions eventually stops affecting them, and they become used to it or *desensitised*. Despite the horrific nature of crimes, participants stated that the only way to protect their own mental health and well-being is by going into autopilot mode and just dismissing the information.

P3. ...it is intense. It's just obviously, you get desensitized after a while. So, I think obviously you get used to it, which is not a good thing.

P6. ...over time with certain cases you kind of like get used to it...

P7. There's a lot of personality disorders, and that can be incredibly taxing, well I find that quite draining. But it's obviously the horrific side of things, the nature of the crimes, so we do become quite desensitised.

P8. You become very desensitised to it. You hear it, and you like ok next. It doesn't affect you anymore.

P10. But I guess as time goes on, that's an element of desensitisation. So that kind of trauma where you just go into autopilot...protecting your own mental health and wellbeing.

P13. You know you end up adapting or adjusting to the environment. This is the environment, so one would expect to hear horrible things, so you just dismiss it.

Superordinate Theme: Debriefing, Therapy, and Supervision as a Coping

Mechanism. Participants mentioned several coping mechanisms to cope with the cases they experience daily. While some participants mentioned exercising, using humour, or finding safety and comfort in family, most participants mentioned that talking to colleagues, debriefing each other and consulting with a supervisor or therapist was the preferred coping mechanism that rendered support.

P1. I talk to my colleagues... We debrief constantly, as in almost daily on our cases, and we make time throughout the week to debrief. So that helps. If I have a specific impactful case, I will literally stop what I have for the rest of the day and go over, and we will put in the time to understand it, but that's my personal coping factor.

P2. Most days of the week, I am very saddened by my work because it almost makes you feel hopeless and lost and worried and all of these things. I mean for instance, at least I've got a colleague here that I can talk to, that I can debrief with, but a lot of psyches' don't have that. So I mean, if I'm experiencing that here I can just imagine what other people are feeling... About five months into my time here, I realised I can't sit with this anymore. There's just so much that my psychologist can do to help me deal with the emotional impact... somehow you are even forced to go and get supervision.

P3. I really do enjoy my job, but in the same vein, some mornings, I don't want to get up. I don't want to come and do work...I would stay away from work, for example, which is not a positive thing to do. And sometimes, it affects my mental health. So, I would feel depressed, or I would feel anxious about stuff. And the loneliness and all of that, you know, plays into it. So, I feel like, again, I don't want to blame anyone or any system or stuff, but like if I had more of a support system... I also have a therapist slash supervisor on-site that I go and see every now and again because I feel like I tried to deal with things on my own for quite a while, but it's obviously not working.

P4. ...I have my own therapist that I see. I try once a month.

P5. So, for me, my family is my safe haven. When I'm home, I'm home. I'm not willing to take DCS into anything external of the gate.

P6. Debriefing with colleagues that's what I do a lot because an outsider's perspective especially someone who's within your profession they can understand also the issues of confidentiality. Sometimes you might overlook certain things, so giving advice or, you know, discussing the case as well it makes me feel so much better.

P7. ...I use humor as a huge way of coping. I also talk. I use peer supervision so my other colleagues I'll chat to them if there's, you know, a certain case that's really bothering me, but otherwise, I think you learn to disconnect quite a bit when you get home...you'll be paralysed if you live in that fear all the time.

P9. I love exercising. I do a lot of exercise. If I'm sitting in my office and I can't take it anymore I walk out. I walk away and then jump into my tracksuit and I run and sometimes I talk to my colleagues.

P10. ...you just have to deal with them yourself or seeking services outside from another psychologist.

P11. But I always try...to share with other psychologists that has helped me a lot.

P12. ...What help sometimes is sitting down with the other psychologists just to share what you have heard and doing that, it helps a bit in relieving one from whatever that seemed to be traumatic...

P13. We talk. We talk about that. Like ourselves as psychologists. I'm talking with my colleagues. I talk at home with my wife. Fortunately, she is a psychologist.

Superordinate Theme: Peer Support from Psychologists versus Power Struggles within the Correctional Centre. Most of the participants articulated experiencing peer support from other psychologists working in their correctional centres or management areas. These participants reported assisting each other and working well together. However, while some relationships have transcended the professional boundaries, forming solid friendships, others have maintained the professional relationships citing that there is no closeness amongst them. Others mentioned that apart from assisting one another, they are quite isolated and hardly see one another.

Furthermore, there appear to be power struggles amongst some participants within the same management areas or correctional centres. Participant Five reported being perceived as *exerting power* or *trying to run things*. Participant Seven used the terms *personality clash*, and *power struggles* to emphasise participants' relationships within that specific management area. It thus becomes evident that although participants can provide peer support to one another, power struggles do exist amongst them.

P1. *So, our work relationship was immediately put onto a friendship rather than a colleague relationship. ...we work very closely together. We share our workload...We communicate every day. We physically see each other every day, and we make social time over the work as well...we formed a definite solid friendship ...and that's my support basis at work and outside.*

P2. *I work at maximum, she works at medium, and we coordinate psychology between us. As a result, we were able to deal with a lot of the difficulties... and we were able to work together.*

P3. *...so it's three of us...very positive in terms of support...but I just expect a level of friendliness and just respect. Like, we don't have to be best friends, but we all colleagues and we are literally the only ones here. So that closeness isn't there ...like we work in silos...and there's no meetings. We never see each other. We don't do fun stuff outside, like afterwards go and have a coffee or something like that. So, it's very lonely.*

P4. *...we do work together...we assist each other. The working relationship is not so great in the sense that we are isolated because we are in different centres and with the workload and the time you don't get time to spend together... we hardly see each other. If I'm in my centre, I'm in my centre. So, it's a bit isolated in terms of working relationship because you don't spend as much time as all of us would like.*

P5. *I think psychologists all need to go for therapy (laughs). Psychologists all need to go to therapy and actually accept their traits and deal with their traits and deal with all of the stuff that they have because they're human. We have no relationship. We have had a disciplinary sit-down...we're gonna work in a professional manner...I'm one of those people who is very eager...So if I see*

something I'm like okay cool let's do this. That is then, I think perceived as I am trying to exert power or I'm trying to run things.

P6. *Some strictly like work relationship whereas others their relationship developed into friendships as well even beyond the correctional facility...it helps to have someone who's in the same field in the correctional centre...Someone who thinks like you in terms of like your profession, so it does help as well whereas you slip up sometimes, they'll be like no this is how you supposed to do it. So, it does help.*

P7. *...there's been some really great relationships formed and ...it's been positive, but there have been one or two that have, it's just been a difficult experience. I suppose it's maybe a personality clash or a different way of doing things or going about things. I think there's also been quite a few power struggles, and I think that's probably at the core of a lot. But I wouldn't necessarily say it's been many of the permanent staff. It's more I think the people who come in on contract basis, in and out, not all, they've been lovely, there's just one or two that have been quite difficult.*

P8. *I don't think you'd survive if you on your own. You constantly need to bounce ideas off other psychologists...you have to constantly use them as a sounding board as well...you become more than just a manager you have to become friend, sister, mother to them but you also need to learn to separate those roles. In the same light you have to do your job. Sometimes you doing your job you going to piss off a couple of people (laughs). You won't always be liked. So, you have to accept that it comes with the territory.*

P9. There are times when I realise that I need their expertise, I ask them to come and assist me. It's always beneficial because now you sit with somebody you discuss the case with and it is really helpful to have them around.

P10. ...so, this was really awarding, this was a really life changing experience working with the colleagues that I work with now having that kind of support...is really enriching...you can always walk into another person's office and vent and shout and scream and then continue with your work...quite supportive and we've really formed a really nice close-knit group with the permanent staff and with the comm serves as well as they come and go.

P11. ...we do actually work a lot together. It's been very helpful because I realise the time I was alone it was difficult...with other psychologists we share equally amongst ourselves the workload...so, having people who understand me, it's quite comforting.

P12. ...we share like the cases that we attended. We share the experiences...so it's all about working together or networking amongst ourselves. We do have a good relationship. A very good one.

P13. Ah I think in as far as I know we work very peacefully. We are cooperative. We sit down, we talk, we discuss issues. We plan together. So, I think our working has been very peaceful, in as far as I'm concerned.

Superordinate Theme: Discord versus Solidarity with Social Workers. Social workers and psychologists are two professional groups working closely with each other. Some participants' responses indicated that social workers are the closest professional group with whom participants share a supportive and professional relationship. Participant One, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of reports produced by social workers,

whilst Participant Four expressed that social workers do not know what they are doing. Other participants used terms such as *social work-psychology thing*, *professional jealousy*, *power struggle*, and *psychologists think they are better* to express the discord experienced between the two professional groups. Participants' responses have indicated that although a supportive, working relationship does exist between psychologists and social workers, there is also the perceived discord that some participants have experienced from their counterparts.

P1. The actual social workers that I worked with, I would say, is in some ways an extension of what I do. In other ways, it becomes a very difficult part of my work because they don't understand what I do, and with all due respect, maybe I don't understand what they do but then when our work gets placed the same value on but when I see the caliber of the work that comes from the profession it upsets me because it's not the same training, it's not the same work, it's not the same opinion and a lot of the times because the reports carry the same weight I have to go and fight with something that I know the person didn't do accurately purely because of quality of service.

P2. I think what happens now is that social work is able to refer, and we are able to cross-refer to one another. But because of the relationships that we have with social work, we are able to get more than one input to the treatment of an offender, which really helps...but working closely with the social work department, we are able to come across as a unified team... from my side, I think I've got a really good relationship with the social workers.

P3. ...I don't know, like maybe again there's, there's always the social work-psychology thing. I don't know where it comes from... Like physically we don't see each other ...and communication is basically through phone or email.

P4. *We do work together with social workers. The bad part of it is that I feel the social workers don't know what they are doing. I'm sorry to say this, there is a grey line between what is the social worker and the psychologist...one of my colleagues said there was a word that she used 'professional jealousy.' I would like us to see each other as colleagues instead of who's higher or not, but there's always that clash between the two. But with other social workers, we work very well. If you are into the power struggle, then it will become a problem.*

P5. *(laughs) Everybody's crazy. Everybody has like every single department seems to have things. I was shocked. There was one (social worker), but she legit had a psychological problem and would not take her meds so (laughs) everybody struggled with her...*

P6. *...it has been a good experience because they also very useful in terms of getting collateral...so it helps as well and also to check the information...Sometimes you need them to intervene...I'd say it is the closest group that we work with in a correctional centre.*

P7. *...We don't really work together as such...we get along and communicate where we need to, but we work quite independently...but it is a good relationship, and I feel that I can go to her and ask her for help if I do need something.*

P8. *...when I first started working here...the only people I could talk to were social workers. There were no psychologists. In my management area, there were no psychologists I could talk to really. I got assistance from them, and they showed me the ropes...*

P9. ...Beautiful relationship. So, I don't know what is causing them not to refer clients but my relationship with them it's very beautiful. I thought maybe they understand that you refer when there's a need because I do refer to them when there's a need. I need them to contact the parents or family, or there's social matters. I always refer to them.

P10. I have enjoyed working with the social workers...it feels like we're one big family. If one has to say that there is a very good professional relationship and a very supportive relationship...it's a very amazing supportive working environment.

P11. (Yoh) initially it was hard hey because I don't know what happened I can't say but I think before I came in there was not a good perception about psychologists. So, we had to establish that relationship, but once we got to know each other, we now have a good working relationship. I know one social worker did say it verbally. She indicated that psychologists don't really like social workers...psychologists think they are better, you know those types of perceptions. Psychologists don't spend time with them, they don't engage, they don't really value their presence here so those...Maybe it was people's own personal things, or they misunderstood those psychologists....We do get along now. All of us.

P12. We always talk about the cases with the social workers especially those clients that are referred from them...

P13. Ah it's very good. As for me my communication, my relationship with almost all of them it's good.

Superordinate Theme: Developing Resilient Behaviours. Participants expressed acquiring resilient behaviours by working in a unique environment such as the correctional centres. They articulated that the experiences make them appreciate, value, and be grateful for the lives they live. Participants felt privileged to acquire the knowledge and expertise which cannot be provided in any other environment except a correctional setting. Others mentioned becoming *stronger, independent, assertive, persistent, patient, and non-judgmental*. Furthermore, participants emphasised that having to take initiatives to implement various strategies has made them innovative. Hence participants concur that working in a correctional environment also develops resilient behaviours amongst correctional psychologists.

P1. ...I think you can become very grateful for what you have on a personal level when you start working in an environment this depressing because you can compare what you have to the absolute worst of the lot, so it makes you grateful, it makes you enjoy life, it makes you experience life outside very differently and full of value...

P2. ...I also do private work and when people come in and they've been robbed...or suffered a home invasion, or somebody close to them has been murdered, and they have all these questions about what happens to the offender afterwards or why do they do this, it kind of gives me a subset of skills that I am able to contain that for them. Something that I don't think the average therapist has because of my exposure and because of my understanding...

P7. I think I've become a lot more resilient, stronger, a lot more independent. I can cope on my own.

P8. It's made me a bit more vocal when it comes to certain things...it's taught me to not keep quiet about certain things and speak up....You need to be persistent, but in the same breath, you need to learn to be patient. It teaches you a great deal of patience and how to deal with different characters.

P9. I have grown as a person...I think I have learnt not to be judgmental.

P10. ...being given that ability to be innovative and implement things...that has just propelled me... I guess the innovativeness...I think gain more skills as a psychologist. It's a process to process more broadly.

P11. Being thrown into that deep end has somehow enhanced certain things that I didn't believe that I possessed...also not shying away from challenges...I think the environment has also, I don't have a better word but toughened me up a bit...being assertive...I can stand my ground now.

Superordinate Theme: Acquired Behavioural and Psychological Implications.

There are always two sides to a coin. As such, participants mentioned that apart from developing resilient behaviours, they have also developed behavioural and psychological effects from working in a correctional centre. Participant One emphasised that the correctional environment makes people want to immigrate to another country where their children will be safe. Other participants mentioned becoming constantly vigilant, guarded, and cautious due to the anxiety, paranoia, and compulsive behaviours that become embedded in a person's persona from working in a correctional centre. Some participants also raised the issues of trust and being wary of others' motives that have implications in their lives outside of the correctional environment.

P1. ...it can also make you literally want to emigrate to another country to get away from humanity in this specific country, in this specific context because as much as it is universal, the behaviour that we have in our country is not universal...on a personal level I need to get out with my kids before any of this can happen to them.

P2. I think the effect is much more pervasive...I've become very wary about my surroundings...much more than I ever have and so, as a result, I find myself always watching what I do...because of the paranoia that sets in...

P4. I'm very cautious. I think sometimes...I'm a bit paranoid...I think I check my door twice to make sure that it's locked, and I can already sense... that this person is a bit dodgy if you are at the mall...if I have my purse, I don't have it laying around. I'm able to handle it with care...because you learn from the offenders how the victims were, and what attracted them to their victims... It changes your behavior as well. I was someone more carefree now I'm more cautious about my surrounding. So, I'm conscious when I'm around strangers... very protective of my family. I'm very protective of my space. When someone is in my space, I, I can't leave them out of sight.

P6. I use to be very carefree, not aware of my environment, but working here, you realize the small things in terms of how criminals pounce on you when you are unaware. Your demeanor when you are outside as well. Where you can let go, be free and where you need to put up and be on guard...

P7. I suppose the hindering part of trusting people or being very wary of what people say and their intentions and motives.

P10. ...increasing my anxiety about many things and my paranoia.

P11. I think I was one person when I got home I don't lock the door, so when I come in, the burglar is open, but now I come in, the burglar must be locked. I think I overthink more than I did before, and I know it's because of the stories that I heard; the stories that have been shared. Even walking around malls, it has affected me personally... Even on the road being vigilant...I'm more cautious as well, and yeah personally it has affected me to that extent. I think partly it's good but I think now it's going a bit overboard because overthinking everything that's what I've noticed in terms of me personally.

Superordinate Theme: A Reflective and Cathartic Experience. Some participants provided feedback about the interview process during this study stating that it was a lens of reflection of their working journey in the correctional centres, which provided them with perspectives of what they may still need to work through personally. The interview was also seen as a cathartic process in which participants recognised their strengths and levels of resilience during challenging times. Participants used the interviews as an opportunity to debrief, thereby encountering a reflective and cathartic experience.

P3. ...it makes you reflect because obviously I live this on a daily basis, and there isn't always time to just sit down and reflect like what are my needs. Obviously, I can do it in supervision...but it's just, it's different. So, I feel like there's a few things that I need to go and look at in terms of just my happiness and my effectiveness as a person. I think I was disillusioned in the beginning as a comm serve, and then I worked through it, but now I know you form part of the system, or they throw you out. Like it's not going to make a difference if

you can throw your toys and scream, they'll get rid of you and hire somebody else. So how I feel is maybe a bit sad.

P4. ...that I've been here for so long and also that I've been through so much challenges and somehow I'm able to cope with them and also proud of myself for taking care of myself...

P5. ...for me... Lots of reflections, lots of reflections.

P10. Um, I feel I'm about 10 pounds lighter and ...I guess I used it for my own advantages to debrief and talk about this because not so many people listen when you talk...So I think for me it sounds a bit cathartic because I was able to express some of my frustrations and my anxieties, my concerns and you are listening.

Hence, the power of resilience as a Master Theme clearly indicates that despite the challenges they experience daily, participants develop resilient behaviours which help them to overcome their distressing experiences.

Master Theme: Reframing the Profession of Psychology within the DCS

Superordinate Themes	Master Theme
Nurturing Relationships	Reframing the Profession of Psychology within the DCS
Providing a Valuable Service	
Work Satisfaction	
Honing Skills	
Working with a Unique and Interesting Population	
The Use of Various Theoretical Approaches	
Remunerative Work Outside of the DCS (Private Practice)	
A Context for Research and Training	
Taking the Initiative and Effecting Change	

Participants' responses led to the creation of various superordinate themes ranging from nurturing relationships to getting the assistance they need to rendering a valuable service, finding satisfaction in the work they conduct with the unique population of clients to finding comfort in the little incentives that make working in the DCS a worthwhile venture. The following superordinate themes are presented to showcase how psychologists reframe the profession of psychology within the DCS.

Superordinate Theme: Nurturing Relationships. Most participants articulated that they have made concerted efforts to engage with officials and create healthy working relationships with them. Participants expressed that through engaging, networking, building and nurturing relationships with correctional officials they can overcome some of the hurdles they experience and ease their working conditions.

P1. ... and it's also through networking and personal relations because if you know the officials and you have relationships with the officials..., usually you can get a lot of honey from a flower because there are officials that will do all of that for you and make it easier but not through instructions. So, it's either networking or becoming creative and assertive.

P2. ...you are able to make more meaningful connections with your other managers and upper management, and that has really helped us here...

P4. ...If you have relationships with the officials, then it makes life a bit easy...I didn't know anyone, and everyone was just scared of me like I was this contaminated disease, but after opening up to them, and going to them, approaching them and learning about the line of work they are doing, things became easier to understand.

P8. It was basically through interacting with officials who had worked in the department for a while...I got assistance from social workers...

P11. ... Building relationships with correctional officials, for me, I found to be very beneficial. In most cases, they might be lower rank, and you think the officials in higher ranks are the ones who would run around and make things happen for you but not really. The fact that you do ask for their help and not demand or instruct them to do certain things, they are actually more willing.

P12. ...my services also help the other stakeholders to understand how we can work together to promote the well-being of offenders.

Superordinate Theme: Providing a Valuable Service. Participants have strived to create a conducive space for offenders to hear and understand their voices. Participants view themselves as *seed planters* providing knowledge and insight to offenders about their

behaviours. Participants identified themselves as touching and shaping the lives of offenders and thereby making a difference. The participants' responses clearly emphasised that the services they provide to offenders are valuable and beneficial.

P1. The offenders get value because...they get an opportunity to speak, and I don't think that they are accustomed to having a voice in this whole system. And when I offer them a voice even if it's for their own problems and not the system, it empowers them in a very different way.

P2. ...I've really seen the impact that psychology has on the life of an offender...I've learnt to take that and ...mould it to become more relevant for them.

P4. ...I am a seed planter where I am giving the offenders knowledge, insight into their behaviours. Then it's up to them whether they want to water that seed that is then changing their behaviour or not It does help to have someone that the offenders can talk to.

P5. For the offenders that I assist, they value the service. But when you actually do the work with the offenders that you're here for, you actually do fully see the results. Then you see the value of your initially advertised role and hired position.

P6. ...the offenders that give you feedback to say at least I'm making a difference. At least one person has changed or shifted their mindset or they have considered what I've told them. So, for me, that's the important thing."

P9. "You touch the lives of the offenders.

P10. ...I've seen a lot of change, especially therapeutically. I've seen offenders with depression, anxiety, a different host of mental illnesses, and they come to

a psychologist, and they find someone who can listen to them, who's not going to be judging. And who's not going to be focusing on their crime but who's going to be focusing on them as humans, and is going to be focusing on trying to help them deal with that condition. I have seen dramatic changes in offenders. I've seen offenders getting better. I've seen offenders regaining trust in themselves. I've seen offenders gaining confidence in themselves, and I've worked with some inmates for like two or three years, and there has been massive changes. And I think that has said to me, the services I render here have so much value for the inmates.

P11. The offenders do give feedback, and in some offenders there are changes...there is a great deal of value.

P12. I've seen the services of psychologist as playing a pivotal role in helping the offenders to help themselves by being aware of the things that they were not aware of and changing their thinking, their way of acting...our services are really contributing positively towards their behavioural change.

Superordinate Theme: Work Satisfaction. Participants expressed that one of the reasons they choose to continue rendering services in the DCS is because of the satisfaction and fulfilment they gain from working with an atypical population, namely offenders and seeing the difference they make in offenders' lives.

P1. For me, the advantages are that I'm working with the clientele that I find extremely interesting and that I get work satisfaction from working with this type of clients...So for me, the benefits come from actual work satisfaction itself, from working in this environment with the clientele that I work with.

P4. ...seeing them coming for the next session. That's a plus for me. That's what is keeping me here. That I get to change offenders' lives, and they get to learn about themselves.

P8. ...the offenders I work with more than anything that makes it worthwhile.

P10. I think one of the few things that has kept me in corrections until now is seeing the change in offenders.

Superordinate Theme: Honing Skills. Participants stated that although the experiences they encounter in their therapeutic cases are challenging, these experiences also create room for them to learn every day and assist them to deal with the various types of psychological disorders effectively. These experiences are advantageous as participants expressed that they can hone their clinical skills.

P2. It's taught me how to become a lot wiser on how to deal with narcissistic personality disorder or borderline personality disorder or even sometimes your hard-core psychopaths because in a sense you see them on a day-to-day basis. You see their manipulation, and it's something that you won't necessarily get in your office in private practice, so that's been a huge benefit for me ...I was able to hone my clinical skills a lot more than I would have, had I just stuck to private practice.

P11. That room to learn because I never had that experiences...So that thing of constantly being challenged...So, for me, the advantage is always being in a situation where I have room to learn.

P12. One advantage is learning every possible day. Learning from the offenders we are working with and the different professionals. Understanding

their way of operation and then it increases the scope of gaining experience and the scope of one to understand more about the ideas and the thoughts behind the offending behaviours. So, for me, I've gained a lot in that.

Superordinate Theme: Working With a Unique and Interesting Population.

Participants expressed their keenness to work in a unique and interesting environment. Some participants mentioned that they get to see the best of both worlds by working with an offender population as well as the community during private practice. They perceive working with offenders as an enriching experience that not every psychologist has the privilege of doing.

P3... you get exposure to offenders... work with a serial killer...it's a very unique position, and it's very interesting...

P5. I think it's understanding offenders from every kind of situation... When you not part of corrections, as an individual, out in the world, you mainly get to interact with victims, and I've come to learn quite a bit from some of the offenders that I've seen and what pushes them as an individual to get into the situations that they end up getting themselves into and committing the crimes that they commit. So, it's quite an enriching thing to be able to see this side and that side.

P6. You get to see a wide variety and for the mere fact that you sit with them (offenders) for the longest time. Sometimes years where you could observe them...So that for me is a big advantage and also the diversity from like different components we can learn a lot about the environment where you are in.

P7. I get to work in a very unique environment. You don't get this at private practice and those sort of cases.

P11. Working with different...as much as its males, committed crimes, there's different dynamics, so that difference for me is an advantage of working at a correctional centre.

Superordinate Theme: The Use of Various Theoretical Approaches. Two participants highlighted that they are not limited to using a specific theoretical approach in their therapeutic processes. Instead, they have free reign to explore and experiment with room for trial and error. Participants expressed a sense of freedom and independence to choose approaches that they prefer to use in their therapeutic work.

P7. I think the freedom and independence where you are not instructed to use a certain theoretical framework. You've got that freedom to choose what framework you would rather work from.

P11. Also, the approach to therapy is not like maybe you supposed to; you limited to this approach only. It's more like you can experiment. There's room for trial and error, you know. There's room for learning.

Superordinate Theme: Remunerative Work Outside of the DCS (Private Practice): Unique to the South African Correctional Context. Of interest was Participant Eight's view that one of the advantages of working for the DCS was that psychologists are allowed to conduct private work (private practice) after official working hours. The participant also stated that conducting remunerative work outside of the DCS allows participants to remain well-informed and relevant concerning therapeutic interventions.

P8. I guess the only one advantage of it is, you are allowed to do your private work afterwards. The department gives you allowance to do private work. Then at least you'll stay fresh and relevant in terms of therapeutic interventions.

Superordinate Theme: A Context for Research and Training. Of note was also the response from Participant Thirteen who emphasised that the correctional setting is ideal for psychology interns and community service psychologists who gain valuable experience by working with different cases. The participant further mentioned that the correctional context is also an appropriate environment for conducting research.

P13. My wish is that those who are doing internships, comm serv, I think the correctional centres is the best place because it has got many different cases which can assist one for his or her training. I think it is the best place for research as well because there is a lot of data that one can use.

Superordinate Theme: Taking the Initiative and Effecting Change. Participants have had to conduct their duties despite the challenges they experience along the way. However, it was interesting to note that apart from just doing what is expected of them, participants still took the initiative to effect change in the system, which ultimately aids in the process of rehabilitation. Participant Two mentioned the initiative they took with a colleague to reduce and prevent para-suicides in their centres. Participant Ten mentioned the initiative taken to co-ordinate and organise the first annual mental health symposium in their management area, conducting a workshop with LGBTQ+ offenders and revamping programmes to suit the needs of remand detainees. This indicates that if provided with the

relevant support by their management areas, psychologists will be able to effect changes that will aid the process of rehabilitation.

P2. ...the management had decided to seal off a lot of the windows at the facility with a more dense fencing to avoid the influx of drugs into the system... So they (offenders) started negotiating psychiatric pills and were overdosing on psychiatric pills. So, myself and my colleague sat down, and we decided to institute a pill run. We need to ensure that offenders who are psychiatric users are getting their pills on a daily basis at coordinated times to reduce the amount of pills in the centre at any given time... We were able to not only coordinate with corrections, with security, with CMC and the hospital but we were able to effectively minimise the effect of psychiatric pills in the facility. So, as a result...we reduced our para-suicides up to zero, and that's where it's been for the last few months now.

P5. I'm a very relaxed person. So, most of the time, I'm like, okay, cool, we can find another way to deal with it then. I'm always let's find a solution if we can't do it that way let's find a solution that will work.

P10. In 2017, we had our first annual mental health symposium in the management area, and there was a huge support from management. Last year we had a workshop on working with LGBTQ+ inmates, and next year we are having a follow up for that... We've created a group for relapse prevention. This was useful for offenders when they go out, but we have sort of like revamped this, and we use it for remand detainees so that if they do get released before being sentenced, what are some of the things that they need to do to not to come in again. I've created an addiction in the brain group, so we

work with a social worker...And in psychology, we focus mostly on the brain and the neuro pathways and neurophysiology of addiction and how addiction shapes the brain and how the brain reacts to addiction... We've created a motivation group that we work with the inmates...This has been the fascinating path that we are given this open space to just create and revamp and innovate different groups.

Despite the various challenges that participants experience in the execution of their duties daily, they are still able to reframe and mould situations to work for them so that they can at least attempt to render an effective service.

Master Theme: Possible Retention Strategies

Superordinate Themes	Master Theme
Remaining in the Service of the DCS	Possible Retention Strategies
Further Academic Development	
The Need for Continuous Support	
Closing the Gaps to Meet the Needs of Correctional Psychologists	

Participants mentioned that they do not intend to retire in the service. Instead, they saw themselves leaving the DCS after working for approximately five to ten years. Participants also mentioned that the DCS is a place of research and training. Several participants were already in the process of or are intending to complete their doctoral studies whilst working in the DCS. They further expressed the need for continuous support from senior management. This was found to assist them in meeting with other psychologists from various management areas and deliberating about their successes and challenges. Most

importantly, participants mentioned that for their services to be retained for a longer period, both their basic and professional needs would have to be sustained.

Superordinate Theme: Remaining in the Service of the DCS. Participants were asked if they would remain in the service of the DCS for a longer period or until retirement. The responses from all participants were very clear. The maximum number of years that participants were willing to render their services ranged from five to ten years if no better employment opportunities were available. I think it is imperative to bring to light the fact that approximately 15 months after the interviews were conducted, one of the participants of the study resigned from the DCS. This is a clear indication that psychologists do not intend to remain in the employ of the DCS especially when they have to constantly contend with the daily challenges within the correctional environment.

P1. ...Currently, it is a very good environment to be in, but I don't know how I'll feel after ten years of service. I don't know if it's something that I will do until I go on pension. It's most probably not.

P2. I would like to stay in DCS for a long period of time, but I can't say that it would be indefinite because I also feel that personally, I need to develop more skills than DCS can provide for me...

P3. I will, I'm staying, I'm staying. And it might seem so strange after all the bitching and moaning and stuff that I was saying, but I mean, I am happy here. And I think I just still need to learn certain effective coping mechanisms still. And it's not always just DCS, it's also me as a person. But I would say at least 10-year thing to 15 years at least.

P4. *I know my plan was five years. I am not sure, honestly, if something better does come, I will not say no...But looking at the situation now, I think I've done the most that I could in DCS. So if a better option comes, I will take it.*

P5. *"I like DCS. I wanted to be in DCS. I'm happy to be in DCS, but that was when I was on my own. So my husband wants to eventually go overseas."*

P6. *I'm still okay in the system...when I feel I've reached the ceiling maybe I'll consider leaving...So I'm in here two years, 8 months now... I think I'll evaluate after five years...*

P7. *I would say I don't have any plans of leaving any time soon. That's good or bad I don't know. I'd say a minimum of 8 years.*

P8. *Oh hell no. No. No I can't (laughing)...A lot would have to change within the department itself for me to stay here another 11 years. Honestly speaking, I don't think I can do it for another eleven years. I'd say with the way the job market is (laughs) maybe about 5 years, probably.*

P9. *I don't see myself really staying here long...but if opportunity presents itself, I'll definitely exit the system.*

P10. *I can certainly tell you not long.*

P11. *...before I used to think not long. Maybe two years, three years, but now I think more than 5 years 6 to 7 years I can see myself staying here. But more than 10 no.*

P12. *10 years. I think I'll remain here because I think this year is going to be the 6th one, so I still think of pushing until you know I have 10 years in this environment.*

P13. *It will depend. I've been doing the moving now I'm old, so I don't want to move. It will depend.*

Superordinate Theme: Further Academic Development within the DCS.

Participants had indicated that the DCS is a place of research and training. Hence one participant has completed their doctoral study using a sample population from the DCS. Other participants are busy with their doctoral studies or intend to conduct their doctoral studies whilst working in the DCS. Participant One also emphasised staying in the DCS to further a doctoral study. It thus becomes evident that further academic development whilst working in the DCS may be perceived as one of many possible retention strategies.

P1. Currently, I really don't know. I would stay in DCS probably to further my studies, to do a doctorate as well...

P7. I'm busy with my PhD at the moment. Well started with my PhD. Haven't really been busy with it...Proposal phase still.

P8. I finished. I just recently finished my PhD studies.

P10. I have been accepted at UNISA to do my PhD...proposal module. So, I'm going to be a registered in with them beginning of the year next year, and I'm going to be starting with my proposal module hopefully, I pass, and then after this, I then continue to do the dissertation for PhD.

P12. This year I was doing the basics and beyond, that is the foundational course on neuro psychology it was just a one-year course and last year it was on medico-legal.

P13. I'm doing my...trying to do my PhD. I've started. I'm trying to complete my proposal. I am at correction stage.

Superordinate Theme: The Need for Continuous Support. Participants mentioned receiving the necessary support from senior management, which is provided by meeting with

other psychologists from various management areas during case conferences, psychological conferences, or specific gatherings. These meetings create a platform to discuss successes, challenges, and the sharing of best practices. Undoubtedly, participants appreciate the opportunity to have these conferences, which shows their need for continuous support.

P1. ...we have a case conference obviously but...it's just a room full of people that you might or might not see again...So, I will meet them at the case conferences, functions, PsySSA, over specific clients that I need to discuss.

P2. I find that the psychologists in the Gauteng Region are more willing to talk to one another. How I figured this out is that normally we have a yearly PsySSA conference, and you get to mingle with other psychologists from other parts of the country, and it's become quite apparent that Gauteng is very different from other regions in the sense that the psychologists here really, not only communicate, but know one another. I think it's mainly because we have our quarterly case conferences, but that has opened a platform for us to actually work togetherbut I think it's really something that is unique to the Gauteng region.

P3. We have the quarterly case conferences. Then I also see colleagues at PsySSA... I feel a bit better of the support.

P5. I quite enjoy getting to know everybody and seeing what everyone is doing and what their interests are because we're all are different so it's always good to learn.

P6. I'd say it's quite pleasant because sometimes you might think you're the only one going through that then you find out oh it's actually happening in the

next centre or in the other correctional facilities then you exchange ideas...also say if you speak with one voice sometimes it makes an impact.

P7. ...if there's a case conference then we'll touch base...It's been quite helpful. There's a common ground.

P8. ...just basically getting advice on how to manage, tackle different problems or assistance with resources... Finding out how they do things in their management areas and seeing if it's something that works that can work in my management area and you can't work like as if you in silos you have to interact with other management areas.

P9. ...it's been quite a good experience.

P10. I think the most engagement you get is when you go for the regional case conferences.

P11. If I have a question normally, I engage when I need help. I normally just send emails in most cases, and most of the times, they do respond.

P12. ...The case conferences which were organised by the regional office so the presentations that were done we also gain a lot from them, but another thing is having contact with other psychologists who are not working in this correctional facility.

P13. ...I think with other psychologists they have assisted us. They have intervened where we had some challenges especially with assessments.

Superordinate Theme: Closing the Gaps to Meet the Needs of Correctional Psychologists. Participants were probed as to what could be done to retain their services in the DCS for a longer period. The suggestions clearly articulated that participants require a conducive working environment to sustain their basic and professional needs. Participants

were of the opinion that the importance of psychology in the DCS needs to be reviewed and amended if psychologists are to be retained in the service. A suggestion made by participant one was to maintain consistency by recruiting employee assistance programme officials to assist and support correctional psychologists and officials working in the various correctional centres. Other participants suggested having flexible working hours, basic office equipment, essential resources, consistent security and security equipment and the availability of assessment tools. Furthermore, participants wanted to feel recognised, respected and acknowledged for their services. They required regular and appropriate training and, notably, the appointment of a Director to head the National Psychological Directorate to steer the psychological ship forward.

P2. Well I think we need to relook at how we structure um the importance of psychology...I think we need to start looking at implementing psychologists in correctional centres for the population as in the officials, myself included so that I know that should I be frustrated, there's somewhere to go...The organisational climate or culture in DCS, the idea of moving out of present setting to corrections was a very ambitious one, and the structure was just not ready for it and so what you have is these gaps, and they impact on service delivery.

P3. I want flexible working hours...I want empathy from people...I don't want to attend meetings because I sit there in a finance meeting, and it doesn't pertain to me... Like if your report is late just having a bit of compassion to understand it is coming.

P4. ...respect and acknowledgement. In my centre, I've worked so hard to gain that, that I do have it now. And I wish it could be like that for my other psychologist colleagues...not to be undermined...to have a decent office...

P5. We don't seem to have a boss, guys (laughs). The previous Director left. The head office structure...And it would be nice if that head was a psychologist that understood that psychology needs more than just the psychologists at DCS, risk assessments and do therapy and do groups and like a structure would be nice because I feel like all of us have structure in our own prisons and then as a whole there's nothing.

P6. Office space, the basics...office stationery...and also security as well because according to policy you supposed to have security personnel outside your office to escort offenders... just to make you feel safe...flexibility in terms of hours...training that is specific to our environment...

P7. ...one of the big ones would be being able to do report writing at home...so you're not bound to that office...maybe more resources...having actual assessments tools...more psychologists as well just to manage the work load...training that is actually beneficial.

P8. Infrastructure that works. Why can't I just have a telephone that works? A computer (laughs). The resources to buy assessment tests and a financial backing from the powers that be and flexi hours because honestly speaking we get here at 7, but you can't really start working till 9.

P9. Be given enough resources. The assessment tools. The tools that will be able to assist me when I am doing the assessment. I will wish that I will not have to struggle when I write reports because my computer is out of order,

because I don't have ink. Also want to have a panic button...an official outside looking after me.

P10. *...a lot of resources...proper offices, the proper group facilities, IT equipment...one printer...and maybe guaranteeing security or having someone really paying little of attention to the security of psychologists in the department...Maybe not be taken out of our work to attend meetings all the time. One meeting a month is enough...Offer training, more training...offer training on forensic assessment or risk assessment and how to write those reports...staff for debriefing purposes.*

P11. *Security in terms of having escorts...also in terms of IT-related computers, internet...if we can have proper working IT-related things...Provide budget for psychologists...also, the issue of flexibility...freedom in terms of how we manage ourselves...Not to be treated in a punitive manner. Not be threatened if you don't do certain things...*

P12. *...improvement in the escorting...the tools that are needed...just thinking of us as human beings not eating uh I think that one is a serious challenge because you cannot go about explaining your health conditions because some of the people need to eat time and again take their medication so moving from the office going outside to go eat, have your medication come back you know it's really rendering the services to null and void.*

P13. *...more resources...We must have a place where we can get psychological tests...we don't have enough space to run groups...the third thing would be we are not given enough time to influence or impact offenders...simply because of the numbers that we must cover in a month. The targets. Monthly targets.*

It thus becomes evident from the superordinate themes that the DCS will need to review and amend their retention strategy if they are to retain the services of psychologists in the DCS for a longer period.

Chapter Summary

The demographical information of thirteen participants was tabled and discussed. Thereafter, superordinate and Master Themes were produced using participants' responses verbatim to clarify and substantiate the various emerging themes. Subsequently, the superordinate themes were clustered and presented under the nine (09) respective master themes, namely; the alluring prospect, the adjustment process, access to resources, safety and security, overwhelming workload (quantity versus quality), professional identity crisis, power in resilience, reframing the profession of psychology within the DCS and lastly, possible retention strategies. The following chapter will thus aim to provide a detailed discussion of the superordinate and master themes, which will be authenticated using the literature to deliberate the findings.

Chapter Six

Discussion of the Findings

One's subjectivities can be seen as virtuous, for it is the basis of researchers making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their personal qualities joined to the data they have collected.

(Peshkin as cited in Merriam & Grenier, 2019, p. 6)

According to Lilienfeld (2020), research studies can only be corrected and further developed if exposed to critical and insightful analysis permitting the correction of inaccuracies, hence attaining a clearer understanding of reality. Similarly, qualitative research is considered a powerful research instrument to acquire knowledge about the way people understand and live within their environments.

In keeping with the quote above, I felt it important to conduct a study on the lived experiences of psychologists working in correctional centres in Gauteng, South Africa to understand the rationale for the high turnover rate of this group of professionals. The supposition of this study is that meaning is socially constructed by the participants who are in continuous interaction with and within their respective correctional contexts. Qualitative research thus proved helpful in unearthing and appreciating the lived experiences of participants working in correctional centres (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The previous chapter aimed to comprehensively present the findings, including the various superordinate and master themes which emerged from the study. Subsequently, this chapter discusses the findings and integrates them with comparable literature and studies (Anderson, 2010).

The Findings

The presentation of the findings identified various superordinate and master themes, all of which accentuated participants' meaning-making processes and the way in which they have socially constructed their world within the confines of a correctional system. As this is the first study (to the best of my knowledge) that explores the lived experiences of correctional psychologists within a South African context, I deemed it befitting to discuss each superordinate and master theme in detail.

Master Theme: The Alluring Prospect

Boothby and Clements (2002) accentuated that the correctional system affords correctional psychologists employment opportunities. However, these opportunities often come with the concealed price of an arduous and challenging working environment. Interestingly, the emergence of the master theme, *the alluring prospect*, in this study remains consistent with Boothby and Clements's findings. Subsequently, the master theme of the alluring prospect that participants pursued to obtain bursaries, attractive salary packages, employment stability and work experience resulted in the emergence of the superordinate themes, namely *DCS employment opportunities and personal interest*.

Superordinate Theme: DCS Employment Opportunities. Psychologists have been part of corrections since the early 19th century. With the progression of time, employment opportunities for correctional psychologists began to expand extensively (Bierie & Mann, 2017; Boothby & Clements, 2002). Boothby and Clements (2002) emphasised that this was directly attributed to the rising offender population in the various correctional centres in the United States of America. With the growing number of incarcerated mentally ill offenders, correctional systems have become one of the largest employers of psychologists and other

mental health professionals in the United States of America. They attend to crisis interventions, deal with mental health symptoms and render psychological services to offenders (Boothby & Clements, 2002; Ricks et al., 2019).

Over the years, however, there have been significant developments in employment opportunities for correctional psychologists. Correctional centres saw a significant increase in the number of female psychologists working in correctional settings (Ricks et al., 2019) compared to previous findings (Boothby & Clements, 2002), which identified predominately male psychologists working in correctional centres. Additionally, there has been an increase in the racial diversity of correctional psychologists (Ricks et al., 2019) compared to previously identified predominately male Caucasian psychologists working in correctional centres (Boothby & Clements, 2002). Ricks et al. (2019) also found an increased number of psychologists with Master's degrees compared to those with Doctoral degrees from 2000 until 2015. They attributed this to the increased demand for these professionals within the correctional context.

In 1998, the South African National Department of Health initiated a year of mandatory community service for medical doctors as an attempt to provide and enhance the availability of healthcare services to all South Africans, especially in the disadvantaged communities of South Africa. Subsequently, community service also became compulsory for the profession of clinical psychology in the year 2002. It was in the year 2005 that the DCS introduced community service positions for clinical psychology students. The strategy was implemented to attract more psychologists into the correctional system and, in so doing, aimed to reduce the serious scarcity of these professionals within the sector (Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021). Correspondingly, six participants in this study emphasised that their reasons for working in a correctional centre were because of the employment package that the DCS offered, such as bursaries, an attractive salary, job stability and employment experience.

Their reasoning appeared to be consistent with existing international and national literature (Bhoodram, 2010; Boothby & Clements, 2002; Ricks et al., 2019; Rohleder et al., 2006), which indicated that corrections are places filled with employment opportunities for correctional psychologists because of their necessitated services within the correctional environment.

Superordinate Theme: Personal Interest. Boothby and Clements (2002) questioned whether working in a correctional centre was a secondary option for psychologists who would have preferred to work elsewhere. Conversely, the findings in this study revealed that apart from the alluring prospect of the DCS employment opportunities, most participants joined the DCS organisation because they were interested in working in the field of corrections and conducting forensic work. In addition, other participants saw themselves as an instant fit for the environment. Other responses indicated the need to make a difference in the lives of offenders. Ultimately, the choice to work in a correctional setting is voluntary, and psychologists who opt for a career in this field are likely to show an interest in working with offenders and the justice system (Boothby & Clements, 2002). Furthermore, there is a greater likelihood for student psychologists who perform internships and community service within a correctional environment to take up permanent employment in this sector (DiCataldo et al., 2021; Salie et al., 2021).

Psychologists may also choose a career in corrections due to their inclination for dealing with crisis management, their threshold for handling extreme intensities that manifest within correctional centres and their tenacity to adjust and deal with hands-on situations (Boothby & Clements, 2002). According to Boothby and Clements (2002), over the years undergraduate psychology students have also shown a keen interest in the field of corrections and law. This interest has been increasingly growing. Additionally, the number of

applications for graduate programmes offering specific training in psychology, law and corrections has consistently increased. There have also been an increasing number of students choosing to perform clinical internships in corrections, resulting in a sharp rise in the number of psychologists working in corrections (Boothby & Clements, 2002). In South Africa, however, all health professionals must perform community service if they expect to register as fully-fledged professionals. Community service affords disadvantaged communities the availability of access to health care services whilst exposing professionals to the actual scenarios and experiences of rendering services from a public health perspective (Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021).

Master Theme: The Adjustment Process

Working in a correctional environment requires consistently adjusting to challenges mostly unique to the correctional setting (Boothby & Clements, 2002; Ricks et al., 2019; Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021). The superordinate themes as discussed below clearly detail the challenges which ultimately result in the adjustment process that correctional psychologists experience on a regular basis.

Superordinate Theme: Absence of the National Psychological Directorate. It is common practice for the DCS to establish the active presence and participation of directorates or branches within the DCS to ensure the smooth functioning of various components which ultimately form the structure of the organisation. Magaletta et al. (2020) highlighted that chief psychologists perform a critical role within correctional contexts. Their mandate is to ensure that offenders receive psychological services within their respective correctional centres. They are also expected to provide supervision and leadership to correctional psychologists employed in the correctional organisation. They form part of

management and participate in policy adherence and changes. Chief psychologists also ensure that resources are available for correctional psychologists to render effective services within their respective correctional centres, thus ensuring that correctional psychologists experience work satisfaction and that services remain unobstructed.

By performing these duties, chief psychologists come into constant contact with correctional psychologists and better understand correctional psychologists' capabilities and their room for growth. This expresses the crucial role that chief psychologists conduct within the correctional organisation. In so doing, they build, maintain and foster relationships with professionals across all integrated departments, enhancing the smooth and effective execution of duties (Magaletta et al., 2020). Consequently, Magaletta et al. stressed that one can only imagine what the absence of a chief psychologist will curtail.

In noting the above and the significance of the psychological directorate within the correctional organisation, the findings of this study revealed that participants have no point of reference to request for assistance as the Directorate Psychological Services has no appointed Director to lead the way forward. Participants further articulated that the former Director (chief psychologist) had resigned and for years, no appointments were made to fill the position. Hence, correctional psychologists receive no clarity or direction on issues pertaining to the challenges they experience in their respective centres.

Superordinate Theme: Learn on the Job. Magaletta et al. (2020) enquired about what types of training, supervision and learning opportunities are provided to assist the correctional psychologist gain experience and develop in their careers once a psychologist is appointed to work in corrections. Some participants in this study revealed that they did not prepare for a career as a correctional psychologist, whilst others enquired about the job from correctional officials who worked in the DCS and regrettably received wrongful information.

Others relied on the knowledge and experience gained when performing community service in the DCS as well as the clinical training acquired during their Master's degrees. On the other hand, some participants stated that even community service was insufficient to prepare them for a career as a correctional psychologist.

The findings in this study are consistent with Salie et al. (2021), who emphasised that as community service psychologists, they were unprepared for the work which seemed outside of their training. Yet, they tried as far as possible to manage the anxiety that came with learning on the job whilst doing the best they could. Ricks et al. (2019) concluded that training for correctional psychologists is essential. It assists with providing information that is vital for the adaptation and integration within a unique and challenging correctional context. Ricks et al. further stressed that the lack of training for the position might also contribute to the high burnout rates among correctional psychologists.

Superordinate Theme: DCS Training versus Peer Supervision. In keeping with the theme discussed above, it is noteworthy to mention that the DCS offers a variety of training to its employed officials to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to carry out their duties (Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016). Some of these training modules include frontline staff training, unit management, computer training, culture and work ethics, finance training, disciplinary code and procedure, grievance procedure, tactical training, gang management and occupational health and safety training, amongst others. The above training modules are security-related which provides compulsory knowledge for the employees of the DCS (Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016). However, none of these modules provides any knowledge or training directly related to the duties of a correctional psychologist.

The participant responses in this study provide a unanimous testament that they received minimal or no training from the DCS upon appointment and explicitly about their

role and function as a correction psychologist. Both Boothby and Clements (2002) and Ricks et al. (2019) recommended that more structured pre-employment training in conducting therapy with a unique population should be provided to correctional psychologists. In addition, Shimazu et al. (2017) stressed that organisations also need to train employees on interventions to employ when adapting to a changing work environment and effective coping strategies. In contrast, whilst Senter et al. (2010) emphasised that correctional psychologists' experience a lack of appropriate supervision from the correctional centres, participants in this study reported that they received basic orientation and supervision from their previously appointed peers. The majority of the participants agreed that it was the peer supervision that provided them with the assistance they needed to continue with their duties.

Most notably, a significant finding identified by Nhlapo and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2016) during their research conducted at the Groenpunt Management Area in the year 2014, was that more male officials (454) than women officials (193) were provided with training in the various fields. Nhlapo and Vyas-Doorgapersad acknowledged that such practices in the past resulted in the 2010 investigative inquiry by the Commission for Gender Equality against the DCS held at Braamfontein. Subsequently, the former Minister of Correctional Services, Mr Sibusiso Ndebele, implemented corrective measures to improve the DCS HR provisioning strategy regarding recruitment, appointment, training, in-service training, and promotions (Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016).

Superordinate Theme: Mental Preparation. The literature on psychology in corrections acknowledged the unique work that correctional psychologists perform in correctional environments and the psychologically damaged offenders they must assist (Boothby & Clements, 2002; Ricks et al., 2019; Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021; Senter et al., 2010). Furthermore, performing these duties in a challenging environment with

a unique population could result in psychological implications for correctional psychologists (Rohleder et al., 2006). Smith (as cited in Rohleder et al., 2006) stated that she became preoccupied with survival whilst working as a counsellor in a correctional centre. She stressed, therefore, that it is vital for correctional psychologists to prepare themselves adequately before working in a correctional environment.

Salie et al. (2021) conducted their community service in various correctional centres of the DCS. Salie et al. stated that they had no alternative but to endure. However, whilst inside the centres, Salie et al. mentally escaped their circumstances by engaging in online shopping. Unconsciously, online shopping served a purpose for Salie et al. and assisted them to endure and overcome the year of their community service. The findings in this study appear to be consistent with Salie et al.'s as participants revealed having to prepare themselves by either affirming religious beliefs or attending therapy. This ultimately served as encouragement and motivation before entering the correctional centre.

Superordinate Theme: Struggles with the System. Various studies (Bantjies et al., 2017; Boothby & Clements, 2002; Ricks et al., 2019; Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021; Senter et al., 2010) have consistently emphasised the struggles that correctional psychologists endured whilst working in a correctional system. Boothby and Clements (2002) survey revealed that correctional psychologists experience diminished satisfaction in aspects that include salary, the right to decision making processes and co-operation amongst correctional personnel. Boothby and Clements highlighted that correctional psychologists experience diminished general satisfaction when the importance-satisfaction fissure is enhanced.

Likewise, Bantjies et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative study within a medium and maximum correctional centre in Cape Town to explore the experiences of health professionals working in South African correctional centres and how they perceived suicide

prevention in offenders. Their sample consisted of ten professionals, including doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and nurses. Bantjies et al. conducted in-depth semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with participants, and thematic content analysis was employed to analyse the data. Bantjies et al. identified two superordinate themes, namely (i) problems within the correctional system that hinder the process of suicide prevention for professionals and (ii) the challenges that participants experience in providing appropriate interventions to suicidal offenders in an environment that is not therapeutic and under-resourced. Bantjies et al. concluded that correctional centres are primarily security institutions with a keen focus on maintaining safe and secure custody of offenders and, as such, lesser emphasis is placed on rehabilitation.

Regrettably, the participants' responses in this study echoed similar lamentations to those of Boothby and Clements (2002) and Bantjies et al. (2017). However, most participants expressed feelings of frustration and questioned their motives for remaining in a struggling system. Moreover, Salie et al. (2021) added that their experiences as community service psychologists working in a fearful and unsettling correctional system were, in most part, unrewarding with no sense of control or success as professionals. Bantjies et al. (2017) concluded that the work of psychologists and other mental health professionals becomes an arduous task as they find themselves fighting against the system to accomplish the job for which they were employed.

Superordinate Theme: Old School of Thought versus New School of Thought.

The literature highlighted conflicting perceptions between correctional officials and correctional psychologists (Fourie, 2015; Ricks et al., 2019; Rohleder et al., 2006; Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994). Correctional officials experience challenges in striving to maintain a correctional system whilst implementing the core objectives of rehabilitation

(Fourie, 2015). In addition, correctional officials' training and understanding of offenders' unruly behaviours are considered constructs of criminal mentality necessitating disciplinary action, whilst correctional psychologists consider such behaviours as a possible indication of a recognisable mental illness that can be treated (Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994).

Weinberger and Sreenivasan (1994) further articulated that correctional officials are correct to view themselves as the pillar of the system in that they maintain order and discipline amongst offenders, address security related incidents and deal with the day to day functioning of the correctional system. Hence they view correctional psychologists as a subsidiary player in the system. However, the implications thereof may be that offenders who genuinely have psychological disorders may be viewed as manipulative and correctional officials may have an undesirable retort towards the correctional psychologists as the latter are attempting to treat the offender. Consequently, the divergent perceptions of both correctional officials and correctional psychologists generate conflict between corrections and mental health (Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994).

In contrast, Ricks et al. (2019) stressed that correctional psychologists diverge from the punitive duties of the correctional system in that their function is supportive and rehabilitative. Hence they experience struggles with the system. Rohleder et al. (2006) highlighted the personal account of Hinshelwood, who worked as a consulting psychotherapist in a correctional centre in England, rendering two sessions a week over two years. Hinshelwood eventually resigned from his work as he felt it was ineffective. Hinshelwood undoubtedly recognised the varying schools of thought which he termed *care-versus-toughness culture clash* (Rohleder et al., 2006, p.798). Hinshelwood (as cited in Rohleder et al., 2006) observed the culture of toughness between officials and offenders, which he claims to arise out of anxieties stemming from the helplessness of offenders and officials' anxieties stemming from violence. Hinshelwood further stated that psychologists

perform duties opposite to those of the officials as they provide care and are therefore perceived as fragile and lenient, which ultimately results in their work being dishonoured.

The findings in this study articulated similar responses in that correctional officials have a tendency of viewing the offenders as criminals whilst the participants' first and foremost, view the offenders as being human. Such clashes between correctional officials and correctional psychologists creates implications for the successful rehabilitation of offenders. Likewise, Weinberger and Sreenivasan (1994) stipulated that a system will not function effectively if such stereotyped and orthodox behaviours continue to exist. Essentially, Weinberger and Sreenivasan (1994) called for correctional officials to be provided with basic psychology education and for correctional psychologists to be mindful of malingering and manipulative behaviours of offenders.

Superordinate Theme: Certain Officials want to be paid an Uber Fare. Over the years, the DCS has faced a series of corruption challenges. The organisation has consistently been striving to alleviate corruption within its correctional centres. This statement is substantiated by the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Ronald Ozzy Lamola, who, in his foreword address of the DCS Annual Report 2020/2021 (Department of Correctional Services, 2021) emphasised that the DCS has adopted a zero-tolerance approach in dealing with corruption by officials. Due to the smuggling of unlawful substances, South African correctional centres have become drug-infested environments with large numbers of offenders addicted to a substance (Salie et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Rohleder et al. (2006) highlighted that many offenders possess various types of weapons such as knives and blades smuggled into the correctional centres. More than a decade later, Bantjies et al. (2017) also highlighted that offenders easily obtain unauthorised substances within the correctional centres. Most notably, an online article

posted in the Washington Post highlighted that American offenders have excelled in their ingenious methods of smuggling by using drones to deliver contraband within the correctional centres' perimeters (Rosenwald, 2016).

In South Africa, however, offenders still appear to be using age-old methods of smuggling unauthorised articles into the correctional centres. In an online Eyewitness News article, Dlulane (2018) reported on the large amounts of illegal contraband, including marijuana, cell phones and electronic appliances confiscated during a surprise search named *Operation Vala* at the Leeuwkop Correctional Centre situated in Johannesburg, South Africa. The former Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, Thabang Makwetla, was present during the search and emphasised that officials involved in the smuggling of these contraband would be disciplined. In another online Eyewitness News article, Dlulane and Sekhotho (2018) reported that during the surprise search at Leeuwkop Correctional centre, the former Deputy Minister Thabang Makwetla revealed that more than one hundred (100) officials had previously been dismissed for smuggling contrabands for offenders.

Practices of corruption in the DCS are bound to affect other employees of the department. The findings of this study revealed that participants have experienced the ripple effect of such illegal practices, which hampers their daily functioning. One participant highlighted the fee that offenders must pay to officials if they are expected to be escorted to the relevant offices for assistance. Of greater concern, is the escalation of corruption by officials that smuggle contrabands into their lunchbox. This practice has affected the basic needs of both officials and correctional psychologists within the management area. Two participants despondently articulated that they were no longer allowed to bring their lunches into the correctional centres.

The DCS, however, is making strides in rooting out corruption and smuggling practices. During an intensive security training held in October 2021, with female officials

working in various maximum correctional centres in South Africa, several modules were included in the training schedule to assist in alleviating corruption amongst officials (Matjekana, 2021). The modules included the Code of Conduct, Gang Combating Strategy, Ethics, and the Prevention of Fraud and Corruption. Matjekana highlighted that the Deputy Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Nkosi Phathekile Holomisa, during the launch of the training, emphasised that these modules will aid in instilling discipline amongst officials and serve as a preventive measure against corruption. The Deputy Minister further mentioned that apart from conducting investigations, the DCS has also implemented interventions such as fraud risk assessments, providing training to officials on corruption, whistle-blowing protocols, and awareness interventions in the form of electronic newsletters.

Superordinate Theme: Stuff Can Change Very Quickly, and Things Can Go Bad Very Quickly. According to Shimazu et al. (2017), employees of an organisation may be inflicted with psychological or physical impairment if the organisation is perceived as challenging and presents with psychosocial risk factors. Shimazu et al. referred to these organisational risk factors as specific characteristics of an organisation established through human intention and includes human relations. Other risk factors may include the organisation's management of work, the societal and interpersonal characteristics and job design. Likewise, correctional environments are highly stressful, emotional, and active settings that result in an increased occurrence of events such as strained and pressured relations between correctional officials and offenders, management changes, various disparities and other incidents resulting in a challenging working environment. Such occurrences tend to disrupt the ambiance of correctional environments and takes a toll on employees' wellbeing (Evers et al., 2020; Fourie, 2015; Rohleder et al., 2006). The mere appearance, physical conditions, fluctuations in noise levels, inadequate resources, and lack

of privacy are factors that contribute to psychological distress, absenteeism from work and substance use amongst officials employed to work in correctional centres (Evers et al., 2020).

Correspondingly, participants in this study concurred that the DCS is a challenging environment in which one must continuously adjust to the continuous nuances ranging from surprise searches, noisy environment, bagless society and working with heinous offenders. Boothby and Clements (2002) also highlighted that correctional environments could be punitive, with personnel experiencing harassment, segregation, and indifference in some correctional centres. Likewise, Shimazu et al. (2017) emphasised that inadequate working conditions, work stress, harassment, intimidation, and the uncertainty of maintaining the job are progressively becoming acknowledged as threatening risk factors. These affect employees' psychological and physical health and impede the organisation's objectives and performance levels.

Most notably, existing research has recognised the struggles of rendering psychological services to offenders in correctional centres (Bantjies et al., 2017; Ricks et al., 2019; Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021; Senter et al., 2010; Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994). Bantjies et al. (2017) discussed the utopic vision mental health professionals had about a post-apartheid era, visualising an enhanced future for all. However, not much has changed for these professionals who continue working in challenging environments that impede their psychosocial wellbeing. Ricks et al. (2019) argued that the work of correctional psychologists are difficult as they are expected to conduct psychotherapy in a confined and callous environment. Bantjies et al. (2017) contended that correctional systems appear to experience deteriorating if not worsened conditions compared to the Apartheid era, with severe lack of resources resulting in serious overcrowding of offenders, gangsterism and unsafe correctional centres. Bantjies et al. described the correctional system as less than ideal environments not conducive for effective therapeutic interventions. Bantjies et al. emphasised a decreased

likelihood of effective rehabilitation of offenders who must endure the deplorable conditions. The experiences of Salie et al. (2021) resonated with Bantjies et al. (2017) and Ricks et al. (2019). However, unique to the experiences of Salie et al. (2021) was the shame they felt in attempting to fulfil their next to impossible duties. Salie et al. emphasised that they judged themselves harshly as the shame they felt was also associated with feelings of incompetence in a demanding correctional context.

In recent times, the DCS, like most organisations, has been contending with an additional challenge. COVID-19, was first reported in South Africa on 5 March 2020. In his foreword address of the DCS Annual Report 2020/2021 (Department of Correctional Services, 2021), the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services stated that the pandemic created various challenges for the DCS and prompted swift reactions to contain the virus, manage the various operations and prevent the number of COVID-19 related deaths within the correctional centres. The Minister further mentioned that the strict lockdown measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 had severely affected the health factor within the DCS as it saw a rise in depressive disorders, anxieties and helplessness amongst offenders and officials (Department of Correctional Services, 2021). Hence, if correctional psychologists are already struggling with the challenges of working in the DCS, one can only imagine what they may be experiencing with the impact of COVID-19 within the correctional centres.

Superordinate Theme: Feelings of Helplessness to Effect Genuine Rehabilitation.

According to the White Paper on Corrections (Department of Correctional Services, 2005), corrections and rehabilitation are fundamental concepts. Every correctional official is considered a prospective rehabilitator of the offenders entrusted in the care of the DCS. However, despite the DCS maintaining that rehabilitation is central to its core business, it becomes an unsuccessful mission due to the discrepancies between the policy documents,

which still enforce an authoritative procedure towards the management of offenders (Hoffman as cited in Rohleder et al., 2006). Rohleder et al. (2006) conducted community service at five correctional centres in Cape Town, South Africa. They provided a personal account of their experience as community service psychologists working in correctional centres. Rohleder et al. reported witnessing numerous offenders suffering from psychological illnesses, but they were unable to render adequate psychological services as the offenders needed psychiatric medications. Rohleder et al. stated that psychiatrist consultations occurred occasionally, adding to the challenges of rendering an effective service. Ultimately, Rohleder et al. felt helpless to effect genuine rehabilitation.

Similarly, Salie et al. (2021) emphasised feelings of helplessness to effect genuine rehabilitation and questioned whether it resulted from their own shortcoming or the larger correctional context itself. On a logical level, Salie et al. understood that the correctional setting played a huge role in the challenges faced in effecting adequate mental health care to offenders. However, Salie et al. reported that they furtively wished they were better equipped to handle the challenges. Moreover, Bantjies et al. (2017) emphasised that it becomes a challenge for mental health professionals to provide adequate therapeutic care to offenders in a system striving for effective rehabilitation of offenders whilst at the same time is conspicuously retributive.

Equally, the findings in this study are consistent with Rohleder et al. (2006) and Salie et al. (2021), as participants highlighted being in a state of helplessness to effect genuine rehabilitation in their respective centres. Several challenges contributed to their feelings of frustration, discouragement, and helplessness which will be further explicated in the themes to follow.

Matetoa (as cited in Fourie, 2015) further emphasised that most offenders incarcerated within correctional centres are serving long- term sentences, which makes it difficult for

offenders and correctional officials to seek value and enthusiasm in the rehabilitation process. Hence, correctional officials may relapse into the role of security officer instead of a rehabilitative correctional official. Additionally, Bantjies et al. (2017) reported overcrowding as one of the factors that result in the shortage of rehabilitation programmes and few recreational or work privileges for offenders in South African correctional centres. Bantjies et al. articulated that correctional centres were designed for the safe and secure custody of offenders, correction, and rehabilitation. Therefore, it is not uncommon for these objectives to conflict with the objectives of mental healthcare.

Master Theme: Access to Resources

Numerous studies as well as the findings in this study have emphasised the lack of resources in correctional centres (Boothby & Clements, 2002; Bantjies et al., 2017; Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016; Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021; Ricks et al., 2019).) The lack of resources is a generalised problem among public service organisations (Rohleder et al., 2006). Furthermore, the lack of essential resources may significantly affect the work of mental health professionals who feel compromised in providing adequate therapeutic care to offenders (Bantjies et al., 2017). *Access to resources* was identified as a significant master theme and the various superordinate themes are discussed below.

Superordinate Theme: Access to Training. Employees are the most valuable part of an organisation, and it is therefore vital to comprehend and take heed of the psychosocial well-being and requirements of their staff complement (Shimazu et al., 2017). It also becomes imperative for an organisation to consider the duties with which employees are entrusted, the type of work environment and the stressors accompanying the position (Shimazu et al., 2017). According to Brown and Sitmann (as cited in Nhlapo & Vyas-

Doorgapersad, 2016), officials acquire the knowledge and skills when the necessary training is provided.

Shimazu et al. (2017) harmonised that employees acquire skills through continuous and constant training in order to improve an organisation's human resources. This ultimately results in positive outcomes for both the official and the DCS organisation (Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016). Essentially, a clinician's central function within the correctional system is to provide psychotherapy and counselling to offenders. Therefore student psychologists need to be trained in evidence-based treatment programmes designed especially for the correctional and forensic context (DiCataldo et al., 2021). However, according to Senter et al. (2010), correctional psychologists experience a lack of support concerning funding.

The DCS has various policies to guide the organisation towards achieving its strategic objectives. As per the DCS HR provisioning strategy (as cited in Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016), one of the key elements is not only to recruit officials to meet the required numbers but also to provide training. Nhlapo and Vyas-Doorgapersad conducted a qualitative study at the Groenpunt Management Area in the Free State and Northern Cape Region with sixty employed officials to explore the HR provisioning challenges and their effect on gender equality within the DCS. The study, however, identified there were limited training opportunities for employed officials. Furthermore, newly appointed officials placed within the Management Area were affected due to sub-standard post-training assessment methods. The study also highlighted that the DCS organisational needs appeared to supersede the career development of its employees.

The findings in this study highlighted that participants from the different management areas provided varying viewpoints concerning access to training. Some participants claimed that they don't experience difficulties in relation to training needs whilst others emphasised the lack of resources to attend training. Furthermore, the process of applying to attend

specific trainings are considered a laborious process. On the other hand, the Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, Nkosi Phathekile Holomisa, emphasised that a variety of training programmes are provided to newly recruited officials so that they gain the necessary skills to take up their positions within correctional centres and develop their careers (Department of Correctional Services, 2021).

Superordinate Theme: Scarce Stationery and Office Furniture. Rohleder et al. (2006) from their experiences, reported on inadequate office furniture and the lack of basic office equipment within the correctional centres where they worked. Only one psychologist had an office telephone for the duration of their community service. The second psychologist received an office telephone six months into the community service, whilst the third had no phone for the whole year. Rohleder et al. had trouble communicating as cellphones were also not permitted in the correctional centres.

The findings in this study indicated a slight deviation from those of Rohleder et al. (2006) in that only one participant expressed that resources are not a limiting factor in that specific correctional centre. On the other hand, other participants in this study concurred with the experiences of Rohleder et al. (2006) in that they experienced severe challenges in acquiring the basic resources such as stationery. Participants reported spending their own funds to buy the necessary items. In addition, participants are compelled to utilise old, dilapidated furniture in their offices which are supposed to be conducive spaces in rendering therapeutic services.

Superordinate Theme: Unreliable Information Technology. The DCS has experienced challenges with the lack of modern technology and infrastructure that could have supported synchronisation and management from a national level to the grassroots level

(Department of Correctional Services, 2021). Correspondingly, the findings in this study highlighted that participants unanimously agreed that access and maintenance of information technology within their various correctional centres was unreliable. The DCS acknowledged the challenges experienced with the information technology (IT). Although systemic findings remain unresolved, the DCS did make progress in dealing with the previous year's IT findings. The DCS envisaged maintaining its focus on aspects of IT security management, IT service management, environmental controls, and user access management (Department of Correctional Services, 2021).

Superordinate Theme: Unavailability of Psychometric Tests. The literature has shown that correctional psychologists are expected to conduct counselling, intervention, treatment, and assessments in the various correctional centres where they are appointed to work (Bantjies et al., 2017; Boothby & Clements, 2002; Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016; Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021; Ricks et al., 2019). During the performance of their duties, psychologists may need to conduct psychometric testing to evaluate or confirm a diagnosis to determine effective therapeutic interventions. Psychometric tests are valuable tools for evaluating traits or symptoms of psychopathology, personality, or intellectual abilities (Aldridge et al., 2017). However, the participants in this study raised their concerns about the unavailability of psychometric tests. Participants are expected to rely heavily on their clinical acumen and collateral information from the various stakeholders and the offenders to render therapeutic services and compile assessment reports.

Superordinate Theme: Inadequate Office and Group Rooms. The experiences of Rohleder et al. (2006) highlighted inadequate resources that regrettably directly affected the quality of their work and created various ethical dilemmas for them. The office spaces

provided to them were mostly inappropriate for conducting therapy as the rooms consisted of walls that did not touch the ceiling, thereby leaving an opening for infiltrations such as the noises from within the correctional centre. Rohleder et al. stated that such office space inadequacies significantly interfered and affected the quality, privacy, and confidentiality of the sessions. Rohleder et al. expressed that despite lodging several complaints over the months, the centres' management did not heed their call for assistance. In addition, one of the psychologist had to use the computer server room to consult with offenders as no other space was available. This also affected the quality of sessions as the computer server room came with its own set of noises. Rohleder et al. further emphasised that when no rooms were available to consult with offenders, the sessions had to be cancelled and rescheduled.

It has been well over a decade, and the same challenges appear to persist. The findings in this study substantiate similar challenges to those of Rohleder et al. (2006). Majority of participants narrated their experiences of working in limited spaces, especially when conducting group programmes. Furthermore, leaking ceilings, flooded offices and regular power outages negatively affect participants' work production. The findings in this study thus demonstrated that participants are working with the minimum resources yet still need to ensure work productivity.

Superordinate Theme: Shortage of Human Resources. “Human resources and the potential they possess are key drivers for an organisation's success” (Haslinda as cited in Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016, p.167). In his foreword statement of the DCS Annual Report 2020/2021 (Department of Correctional Services, 2021), the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, also acknowledged that the DCS is only as functional as its human resources (correctional officials) who are tasked with the mandate of safety and security of the organisation. However, the lack of financial resources had resulted in the DCS tightly

managing the filling of vacant positions. This, in turn, has created a ripple effect in that it put a strain on the available and valuable services offered through human resources (Department of Correctional Services, 2021).

In addition, the Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, in his statement of the DCS Annual Report 2020/2021 (Department of Correctional Services, 2021), also emphasised that the DCS is mainly dependent on its human resources to carry out the set mandate of the organisation. He confirmed that despite the restrictions in budget allocations, the DCS was still able to provide employment to the youth, thereby addressing the unemployment rate amongst the youth in South Africa.

Meanwhile, the findings in this study indicated that participants showed a greater need for more psychologists to render psychological services to offenders, especially in centres where there is only one psychologist. It also became apparent that apart from providing services to a large number of offenders, it is expected of psychologists to also provide services to officials at centres where an employee assistance programme official is unavailable. Furthermore, concerns regarding the rotation and availability of psychiatrists in centres were also raised as it ultimately impedes on the psychological services provided to offenders.

Likewise, Bantjies et al. (2017) confirmed that mental health professionals experienced a lack of resources such as psychiatric medication for suicidal offenders. In addition, the correctional centres experience a lack of mental health practitioners, which contributes to the pressure and workload of those practitioners who are permanently employed in the service. Most notably, the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, (Department of Correctional Services, 2021), emphasised that the COVID-19 pandemic severely affected human resources within correctional centres and necessitated the implementation of different working methods.

Superordinate Theme: Wearing of Uniforms versus Unavailability of Uniforms.

According to Tynan and Godson (2019), the word uniform means being of one form and alike. Tynan and Godson highlighted that wearing a uniform creates confidence in the wearer as the uniform holds the power and authority of the organisation it represents. DCS is a uniform-wearing organisation and it expects every employed person whether one is an official or professional to wear a uniform. Within the correctional system, the uniform serves as an important tool in maintaining clear boundaries, ensuring that the objectives of the department are achieved, regulating, and controlling the various ranking structures within the group and preventing conflict amongst its members (Pieterse, 2019).

Additionally, the correctional uniform maintains consistency amongst the officials and permits distinctive affiliation to the DCS whilst excluding all others (Pieterse, 2019). Although correctional employees are expected to wear uniforms, there is an inadequate supply of this necessitated workwear. Pieterse (2019) made a note of the insufficient uniforms for correctional officials, stating that some officials only have one set of uniforms whilst others have a uniform as old as 10 years which is faded and inadequate for use.

Similarly, in this study, Participant Eleven emphasised the scarcity of the DCS uniforms and yet still being compelled to comply with the directive of wearing uniforms.

Superordinate Theme: Time Management versus Correctional Centres'

Operational Demands. The literature has consistently validated that correctional environments are challenging, demanding, and dynamic settings with multiple events taking place at the same time (Bantjies et al., 2017; Boothby & Clements, 2002; Fourie, 2015; Pieterse, 2019; Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021; Ricks et al., 2019). Clements et al. (2007) reiterated that any duty undertaken within correctional centres should be conducted with due cognisance of the unpredictable environment. Such events tend to affect correctional

psychologists in the daily rendering of psychological services to offenders. Furthermore, correctional psychologists are expected to participate in specific operational demands, which also takes up a reasonable portion of their time.

Boothby and Clements (2002) in their survey, accentuated that correctional psychologists felt aggrieved by the insufficient time and resources to render services to mentally ill offenders adequately. Worthy of note is the 1:750 psychologist-to-offender average ratio that was identified by Boothby and Clements in the correctional facilities of the United States of America. In addition, Senter et al. (2010) highlighted the dissatisfaction of correctional psychologists in performing duties such as administration not directly related to their job description.

The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of Boothby and Clements (2002) and Senter et al. (2010) in that participants raised concerns about time management and having to participate in correctional centre demands that did not require their time and presence but rather took them away from attending to their workload. Participants were, therefore, of the view that they are unable to set structured daily programmes as the centres' demands take precedence over their work. However, Clements et al. (2007) accentuated that correctional psychologists need to develop professional, yet straightforward skills to deal with these challenges.

Master Theme: Safety and Security

According to the White Paper on Corrections (Department of Correctional Services, 2005), the DCS has an obligation to ensure that the community is safe from threatening offenders. Furthermore, to transform the vision of the White Paper on Corrections (Department of Correctional Services, 2005) into functioning activities, the DCS established six financial programmes, with one of them being *Security* which is intended to ensure the protection of

offenders, officials, and the community at large. However, research has constantly articulated issues of gangsterism, violence, assaults on officials and escapes, all of which pose a threat to correctional employees and correctional psychologists (Boothby & Clements, 2002; Clements et al., 2007; Bantjies et al., 2017; Pieterse, 2019; Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021).

Similarly, the findings of this study are consistent with the existing literature in that participants raised various issues, all of which are embedded in the superordinate themes discussed below, thereby resulting in the emergence of the master theme, safety and security.

Superordinate Theme: Feelings of Being Unsafe. The existing literature has acknowledged that concerns about one's safety whilst working in a correctional centre necessitates the need for increased alertness, is mentally exhausting and is a contributing factor to work-related stress (Evers et al., 2020; Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021). Consequently, Rohleder et al. (2006) discussed the personal narrative of a former senior correctional psychologist by the name of Eisemann, who highlighted that correctional centres are inherently hostile environments with the presence of physical danger. In addition, Bantjies et al. (2017) highlighted that literature on the unsafe and inhumane conditions in South African correctional centres is continuously emerging.

Likewise, the participants in this study clearly articulated that they did not feel safe within the confines of the correctional centres and more especially in the provision of their services. Participants concerns were based on the lack of human resources to afford the necessitated security. The findings of this study showcased that correctional environments are unique work environments in which employees have no alternative but to be vigilant at all times.

Superordinate Theme: Threatening Behaviours from Offenders. Correctional officials tend to experience significant tension from experiencing regular contact with

offenders with a history of aggressive behaviours (Evers et al., 2020). Moreover, symptoms of stress amongst officials are exacerbated when they are compelled to work in overcrowded centres where hostility amongst offenders is endemic (Evers et al.; Kupers, 2005). In South African correctional centres, violence, and sexual assault are disturbingly high. This is attributed to the influence of gangsterism which is rife (Bantjies et al., 2017). A clear cut example of threatening behaviours from offenders is cited in Rohleder et al. (2006) who narrated serious incidents that took place one week, halfway through their community service. One of the psychologists (author) and two other female community service psychologists were threatened by an offender who used a blade to intimidate them. The official who escorted the offender had wandered off. Rohleder et al. (2006) narrated another incident, whereby their colleague from one of the other correctional centres found herself in a threatening situation when the offender with whom she was consulting intimidated her by telling her how he could harm her. The psychologist was alone with no official posted outside her door. She had no alternative but to pretend to remain in control and calm until she saw an official and removed herself from the situation. Rohleder et al. (2006) stated that an incident report and requests were compiled by all seven psychologists and submitted to the senior management of the correctional centre. Regrettably, they received no feedback from their raised concerns.

Correspondingly, the participants in this study also experienced threatening behaviours from offenders during the daily performance of their duties. Unique to this study, however, is that some participants attributed the threatening behaviours of offenders to the information they received from the members of the Parole Board. The latter discloses to offenders that psychologists are responsible for them not being released on parole or for being given further profiles (further incarceration in the correctional centre). Offenders become aggressive and display threatening behaviours towards psychologists.

Superordinate Theme: The Need for Self-Defence Training. In some correctional centres in the United States of America, it is expected for correctional psychologists to undergo additional self-defence, fire-arm, and security training (Boothby & Clements, 2002). Boothby and Clements referred to the federal system in the United States of America, stating that all employees, including psychologists, are expected to attend quite a few weeks of training before being employed in the service. Nhlapo and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2016) argued that such training should also be essential for women working in corrections. Nhlapo and Vyas-Doorgapersad emphasised that women working in corrections need to be made aware of and take cognisance of the risks involved and take the necessary steps to acquire the relevant training that will benefit their protection when working in confining correctional environments. The contentions of Nhlapo and Vyas-Doorgapersad come as no surprise due to the history of assaults and violence experienced by officials regularly. For example, between 2019 and 2021, in two South African correctional centres, two female officials were brutally murdered by male offenders (Matjekana, 2021).

However, the findings in this study clearly articulated that participants are not adequately equipped in security and self-defence skills despite working closely with offenders on a daily basis. As a measure of self-protection, one participant had no alternative but to independently pay for self-defence classes. Most notably, on 27 October 2021, an internal notice addressed to all DCS staff was circulated via email informing members of the official launch of the security training programme for female officials working in maximum correctional centres (Matjekana, 2021). This programme was launched on 22 October 2021 at the Kroonstad Training College (situated in the Free State and Northern Cape region) by the Deputy Minister of Justice and Correctional Services.

According to Matjekana (2021), the programme entailed an intensive three-week security training with ten officials from each of the six regions, thus comprising 60 female officials who worked in maximum correctional centres around the country. The training aimed to equip female officials with self-defence skills that are necessitated when working with male offenders. The incidents of 2019 and 2021 (Matjekana, 2021), led the DCS to establish training programmes geared to safeguard the wellbeing of female officials working in maximum correctional centres. However, it can only be anticipated that such training will be rolled out to the professional groups working in correctional centres as none yet exist.

Superordinate Theme: The Need for a Permanent Security Official. Correctional environments are volatile settings due to the atypical, overcrowded offender population that are incarcerated in these centres (Bantjies et al., 2017; Clements et al., 2007; Department of Correctional Services, 2005; Evers et al., 2020; Kupers, 2005; Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016). Furthermore, Kupers (2005) emphasised that an increase in overcrowding coupled with idleness has increased offender violence and psychiatric breakdown. Additionally, Rohleder et al. (2006) reported that in both the maximum and medium correctional centres, their client population consisted of aggressive, violent, and dangerous offenders, some of whom had committed heinous crimes of murder and rape. Moreover, the incidents of 2019 and 2021, when two female officials whilst on duty, were murdered by offenders (Matjekana, 2021), are a testament that such an environment calls for increased safety and security of its employees. However, the personal account of Rohleder et al. (2006) extensively discussed under the superordinate theme of threatening behaviours from offenders, highlighted that no security officials were present during the incidents.

Likewise, the participants in this study expressed the same concerns, some highlighting the aggressive behaviours of offenders during the sessions and the threatening

situations they experienced in the absence of security officials. Although the psychological services procedure manual instructs that correctional psychologists consult offenders with a security official being present, this directive is not constantly adhered. Like the personal account of Rohleder et al. (2006), the participants in this study raised this issue with their management on numerous occasions, but their concerns are ongoing. Furthermore, in considering the security incidents of 2019 and 2021 (Matjekana, 2021), it is notable that most of the participants in this study are also female psychologists whose safety is constantly compromised because of the absence of a security official. Subsequently, the findings in this study identified that the absence of a security official intensifies participants' feelings of being unsafe.

Superordinate Theme: The Need for Safety Equipment. Correctional employees face many dangerous situations whilst working in correctional centres, and they are dependent on safety equipment to protect themselves and conduct their duties safely (Battisti & Robinson, 2019). However, according to Rohleder et al. (2006), as community service psychologists, they experienced challenges when it came to possessing security equipment. Despite being told that the offices were installed with panic buttons, there were none. Rohleder et al. stressed that had there been a security incident, there would have been no way to inform the relevant officials.

Correspondingly, apart from the absence of a security official to afford protection to correctional psychologists, the findings in this study revealed that participants possessed only the bare minimum in security equipment to self-protect against precarious situations. Like Rohleder et al. (2006), the participants in this study also confirmed not having the relevant security equipment to afford some surety of protection. Furthermore, no training on the use of security equipment is conducted because no security equipment is provided.

Superordinate Theme: Escorting of Offenders and Psychologists versus Psychologists Escorting Offenders. According to Young et al. (2018), escorting offenders to the various offices such as the hospital unit, psychologist, or social worker tends to overburden officials who are already responsible for several other duties. Correspondingly, the DCS Annual Report (Department of Correctional Services, 2021) indicated that the current official-offender ratio is one official to nine offenders' instead of the recommended one official to five offenders' ratio. The DCS indicated that the staffing ratio amplifies when the different shift patterns are included. In other words, the DCS is experiencing a shortage of human resources. This has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, whereby officials were placed in isolation, quarantine, and on staff rotation to reduce contact of the number of officials at work (Department of Correctional Services, 2005).

However, this study was conducted a few months before the outbreak of the pandemic, and even then, the participants expressed their challenges with regards to the escorting of offenders to their offices for a consultation. According to the participants in this study, their psychological services procedure manual stipulates that officials should escort offenders' to the psychologist for their consultations. Participants highlighted the inconsistencies with some offenders being escorted by officials whilst others are not. Furthermore, it has become customary for officials to leave the offenders alone with the psychologist. Despite only having negligible security equipment, participants are expected to go to various units in the correctional centres by themselves should they need to render group programmes to offenders. Participants also have no alternative but to render group programmes to approximately 30 offenders in a confined space with no security official to afford protection. On the other hand, participants mentioned that it has also become standard practice for them to escort the offenders to their offices for a consultation due to resistance

from some officials to escort the offenders. One of the main reasons afforded to participants for this breach of policy is that the centre is experiencing a shortage of correctional officials.

The experiences of Rohleder et al. (2006) also highlighted challenges with the escorting of offenders and the shortage of officials, which affected the services they rendered to offenders. Rohleder et al. also argued that the DCS regulations which direct the escorting of offenders to the relevant offices, and the physical presence of an official outside the office was not adhered to as the officials would inevitably disappear for various reasons, including attending to other duties. Deplorably, the participants in this study articulated that they must take the initiative, whether dangerous or not, to escort the offenders themselves to proceed with their daily duties.

On the other hand, Boothby and Clements (2002) emphasised that correctional psychologists should remain cognisant of their primary role within the correctional context. Boothby and Clements stressed that being trained in security-related matters might be an advantageous benefit for correctional psychologists as they are better equipped to protect themselves. The disadvantage, however, lies in the perception of the system which then views the correctional psychologist as a correctional official, first and foremost, and only after that views them as mental health practitioners. Boothby and Clements (2002) further cautioned correctional psychologists that such shift in roles tends to affect the primary functions of the correctional psychologist, and once committed into a correctional official role; the correctional psychologist will be expected to perform the duties of a correctional official such as escorting offenders within the correctional system. The shift in roles from a correctional psychologist to correctional official conducting escort duties may also exacerbate feelings of confusion for some psychologists (Boothby & Clements, 2002).

Master Theme: Overwhelming Workload (Quantity versus Quality)

The perpetually increasing offender population and the lack of essential resources to provide adequate services within the correctional system have exacerbated the perceptions of overwhelming workloads for correctional employees (Schiff & Leip, 2019). Some explanations supporting this statement are that correctional employees may have numerous duties to complete with too little time to achieve it, or the duties may be too much for one individual to achieve (Schiff & Leip, 2019). Furthermore, the overwhelming workload in the workplace is considerably intertwined with work stress (Rohleder et al., 2006. Salie et al., 2021; Schiff & Leip, 2019). Correspondingly, correctional psychologists experience similar perceptions of overwhelming workloads such as administration and meeting the set operational targets, which deter them from conducting therapeutic work (Boothby & Clements, 2002).

The findings in this study are consistent with Boothby and Clements (2002), Rohleder et al. (2006) and Salie et al. (2021) in that the participants expressed contending with administrative tasks which are not related to their specific work, having to meet the annual performance plan targets monthly and compiling psychological reports for the case management committees and parole boards which evidently leaves them with little time to focus on effective therapeutic interventions. The superordinate themes are discussed further.

Superordinate Theme: Thrown Into Doing Admin Stuff. According to Magaletta and Boothby (2003), the roles and functions of correctional psychologists working in correctional systems have remained unchanged over the past decades, with correctional psychologists performing duties such as conducting individual and group psychotherapy, risk assessments, research, attending to administrative tasks and providing training to employees. In contrast to Magaletta and Boothby (2003), Boothby and Clements (2002) found that

correctional psychologists spent the greatest portion of their time conducting administrative work whilst very little time was dedicated to the therapeutic treatment to offenders. Notably, although psychologists experienced general job satisfaction, they are not content with taking on administrative roles that are not directly related to their job profile (Senter et al., 2010). According to Senter et al. (2010), correctional psychologists prefer to perform the tasks for which they have been clinically trained. It is now two decades later and psychologists appear to experience the same challenges as mentioned by Boothby and Clements (2002), in that Salie et al. (2021) in the narrations of their experiences, emphasised that their clinical training did not prepare them for the overpowering administrative tasks that they had to attend to in the correctional centres.

Consistent with Boothby and Clements (2002) and Salie et al. (2021), this study reproduced similar findings. Participants raised their concerns about spending too much time attending to administrative tasks and meetings that were not specifically related to their work. Essentially, the findings in this study revealed that participants appeared to have entered the correctional system with a pre-conceived notion that their work would be exclusively clinical and therapeutic, and this perception appeared to be a shared concern amongst participants.

Superordinate Theme: Meeting the Target: Annual Performance Plan (APP).

Like any other public service organisation, the DCS is accountable to produce a document that reveals the activities conducted to meet the department's strategic objectives in any given financial year. This document is available in the form of the DCS Annual Report. According to the National Commissioner of the DCS, Mr A Fraser, the Annual Report (Department of Correctional Services, 2021) is a fair reflection of the DCS activities, performance, and human resource information, as well as the financial undertakings of the DCS. The various DCS directorates are responsible for setting achievable annual targets, and performing

activities, thereby aligning itself to the strategic objectives. These targets are reported in the financial year DCS Annual Report.

As a directorate in the DCS, Psychological Services is also expected to achieve its annual target. The DCS Annual Report 2020/2021 (Department of Correctional Services, 2021) indicated that the planned annual target on the percentage of inmates receiving psychological care services was set for 20%. The directorate achieved an additional 5% with an actual achievement of 25%. The Directorate thus overachieved on its set target for the financial year and provided the reason for deviation as the active marketing of psychological services (Department of Correctional Services, 2021). From a national level, the achievements of the DCS may be perceived as outstanding. However, at a correctional centre level, the impact on production workers to achieve stipulated targets are experienced differently. A typical example is Rohleder et al. (2006) who emphasised that one of the challenges of working in a correctional setting is dealing with a large caseload. Rohleder et al. were evaluated on their monthly statistics which entailed the total number of offenders consulted for sessions. Rohleder et al. emphasised that such evaluations are part of the reason for ineffective rehabilitation. In attempting to meet the set annual targets, correctional psychologists are compelled to focus on the number (quantity) of new offenders consulted in a month rather than the effective (quality) rehabilitation of offenders. Every consultation with the same offender is considered a follow-up or repeat and cannot be included as a new client in the monthly performance of the psychologist.

This was also a resounding superordinate theme of this study. The participants expressed that the DCS seeks quantity for the sake of meeting the targets rather than performing a quality therapeutic service to offenders.

Superordinate Theme: Psychological Reports. Assessments form a crucial aspect of mental health services within a correctional context (DiCataldo et al., 2021; Magaletta & Boothby, 2003; Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994). Notably, Magaletta et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative study within 97 Federal Bureau of Prisons in the United States of America to explore and understand from the perspectives of the chief correctional psychologists (CCP) the competencies needed to be successful in attaining employment as a newly appointed correctional psychologist. Seventy-six chief psychologists formed part of the study. The study indicated that chief psychologists sought out psychologists who displayed competence in conducting risk assessments, suicide risk assessments and crisis interventions. Additionally, Boothby and Clements (2002) also found that correctional psychologists spent more time on administrative tasks (30%) than on therapeutic interventions (26%) and assessments (18%). The rest was dedicated to crisis intervention, staff training, consultation, and research.

Worthy of note is the personal account of Rohleder et al. (2006) who experienced several challenges with regards to compiling psychological reports for the parole boards who expected them to consult with offenders using information from previous therapeutic interventions conducted by other psychologists from other correctional centres to compile a psychological report. Rohleder et al. stated that such requests held several ethical implications. Furthermore, Rohleder et al. asserted that compiling psychological reports is not a therapeutic invention aimed to encourage effective rehabilitation. Instead, it is an assessment process aimed at determining the level of risk for re-offending behaviours upon parole.

Similarly, the participants in this study expressed being overwhelmed with compiling risk assessment reports for life-and determinate-sentenced offenders. Consequently, the various judgements imposed on the DCS for the consideration of parole for specific

categories of offenders for the finalisation within a specific time frame has resulted in participants being flooded with numerous risk assessments which have to be conducted and compiled. As there are only a limited number of psychologists in each management area, this resulted in a backlog of assessments and overwhelming workload and pressure on the participants. Regrettably, although the correctional psychologists' determination of an offender's risk of re-offending continues to be a bone of contention, it is imperative for mental health practitioners working in a correctional environment to conduct assessments as part of their job description. However, it is also essential that clinicians receive evidence-based training in conducting assessments (DiCataldo et al., 2021; Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994).

Master Theme: Professional Identity Crisis.

Meyer and Young (2021) defined *identity* as a socially constructed classification with which a person finds association. Meyer and Young emphasised that identity is a multidimensional construction, and individuals may represent several identities, each personifying its exclusiveness. According to Senter et al. (2010), *professional identity* refers to the mindful connection one associates with the values and importance acquired during their training or as stipulated in their job title. Additionally, Meyer and Young (2021) articulated that the identity of a psychologist transmits the connotation of supremacy and importance. Consequently, student psychologists who perform clinical training within a correctional environment gain the opportunity to enhance their professional identity as emerging therapists (DiCataldo et al., 2021). Conversely, professionals working in a correctional context are experiencing challenging conditions which attribute to feelings of being overwhelmed, unsupported, and ethically compromised (Bantjies et al., 2017), thereby resulting in a crisis. Furthermore, Senter et al. (2010) emphasised that correctional

psychologists will experience reduced levels of burnout if they encounter increased professional identity.

The findings in this study identified several superordinate themes, all of which resulted in the emergence of the master theme: professional identity crisis. These themes are discussed below.

Superordinate Theme: Security Setting Compromising a Confidentiality

Profession. Correctional psychologists have considerable concerns regarding confidentiality in correctional centres (Kupers, 2005). According to Weinberger and Sreenivasan (1994), correctional psychologists understand and accept that correctional systems are principally, security institutions. However, conducting their duties within such a system results in several ethical dilemmas, including maintaining client confidentiality which is necessitated for the profession. Obtaining informed consent, maintaining client confidentiality and discussing the limitations and exceptions to confidentiality to their clients are fundamental for mental health professionals guided by their professional ethics (Willis & Letourneau, 2018). However, the correctional management team and correctional officials may have trouble understanding the need for this as they are not expected to follow this code of ethics (Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994).

Consequently, the policies of the correctional system come into direct conflict with professional board criteria that aim to guide therapists in the treatment of their clients and conducting ethical behaviours (Kupers, 2005). The correctional organisation has various policies which necessitate that correctional psychologists inform the correctional team of any discrepancies that may perturb the smooth running of the institution. Such discrepancies can only arise during psychotherapy sessions with offenders. Reporting information provided during therapy results in further implications as offenders may choose not to disclose

incidents of harm or open themselves to the therapeutic process for fear of being reported (Kupers, 2005).

Furthermore, correctional personnel may interrogate offenders to reveal further information, thereby placing them at even greater risk within the centre and amongst other offenders (Kupers, 2005). Weinberger and Sreenivasan (1994) argued that ambiguous standards or guidelines from the correctional system provide unclear direction for psychologists who have no alternative but to base their decisions on personal values. Hence, such challenges become obstacles in effecting genuine rehabilitation (Kupers, 2005).

The findings in this study revealed similar perceptions regarding confidentiality. Unique to this study, however, is that participants reported that information is disseminated by specific role-players such as the Parole Boards or Case Management Committee (CMC) to the relevant offenders, thereby placing the participants at risk of threatening behaviours from offenders. Furthermore, the lack of resources compromises the confidentiality of the psychological reports in that participants have no alternative but to utilise various printers within the centre to print reports. Hence, the profession of psychology loses its essence in adhering to confidentiality.

Superordinate Theme: Ethical Dilemmas.

The code of ethics for all helping professions is inherently similar in that all persons should be treated with dignity and respect (Willis & Letourneau, 2018). It is also mandatory for clinical professionals to adhere to this code of ethics. Additionally, clinical professionals must adhere to providing help and not harm to their clients whilst treating all fairly (Allan, 2013; Willis & Letourneau, 2018). Karen Franklin (as cited in Allan, 2013, p.47) stated, “Interviewing someone in a cage while wearing a bullet-proof vest is hardly the type of doctor-patient relationship in which we were trained as psychologists.” This quote is a typical

example of one such dilemma that a psychologist had to experience. Additionally, Bantjies et al. (2017) highlighted that it becomes a challenge to practice mental health ethically when working in a strict and confined environment. Bantjies et al. found that professionals also felt ethically compromised in providing adequate mental health care to offenders. Furthermore, psychologists have trouble finding a fit between security and rehabilitation and are obligated to ensure that, first and foremost, the needs of the organisation are achieved (Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994). Subsequently, Weinberger and Sreenivasan echoed a widespread fundamental belief that correctional psychologists are primarily considered correctional officials within correctional systems.

There is thus an expectation from the correctional systems for correctional psychologists to form part of the security and custodial tasks. These activities tend to affect the therapeutic relationship between the correctional psychologist and the offender. Such conflicts of interest result in ethical and professional dilemmas (Allan, 2013; Boothby & Clements, 2002; Kupers, 2005; Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994). Bantjies et al. (2017) also stressed that correctional psychologists find themselves in situations where their code of ethics appear to be in direct conflict with the work they conduct.

Similarly, the findings in this study revealed that participants experienced conflicts with adhering to their scope of practice which is governed by the HPCSA, whilst complying with the DCS policies and regulations. Often participants are left questioning whether they are breaching their code of conduct as per HPCSA regulations to fulfil the mandate rendered by the DCS. According to Schiff and Leip (2019), such conflicts in a system create unclear expectations resulting in obscurity to meet those needs. It can further result in stressful situations for the correctional psychologist and possibly jeopardise the centre's safety and security.

Another ethical dilemma experienced by correctional psychologists is the dual or blurred roles. Dual role dilemmas are not uncommon in the practice of psychology. However, it is inevitable in a correctional system (Boothby & Clements, 2002). Correctional psychologists need to be transparent and descriptive about their possible roles with offenders. For example, offenders need to be informed about the limitations and exceptions to confidentiality due to the nature of the environment (Kupers, 2005; Boothby & Clements, 2002).

Furthermore, there is a likelihood of effecting positive change amongst offenders if correctional psychologists can carefully thread around the path of these ethical dilemmas and render the necessary therapeutic services despite the hurdles they face (Boothby & Clements, 2002). Conversely, Allan (2013) stressed that correctional psychologist do not feel prepared to handle the unique ethical challenges they face when working in a correctional context. Some psychologists may experience cognitive dissonance whereby they negate being psychologists. Moreover, correctional psychologists may also adopt the standards of correctional officials to gain trust and assurance from their colleague counterparts even though these standards are not appropriate for their role as a psychologist (Allan, 2013). Regrettably, correctional psychologists are compelled to contend with ethical and professional dilemmas exclusive to the correctional context (Allan, 2013; Bantjies et al., 2017; Kupers, 2005; Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994).

Superordinate Theme: The Hats We Wear. Correctional employees experience the confusion of roles, being overloaded with work and conflicts of roles resulting in added stress (Evers et al., 2020). Similarly, correctional psychologists are experiencing conflict in the roles and functions they perform (Ricks et al., 2019). Boothby and Clements (2002) also asserted that correctional psychologists find themselves in different roles conducting several

duties which may not be in their job description. Apart from attending to psychological assessments, crisis interventions and therapy, correctional psychologists must contend with other tasks such as conducting administrative duties and rendering psychological services to correctional officials when necessitated. In addition to these multiple roles, correctional psychologists are expected to render services to an over-exceeding number of offenders whilst sometimes functioning alone in a correctional centre (Boothby & Clements, 2002).

The findings in this study revealed the multiple roles participants are expected to enact during the performing of their duties. Participants are considered as managers and psychologists, and are therefore expected to comply with the instructions that dictate the position of a manager. Weinberger and Sreenivasan (1994) termed the dual role function of correctional psychologists as *role distortion*. Consistent with Boothby and Clements (2002), Evers et al. (2020) and Ricks et al. (2019), Weinberger and Sreenivasan (1994) argued that offenders' perceptions of correctional psychologists become confusing when viewing psychologists in dual roles within the correctional system. The psychologist's trustworthiness and effectiveness become compromised (Kupers, 2005).

The psychologist's therapeutic image becomes distorted, and offenders eventually recognise them exclusively as part of the correctional personnel within the correctional system (Kupers, 2005; Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994). Moreover, despite the insufficient professional staff, the correctional organisation still expects the correctional psychologist to perform various other functions that correctional officials can perform, resulting in more of many correctional officials and one less of an already insufficient professional personnel (Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994).

The participants in this study also stressed that therapeutic work forms only a minuscule part of their daily functioning as the manager's role tends to supersede the role of a psychologist. The dual role function that correctional psychologists perform may assist the

correctional organisation temporarily. However, the dual role function may have long-term implications for the effective rehabilitation of offenders, the ultimate purpose for which these groups of professionals are employed. Dual role functions may also lead a correctional psychologist to develop a correctional regime mentality (Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994).

Superordinate Theme: An Unrecognised Profession. Research has shown that individuals willingly render support and subordinate themselves to their organisations when they are treated with justice and fairness when the organisation behaves ethically, and when individuals can express their opinions in the decision-making processes (Bierie & Mann, 2017). In contrast, other studies have indicated that correctional psychologists experience discontent by not being recognised in decision-making processes and experience decreased development opportunities (Evers et al., 2020; Senter et al., 2010). Furthermore, Bantjies et al. (2017) confirmed that mental health professionals experienced a lack of co-operation and support from internal stakeholders, which impeded their capability to provide adequate care to offenders.

Similarly, Weinberger and Sreenivasan (1994) reiterated that although set standards and guidelines are provided for correctional psychologists, they continue to experience ethical dilemmas. This could be attributed to the ambiguity in the set standards, unsupportive correctional personnel, and that the correctional staff do not understand the role of correctional psychologists. The correctional psychologists are left feeling unsupported and discouraged when they strive to adhere to their professional ethics (Allan, 2013).

The findings in this study remain consistent with the literature, in that psychology as a profession within the DCS has not been given much recognition. The role and function of correctional psychologists are not clearly understood by both officials and offenders. Salie et al. (2021) experienced their environments as depressing and stated there is a perception that

the duties of correctional psychologists are a waste of time as the results and outcomes cannot be observed.

Likewise, Rohleder et al. (2006) highlighted that although the policy documents clearly state that their role is to render needs-based psychological services to offenders, most of the correctional personnel did not know or understand what is involved. Rohleder et al. went to the extent of psycho-educating correctional personnel on their role and functions as correctional psychologists; however, it appeared to be in vain as they still experienced challenges concerning what the correctional system expected of them and what they were able to provide.

Similarly, the participants in this study went to the extent of recommending that both officials and offenders be provided with the necessary education to understand the profession of psychology and its role in the DCS. Furthermore, participants stated that their inputs are not considered as they are not included in decisions regarding offenders and the correctional centre. Also, of concern is that participants experience no room for career expansion. Despite the increase of mental health professionals within the correctional system over the years and the valuable services rendered by this group of professionals, they continue to receive very little recognition (Ricks et al., 2019).

Superordinate Theme: Being Micro-Managed versus Flexibility. Correctional systems are highly controlled environments that offer very little autonomy and, as a result, elicit continuous challenges for employees (Evers et al., 2020). Boothby and Clements (2002) in their survey emphasised that autonomy or being self-governed ranked as one of the most significant work dimensions of conducting and accomplishing meaningful work. In stark contrast to Boothby and Clements (2002), community service psychologists (Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021) narrated their inevitable accounts of feeling *imprisoned* within their

confining correctional centres. This is also evidenced in the article title of Rohleder et al. (2006), *doing time: clinical psychologists' experience of community service in a prison placement*. Most notably, fifteen years later, Salie et al. (2021) highlighted similar experiences in their community service year, stating that they were part of a rigid and inflexible correctional system that made them feel imprisoned and disowned as individuals.

The findings in this study appear to remain consistent with the literature as participants raised concerns about being extensively micro-managed by other managers with very little room for flexibility. In addition, participants narrated events of being reprimanded for not strictly following the DCS regulations. It also became apparent that the principles of Batho Pele and Ubuntu, in which the DCS is fundamentally rooted, were not practiced in some correctional centres, as one participant in particular was left feeling dehumanised after the incidents of fumigation and loadshedding occurred at the respective correctional centre. Schiff and Leip (2019) accentuated that a positive relationship between supervisors and subordinates exist when there is a distinctive element of trust.

However, such conditions do not exist in all correctional centres as other participants expressed being minimally micro-managed which afforded them independence and made their work environment enjoyable. Consequently, this study clearly showcased that whilst some participants experience extensive micro-management, others appear to have a certain degree of flexibility.

Superordinate Theme: Deterioration of Clinical Skills. Nhlapo and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2016) emphasised that when correctional employees are not appropriately trained, the set objectives of the department will not be achieved. Accordingly, Ricks et al. (2019) emphasised there is a constant need for training and, particularly, the need for multicultural training such as incorporating socio-cultural issues into psychotherapy. Ricks et

al. further argued that correctional systems should provide training that prioritises cultural competency for correctional psychologists as they work with not only a unique but also a racially diverse population.

Correspondingly, and like the experiences of Rohleder et al. (2006) and Salie et al. (2021), the findings in this study revealed insufficient financial resources to attend training specifically designed for correctional psychologists. Furthermore, when funds do become available, the administration to gain approval for the training is a lengthy and laborious process. Most notably, however, is that participants spend more time conducting tasks that do not involve therapeutic work and this eventually results in the blunting of their clinical skills.

Superordinate Theme: Even the Healer Needs Healing from Burnout.

Correctional employees experience severe health conditions because of their work in correctional systems (Evers et al., 2020). Work-related stress has become a common denominator in most working environments that are progressively developing and are subjugated by constant employee relations (Shimazu et al., 2017). Work-related stress may also result in burnout, psychological and physical illness, high turnover rate, absenteeism from work, low work morale and diminished effectiveness and efficiency performing duties (Schiff & Leip, 2019; Shimazu et al., 2017).

According to Senter et al. (2010), burnout is a condition whereby one experiences decreased individualistic achievement, exacerbated fatigue, and increased emotional and physical disassociation to their environment. Additionally, public service psychologists are at a greater risk of experiencing burnout than psychologists working in private practice (Senter et al.). Subsequently, correctional psychologists may experience higher levels of anxiety and stress, resulting in burnout much more swiftly than psychologists working in other settings due to various challenges such as resource constraints when working in a strenuous

correctional setting with offenders (Bantjies et al., 2017; Boothby & Clements, 2002; Senter et al., 2010).

Senter et al. (2010) also indicated that prolonged interaction with sexual offenders and their victims results in burnout. Furthermore, Rohleder et al. (2006) emphasised that correctional psychologists may experience burnout from working with offenders who reveal disturbing and traumatic narratives. Burnout is also one of the reasons why professionals leave the profession of psychology (Senter et al., 2010). Consistent with the literature, the findings in this study revealed that participants experienced symptoms of burnout with minimal debriefing or personal supervision provided. Notably, this study identified that participants require the DCS to fund the services of personal supervision or debriefing. Shimazu et al. (2017) agreed that it is the responsibility of every organisation to implement physical and psychosocial mitigation strategies so employees can experience a conducive working environment.

Master Theme: Power in Resilience

According to Herrman et al. (2011), resilience may be described as the ability to positively adapt or maintain a functioning psychological state during times of traumatic events. Factors that may contribute to gaining resilience may be personal (personality traits, internal locus of control, mastery, self-esteem, cognitive judgement), biological (changes in brain function and biological developments) and environmental (social support and interpersonal relationships). However, an individual is more than likely to develop resilience from regular and sustained stressors or when the traumatic effects are cushioned by reassuring relationships (Herrman et al., 2011). Taking into consideration the previous superordinate and master themes which are mostly consistent with the literature (Allan, 2013; Bantjies et al., 2017; Boothby & Clements, 2002; Evers et al., 2020; Kupers, 2005; Nhlapo

and Vyas-Doorgapersad; 2016; Ricks et al., 2019; Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021; Senter et al., 2010; Schiff & Leip, 2019; Shimazu et al., 2017; Weinberger & Sreenivasan, 1994) and the effect on participants who endure the frequent and prolonged adverse effects within their work environment, with some of them being in the DCS for years, the resilience acquired over time is extraordinary. In addition, participants' contend with vicarious trauma daily, become desensitised over time and seek debriefing, therapy, and supervision as coping mechanisms. They also must contend with peer issues and deal with acquired behavioural and psychological implications, all of which contribute to their existing stressors. Hence the superordinate themes below reflect participants' stressors and their level of resilience to adjust and adapt during adverse situations.

Superordinate Theme: The Effect of Vicarious Trauma on Mental Health.

According to Thomas (2012), correctional employees are compelled to work in correctional centres that are highly volatile and vulnerable, making it almost inevitable for them to experience emotional, psychological, physical or indirect trauma. Factors such as regular contact with offenders, a negative social environment, and feelings of being unsafe in a correctional centre may also result in experiences of direct or indirect trauma (Thomas, 2012). Mento et al. (2021) found that the terms secondary trauma and vicarious trauma were used interchangeably in the literature. Secondary trauma, as described by Mento et al. is a consequential result of care between two individuals whereby one experienced the trauma, and the other was exposed to the trauma through the other's pain. Secondary trauma symptoms are like those of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), in which a person may experience disturbing and intrusive thoughts, avoidance, depression, and anxiety.

Additionally, Mento et al. (2021) described vicarious trauma as a process of transference between therapists or other colleagues because of the empathic therapeutic

relationship with a patient who suffered a traumatic experience. Bahuman (2020) emphasised that vicarious trauma occurs during empathic interaction with a client suffering from trauma. Vicarious trauma may occur either by listening to explicit, traumatic events narrated by the client, having to bear witness to individuals' malice with each other, or either witnessing or being part of a traumatic replay of actual events (Bahuman, 2020). Thomas (2012) reiterated that an individual might experience vicarious trauma by listening to another's retelling of a traumatic event.

The effect of vicarious trauma on psychologists working with trauma cases can be quite harmful. It may contribute to burnout and result in an eventual decline in the value of services provided (Bahuman, 2020; Malkina-Pykh, 2017). Vicarious trauma might also result in psychological and emotional implications and affect how an individual functions in their work environment (Thomas, 2012). Burke (2022) emphasised that early-career female psychologists also experience vicarious trauma when conducting trauma work. Correctional psychologists encounter a high number of psychologically ill offenders. They are also compelled to deal with the traumatic paraphernalia when interacting with offenders who narrate some of the most horrendous criminal behaviours committed (Rohleder et al., 2006). Subsequently, Malkina-Pykh (2017) contended that correctional psychologists experience higher levels of burnout than other psychologists who conduct services in various environments.

The findings in this study are consistent with the literature in that several participants expressed being traumatised by offenders' explicit narratives of the crimes they committed. These crime stories result in participants experiencing vicarious trauma, which they are forced to contend with long after the sessions are over. However, despite experiencing vicarious trauma daily, participants have also demonstrated resilience by returning to the

correctional environment and performing their duties as usual whilst personally dealing with the effect of the trauma.

Superordinate Theme: Desensitisation. Correctional employees are susceptible to experiencing an array of negative emotions such as depression and depersonalisation because of their services to offenders who have experienced traumatic events, criminality, and a range of other deviant behaviours (Bademci et al., 2016). Furthermore, correctional employees may experience emotional exhaustion, which is interlinked to various symptoms of stress such as tension, insomnia, anxiety, fatigue, increased substance use, and interpersonal relationship problems (Allard et al., 2003). Depersonalisation becomes the coping mechanism to desensitise or reduce emotional exhaustion when working with clients (Allard et al.). Similarly, correctional psychologists ultimately become desensitised whilst working in correctional settings (Allan, 2013).

Correspondingly, the findings in this study identified that participants undergo a process of desensitisation as the traumatic narratives of crime stories they hear in sessions becomes a familiar process. Over time, the participants develop a resilience to the traumatic narratives, and they become used to it or *desensitised*. Interestingly, participants used the phrase *going into autopilot mode* as the only way to protect their own mental health and wellbeing.

Superordinate Theme: Debriefing, Therapy, and Supervision as a Coping Mechanism. The trauma work that psychologists do with clients can be psychologically harmful and toxic resulting in stress-related outcomes such as vicarious trauma, empathic stress, and compassion fatigue (Bell et al., 2019; Hernández et al., 2010). The literature emphasises that organisational factors such as the value of supervision, organisational

support, and cohesion are significant influences to assist psychologists cope with the taxing process of conducting trauma work (Bell et al., 2019; Thomas, 2012). Additionally, training and supervision are essential tools to assist psychologists gain insight and awareness into their own weaknesses, maintain self-care and forge support systems on an individual and organisational level (Hernández et al., 2010).

Rohleder et al. (2006) mentioned that as community service psychologists, they conducted peer group supervision weekly, which served as an effective coping mechanism. This group provided the space they needed to vent about the organisational challenges experienced and rendered the necessary support. Regrettably, this group fell apart when the permanent psychologist decided that it was not relevant. In addition, two of the authors and another colleague found it necessary to seek external supervision, which they paid for personally. Ultimately, Rohleder et al. had no alternative but to seek individual therapy to process the work-related trauma they experienced as it became their only means of coping with their situation.

Similarly, the findings in this study remain consistent with that of Rohleder et al. (2006) as participants articulated needing debriefing, therapy or supervision as a coping mechanism to deal with the distressful experiences they encounter on a daily basis. Interestingly, participants coping mechanisms entailed humour, physical exertion, relief in family, and personal therapy. Notably, however, is that participants expressed a sense of relief after talking to their colleagues of the same fraternity.

Superordinate Theme: Peer Support versus Power Struggles. According to Mead and MacNeil (2006), peer support may be described as a group of people who share similar experiences, have a greater understanding, and can provide genuine compassion and support. Additionally, individuals with comparably similar lived experiences can provide hands-on

advice and recommendations as they have experienced a similar event. Conversely, Beerli (2018) highlighted that internal power struggles are characteristically common in organisations where the various category of professionals are structured differently according to significance and reasoning. Their realities may differ resulting in power struggles. Organisations may also experience an interplay of peer support and power struggles amongst their employees. This was evident in the findings of this study, as most participants experienced peer support from their colleagues in the form of assisting one another, working well together, and forming solid friendships. On the other hand, some participants maintained strictly professional relationships characterised by distance and isolation.

Likewise, Bell et al. (2019) conducted an exploratory study with 36 mental health professionals and correctional officials working in the inpatient healthcare centre at a large male remand detention facility in London to investigate the degree of exposure to traumatic events, burnout levels, compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction, and to identify risk and protective factors. The study identified that many participants experienced medium levels of burnout, compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction. Furthermore, exposure to traumatic events was related to decreased well-being in participants.

Based on the findings of their study, Bell et al. (2019) highlighted that peer support was appreciated as being helpful and encouraging, however it was apparent that the organisational structure did not provide emotional support and frequent supervision. Bell et al. argued that correctional systems must provide organisational support that embraces spontaneous engagements with correctional professionals. Similarly, Rohleder et al. (2006) reported that initially, they experienced some support from the permanent psychologist who would join them during their peer group supervision until the permanent psychologist found it unnecessary. However, Rohleder et al. experienced confusion about the role of the permanent psychologist, especially in terms of supervision and management, which led to

personal conflict between them and the permanent psychologist. This ultimately led to the fragmentation of the group that experienced differences of opinions concerning supervision.

Consistent with other studies, the findings in this study, highlight the significance of peer support amongst correctional psychologists. Paradoxically, although correctional psychologists support one another other, the presence of power struggles amongst them are clear.

Superordinate Theme: Discord versus Solidarity with Social Workers. Adequate services to clients in various settings such as hospitals, clinics, and even correctional settings require a multidisciplinary approach. The different professionals must cooperate to ensure quality client care. Traditionally, respect and trust for each other's professions should support a professional and collaborative alliance. However, when there is no respect and trust between professionals, the effective management of clients will be in jeopardy (Koeske et al., 1993).

The literature on the relationship between psychologists and social workers working in organisations are archaic. However, like psychologists, social workers also experience demanding and challenging careers with excessive administration, overwhelming caseloads, challenges with demanding clients, shortage of human resources and inadequate supervision (Kim & Stoner, 2008). Bell et al. (2019) and Kim and Stoner (2008) also called on managers and supervisors to develop policies that will encourage supportive working environments for social workers, manage the day-to-day work, provide methods for conducting the work, and assist in decision-making.

However, the findings in this study revealed that although psychologists and social workers are expected to work together sharing mutual respect for one another, this is not necessarily a true reflection of the relationship. Although participants claimed to experience

supportive relationships with social workers in their correctional centres, some also questioned the competency of social workers in writing reports for offenders and clearly displayed their reservations in this regard. Furthermore, participants acknowledged perceptions of inferiority, power struggles and professional jealousy between the two professional groups.

Superordinate Theme: Developing Resilient Behaviours. By virtue of the work they conduct, mental health professionals are likely to experience vicarious trauma when working with clients who have endured traumatic experiences. Mental health professionals may experience difficulties in relationships within various contexts because of encountering vicarious trauma. Additionally, they may also experience emotional and physical health issues. Moreover, professionals working in environments that are considered unsympathetic and lack the promotion of self-care are vulnerable to experiencing vicarious trauma (Taylor, C. M., 2021).

Thus, factors such as educational level, clinical training, years of experience, job satisfaction, and attitude and different intensities of resilience meaningfully impact an individual's understanding and response to stress within their work environment (Thomas, 2012). Resilience refers to the practical methods that trauma survivors adopt as coping mechanisms to survive and flourish during traumatic situations (Hernandez-Wolfe, 2018). Qualitative studies have detected that psychologists, teachers and community leaders who work with trauma survivors experience vicarious resilience (Hernandez-Wolfe, 2018). According to Hernandez-Wolfe, psychotherapists who worked with trauma survivors highlighted gaining motivation and inspiration, which showcased that working with trauma cases could touch and change psychologists exceptionally and constructively.

Reynolds (2020) described vicarious resilience as the affirming influence professionals encounter when working with clients who have undergone traumatic experiences. Such encounters may be witnessed in modifications made by professionals in their perceptions, show of courage, heightened awareness of clients' religious beliefs as a therapeutic benefit and increased self-care and self-awareness.

Like Hernandez-Wolfe (2018), a superordinate theme of developing resilient behaviours in the face of adversity was harmonised amongst participants in this study. They articulated that the experiences have led them to become stronger and braver and that is why they are still able to thrive in a correctional setting. Evidently, acquiring resilient behaviours has also resulted in participants implementing innovative strategies that not only provides them with a sense of achievement and builds self-worth but also assists in the rehabilitative process of offenders.

Superordinate Theme: Acquired Behavioural and Psychological Implications.

According to Senter et al. (2010), life satisfaction refers to the positive attributes contributing to an individual's overall functioning. Shimazu et al. (2017) emphasised that an individual's perception and attitude towards their work environment may contribute to their state of health. If an individual's psychological and social wellbeing are not properly modulated, it can result in adverse effects such as depression, anxiety, stress, and decreased work performance. Ricciardelli et al. (2021) concurred that correctional employees are at a greater risk of developing mental disorders due to the work they conduct in an unpredictable environment.

According to Thomas (2012), correctional employees who experience trauma whilst working in a correctional centre are more likely to encounter both emotional and physical

illnesses. Sustained contact with trauma work may also result in increased stress, emotional dissonance, medically related concerns, interpersonal difficulties, and dysfunctional behaviours. Deterioration of physical and emotional wellbeing can result in decreased judgement and alertness, hence comprising the safety and security of the institution and creating life-threatening situations. Additionally, offenders may not receive the necessary services and will be forced to find dysfunctional ways of meeting their needs. Consequently, this increases smuggling of unauthorised articles such as drugs and an increase in violence within the correctional centre (Thomas, 2012).

Consistent with the findings of Thomas (2012) and Ricciardelli et al. (2021), the participants in this study also mentioned developing behavioural and psychological effects from working in correctional centres. Participants expressed concerns pertaining to their own safety and security as well as becoming hyper-vigilant over their family's safety. The psychological implications acquired from working in a correctional centre comes with added repercussions that impact participants' lives outside of the correctional setting as they struggle with the issue of trust and paranoia, always questioning other individuals' motives. Rohleder et al. (2006) also highlighted similar findings, stating that they experienced fear and anxiety from working in correctional centres and even thought about changing their cell phone numbers for fear that an offender may contact them. Consequently, these acquired psychological behaviours also infiltrated and impacted their personal lives.

Shimazu et al. (2017) emphasised that an employee experiencing any of these psychological states may not readily seek professional help. Furthermore, affected employees may not disclose their current state of health to their supervisors fearing being stigmatised or experiencing a lack of understanding and support. Without the appropriate assistance and support, the resulting implications may result in long periods of absenteeism and in a broader sense, affect general organisational performance. Essentially, Shimazu et al. specifically

highlighted that the onus is with the employee's organisation to implement health assistance programmes that alleviate issues of occupational stress and enhance employee psychosocial wellbeing. Furthermore, Shimazu et al. provided guidance into the type of programmes that organisations should consider for overall organisational health. Some programmes include organisational leadership, health risk screening, individually tailored programmes, and a supportive working ethos.

Superordinate Theme: A Reflective and Cathartic Experience. According to Sandu and Pescaru (2018), catharsis is a Greek concept meaning purifying and clean. Blasco et al. (2018) also stated that catharsis accurately translated means to wash out feelings that have been suppressed in the soul. Catharsis is also an organising process in which an individual can categorise, order, and make sense of their feelings and emotions. In contrast, reflections are processes that assist in meting out feelings and generating understandings of current situations (Curtis et al., 2018). Thus, effective communication creates the platform for individuals to express their emotions and feelings vividly. It is through the process of articulating feelings and emotions that one can reflect, confess, and recognise what they are experiencing. A cathartic process occurs when emotions and feelings are released so it provides a satisfying sense of order and relief (Blasco et al., 2018; Sandu & Pescaru, 2018).

The findings in this study revealed that although participants entered the interview process with the aim of discussing their lived experiences within the correctional centres, the interviews, however unintentional, provided a conducive and cathartic space for the participants. They were able to reflect on their time spent in the correctional centre, gain insight into their own behaviours and facilitate awareness into aspects they may still need to improve, both on a personal and professional level. Notably, through the process of narrating their experiences, participants were able to recognise the resilience they possessed.

Master Theme: Reframing the Profession of Psychology within the DCS

Correctional psychologists struggle with various challenges whilst rendering services in correctional centres. This was evidenced in the literature, including Ricks et al. (2019), Rohleder et al. (2006) and Salie et al. (2021). However, despite enduring the frequent and negative causalities of working in correctional settings, the participants in this study were able to reframe the profession of psychology within the DCS by giving it a positive spin. Participants expressed maintaining nurturing relationships which aided their quest in rendering services to offenders. They saw value in the services they provide to both the offenders and the organisation. In addition, they experienced a sense of achievement in the work they conducted.

The challenging therapeutic cases fundamentally create room for experiential learning, thereby enhancing participant skills. Furthermore, participants mentioned working with a unique and interesting population, a privilege that their counterparts in other settings do not acquire. They can conduct therapy with offenders using theoretical approaches that they find befitting. Most notably, participants mentioned conducting remunerative work outside of the DCS, which is unique to the South African correctional context. The correctional context is also perceived as a place of research and training. Despite the stumbling blocks in their path, participants have made strides in attempting to effect change within the correctional centres. The superordinate themes will be discussed below.

Superordinate Theme: Nurturing Relationships. According to Melhem and Al Qudah (2019), maintaining good interpersonal relationships result in positive and supportive work environments that ultimately yield enhanced outcomes. Interpersonal relationships that foster encouragement and nurturance create a foundation for positive results in employee cooperation, efficiency, trustworthiness, and hands-on work engagement. Additionally, Andri

et al. (2021) emphasised that organisations need to utilise a strategy to develop employee skills. Andri et al. concurred that supervision from management and personality could affect occupational performance. Furthermore, empowering and involving employees in the performance of duties and decision-making processes permit for the recognition and importance of individuals when positive outcomes are achieved.

Motivating and nurturing relationships in organisations are significant in developing employee capability and competence. Building teamwork and trusting employees to complete tasks allocated to them involves empowering leadership and is considered an individual's strength (Andri et al., 2021). Correctional employees work in highly organised correctional environments rigged with highly volatile behaviours that can compromise the safety and security of the institution. Furthermore, correctional employees experience occupational stressors which can harm their work and family relationships. Conversely, correctional employees who experience increased participation in decision-making processes, innovation and direction through supervision also experience decreased stress, increased job satisfaction and demonstrate higher levels of work commitment (Ricciardelli et al., 2021).

Similarly, the findings in this study revealed that for participants to gain the necessary support to perform their duties, they fostered professional relationships with correctional officials on all levels. This resulted in participants gaining assistance from the system to perform their tasks optimally.

Superordinate Theme: Providing a Valuable Service. Correctional psychologists perform various tasks and duties within the correctional system. They are involved in clinical work with offenders; they design, participate, and supervise various therapeutic programmes; they are involved in crisis intervention and conduct therapy with offenders (Bierie & Mann, 2017). Occasionally, the correctional psychologist is called upon to render therapeutic

interventions to the correctional officials when necessitated. Correctional psychologists may also act as advocates and translators within the correctional system and contribute to policy development. They are also professional practitioners who may work in a sole capacity of clinician or may take on several roles such as clinician, forensic, researcher, mediator as well as performing tasks external of the correctional centre but which is of value to the enhancement of the correctional system (Bierie & Mann, 2017).

Moreover, Ricks et al., (2019) emphasised that apart from managing symptoms, correctional psychologists play a valuable role in providing hope amongst offenders, alleviating cognitive distortions, and exemplifying positive change. Their role is viewed as rehabilitative, which is the central mission of correctional systems (Department of Correctional Services, 2005). Correspondingly, the findings in this study clearly emphasised that despite the enduring challenges that participants' experience, they are still willing to assist the correctional system achieve its mission by providing a service that necessitates positive and rehabilitative change for offenders.

Superordinate Theme: Work Satisfaction. Vickovic and Morrow (2020) described job or work satisfaction as a sense of achievement related to specific needs connected to an individual's purpose in their work environment. According to Senter et al. (2010), job or work satisfaction refers to the overall positive emotions that individuals ascribe to the work they perform. Work satisfaction is also directly related to whether individuals feel their expectations are being met or not at their place of work. Generally, employee work satisfaction is vital for the adequate functioning of correctional systems (Vickovic & Morrow, 2020). Correctional psychologists find their work challenging yet stimulating at the same time. This is attributed to the operational demands imposed by the correctional system and the presenting problems that offenders raise (Boothby & Clements, 2002). Senter et al.

(2010) asserted there was a noteworthy negative association between job satisfaction and centres that were overcrowded.

Essentially, the findings in this study revealed that participants attain fulfillment and satisfaction from providing a critical service to offenders and watching the positive transformation take place. Participants feel relevant and appreciated which explicates the work satisfaction they experience.

Superordinate Theme: Honing Skills. Magaletta et al. (2007) emphasised that for correctional psychologists to be effective in rendering therapeutic services to offenders, they must undergo sufficient academic and continuous training in the field. In addition, Neal (2020) accentuated that it is expected of correctional psychologists to improve and enhance their competencies and skills correctly steer through ethical dilemmas that are unique to the correctional system. Correctional psychologists also require special skill sets to handle interdisciplinary communication, conflict avoidance, working in housing units, and with correctional officials. It is also required of correctional psychologists to develop a distinct skill set used during psychological assessments and therapeutic interventions and enhance competence. Furthermore, Neal stated that correctional psychologists could develop these skills whilst conducting on-the-job training and during internships. Ironically, the findings in this study discovered that experiencing challenging caseloads is a *necessary evil*, as participants were able to take from those experiences and hone their skills.

Superordinate Theme: Working with a Unique and Interesting Population. The literature has identified that, unlike the typical work environments, correctional settings present a unique and threatening environment that hosts an unpredictable, atypical population (Allan, 2013; Bantjies et al., 2017; Boothby & Clements, 2002; Evers et al., 2020; Ricks et

al., 2019; Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021; Senter et al., 2010). In addition, literature focussed chiefly on the impact of such an environment on its employees, most popularly, the correctional officials (Ricciardelli et al., 2021; Vickovic & Morrow, 2020). This is to be expected considering correctional officials' role within correctional centres (Senter et al., 2010).

Research further confirmed that there is a high percentage of offenders experiencing psychopathology, with only a few receiving the necessary psychological and psychiatric interventions. Psychological disorders amongst incarcerated offenders include depression, aggressive behaviours, anxiety, adjustment disorders and psychoses. Mainstream therapy, however, was aimed at improving emotional instabilities in offenders (Bantjies et al., 2017; Boothby & Clements, 2002). Furthermore, Bantjies et al. (2017) emphasised literature that indicates high rates of suicide amongst the offender population. Bantjies et al. found that their study was consistent with findings from the literature because professionals frequently encountered suicidal offenders whilst some offenders displayed a history of mental health problems. Correspondingly, Ricks et al. (2019) stressed that correctional psychologists are a group of professionals experiencing unique and valuable challenges as they are tasked with the responsibility of providing psychological treatment to an atypical population.

Similarly, the findings in this study displayed that despite the intimidating nature of offenders and the threatening correctional environment, participants actually feel advantaged as they are allowed the opportunity to experience both worlds, working with the offender population and the communities in which they have established independent practice. Participants emphasised that not all psychologists are privileged to find themselves in this position.

Superordinate Theme: The Use of Various Theoretical Approaches. Boothby and Clements (2002) in their survey, found that psychologists generally implemented an eclectic theoretical approach in their therapeutic interventions but were also at liberty to utilise various theoretical approaches. Many of the respondents in their survey mentioned utilising cognitive, behavioural, rational,-emotive, and psychodynamic theoretical approaches in providing therapeutic services to offenders. Similarly, this study showed that participants seem satisfied in having the choice to approach therapy with whichever theoretical approach they see befitting. Participants are experts in their field and such found it appropriate that they determine the theoretical approach to use. Correspondingly, the literature emphasises various treatment approaches such as sand tray therapy in counselling juvenile offenders and - trauma-based therapies to assist in corrections based therapeutic interventions aimed at enhancing the rehabilitative process of offenders and reducing the rate of recidivism (Parker & Cade, 2018; Levenson & Willis, 2019).

Superordinate Theme: Remunerative Work Outside of the DCS (Private Practice): Unique to the South African Correctional Context. The findings in this study revealed a unique and stimulating superordinate theme exclusive to the South African correctional context: *Remunerative work outside of the DCS*. Most notably, Participant Eight mentioned that one of the advantages of working for the DCS was that psychologists are allowed to conduct private work (private practice) after completing their working hours in the DCS provided they have official consent. I conducted a literature search to determine if correctional psychologists conducted remunerative work in other countries. However, no literature on this specific theme could be found. Subsequently, this unique theme can also be revised and implemented as a DCS retention strategy.

Superordinate Theme: A Context for Research and Training. According to Bierie and Mann (2017), psychologists have been active participants in the correctional world since the early 19th century and continue to produce significant findings related to correctional progressions. Several early psychologists piloted various scientific and theoretical developments within the correctional organisations and gained professional identity as clinicians and counsellors, which increased their professional status. For example, the APA president in 1898, Hugo Münsterberg, wrote the first forensic psychology manuscript in 1908 and the evolving applications of psychology to questions of crime and justice which became widely acknowledged. Even today, correctional systems remain a productive context for research and training (Bierie & Mann, 2017).

Furthermore, Bierie and Mann (2017) argued that had correctional psychologists not been working in correctional centres for the past century, the accrual of correctional research would have been reduced and much less detailed in quality. Correctional psychologists within the correctional system are exceptional among the social sciences and indeed carries a significant legacy.

Correspondingly, the findings in this study revealed that participants found correctional settings to be an appropriate environment for conducting research, providing experiential training and gaining experience. Conversely, a study conducted by Ricks et al. (2019) found that correctional clinicians now spend more time conducting therapy and less time doing research. The authors concluded that the increase in workload that this group endures is likely the reason for the decrease in conducting research.

Superordinate Theme: Taking the Initiative and Effecting Change. According to Andri et al. (2021), taking the initiative to complete work tasks is a positive individual attribute that enhances organisational performance. The proactive behaviours of employees

allow for the control and management of situations and instil positive change in the organisation (Andri et al., 2021). Correctional psychologists are the only representatives for effecting social science within correctional environments (Bierie & Mann, 2017). One of many examples is based on the work of Levenson and Willis (2019) who attempted to initiate and effect change by addressing the role of trauma in offending behaviour. This improves the understanding of the development of criminal behaviour and assists in advancing therapeutic interventions. Similarly, the findings in this study showcased that when participants are provided with the necessary support and co-operation, they were able to make positive changes in the correctional system, which not only enhances rehabilitation but also reduces risk behaviours amongst offenders.

Master Theme: Possible Retention Strategies

The previous master themes have highlighted the disadvantages, challenges and consequences for correctional psychologists who work in correctional systems (Bantjies et al., 2017; Boothby & Clements, 2002; Ricks et al., 2019; Rohleder et al., 2006; Salie et al., 2021; Senter et al., 2010). However, despite the hurdles they face, participants who work for the DCS as correctional psychologists display resilient behaviours and have reframed the profession of psychology in the DCS, which ultimately plays an integral role in assisting them to overcome some of their most difficult experiences. In addition, participants were probed about what could be done to retain their services in the DCS. The superordinate themes below highlight possible retention strategies that the DCS could employ to retain this group of scarce skill professionals.

Superordinate Theme: Remaining in the Service of the DCS. According to Boothby and Clements (2002), the more crime continues to ravage communities, the more

likely the offender population will continue to rise, and the more likely there will be an increase in incarcerated mentally ill offenders. Hence, the likelihood of correctional systems constantly recruiting correctional psychologists. Additionally, Boothby and Clements argued that it is possible that recently graduated psychologists may not consider a career in corrections due to the challenging environment and clientele. Fourie (2015) also highlighted that the DCS is experiencing challenges retaining social workers and psychologists. These professionals play an integral role in the rehabilitation process of offenders. Fourie questioned how the vacancy rates of professionals' affect the rehabilitative process as well as the expectations they place on correctional officials.

Correspondingly, according to the latest DCS Annual Report 2020/2021 (Department of Correctional Services, 2021), as of 31 March 2021, the number of posts on the approved establishment for psychologists and vocational counsellors was 98. The number of posts filled was 86, and the vacancy rate for psychologists was 12 (2%). Furthermore, the number of psychologists and vocational counsellors employed at the beginning of 01 April 2020 was 123. The department had had 46 psychologists' terminations and transfers out of the department resulting in a turnover rate of 37, 4%.

Likewise, the participants in this study unanimously indicated that although they did not intend to resign anytime soon, they will not retire in the service of the DCS. Participants agreed to remain in the service of the DCS between five to 10 years, and only if there are no better employment opportunities available. Subsequently, the DCS Annual Report 2020/2021 (Department of Correctional Services, 2021) clearly indicates that psychologists are finding it challenging to remain in the service of the DCS.

Superordinate Theme: Further Academic Development within the DCS. Students interested in a career in corrections should consider gaining clinical experience through

internships and community service in the field of corrections as this training prepares them for a permanent career in the field and nurtures future work satisfaction (Boothby & Clements, 2002). In addition, Magaletta et al. (2020) conducted two studies with chief correctional psychologists (CCP) who provide leadership and supervision to correctional psychologists. Their first study was discussed above under the heading *Psychological reports*. Their second study to explore staff development consisted of data collected during a national training conference held in 2015 for CCPs. They worked for the various Federal Bureau of Prisons in the United States of America. Their sample size consisted of 90 participants. The data was transcribed so descriptive statistics could be presented. The study's outcome indicated that to enhance development in their staff, CCPs considered staff conducting projects that ranged beyond their scope and accepting responsibility that was external of their current positions.

Moreover, Bantjies et al. (2017) identified that permanently employed correctional psychologists need training that will assist them in effectively dealing with suicide prevention. It, therefore, becomes imperative that mental health practitioners keep abreast of the latest and scientific developments in the public sector and work towards positively changing how services are rendered (Ax et al., 2007).

Consistent with the literature, the findings in this study showed that participants consider the DCS to be an appropriate setting for further academic development. Participants emphasised that one can use the opportunity to further a Doctoral degree which is what one of the participants has done. Participants also appeared keen to follow the same route. According to Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad (2016), gender-based training needs are significant to aid both male and female correctional employees identify their appropriate career paths and establishing advancement opportunities. Subsequently, the theme of further academic development is something the DCS should consider as a possible retention strategy

and review the possibility of providing correctional psychologists with a bursary for completing the required degree.

Superordinate Theme: The Need for Continuous Support. Bantjies et al. (2017) highlighted that professionals depend on other staff members to assist them with observing, and safe custody of suicidal offenders. However, professionals experience difficulty carrying out their objectives in providing adequate care to offenders due to the lack of collaboration and support from the correctional system. As a result, professionals feel segregated from the system and work in isolation rather than with a multidisciplinary team to provide adequate care to offenders (Bantjies et al., 2017). In addition, Bantjies et al. stressed that mental health professionals need assistance and direction when dealing with suicidal offenders. Furthermore, the personal experiences of Rohleder et al. (2006), were extremely challenging as they reported being ignored and feeling unsupported by the management of the DCS, especially concerning the indifference shown to their concerns and requests.

Comparatively, the findings in this study articulated the appreciation of participants who expressed that management is supportive and approves the necessary gatherings that psychologists attend. According to participants, this is the space in which they are able to express their challenges and feel heard. The participants unanimously agreed that they are in need of continuous support.

Superordinate Theme: Closing the Gaps to Meet the Needs of Correctional Psychologists. According to Boothby and Clements (2002), correctional systems need to create correctional centres conducive to retaining recruited correctional psychologists and various other professionals. Boothby and Clements highlighted the ripple effect of large and overcrowded correctional centres with fewer psychologists to render services on the turnover

rate. Correctional psychologists experience decreased work satisfaction when they are expected to render services to a multitude of offenders, especially when they themselves are but only a few. In addition, Boothby and Clements argued that there are limited opportunities for psychologists to climb the corporate ladder within the correctional system as advertised positions tend to focus more on the experience of general correctional management.

Hawk (as cited in Boothby & Clements, 2002, p. 314) provided a fundamental viewpoint by stating that, "Corrections is a field in which psychologists can continue to function as psychologists, regardless of what position they may hold and even if they no longer are providing direct client services, because the totality of correctional work involves the dynamics of human behavior and emotions." Boothby and Clements reiterated that if psychologists are to be retained within the correctional system, they should also be afforded opportunities for career advancement within the correctional system. In addition, Nhlapo and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2016) highlighted that the history of the DCS recruitment process clearly depicted a male dominant environment.

However, similar conditions continue to prevail, thus demonstrating gender-biased appointments of officials. Such conditions have also become apparent in the recruitment and retaining of professionals responsible for rehabilitating offenders. Nhlapo and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2016) argued that the turnover rate of such professionals remain high as these professionals remain in the service for only a short period. Nhlapo and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2016) further claimed that this is attributed to the limited reimbursements that professionals receive from the DCS compared to the benefits received from the private sector. It is therefore vital for the DCS to benchmark best practices from other countries to close the capacity gaps if they are to retain professionals in the service of the DCS (Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016).

Second, Ricks et al. (2019) recommended that correctional systems should consider forming partnerships with universities to include corrections related courses and practical experience as this will aid in preparing future correctional psychologists for the correctional setting workforce. Furthermore, Ricks et al. stressed that correctional systems that employ psychologists to render services to offenders need to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field to retain this valuable group of professionals.

Third, Ax et al. (2007) emphasised that the offender population is increasing, and the access to resources is decreasing. To utilise resources effectively and efficiently, Ax et al. recommended that research be conducted to investigate the benefits, impact and potential costs of intervention strategies that could potentially benefit correctional systems. Rohleder et al. (2006) mentioned that psychiatrists only occasionally provide consultations to offenders resulting in several offenders not receiving treatment or psychiatric medications timeously. Most notably, Ax et al. (2007) stated that such demand for psychiatric attention coupled with there being scarce resources, whether intentionally or by default, makes good sense for correctional psychologists to add prescriptive authority to their scope of practice as they are constantly interacting and consulting with the offenders. This authority will not only address the lack of resources but also enable correctional psychologists to render effective and efficient pharmacological and psychotherapeutic interventions when necessitated. Perhaps this is something that the DCS and HPCSA, in conjunction with correctional psychologists, should consider to keep up with scientific advancements and address the lack of resources.

Fourth, Rohleder et al. (2006) argued that the DCS needs to make adequate provision for protection and support for psychologists. Rohleder et al. are of the view that placing community service psychologists within the various correctional centres without any protection, planning, or support can result in possible life-threatening situations.

Last, the findings in this study were consistent with research in that participants clearly articulated the need for favourable working conditions which provided for their basic needs whilst enhancing their professional needs within the DCS. The field of psychology needs to be taken more seriously in the DCS. Participants also emphasised that they want to work according to their job description and not be compelled to render additional services such as conducting the duties of the employee assistance programme officials to correctional officials. Participants also specified that they need to attend training that is specifically designed for the work they perform. Most notably, however, were participants' requests for the appointment of a Director at the National Psychological Directorate who will provide leadership and guidance to all correctional psychologists.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of the study and compared it to the literature. Nine master themes and forty-seven superordinate themes were extensively discussed. For the study, I attempted to differentiate the superordinate themes. However, it should be noted that the superordinate themes are interlinked. Although most of the superordinate themes are consistent with literature, two superordinate themes stand out.

The first, which poses a concern for participants, is the absence of a Director to head the National Psychological Directorate and provide guidance and direction for participants who have had to unequivocally use their clinical judgement and discretion to navigate through the challenges they face within their respective correctional centres.

Another cause of concern was meeting the Annual Performance Plan Targets set by the DCS, which participants expressed as seeking quantity in the number of offenders consulted instead of a quality therapeutic service that facilitates the process of rehabilitation. In contrast, a superordinate theme that appears to be advantageous and acts as a retention

strategy for correctional psychologists is conducting remunerative work outside of the DCS. According to my knowledge, this theme may be unique to the South African correctional context as no literature supporting this finding could be retrieved. Furthermore, conducting research within the context of the DCS, in pursuit of a Doctoral degree, could also enhance the retention strategy if the DCS considers providing a bursary for this qualification.

Essentially, the master themes identified in the study highlight the concerns, challenges, and disadvantages that correctional psychologists experience daily. However, despite the depressing lived experiences and challenges they face, participants working in the DCS were able to develop resilience, overcome the hurdles and reframe the profession of psychology for themselves as they continue to embark on their professional journey in the DCS. Finally, the superordinate themes also bring to light possible retention strategies that the DCS could employ to retain this group of scarce skill professionals. The following chapter will summarise the study, discuss the limitations and provide the recommendations.

Chapter Seven

Summary, Limitations and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

According to the DCS (Department of Correctional Services, 2005), psychologists are a group of professionals who are entrusted with the essential task of rehabilitating offenders, thereby addressing the recidivism rate and protecting societies. Psychologists are therefore considered scarce or critical due to the invaluable services rendered to offenders. The primary role of the psychologist employed in the DCS is to provide interventions in the form of individual therapy, psychological programmes and risk assessments that assist the offender to adjust to the correctional context, develop coping skills and prevent re-offending behaviour. However, the number of psychologists employed in the DCS is relatively low in relation to the number of offenders incarcerated at the correctional centres. Furthermore, the increasing crime rate has resulted in several challenges for the DCS such as, the overcrowding of offenders and unsentenced inmates in correctional centres. The domino effect thereof results in consequential impacts for correctional employees who are compelled to endure the weight of their work. Furthermore, professionals such as nurses, social workers, educationists, and psychologists are expected to render adequate services to offenders with minimal resources available.

In an effort to retain psychologists in the DCS, an occupation-specific dispensation (OSD) was created. It was anticipated that an increase in the salary of psychologists would help to retain this specialised group. Furthermore, to address the backlog of life-sentenced offender psychological reports that became a national outcry, the headhunting strategy for clinical and counselling psychologist professionals was implemented to fill vacant psychological positions as quickly as possible.

However, despite the efforts made by the DCS to retain this group of professionals, the turnover rate of psychology professionals in the DCS has significantly escalated over the years, with the latest percentage standing at 37.4%, as verified in the DCS Annual report 2020/2021 (Department of Correctional Services, 2021). The DCS has evidenced many psychologists' termination of services after serving only a few years in the department. Having worked in the DCS for two decades thus far, I have, like many other officials, also witnessed the cycle of employment and termination of services of psychologists. The resulting consequence is that psychologists who are still in the employ of the DCS have to bear the brunt of the overwhelming workload such as addressing the backlogs of life and determinate sentenced offenders' psychological reports, which are compulsory for the consideration of parole for offenders. Furthermore, any kind of psychological intervention rendered by psychologists, be it individual or group-based interventions, is minimal as the professional personnel are inadequately staffed to cater for the effective rehabilitation of offenders as considerable importance is given to the assessment of offenders for parole consideration.

Although the literature on the lived experiences of correctional psychologists has been documented globally, it is however, minimal. To my knowledge, the only available literature that is documented in South Africa which specifically documents the experiences of psychologists working in correctional centres is based on the experiences of community service psychologists. However, South African studies demonstrate similar findings to that of international research. This study, therefore, attempted to address the gap in the literature by exploring the lived experiences of *permanent* psychologists working in South African correctional centres. Social constructionism was identified as an appropriate framework to ground the study as it permitted the exploration and discussion of how psychologists make meaning of their experiences within the correctional contexts.

A qualitative, interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) was employed to conduct the study. The purposive sampling included 13 participants with whom semi-structured interviews were conducted. The criterion included psychologists who have been permanently employed in the DCS for at least one year. Subsequently, 47 superordinate and nine master themes were produced using participants' responses verbatim to provide clarity and substantiate the various emerging themes. Although most superordinate themes are consistent when compared to existing literature, two superordinate themes conspicuously stand out as unique challenges, namely; the absence of a Director to head the National Psychological Directorate and meeting of the Annual Performance Plan Targets set by the DCS. The third superordinate theme that somewhat appears to be advantageous and acts as a retention strategy for correctional psychologists is conducting remunerative work outside of the DCS. According to my knowledge, this theme may be unique to the South African correctional context as no literature supporting this finding could be found. Despite their lived experiences which are drenched in challenges, participants working in the DCS were able to develop resilience, overcome the hurdles and positively reframe the profession of psychology for themselves.

The study brought to light the reasons and motivations why psychologists choose to resign from the DCS after working for only a limited period. It is anticipated that the findings of this study may provide the DCS with relevant information they may need in making sense of the experiences, including the resignations of psychologists working in correctional centres.

Limitations of the Study

During the data collection phase, I encountered a few challenges which may be viewed as limitations to the study. I experienced most correctional centres to be very noisy

during the interviews. The noise penetrated through participants' closed doors, making it impossible to hear the participants when they spoke. Furthermore, the noise made it difficult to hear some parts of participants' narratives on the audio recordings afterwards and thus, certain parts of the recordings could not be transcribed. In addition, offenders and officials would constantly knock and enter the office of the participant for assistance with various issues. The interviews thus had to stop and start recurrently until the interviews were completely over. Furthermore, this study was conducted in only one of six regions in South Africa. Therefore, the findings should not be generalised over the entire population of psychologists working in South African correctional centres.

Recommendations

The superordinate and master themes showcased the experiences that psychologists encounter daily. If the challenges they experience are resolved, it could aid in retaining psychologists in the DCS for longer periods. Hence, based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

The position of the Director: Psychological Services has been vacant for years. This has implications for psychologists who expressed not receiving the necessary guidance and support from the Directorate. The DCS thus needs to urgently prioritise the appointment of a Director for the Directorate: Psychological Services.

The DCS needs to consider establishing and funding positions for principal psychologists/divisional heads in the management areas. This would ensure that correctional psychologists in the various management areas receive the guidance and support and reduce the administrative work with which they are overwhelmingly burdened.

The number of psychologists working in correctional centres is low, resulting in an overwhelming workload. The DCS seriously needs to consider employing more

psychologists in the DCS. This will not only ease the burden of already overworked psychologists but also create the opportunity for the genuine and effective rehabilitation of offenders. The DCS may also consider registering the organisation as an internship site for student psychologists. This process may attract psychologists to render services in the DCS.

The DCS needs to be consistent and make it mandatory for all newly appointed psychologists to undergo training immediately upon appointment so that they can be provided with the relevant knowledge and become familiar with the DCS policies and procedures and the daily operations of the correctional centres. In addition, the training should include aspects that are specifically related to the correctional psychologist's job functions, such as conducting risk assessments and the compilation of therapeutic and assessment reports. This will significantly assist the newly appointed psychologist and integrate them within the context of corrections. Furthermore, correctional psychologists must be trained in self-defence. The DCS should prioritise this, and ensure that all correctional psychologists receive self-defence training.

All psychologists must be provided with adequate offices and group room spaces that are conducive to the work they perform. They also require essential stationery, information technology and psychometric tests to render effective services. The DCS also expects correctional psychologists to wear uniforms when on duty. It is therefore imperative that the DCS make ample provision of uniforms for correctional psychologists if they are to comply with the DCS directive.

It needs to be made mandatory that correctional psychologists are provided with a permanent security official at their respective components to provide the safety and security that correctional psychologists seek. Furthermore, this official may also be utilised to escort and search offenders coming to the psychologists when the units experience a shortage of correctional officials. In addition, the DCS needs also to ensure that all correctional

psychologists are provided with the necessary security equipment such as panic buttons and pepper sprays. They also need to be trained in the use of this equipment.

The Annual Performance Plan (APP) for correctional psychologists appears to be a contentious issue as the psychologists are of the opinion that the APP forces them to provide numbers of new offenders consulted monthly rather than focus on the quality of the therapeutic process, thus doing minimal to facilitate genuine rehabilitation of offenders. Considering this, it is recommended that the DCS review and revise its strategy concerning the APP for psychologists.

Another contentious issue was that the Parole Board is using the psychologists' risk assessment reports to inform offenders why they were not being granted parole. This has put correctional psychologists at risk with offenders who display threatening behaviours to the assessing psychologists. It is therefore strongly recommended that the DCS schedule meetings with the Parole Boards in their management areas and bring this to their attention. They need to take cognisance of what they are doing and take responsibility for the decisions as the Parole Board.

Correctional psychologists feel excluded and unrecognised in their correctional centres. The DCS needs to include correctional psychologists in decision-making processes and seriously consider the concerns they raise as it may aid in effecting the smooth operations of the correctional centres. Management areas and correctional centres need to render the necessary support and approval to correctional psychologists who attempt to effect and implement projects that will assist the operations of the correctional centres and facilitate effective rehabilitation.

Some management areas may need to revise their conditions to combat smuggling and corruption practices in their correctional centres as it is negatively affecting the basic needs of both correctional psychologists and correctional officials. The DCS needs to ensure that

measures put in place to alleviate corruption challenges are in line with policies and do not have a demoralising effect on officials and psychologists who do their best to display and promote disciplined behaviour.

Correctional psychologists experience burnout because of the overwhelming workload. It is therefore essential that the DCS consider funding wellness days and debriefing sessions for correctional psychologists. Implementing physical and psychosocial mitigation strategies will facilitate an improved and conducive work environment for this group of professionals.

There also appears to be a need for consistent teamwork sessions amongst correctional psychologists, social workers, and correctional officials to build trusting and professional relationships. Such team activities need to occur amongst the various levels of employees who constantly come into contact with one other for work.

Another retention strategy that the DCS should consider is including remunerative work after official working hours as part of its employment package for correctional psychologists. This may retain psychologists for a longer period in the DCS.

The DCS should also consider providing a bursary to correctional psychologists who are PhD candidates. This may also attract psychologists and keep them in the DCS for a longer period.

The DCS should also consider promoting career advancement for correctional psychologists either through the automatic revision of notch progressions after working for a stipulated number of years in the DCS and by appointing successful candidates for higher positions in the DCS, thereby allowing them to climb the corporate ladder. The DCS needs to benchmark best practices on retention strategies from other countries, which could aid in retaining psychologists in the DCS.

Last, a study on the lived experiences of correctional psychologists should be conducted on a national level in South Africa as it will aid the DCS to understand the challenges experienced in every region. Furthermore, a study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on correctional psychologists working in the DCS should be conducted. The DCS needs to consider other methods of providing psychological interventions such as online sessions between offenders and psychologists to curb the spread of infection and keep both offenders and psychologists safe.

Correctional officials also play an integral role in the rehabilitation of offenders and work closely with correctional psychologists; therefore, they must receive training in basic psychology. This will assist correctional officials to become acquainted with the role and function of correctional psychologists and identify and appropriately refer offenders with psychological concerns to the psychologist. This training will also bridge the gap and promote effective working relationships between correctional officials and correctional psychologists. In addition, the DCS needs to employ more correctional officials to meet the organisation's operational needs.

To the best of my knowledge, this study was the first to explore the lived experiences of psychologists who are permanently employed in the DCS. It is hoped that the findings in this study may assist the DCS to ameliorate its retention strategy for psychologists by addressing some of the core issues experienced by correctional psychologists as reflected in the superordinate and master themes and by seriously considering the recommendations mentioned above. The struggles that psychologists experience daily are real.

This study wholeheartedly salutes and applauds every correctional psychologist in South Africa who, despite the odds, continue to heed the call and render their professional services in the DCS with the hope of making even a small but positive change in the lives of offenders.

Chapter Eight

Narrative Reflections of my Lived Experience of Working in a Correctional Centre

During the compilation of this thesis, I constantly found myself in deep reflection about my journey of working in the field of corrections. The literature I read unexpectedly took me back in time and unveiled memories that stirred bittersweet emotions inside me. I thus gravitated more and more towards writing this chapter in which I provide an account about my own lived experience of working in a correctional context for the past 21 years and counting.

I included this chapter as I truly believe that the recollections of my own lived experience will contribute to the study. This chapter thus reflects my journey from the first day of entering the correctional system as a student correctional official, all the positions I worked and the ranks I obtained until I translated into the capacity of becoming a fully-fledged correctional psychologist and the experiences I encountered along the way.

An Unexpected Calling

My journey towards becoming a correctional official began before I had even set foot in a correctional centre. I recall coming to Pretoria with my cousin for the first time in 1998. My cousin requested that I accompany him on a driving trip from Durban to Pretoria to visit my aunt and her family. Also, it would assist me in gaining experience and perfect my driving skills by driving the distance from Durban.

I remember it being a late, chilly Friday evening when we entered the CBD of Pretoria. The city was new to me, and the first thing that caught my eye was a huge, brick building with high-security fencing around it, situated on the left side of the street. As we drove past this building, I asked my cousin, “What is that big brown building on the left?” He

answered, "That is a prison." I shrugged at the mere thought of such a place and responded to my cousin, "I don't ever want to go there for any reason." Little did I realise that the universe was sneakily revealing my destiny to me.

Two years later, in 2000, at the age of 23 and living in Durban with my parents and brothers, I had just completed writing my final year undergraduate exam. My older brother, who was already working for the DCS in the Gauteng Region at the time, requested of my younger brothers and I to apply for the correctional officials' positions that were advertised. My younger brothers, twins, were eager to apply for the positions. I decided to apply for a position just for the sake of applying. I honestly had no interest in working in such an environment. It was a huge surprise when my brothers and I were all appointed to the organisation simultaneously. I had not even graduated when I was appointed to the DCS on 26 September 2000. I had to join the other recruits at Zonderwater Training College situated in Cullinan, Pretoria. Back then, the college housed and trained student correctional officials for six months. All the students had to endure rigorous physical training, attend lectures and write weekly exams. Now, however, the training consists of three months in the training college and nine months of working in a correctional centre before the student can graduate as a fully-fledged correctional official.

The Training

I was part of the second group of students selected for 2000. I was placed to reside in the block called D-company. This company housed only female recruits. Although it has been 21 years, I can still remember the smell of the fresh floor polish on the brick tiles. We were expected to wake up at 04h30 every morning, clean the rooms in which we slept, shine the floors, wash the toilets and showers. We also had to ensure that we were appropriately dressed in our correctional attire, which included tracksuits or uniforms, depending on the

programme for the day. Our company was inspected daily, and any mistakes led to a punishment of running what was called the ‘Golden Mile’ – a long and windy path that all students at some point were expected to run when they contravened the rules. I cannot even recall how many times I had to run the golden mile and for petty things really, such as not correctly holding the tonfa (baton used in correctional centres by officials) or not doing the physical exercises the way we were instructed to do them. Running the golden mile was one of the most humiliating and embarrassing experiences of my life as the other recruits who were moving from lectures to their housing companies would look and laugh at me.

Two weeks into the training I was ready to leave it all behind and go back to Durban. At the time, I felt like I had been taken out of the city and was being held hostage in a desert. I was habituated to the place where I grew up in Durban. Being at the training college in such a quiet, small, isolated town so far from home with strangers (apart from my brothers) created a black void in my heart. I found the training excruciating and the food horrid. I felt stuck in a restricting environment, and I could not transition and adapt to the environment. I cried for days, and depression seized my soul. Even as I write this, I cannot help but wonder if this is how the offenders feel when they enter the correctional system for the first time.

Luckily, I was granted permission to attend my university graduation in Durban. My graduation was a good excuse never to return to Pretoria. I recall phoning my parents from the phone booth at the college and crying to them. Upon hearing my cries, my father requested that I stop the training and go back home. However, one male recruit I befriended gave me a tongue lashing that I still remember to this very day. His words plagued my soul so much that I stayed on just to prove a point to him and show him I was strong and courageous. In my mind, though, the aim was to complete the training and prove my worth before quitting. I promised my father that I would complete the training and then go back home. That was the initial plan, but destiny chose otherwise for me.

On 25 October 2000, I graduated with my undergraduate degree in Durban. After graduation, I returned to the training college to complete my basic training. Remarkably, after three months of staying in the training college, I found I had begun adapting, acclimatising, and finding my space within this context. I grew physically fit from the exercises we did every day. I studied and passed all my written exams with flying colours. I mastered the art of dismantling and putting back together a 12 mm parabellum firearm in 20 seconds flat. During a shooting exam, I remember shooting down the steel plates with the R5 rifle. The butt of the rifle kicked back on my left shoulder and hurt me badly. In my pain and frustration, I threw down the weapon and was about to quit the exam, but my instructor made me pick up the rifle hold it into position as he stood behind me and held the gun with me to provide support. Together, we shot down all 12 plates, and that is how I passed that exam. Still, I had to have my left arm bandaged and placed in a sling for almost two weeks.

I remember the night searches we conducted at nearby correctional centres. We had to go into the centres and conduct surprise searches at odd hours of the night. The cells of the offenders were unlocked, and we had to conduct a clean sweep of their cells. Some of the items we found were astonishing. These experiences built and shaped the correctional official inside me, and even though at that time, I could not understand the need for such training, it all became clearer when I was appointed to work at a correctional centre. The training was hard, I must admit, but the graduation ceremony made me realise the essence of the entire process. I remember how proud my dad was to hold our graduation certificates as we took a family photo after the graduation ceremony. It was an indescribable feeling of achievement on that special day. It made me want to venture into the next step of this journey, which was to enter the correctional system as a fully-fledged correctional official.

A Whole New World... My Transition into the Correctional Centre

The graduation was over, and all the officials were loaded in buses and taken to various management areas in Gauteng. Before I boarded my bus, my dad reiterated, "It's done; it's time to come home." I looked at him and went into silent mode for a while. I did not think I could feel such sadness in my heart to leave this place and go back home. But I did; it was overwhelming and it made me feel heavy in the pit of my stomach. I looked at my dad and told him that I had made it this far and wanted to go to the correctional centre and work there, and that if at any point I felt I could not manage, then I would go home. My dad smiled when he heard my decision, and so my family followed the bus which took us to Pretoria management area.

Upon arrival at the management area, we were welcomed by the Area Commissioner. All the new recruits were then split into groups and re-allocated to other centres to cater for their accommodation. The Area Commissioner decided that I would work at Atteridgeville Correctional Centre situated in Pretoria, which was closer to the suburb of Laudium. I could then reside with my aunt until they could accommodate me on the terrain in the singles quarters. However, my brothers were placed to work in Devon Correctional Centre, which is quite a distance from Pretoria. I pleaded with the Area Commissioner to keep us together, but he was adamant in his decision. To this day, I still feel my stomach churn and my heart sink whenever I ponder on the separation from my younger brothers. Even now, when I reflect on this experience, I realise that apart from always being their protective older sister whilst growing up, the training college experience closely bonded my brothers and me to an extent whereby I became more of a mother hen looking out for her chicks than an older sister. The separation from my brothers turned a beautiful graduation from college into a grieving process. I sank into the depths of despair.

The following day I reported to the Atteridgeville Correctional Centre with the other newly appointed recruits who were placed to work there. Atteridgeville Correctional Centre is a farm centre where the offenders grow vegetables such as cabbage and beetroot. I recall how all the officials already stationed there stared at us with welcoming smiles on their faces. They were pleased to receive female officials. I was the first Indian female official at their facility. We were introduced to the various officials and then taken to where the offenders were housed. It was called 'the binneplaas' (loosely translated, this means courtyard). This was the first time I had actually come into contact with offenders in such numbers, and as we walked past them, they began whistling and screaming at us. I was so afraid, but I tried not to show it. It took me some time to adjust and adapt to the environment, the officials, and the offenders. In all honesty, I wanted to run, leave, and never come back. I did not know anyone except for the recruits with whom I arrived at the centre.

Moreover, I was not close to the other recruits. It was a sinking feeling that I experienced in those first few months. Now that I think about it, I was experiencing all the symptoms of a major depressive disorder at the time. I lived with my aunt and her family in Laudium for the first two weeks until the centre could afford me a room at the singles quarters on the premises of the correctional centre. Being with family afforded me a calm of belonging, but I knew I could not stay with them forever, and when I moved into the singles quarters, I fell into a deep depression. I recall typing out a poem on an office computer in my spare time, and it was a true reflection of what I was going through at the time. I wrote this poem 2001.

*When you're sinking into the depths of despair and depression seizes your soul
grey clouds surround your tiresome mind, and not even the warm sunshine
can help you to unwind. Don't be afraid, don't be alone, don't be stubborn*

*because you simply can't do it on your own. If you believe and if you pray,
then the Good Lord will guide you and show you the way.*

I spent most of my alone time writing my thoughts in my diaries, but this poem was special to me, and I even put it up on the notice board of the correctional centre so that colleagues could read it and feel motivated. I used to ask a colleague to use the computer in his office to type my little poems, and I even typed chapters of a fictional story I wrote. These writings helped me surpass the loneliness and sadness I felt over the months that passed.

Coming into Ranks

The correctional system is governed by a ranking structure. Officials wear insignias on their shoulders that identify the rank in which they are categorised. I entered the correctional centre as a correctional official grade three, an entry-level rank. During this year, on weekends, I worked various shifts, such as first watch (14h00 until 22h00), alternating with second watch (22h00 until 06h00), and manning the gates, tower posts and administration gates. During the week, however, I worked in the offices. I recall being placed to work at the case management committee dealing with the offenders' case files. I did not take much pleasure working in this office. It was just not my cup of tea.

I worked there for almost two months before being requested to work at the switchboard. The switchboard seemed better, but I eventually became bored. Also, it was not long before the switchboard stopped working. After that, I requested to be placed to work at the registration and archive office because it had a computer, printer, and photocopy machine. My loneliness brought out my creative streak, and the computer provided me access to type out my creative thoughts. There were also instances when I worked at the visits room searching the female visitors when they entered to visit the offenders. During my time

working there, I saw children come in with their mothers to visit their fathers. The cold concrete room was very uninviting, and I could only imagine how the children felt when they entered that space. Once again, my creative nature came to the fore. I requested permission from the Head of the Centre to apply for the sponsorship of paints from companies and have the offenders paint the visits room. My request was approved. I secured sponsorships for paints and brushes and so the new project instilled hope in me to venture forward. I forgot about the loneliness and sadness for a while and put all my energy into this project.

During the counting of the offenders for unlock and lock up, I noticed that some offenders would sit in a group and paint beautiful paintings of animals or people. This fascinated me, and I would sit with them at times (when I also worked in the binneplaas during the weekends), and I would while away the hours painting alongside them. Some of my paintings were framed and still hang proudly on the walls of my parental home in Durban. Together with the offenders, I transformed the visits room into a beautiful, painted room filled with paintings of storybook characters with whom the children could relate.

I also used the skills of other offenders to transform the old mattresses into sofa seats and cover them with material. The benches no longer felt barren and provided a comfortable seat for the offenders' families. I remember how excited I was to see the look on the visitors' faces as they entered the visiting area the following week. However, my joy was short-lived as older officials began to mock me and remark that I had turned the visiting room into a crèche. These words sank my spirit immensely, and it was then that I appreciated that change, was not easy to accept. This project made me realise that I had the potential to work with offenders constructively and possibly assist in transforming their thoughts and behaviours.

The following year I was promoted to a correctional official grade two rank. This was because I had attained a university bachelor's degree. There was not much I could do with just a bachelor's degree, and I decided to apply for a bursary from the DCS study for an

Honours Degree in Psychology. I worked full time and studied through UNISA by correspondence. I found working and studying at the same time to be quite a strenuous process. Also, there were times when I had to request to write the supplementary examination as I was unavailable to write the initial exams due to my mother's health conditions which were severely deteriorating. I had to constantly take leave from work to go to Durban to take care of my mother. Despite the challenges I faced, I continued with my studies and eventually graduated with my Honours Degree in Psychology.

The registration and archive office was situated close to the Head of Centre's office. Apart from my duties as registration and archive clerk, I was also appointed as the Head of Centre's secretary. I was at Atteridgeville Correctional Centre, a few years later, and I was amazed to find that the files I had created for the office of the Head of Correctional Centre and labelled with my handwriting were still in that office.

I felt proud of my humble beginnings. The Head of Centre was an honourable man, and he always motivated me to apply for higher positions. I recall one afternoon, I was in my office, and at the behest of the Head of Centre, I decided to apply for a position advertised for the National Head Office of the DCS. My supervisor walked in, saw me filling in the forms, and hit the forms off the table onto the floor. He then stated, "The day you get promoted, I will resign from the department." Although he said it with a laugh and grin on his face, I believed that he was resentful as he had not completed his schooling career. In the Apartheid regime, officials were allowed to work for the DCS with only a standard eight (grade 10) certificate. However, by the time I entered the system six years later, officials with no qualifications found it difficult to be promoted. I was thankful for the incident, though, because the Head of the Centre had entered my office and saw what my supervisor had done. He reprimanded him, stating that applying for positions in the DCS is official business and that I should not be taunted.

I was called for an interview for the advertised position for which I had applied. A few months later, I was appointed to the National Head Office as a Senior Correctional Officer (SCO): Project Co-ordinator-Sentence Planning. After five years of working at the Atteridgeville Correctional Centre, I said my goodbyes and went to work at the Directorate: Correctional Programmes in my new position. My insignias changed from shoulder flaps to three golden proteas on a green epaulette, which I wore on the shoulder of my uniform shirt.

Once again, my life changed as I moved out of a correctional centre and into the National Head Office in the central business district of Pretoria. My work here was very different from the work in a correctional setting. I was part of a team that developed the correctional sentence plan (CSP) and the correctional sentence plan revision framework (CSPRF), which can be found in the case file of every incarcerated offender. I worked at the Directorate: Correctional Programmes for six months before the Chief Deputy Commissioner (CDC) requested that I assist her office as a secretary as hers was on maternity leave.

At the time, I became aware that the HPCSA (Health Professions Council of South Africa) created a category of professionals (the registered counsellor) as an approach to provide more services to disadvantaged communities. One required an Honours Degree to conduct a six month internship and thereafter write the board exam with the HPCSA to qualify for this category. I worked with the CDC for approximately four months before applying for an internship as a registered counsellor. The CDC approved my request, and I found myself within Atteridgeville Correctional Centre again performing a six-month counselling internship under the supervision of a clinical psychologist who was also the Regional Co-ordinator of the Development and Care Directorate for the Gauteng Region. During this time, I gained a wealth of experience in counselling offenders, and my passion for the profession of psychology grew stronger. Upon completing the internship, I wrote the HPCSA board examination, and in July 2017, I was registered with the HPCSA as a

registered counsellor. After my internship, I returned to my position at the National Head Office.

Various positions within the DCS were being advertised at the time, and my colleagues were all applying for higher positions. I became motivated and applied for some positions. I was called for five interviews for various higher positions. On 01 November 2017, I was appointed as the administrative secretary to the Deputy Regional Commissioner (DRC) of the Gauteng Region. Once again, my insignias changed, this time to a big protea and one small one on a green epaulette. This rank meant that I was now an Assistant Director.

Change became a constant part of my life which I welcomed wholeheartedly. I moved out of the National Head Office and took up my position at the Gauteng Regional Office in Hatfield, Pretoria. The work was very different from my work at the National Head Office. I found myself communicating with high ranking officials in the Region and the National Head Office. I struggled to understand and cope with the workload in the first three months. However, as time went by, it became much easier, and it was in this capacity that my administrative skills were perfected. I worked in this position for only a year because the DRC was transferred to Cape Town. I, therefore, requested to be placed at Central Correctional Centre situated in Pretoria, as a registered counsellor. The DRC approved my request, and I was given a placement letter to work at the centre as a registered counsellor even though the DCS did not have approved, funded posts for this category of professionals. I was still paid the salary of functional personnel but functioned as a counsellor in the centre, the first unofficial registered counsellor in the DCS. I had hoped that my presence in this position would pave a pathway for the funding of approved positions for this category of professionals. However, to date, many years later, such a category does not exist in the DCS.

The Unofficial Registered Counsellor

I worked as a registered counsellor for four years within the component of psychological services. In that time, I worked with several psychologists. I conducted short-term, basic counselling services to offenders, but I did not write any reports for offenders as the risk assessment reports had to be compiled by psychologists. My work as a counsellor was productive; however, I always felt excluded from tasks that were deemed complex and intensive. During a component meeting, I was told that I need not attend as it was for psychologists only. It was disheartening to hear this from a psychologist, and those words made me feel belittled, as though my role in the system was meaningless.

I also witnessed the power struggles that played out in the component. All psychologists were on the same rank; therefore, when one was nominated to co-ordinate the tasks for the component, it became difficult to take instructions from a colleague. Ambivalence and groupings within the psychological component became a practice. However, as time went on, I watched and welcomed psychologists when they entered the system, and I also watched and bid farewell to psychologists when they left the system. I observed that psychologists never really stayed long in a correctional setting, and this pattern persists. I termed the entry and exit of psychologists as a feast and famine period, as mentioned, because psychologists would enter the system in numbers and one by one would exit the system until there was only one or none remaining. I eventually realised that I was not called to be an unofficial counsellor in the system. I believed that I was destined for more than that.

Transition from Counsellor to Clinical Psychologist

In 2012 I began applying to various universities to study for a master's degree in psychology. I attended the selection processes at several universities. After gruelling and

excruciating process of eliminations, I was finally selected as one of the twelve students that UNISA admitted into the Master's programme for clinical psychology. The DCS provided me with a full-time bursary to complete the degree. I felt truly supported by the DCS, and the opportunity they gave me to pursue my aspiration. I was away from work at the DCS for three years and entered the academic arena to complete my Master's degree in psychology. The psychological component at the DCS had a farewell function for me when I left the centre. At the time, at least nine psychologists were working in the management area. However, three years later, and upon my return as a community service psychologist, I found only three new psychologists were working in the management area. All the psychologists I had left behind had either resigned or been transferred. Hence another famine period had begun.

One of the most significant changes I observed was that a funded and approved position for a Principal Psychologist was created. A psychologist had been officially appointed as the Manager: Psychological Services for the management area. This made working conditions within the component much better as all psychologists reported to a higher ranking official/psychologist, thereby eliminating the power struggles that previously prevailed.

Upon my entry into the system, the DCS had trouble converting me on the electronic system, from a functional member (correctional official) into a community service psychologist. I could not begin my community service until this process was finalised. I recall being requested to even resign from the DCS by another colleague and start afresh with the community service. I was prepared to do just that, and I even wrote a letter to the Regional Head: Corporate Services to indicate that I was prepared to resign and start afresh. However, I had been working in the DCS for a long time and resigning would mean losing all the accumulated benefits. The National Head Office was not willing that I resign. Eventually it

was decided that I complete my community service whilst being paid the salary of a functional correctional official and not as a community service psychologist. Seeing that I was the first permanent correctional official in the department to translate into the capacity of a community service psychologist (in another words, moving across from functional personnel to professional personnel on the electronic system), it was understandable why the department experienced system challenges to convert me. By this time, there was only one permanent psychologist who had to bear the workload on her own within the centre. Despite being present in the component, I could only handle the administrative tasks, which created immense frustration for my colleague and me.

Eventually, after a long seven-month wait I was allowed to begin my community service within the DCS. It was only upon completion of my community service that I was appointed as a permanent psychologist in the DCS. As tedious and wearisome as the process was, I feel proud that I was the first permanent correctional official, nationally, to be translated into the position of a clinical psychologist. My translation was an inspiration for many officials who, to this day, claim that I have paved a path for other correctional officials interested in the field of psychology.

Community Service in the DCS

During my community service year, I worked at the Remand Detention Centre (RDC). The 'feast period' had begun, and we received other community service psychologists and permanent psychologists. I initially worked alone at the RDC and was later joined by another community service psychologist. The centre felt like a maze upon entry, with many turns to reach the office in which I worked. It took a while to familiarise myself with the grid of this maze, and I usually walked in with other officials until I was confident enough to walk by myself. The offices for psychologists and social workers were situated

within the centre itself, one floor down from the office of the Head of the Centre and other administrative offices. The broad, long passage had no windows for ventilation, and the lights were the only source of brightness on that floor.

The office itself showcased a typical office that one would expect to find in the DCS: a table, two chairs, a filing cabinet, a phone and thankfully, a computer that worked. I decided to own my space and turn the dark and dreary environment into a conducive, therapeutic space. I bought curtains, a vase with flowers and other little items that made the office a better place to work and conduct therapy. During my community service year, I conducted group programmes with the remand detainees as well as risk assessments and individual therapy with some of the sentenced offenders housed at the RDC. I also rendered individual therapy and risk assessments at the Central and Female Correctional Centres.

To Wear Uniform or Not to Wear Uniform... The Paradox

Psychologists were appointed to work in the DCS, or were given a bursary to complete their studies. After that, they were appointed to work for several years as a psychologist in the DCS. My situation was somewhat unique as I was the first psychologist who, whilst working as a permanent correctional official, became a psychologist. There has never been such a case before. All community service psychologists wore civilian clothing and not the DCS uniform. However, I was a permanent member of the DCS who had been granted a full-time bursary to complete my studies and return to the system. It was thus obvious that I would return to work wearing my DCS uniform. However, I recall what confusion was caused as to whether I wore a uniform when I re-entered the correctional system. I did not want to stir up any problems within the component and thus chose to comply with wearing civilian clothing.

However, the Head of Centre insisted that I wear my uniform because apart from being a community service psychologist, I was also a permanent member of the DCS. Hence my correctional attire had to be worn. At the time, I honestly did not mind wearing a uniform or civilian wear. I must admit, though, that my uniform was—and still is—my saving grace when working in a correctional environment.

A Threatening Situation

Whilst working as a community service psychologist, I encountered a threatening situation. My female colleague and I needed to leave the RDC to attend a meeting at the Central Correctional Centre. We had to use the kitchen route of the RDC to exit the centre as the other gates to our regular route were locked. The officials tasked to work around the kitchen area were inside the kitchen monitoring the offenders during their mealtime. We were the only two women walking amongst many offenders in the corridors. Our only weapon was to put on a courageous face. Suddenly, one of the offenders blocked our path and forcefully attempted to touch my colleague (a community service psychologist who was dressed in civilian wear). I was wearing my uniform. It took every ounce of courage in me to step in front of the offender and assertively say, “MOVE!” Thankfully the offender listened and stepped back. Frightening as it was, we still wore our brave faces and made our way to the exit gate. I firmly believe that my uniform gave me the courage I needed on that day.

My Participation in the National Lifer Task Teams

The backlog of lifer reports became problematic at all correctional centres. This was attributed to the Phaahla Judgement, as previously mentioned in the study. Numerous offenders needed to be considered for parole. The risk assessment reports for these offenders needed to be compiled by the psychologists. However, the number of reports were too many

in relation to the number of psychologists working in the centres. At the time the Director: Psychological Services at the National Head Office decided to create a National Lifers Task Team (NLTT) comprising psychologists grouped into different teams. These teams were tasked to go to the various centres in the country and work for a week, conducting risk assessments with offenders due for parole consideration. This assisted in curbing the backlog of lifer reports.

I was still a community service psychologist when I was tasked to participate in the task teams. I was very new to the risk assessment process. By that time, I had received no training in writing a risk assessment report for an offender. The training came afterwards. All I had was a template of a report and the assessment tool used to conduct a risk assessment. I familiarised myself with the process, the tool and the template of the report and jumped right in. I participated in three lifer task teams in Nelspruit (Mpumalanga region), Pretoria (Gauteng region) and Pietermaritzburg (Durban region) in South Africa. I was very nervous during the first lifer task team, but after conducting the first risk assessment, I became acquainted with the process, and the other two NLTT's that I was appointed to be part of, became easier.

Becoming familiar with the process of conducting risk assessments was completely different from what I experienced as a psychologist when I heard the details of the crimes that the offenders committed. Initially, I was traumatised. I could not sleep well at night, and it took me weeks to finish some of the lifer reports. I procrastinated with the reports so that I did not have to relive the gory crimes in my mind. Sadly enough, I became accustomed to listening to the crimes and eventually felt nothing inside.

Over time, I realised that there was no escaping from it, and rather than break down, I became desensitised. I think it is part of developing resilience. I came to realise that I could either let the population of offenders break me down or make me stronger from the inside

out. I chose the latter. I believe that the NLTT allowed me to absorb the process of risk assessments quickly. During the Indaba (national meeting held for psychologists at one of the PsySSA conferences), I was presented with a certificate of appreciation. I obtained three stars, one for each of the task teams in which I participated.

My Transition from Community Service Psychologist to a Permanent Psychologist in the DCS

On 01st September 2017, I was appointed as a permanent psychologist to the DCS. Psychologists in the DCS are paid according to the occupation-specific dispensation (OSD). Although I maintained the same rank of Assistant Director, my salary scale was much higher than that of the rank I wore. It was one of my proudest moments finally to achieve my dream of becoming a psychologist.

However, little did I realise what awaited me as a permanent psychologist in the DCS. I was moved from the RDC to the Central Correctional Centre, where most permanent psychologists worked. The office I was given was in a bad state. One the chairs would automatically slide down, and we called it the “narcissist’s chair”. The headrest of the other chair slid all the way back, making it impossible to use. The other furniture was old. I thus decided to follow the procedure to procure new furniture from the Workshops section. This furniture was made by the offenders as part of their skills training. I waited for at least one month before receiving my new furniture, and when I was done furnishing my office, it looked like an office for a psychologist. The Head of Centre was very impressed with the way my office looked and everyone who passed my office always stopped to take a peek through the window

I did not have a printer in the office, and I knew that the office of the Director: Corporate Services had a spare printer that was not being used. I, therefore, went to the

Director and humbly requested to be allowed to use the spare printer. Because of the previous work I had done and the long-standing relationships I had built over time, the Director did not hesitate to give me the printer. After following the relevant handing over procedures, I had a printer in my office that I could use to print the confidential reports. I must admit that all these processes took much time, planning and initiative on my part. Had I not done so, I would have had to work in a dilapidated office pleading to other officials to utilise such items as printers. Work thus became easier once I had all the necessary resources available in my office.

I continued with my work as per my job description of consulting with offenders for individual therapy, group programmes and risk assessments for parole consideration. I worked with a group of psychologists whom I had never worked with previously. The group was made of different personalities that complemented one another. All the psychologists were always willing to assist, motivate, and support one another. The best part of working with this team was that we could come together and laugh hysterically over the silliest of things which became our therapeutic time together. We could also go into one another's office and vent if we needed to or talk about a case that overwhelmed us. Indeed, like every other component, we experienced our challenges and individual concerns and issues. It was nothing that we could not address and overcome. Together, we made a formidable team. Even as the workload mounted and I sometimes found myself drowning to the point of exhaustion, team members were always there to pick me up and motivate me to carry on.

The Workload

The National Head Office creates targets for each psychologist to achieve every month. These targets form part of the annual performance plan (APP). As a psychologist, I was expected to meet or exceed the target monthly. Failure to meet the target meant

providing reasons why I did not get to consult with a certain number of offenders. I have a very strong work ethic, and I always ensured that I exceeded the target every month by consulting with offenders for group programmes.

Apart from meeting the targets, I also needed to conduct risk assessments which came with due dates. There was also a long list of offenders I was consulting with for individual therapies. I always felt like the day did not have enough hours for me to do as much as I could. Upon leaving the office every day, I felt like I had just run a marathon. I was physically and mentally tired, and overwhelmed. I cannot overemphasise how drained I felt once the day was done. The attendance at the various meetings in the centre did not assist my workload, and I would always try to get out of a meeting just so that I could continue with my work.

Furthermore, there were many times when I would have to call the various units to escort the offenders for their sessions because the officials would not bring the offenders. They would state that they were alone in the unit or that the offender was not in the unit. This became a frustration, and on numerous occasions, I would complain to the Head of Security just so that the offenders could attend the sessions with me. The workload was intense and often led to burnout. I would find myself taking sick leave, and vacation leave more than I usually would so that I could recuperate before coming back and continuing with the never-ending routine again.

A High-Risk Environment

Unlike a typical workplace, the correctional environment is a unique workplace where one must be alert, vigilant and cautious at all times. It seems only logical considering that we are working with a population of offenders who have committed some of the most heinous crimes. Hence, it is considered a dismissible offence if one is caught sleeping on duty, for

example. Whilst working as a permanent psychologist, I experienced some unsafe incidents. I recall when one of the offenders, who was a cleaner for the psychologists and social workers, stole items from our offices and sold them inside the centre to other offenders. It took us a while to realise that he was insidiously stealing from us, and we had him removed from the component when we found out about his crafty behaviours. I also recall a time when the offenders who attended one of my group programmes used the opportunity to steal the electric kettle and an extension cord from the group room. It felt so disappointing to realise that the offenders were stealing from the very people trying to rehabilitate them.

On another occasion, an offender came unescorted to my office and pulled out his manly part to show me the catheter attached to it. At the time, I was so numb that I could not comprehend what was happening. All I could do was put on my brave face and scream at the offender to leave my office immediately. I then went to my colleague and told him what had happened. He took the offender to the Head of Security whilst I left the centre and went outside to catch my breath and calm my nerves. Another incident involved an offender who became quite aggressive with me because of the parole board's information about his risk assessment report. I was so thankful that an official was present with the offender. This made me feel a little safe. Unfortunately, working (as a psychologist) in a correctional centre means having to deal with these high-risk situations from time to time, and no amount of self-talk, safety measures or training will ever be sufficient to prepare one for these events.

Supervision as Therapeutic Relief

During our component meetings, we always discussed our successes and challenges experienced for the month. Some of the challenges included the cases we needed assistance with and our struggles with resources and security challenges. The manager of Psychological Services realised the need for personal supervision and debriefing sessions for all

psychologists in the management area and sought approval from the Area Commissioner. We were thus allowed to attend our own personal supervision scheduled for once a month and we could leave the office at 13h00. Furthermore, the manager obtained the services of a private practitioner to come to the centre every month and hold debriefing sessions with the psychologists. I found these sessions very beneficial for me as they provided me with a safe and secure platform to vent, air my frustrations, recognise and acknowledge the identity crisis. It was during these sessions that I came to understand myself and my personality, which I found to be constantly evolving within the context of the correctional environment.

Attendance at Conferences and CPD (Continuous Professional Development)

Workshops

I was always privileged to attend the PsySSA conferences and the various CPD workshops since 2009 when I began working as a registered counsellor at the Central Correctional Centre. The DCS always ensured that psychologists were funded to attend these events. This assisted us to stay abreast of the latest developments in the field of psychology but also afforded us an opportunity to meet and foster relationships with other psychologists working in the DCS or other organisations. The PsySSA conferences were constantly rotated amongst the three major cities, namely Durban, Cape Town, and Johannesburg. The DCS also funded our accommodation and travel needs every year.

The PsySSA conferences always had a treasure hunt competition, and on the last day of the conference, the winners would be announced. I always entered the treasure hunt competitions and looked forward to the last day of the conference when they announced the winners. Although not consecutively, I did, however, win beautiful prizes during three of the conferences. These were always my highlights of the conferences. We also attended the Vista Academy CPD workshops, held at the Centurion Lake Hotel in Pretoria, every month. The

DCS also funded these mini-workshops. The attendance of these monthly workshops provided me with an opportunity to gain new knowledge in the field of psychology. I was also able to acquire CPD points for the year (a requirement by the HPCSA), travel to various places and spend quality time with psychologists with whom I developed great friendships along the way.

Investing in Relationships

I have worked in the DCS for over two decades, and over the years, I learned how to think and behave in a manner that is considered appropriate in the DCS organisation. I adapted and became accustomed to the mannerisms, protocols, and culture of the DCS. The wearing of my uniform has become an integral part of my identity. It became an automatic reaction to stand up, as a sign of respect, in the presence of higher-ranking officials. It also became routine for me to greet every official in their respective languages.

These norms and practices have played a huge role in bridging and building relationships with all my colleagues. It also led to deep and meaningful relationships that proved beneficial, especially in the execution of my duties. Of course, like any work environment or relationship, I experienced conflict and disagreements with colleagues. These are expected when working with people of differing viewpoints. At the time of these encounters, I did not feel that way, but these experiences have been my learning curves. They have shaped my behaviours, especially in dealing with conflictual situations.

As the years past certain relationships that were once damaged, were restored. My DCS colleagues became family, and the longer I worked in the correctional environment, the more I found myself closely interacting with others on all ranking levels. Correctional officials, on most occasions than not, were willing to assist me with escorting offenders and with administrative tasks. The Head of the Centre and other managers always gave me a

listening ear and assisted wherever they could. Most importantly, my relationships with the other psychologists in the component transcended barriers beyond my comprehension.

Besides working well and assisting one another, we were physically and emotionally present for each other.

I recall many occasions when I would go into my colleagues' offices and let off steam over incidents, and they were always there to help me through it. They were an amazing team of people with whom I had the privilege of working. I used to be cautious of investing in relationships, especially at work. However, I am thankful that I did invest in the relationships with my DCS colleagues, for they have become an inseparable part of my big family.

A Life-Altering Catastrophe...The Coronavirus Pandemic (Covid-19)

On 05th March 2020, whilst driving home from work, I heard the breaking news on the radio that South Africa had its first Covid-19 case. I became anxious and called my colleagues to let them know. Since then, life as we knew it has never been the same. The virus rapidly spread throughout the provinces of South Africa, forcing the country into a national lockdown. However, like many others, I was considered an essential worker, and with the aid of work permits, I had to report for duty every day.

Work became a very frightening experience for me as offenders and officials were contracting Covid-19. I was expected to wear the full personal protective equipment (PPE) and go into the isolation cells to provide supportive psychotherapy to offenders who had contracted the virus and who could not understand why they were being isolated. I recall a situation where a cell of remand detainees had come into contact with infected detainees, and the psychological component had to go into the unit and render supportive psychotherapy. It was one of the scariest moments in my life because, at the time, we only had masks, gloves, and sanitisers and not the full PPE. It made me realise that if this was how I felt, imagine the

offenders who had no choice but to stay in the cells and await an outcome of whether they also contracted the virus or not.

As psychologists, we were expected to remain calm, go into the units, calm the offenders, and come out. But all the while, I was anxious and screaming on the inside at being placed in such a predicament. There was another incident where two other psychologists and I, went into one of the units to provide psychoeducation on Covid-19 to the offenders who were kept in quarantine. The offenders became aggressive, and no amount of talking to them was going to help. I saw the situation getting out of hand as the offenders began tearing up the booklets we gave them and they screamed at us. I immediately alerted my colleagues that we needed to leave the unit.

Over the months, as the lockdown levels dropped, it created room for regular work to commence. However, it was an overwhelming challenge. We were expected to have a recovery plan to achieve the set APP targets for the financial year despite the extraordinary times and situations we were in. Words cannot express how mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausted I was from trying to keep up with the workload whilst at the same time trying to ensure that I was safe from Covid-19. I managed to cope and overcome this demanding period within the correctional setting. As time went on, I found proactive methods of ensuring that the APP targets were met whilst still maintaining my sanity and overall well-being.

Conclusion

A Journey from 'Being to Becoming'

Working in a correctional context made me realise that no matter where we may be in the journey of our lives, our environment plays a huge role in shaping, moulding, and instilling certain prescripts, values, and beliefs within us. These in turn help us, to understand

our environment and venture forward whilst also creating new rules to enhance the system in which we find ourselves. As I reflected on my journey in the correctional system, I pictured a very fragile, petite, frightened, lonely, and naïve young girl who once upon a time thought that she would never make it in such an environment. As the years went by, however, the system played a massive role in transforming me into a polite yet assertive, ambitious, strong, independent, and self-driven woman. I never knew I possessed these traits; however, I found these emerging characteristics developing from the experiences I encountered in the system. Blindly, I began to blend with the correctional system, and the system became a part of me and my identity. Reflexively, I see myself as a part of a whole and a product of the correctional system—just as the system is a product of me and all those that form part of it. Whether this is a good thing or not, I cannot say. What I can say is that had it not been for the experiences I endured within the correctional system, I would not be the person I am today. In all honesty, I am and will continue to be humbled and honoured by the woman I see in the mirror today and every day.

References

- Abel, E. (2007). *Registered counsellors in South Africa: Is there light at the end of the tunnel?* [Honours research project, University of Cape Town].
www.humanities.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/117/Esther.Abel.pdf
- Abel, E., & Louw, J. (2009). Registered counsellors and professional work in South African psychology. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 39(1), 99–108.
- Adams, A. (2014). *The construction of intimacy in heterosexual, long term relationships in a South African farmworker community*. [Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Stellenbosch]. <http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/95951>
- Adom, D., Hussein, E. K., & Joe, A. A. (2018). Theoretical and conceptual framework: Mandatory ingredients of a quality research. *International Journal of Scientific Research*, 7(1), 438–441. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322204158>
- Adorjan, M. (2019). Social constructionism now more than ever: Following the hermeneutic money trail in post-truth world. *The American Sociologist*, 50, 160–174. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12108-019-9415-7>
- Ainsworth, P. B. (2000). *Psychology and crime: Myths and reality*. Pearson.
- Airo, K. (2021). Social constructionism theory. Constructing the user experience of workplace. In R. Appel-Meulenbroek & V. Danivska (Ch.8), *A handbook of theories on designing alignment between people and the office environment*. (pp. 93–100). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003128830-8>
- Aldridge, V. K., Dovey, T. M., & Wade, A. (2017). Assessing test-retest reliability of psychological measures. *European Psychologist*. 1–33.
- Allan, A. (2013). Ethics in correctional and forensic psychology: Getting the balance right. *Australian Psychologist*, 48(1), 47–56.

- Allard, T. J., Wortley, R. K., & Stewart, A. L. (2003). Role conflict in community corrections. *Psychology, Crime and Law*, 9(3), 279–289.
- Allen, B. J. (2004). Social constructionism. In S. May & D. K. Mumby (Ch.3), *Engaging organizational communication theory & research. Multiple perspectives*. Sage.
- Alpaslan, A. H. (2013). *Guidelines on writing a research proposal for a research undertaking using a qualitative approach*. UNISA.
- American Psychological Association [APA]. (2011). *Careers in psychology*.
<https://www.apa.org/careers/resources/guides/careers.aspx>
- Anderson, C. (2010). Presenting and evaluating qualitative research. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 74(8), 1–7.
- Andrews, T. (2012). What is social constructionism. *The Grounded Theory Review*, 11(1), 39-46.
- Andri, G., Adawiyah, W. R., Purnomo, R., & Candra, Y. (2021). Nurturing individual job performance through psychological capital power. *BISMA (Bisnis dan Manajemen)*, 14(1), 27–45.
- Annett, J., Morris, P., & Holloway, C. (1974). *Approaches and methods. Social sciences: A second level course*. The Open University.
- Appelbaum, K. L., Hickey, J. M., & Packer, I. (2001). The role of correctional officers in multidisciplinary mental health care in prisons. *Psychiatric Services*, 52(10), 1343–1347. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.52.10.1343>
- Ax, R. K., Fagan, T. J., Magaletta, P. R., Morgan, R. D., Nussbaum, D., & White, T. W. (2007). Innovations in correctional assessment and treatment. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 34(7), 893–905.
- Babbie, E. (2013). *The practice of social research*. (13th Ed.), Cengage Learning.

- Bademci, H. Ö., Karadayi, E. F., Pur Karabulut, I. G., & Warfa, N. (2016). Who is the helper? Who is being helped? The benefits of psychosocial support to correctional officers in Turkey. *Psychodynamic Practice*, 22(4), 351–365.
- Baglivio, M. T., Wolff, K. T., Howell, J. C., Jackowski, K., & Greenwald, M. A. (2018). The search for the holy grail: Criminogenic needs matching, intervention dosage, and subsequent recidivism among serious juvenile offenders in residential placement. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 55, 46–57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2018.02.001>
- Bahuman, G. M. A. (2020). *A qualitative investigation of susceptibility to vicarious trauma in correctional psychologists*. (Published doctoral thesis, Alliant International University). ProQuest LLC.
<https://www.proquest.com/openview/5ce1ff0e54baa25b9ecbf0f1c7dd7b3e/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=44156>
- Baldwin, E. (2019). The spider and the fly by Mary Howitt. *Poem analysis*.
<https://poemanalysis.com/mary-howitt/the-spider-and-the-fly/>
- Baloyi, L. (2020a). From teaching psychology in conqueror South Africa to teaching African swa moya in the psychology curriculum: critical reflections and experiences in a Masters Clinical Psychology programme. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 51(3), 453–463. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246320954308>
- Baloyi, L. (2020b). Epistemological exclusion: the case of the master's degree programmes in clinical psychology in South Africa. *Alternation*, 27(1), 130–152.
<https://doi.org/10.29086/2519-5476/2020/v27n1a8>
- Baloyi, L. J. (2008). *Psychology and psychotherapy redefined from the viewpoint of the African experience*. (Doctoral thesis, UNISA).
<https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/1346/?sequence=1>

- Baloyi, L., & Ramose, M. B. (2016). Psychology and psychotherapy redefined from the viewpoint of the African experience. *Alternation Special Edition, 18*, 12–35.
- Bantjies, J., Swartz, L., & Niewoudt, P. (2017). Human rights and mental health in post-apartheid South Africa: lessons from health care professionals working with suicidal inmates in the prison system. *BMC International Health and Human Rights, 17*(29), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12914-017-0136-0>
- Barnes, B. R., & Cooper, S. (2014). Reflections on South African psychology with Saths Cooper. *South African Journal of Psychology, 44*(3), 326–332. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246314537428>
- Battisti, A., & Robinson, C. (2019). Hands-on protection for law enforcement and corrections officers. In *Homeland Security and Public Safety: Research, Applications And Standards*. ASTM International. 195–215.
- Berli, M. J. (2018). Saving the saviours: security practices and professional struggles in the humanitarian space. *International Political Sociology, 12*(1), 70–87.
- Belkin, G. S., & Skydell, R. H. (1979). *Foundations of psychology*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Bell, S., Hopkin, G., & Forrester, A. (2019). Exposure to traumatic events and the experience of burnout, compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction among prison mental health staff: An exploratory survey. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 40*(4), 304–309.
- Berger, R. (2013). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research, 0*(0), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/468794112468475>
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality*. Penguin Books.

- Bertrand-Godfrey, B., & Loewenthal, D. (2011). Delivering therapy in prison: An IPA study researching the lived experiences of psychotherapists and counsellors. *European Journal of Psychotherapy & Counselling*, *13*(4), 335–355.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13642537.2011.625197>
- Bhoodram, P. A. (2010). *An evaluation of the Employee Assistance Programme in the Department of Correctional Services benchmarked against the standards of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association of South Africa* [Doctoral thesis, University of Pretoria].
<https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/28567/Complete.pdf?sequence=6>
- Biggerstaff, D. (2012). Qualitative research methods in psychology. In G. Rossi (Eds.), *Psychology-Selected Papers* (pp. 175–206). Intech.
- Blasco, P. G., Moreto, G., & Pessini, L. (2018). Using movie clips to promote reflective practice: a creative approach for teaching ethics. *Asian Bioethics Review*, *10*(1), 75–85.
- Bøe, T. D. (2021). Ethical realism before social constructionism. *Theory & Psychology*, *31*(2), 220–236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09593543211004756>
- Boothby, J. L., & Clements, C. B. (2000). A national survey of correctional psychologists. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *27*(6), 716–732.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854800027006003>
- Boothby, J. L., & Clements, C. B. (2002). Job satisfaction of correctional psychologists: Implications for recruitment and retention. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *33*(3), 310–315.
- Botha, C., & Pienaar, J. (2006). South African correctional official occupational stress: The role of psychological strengths. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *34*(1), 73–84.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2005.11.008>

- Brain, C. (2002). *Advanced psychology: Applications, issues and perspectives*. Nelson Thornes.
- Breuer, F., Mruck, K. & Roth, W. M. (2002). Subjectivity and reflexivity: An introduction. *forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 3(3), <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs020393>
- Bierie, D. M., & Mann, R. E. (2017). The history and future of prison psychology. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 23(4), 478–489.
- Broomfield, K. (2008). *Challenges psychologists encounter working in a correctional setting* [Unpublished Master's dissertation, Campus Alberta Applied Psychology]. [Microsoft Word - 484DD38D-1E5D-08E5F7.doc \(athabascau.ca\)](#)
- Burke, E. K. (2022). *You, me, and us: exploring early career female psychologists' experience of trauma work* [Doctoral thesis, Fordham University]. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/20ae05af28f4a652004c8eb09f0c8844/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>
- Burr, V. (1995). *An introduction to social constructionism*. Routledge.
- Burr, V. (2015). Social constructionism. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 22(2), 222–227. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.24049-x>
- Burr, V., & Dick, P. (2017). Social constructionism. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Social Psychology*. Palgrave MacMillan. <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/26455/>
- Butowski, L., Kaczmarek, J., Kowalczyk-Aniol, J., & Szafrńska, E. (2021). Social constructionism as a tool to maintain an advantage in tourism research. *Tourism Geographics*, 23(2), 53–74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2019.1654537>

- Cilliers, C., & Smit, J. (2007). Offender rehabilitation in the South African correctional system: myth or reality. *Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology & Victimology*, 20(2), 83–101.
- Clements, C. B., Althouse, R., Ax, R. K., Magaletta, P. R., Fagan, T. J., & Wormith, J. S. (2007). Systemic issues and correctional outcomes: Expanding the scope of correctional psychology. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 34(7), 919–932.
- Coetzee, M. (2008). Psychological career resources of working adults: A South African survey. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 34(2), 10–20. <http://www.sajip.co.za>
- Collins, C. S., & Stockton, C. M. (2018). The central role of theory in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17, 1–10.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918797475>
- Constitutional Court of South Africa. (2019). *Phaahla v Minister of Justice and Correctional Services* (May 2019). www.concourt.org.za/index.php/judgement
- Correia, T. (2020). Social constructionism, power and behaviour: a post-structuralist analysis. *Observatorio Politico, Working Paper #90*, 1–14.
www.observatoriopolitico.pt
- Cunliffe, A. L. (2008). Orientations to social constructionism: relationally responsive social constructionism and its implications for knowledge and learning. *Management Learning*, 39 (2), 123–139.
- Curtis, A., & Day, A. (2013). The impact of specialist training on professional identity, organisational membership, organisational commitment and stress in correctional psychologists. *Journal of Forensic Practice*, 15 (2), 130–140.
- Curtis, P., Booth, P., Frankland, S., & Harris, M. (2018). Written reflection in NHS appraisal: time for an alternative. *British Journal of General Practice*, 68(672), 316–317.

De la Rey, C., & Ipser, J. (2004). The call for relevance: South African psychology ten years into democracy. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 34(4), 544–552.

Department of Correctional Services. (2005). *White paper on corrections in South Africa*. Correctional Services.

Department of Correctional Services. (2017). *Department of Correctional Services Annual Report 2016/2017* Vote no. 18. DCS.

Department of Correctional Services. (2018). *Psychological services*. Retrieved June 9, 2018, <http://www.The DCS.gov.za>

Department of Correctional Services. (2017/2018). *Department of Correctional Services Annual Report. 2017/2018*. DCS

Department of Correctional Services. (2019). *Department of Correctional Services Annual Report 2018/2019* Vote no. 18. DCS

Department of Correctional Services. (2021). *Department of Correctional Services Vote No.22 Annual Report 2020/2021 Financial Year*. DCS.

Department of Correctional Services. (n.d). *Untitled page*.

http://www.dcs.gov.za/?page_id=461%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions%20Department_of

DiCataldo, F., DeJesus, B., & Whitworth, D. (2021). Training needs of counseling trainees in corrections: A survey of clinical directors. *The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision*, 14 (1), <https://repository.wcsu.edu/jcps/vol14/iss1/2>

Dickens, T. E. (2004). *Social constructionism as cognitive science*. Middlesex University Research Repository.

- Dlulane, B. (2018). *Makwetla 'concerned' by contraband found in Leeuwkop Prison*.
EWN: Eyewitness News.
<https://ewn.co.za/2018/12/27/makwetla-concerned-about-amount-of-contraband-found-in-leeuwkop-prison-->
- Dlulane, B., & Sekhotho, K. (2018). *Over 100 prison officials fired this year for smuggling, collusion with inmates*. Eyewitness News.
<https://ewn.co.za/2018/12/28/over-100-prison-officials-fired-this-year-for-smuggling-collusion-with-inmates>
- Dollarhide, C. T., Shavers, M. C., Baker, C. A., Dagg, D. R. & Taylor, D. T. (2012).
Conditions that create therapeutic connection: A phenomenological study. *Counseling and Values*, 57(2), 147–161.
- Doyle, M. F., Shakeshaft, A., Guthrie, J., Snijder, M., & Butler, T. (2019). A systematic review of evaluations of prison-based alcohol and other drug use behavioural treatment for men. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 43(2), 120–130.
- Du Plessis, G. A., Du Plessis, L. M., & Saccaggi, C. (2013). The lived experiences of professional clinical psychologists who recently started a new academic career. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 13(2), 1–12.
<https://doi.org/10.2989/IPJP.2013.13.2.3.1177A>
- du Preez, J., & Jorgensen, L. I. (2012). An evaluation of a helping skills training programme for intern psychometrists. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 22(1), 128–148.
- Durrheim, K. (1997). Social constructionism, discourse, and psychology. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 27(3), 175–182.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/008124639702700308>

- Elkonin, D. S., & Sandison, A. (2006). Mind the gap: Have the registered counsellors fallen through? *South African Journal of Psychology*, *36*(3), 598–612.
- Engelsted, N. (2017). *Catching up with Aristotle: A journey in quest of general psychology*. Springer.
- Evers, T. J., Ogloff, J. R. P., Trounson, J. S., & Pfeifer, J. E. (2020). Well-being interventions for correctional officers in a prison setting. A review and meta-analysis. *Criminal Justice And Behavior*, *47*(1), 3–21.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854819869975>
- Farmer, M. (2019). The importance of strengthening female offenders' family and other relationships to prevent reoffending and reduce intergenerational crime. *Ministry of Justice*. London.
- Fisher, L. D. (2017). *Registered counsellors at a crossroads: Current status, professional identity and training realities*. [Doctoral thesis, Stellenbosch University].
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/102980>
- Fourie, E. (2015). Thinking about incarceration in South Africa: The Inside-out Outside-in interest group. *PINS*, *48*, 77–89. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/23098708/2015/n48a4>
- Galbin, A. (2014). An introduction to social constructionism. *Social Research Reports*, *26*, 82–92. www.researchreports.ro
- Geldenhuys, D. J. (2015). Social constructionism and relational practices as a paradigm for organisational psychology in the South African context. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, *41*(1), 1–10. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v41i1.1225>
- Geffen, S. (2013). *The discursive practices of clinical psychologists in private practice in the Cape Metropole* [Unpublished Master's dissertation, University of Cape Town].
http://www.psychology.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/117/Shayni.Geffen.pdf

- Gender, Health, and Justice Research Unit. (2012). Women in prison: Health and mental health. *Policy Brief*. University of Cape Town.
- Gergen, K. J. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. *American Psychologist*, 40(3), 266–275. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.40.3.266>
- Gilroy, P. J., Carroll, L., & Murra, J. (2002). A preliminary survey of counselling psychologists' personal experiences with depression and treatment. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 33(4), 402–407.
- Giovazolias, T. & Davis, P. (2001). How common is sexual attraction towards clients? The experiences of sexual attraction of counselling psychologists towards their clients and its impact on the therapeutic process. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 14 (4), 281–286.
- Gough, H. (2016). *Hidden talents: mental health professionals explore their lived experiences of mental health challenges in the workplace: An interpretative phenomenological analysis* [Doctoral thesis, University of East Anglia, Norwich Medical School].
<https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/id/eprint/60997/1/2016GoughHClinPsyD.pdf>
- Government Gazette. (2006). *Form 223. Ethical rules of conduct for practitioners registered under the Health Professions Act, 1974*.
https://www.hpcsa.co.za/Uploads/PSB_2019/Exams/ethical_rules_annexure_12.pdf
- Government Gazette. (2018). *Board Notice 101 of 2018. Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act No.56 of 1974). Regulations defining the scope of the profession of psychology*. www.gpwonline.co.za
- Government Gazette. (2011). *Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act no. 56 of 1974)*.
www.HPCSA.co.za-history

- Government Gazette. (2002). *Mental Health Care Act, 2002, Act No. 17*. South Africa.
- Grant, C., & Osanloo, A. (2014). Understanding, selecting and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your “house.” *Administrative Issues Journal: Connecting Education, Practice, and Research*, 4(2), 12–26. <https://doi.org/10.5929/2014.4.2.9>
- Green, H. (2014). Use of theoretical and conceptual frameworks in qualitative research. *Nurse Researcher*, 21(6), 34–38.
- Haney, C. (2002). *The psychological impact of incarceration: Implications for post-prison adjustment*. University of California-Santa Cruz.
- Hanurawan, F. (2012). Qualitative research in psychology. *Journal of Educational, Health and Community Psychology*, 1(2), 120–132. <http://dx.doi.org/10.12928/jehcp.v1i2.3802>
- Harris, S. R. (2006). Social constructionism and social inequality. An introduction to a special issue of JCE. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35(3), 223–235.
- Haslam, S. A. (2004). *Psychology in organizations*. Sage.
- Herbig, F. J. W., & Hesselink, A. M. (2012). Seeing the person, not just the number: Needs-based rehabilitation of offenders in South African prisons. *South African Crime Quarterly*, 41, 29–37.
- Hernandez-Wolfe, P. (2018). Vicarious resilience: A comprehensive review. *Revista de Estudios Sociales*, (66), 9–17.
- Hernández, P., Engstrom, D., & Gangsei, D. (2010). Exploring the impact of trauma on therapists: Vicarious resilience and related concepts in training. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 29(1), 67–83.

- Herrman, H., Stewart, D. E., Diaz-Granados, N., Berger, E. L., Jackson, B., & Yuen, T. (2011). What is resilience? *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, *56*(5), 258–265.
- Hlophe, Z. L., Morojele, P. J., & Motsa, N. D. (2017). Learners' constructions of bullying in a South African school context. *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*, *13*(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.4102/td.v13i1.391>
- Horton, J., Macve, R. & Struyven, G. (2004). Qualitative research: Experiences in using semi-structured interviews. In C. Humphrey & B. Lee (Ch.20), *The real life guide to accounting research. A behind-the-scenes view of using qualitative research methods* (pp. 339-357). Elsevier.
- HPCSA. (2008). *Annual report*.
[www.hpsca.co.za/uploads/editor/UserFiles/downloads/publications/annual reports](http://www.hpsca.co.za/uploads/editor/UserFiles/downloads/publications/annual_reports)
- HPCSA. (n.d.). <http://www.hpsca.co.za/PBPsychology/Registration>
- HPCSA. (2017). *National survey of all registered psychology practitioners*.
<https://www.quantifyresearch.co.za>
- Huynh, L., & Rhodes, P. (2011). Why do people choose to become psychologists? A narrative inquiry. *Psychology Teaching Review*, *17*(2), 64–70.
- Johnston, E. R. (2015). South African clinical psychology's response to cultural diversity, globalisation and multiculturalism: a review. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *45*(3), 374–385. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246315575648>
- Jootun, D., McGhee, G., & Marland, G. R. (2009). Reflexivity: promoting rigour in qualitative research. *Nursing Standard*, *23*(23), 42–46. www.search.proquest.com
- Jordaan, I., Spangenberg, J., Watson, M., & Fouché, P. (2007). Burnout and its correlates in South African clinical and counselling psychologists. *Acta Academica*, *39*(1), 176–201.

- Joubert, C., & Hay, J. (2020). Registered psychological counsellor training at a South African faculty of education: Are we impacting educational communities? *South African Journal of Education*, 40(3), 1–9.
- Kagee, A. (2014). South African psychology after 20 years of democracy: criticality, social development, and relevance. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 44(3), 350–363. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246314534147>
- Kanuha, V. K. (2000). “Being” native versus “going native”: Conducting social work research as an insider. *Social Work*, 45(5), 439–447. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/45.5.439>
- Kheswa, J. G., & Lobi, T. (2014). An investigation of effectiveness of rehabilitation in the correctional centre, Eastern Cape. A phenomenological study. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(14). <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n14p610>
- Kim, H., & Stoner, M. (2008). Burnout and turnover intention among social workers: Effects of role stress, job autonomy and social support. *Administration in Social work*, 32(3), 5–25.
- Koeske, G. F., Koeske, R. D., & Mallinger, J. (1993). Perceptions of professional competence: cross-disciplinary ratings of psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 63(1), 45–54.
- Krzyżanowski, M. (2020). Normalisation and the discursive construction of “new” norms and “new” normality: discourse in the paradoxes of populism and neoliberalism. *Social Semiotics*, 30(4), 431–448. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2020.1766193>
- Kupers, T. A. (2005). Toxic masculinity as a barrier to mental health treatment in prison. *Journal of clinical psychology*, 61(6), 713–724.

- Labaree, R. V. (2002). The risk of ‘going observationalist’: negotiating the hidden dilemmas of being an insider participant observer. *Qualitative Research*, 2(1), 97–122.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794102002001641>
- Laher, S., & Cockcroft, K. (2013). Contextualising psychological assessment in South Africa. In S. Laher, & K. Cockcroft, *Psychological Assessment in South Africa. Research and Applications* (pp.1–14). Wits University Press.
- Laidlaw, C. (2018). *Psychotherapist development of trainee and qualified psychologist within the South African context: A qualitative study*. [Doctoral thesis, UNISA].
<https://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/26147>
- LaSala, M. C. (2003). When interviewing “family”: Maximizing the insider advantage in the qualitative study of lesbians and gay men. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 15(2), 15–30. https://doi.org/10.1300/J041v15n01_02
- Leopeng, B. (2019). Towards a dialogical decolonised psychotherapy. *PINS*, 71–86.
<https://1library.co/document/zk3rw1ly-towards-a-dialogical-decolonised-psychotherapy.html>
- Levenson, J. S., & Willis, G. M. (2019). Implementing trauma-informed care in correctional treatment and supervision. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 28(4), 481–501.
- Levy, M. (2002). *Barriers and incentives to Maori participation in the profession of psychology. A report for the New Zealand Psychologists’ Board*. University of Waikato.
<https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10289/457/content.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

- Lilienfeld, S. O. (2020). Microaggression research and application: Clarifications, corrections, and common ground. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 15*(1), 27–37.
- Lionel, N. (2014). A history of South African (SA) psychology. *Universtas Psychologica, 13*(5), 1983–1991. <http://dx.doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.upsy13-5.hsap>
- Lit, S. W., & Shek, D. T. L. (2002). Implications of social constructionism to counseling and social work practice. *Asian Journal of Counselling, 9*(1&2), 105–130. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242463155>
- Lock, A., & Strong, T. (2010). *Social Constructionism sources and stirrings in theory and practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Long, W. (2013). Rethinking “relevance”: South African psychology in context. *History of psychology, 16*(1), 19–35. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029675>
- Long, W. (2016). On the Africanization of psychology. *South African Journal of Psychology, 1*–3. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246316650853>
- MacKain, S. J., Myers, B., Ostapiej, L., & Newman, R. A. (2010). Job satisfaction among psychologists working in state prisons: The relative impact of facets assessing economics, management, relationships and perceived organizational support. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 37*(3), 306–318. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854809357420>
- Macleod, C. (2004). South African psychology and ‘relevance’: Continuing challenges. *South African Journal of Psychology, 34*(4), 613–629.
- Magaletta, P. R., & Boothby, J. (2003). Correctional mental health professionals. In T. J. Fagan, & R. K. Ax, *Correctional mental health handbook* (Chapter 2), (pp. 21–38). Sage.

- Magaletta, P. R., Patry, M. W., Dietz, E. F., & Ax, R. K. (2007). What is correctional about clinical practice in corrections? *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 34 (1), 7–21.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854806290024>
- Magaletta, P. R., & Perskaudas, R. (2016). Self-renewal for correctional psychologists: Common challenges and successful solutions. *The Register Report*.
<https://ce.nationalregister.org/publications/self-renewal-for-correctional-psychologists-common-challenges-and-successful-solutions/>
- Magaletta, P. R., Perskaudas, R., & Heigel, C. (2020). Take it from the chiefs: Gold standards for correctional psychologist competency and development. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 51(5), 446–453.
- Malkina-Pykh, I. G. (2017). Associations of burnout, secondary traumatic stress and individual differences among correctional psychologists. *Journal of Forensic Science and Research*, 1, 018–034. <https://doi.org/10.29328/journal.jfsr.1001003>
- Mandisa, T. (2007). Home and family circumstances of young offenders: An examination of social workers views. *British Journal of Community Justice*, 5(3), 63–80.
- Manganye, P., & Phetlho-Thekisho, N. (2016). Perceptions of offenders and correctional officials on rehabilitation in maximum correctional centres. *The Social Work Practitioner-Researcher*, 28(2), 173–186.
- Matetoa, J. M. (2012). *The professional role of the correctional officer in the rehabilitation of offenders* [Unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of South Africa].
<https://citeseerx.ist.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.828.5810&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Matjekana, T. (2021, Oct, 27). DCS let's communicate. Internal Notice to all staff.
- Mead, S., & MacNeil, C. (2006). Peer support: What makes it unique. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 10(2), 29–37.

- Melhem, Y. S., & Al Qudah, M. F. (2019). Work engagement: trust and respect to engage your people. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, 12(17), 1–13.
- Mento, C., Silvestri, M. C., Merlino, P., Nocito, V., Bruno, A., Muscatello, M. R. A., ... & Kawai, T. (2021). Secondary traumatization in healthcare professions: A continuum on compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and burnout. *Psychologia*, 2020-B013, 1–15.
- Merriam, S. B., & Grenier, R. S. (2019). *Qualitative Research in Practice. Examples for Discussion and Analysis*. 2nd Ed. Jossey-Bass.
- Meyer, M. L., & Young, E. (2021). Best practice recommendations for psychologists working with marginalized populations impacted by Covid-19. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*. 52(4), 309–317.
<https://obi.org/10.1037/pro0000409>
- Mguni, S. (2011). *Challenges facing social workers rendering rehabilitation services to male offenders in a Maximum Correctional Centre* [Unpublished Master's dissertation, University of South Africa].
https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/4773/dissertation_mnguni_sjs.pdf;sequence=1
- Misra, G., & Prakash, A. (2012). Kenneth J. Gergen and social constructionism. *Psychological Studies*, 57(2), 121–125. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-012-0151-0>
- Mohammed, S., Peter, E., Killackey, T., & Maciver, J. (2021). The “nurse as hero” discourse in the Covid-19 pandemic: A poststructural discourse analysis. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 117 (103887), 1–11.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2021.103887>

- Moodley, J. (2009). *An interpretive phenomenological analysis of the effects of burnout as experienced by volunteer lay counsellors (VLCs)* [Master's dissertation, University of Pretoria].
<https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/28241/dissertation.pdf?sequence=1>
- Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counselling psychology. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 52(2), 250–260.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.250>
- Mulder, G., Jorgensen, L. I., Nel, J. A., & Meiring, D. (2013). The evaluation of a frame-of-reference training programme for intern psychometrists. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management*, 11(1), Art. #506, 10 pages.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v11i1.506>
- Muthaphuli, P. (2008). *Offenders' rights with regard to rehabilitation in South Africa* [Unpublished Master's dissertation, University of South Africa].
<https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/1309/dissertation.pdf>
- Naidoo, S., & Mkize, D. L. (2012). Prevalence of mental disorders in a correctional population in Durban, South Africa. *African Journal of Psychiatry*, 15, 30–35.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ajpsy.v15i1.4>
- Neal, T. (2020). Generalist and specialist training in professional correctional psychology are compatible: Reply to Magaletta and Patry (2020). *American Psychologist*, 75(1), 106–107.
- Nel, L. & Fouche', P. (2017). The positive experiences of becoming a psychologist: A Master's student's journey. *The Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 17, 1–11.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/20797222.2017.1299284>

- Nhlapo, T. M. S., & Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. (2016). Human resource provisioning strategy for gender equality within the Department of Correctional Services. *Administratio Publica*, 24(3), 166–182.
- Nobles, W. W., Baloyi, L., & Sodi, T. (2016). Pan-African humanness and sakhu djaer as praxis for indigenous knowledge systems. *Alternation Special Edition*, 18, 36–59.
- O’Neil, S., & Koekemoer, E. (2016). Two decades of qualitative research in psychology, industrial and organisational psychology and human resource management within South Africa: A critical review. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 42(1), 1–16. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v42i1.1350>
- Painter, D., & Terre Blanche, M. (2004). Critical psychology in South Africa: Looking back and looking ahead. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 34(4), 520–543. <https://doi.org/10.1177/008124630403400402>
- Parker, M. M., & Cade, R. (2018). Using sand tray therapy with juveniles in correctional settings. *Journal of Addictions & Offender Counseling*, 39(2), 78–88.
- Paula-Ravagnani, G. S. D., Guanaes-Lorenzi, C., & Rasera, E. F. (2017). Use of theoretical models in family therapy: Focus on social constructionism. *Paidéia (Ribeirão Preto)*, 27 (67), 84–92.
- Pieterse, T. (2019). *Keeping up appearances: Female correctional officers shaping their work identity in a South African Correctional Centre* [Doctoral thesis, UNISA]. https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/26375/dissertation_pieterse_t.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- Perry, C., Thurston, M. & Green, K. (2004). Involvement and detachment in researching sexuality: Reflections on the process of semi structured interviewing. *Qualitative Health Research*, 14(1), 135–148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732303255853>

- Pillay, A. L., Ahmed, R., & Bawa, U. (2013). Clinical psychology training in South Africa: A call to action. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 43(1), 46–58.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246312474411>
- Pillay, J. (2020). Social justice implications for educational psychologists working with orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa. *School Psychology International*, 41(1), 37–52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034319893005>
- Pillay, R. S. (2016). Silence is violence: (Critical) psychology in an era of Rhodes must fall and fees must fall. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 46(2), 155–159.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246316636766>
- Pillay, R. S. (2017). Cracking the fortress: can we really decolonise psychology? *South African Journal of Psychology*, 47 (2), 135–140.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246317698059>
- Pillay, Y. G., & Petersen, I. (1996). Current practice patterns of clinical and counselling psychologists and their attitudes to transforming mental health policies in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 26(2), 76–80.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/008124639602600202>
- Pilkington, L., & Sciberras, A. (2018). The lived experience of psychologists working in mental health services: An exhausting and exasperating journey. *Professional Psychology: Research and practice*, 1–27. <https://tees.openrepository.com/tees>
- Pittaway, L., Aïssaoui, R., & Fox, J. (2017). Social constructionism and entrepreneurial opportunity. In M. Karatas-Ozkan (Book Chapter). *Philosophical reflexivity in entrepreneurship, forthcoming*. (pp. 1–32). University of Southampton.
<https://ssrn.com/abstract=2975470>

- Ponterotto, J. G. (2005). Qualitative research in counselling psychology: A primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 52(2), 126–136. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.126>
- Pope, K. S., & Tabachnick, B. G. (1994). Therapists as patients: A national survey of psychologists' experiences, problems, and belief. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 25(3), 247–258.
- Priest, P. N., & Piotrowski, J. (1983). Being professional in prisons. In G. Wardlaw, *The Role of Psychologists in the Criminal Justice System* (pp. 1–15). Australian Institute of Criminology.
- Psychological Society of South Africa [PsySSA], (n.d.). *Final congress programme version 1.1*. <https://psyssa.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/22nd-South-African-Psychology-Congress-Programme-08-09-2016.pdf>
- Qhogwana, S. A. (2017). “We are human too”: A narrative analysis of rehabilitation experiences by women classified as maximum security offenders in the Johannesburg Correctional Centre. [Unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of South Africa].
https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/22597/thesis_qhogwana_sa.pdf?sequence=1
- Raskin, J. D. (2002). Constructivism in psychology: Personal construct psychology, radical constructivism, and social constructionism. In J. D. Raskin & S. K. Bridges (Eds.), *Studies in meaning: Exploring constructivist psychology* (pp.1–25). Pace University Press.
- Rees, E., Crampton, P. E. S., & Monrouxe, L. V. (2020). Re-visioning academic medicine through a constructionist lens. *Academic Medicine*, 95(6), 846–850, <https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0000000000003109>

- Reid, K., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2005). Exploring lived experience. *The psychologist*, 18(1), 20-23. <http://www.psyc.bbk.ac.uk/ipa>
- Republic of South Africa. (1996). *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Reynolds, A. (2020). *Exploring vicarious resilience among practitioners working with clients who have experienced traumatic events* [Doctoral thesis, City University of New York].
https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?&content=gc_etds
- Ricciardelli, R., Mitchell, M., Taillieu, T., Angehrn, A., Afifi, T., & Carleton, R. N. (2021). Pervasive uncertainty under threat: Mental health disorders and experiences of uncertainty for correctional workers. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 00938548211050112, 1–19.
- Ricks, E. P., Ferreira, M., & Laudén, J. E. (2019). The changing correctional mental health workers demographics and duties. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 50 (1), 25–32. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pro000207>
- Richter, L. M., Griesel, R. D., Durrheim, K., Wilson, M., Surendorff, N., & Asafo-Agyei, L. (1998). Employment opportunities for psychology graduates in South Africa: A contemporary analysis. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 28(1), 1–7.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/008124639802800101>
- Rohleder, P., Miller, M., & Smith, R. (2006). Doing time: Clinical psychologists' experience of community service in a correctional placement. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 36(4), 795–812. <https://doi.org/10.1177/008124630603600409>

- Rosenwald, M. S. (2016). *Prisons try to stop drones from delivering drugs, porn and cell phones to inmates*. The Washington Post. Retrieved, Oct 2021.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/prisons-try-to-stop-drones-from-delivering-drugs-porn-and-cellphones-to-inmates/2016/10/12/645fb102-800c-11e6-8d0c-fb6c00c90481_story.html
- Rouillard, M. C. M, Wilson, L., & Weideman, S. (2015). Registered counsellors' perceptions of their role in the South African context of providing mental health-care services. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 1–11.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00881246315591340>
- Salie, M. Snow, M., De Wet, H., Marquard, K., & Swartz, L. (2021). 'Add to cart': prison-based community service for psychologists in South Africa and the comfort of online shopping. *Psychodynamic Practice*, 27(3), 228–240.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14753634.2021.1939112>
- Sandu, M. L., & Pescaru, M. (2018). The cathartic function of communication. *Rev. Universitara Sociologie*, 59–71.
- Sarantakos, S. (1988). *Social research*. Palgrave.
- Scheela, R. A. (2001). Sex offender treatment: Therapists' experiences and perceptions. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 22(8), 749–767.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01612840152713009>
- Schiff, M., & Leip, L. (2019). The impact of job expectations, workload, and autonomy on work-related stress among prison wardens in the United States. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 46(1), 136–153.
- Seedat, M., & Lazarus, S. (2014). Community psychology in South Africa: Origins, developments, and manifestations. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 44(3), 267–281. <https://doi.org/101177/0081246314537431>

- Seedat, M., & MacKenzie, S. (2007). The triangulated development of South African psychology: Race, scientific racism and professionalism. In C. Van Ommen & D. Painter, *Interiors: A history of psychology in Southern Africa* (pp. 61–89). UNISA Press.
- Senter, A. (2006). *Correctional psychologist burnout, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction*. [Doctoral thesis, Texas Tech University]. <http://hdl.handle.net/2346/9316>
- Senter, A. Morgan, R. D., Serna-McDonald, C., & Bewley, M. (2010). Correctional psychologist burnout, job satisfaction and life satisfaction. *American Psychological Association*, 7(3), 190–201. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020433>
- Sharratt, P. (1995). Is educational psychology alive and well in the new South Africa? *South African Journal of Psychology*, 25(4), 211–216. <https://doi.org/10.1177/008124639502500402>
- Shimazu, A., Nordin, R. B., Dollard, M., & Oakman, J. (2017). *Psychosocial factors at work in the Asia Pacific*. Springer.
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2004). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In G. M. Breakwell, *Doing social psychology research* (pp. 229–254). BPS Blackwell.
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J. A. Smith (2nd Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (pp. 53–80). Sage.
- Stead, B. G. (2002). The transformation of psychology in a post-apartheid South Africa: An overview. *International Journal of Group Tensions*, 31(1), 79–102. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1014216801376>

- Swanepoel, M. (2011). Human rights that influence the mentally ill patient in South African medical law: A discussion of sections 9; 27; 30 and 31 of the Constitution. *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad*, 14(7), 1–20. <http://dx.doi.org/10.43114/pej.v14i7.5>
- Swords, C., & Houston, S. (2021). Using social constructionism to research the recovery movement in mental health in Ireland: A critical reflection on meta-theory shaping the inquiry. *Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies*, 21(1), 52–72.
- Tang, D. T. S. (2006). The research pendulum: Multiple roles and responsibilities as a researcher. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 10(4), 11–27.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J155v10n03_02
- Tangvald-Pedersen, O., & Bongaardt, R. (2017). The interconnection between mental health, work and belonging: A phenomenological investigation. *The Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 17(2), 1–11.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/20797222.2017.1392759>
- Taylor, C. M. (2021). *Trauma-exposed mental health professionals who experience vicarious resilience: A case study* [Doctoral thesis, Grand Canyon University].
<https://www.proquest.com/openview/dd737b6e2e060f83dff4ad3d2e44692/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=1850&diss=y>
- Taylor, S. P. (2021). Assessing critical realism vs social constructionism & social constructivism for a social housing research study. *Topics in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3, 32–42. <https://doi.org/10.9734/bpi/sthss/v3/1736C>
- Terre Blanche, M., & Durrheim, K. (1999). *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences*. University of Cape Town Press.
- Thomas, B. Jr. (2012). Predictors of vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress among correctional officers. *PCOM Psychology Dissertations*, Paper 228, 1–91.

- Towl, G. (2003). *Psychology in prisons*. BPS Blackwell.
- Tynan, J., & Godson, L. (Eds.). (2019). *Uniform: Clothing and discipline in the modern world*. Bloomsbury.
- UNISA. (2017). *Psychology @ Unisa: A complete guide to preparing yourself for career opportunities*.
www.unisa.ac.za/static/corporate_web/Content/.../career_psychology_unisa.pdf
- Van Eeden R., Van Deventer V., & Erasmus, H. (2016). The relevance of the psychometrist category as a professional resource: Training-related issues. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 42(1), 1–10. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v42i1.1307>
- Van Manen, M. (2nd Ed.). (2016). *Researching lived experience. Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Routledge Taylor & Francis.
- Van Ommen, C. (2008). Writing the histories of South African psychology. In C. Van Ommen & D. Painter (Chapter 2). *Interiors: A history of psychology in South Africa*. (pp. 25–62).
- Vickovic, S. G., & Morrow, W. J. (2020). Examining the influence of work–family conflict on job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among correctional officers. *Criminal Justice Review*, 45(1), 5–25.
- Weinberg, D. (2009). Social constructionism. In B. S. Turner (Ch.14). *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*. (pp. 281–299). Blackwell.
- Weinberger, L. E., & Sreenivasan, S. (1994). Ethical and professional conflicts in correctional psychology. *Professional psychology: Research and practice*, 25(2), 161–167.
- Williams, L. L. (2007). *Perceptions of community psychology among registered psychologists*. [Unpublished Master's dissertation, Stellenbosch University].
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/1850>

- Willis, G. M., & Letourneau, E. J. (2018). Promoting accurate and respectful language to describe individuals and groups. *Sexual Abuse, 30*(5), 480–483.
- Young, C. (2013). South African counselling psychology at the crossroads: Lessons to be learned from across the world. *South African Journal of Psychology, 43*(4), 422–433. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246313504697>
- Young, C., Bantjes, J., & Kagee, A. (2016). Professional boundaries and the identity of counselling psychology in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology, 46*(1), 3–8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246315603620> sap.sagepub.com
- Young, S., Gudjonsson, G., Chitsabesan, P., Colley, B., Farrag, E., Forrester, A., ... & Asherson, P. (2018). Identification and treatment of offenders with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in the prison population: a practical approach based upon expert consensus. *Bmc Psychiatry, 18*(1), 1–16.
- Zajda, J. (2020). Discourse analysis as a qualitative methodology. *Educational Practice and Theory, 42*(2), 5–21.

Appendix A: UNISA Ethics Approval Letter



COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

30 April 2019

Dear Shonitha Harripersadh

NHREC Registration # :
Rec-240816-052
CREC Reference # : 2019-
CHS-Depart-34058605

Decision:
Ethics Approval from 30 April
2019 to 01 May 2023

Researcher(s): Shonitha Harripersadh

Supervisor(s): Prof M.E. FOURIE

fourime@unisa.ac.za

**The lived experiences of psychologists working in correctional centers in
South Africa**

Qualification Applied: DLitt et Phil in Psychology

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa Department of Psychology College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The *low risk application* was *reviewed and expedited* by Department of Psychology College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, on the **(30 April 2019)** in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Department of Psychology Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date (**01 May 2023**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2019-CHS--Depart- 34058605** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature :



Prof I. Ferns
Ethics Chair: Psychology
Email: fernsi@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 8210

Signature :



Dr Suryakanthie Chetty
Ethics Chair : CREC
E-mail: chetts@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 6267



Appendix B: DCS Ethics Approval Letter



correctional services

Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X136, PRETORIA, 0001 Poyntons Building, C/O WF Nkomo and Sophie De Bruyn Street, PRETORIA
Tel (012) 307 2770

Ms S Govender
No.5 Maltzanhof
300 Christoffel Street
Pretoria West
0183

Dear Ms Govender

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES ON: "THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PSYCHOLOGISTS WORKING IN CORRECTIONAL CENTRES IN SOUTH AFRICA"

It is with pleasure to inform you that your request to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services on the above topic has been approved.

Your attention is drawn to the following:

- This ethical approval is valid from **26 August 2019 to 25 August 2021**.
- The relevant Regional and Area Commissioners where the research will be conducted will be informed of your proposed research project.
- Your internal guide will be **Ms M Ramutla: Regional Coordinator Care, Gauteng**.
- You are requested to contact her at telephone number (012) 420 0152 before the commencement of your research.
- It is your responsibility to make arrangements for your interviewing times.
- Your identity document/passport and this approval letter should be in your possession when visiting the Correctional Centres.
- You are required to use the terminology used in the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (February 2005) and the Correctional Services Act (No.111 of 1998) e.g. "Offenders" not "Prisoners" and "Correctional Centres" not "Prisons".
- You are not allowed to use photographic or video equipment during your visits, however the audio recorder is allowed.
- You are required to submit your final report to the Department for approval by the Commissioner of Correctional Services before publication (including presentation at workshops, conferences, seminars, etc) of the report.
- Should you have any enquiries regarding this process, please contact the REC Administration for assistance at telephone number (012) 307 2770.

Thank you for your application and interest to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services.

Yours faithfully

ND SIHLEZANA
DC: POLICY COORDINATION & RESEARCH

DATE: 21/08/2019

Appendix C: Information Sheet

Research Title: The lived experiences of psychologists working in correctional centres in Gauteng, South Africa

Name of researcher: Shonitha Harripersadh

Faculty: Department of Psychology

University: UNISA

Supervisor: Professor E. Fourie

I am a student at UNISA, conducting research on the lived experiences of permanently employed psychologists in the Department of Correctional Services. I am interested in exploring the experiences of psychologists who have been working for one year and/or more within the Gauteng correctional centres.

To be a participant of this study you will therefore have to meet the above criteria and sign the consent form. Your participation must be completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time should you feel the need to do so.

The study will entail an in-depth semi-structured, one-on-one interview that will be tape recorded. The interview is designed to explore first-hand about the experiences that you have encountered whilst working in the correctional centre. You will be required to share your rich experiences of working as a psychologist in a correctional centre and its impact's/contributions on you, if any. The interview will be short and will depend on the responses provided. I will come to your respective correctional centre to conduct the interview, pending your availability.

You are therefore encouraged to speak freely and share as much as possible about the experiences you have had over the past year/s.

If at any point during the interview you begin to feel uncomfortable, distressed, or anxious, please indicate this to me and we will terminate the interview immediately. If necessary, I will also refer you to a colleague who is a clinical psychologist for further intervention if you so wish.

All the information you provide will be kept confidential and stored in a secure place out of the correctional centre. My supervisor will be the only person who will have access to the information. Upon completion of the study, all data will be securely stored away in a safe place. The final research report will be made public access and a copy will be submitted to the Department of Correctional Services.

It is important to note that as a participant of this study, your anonymity will be maintained at all times. Furthermore, you will not be given any benefits of any form for participating in the research study.

It is also important to note that the research is solely for academic purposes and it has no bearing on the Department of Correctional Services.

Shonitha Harripersadh
Researcher

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form for Participants

I, Name and Surname _____ working at _____ correctional centre, have read the information sheet that was provided to me, regarding the study. The information sheet was also discussed with me by the researcher, prior to conducting the interview, for the purpose of clarity.

Based on the above, I therefore give my full consent to participate in the research conducted by Miss S. Harripersadh, a doctoral student in Psychology at the University of South Africa.

By consenting to participate in the research: The Lived Experiences of Psychologists working in correctional centres in Gauteng, South Africa, I hereby acknowledge the following:

- | |
|--|
| <p>1. I have not been forced or coerced by anyone to participate in this study, hence my participation is voluntary.
I am aware of my rights to withdraw from the study at any time should I choose to do so.
If I become uncomfortable or distressed during the interview, I will inform the researcher and will discontinue the interview.</p> |
| <p>2. I acknowledge that this study is for research purposes only and I will not be remunerated in any way.
I therefore, will not make any claim for remuneration from the researcher or from the Department of Correctional Services.</p> |
| <p>3. My name will remain confidential and will not be used in the final research report.
The researcher will ensure that all information provided will be locked away in a secure place to maintain my rights to confidentiality and safety.</p> |
| <p>4. The information collected during the interviews will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher and quotes from the transcripts may be used in the final research report.</p> |
| <p>5. I am fully aware that the final research report will be made available to the Department of Correctional Services and to public access.</p> |

Signed on this day of _____ month _____ year _____ at

Signature

Date

Appendix E: Interview Schedule

- 1) Will you provide me with some background information about yourself?
e.g. gender, age, clinical or counselling psychologist, which centre: male or female?
- 2) How long have you been working in the Department of Correctional Services (DCS)
- 3) Why did you decide to work in a correctional centre?
- 4) What did you do to prepare yourself for a career as a correctional psychologist?
- 4.1) What were some of the training approaches and skills that DCS provided to you upon being appointed as a psychologist?
- 5) How do you see or perceive yourself within the confines of a correctional centre?
- 6) How do you perceive the value of the services you render in the correctional centre?
- 7) What resources are available to you in order for you to perform your functions adequately?
- 8) What are the advantages of working as a psychologist within a correctional centre?
- 9) What are the disadvantages of working as a psychologist within a correctional centre?
- 10) What are the common challenges that you experience as a psychologist working within a correctional centre?
- 10.1) How do these challenges impact on the services that you render?
- 10.2) How do these challenges impact on you as a person?
- 11) How do you experience vicarious trauma within a correctional context?
- 11.1) How do you cope with the vicarious trauma?
- 12) How has the experiences that you may have gained within the correctional centre affect or enhance other aspects of your life?
- 13) Are you working together with other psychologists at the Centre?
If so, can you tell me more about your experiences in working with other psychologists?
- 14) Are you engaging with psychologists at other Centres?
If so, can you tell me more about your experiences in engaging with other psychologists?

- 15) Are you working together with social workers?
If so, can you tell me more about your experiences in working with these social workers?
- 16) Are you attending and participating in any of the DCS events that are organized for psychologists?
- 17) Are you currently involved in any further studies or enrolled for short learning courses?