**EXPLORING THE SUPPORT STRUCTURES IN PLACE FOR LEARNERS WHO ARE**

**SURVIVORS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

by

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**DECLARATION**

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**ABSTRACT**

Many South African schools are branded by violence, gangsterism, substance abuse and general crime. The scourge of violence in schools is cause for concern, citing daily reports that appear in the written and electronic media about high levels of violence, physical and sexual abuse and gang-related activities in schools. The carrying of knives, guns and other weapons has become part of daily school life. What is of utmost concern, and what stands out is that violence is happening in a place that is intended to be a safe environment and a place of learning.

These acts of violence in schools often start with learners who assault each other and then spread to attacks on teachers. One cannot over-emphasise the importance of schools, and how the schools are supposed to be safe places where effective teaching, learning and socialisation can take place in an environment that is safe for learners, teachers and non-teaching staff.

In understanding violence in schools, the study undertakes to comprehend the characteristics that are embedded in violence and the support structures that are available for survivors. The primary aim of this study is to explore the support structures that can be employed to support learners who are survivors of school violence. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model was used as a conceptual framework. Qualitative research design and phenomenology as a mode of enquiry were employed in this study. The experiences and perceptions of various school principals and teachers were elicited through the focus-group interviews, document review, and observations. Population comprised principals and teachers in five schools. Purposive sampling was used as a method of sample selection.

The findings revealed that support is key, and lack of support can negatively impact on learners' access to schools and academic achievement in many ways. Generally, because of lack of a structured support, culture in some of the schools and communities, breed an attitude of "you are on your own" among learners. It was also found that most learners who leave schools prematurely, through the fear of violence, do not report when they leave. The study recommended that support must be provided promptly, and parents, teachers as well as caregivers need to be capacitated in order to offer effective and efficient support.

## Keywords:

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ARACY | Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth |
| ATP | Annual Training Plan |
| CEPD | Centre for Education Policy Development |
| CES | Chief Education Specialist |
| CSTL | Care and Support in Teaching and Learning |
| CSVR | Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation |
| DBE | Department of Basic Education |
| DBST | District-based Support Team |
| DoE | Department of Education |
| DSD | Department of Social Development |
| ECD | Early Childhood Development |
| EPE | Ecologies of parental engagement |
| ESI | Emotional-social intelligence |
| FSS | Full-Service Schools |
| HRM | Human resource management |
| IPT | Independent Projects Trust |
| ISHP | Integrated School Health Policy |
| ISP | Individual Support Plan |
| ISS | Inclusion and Special School |
| JMPD | Johannesburg Metro Police Department |
| LO | Life Orientation |
| LSA | Learner Support Assistants |
| LSEN | Learners with Special Education Needs |
| NCESS | National Committee on education support services |
| NCSNET | National Commission on special needs in education and training |
| NDP | National Development Plan |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NICRO | National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders |
| ODI | Overseas Development Institute |
| PAGAD | People Against Gangsters and Drugs |
| PsySSA | Psychological Society of South Africa |
| SA | South Arica |
| SACE | South African Council for Educations |
| SANCA | South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence |
| SAPS | South African Police Service |
| SASA | South African Schools Act |
| SBST | School-based Support Team |
| SGB | School Governing Bodies |
| SIAS | Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support |
| SMT | School Management Team |
| SOP | Standard Operational Procedures |
| SSC | School Security Committee |
| SSRC | Special School Resource Centre |

| UAE | United Arab Emirates |
|---|---|
| UNISA | University of South Africa |
| US | United States of America |
| USAID | The United States Agency for International Development |

**CHAPTER 1:**

**INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Amplified media responsiveness to school violence and learners' maladaptive behaviour has led to major concerns of many adults about the status of the education system in South Africa. Raising and educating learners to become just and democratic citizens is a major mission for any country (Pretorius, 2007). Education is undeniably the right of learners and the responsibility of adults. However, that right to learn is presently being destabilised by the constant violence in numerous South African schools. Pretorius (2007), proclaimed that many South African schools are branded by violence, gangsterism, substance abuse and general crime. The media often report on learners being killed by co-learners, learners dying from drugs slipped into cool drinks, and learners being raped, sexually harassed and physically and emotionally bullied. Clearly, society is answerable to the victims for the chaos and violence in our schools.

Violence in some form has always existed in schools and communities all over the world. The United States Department of Justice and the National Association of Secondary Schools Principals both reported that an astonishing three million crimes have occurred on or near school property each year since the 1980's (Baum, 2010). This is further strengthened by Hashima and Finkelhor (1999), who stated that learners in the United States are more likely to be exposed to violence and crime than adults. The concept was emphasised by Baum (2010), that who reported that juveniles and young adults ages 12 to 19 years of age were twice as likely to be victims of violent crimes than the rest of the population. This translates to millions of learners and adolescents in the United States being unprotected to violence in their homes, schools, and communities as both victims and witnesses. This is a clear concern for parents and other stakeholders in education.

In South Africa, as discussed on diverse media platforms, this aberrant behaviour at times results in death, and has lately intensified and seems out of control, as highlighted by the Minister of Education, Mrs. Angie Motshekga in several news reports (African News Agency, 2016). The concern was reinforced by the Member of the Executive Council of

Education in Gauteng, Mr Panyaza Lesufi, in the City Press (2017). Other newspapers such as the Daily News, the Mail and Guardian have reported that class warfare is rife at SA schools. Mncube and Harber (2012), reported that the scourge of violence in South African schools is cause for concern, citing daily reports that appear in the written and electronic media about high levels of violence, physical and sexual abuse and gang-related activities in schools. They further stated that carrying knives, guns and other weapons has become part of daily school life. These reports seem to accentuate the extent of violence and crime as experienced by communities, which generally impacts negatively on education, and what happens in the school. The attention has resulted in an increase in public awareness and concern (Burton & Lezanne, 2012). This concern is exacerbated by reports that many of these crimes go unpunished for extensive periods of time (Mail and Guardian, 2008). These acts of violence in South African schools often start with learners who assault each other and then spread to attacks on teachers. This has led to a frenzy of finger-pointing, blame-shifting and calls for untenable, unconstitutional, and ultimately very harmful responses. None of this serves any useful purpose and will certainly not even start to allow resolution of this very real and major challenge that the education system faces.

With so many reports and broadcasts, clearly, something needs to be done to reduce the number of violent attacks at schools. What is of utmost concern, and what stands out in the dialogue, is that violence is happening in a place that is intended to be a safe environment and a place of learning; it has, therefore, become one of the most bothersome social problems in the South Africa today (Mncube & Harber, 2012). Not only does it affect those that are involved in the violent act, but it also affects and hinders social evolution and stability. In that light, it is vital to understand the characteristics of violence in schools, the type of learners who are affected by these acts and the support these learners receive, so that policy makers, School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs), District-Based Support Teams (DBSTs), school counsellors, psychologists, and the public can draft and implement effective strategies for support.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Schools are experiencing an increase in incidents of violence, leading to problems with learner performance. Exposure and lack of support for learners are leading to restricted curriculum access, poor academic performance and ultimately to academic exclusion. This may also result in social exclusion of survivors of violent acts. Concomitant with these problems is the realisation that, while there is a growing call for non-violence and academic success, there is no deliberate support that promotes inclusion for survivors of violent acts in school. It has also been noted that the support of survivors of violence can likely strengthen schools and increase optimum participation and excellence of learners (Ungar et al., 2019).

## 1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to build on available literature on violence by investigating violence in high schools in the Diepkloof, Pimville, Randburg, Westbury and Diepsloot areas of Gauteng Province in South Africa. I explored support structures of survivors of violence and how it is being responded to in selected high schools, through principals and teachers' voices. In addition, the study aims to build on existing literature on the support of survivors of violence in schools. Policymakers may gain insight into support, perceptions and attitudes which may influence the support of survivors of violence in schools.

## 1.4 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

For the sake of precision and to contextualise the problem, it is appropriate to distinguish between violence and aggression. The definitions provide simplicity of focus and understanding for the study. According to Tlale (2013), violence is the ultimate explosive behaviour resulting from aggression when other attempts at curbing it has been unsuccessful. Tlale (2013), accentuated that although violence and aggression often co-exist, the two should not be confused. The former implies the use of force in order to hurt, violate or abuse people, or to destroy property, the latter being more based on emotional harm, threats or antagonistic behaviour towards other people. Another definition by the World Health Organisation (2003, cited in Rutherford, et al., 2007), is that violence is the

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"physical force or power, threatened or actual (against oneself), another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm or maldevelopment or deprivation" (p. 676). Although there is wide range of disciplines, including psychology and education, that have attempted to define the phenomenon of aggression, there is no commonly accepted definition (Underwood, 2003). In understanding violence in schools, the study undertakes to comprehend the characteristics that are embedded in violence and the support structures that are available for survivors. Learners are the products of their environment and their social relationships are shaped by their milieu. The environment therefore plays a major role in how learners react and respond in social settings. The settings they find themselves in may influence and contribute to the development of violent behaviour because they may model themselves on their parents, either through their direct collaboration in the form of abusive discipline, or by exposure to domestic aggression between the parents. They may also observe and imitate the violent behaviour of peers in the school setting (Gelfand & Drew, 2003; Palmary & Moat, 2002). It, therefore, means the behaviour observed may have a negative influence on the learner whether it arises at school or at home.

In the family context, aggression is easily transmitted from parents to their learners because violent parents produce a social environment favourable to it (Arrowood, 2015). It is from the home that many people either obtain or do not receive support to develop intellectual and pro-social skills and self-regulatory behaviour. This backing or lack thereof can thus spill over into other places, especially in a school context where social skills may be needed. Parental responsibility and role modelling cannot be over-emphasised, as they are the primary socialising agents in the life of many learners. Family effects play a particularly prominent role in the modelling of violence. When parents have an instinctive tendency to violence and an aggressive style of managing conflict, their children may model the same behaviour. Similarly, they may model the behaviour of violent parents who apply punitive, inflexible, and authoritarian discipline techniques in the home (Arrowood, 2015). This maladaptive aggressive behaviour solution to social problems can limit and restrict their repertoire of problem-solving skills to aggressive responses only (Kelley & Beauchesne, 2001; Morrell, 2001).

Like the family, the school is a powerful socialisation agent in learners' lives. Lack of socialising skills and poor parental role models can therefore result in schools being a fertile ground to display negative behaviour. The negative behaviour can pose serious challenges to learning for learners in South African schools, as they do elsewhere in the world. Exposure to violence together with heightened levels of frustration and increased aggression can create problems within the education system, which compromises the culture of learning in schools (Eliasov & Frank, 2000; Human Rights Watch, 2001). To achieve change, it will be necessary to break into the cycle of violence that has become a systemic part of society including schools.

### 1.4.1 Schools as places of learning

According to Landsberg (2011), the main objective of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) or any education system in a democratic society, is to provide quality education for all learners so that they will be able to reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to and participate in that society throughout their lives. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), provides a base for learning and development in South African education system. The Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996), states that everyone has the right to education, which the state to the best of its ability and with its resources, must make progressively available and accessible. It is, therefore, useful to determine and relook if schools function within their mandate as per their legislated mandate. The Education White Paper 6 of 2001 (EWP6) (DoE, 2001) proclaims a policy of inclusive education, the goal being the advancement of human rights as well as social and environmental justice. Inclusive education as set out and supported in the National Curriculum, takes an inclusive approach, which means that diversities of all learners should be accommodated. That means that all schools must be prepared to accept, teach and support a diversity of learners, including learners who have the tendency to have violent outburst and survivors.

Schools, if considered holistically, and as envisaged by the DBE, should be places where learners not only acquire knowledge but also where they learn to know, to be, to do and to live together. They are valued institutions that help build upon the nation's foundations

and serve as an arena where the growth and stability of future generations begin. They are learning spaces where learners go for education. One cannot over-emphasise the importance of schools, and how they are supposed to be safe places where effective teaching, learning and socialisation can take place in an environment that is safe for learners, teachers and non-teachers. However, if one considers the incidence of murder, violence and assault in schools reported by the media, the obvious question that comes to mind is: How safe are South African schools and what is the definition of a safe school?

Nieuwenhuis (2012), asserted that a safe school may be defined as one that is free of danger and where there is an absence of possible harm: a place in which teachers, learners and non-teachers may work, teach and learn without fear of ridicule, intimidation, harassment, humiliation or violence. Bearing this in mind, a safe school is therefore a healthy place that is physically and psychologically safe. Indicators of safe schools include the presence of certain physical features such as secure walls, fencing and gates, buildings that are in a good state of repair, and well-maintained school grounds (Squelch 2011). Safe schools exercise good discipline, create a culture conducive to teaching and learning, allow for professional teacher conduct, good governance and management practices, and ensure an absence (or low levels) of crime and violence. If that definition can be taken as our definition of what a school is, clearly this is a call for concern to our South African schools. Since violence and aggressive acts cannot be completely eradicated, what is of greater concern, and my focus, is what schools can do to reduce these violence acts and put in place measures and support to avoid such acts; implement coping mechanisms to cope with the demands of curriculum delivery; put measures in place for all to feel safe and to continue normally with academic functions; and implement measures for support of excellence in performance.

## 1.4.2 Violence in schools

Few people will argue with the fact that school violence has a shattering effect on a school community system. Burton (2012), indicated that 15.3 percent of all learners between Grades 3 and 12 have experienced violence in some form while attending school. This translates to 1 821 054 learners countrywide. In translation, South African learners are

victimised at a rate of 160 learners per 1 000: a figure that is significantly higher than, for example, that in the United States, where the latest statistical data yields a rate of 57 learners per 1000 who fall victim to comparative forms of school violence (Burton, 2012). Du Plessis (2008), although criticised by the DBE for having a political agenda, cited research done by the South African Institute for Race Relations, which indicated that South African schools are the most dangerous schools in the world and that only 23 percent of learners reported that they feel safe at schools. A survey done by the Medical Research Council of South Africa showed that 32 percent of learners felt unsafe in schools (Keppler, 2008). Another research done by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention and the Department of Education, found that high schools in Gauteng have by far the highest rate of violence in the country (Serrao, 2008). Du Plessis (2008), reported that teachers within some schools have complained since 1999 that the DoE was not supporting their efforts to rid schools of troublemakers, whom they attempt to expel on reasonable grounds. This situation has even led to legal action against the DoE (Bezuidenhout, 1999). Furthermore, this non-support for teachers was also echoed by Astor et al. (1996) who pointed out that, in practice, the DoE keeps offenders within the school system. School then need to cope with what they term "offenders" of violence and restore stability and the culture of learning. Restorative justice is linked to the concept of 'Ubuntu' which, in essence, implies forgiveness (Morrison, 2007). This concept of Ubuntu, which is an African idiom, places a larger responsibility on teachers to forgive and continue with their daily activities, disregarding the context of violence. In practice, this also supported by the policy of inclusion, Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DBE, 2014), which does not allow schools to permanently remove violent learners from schools. It is on this basis that I intended to study the characteristics of violence within the school context.

## 1.5 THEORETICAL APPROACH

The theoretical framework of this study is informed by Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979). This theory looks at the development of the child within the context of the system of relationships that make up his or her environment. Multifaceted layers of the environment define each having an impact on the result of a child's development

(Paquette & Ryan, 2001). The interface between factors in the child's maturing biology, his immediate family and community environment stimulates and drives the child's development. Conflict or changes in any one level will ripple all the way through other levels. To study a child's behavioural influences then, it is not only imperative to look at the child, but at her or his immediate situation, and at the interface with the larger environment as well (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).
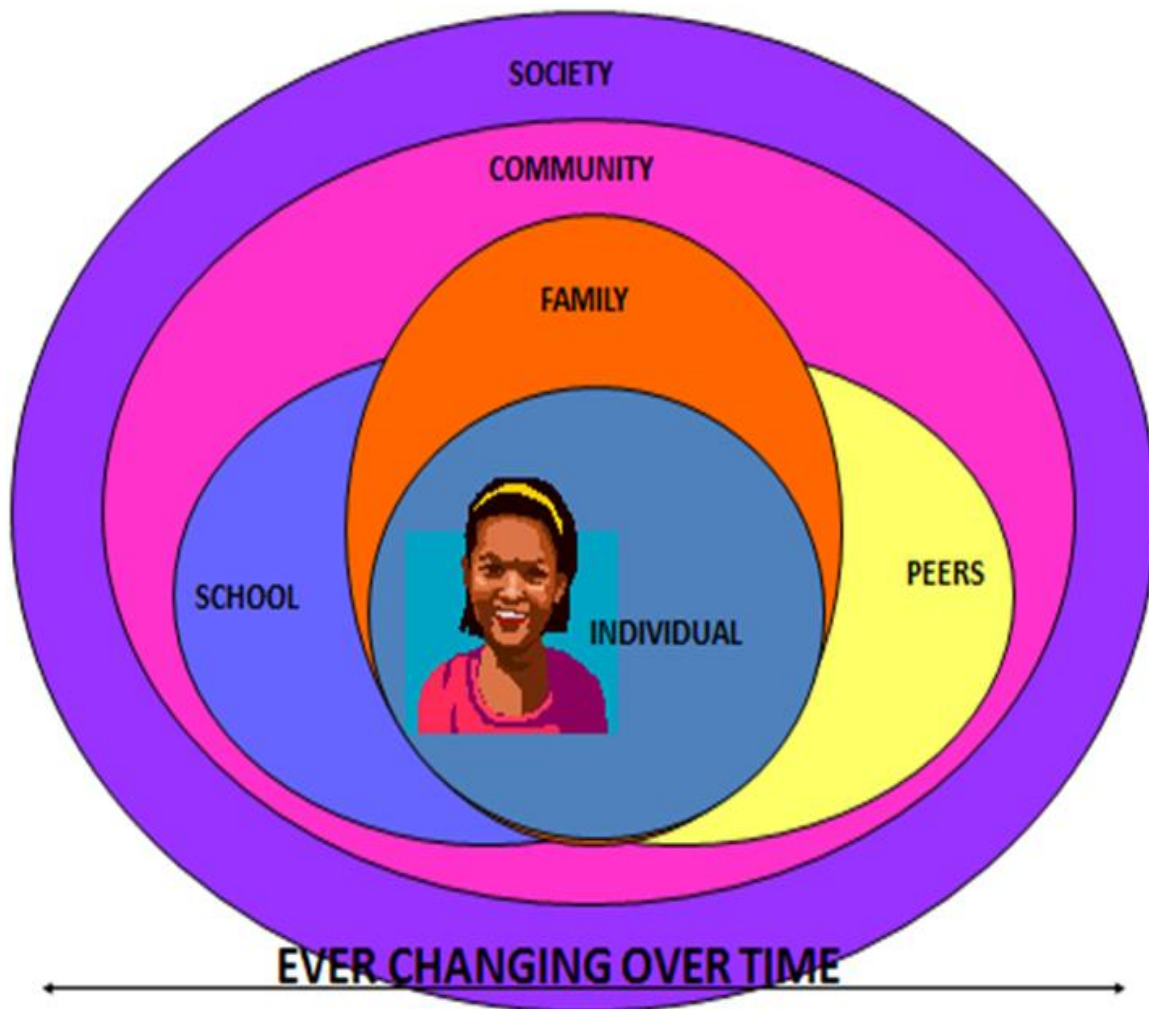


*Figure 1: Interacting levels of organisation within the social context*

Source: (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 1997, p. 35)

The ecological systems theory identifies five environmental systems, namely, the micro-system, meso-system, exo-system, macro-system and chrono-system. The micro-system encompasses the relationships and interactions a child has with her immediate surroundings. Structures in the micro-system comprise family, school and neighbourhood. The other ecosystems describe the larger social system in which the child does not function directly. Parent workplace schedules or community-based family resources are examples. The meso-system facilitates the relationship between the structures of the child's micro-system; for example, the link between the child's teacher and his parents, between his church and his neighbourhood. The macro-system may be considered the outermost level in the child's environment and is comprised of cultural values, customs, and laws. The chrono-system is about the dimension of time as it relates to a child's environment. Elements within this system can be either external, such as the timing of a parent's death, or internal, such as the physiological changes that occur with the ageing of a human (Berk, 2000).

The keystone of Bronfenbrenner's model is a belief that individual human development, socialisation explicitly, comes about through interactions within and between multiple nested ecological systems impacting upon the developing young person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner (1979), stated that to assert that human development is a product of interaction between the emergent organism and its environment is to state what is almost commonplace in behavioural science. To clarify, this belief asserts that behaviour changes as a function of the interplay between person and environment, paying special consideration to the interaction between the two (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The ecological system theory proposes that the progression of human development occurs when mutual exchanges develop between the individual and the environment, which are mutually influential (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner (1979) claimed that learner, family, school and macrosystem factors, such as the cultural and economic fabric of society, including policies, legislation and judicial systems can give rise to a learner who has violent tendencies. It is, therefore, not satisfactory to scrutinise individual factors, such as family, peers, or school separately, as these overlaps.

The importance of this theory in exploring violent behaviour is the interaction between a violent learner and the environment. Here the behaviour develops through interactions with family, peers, school, and community. As the learner enters school, their behaviour is shaped by many dynamic issues, experienced on daily basis. How they react to certain stimuli will depend on how they have learnt resolution skills at all the different levels. The support they have or do not have will play a pivotal role in determining how they react. It is on this note that learners need to be supported effectively and efficiently by all that are involved in their lives. Donald, Lazarus, and Lolwana (2004), confirmed that the interdependence and relationships between different organisms and their physical environment is imperative, as relationships are a whole. Every part is as important as another in sustaining the cycles of birth and death, regeneration and decay which together ensure the survival of the whole. The learner is constantly involved in interactive relationships with vast different levels of organisation within a particular social context. Each of the levels thus interacts within the others within the total socio-ecological system.

In considering the characteristics of violence in schools, it is important to look at the challenges and possible solutions considering all levels of the Bronfenbrenner (1997), model. The levels as explained in the Bronfenbrenner theory emphasise the need to understand and respond to acts of violence in a systematic way. These are following are some of the aspects to be considered which contribute to the problem: (i) the school environment, this includes considering how the teacher manages the class, and how teaching and learning happens in the classroom; (ii) the impact of the curriculum; (iii) the accessibility and availability of learning materials; and (iv) the interpersonal environment. For example, factors such as interpersonal conflict in an institution, mismanagement, a lack of adequate materials or equipment, or inaccessible buildings and classrooms may indirectly be acting as barriers.

Other considerations are how the home environment influences the principals and teachers. This includes consideration of family dynamics, home language, socio-economic class, cultural background, and economic conditions of the family, to answer the question of whether there are broader community and social factors that are promoting violence. This includes the number of social challenges facing schools now,

including poverty and various forms of substance abuse. Bronfenbrenner's (1997), framework will be used as a basis for developing a profile of violence, to ensure that all aspects of the systems are considered in understanding the context and characteristics of violence in schools.

## 1.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

### 1.6.1 Aim

The primary aim of this study is to explore the support structures that can be employed to support learners who are survivors of violence in schools.

### 1.6.2 Objectives

The objectives of the research are:

- To explore the main causes of violence in schools.
- To analyse and describe the benefits of support structures on the learners who are survivors of violence in schools.
- To examine the role that the principal and teachers are playing in supporting the learners who are survivors of violence in schools.
- To develop intervention strategies that can be incorporated in supporting the learners who are survivors of violence in schools.

## 1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research question was the methodological point of departure of the research (Maree, 2010). The study to be conducted helped me to answer the research question (Alexander, 2008; Bryman, 2007; Creswell, 2010; Maree, 2010). The conceptualisation of the research was made possible by the answering of the research question. Creswell (2010), advised that the research question helps a researcher to focus their ideas and ensure that data collected is appropriate data. It is through the research question that a researcher will be able to determine what, where, when and how to collect data and to identify the trends and significance of the study (Blaxter et al., 2006; Alexander, 2008).

### 1.7.1 Main research question

The following primary research question guided the study:

What are the current support structures that are available for learners who are survivors of violence in schools?

### 1.7.2 Secondary questions

To answer the main research question, I explored the following secondary research questions.

- What are the main causes of violence in schools?
- What are the benefits of having the support structures for the learners who are survivors of violence in schools?
- What role is the principal and teachers playing in supporting the learners who are survivors of violence in schools?
- What are the intervention strategies that can be used in support of the learners who are survivors of violence in schools?

### 1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this study, a qualitative approach will be used to get a holistic understanding what characterise violence within the context of five high schools. The use of the qualitative approach ensured that I understood violence in the five high schools that I studied from an insider perspective (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as the authentic life situation [where] the researcher does not make an effort to change phenomenon of interest (Burns & Grove, 2005). Qualitative research, broadly defined, means any type of research that produces findings that are not based on any statistical procedures or quantification (Burns & Grove, 2005), and instead, it is the kind of research that produces findings that are derived from the real world environment where the wonder of interest are naturally shown (Patton, 2001).

Qualitative research data usually is in the form of words, images and descriptions, language, verbal non-verbal and has symbolic meaning. The results data for this study, therefore, were obtained by means of documentation, face-to-face, focus-group interviews and observation. I used focus-group semi-structured interviews to ask questions and to gather necessary and relevant information (Burns & Grove, 2010).

## 1.8.1 Research design

A research design is viewed as a framework representing how a researcher will conduct the study to best address the research problem or research question (Rubin & Babbie, 2012). Its emphasises the logic of the research and includes the nature of evidence that is required to address the research question effectively and to guarantee the trustworthiness of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The research design therefore explains the phenomenon to be considered as well as the envisaged approach to be followed (Babbie, 2010). This study was aimed at gathering data on the support structure available in five schools in the Johannesburg North District. The qualitative phenomenological design was chosen to elicit the information.

According to Engelbrecht (2011), the research design is based on four central questions, specifically: what data is needed, where the data is located, how the data will be analysed, and how the data will be interpreted. To ensure the efficacy and trustworthiness of the research, the research design addressed the following: the purpose of the study, the theoretical assumptions, and the context in which the research took place as well as the research techniques to be followed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

## 1.8.2 The study sites

Data was drawn from five high schools, one each in Diepkloof, Pimville, Randburg, Westbury and Diepsloot. The five high schools fell under one of the 15 education districts in Gauteng, the Johannesburg North District. I chose purposive sampling to select research sites that were accessible (Petty et al., 2012). McMillian and Schumacher (2006), maintained that purposive sampling allows a researcher to select specific

elements from the population and site that will be illustrative and informative about the topic of concern. Table 1 indicates the sites where the study was conducted.

**Table 1:**

*School Sites*

| School | Circuit | Area |
|--------|---------|------|
| **School A** | 1 | Diepkloof Soweto |
| **School B** | 2 | Pimville Soweto |
| **School C** | 3 | Westbury |
| **School D** | 4 | Randburg |
| **School E** | **4** | **Diepsloot** |

## 1.8.3 Population

According to Banerjee and Chaudhury (2010), the population of a study is the entirety of all the possible participants or units of observation of the study. For this study, the population comprised principals and teachers in five schools in Johannesburg North District. O'Leary (2009: 87) stated that a population is "the total membership of a defined class of people, objects or events. Similarly, Magwa and Mugari (2017), confirmed that population is the complete group of persons or set of objects and events a researcher

wants to investigate. One significant aspect of selecting a population is whether conclusions reached from a research sample can be applied to the population.

## 1.8.4 Sample

A sample is a small percentage of the entire set of objects, actions or individuals that collectively encompass the subject of study. It can be observed as a subdivision of units drawn from population with which a researcher is concerned (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

Denscombe (1998), explained that purposive sampling is appropriate in situations where a researcher already knows roughly about specific individuals who are likely to produce most valued data. In short, purposive sampling is best used with small numbers of individuals or groups which may be necessary for understanding human perceptions, problems, needs and contexts. In this study, purposive sampling was used. In qualitative research, the researcher deliberately picks cases that can shed light on the phenomenon under study, rather than relying on statistical probability. Participants are selected for their ability to deliver rich information. The sample for this study was based on the aim of the research (Groenewald, 2004), and teachers who are part of the support group, and the principal of the selected schools will be identified. (Groenewald, 2004). One principal and six teachers were involved. This total number of participants was 35. Table 2 illustrates the sample used in the study.

**Table 2:**

*Sample for the Study*

| School | Participants | Total |
|--------|--------------|-------|
| School A | Principal | 7 |
| | 6 x Teachers | |
| School B | Principal | 7 |
| | 6 x Teachers | |
| School C | Principal | 7 |
| | 6 x Teachers | |
| School D | Principal | 7 |
| | 6 x Teachers | |
| School E | Principal | 7 |
| | 6 x Teachers | |
| Total | | 35 |

## 1.9 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Lewis (2015), defined data collection as a process of interrelated activities that are intended to gather evidence which will permit a researcher to respond to the emerging research questions. Antonius (2003), stated that the expression 'data collection' denotes an organised way of accumulating, organising, and recording data for the reader to be able to evaluate the evidence appropriately. Thus, data is not to be collected

indiscriminately, but as answers in reply to research questions the study poses. Schostak and Schostak (2008), maintained that a researcher must remember that the data they get is not static but is exposed to rebuilding and other ways of seeing and finding answers to questions the study wishes to answer.

Lewis (2015), additionally, advocated that a researcher needs to be aware that the data collection methods they will be using will be produced from a qualitative perspective. It is also vital during data collection to establish rapport with participants and gain informed consent from them to produce valid data and achieve a successful result.

### 1.9.1 Individual interviews

Collecting data using the qualitative method entails collecting data using words rather than numbers. One way of collecting data is by conducting interviews. Interactive interviews were conducted as they were ideal for probing and getting clarification on matters that needed further discussion. Unlike everyday conversations, interviews aim at collecting data for the researcher. I conducted interactive interviews where I asked participants open-ended questions and recorded their answers. The interactive interview questions helped the participants to voice their experiences in a way that was not inhibited by my standpoint. Creswell (2008) stated that open-ended questions allow participants the freedom to answer as they see fit. Additionally, Maree (2010), stated that interviews permit participants to describe detailed personal information as they are comfortable in their own space with the researcher without any fear. The interactive interviews were conducted with five principals using the Microsoft Teams online platform. The interviews were transcribed and used for data analysis. Notes recorded during the sessions, observations and documents were also used in data analysis. During the research period, all Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) governing schools in the management of Covid-19 were adhered to.

It should be noted that interviews have both advantages and disadvantages when used in research (Maree, 2010). I acknowledge that one of the disadvantages is that interviews provide information as it is processed by the researcher (Maree, 2010). This is so because I summarised participants' views in the report. The other disadvantage is that the

interviews may be misleading in that the participants may present views that they think the researcher wants to hear, bearing in mind the researcher's presence may affect how they answer. I used a recorder to minimise distractions that could compromise the flow of the interview. The recorder enabled me to give attention to the conversation with participants.

## 1.9.2 Focus-group interviews

Another type of interview the study used was focus-group interviews, as one objective of the study was to collect shared perceptions and understanding from participants (Creswell, 2014). White (2005), asserted that smaller groups are a preference when the researcher wants participants to share a great deal of information about the phenomenon under study. Thus, at each of the research sites, I conducted focus-group interviews with teachers from the SBST, safety committees, Heads of Department and Life Orientation teachers with a maximum of eight individuals in each focus group. I recorded the session using the Microsoft Teams facility.

It should be noted that transcriptions of recordings of online meetings could be challenging when identifying or discerning voices of individuals in the group. Moreover, the researcher may have a challenge with taking notes because of all activities during the interview. However, I was mindful of the advantages of using focus-group interviews.

White (2005), stipulated that focus-group interviews allow interaction among interviewees that may give rise to obtaining the best information when participants are similar and accommodate others' views. Another advantage of focus-group interviews is that they are not time-intensive, and they work well when the time to collect information is limited (Creswell, 2008). I decided on online focus-group interviews because of the sample size needed (a small number of participants: four to six), and furthermore, participants could gather online at the same time (Maree, 2010). Semi-structured open-ended questions to collect data allowed me the flexibility to add questions for clarification (White, 2005).

In addition to using focus-group interviews, observations were used as a data collection strategy in the research. The next paragraph explains the use of observations in the proposed study.

### 1.9.3 Observation

To understand the matter being investigated or explored, it is important for the researcher to be involved by carefully taking interest in the phenomenon and strategically observing the participants in their natural setting (Young et al., 2020). Observations help a researcher to understand the context in which the incidences occur and thus help in collecting precise data in its natural context (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Observation also helps the researcher to have clear perceptions and helps in removing the inconsistencies between what the participants say and do and may help to reveal some behaviour of which the participants may not be aware (Young et al., 2020). Using observation as data collection requires a researcher to adopt a specific role as observer. For the current study, I took on the role of a non-participant observer to record notes without becoming involved in the events of the participants. I watched and recorded the reactions an interaction of the participants (Creswell, 2008; Maree, 2010). Before conducting the observations, I built rapport through Microsoft Teams and took limited notes so that participants did not get overwhelmed. The practical requirements of the situation needed to be taken into consideration. The observation was done during the recording of the session. The teachers and principal who were the participants were observed during the interview process that was done online through Microsoft Teams. The participants were at the school.

During her role as a non-participant observer, I conducted herself in a non-intrusive manner. I then thanked the participants and notified them that the results would be made obtainable to them once the study was completed. There was thus a need to include field notes, which is discussed in the data documentation segment that follows (Creswell, 2008).

### 1.9.4 Data documentation

Documents are artefacts that are useful in collecting data. They are a non-interactive way of collecting data where the researcher does not extract the evidence but is required to be creative and inventive to deduce the meaning from them (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). In this regard, documents used for external communication such as logbooks, referral documents, incident reports, minutes of SBST meetings and documents for internal communications that establish the nature of support were analysed.

### 1.10 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collection methods that the researcher selects need to be appropriate in terms of the purpose and nature of the research (Maree, 2010). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) stated that the use of the qualitative approach allows the researcher to be an instrument of data collection, as the researcher asks the participants questions during data collection and interprets what they observe. It is important as a researcher to observe participants in their own natural setting (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The benefit is that data collected through the qualitative approach is in depth (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Individual and focus group interviews which are rooted within the case study approach were used as an approach to collect data during the study (Palinkas et al., 2015).

### 1.10.1 Data analysis

Atkins and Wallace (2012), asserted that in qualitative research, the data analysis process begins during data collection as the data that collected is analysed and shapes the ongoing data collection This chronological investigation will allow the researcher to go back and improve questions and pursue emergent opportunities of inquiry in additional depth (Pope et al., 2000). Pope et al. (2000), asserted that continuous analysis is used in qualitative research because the researcher is on site collecting the data, and this makes it difficult for the researcher not to be mindful of what they hear and see. The data analysis and process are iterative and cyclical rather than a fixed linear methodology (Lewis, 2015). Marshall and Rossman (1999), declared that data analysis is a process used for

ordering, structuring, and giving sense to the collected data. Data interpretation is thus a non-linear process that helps the researcher to make sense interpreting and theorising data noteworthy to the search for general statements among categories of data (Schwandt, 2007). Therefore, the data analysis is regarded as a necessary research step that, when appropriately applied, will help direct the researcher's enquiry. The analysis and interpretation of data are either deductive or inductive (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). In qualitative research, the inductive approach is usually followed (Azungah, 2018). I was mindful of the inseparable relationship between data collection and data analysis on building a coherent interpretation of data (Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Schurink et al., 2011; Tuckman & Harper, 2012; Veal, 2006).

## 1.10.2 Inductive thematic analysis

In the study, I analysed data using inductive thematic analysis. My objectives were to organise the data into categories, identify patterns and demonstrate the connections among the different categories (McMillian & Schumacher, 2014).

The following steps were observed in the inductive thematic analysis:

- Reading the data sets for understanding and recording all developing ideas;
- Creating codes (writing codes and noting recurring topics);
- Comparing codes for replication and overlaps;
- Refining the coding system and forming final categories;
- Evaluating discrepant negative evidence throughout the process.

## 1.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY

Trustworthiness in qualitative studies is based on determining whether the findings are accurate (Maree, 2010). Polit and Beck (2010) argued that trustworthiness of a qualitative research cannot be guaranteed. The use of rich and thick description will, however, transport the reader to the setting and provide a discussion of the participants' shared experiences (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009), De Vos (2005), and Polit and Beck (2010) explained that for the research findings to be credible, a detailed description of the setting,

the identification of the population, the selection of the sample, and all the steps taken should be provided. In the current study, I provided a detailed description of the setting and all components of the population. The steps taken were discussed in an attempt to produce a trustworthy and rigorous study (Reynolds et al., 2011) and I adhered to the quality criteria for qualitative studies that Lincoln and Guba (1985), established in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity.

Quality criteria require me to make sound decisions about the focus of study, when selecting the context, participants, and approach to gathering data to achieve credibility. For example, I chose principals of school and teachers within the SBST who had an in-depth knowledge of violent incidents at schools (Cope, 2014; Graneheim & Lundman 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To attain transferability, I gave a rich and distinguishing description of the context, selection and characteristics of participants, data collection and analysis processes followed. I used appropriate quotations to give the reader the opportunity to explore alternative interpretations (Cope, 2014; Graneheim & Lundman 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure dependability, I was careful to give clear procedures and descriptions of how the study was conducted so that another researcher could apply a similar process in their own study (Cope, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Cope (2014), contended that a clear audit trail helps other researchers to conduct research in a similar context with similar participants.

I ensured confirmability by demonstrating that data was an accurate representation of the participants' responses and not my subjective viewpoint (Cope, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Beck, 2012). I used verbatim quotes from the interviews to illustrate developing themes and show that findings resulted from data (Cope, 2014). Quality criteria further require that the researcher express the feelings and emotions of the participants in an honest way, to ensure authenticity of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Beck, 2012). I used the participants' quotes to assist readers to understand the participants' experiences (Cope, 2014).

Reliability in qualitative research is associated with stability, accuracy, consistency, and repeatability of the study (White, 2005). As stated by White (2005), the researcher must

ensure that the study meets the benchmarks for reliability, both internal (by limiting inaccuracies during progressions of the research) and external reliability (by being precise in recording the progression of the research) using pertinent research methods.

## 1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Firstly, I ensured honest reporting which Walliman (2009), says is essential to engender a level of trust and credibility in the development of knowledge. Ethical considerations were observed throughout this research study. I addressed issues of plagiarism in the research report by acknowledging my sources. Permission for the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of UNISA and from the research directorate of Gauteng Education Department at the provincial level. Participants were informed of all aspects of the research that might influence their willingness to participate, namely, the purpose of the study, data collection and the feedback of the results. There was no payment for participating in the study (Frankel & Wallen, 2006). Signed consent from all participants was obtained beforehand.

Whenever research is conducted on people, the wellbeing of research participants must be the top priority (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This principle must not be dismissed as irrelevant, or the researcher may make decisions that threaten the study or disrupt the lives of the participants. In this research, participants were assured of confidentiality, anonymity and avoidance of harm (physical, psychological, or otherwise). The participants were requested not to give their names to ensure that their identity was not revealed to anyone (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Strict ethical measures were adhered to during the research process. Informed consent was obtained from participants on forms with a clause about voluntary participation and assurance that no unforeseen risk or harm would arise from participation. The consent forms also explained the freedom to withdraw from the research at any time. Great care was taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity so that no participants would be identifiable in the reporting of the results.

## 1.13 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

### 1.13.1 District-Based Support Team

The DBST is a management structure at district level, the responsibility for which is to coordinate and promote inclusive education through training, curriculum delivery, distribution of resources, infrastructure, development, identification, assessment and addressing barriers to learning. The DBST must provide leadership and general management to ensure that schools within the district are inclusive centres of learning, care and support. Leadership for the structure must be provided by the District Senior Management that could designate transversal teams and provide support (DBE, 2014).

### 1.13.2 School-Based Support Team

The SBSTs are teams that are established by schools at large to function as a school-based support mechanism whose main role is to put in place coordinated school, learner and teacher support services (DoE, 2014).

### 1.13.3 Inclusion

Inclusion is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, within a common vision which covers all learners of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular school system to educate all learners (UNESCO, 2005). Specific to this study, inclusion means the consideration of survivors of violence in the education domain. The strategy is to facilitate and promote appropriate learning conditions and cultural diversity within the mainstream school system where all learners are treated equally.

### 1.13.4 Support

Support varies from person to person and is intended to benefit everyone to develop the life skills they need at their individual pace. With support, people learn to deal with household chores such shopping, cleaning, and laundry. Tlale (2013), asserted that

support means providing various types of help, sometimes nonprofessional and nonmaterial, for one of several shared, usually onerous needs. The help may take the form of providing and evaluating relevant information, relating personal experiences, listening to and accepting others' experiences, providing sympathetic understanding and establishing social networks, or support may work to inform the public or engage in advocacy.

### 1.13.5 School violence

Violence is the ultimate explosive behaviour identified with aggression when other attempts at curbing it has been unsuccessful. Tlale (2013), emphasised that, although violence and aggression often co-exist, the two should not be confused. Violence implies the use of force to hurt, violate or abuse people, or to destroy property, while aggression involves emotions that harm, threaten or antagonise other people (Tlale, 2013).

### 1.14 POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first noticeable limitation of this study could be to do with time. Considerable time was needed to deal with the diversity of data sources. From the participants' viewpoint, principal and teachers, may feel that they are overburdened by having to participate in the interviews or that they just have no time to do so (Delva et al., 2002).

The other limitation is that the results generated from the qualitative dimension of the study may be problematic to reproduce (Wiersma, 2000). There is a chance of inconsistent results, which may force the researcher to collect additional data.

One limitation of this study was that the study was limited to Johannesburg North District, one of the 15 districts in Gauteng Province, South Africa. None of the other 14 districts were included in this study. However, although the findings of this study may not be generalised, its recommendations may be useful even in other areas outside Johannesburg North, Gauteng. The research involved only the high school because most of the violence is reportedly happening in high schools.

## 1.15 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The chapters for this enquiry have been arranged as follows:

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In this chapter, I provided the background to the study and emphasised the core issues and events that motivated the study. The problem statement was articulated, and the research questions were raised. The chapter also covered the purpose and rationale of the study, as well as the whole context and framework of the study including the definition of key terms.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I present a discussion of the ecosystem theory that guides the study in exploring the support structure for learners who are survivors of violence in schools. The theory assisted me to explore current literature that would drive the interpretation and analysis of the results of the study. This chapter also examines the literature on rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for learners who have experienced violence in schools to get a significant deeper insight into the dimensions and complexity of the problem.

Chapter 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is a continuation of the literature review but deals with issues to do with the violence in schools, best practices of support, resources, policies, conditions, and inclusivity principles. Previous research is studied to further define the knowledge gap that this study proposes to fill.

Chapter 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology underpinning the enquiry, explaining methods of data collection that have been used and describing the interpretation and analysis of the data. The chapter also focuses on refining results, taking heed of ethical issues, and outlining the complete picture of the study.

Chapter 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this chapter, the data collected is presented in narrative summaries and analysed. The chapter includes discussions of the final themes and the subsequent findings of the enquiry. It accomplishes this through contextualising the conversation of the participants through presenting and discussing themes that emerged. The common themes are provided and discussed. Comparison of the study with previous similar studies but in the context of the prevailing conditions are highlighted.

Chapter 6: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, conclusions are drawn from the major findings and recommendations on how to mitigate the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities for support in learners who are survivors of violence are submitted. Factors beyond the researcher's control that might have impacted the study are highlighted.

**1.16 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Support for survivors of violence in schools should be a priority for education department in rehabilitation of learners who have been traumatised by violence. Appropriate intervention and containment programmes can play a central role in giving back dignity and respect to the learners who experienced violence. Relevant programmes can prevent the mental health problems and give learners who experienced violence an opportunity to reflect on the possibility that they can successfully continue with school without fear. The school and authorities can take the power back, give guidance and support and support learners in excelling in the curriculum. In this chapter, the background and motivation for the study were outlined. Significant concepts were explained, and the theoretical framework was introduced. The chapter set the tone of the study by considering the research problem and the inspiration behind the study. In addition, a brief review of literature was undertaken and strategies and procedures for the whole process of the research were expressed. The next chapter addresses the support structures that are currently in place for leaners who are the victims of school-based violence.

**CHAPTER 2:**

**THE SUPPORT STRUCTURES IN PLACE FOR LEARNERS WHO ARE SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE IN A SCHOOL CONTEXT**

**2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented an overview of the study which included an introduction of the study, the research problem, the research aims and the research design. This chapter focuses on the relevant literature on support structures that are available for learners who are survivors of school violence. The support structures are located within the framework of an inclusion strategy. The study examines the voices of both principals and teachers. The chapter explores international best practices of support structures available in a school context and reflects on the challenges that are currently faced by principals and teachers. The chapter incorporates the available literature and legislation, the guiding principles of support structures within schools and appropriate interventions done to support learners.

In addition, the chapter gives a synopsis of the complexity and the challenges of support structures, by reviewing the global information on support. Furthermore, the inputs and approaches of other researchers on support structures available for learners who are survivors of school violence are explored. It also looks at how schools that are experiencing violence play their part to diminish violence by offering support to relevant learners. The literature review looks at the repetitive problems of school-based violence, which may impact negatively on support. Both international and South African literature is reviewed (Burton & Leoschut, 2012; Mncube & Harber, 2012).

The chapter starts by deliberating on global and continental literature on the available support for learners who are survivors of school-based violence. For accuracy, the section is divided into two main parts, which are to explore the support structure of learners who are survivors of school violence as well as the phenomenon of violence in schools. The two aspects are explored as defined in the following illustration.

**Level 1**

Support structure

- Inclusion
- Screening Identification Assessment and Support
- District Based Support Team
- School Based Support Team

**Level 2**

Violence

- Literature
  - International
  - Africa
  - South Africa
- Legislature within the Education Sysytem
  - School Governing bodies
  - Whole school evaluation
  - Leadership and management
- Violence and legacy of apaartheid
  - Why is South Africa rated the highest in violence
- Survivors of violence
  - Effects of trauma
  - Physical
  - Emotional
- How survivors are supported and succeed with support.

*Figure 2: The conceptual framework*

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In addition, the foundations of school violence and its connection to the theoretical framework are presented in this chapter. Furthermore, it is in this section where I deliberate on the legislated structures within the education system and emphasise further the part they play in the educational framework of support. I touch on the responsibilities of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to create safe schools in order to provide learners with a violent free area where teaching and learning can be accomplished. The chapter also focuses on the legislative framework that SGBs rely on to prevent violence in schools and the use of such legislation in preventing school violence; the SIAS document; the role of the DBST; the role of the SBST; the legacy of apartheid; why South African schools rate among the most violent schools in the world; and how this violence and lack of support influences schooling. The chapter concludes by discussing the effects of trauma and how survivors of violence can succeed in their schooling with the functional support structures that are available for learners who are survivors of violence.

## 2.2 INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LITERATURE ON SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE

Delinquent behaviour of teenagers can lead to serious problems in schools, for the learners involved and for humanity at large. The social repercussion may result in things like incarceration or an increase in teenage pregnancy, among others. The financial toll on society brought about by such behaviour is huge; for example, in the United States alone, adolescent incarceration costs over $2 billion annually (Valois, 2014), while teenage childbearing costs over $9 billion (Davis et al., 2013). Given the significant challenges of adolescent misbehaviour, reducing and preventing such inappropriate behaviour need to be the top priority of the all stakeholders (Cohen et al., 2011).

Empirical studies have shown that this violent behaviour experienced at school is snowballing and affecting other areas of the school (Benbenishty & Astor, 2008; Edwards, 2008; Leach & Sitaram, 2007). The increasing instances of violent behaviour are not confined to developed countries but are also seen in the developing countries (Dunne et al., 2006). Most often, communities appear to be shaken by the uncontrolled, increasing instances of violent behaviour in schools (Astor et al., 2008).

Recent research has found that the psyche of a child is negatively impacted by the heightened adolescent violence and misbehaviour (Klein et al., 2012; Leoschut & Burton, 2009). Consequently, all affected schools need to work towards the deterrence and reduction of adolescent violence, by constantly monitoring their environments. It is, therefore, the school's obligation to promote the rights of children and create an environment to ensure that all learners have the right to education which needs to be respected by all.

It is the duty of the government to make sure that the rights of children in education at both a primary and secondary level are maintained. Ensuring that the rights of children are protected will lead to the advancement of and access to employment opportunities later in life. The school needs to ensure that the learners receive the most important skills to help them to get out of poverty.

Wang and Degol (2016), asserted that the school climate is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept. For the purpose of this study, school climate is defined as the attitudes, norms, beliefs, values and expectations that underpin school life and affect the extent to which members of the school community feel safe (Aldridge et al., 2016; Cohen et al., 2009). A recent review by Berkowitz et al. (2017), noted that teacher support, school connectedness and school safety are central factors that define a good school environment. Where there is any level of violence in a school situation, it certainly reduces access to equitable education.

Young people's rights to self-respect and security, and to live in a safe, free environment, are also restricted by violence. Even for those learners who show resilience at schools and having experienced violence or fear, there is a great chance that they may not succeed in school. Simply put, their success in education is undesirably affected. Violence thus negatively affects education in terms of access, perseverance, and achievement. Violent behaviour in a school presents a challenge to the existing health, wellbeing, social relationships, and academic accomplishment of learners (Valois, 2014). Valois (2014), emphasised that violent behaviour has an impact on the societal and psychosocial wellbeing of adolescents.

Whether within or outside the school environment, violence has negative consequences for the learners. According to Krauss et al., (2021), violence in the community and in some of the homes in the United States has spilled over into the schools. In recent years, the USA has been intensely traumatised by numerous dramatic, incomprehensible multiple shootings of learners at school by their fellow learners and others (Keneally, 2018; Lewis, 2020). In South Africa, Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), found that "bullying, vandalism, gangsterism, indiscipline, intolerance, and corporal punishment were prevalent in schools. Furthermore … school violence had the following effects on learners: loss of concentration; poor academic performance; bunking of classes; and depression" (p. 1).

Harber (2009), supported what Mills (2001), called "inexplicable multiple killings of learners" (p.41) and explained that the shooters had often been humiliated by their peers in the presence of their teachers, who failed to intervene on their behalf despite the legal obligation to do so (the in loco parentis principle). Society, media and school shootings have recently been described as "the Inexplicable" by Braselmann, (2019, p.58). Braselmann, (2019), emphasised the rash of school shootings that shocked America, where the public perception of school shootings was that mass shootings committed by learners at their respective schools were commonplace. In several other cases, it was reported that individual members of the school staff were aware that the shooters were being bullied or humiliated but did little to end the abuse. Based on this evidence, one can conclude that these shootings did not happen by accident. They were a culmination of the interplay between the cultural environment in which the schools operated, the organisational structure of the school and the routine academic practices of its staff (Borum et al., 2010). The Columbine incident that occurred in 1999, where the cause of the disaster was attributed to bullying (Brockell, 2019), is in many ways like the story of a learner who committed suicide after being bullied by school mates in Limpopo South Africa in April 2021. The girl had undergone a period of bullying by her peers and her teachers had done nothing to protect her (Sonjica, 2021). This is an example of violence by omission on the part of the teachers who subconsciously colluded with the perpetrators.

In similar vein, Habib and Soomro (2021), maintained that although school violence seems to be more prevalent in underprivileged societies, it is also found in privileged societies and schools. Edwards et al. (2021), corroborated this idea and stated that there are complicated ongoing incidences of violence in all communities. These incidences can often be attributed to the battle for resources and the scarcity of these resources. The lack of resources and poverty is often a cause for violence, particularly domestic and gender-based violence (Council of Europe, 2021; Slabbert, 2017). Children then see this as the norm and transfer it to other social settings such as the school (Maunder & Crafter, 2018). Taking both community and domestic aspects into consideration, the community has a crucial role in the development of young learners' behaviour.

Since 2000, there has been a rash of mass killings, often in schools (Donoghue & Raia-Hawrylak (2016). Violence is a multifaceted phenomenon. Astor and Benbenishty (2018), have stated that there are no easy explanations for the violent acts. My observations as a district official, Chief Education Specialist (CES) and an Educational Psychologist (ED) working in different contexts including poor township schools, are that the schools in poorer communities appear to suffer from greater levels of violence than those in more privileged communities and this has an association with the contextual situation of the school, and the background of the communities surrounding the schools. For many learners in these communities, life is a fight for survival; for example, young learners rob others of their belongings such as cash that learners take to schools to purchase food. This, in turn, escalates into occurrences of hostility, victimisation and violence. However, this does not mean that these occurrences do not occur in privileged communities.

Studies conducted by Longobardi et al. (2017, 2019), (in Italy and Albania) and Dobson (2019) (in the US) found that sexual harassment combined with intimidation was the most common form of violence within schools. In a comparable study in South Africa, Sikhakhane et al. (2018), found that bullying and sexual harassment were commonplace. This kind of behaviour thus exists across the world.

Furthermore, some studies mentioned "implied" gender violence, which relates to the way explicit sexual groupings behave in a violent manner, particularly towards those with

alternative sexual orientations (Du Preez, 2013, 2006; Hlope et al., 2017; Mayeza, 2015; Swanson & Anton-Erxleben, 2016). Comparable studies by Edwards (2008), and Leach (2006), also contended that institute-based violence is multi-layered and seen in the many instances of violence across the spectrum of domestic and international contexts. Though not all schools are spaces of violence, studies have emphasised that gender-based violence appears to be pervasive in schools and is most unsettling for teachers (Chitsamatange & Rembe, 2020).

Similarly, Werthein (2003), stated that school violence in Brazil and other Latin American countries is also pervasive. Werthein (2003), identified various violent actions and behaviour from the learners, parents, school principals and other stakeholders that exacerbate prejudice and societal segregation. According to Werthein (2003), different kinds of violence have repercussions for school leadership and the smooth running of the school. Likewise, Deole (2018), asserted that intentional and organisational violence in and around schools in Brazil has far-reaching negative consequences. Like South Africa, Brazil is overwhelmingly impacted by poverty, leading to communal exclusion and inequality. Consequently, the idea that schools are places where learners should be protected and where no human should feel threatened is a myth.

According to Sherman (2016), the lack of attention of learners' mental health in schools and poor health are demonstrative of poor welfare system that has resulted in a snowballing of maladaptive behaviours in the classroom. These maladaptive behaviours are a constant demonstration of unrecognised and unrealised curriculum challenges. It is, therefore, important to consider the support that is available for these learners in order for them to succeed at school. The Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) (2019) has adopted a firm stance on this aspect, advocating for safety within schools. Nonetheless, this has proven to be inadequate. The recommendation for more schools to have security officers available should be made a priority as stated by Saul et al., (2018). Nonetheless, security in schools ought not to be left to law enforcement officials only but to the SGBs, too.

As stated earlier, school violence is a universal problem, and Africa is no exception. In a study on school violence in West and Central Africa, Antonowicz (2010), maintained that corporal punishment and other approaches of humiliating discipline such as criticism, castigation and intimidation were often used in schools. Other forms of violence were sexual violence, physical abuse and exploitation, psychological abuse, intimidation and learners being forced to do teachers' domestic errands as a method of punishment. Antonowicz (2010), also suggested that the level of violence in the community influenced school-based violence. In a similar way, other studies on school violence in East and Southern Africa have led to similar findings (Espelage & Hong, 2019; Jones et al., 2008; Moore et al., 2008). The literature that is available from other parts of Africa is no different from that of South Africa which is discussed in detail below.

Given this reality, preventing violence against children is squarely on the international development agenda. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 5.1 calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against girls, and SDG target 16.2 calls for ending all forms of violence against children. Access to education is equally prominent within the SDGs, with SDG target 4.a to build and upgrade education facilities that provide safe, non-violent learning environments for all (World Health Organization, 2019).

Many efforts are underway that would help to achieve these goals. These activities take place in various settings. Schools have been identified as one important setting for conducting violence prevention efforts. Therefore, in early 2019, with support from several of its affiliated organizations, the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children launched the "Safe to Learn" initiative focused specifically on ending violence against children in schools. The activities promoted as part of this initiative complement current work countries are doing to implement the evidence-based technical package INSPIRE: seven strategies for ending violence against children. Enhancing access to education and providing life skills training through schools, form one of the seven strategies (World Health Organization, 2019).

In schools, the provision of education and organized activities are themselves powerful protection against violence. In addition, it is in these settings that opportunities arise to

shape attitudes and norms about the acceptability of violence, alcohol and drug use, the carrying of weapons onto school grounds and other risks. In turn, preventing violence in the broader society can directly benefit the core aim of schools to educate children, foster high-quality lifelong learning, and empower leaners to be responsible global citizens (World Health Organization, 2019).

## 2.3 SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

School violence is an occurrence that disrupts learners' academic and social growth and can impact an individual for their entire life. The undesirable consequences that sufferers experience can spill over to their community environment as it becomes a problem too large to be contained within a school environment. Europe and the US have given consideration to these challenges since the 1980s, through a clear emphasis on the causes of violence tendencies and their prevalence (Pérez et al., 2021).

South Africa equally displays growing levels of violence in school. This phenomenon is not new, but lately it has been gaining momentum. Likewise, as indicated earlier, numerous lessons on school-based violence have been shared in South Africa (Barnes, 2012; Burton & Leoschut, 2012; Le Roux & Mokhele, 2011; UNISA, 2012), and appear to be similar to the global trends, indicating that school violence committed by learners on other learners includes mistreatment, assaults and robbery, gender-based violence and aggressiveness, often fueled by the use of drugs. In South Africa, the phenomenon is gaining momentum at a disturbing rate, rendering some schools danger zones and threatening the wellbeing of many young people. In addition, school violence is becoming a deterrent to access to education for millions of children across the globe (Contreras & del Carmen Cano, 2016).

The scourge of violence in South African schools is cause for concern; daily reports appear in the written and electronic media about high levels of violence, physical and sexual abuse, and gang-related activities in our schools. Carrying knives, guns and other weapons has become part of daily school life. These incidents underline the extent of violence and crime we experience in our communities, which generally impacts negatively on education and what happens in the school in particular (Le Roux & Mokhele, 2011).

During the process of data collection for this study, two learners died on school premises in two unrelated incidents. The Eyewitness News (01 March 2012) reported that a 16-year-old boy was killed at Beauvallon Secondary School in Valhalla Park, Western Cape. The learner was stabbed by another learner during break time. Three others were wounded. Two learners fled the scene and a third one was treated on the school grounds. In another incident The Citizen (02 March 2012) reported that an 18-year-old boy was stabbed once in the neck and died outside the school gates of Vorentoe High School in Auckland Park, Johannesburg, allegedly in a fight over a ball (Times, 2012).

Schools are supposed to have in place policies and a learner code of conduct to deter violent behaviour. These school policies and the learner code of conduct are meant, among other things, to impede the use of drugs or any intoxicating substance, the carrying of weapons or any sharp objects, the use of violent or vulgar language, and also to discourage threats against persons or their property. Despite the existence of such policies, violence, physical and sexual abuse, and gang activities are still the order of the day in many South African schools. This study is not only exploring the problem in South Africa within a wider international context but is also suggesting some underlying reasons for the prevalence of violence in South African schools and what might be done to improve the situation (Zimsak, 2019).

Violence is said to be an ancient theory associated with domination, which would explain why it exhibits itself in numerous ways. It is undesirable conduct based on belligerence, which arises largely because of a deficiency in communal and sensitive skills desired to resolve disagreements calmly (Chaparro, & Coll, 2010). In should however be noted that the description of violence differs from one environment to the other (Castillo, 2011). According to, (Zimsak, 2019), 'objective violence' theory (Zimsak, 2019), who supports the idea that the objective of violence is to cause discomfort to a victim (Berger, 2011) or "to control, to transgress a right, and to produce damage" (Castelao-Huerta, 2020, p. 1).

To reduce school violence, schools need to identify that this is a multi-causal, multifaceted, and dynamic situation (Times, 2012). Studies have shown that, in the short term, the psychosocial effects of the experiences of violence or bullying can cause many

psycho-social, intellectual, interactive and personal challenges (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). In the longer term, indications show that the humiliation identified is frequently recalled with pain (Nashiki, 2013), and perpetrators of violence may perpetuate the dysfunctional behaviour they experienced as children (Kgobe & Mbokazi, 2007).

Appallingly, violence is such a problem in South African that Le Roux and Mokhele (2011), have stated that criminality and violence in South Africa is a part of everyday life and that schools are not immune to the violence from the community. Correspondingly Kgobe and Mbokazi (2007), stated that, although the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa defends the privileges of teachers, these privileges are negated by constant violence in schools. For example, Grobler (2018), stated that in Cape Town alone (in 2016 and 2017), "there were at least 30 attacks on teachers reported to the Department of Education …". In 23 of the 29 matters reported between January and May 2016, learners were the perpetrators, with 14 assault cases, six cases of verbal abuse, two sexual abuse cases and one in which a weapon was used to threaten a teacher" (Grobler, 2018: p. 24). Ngidi (2017), cited examples from schools in Durban where violence occurred regularly, leading to what has been called "'Battered Teacher Syndrome', a psychological and physical condition characterised by a combination of stress actions including anxiety, disturbed sleep, depression, headaches, elevated blood pressure and eating disorders" (p. 174).

In addition, murder, rape, bullying, battering, destruction, gang fights, stabbings and other forms of violence have frequently been highlighted in the electronic and print media. In demonstrating the sadness of sexual violation of schoolgirls, the Mail & Guardian Online (2010), stated that schoolgirls worry in silence. Prinsloo (2006), called it "an indistinguishable procedure of segregation" (p. 306). Prinsloo further stated that more than 30 percent of girls were raped at schools in South Africa. Many also left either because of fear of repetition of rape or pregnancy and did not return to school. Another incident that was a headline in the news was that of a schoolboy from Krugersdorp in Gauteng who went on the rampage, equipped with a ninja sword, leaving 16-year old dead and three other learners injured (Pillay & Ragpot, 2010). In addition, an opinion piece that appeared in the Daily News (2010, p. 5), was titled: "Violence in South Africa is seven times the norm". This piece added that South Africa has an excessive level of

family violence fuelled by alcohol dependency. In the Cape alone, 300 people die every month from alcohol-related crimes. In any other country, that would be described as a national disaster.

During the Public Hearings on School Violence of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) (2008), numerous factors contributing to school-based violence were acknowledged. The list of causes included the poverty in the community; the presence of gangsters at schools; drug and alcohol abuse in the community; circumstances in the home environment; the social de-sensitisation of youth to a culture of ruthless violence (which is itself a legacy of apartheid and colonialism); correctional models in schools and unclear management roles; an unappealing school environment; and teachers' misunderstandings concerning the human rights of learners. The list was not inclusive, neither were the named causes exclusive (SAHRC, 2008).

Pérez et al. (2021), contended that numerous elements of school organisations and operations also greatly contribute to violent behaviour. These entails overcrowding in the classroom, tolerating bad behaviour, and school complacency, along with such factors such as large schools and teacher isolation. Further, studies by De Wet (2003, 2007), also maintained that poor infrastructure may lead to learner frustration and violence. The same can be said about congested and large metropolitan schools in which learners have inadequate space to move about. Savolainen, Malinen, and Schwab (2020), supported the view, stating that in schools where classes are huge, teachers do not have adequate time to identify all their learners by name or attend to individual needs; this frequently leads to undesirable consequences such as truancy and bunking of classes among learners. In addition, large schools have big school grounds which are a challenge to maintain particularly during break periods. This is the time when learners are intimidated, beaten, or robbed of their food, money and other belongings, particularly in township schools where, teachers (supported by their teacher unions) have often declined to do playground duty, citing labour matters. This leaves learners exposed to all the negative elements.

South African schools have traditionally remained controlling institutions emphasising compliance, conformism, and passivity (Harber, 2004). Mayez et al. (2021) also contended that education can have very undesirable consequences for a nation. He stated that education can simply assist to maintain the status quo. Children from underprivileged backgrounds go to poor schools and then into poorly remunerated, and low status jobs, or unemployment. A significant number of children from underprivileged backgrounds barely survive. A meritocratic system which is the norm in most schools serves to disguise the role of education in reproducing and maintaining inequality. It is clear from this review that educational, socio-economical, biological, psychological, political, and demographic factors contribute to school violence. This leads to the researcher's belief, therefore, that multi-layered support strategies should be implemented to reduce violence in schools.

To complete this first section of the chapter, Pérez et al. (2021), maintained that changes in school organisations and practices hold the greatest hope for eradicating violence in schools. The present school situation which encourages misbehaviour must be reviewed. Not only do learners need to be taught about violence and its causes, but they also need to have school experiences and effective support structure that encourage compassion and cooperation amongst peers and school personnel (Edwards, 2008). This indicates, in my opinion, that support structures and persons who are offering support, need to be increasingly reflective in their support policies and practices to ensure that these create peaceful school environments that are favourable to teaching and learning. It is thus my stance that all learners should be supported and be included in all policies and practices that promote healthy and maximal learning, to alleviate the problem of violent behaviour as mentioned above.

## 2.4 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 2.4.1 Outlining the concepts

Post-apartheid South Africa was confronted with numerous challenges and changes, one of which is appreciating the right to basic education for all learners including Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN). During apartheid, learners remained separated

and were educated according to race. There were also special schools for LSEN (Walton & Lloyd, 2011). To address the separated arrangement and to bring South Africa in line with other countries in accommodating LSEN in regular classes, South Africa has put in place a policy that encourages an inclusive education system (Al Zyoudi et al., 2011).

Tlale (2013), asserted that inclusion is a multifaceted, multidimensional concept incorporating layers of interrelationships. As such, inclusion remains controversial with no single exclusive explanation or definition of the practice. Inclusion, relatively, is an evolving process and the inclusive discourse is continuing and as yet inconclusive. Nevertheless, there are commonalities in inclusive discussions. It is extensively agreed that inclusion broadly and inclusive education precisely contribute towards the progression of a democratic society. Inclusive education involves a continuing endeavour towards redistribution of access to quality education, acknowledgement and appreciating learner differences, providing support and the formation of additional opportunities for non-dominant groups (Kozleski, Waitoller & Gonzalez, 2016).

Inclusion is the act of educating learners who were previously educated in special schools, because of their special needs, and educating learners in regular schools that deliver the essential support structures to guarantee access to quality education. In the teaching of inclusion, there is curriculum adaptation that refers to improvements and amendments in what is taught, methods of teaching and structures of education with the aim of accommodating all learners, including learners who experience violence in schools (Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht, & Nel, 2016).

All children ought to be included in the schooling system and be able to access some level of support they might require participating and learn. Preferably this will be at a public ordinary mainstream school, but where very specialised support is necessary, it may well be at a special school. Inclusive education recognises that all children require the right to support within the school context (DoE, 2014), including learners who have experienced school violence. The South African government's initiative to guarantee inclusive education is delineated in the 1996 Constitution and a number of policies; among them, are the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 (RSA, 1996), and the

White Paper 6 of 2001: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (DoE, 2001). The best way of reducing barriers emanating from the curriculum is to make sure the process of learning and teaching is flexible enough to address different learning needs and styles (DoE, 2001).

Democratic principles comprising equality and equal access to resources and opportunities underpin the philosophy of inclusion. As such, inclusive education recognises the need for an unbiased and quality education system accessible to all and endorses that mainstream schools ought to accommodate all learners (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). In this context of this study, this includes learners who are survivors of violence in schools. Inclusive education explores how educational organisations can improve their service to learners through providing them with equal chances to learn and reach their potential (Middlewood et al., 2005). This means that all schools including tertiary institutions need to recognise their accountability to serve learners (Malete, 2007). Inclusion recognises that the education system and schools specifically, do not operate in isolation but are affected by economic, social, and political influences (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Equally, an inclusive education structure and inclusive schools are fundamental to economic, social, and political transformation. Inclusive education as an outcome of inclusion has a rich international history which informs the South African context.

Inclusive education in South Africa has shadowed these international developments but the extent of political and philosophical influence differs (Krämer et al., 2021). South Africa's drive towards inclusive education is expressed in the disassembling of apartheid structures and the consequent commitment to the protection of human rights and ideologies of equity and inclusion. Throughout the apartheid administration, black learners with disabilities or support requirements either attended local schools or received very little support or often did not attend school. However, South Africa has to contend with its previously exclusionary context and extreme societal inequality which has a bearing on the implementation of effective inclusive education. After 24 years of the new South African democracy, it is time to reflect on the advancement, accomplishments and

challenges of inclusive education and how these impact on learner support and teachers' perceptions thereof.

Although there is recognition internationally that inclusive education seeks to develop a system and schools which democratise society (Nind, 2014), the development of inclusive education policies and practices in South Africa was positioned from a specific political perspective. With the shift to participatory democracy, the country was developing policies which sought to address the impact of segregation on all echelons of society. Thus, within the context of democratisation, inclusive education was underpinned by South African politics resulting in the growth of inclusive education policies and guidelines (Nel et al., 2016).

An evaluation of the inclusive discourse is essential to reflect on inclusive education in the South African setting. Inclusive education is supported by the philosophy of the value of inclusion. Inclusion can be labelled as a value and belief that views all people as equal and puts this value into action. It is extensively acknowledged that inclusive education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more impartial and equivalent society (Aracy, 2013). In highlighting the difficulty and extensive impact of inclusion, Krämer et al. (2021), contended that inclusion is an element of an emerging inclusive community and education system. Inclusion considers the whole society in terms of gender, culture, nationality, age, language, and differing capabilities. Values and ideologies of inclusion vary from constructing a democratic culture to the establishment of equivalent and quality education and the development of schools, which accommodate the varied needs of all learners.

The principles of an inclusive philosophy as outlined in the Constitution of South Africa incorporate human rights and social justice, optimum involvement and social integration of all individuals, and equivalent access to a single, inclusive education system (DBE, 2010b). The DBE (2010b), asserted that an inclusive educational policy is not an addition to the development of transformation which must go on in all South African schools, but it is the means by which transformation can be accomplished. Inclusion, and therefore inclusive education, nurtures transformation through safeguarding access, active participation, and achievement of all learners notwithstanding their differences (Buchner

et al., 2021). Inclusive education is an endeavour to generate opportunities for equal education for all and move towards a more egalitarian society. Through recognising that all learners have the right to and can learn, inclusive education celebrates and values differences and generates learning pathways, systems and methodologies which empower all to learn (DoE, 2001).

Inclusive education thus moves societal relationships and systems through equal access, recognition of the equal value of all learners and guaranteeing the inclusion of non-dominant, traditionally sidelined groups. Inclusive education should result in an education system that is responsive to diverse learners and incorporates support structures which are functional. At the same time, inclusion is not about providing something different or supplementary to cater for needs of specific learners but is about flexibility and using what already exists to embrace all (Florian & Graham, 2014). This essential move towards an inclusive viewpoint is obligatory at all echelons of society, including community, parents, teachers, and learners. Schools do not function in isolation but reflect political, economic, and social development (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Consequently, an inclusive education system necessitates an individual and societal paradigm change.

This individual and societal revolution towards inclusion is reflective in inclusive education. Inclusive education is obliged to guarantee that the school views all learners, including those who have experienced violence, as unique entities and endeavours to meet all of their distinctive differences, their diverse support needs and learning styles by reevaluating and restructuring its organisation rather than expecting the learner to acclimatise (Buchner et al., 2021). It necessitates a change in practices, tools, policies and, eventually, of the individuals involved. Inclusive education, as a policy, means that formerly excluded children, who experienced violence or who suffered trauma through violence, can attend regular classes in mainstream, depending on the availability of suitable and acceptable support structures. Inclusion is therefore not just about finding alternative placement for an individual in a classroom; it is about guaranteeing that the whole individual is respected, valued for their own individuality – from those who face barriers to learning to those who excel (DBE, 2012).

Learners experiencing barriers to learning have in recent years benefited from changes to education systems that focus on support structures that have been introduced in the education system. The changes comprise key modifications in attitude and awareness. One of the foremost changes is not simply to advance and enrich the lives of children who have endured violence in schools, but also to enrich the learning capabilities and help in dealing with trauma in the education system, so that learners can deal with retention of curriculum which is a basic concern for all children. In the last few years, efforts have been made to make support structures more reachable for the entire learning community, but with the intensified violent acts as reported in the media, it is imperative to note if the support structures will be completely accessed and taken full advantage of. For the support structures to be effective and relevant, it is imperative that the system to be organised and put legislation into practice.

For the application in practice of legislation, South Africa has a good constitution as the supreme law of the country which underpins a base for policies that defines support structures. What stems from the commitment of the Constitution, is that several policies were introduced? The initial policies were aimed at shifting from the medical model of diagnosis, labelling and placement towards recognising and addressing the social, economic, and physical barriers which hamper learners' abilities to access education. Based on the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, important policies and legislation were developed to advance the implementation of support structures. The next section will focus on policies that were developed and the support structures that were put in place to promote and apply those policies.

Unfortunately, the quality of general education is poor, with an ongoing national conversation about the crisis in education (Hay & Beyers, 2011) marked by violence in schools, dropout, high teenage pregnancy rates, and decreasing high school graduation rates. Even when compared only to other African countries on standardised measures of achievement, South African learners still perform toward the bottom of the spectrum on both mathematics and reading (Van der Berg, 2007). Nevertheless, over a decade after the unveiling of Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), most learners with disabilities who attend school are still in separate, "special" schools for learners with

disabilities. There is no consensus about what should and should not be classified as a disability in South Africa (Heap, Lorenzo & Thomas, 2009). This difference in opinion causes discrepancies in estimates of disability prevalence (Loeb & Eide, 2004), despite the fact that the South African government has estimated that about 5% of the population have a disability (Statistics South Africa, 2011). In this paper, the definition of disability provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) will be used. According to WHO (2012), disability arises from the interaction between an impairment, in a person's body function or structure, and the society in which that person lives.

To sum up, the exercise of inclusive education has been widely welcomed as an ideal model for education, both in South Africa and internationally (Maher, 2009). However, this acceptance of ideal practices does not necessarily translate into what actually occurs within the classroom. Successful inclusion depends on the attitudes and actions of school principals (Zollers, Ramanathan & Yu, 1999) and the investment of other school personnel as they create the school culture and have the ability to challenge or support inclusion (Ainscow, 2002). Research has found that although teachers often report that they agree with the idea of inclusion, they actually believe that the needs of learners with disabilities are best met in separate classrooms (Campbell, Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2003), particularly those learners with greater special needs and more severe disabilities (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Bornman and Rose contend that (2010:7), " general lack of support and resources, as well as the prevailing negative attitudes toward disability, all contribute to the general bewilderment in South African schools towards inclusion".

### 2.4.2 Screening identification assessment and support

According to the SIAS (DBE, 2014), The determination is to deliver a policy framework for the standardisation of the processes to identify, assess and provide support structures for all learners who necessitates supplementary support to heighten their involvement and inclusion in schools. The SIAS policy is designed at refining access to quality education for vulnerable learners and those who experience barriers to learning. The foremost focus of the policy is to manage and support teaching and learning procedures for learners who experience barriers to learning within the context of the National

Curriculum Statement Grades R–12. The policy is meticulously aligned to the Integrated School Health Policy (ISHP), which intentions is to institute a seamless system of early identification and effective intervention to minimise learning breakdown, and possible dropout.

The policy is additional seen as a significant technique to guarantee the transformation of the education system towards an inclusive education system in line with the regulations of Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001). The policy comprises a protocol as well as a set of official forms to be utilised by teachers, School Based Support Team's and District Based Support Teams in the course of Screening, Identifying, Support and Assessment of barriers experienced by learners with an understanding to planning the support provision according to structures and monitoring by the District Based Support Team. The protocol of Screening, Identifying, Support and Assessment summarises the key role purposes of personnel appointed in district as well as school structures accountable for planning and provision of support.

The policy also standardises the composition and processes of the key coordinating support structures who are mandated for the implementation of an inclusive education system, namely School Based Support Team and District Based Support Team which are transversal structures intended at justifying and maximising support structure delivery at school and district level. In view of the fact that not all learners who experience barriers to learning, including those who have experience violence, have access to suitable support structures, this policy is envisioned to ensure a more demanding and reliable process of Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support of learners across the system. This will demand more reasonable preparation in terms of admission, support, and funding (DoE, 2014).

Permitting to the SIAS policy (DoE, 2014), support should no longer focus only on the diagnosis and remediation of deficits in individual learners through individual attention by specialist staff. The SIAS shifts the focus to an all-inclusive method where a complete variety of probable barriers to learning that a learner may experience (such as extrinsic

barriers in the home, school or community environment, or barriers connected to disabilities) are considered. The purpose is to design support structures in such a way that the learner gains access to learning (DoE, 2014).

The SIAS policy (DoE, 2014), advocates that support ought to comprise all activities in a school which increase its size to respond to diversity. District Based Support Teams and School Based Support Teams should note that providing support to individuals is only one way of making learning contexts and lessons accessible to all learners. In the new structure proposed and piloted by other district, the District Based Support Teams is comprised by different circuits, operating at circuit level to give support immediately. These Circuit Based Support Team is connected and responds to the needs of the School Based Support Teams. The next diagram indicates how schools can access support through their Circuit Based Support Team (Figure 2):
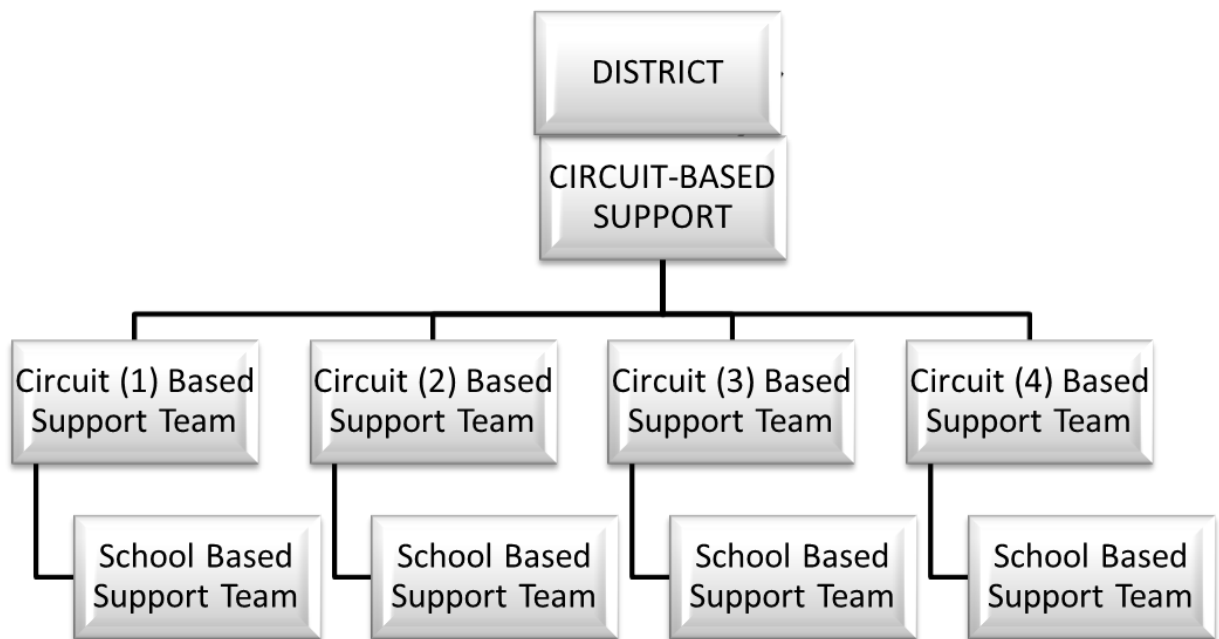


*Figure 3: Circuit-based support*

## 2.5 COMPETENCIES RELATED TO THE SIAS PROCESS

The education system in South Africa takes a systems approach as its framework for addressing barriers to learning. Thus, it embraces inclusive education principles that recognises that every learner can learn when supported appropriately. Certain competencies of the SIAS procedures lie with different ranks of authority within the system. In addition, school-based support structure such as the School Based Support Team, have been tasked with the responsibilities of facilitating learning support processes in collaboration with the referring teachers, learning support teachers, the District Based Support Team and other external stakeholders (DoE, 2005). As indicated in the SIAS policy (DoE, 2014), each person in the team has a role to play. The following are the roles that each person will undertake:

Teachers collected evidence and identify learners at jeopardy of learning breakdown and or school dropout. They also provided teacher-developed classroom-based interventions to address the support needs of identified learners. School Based Support Team responded to teachers' requirements for assistance with support strategies for learners experiencing barriers to learning. Teachers also evaluated teacher-developed support strategies, collect any extra evidence required, and offer direction and support in respect of supplementary strategies, support structure, services, and resources to toughen the Individual Support Plan (ISP). Where needed, to demand support from the District Based Support Team to improve the Individual Support Plans or support their recommendation for the placement of a learner in a specialised setting (SIAS, 2014).

District Based Support Teams and Circuit Based Support Team responded to requests for support from SBSTs. They evaluated admissibility of needs made by School Based Support Team by collecting any supplementary evidence and/or administering pertinent assessments, conducting interviews and/or site visits. The District Based Support Team and Circuit Based Support Team will provide direction in respect of any concessions, accommodations, supplementary strategies, programmes, services and resources that will improve the school-based support plan. They identified learners for outplacement into specialised settings, e.g. Special Schools, to access specialised support services

attached to ordinary or Full-Service Schools or to access high-level outreach support (DoE,2014). These different levels of support are also supported by certain Institutions which seek to advance the SIAS concept and processes.

## 2.6 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR DELIVERY OF SUPPORT

According to the SIAS policy (DoE, 2014), the Special School Resource Centre (SSRC) or a developing Full-Service Schools (FSS), as well as an Educational Assistive Devices Resource Centre, will be the point within a circuit or district from which services will be made accessible to a cluster of ordinary schools or special care centres. Provincial dynamics such as the variety and frequency of barriers experienced by learners, the way it organises or clusters schools, the terrain of the province, availability of specialist services and or personnel in the area, available budgets for support provision in relation to the size of the department, will regulate the provincial policy to ensure that the variety of support structures, services, personnel and resources are available and can be accessed by all learners needing such support provision.

### 2.6.1 District-Based Support Team

As outlined in Education White Paper 6, the implementation of the SIAS proposes an integrated community-based model of support provisioning. This entails involving support staff from the district, circuit, and the District Based Support Team (DBST). The DBST includes staff from curriculum, circuit management, school management and governance, financial, personnel and physical planning, assessment, psychosocial support, Care and Support in Teaching and Learning (CSTL) framework, Whole School Evaluation, Early Childhood Development (ECD), Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM), E-Learning, etc. that operate as transversal teams to support schools to identify and address a wide range of systemic and other barriers, and mentor and guide schools to implement inclusive education in all its dimensions. The DBST forms a key component in the successful implementation of an inclusive education support system. This Policy gives an overview of the role functions of District Based Support Teams regarding the management of the SIAS process as a measure to establish such a support system.

District-Based Support Services will collaborate closely with social services to guarantee a seamless system of support to learners who experience psychosocial barriers and where the support requisite goes beyond school level.

As declared above, according to (DoE, 2014), institutions that collaborate with the DBSTs are the Special School Resource Centres and the Full-service or Inclusive Schools that are also equipped with specialised skills and resources to reach out to all ordinary and special schools in a district as well as to Early Childhood Centres and Special Care Centres for children with severe and profound disabilities who are not yet enrolled in schools. With support and fully functional District Based Support Team the delivery structure and expectation of the support service at school level will be the School Based Support Team.

### 2.6.2 School-Based Support Team

Psychosocial support refers to the provision of psychological and social resources to a person by a supporter intended for the benefit of the receiver's ability to cope with the problems faced (Finlay, Peacock & Elander, 2018). Reflecting on the classical work by a Brazilian theorist who pioneered the critical pedagogy, Mooses, Vihalemm, Uibu, Mägi, Korp, Kalma, and Kull, (2021), believed that the School Based Support Team members could address the social inequalities and work towards building social cohesion and positive change, in which, learners envision themselves as conquerors than victims of stigma and discrimination (Sayed & Novelli, 2016). Psychological wellbeing is a concept used to denote an overall satisfaction and happiness of an individual as stated by Mercer, (2021), and it involves realising one's true potential and traits related to coping effectively with environmental demands. Ryff (2013), affirms that a fully functional individual should positively demonstrate the six dimensions of wellbeing, namely, autonomy, self-acceptance, purpose in life, personal growth, environmental mastery and positive relationships with others. The School Based Support Team is the core committees in the schools that looks at the needs of vulnerable learners for psychological support and promote inclusion.

Since the employment of the policy of inclusive education, the DBE has made advancement towards guaranteeing that all teachers are supported to protect the rights of the most vulnerable learners in the system. Despite this achievement, the support structures that aimed to perform this task are claimed to be ineffective in many instances (Nel et al., 2016), leaving teachers feeling unsupported and ill-equipped to face the challenges presented by the new education system (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). Nel et al. (2016), reported that should the School Based Support Team be properly organised, teachers will be better motivated as they will have knowledge, self-confidence and a change of attitude, while Mulholland and O'Connor (2016), highlighted that effective support to teachers is an assurance of positive outcomes for learners experiencing barriers to learning. At school level, the School Based Support Teams is assigned to perform this support role to coordinate learner and teacher support services (DoE, 2001). According to SIAS the role of the School Based Support Team is to offer support at the school. Different support levels ought to be obtainable through support from different structures. Nonetheless where high-level support at school level cannot be organised in any practical and cost-effective way, the DBST is the subsequent level to deliver additional support. The School Based Support Team should provide the DBST with indication of support provided to the learner at school level. The School Based Support Team should continuously include the parent in and update the parent about conclusions taken to support the learner. The DBST should establish what kind of support is desirable by the School Based Support Team in order to support the learner, what the strength of the School Based Support Team is and discover ways in which extra support can be attained, support the School Based Support Team to identify additional community-based support and also facilitate partnership through the CSTL framework.

School Based Support Teams need to support teachers and caregivers in this process by providing opportunities for steady, collaborative problem-solving in areas of concern, and simplifying the provision of support where needed. In each case a sequence of intervention and support by the teacher, simplified by the School Based Support Team, needs to be affected before additional support from outside the site of learning is invited. To guarantee operational intervention by the School Based Support Team, their role must

be accommodated in timetabling. This means that each member of the School Based Support Team must have a role to play and not just be a member without a portfolio.

The School Based Support Team need to make sure that where deficiency of support is, then support can be obtained outside. Some sources of support (physical, human, and material), apart from those within the school and the home, can be in the local community. These may include, Department of Health, school health team, health-care practitioners, Department of Social Development/social workers, Programmes of Non-Profit Organisations, Disabled People Organisations, Parent Organisations or Higher Education Institutions, ECD service providers, Special Schools and Special School Resource Centres.

## 2.7 THE ROLE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

The role of the SGB in a school context can never be underestimated. The SGBs play a pivotal role in creating safe schools and making sure that the schools become a place of safety and a place where decisions taken should be just and in support of all learners, including those who are victims of violence. School is a sphere of life that is characterised by just and unjust decisions (Resh and Sabbagh, 2014). In schools, limited resources are distributed constantly, and justice relevant decisions are made frequently (Connell, 1993). Such decisions include appraisal and criticism, punishment, support, performance evaluations, and learning opportunities (Chataika et al., 2012).

The evaluation of school as just or unjust is therefore mainly dependent on whether the distribution of resources and the processes in general are perceived as just (Chataika et al., 2012).

The SGB must guarantee that the culture, ethos, and policies of the school are inclusive, encourage involvement of all learners and condense exclusionary practices. A sub-committee of the SGB must be established to direct learner support and inclusion. SGBs must monitor the implementation of the SIAS processes at school and guarantee that every conceivable measure is taken to deliver reasonable accommodation for learners with additional support needs, including learners with disabilities. The role of the SGB is

a key one in making sure that support is given to all the learners that need it. It needs to be noted that a significant structure within the school is the SGB.

## 2.7.1 Approaches employed by School Governing Bodies to avert violence

In this segment I begin by appraising the approaches that could be employed by SGB to avert or decrease school violence whereas in the concluding part, I present and deliberate the tangible strategies SGB are exploiting directed largely by the legal framework as well as the policy documents from the DBE. De Wet (2007), lists the succeeding methodologies which SGB might utilise to avert school violence, zero-tolerance school policies, school-wide or worldwide involvements, the targeted intervention approaches and implementing school security measures. In addition, zero-tolerance school policies are extensively used and are characterised by their punitive nature to learner behaviour, concentrating on an inadequate number of responsive and disciplinary responses to problem behaviour, including office discipline referrals, in- and out-of-school suspension and expulsion.

The UNISA Report (2012), also proposes the necessity to generate a well-managed school community where learners feel they fit, are appreciated, and have principles that support nonviolent conflict resolution. This view is also substantiated by Edwards (2008), who advocates that schools may endorse misbehaviour among learners, and even put learners at jeopardy and invite discipline problems if they: are not commanded and managed successfully; misunderstand learning circumstances and necessitate learners to learn information that is not significant to them; they fail to inspire development of autonomous thinking patterns in learners; institute inflexible environments for learners to meet in order to feel acknowledged; exercise unwarranted mechanism over learners and fail to afford an environment in which children can turn out to be autonomous and independent and use discipline measures that endorse misbehaviour.

Briefly, the literature appraised all through this thesis proposes that the ethos of the school can add to a situation where violence is probable or conceivable. The more muddled, erratic, and unpredictable the school, the more probabilities of violence are, as learners feel that in a laissez faire atmosphere anything goes and they too can do as they please

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(Krämer, Möller, & Zimmermann, 2021). The new approaches to school leadership and management necessitate leaders and executives to be tactical thinkers, to be direction setting, to be deciphering strategy into action, to align people and the organisation to the strategy, to develop strategic competences of people (the teachers, the School Management Team and the school governors), to work in democratic and participatory ways to construct relationships with all stakeholders to guarantee efficient and effective delivery of quality education for all learners in a conducive environment (Davies & Davies, 2009). This also requires school principals, teachers, and school governors to continuously reflect on their activities and modify where necessary (Starrat, 2009). Krämer, Möller, and Zimmermann (2021), further upholds that disciplinary procedures grounded on social control do not work; instead, they give rise to prison-like schools that continue to be unsafe.

Equally, coercive strategies interrupt learning and foster an environment of mistrust and confrontation. Instead, Edwards (2008), proposes that it is the obligation of the school leaders to humanise the school environment by encouraging responsibility and a sense of community to diminish violence. He further states that programmes that truly preclude school violence necessitates noteworthy change of traditional methods to teaching and school leadership to those that uphold caring and human relationships. These kinds of methods should thus be adopted for promotion of support structure to learners who experienced violence In addition, the literature reviewed in this thesis strongly suggests that a well-managed and effective school with a good support programme is able to anticipate problems and thus plan how to navigate around those problems.

## 2.8 LEGISLATION ON PREVENTION OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

To support schools combat violence and other disciplinary issues, the South African Schools (SASA), Act 84 of 1996 as amended was approved. This law, specifically Section 8, commands an SGB of a public school to adopt a code of conduct for the learners. To have a mutual understanding and elucidate procedures, the National Department of Education has over the years also produced numerous booklets to assist schools in managing/reducing violence, discipline, sexual violence, diversity, and racism in schools.

The following examples are: Creating Safe and Caring Schools (2001), Educating for Our Common Future: Building Schools for an Integrated Society (2001), Opening Our Eyes: Addressing Gender-Based Violence in South African Schools (2001), Signposts for Safe Schools: Enabling safe and effective teaching and learning environments (2002), Speak Out-Youth Report Sexual Abuse: A Handbook for Learners on how to Prevent Sexual Abuse in Public Schools (2010), Values in Action Signposts for Safe Schools: A Manual in Constitutional Values and School Governance for School Management Team and Representatives Councils of Learners in South African public schools (2011), School Safety Framework: Addressing Bullying in Schools (2012), and many other programmes at provincial level.

Working with non-governmental organisations and South African Broadcasting Channel, the Department of Education has also initiated the Soul Buddies to teach learners various lifelong skills including nurturing a culture of non-violence in the school. In addition, schools that have original and inventive leadership have introduced native programmes and other projects to supplement the initiatives of the Department of Education. These ingenuities are beneficial tools to support schools to reinforce their anti-violence programmes, but they can simply be effective if each school adapts these programmes to their local circumstances and obligate the necessary inclination to learn and commitment to prosper. Regrettably, in several schools, these documents are unknown or are gathering dust in the principals' offices.

Likewise, De Wet (2007), proposes that school-wide or universal interventions attempt to create school and classroom climates that promote social and academic growth and a sense of community for all children. These interventions attempt to develop a culture within the school in which respect for the individual, predictability, and the perception of fair play shape the behaviour of teachers, learners, and administrators. Effective school-wide support relies on the development and implementation of a systematic approach to training, monitoring and the reinforcement of appropriate behaviour (De Wet, 2007). Furthermore, the targeted intervention approach seeks to change the behaviour and school experiences for specific learners. Targeted interventions may provide special programmes, classes or schools for those who have engaged in specific acts of

misconduct or those most at risk for engaging in anti-social and disruptive behaviour. Interventions aimed at individual learners or groups of learners may also teach specific skills, such as conflict resolution strategies or social skills (De Wet, 2007).

School security measures in addition to the above strategies, (Polanin, Espelage, Grotpeter, Spinney, Ingram, Valido, El Sheikh, Torgal, & Robinson, 2021), also suggests that implementing school security measures is another popular strategy in the effort to provide support to learners. This form of intervention is meant to detect and deter potential perpetrators of school violence before they harm themselves or others. The use of metal detectors, school security officers and surveillance cameras are examples of school security support measures that have been introduced to prevent school violence. Further, De Wet (2007), posits that effective programmes are those that involve grassroots participation; that empowers both the teachers and learners; are embedded in democratic principles and where schools demonstrate a pro-active vision regarding the violence problem. Mabovula (2009), asserts that schools pay lip service regarding the role of learners in the schools. However, if learners were given a thoughtful voice e.g. to express where at school they feel safe or unsafe, and what their main security apprehensions are – and adequate reporting mechanisms developed at a school level, the school is probable to be a safer school than when only school management resolves what is finest for the school. Commonly, where people are adequately consulted and have contributed to decision-making developments, they are inclined to own and value the pronouncements taken and guarantee they succeed.

The major step in developing a school security support plan is for the SGB to set up a sub-committee called School Security Committee (SSC) made up of all the members of the school community (learner leaders, teacher representatives and community members) who are responsible for formulating, executing and monitoring the school's security support plan. The SSC would identify the school's priority misconducts and the supreme recurrent security problems that face the school. The SGB would make available all the essential human and monetary resources to address significant problems (De Wet, 2007). Each school is anticipated to have a safety support plan that has undertaken a consultative process by all members of the school community. This generates a sense of

ownership amongst all shareholders. Further, schools should retain incidents records which similarly have specifics of incidents such as date and time of occurrence, category of incident, where it took place, an explanation of the occurrence, who was involved, the action taken to address the problem ( Polanin, Espelage, Grotpeter, Spinney, Ingram, Valido, El Sheikh, Torgal, & Robinson, 2021), Research conducted by the Independent Projects Trust (IPT) in 1999 postulates that effective support structures that advance safe schools are those where community ownership and partnership is robust; the school premises are physically threatened; random searches for both visitors and learners are conducted and vandalism and theft are prohibited through the use of burglars bars, strong rooms, appropriate lights and boundary fencing. The trials that most SGB face is that the strategies deliberated above appear not to work or have severe challenges. It is easier said than done to assume the school community to own and defend the school in its neighbourhood. In most communities it is the members of the community close the school that damage and steal school assets. There is very little or no sense of community ownership of schools or any public property such as community halls. In some communities, there is even distress to report criminals who vandalise schools to the police for fear of vengeance, so school governing has a mountain to climb.

## 2.9 MANAGEMENT OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

Democratic school leadership and management, constructed on the philosophies of transparency, inclusion and partaking advances communication, decision creation and a sense of accountability which in turn reduces the risk of violence within the school, and unites the school to withstand outside threats such as gangsterism (De Wet, 2007). In addition, the IPT report (1999), emphasises training and education as another vital element to ensure school safety and security. This key role of leadership and management will assist is reducing the acts of violence in a school context if managers take their role of leadership seriously. They should lead by example and make sure that all necessary committees that should deal with addressing violence should be formed and become functional.

The progression of education and training, initiated by the School Safety Committee, should begin with developing cooperative goals and values for the school through translucent, inclusive, and participative workshops. The publication on *'Values In Action - Signposts for Safe Schools: A Manual in Constitutional Values and School Governance for SGBs and Representatives Councils of Learners in South African public schools'* (2011), might be of value to assist the schools on working on values that are in line with the country's constitution. This would translate to instruct, to inform and to skill all stakeholders about the school's security plan; communication skills, problem-solving, teamwork and information sharing should also be developed to increase understanding and harmony (Artinopoulou et al., 2016).

The IPT report also emphasises that punitive laws, autocratic leadership, and other punitive actions will not necessarily end violence; rather the social structures and the discourses that preserve violence should be deliberated by the school's leadership. De Wet (2007), posits that the destructive chain, namely of "… violence, fear→ violence, hate and anxiety → retribution (or an increase in the possibility that the victim might develop pathology) → more violence/ developing more pathology" needs to be fragmented, they definitely are not helpful. This could be assisted by applying a wide-ranging and a detailed programme that would talk to the strong action against violence against school violence. This requires everybody's effort including the school community, school leadership, school governors, teachers, school community, all stakeholders that have invested their effort to the school and learners.

The role of leadership in the transformation of the school's culture can never be undermined, especially when it comes to conforming to the new democratic forms of school leadership and management. There is also particular substantiation in the report, of the schools' failure to take into cognizance the individual wishes of young people in an effort to regulate them in a "one size fits all" manner, which in itself can result in violent rebelliousness (Mncube & Harber, 2012). However, eventually it is the school management – the principal and SGB – that is answerable for the day to day deterrence of violence in schools, and there is substantial indication in literature to back the notion that schools that are managed well and in an appropriate manner do reduce violence. It

is therefore important that the SGB know and are well acquainted with the different statutory structure that will guide them in managing violence in schools.

## 2.10 STATUTORY STRUCTURES ON SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE.

### 2.10.1 The South African Constitution

The preliminary point of guidance of every policy is the South African Constitution, which enshrines the rights of children to an equitable education, and to live free of harm, in all environments. The South African Constitution is the supreme law of the country and cannot be superseded by any other law or government action. The Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of the Constitution and it affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom. Chapter 2 of the Constitution (Bill of Rights) enshrines the right to basic education, right to life, right not to be unfairly discriminated against, right to privacy, right to bodily and psychological integrity, and the right of children to access basic health-care and social services (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). The responsibility of every SGB in supporting all learners who have experienced violence should be drawn from the constitution.

### 2.10.2 The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

This convention, ratified by South Africa on 16 June 1995, sets a global standard to ensure human rights for children aged 0 to 18 years. The convention addresses the needs of children and puts forward minimum standards for the protection of their rights. It is the first international treaty to guarantee civil and political rights, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights of children (United Nations, 1989).

The leadership of every school will obligate to consider the rights of every child in supporting them. All disciplinary procedures taken against any learner, be it the one that experienced violence or not, what is of essence is to put the rights and the welfare of learners first.

**2.10.3 The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (2000)**

This charter, which was ratified by South Africa on 7 January 2000, addresses various rights and responsibilities of children, including rights to education, non-discrimination, and health services. Article 16 of the Charter declares that government parties to the charter should take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhumane or degrading treatment, and especially, physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment including sexual abuse (African Union, 1990).

**2.10.4 The African Youth Charter (2009)**

This charter, ratified by South Africa on 28 May 2009, makes explicit provision for the development of life skills to form part of the education curriculum. Article 2 of the Charter declares that all state parties should take appropriate measures to ensure that the youth are protected against all forms of discrimination. Furthermore, the charter addresses the following areas for concrete actions for change; education, skills and competence development; employment and sustainable livelihoods; youth leadership and participation; health and welfare; peace and security; environment protection; and cultural and moral values (African Union, 2006).

**2.10.5 The Child Justice Act 75 of 2008**

The Child Justice Act of 2008 delivers a new practical context for dealing with children who are alleged of committing criminal wrongdoings. The Act undertakes a rights-based approach to children who come into interaction with the law. It pursues to guarantee children's accountability and reverence for the essential freedoms of others, and using diversion, alternate sentencing, and restorative justice, avert crime and encourage public protection. Provision is made to redirect and support children between the ages of 10 and 18 years into diversion programmes, including substance abuse treatment programmes that attempt to reintegrate young offenders into family care, and to limit the stigma attached to crime.

### 2.10.6 The Children's Act 38 of 2005

The Children's Act of 2005 combines and reforms the laws on matters connected to children. This Act gives effect to the rights of children to care and protection as contained in the Constitution. The objects of the Act comprise protection from maltreatment, neglect, abuse, or degradation; protection from discrimination, exploitation and any other physical, emotional, or moral harm or hazards; and promotion of the protection, development, and wellbeing of children.

### 2.10.7 The National Development Plan

The National Development Plan (NDP) argues that the safety of learners at school and in the community requires a well-coordinated approach between the education departments, police, and local government. The plan preserves that in order to advance the quality of education, urgent action is essential on the following fronts: management of the education system, competence and capacity of school principals, teacher performance, further education and training, higher education, and research and development.

### 2.10.8 The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996

The SASA aims to redress historical disparities in educational provision and to afford an education of progressively extraordinary quality for all learners (DoE, 1996). It necessitates schools to espouse a code of conduct that is devoted to the development and conservation of the quality of the learning procedure. The Code of Conduct of the SASA calls for the formation of a well-organised and resolute school environment devoted to the upgrading and upkeep of the quality of the learning process.

### 2.10.9 The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996

The Act specifies that no person shall administer corporal punishment or subject a learner to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution. In terms of section 16(3) of the SASA, the principal has a primary obligation to ensure that learners are not exposed to crimen injuria, assault, harassment, maltreatment, degradation, humiliation or

intimidation from teachers or other learners. Teachers "have a 'duty of care' and must protect learners from violence because of their in loco parentis status" (Act 84 of 1996: 70).

**2.10.10 The Employment of Teachers Act 76 of 1998**

This Act regulates the conditions of service, discipline, retirement, and discharge of teachers. The Act recommends that teachers should exercise self-discipline, and refrain from improper physical contact with learners, and, that any teacher must be dismissed if found guilty of committing an act of sexual assault on a learner, learner or other employee and for having a sexual relationship with a learner of the school where he or she is employed. It furthermore calls for the mandatory dismissal of a teacher found in possession of any intoxicating, illegal or stupefying substance while at work. A teacher found to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while at work will be subject to a disciplinary hearing and appropriate sanctions. A teacher suffering from ill health because of alcohol or drug abuse may be sent for counselling or rehabilitation. However, employment may be terminated if the behaviour is repetitive

**2.10.11 The Regulations for Safety Measures at all Public Schools**

These regulations assert that all public schools are dangerous weapon- and drug-free zones. No person may have dangerous weapons or prohibited drugs on public school buildings or enter the premises while under the stimulus of an illegal drug or alcohol. The regulations also make provision for the searching of school premises, or persons present on the premises, by a police officer, principal, or delegate, if there is reasonable suspicion of possession of dangerous weapons or substances (DoE, 2001).

**2.10.12 The Regulations to Prohibit Initiation Practices in Schools**

These regulations (Government Gazette 24165, 2002: 68) stress that applicable procedures must be taken to protect the learner from all forms of physical or mental violence, including sexual abuse, while in the care of any person who acts in loco parentis.

## 2.10.13 The Norms and Standards for Teachers

The Norms and Standards list "community, citizenship and pastoral care" as one of the seven roles of teachers in terms of which they must demonstrate a caring, ethical attitude, respect and professional behaviour towards learners (Government gazette 20844, 2000: 48).

## 2.10.14 The Policy Framework for the Management of Drug Abuse

This policy for the management of drug abuse by learners in schools and in public further education and training institutions (DoE, 2002), proposes to support learners who abuse substances, as well as staff and learners who are affected by substance abuse, and contribute to the effective prevention, management, and treatment of drug use. It states that all South African schools should become tobacco, alcohol, and drug-free zones. It also states that random drug testing is prohibited, and that drug testing should only be used where there is reasonable suspicion that a child is using drugs. It makes provision for preventative education via the Life Orientation curriculum (DoE, 2002).

## 2.10.15 The National Guidelines for the Management and Prevention of Drug Use and Abuse

The guidelines for the Management and Prevention of Drug Use and Abuse in all public schools and further education and training institutions provide a structure for how to operationalise the afore-mentioned policy framework. It provides direction as to the systems that should be put in place to address substance abuse in the schooling system. These include, amongst others, developing a policy regarding the management of substance abuse by learners for each school, establishing Learner Support Teams, creating links with community resources, and implementing procedures for incident management (DBE, 2014). The guidelines further recognise the inclusion of drug education in the Learning Area of Life Orientation which is currently implemented in schools. A healthy, drug-free life is further encouraged through learners' participation in sport and cultural activities.

## 2.11 THE WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

The whole-school approach to school violence prevention, is a document that embraces what is termed a "whole-school approach" to school safety and comprises practical school safety diagnostic tools that should be used by school learners, teachers, principals and SGB, it also (in later segments) provides guidance on the practical steps to be taken in order to implement a "whole school approach", including the development of school safety plans, the engagement of key partners in the community, and monitoring and evaluation tools.

What is a whole-school approach? The school is made up of several "components", namely, learners, teachers, principals, school management teams, SGB and parents or caregivers. Together, these components interact and exist within the greater system of the home and community. Only by dealing with all aspects of the system will violence ultimately be reduced and eradicated. This calls for a carefully targeted, coherent system of structures and interventions that complement rather than duplicate each other. The success of the whole-school approach to school safety also rests partly on each component being aware of its roles and responsibilities in this broader system. The whole-school approach, along with each stakeholder's roles and responsibilities, is depicted in its entirety in Figure 3. A whole-school approach to safety involves using multiple strategies that have a unifying purpose and reflect a common set of values. This requires the continuous support and dedication of school administrators, principals, teachers, support staff, learners, caregivers, and school structures such as provincial-based safety teams and district-based safety teams, as well as a range of other community actors. It requires that all the components of the system work together to create a safe and supportive school climate where people feel they belong and where violence of any kind is not tolerated.
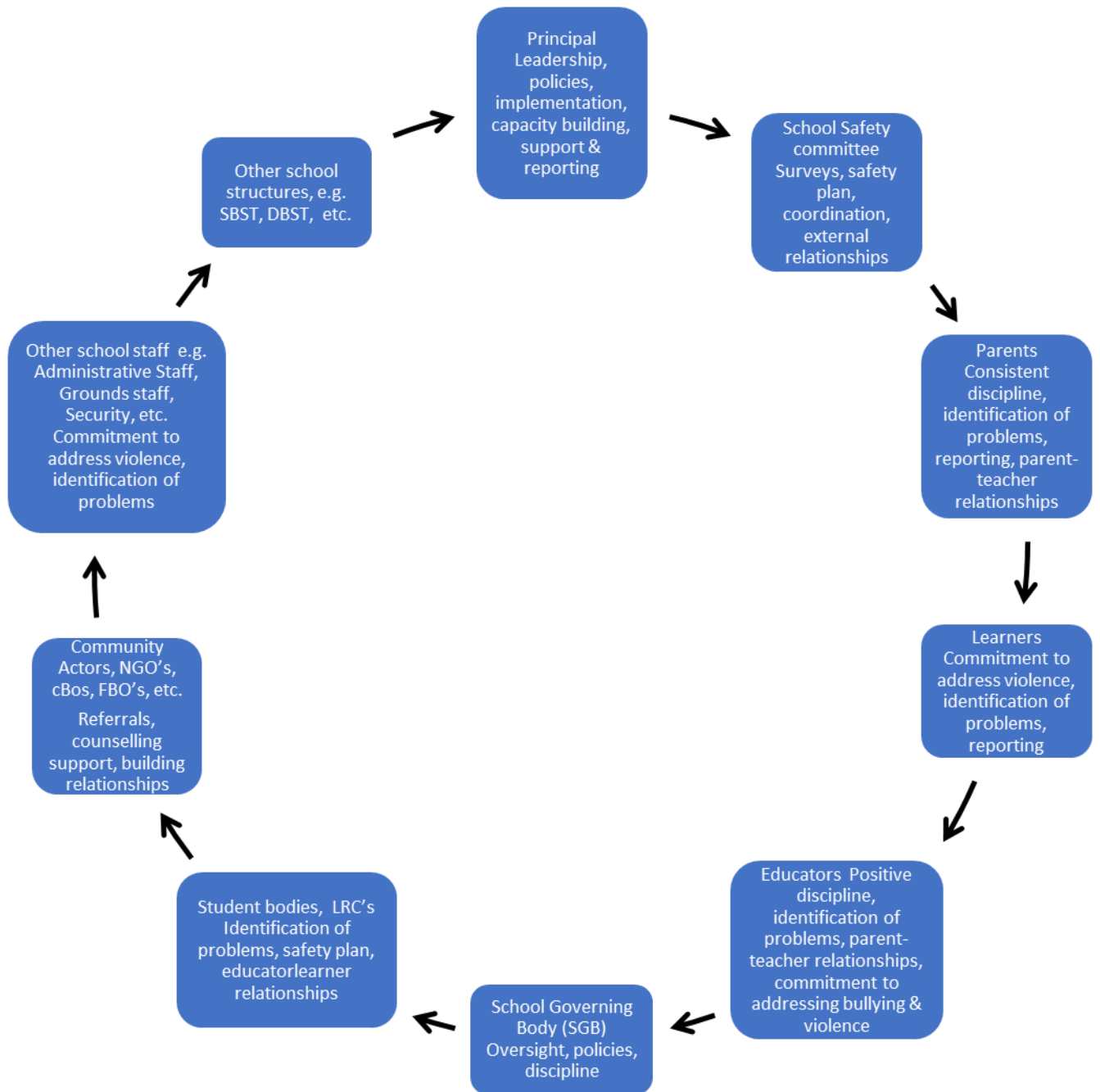
*Figure 4: A whole-school approach to violence prevention*

## 2.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter deliberated on the literature review on school-based violence, not only in South Africa, but also globally as well. The chapter has also investigated the legislation

that supports inclusion and support structures of learners who have experienced violence. In doing this, it presented and discussed violence as a power relationship; the typologies of violence in South African schools; the causes of school violence; school violence and its relationship to academic achievement, dropout rates, and access to schooling. Furthermore, the chapter explored the duty of SGB in creating safe schools in South Africa in order to provide learners with a violence-free environment where teaching and learning could occur; the strategies utilised by SGB to prevent school violence; the dynamics of school-based violence in the context of South Africa as a young, developing, post-conflict country. The chapter furthermore explored of the legislative framework of the promotion of inclusion and legislation that deals with measure to combat violence is schools. The chapter concludes by discussing why South Africa rates among the most violent societies in the world. The next chapter presents and discusses the theories utilised in the study.

**CHAPTER 3:**

**BRONFENBRENNER'S SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY AND RELATED THEORIES**

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter reviewed literature on school support to learners who experienced violence in schools, globally and nationally, and the role that could be played by school leadership and the regulatory authorities in reducing it in South African schools. It also offered a foundation on which to build an understanding of the topic. In this chapter, the main deliberation will be on the theoretical framework used for understanding the support structures of learners who experienced violence in schools, informed by Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model, and the strength-based perspective theory and how the two theories complement one another and are integrated.

The interrelated theories look at the support given to learners who experience violence against the background of a system of complex relationships that make up his or her environment (Pickover et al., 2021). The interface between influences in the learner's environment, the immediate family and the community, arouses and drives the learner's development, with variations or struggle on any one level rippling through the other levels. To study the learner's behaviour and to offer support, it is necessary not only to look at the child and her or his immediate environment, but also at its interface with the larger environment (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

In explaining Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological approach, Makuya and Sedibe (2021), stated that in terms of this theory, systems are patterns of organisation, the identification of which becomes more than simply the sum of their parts. Any individual person or situation can be thought of both as a detached entity and a part of different systems. Noting the above, Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological approach supports the key aspects of offering support to learners. The learner is, for example, part of a family, a school system as well as a peer system, each of which operates in stable and predictable ways that contribute to its continuity yet holds the likelihood of fluidity and change. The systems' functions are dissimilar but interconnected and constantly changing. Modification at one

level has an unavoidable, although not always foreseeable, effect on the other levels. At any level there are subsystems that also interact with each other and with other levels of the system. Part of one subsystem may at times form part of other subsystems.

These systems tend to sustain themselves, but at the same time are continuously exchanging and restructuring themselves to attain a state of equilibrium. A dynamic system does not change on a linear basis and a small change at one level will potentially influence the complete system (Donald et al., 1997). This approach recognises and accepts the fluidity of a system, signifying that any individual is likely to experience a range of contexts shared with others, but that the exchanges of the individual characteristics, time, contexts and opportunities will have different impacts on different learners. It suggests that each individual life within a multi-layered, interactive system and progresses holistically within that system. The dissimilar levels of a system in the social context influence and are in turn influenced by one another in a continuous process of dynamic balance, tension and interplay (Gunnarsdóttir et al., 2021).

An essential component in Bronfenbrenner's model is an appreciation that the environment does not simply have a bearing on the child but that the child also actively contributes to their own growth. Understanding of the context within which they are living influences their response to their human and physical surroundings (Swart & Pettipher, 2005). Bronfenbrenner's theory can be aligned with the formation of a holistic, cohesive educational support structure, recognising the roles that parents, teachers, education officials, peers, the extended family, the community and wider government structures can play in providing support, not only for individual learners, but also to all other systems that may influence their development or create barriers to learning and development. This theoretical framework accentuates the need for educational support services to deal with all barriers to learning and development in a comprehensive and cohesive approach, to ensure that excellent support is delivered at all levels of the system.

In this study, the main focus is on the role that support structures within the department, be it the SBST and or the DBST level. The SBST and the DBST are structures within an inclusive education system and they fit perfectly into Bronfenbrenner's model, especially

in offering support to learners who have experienced violence in school. The focus in the next section is on the role of the school and its effect on the development and support of the child; in other words, the focus is on the micro-system, meso-system and exo-system

## 3.2 BRONFENBRENNER'S DEVELOPMENTAL ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY

Urie Bronfenbrenner developed the ecological systems theory to clarify how everything in a child and its setting affects how he or she grows and grows. He named the various features or levels of the environment that impact development as the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, macrosystem and the chronosystem as shown in Figure 5.
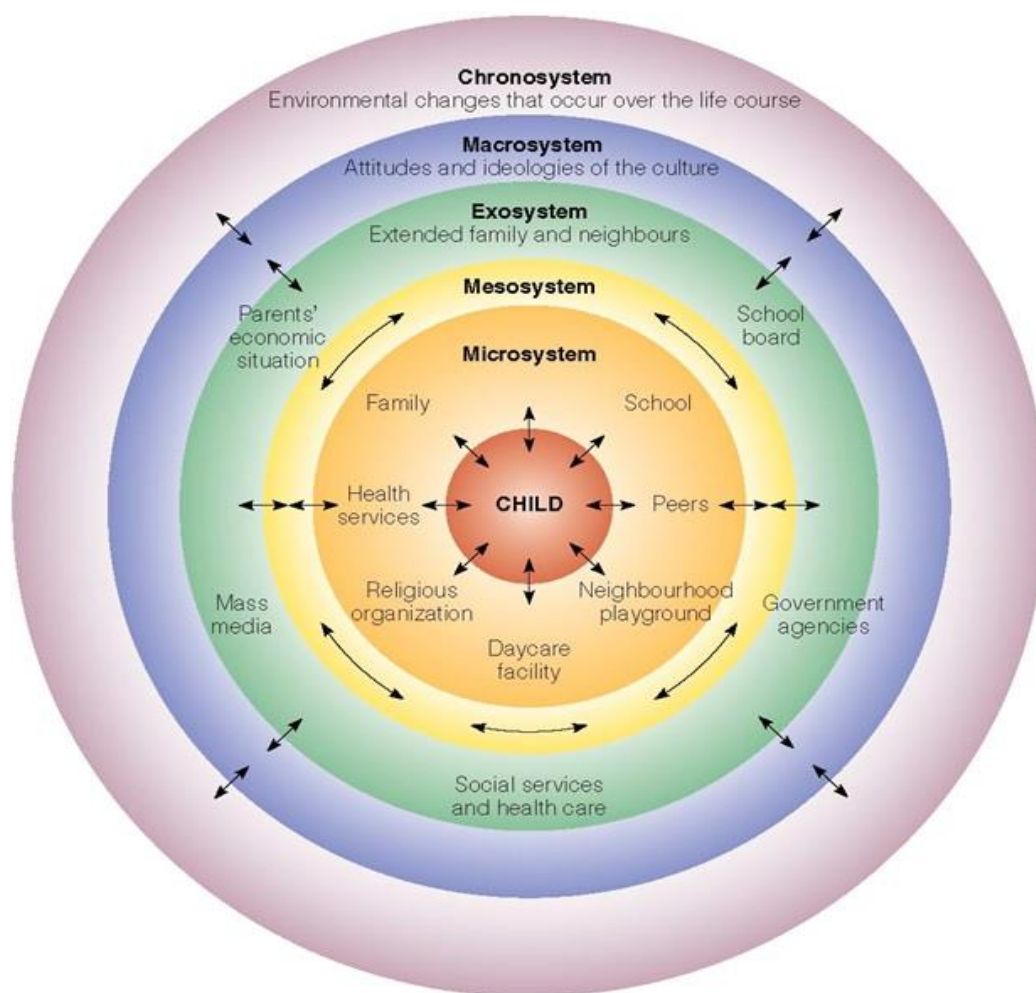


*Figure 5: Levels of Bronfenbrenner's Developmental Ecological Systems Theory*

*Source: (Guy-Evans, 2020)*

The microsystem is the small, immediate environment in which the child subsists and will include any immediate associations or organisations with which they interact, such as immediate family, school or neighbourhood. How these groups or organisations interconnect with the child have an impact on how they grow, and the more reassuring and accommodating these relationships and places are, the better the child is able to develop. The microsystem inevitably affects the child and vice versa and how a child acts or reacts to other people will affect how they treat them in return. Each child's special genetic and biologically predisposed personality traits will affect how others treat them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The mesosystem has an organisational connection with the microsystem; for example, in links between the child's teacher and parents, church and neighbourhood. The ecosystem designates a larger communal system in which the child does not function directly, such as the parent's workplace or community-based activities. The macrosystem, meanwhile, may be considered the outermost level in the child's milieu and encompasses cultural values, customs, and laws. Lastly, the chronosystem integrates the dimension of time as it relates to a child's environments. Fundamentals within this system can be either exterior, such as the timing of a parent's death, or interior, such as the biological modifications that occur with ageing (Gunnarsdóttir et al., 2021).

Bronfenbrenner's conceptualisation of the ecology of human development provides a useful theoretical framework for research on the implementation of inclusion and support (Tlale, 2016), as discussed in the following sections.

### 3.2.1 Microsystem: The Family

Regarding the learner's microsystem, investigations have documented the relationships between learners and the environment. Other research has documented the impact of inclusive programmes on preschool-aged learners with barriers to learning (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007).

Whereas the importance of family influences and access to resources is undisputable, how to access them is personalised and not always noticeable. Rowe (2010), indicated

that how one describes a family need or want has much to do with the methodology one uses to meet that need. A want exists whenever there is a difference between what the parent sees as normative or appropriate and what truly exists from their perspective, not that of the teacher, social worker, or therapist. The role of the professional is to recognise and support each family with regard to the development and education of their child, and, by implication, to empower them in attaining both the skills and resources that may be necessary to appropriately address particular concerns, such as misbehaviour. According to several studies, many parents do not feel that the activities provided by the school constitute real opportunities for family participation, and many feel powerless in decision-making processes (George et al., 2021).

Supplementary research has revealed the effects of including families by allowing them to be involved in decision-making on matters that impact their lives. A model known as "ecologies of parental engagement" (EPE) elucidates how parents' practices in relation to their children's schooling can bring about transformative development, in which they draw on multiple experiences and resources to define their interaction with it and its activities (Piquero et al., 2012). Instead of describing the specific things parents do, the researchers used parent's context and participation to include parents' perception to the world and how those perceptions frame the things they do. The conception of parental and family participation thus goes beyond a given individual and his or her involvement in an event to include the contexts of an individual's decision to participate in an event, including relationships with other individuals, the history of the event, and the intra-familial resources available that may be used to support participation or engagement. Such an approach views the family as a complex organisation of individuals with unique patterns of communication and responsibilities that at times overlap and at other times are unique to subsystems that exist within the larger family system (e.g. the parent-child, spouses, siblings, and parents-grandparents). An intervention that focuses upon an individual is likely to affect any subsystem to which that individual belongs and in turn affect the entire family (Calabrese et al., 2004).

Martin and Donnellan (2021), suggested that one way to address family expectations in an appropriate manner is to allow parents' life experiences and cultural capital to impact

and shape the school's culture. Schools need to implement parental contributions to programmes by listening to parents and other family members' voices and, in so doing, understand the specific needs and desires echoed in those voices. In this way, the separation between home and school may be reduced and can be of help in supporting learners. Cooper and Christie (2008), evaluated a District Parent Training Programme which was designed to "educate and empower urban school parents" (p. 2249). Although this was a curriculum-based parent education programme with the aim of empowering parents in helping their children in content areas such as English and mathematics, conclusions from the evaluation found a shared benefit for parents and school. While parents felt more empowered through the programme, teachers and administrators gained a healthier understanding of family needs by giving those parents the chance to express their own needs and find ways to benefit from parent-oriented programmes. They also found that creating true partnerships with parents needed teachers to validate parents' views and share the responsibility in developing their children. Partnership also requires teachers to show understanding of the culturally relevant values that influence parents' educational priorities and burdens, and know that cultural, socio-economic and gender factors affect how parents contribute to their children's education.

Implicit in such an approach is the postulation on the part of teachers that, as George et al. (2021), have noted, every parent has the ability to identify his or her own educational understanding and to attain the skills compulsory to play a central role in the education of the child.

Research has revealed that high levels of parental involvement lead to enhanced academic performance, higher test scores, more positive attitudes toward school, higher homework accomplishment rates, fewer placements in special education, academic determination, lower dropout rates, and fewer interruptions (Martin & Donnellan, 2021).

It is key to note that parental involvement is important for the education of children of all ages, but it is critical for the performance of young children in inclusive settings (Dieleman et al., 2021), as supported in the SIAS policy. Even though there has not been a standard definition of the term inclusion, inclusive early childhood programming typically reflects

three characteristics: full involvement of learners with disabilities in everyday life activities with their typically developing peers in both school and community settings; development and achievement of educational goals and objectives through partnerships between parents and professionals; and planned evaluation of performance outcomes to ensure the efficacy of the programme (Martin & Donnellan, 2021)

While it is recognised that family participation benefits children, it is not clear how the participation converts into a positive force or which influences determine the degree of benefit. Family involvement is not a static event but a dynamic and ever-changing series of exchanges that depend on the context in which they occur; the disciplines from which the collaborative team members are drawn; the resources parents bring to the relationships; and the specific needs of the child and the family. Traditionally, the education agency or school has created structures and activities intended to support involvement. However, as parents become involved, they do so with limited power to define their roles and actions (Quinn & Evans, 2010). They are often expected to agree with and support the structures and dynamics already in place. Parents who agree with the school and get along with the existing model are good, while those who disagree are regarded as "problematic" (Montes, & Montes, 2020).

There is a relationship between parent involvement and teacher actions. For example, Jabar (2020), indicated that invitations by specific teachers to events were significantly related to parent involvement, particularly among low-income families. They suggested that when parents perceived that their involvement was wanted by teachers, they would often overcome hindrances to be involved, despite a lack of resources. Montes and Montes (2020), observed the relationships between the school climate, teacher expectations and instructional practices in an elementary school with a high percentage of low-income, minority children. They found that when teachers valued parental input and family involvement, they created ways to facilitate home-school communication. Exemplary teachers also felt responsible for building a positive association with parents and placed a high value on parents helping their children with homework and other activities. These teachers viewed parental participation as more than their physical presence at school and felt that parents could make a significant educational impact

beyond what they might contribute by attending meetings and volunteering in the classroom.

### 3.2.2 Mesosystem: Peers, School, and Society

The mesosystem refers to the construction between the microstructures, for example, connection between a child's teacher and parent. It encompasses the interrelationships between two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates such as, for a child, the relations between home, school, and neighbourhood peer groups (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In addition, within it, the different parts of a child's microsystem work together for the sake of the child. For example, if a child's caregivers take an active role in school, such as going to parent-teacher meetings and attending the child's sports games, this will help to promote the child's overall development. By contrast, if the parents are in a disagreement on how best to raise the child and continually give contradictory instructions when they see them, this will steer the child's growth along a different pathway. In the microsystem, the child only appears in one setting and in this system, it involves the relationship between school and home or home and neighbourhood. Bronfenbrenner (1979), included church or social activities and parental workplaces as a part of this system. The mesosystem expands as a child extends their territory, forming new relationships and discovering new settings within the microsystems' boundaries. The child's social network becomes broader and consequently more complex, called "the multi-setting participation" by Bronfenbrenner (1979, p.174), the most basic form of which can be demonstrated by children's activities in two settings, as some hours a day in a school and the remaining hours at home. Bronfenbrenner (1979), added that the ecological transition was also highly important in this system. The way the shift and connection between locations are handled affects the child's development, and if the new connections between home and school are managed by the child unaided this might affect them in a negative way.

Effective endeavours to meet the educational needs of learners with a wide spectrum of needs in a single setting require careful preparation, key to which is the identification of activities that allow for the meaningful contribution of each child and, at the same time,

accommodate the unique cultural identity of each family. As families, schools, and communities have taken more steps to fully integrate all learners into the schools, families and teachers have worked to find effective ways to plan together (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2010).

### 3.2.3 Exosystem

The exosystem relates to structures that influence the child's mesosystem and consequently have an impact on how the structures affect the child. It comprises all external networks, such as community structures and local educational, medical, employment, and communications systems, which have an effect on the microsystem. It consists of settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events happen that affect, or are affected by, what is happening in the setting containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

In the learner's exosystem, Peck et al. (1994), stated that the service delivery agency responsible for programmes in inclusive education provides an example of an exosystem setting, and that the way the agency is organised can affect programme application. In a study that followed inclusive education programmes in Washington over a 5-year period, it was found that the programmes that were able to sustain inclusion services appeared to be those with organisational structures that had been reshaped explicitly to support the implementation of inclusive education (Wasserman & Clair, 2011). Examples of factors operating at the exosystem level include the interaction of professionals responsible for educational and rehabilitation programmes, formal and informal policies of school systems, and social policies that connect organisational layers. Any of these exosystemic factors can affect the experiences of individual learners in individual educational and rehabilitation support programmes (Ogg & Anthony, 2020).

Formal education takes place in school; therefore, as a system, it plays a critical role in developing the child's potential. In applying inclusive education, the DBE is the exosystem and, through schools, it must play a major role in teaching learners in a way that will assist them, as diverse as they are, in their cognitive development. It is imperative for teachers to have support from other levels or systems in doing their work.

### 3.2.4 Macrosystem

Bronfenbrenner's final level is the macrosystem, which is the largest and most remote set of people and things. The macrosystem envelops the micro-, meso-, and exosystems, and includes the degree of freedom permitted by the national government, cultural values, and the economy, which can also affect a child either positively or negatively. It embraces those constructions that have a variable effect on the child, though distant; for example, government policies, cultural values, political philosophies, economic patterns, and social conditions (George et al., 2021).

Bronfenbrenner (1979), described the macrosystem as certain realities that exist at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, alongside with any belief system or ideology underlying such consistencies. All settings at each level operate within a cultural context. Bronfenbrenner (1979), claimed that learners, families, schools and macrosystem factors, such as the cultural and economic fabric of society, including policies, legislations and judicial systems, can give rise to functional support structures in schools. It is, therefore, not satisfactory to scrutinise individual factors, such as family, peers, or school, separately. The significance of this level in this study is the interaction between the learner who has experienced violence at school and the support offered, which may include family, peers, school and community. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), in order to demonstrate that human development has taken place, it is necessary to establish that a change produced in the person's understanding and behaviour carries over to other situations and other times.

### 3.2.5 Implications of Bronfenbrenner's Model in the Context of this Study

The cornerstone of Bronfenbrenner's model is a belief that individual human development, socialisation explicitly, arises as an outcome of interactions within and between multiple nested ecological systems impacting upon the developing young person:

> … to assert that human development is a product of interaction between the growing organism and its environment is to state what is almost a

commonplace in behavioural science … the principle asserts that behaviour evolves as a function of the interplay between person and environment, with paying special attention to the interaction between the two (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 16).

The socio-ecological model propositions are that the evolution of human development happens when exchanges occur between the individual and the environment, which are mutually influential within the context of their ecological systems.

The first important influence on children is the family in which they and their parents are interactive members of a bigger socio-ecological system (Danziger & Ratner, 2010). When connections are made between youth, family, friends and the community, they play an active role in their environment which can lead to the development of control over their lives.

More specifically, Ogg and Anthony (2020), argued that when youth make authentic connections with their families, schools and communities, this can lead to a decrease in the violence facing today's schools. When this connection occurs and children are recognised as a central part of their community, schools would be better equipped to address the growing problem of violence which is an obstacle to the learner's educational outcomes. In this case, families and members of the community can take a leading role when dealing with issues of violence and emphasise the importance of family and community in the life of children. In line with Bronfenbrenner:

… the aspects of the environment that are most powerful in shaping the course of psychological growth are overwhelmingly those that have meaning to the person in a given situation … An ecological transition occurs throughout the lifespan and it is defined as whenever a person's position in the ecological environment is altered as the result of a change in role, setting, or both … every ecological transition is both a consequence and an instigator of developmental process (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, pp. 22, 26, 27).

Bronfenbrenner's development ecology model offers a wider understanding of the individual's growth and cognitive development. Individuals with resilience and entrepreneurial skills determine their own destiny, notwithstanding their environmental context. They have the capability to rely on the interplay between different levels in their surrounding world in relation to their own development (Nation et al., 2020).

By using Bronfenbrenner's model, together with aspects of interrelatedness and interactions, it is possible to see how society and the school influence the lives of learners who have experienced violence at schools, particularly in the way they develop mechanisms for survival. The ability of individuals to take control over their lives should be the point of focus of any support initiatives (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

### 3.2.5 Collaboration of parents

Educating a child takes cooperation and involvement from teachers, parents, families, and the community, consistent with the African proverb that "It takes a village to raise a child". Research has shown the greater the family and community involvement in the wellbeing of the child the greater his or her achievement (Martin & Donnellan, 2021), Parental involvement has an important impact on a child's school success (Smith, 2010), but, for various reasons, there is an increasing number of children raised for some period of their childhood in less than ideal conditions. For example, in the USA, at least a quarter of children live with one parent, and among African-Americans this figure increases to more than 55% (Adamczyk, 2012). At least one in five children in the USA lives in a family with an income below poverty level and this rate doubles among African-Americans and Latinos. An increasing number of mothers are working outside the home, consequently impeding involvement in their children's lives (Kreider & Ellis, 2011).

### 3.3 STRENGTH-BASED PERSPECTIVE THEORY

The strength-based perspective (SBP) theory underpins endeavours to develop wellbeing in youngsters and their families. The SBP is an approach for recognising or learning to recognise and use resources available to individuals to help them recover their personal power when it has been lost because of some unfortunate event. The teacher or parent

and support structures established at schools need to help learners to comprehend that they already have much of what they need to advance on their chosen path. The SBP rests on a foundation of positive characteristics and competences, which the support structures in schools must emphasise, to allow all learners to understand the ways in which they can enhance their resilience (Van Breda, 2018). For instance, in helping a learner who has experienced violence at school, instead of asking questions like "what is wrong with the support system within schools?" the question may be "what are strengths in the present support system that may help learner grow and change?".

For the purpose of this study, I chose to use the SBP theory since its emphasis is on enhancing growth and development by focusing on positive characteristics and resources already available rather than on their absence. This position asserts that organisations and individuals do not develop by concentrating on their problems as that has potential to weaken confidence in their ability to develop in self-reflective ways. The SBP theory framework combines ideas from various methods, for instance, community development (Bryan & Henry, 2008), solution-centred approach (Walsh, 2002); development assets (Lerner, 2003), and positive youth improvement and flexibility approaches (Connell, Gambone & Smith, 2001). It is largely based on the work of Saleebey (2008), who was a fervent advocate of inspiring people to focus on their strengths, and emphasised that, all humans, somewhere within, have the urge to be heroic; to transcend circumstances, to develop their powers, to overcome adversity, and to stand up and be counted.

The SBP theory is a synergistic process between the individual supported and those supporting them. The approach expects the youth and their families to help themselves where families take on a role as accomplices instead of as specialists, experts, initiators and executives of the change procedure (Hammond & Zimmerman, 2012). This approach depends on the interaction between individuals and situations that change each other. Unlike the traditional teaching and professional growth models that are based on deficit methodologies of evaluation, finding, or profiling and exhibiting decisions on individuals' lives disregarding the qualities and encounters of the individuals or organisation, the strength-based approaches concentrate on the inherent strengths of individuals and organisations, families, groups and organisations to mobilise their knowledge, talents,

capacities, and resources in order to pursue their aspirations (Saleebey, 2008), and to aid their recovery and empowerment. It avoids the use of stigmatising terminology which people in need may have become used to and eventually accept and feel helpless to change and affect their future. As a researcher, I find the theory to be an ingenious approach to understanding the support for learners who experienced violence in schools.

My role as a researcher is the need to explore how the support structures support learners and what capacities and strengths, they possess to overcome their circumstances, rather than labelling them as poor or non-functional. The SBP theory is thus found to be useful in that it functions on the basis that people and organisations and structures have strengths and resources for their own empowerment. Through the application of the SPB theory, learners learn to understand their capability and obtain skills to address the true causes of violence and its effect on their lives. Through the SBP theory, the support structures serve as a platform for negotiating and navigating resources that every individual, family, group or community has that can directly or indirectly improve the situation (Early & GlenMaye, 2004; Pulla, 2012).

The SBP theory fits within an all-inclusive model in which each learner is regarded as an individual having unique strengths and weaknesses. Strengths can be the learner's willingness to receive help, their positive attitude, their capability to overcome hardships in the past, and the support system available to them. It strives to recognise the positive basis of the person's resources (or what may need to be added) and strengths that will lay the basis for addressing the challenges that may arise from the problems (McCaskey, 2008). The method offers positive indirect building blocks which can lay the groundwork for future growth of the adolescents. Hammond and Zimmerman (2012) presented a strength-based cycle to provide a more holistic approach to building a strong support structure for learners who have experienced violence in schools as reflected in Figure 6.

Change needed

Continued development of strength aand capaccities

Identification of strength

Positive Meaningful Experience

Positive Expectation

Opportunities provided for successful development
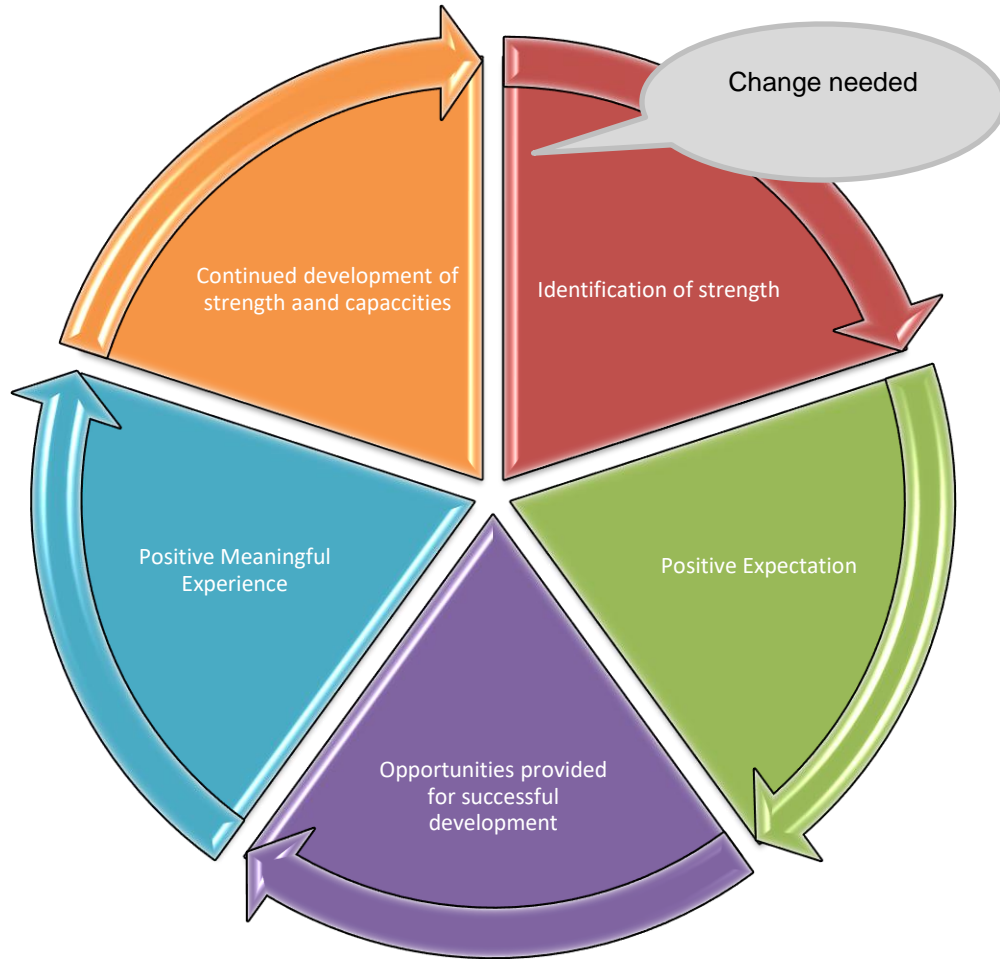
**Figure 6: The Strength-Based Cycle**

**Source: (Adapted from Hammond & Zimmerman, 2012, p. 3)**

### 3.3.1 Positivity within the Strength-Based Cycle

With the SBP theory, support structures in schools need to consult with individuals to allow individuals the space to speak about their strengths and weaknesses. It is vital for making them realise the reason for support so that they make changes to their lives (Brun & Rapp, 2001). It is imperative that the support structures offered to learners who are survivors of violence should attempt to understand the factors that can help individuals to flourish and achieve health, wellbeing and victory (Oberle, 2018).The SBP is rooted in the idea that individuals and organisations have existing competencies, they are capable of

learning new skills and addressing weaknesses, and can use existing competencies to identify and address concerns. It is a general concept that people have more confidence and comfort to journey into the future (the unknown) when they are invited to start with what they already know.

Boniwell (2003), proposed that the foundation of an applied strengths viewpoint for identification of strengths is through contact with learners. The SIAS policy document (DoE, 2014), serves as a start-off point for identification of barriers early in the school system. The SIAS document dictates that all learners must have a profile established for them upon admission which will serve as the baseline for intervention and support in the classroom. The SIAS document has embedded the learner profile within it. However, a learner profile can take the form of a formal document or process or can simply be a series of conversations with learners. It should include information about a learner's skills, strengths, interests, and can highlight potential barriers to learning, and make suggestions about what is needed to support learning. A learner profile has benefits for both learners and teachers. Learner profiles can help school staff build relationships with learners and comprehend things from their standpoint. Similarly, teachers can build rapport with learners, identify, and address potential barriers to learning at the outset.

### 3.3.2 Transformation and purposeful modification process

People have confidence to work towards the future when they are requested to start out with what they already understand. The SBP theory reminds us that each person, family, group and community hold the key to their own transformation. The challenge is and constantly has been whether people are willing to completely embrace this method of working with individuals.

### 3.3.3 Self-Efficacy Capacities Increase

It is important to value changes and the need to cooperate actual transformation is a cooperative, all-encompassing and participatory process – "it takes a village to raise a child" (Hammond, 2010, p. 5). Positive change occurs in the context of reliable relationships – people need to know someone cares and will be there unreservedly for

them. It is a transactional and facilitating process of supporting change and capacity building – it is not about fixing someone.

Building skills and capacities increases self-efficacy which in turn motivates the achievement of goals. The SBP theory interventions work toward creating a well-coordinated sequence of positive experiences and providing developmental support and opportunities (Hammond & Zimmerman, 2012). In adopting the strengths-based cycle, I intend to contribute to developing a support framework for the support structures established in schools that will help them reflect and define their relevance for purpose of growth (Boniwell, 2003). The support structures in different schools will thus be able to tell their support stories according to their unique socially constructed reality. In that way, I will be able to find out what the different support structures have learnt and know about themselves and their environment. I will be able to identify the structure in place and how they incorporate families within the school traditions, culture and the entire school community early including their hopes and wishes.

## 3.4 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Most of the earlier work on inclusive education focused on the validation for inclusion and focused on the rights of people with disabilities to a free and suitable education (Nieuwenhuis, et al., 2017). The rights and ethics discourse is one of the ways to justify inclusive education. It states that the existence of a dual education system prevents systematic changes to make education responsive to an increasingly diverse society. This justification is often based on the ideals of social justice (Artiles et al., 2006). The ideal of social justice can be seen as complete and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually designed to meet the needs and in which individuals are both self-determining, i.e. able to develop their full capacities, and interdependent, i.e. capable to interacting democratically with others, as well as a society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure (Adams et al., 2017). Grossman (2011), explained that the rights discourse is committed to extending full citizenship to all people and emphasises equal opportunity, self-reliance, and independence. For Engelbrecht (2006), Inclusive Education within the

South African context is therefore framed within a human rights approach and based on the ideal of freedom and equality as represented by the Constitution.

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action endorses the rights discourse, with a strong focus on the development of inclusive schools and states that "schools should accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic, or other conditions" (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 1994, p. 6). The underlying principle of inclusive education is to provide an education that is as standard as possible for all learners, adapting it to the needs of each learner and providing support when needed (Jennings, 2020).

By applying the principle of social justice, which is focused on providing equitable outcomes to marginalised individuals and groups due to barriers embedded in social, economic, and political systems (Dreyer, 2011), inclusive education can improve the lives of all people. Inclusive education depends on the capacity of the school, and therefore on the capacity of the principal and teachers, to be innovative and to implement differentiated approaches (Thomazet, 2009). Learners with learning impairments and special needs, and those that have been affected by violence, thus affecting their performance, should not be segregated from other learners, but should be supported in the mainstream in such a way that their needs are met (Jennings, 2020). It, therefore, translates to the fact that the support structure forms the basis of support in any school.

Dreyer (2011), confirmed that an understanding of the context is the first step towards understanding new developments in education and the movement towards inclusive education. Social justice principles, e.g. more equal distribution of resources and providing equal opportunities to marginalised individuals and groups (Dreyer, 2011), directly engage with the very contexts and systems in which inclusive education is embedded and seek to improve the influences of these systems on the learning experiences and relationships among learners.

### 3.4.1 The Implementation of Inclusive Education aligned with Bronfenbrenner's ecological Model

Just like inclusive education which aims to address the needs of the child in all contexts, Bronfenbrenner's ecological system provides a framework for studying causes, development, treatment and attitudes, but its strength lies in its focus on the child, family and peers (micro), and to a lesser extent the child, school, and teachers (meso). The following table encapsulate the inclusive education which is embedded in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems.

**Table 3:**

*Different Levels of Inclusivity which are embedded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System*

**LACK OF PREPARATION FOR CHANGES OVER TIME**

| CHRONO SYSTEM | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CONSTITUTION OF SOUTH** | **SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT** | **EDUCATION**<br><br>**WHITE PAPER** | **CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICIES** |
| **Prohibits discrimination to any person on any grounds** | *Prohibits discrimination to any learner on any grounds | *Framework for inclusive education | Rigid curriculum and assessment |
| **Not applied to learners who experience barriers to learning in schools** | Promotes<br><br>equitable and quality education for all learners | Not embrace by teachers | No provision for learners with barriers to learning |
| | Not implemented in schools regarding learners who experience barriers to learning | In conflict with curriculum and assessment | In conflict with Education White Paper 6 |

**EXOSYSTEM**

**LACK OF PREPARATION FOR CHANGES OVER TIME**

| SMT | ILST | SGB | DBST |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Lack commitment towards management of learners who experience barriers to learning** | Dysfunctional | No policies | Dysfunctional |
| **Ineffective communication and collaboration** | Non- implementation of SIAS strategy | Non- mobilisation of parents | Fragmented operation |
| | No training | No adaptation to building structures | No guidance to schools |
| | Lack of knowledge | Non-provision of assistive devices | No support to schools |
| | No effective support to teachers and learners | | Non-provision of specialised support services |
| **MESOSYSTEM** | | | |
| SMT | ILST | SGB | DBST |
| **Lack commitment towards management of learners who** | Dysfunctional | No policies | Dysfunctional |

**LACK OF PREPARATION FOR CHANGES OVER TIME**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **experience barriers to learning** | | | |
| **Ineffective communication and collaboration** | Non- implementation of SIAS strategy | Non- mobilisation of parents | Fragmented operation |
| | | No adaptation to building structures | No guidance to schools |
| **Lack of knowledge** | | | |
| **No effective support to teachers and learners** | | Non-provision of assistive devices | Non-provision of specialised support services |

**MICRO-SYSTEM**

| HOME | PEERS | SCHOOL |
|---|---|---|
| **Non-supportive** | Discrimination | Inappropriate building structures |
| **Unsympathetic** | Rejection | Lack of resources and support |
| **Negative lifestyle** | Stereotyping | Outdated approach to barriers to learning |
| **Absence of parents** | | Inappropriately trained teachers |

**LACK OF PREPARATION FOR CHANGES OVER TIME**

| Denial of parents | Labelling | Large class sizes |
|---|---|---|
| **Low literacy levels** | | Time constraints |
| | | No differentiated teaching |

## 3.5 INTEGRATION OF THE STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH TO BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

Rather than the traditional perspective focusing on a learner's weaknesses and risk factors, this study adopted the shift to a new paradigm of the integration of the Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and the strength-based perspective theory, which also aligns with the SIAS policy document which emphasises the strength of an individual. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory looks at a child's development within the complex system of relationships that make up their environment. Bronfenbrenner's theory defines several layers of the environment, each having an impact on a child's development. The SBP theory also relates to Bronfenbrenner in that it also has impact on the lives of learners who have experienced violence.

A SBP theory tells a much richer story about what children and adolescents, and thus, what schools are doing to make things happen and succeed despite the odds, rather than just letting things happen as passive passersby in their own lives with an emphasis on how they fall short (O'Leary, 1998).

Learners' ability to thrive with or without support is distinguished by a more positive empowering view of human potential (Pillay, 2020). It has been asserted that when an individual is faced with stress and challenges, unless they succumb, they will survive, recover, and possibly even thrive. From this perspective, challenges are welcomed because they have the potential to provoke growth and development through support. Both theories seek to understand and develop the strengths gained through support and capabilities that can transform the lives of people in positive ways.

The combination of the two models is important as it examines the topic from various theoretical perspectives. Both theories produce dependable models that are useful in examining the phenomenon of support for learners who have experienced violence in schools. Bronfenbrenner's theory has its foundations in social control and social disorganisation and describes the breakdown of social norms and values. This provides a framework for studying relationships between the child and family, between the child

and their peers and school, and between the child and the community in order to support them and minimise the spread of violence.

Surviving violence through support can be addressed by being sensitive and understanding aspects of conflict resolution, character education, bullying prevention, and other educational enrichment programmes that encourage learners to talk. It is thus useful to combine the two models to address the support structures for learners who have experienced violence. The two approaches are extremely powerful and can transform a school's environment (Elias, 2006).

With the two models, I hoped to develop a comprehensive emergency management plan with well-defined and well-executed processes that will help ensure the support of learners; can adequately restore the school climate to optimal learning conditions; and ensure the continuity of schools' daily operations during and after a crisis. The ultimate aim is to support and protect the learners, keeping them safe and providing a place where they can learn and develop physically and socially without fear of harm or violence (Grossman, 2011).

## 3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The SBP theory is an educational model which should assist the DBE in general and other human support services in their quest to understand the complexity of supporting survivors of school violence (Ledesma, 2014).

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a theoretical framework for the study reflecting on the support structures for learners who are survivors of violence in a school context. The discussion unfolded in two parts. The first part discussed Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory followed by the SBP theory; the second part described interrelatedness and relevance of the characteristics of the two theories and how they apply and complement each other in support. The subsequent chapter is on research methodology and focuses on the methods used for the purpose of his study.

**CHAPTER 4:**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Having presented the theoretical framework appropriate for this study in the previous chapter, namely, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, in this chapter, the research methodology is presented. Research methodology is the philosophical framework which influences the procedures and process of the entire study (Fuster, 2019). The philosophical paradigm and the typology of the research design are also discussed. The chapter identifies the population and the sample of the study and explains the sampling strategies that were employed. The choice and justification of the research instruments that were used are presented and issues of validity or trustworthiness and reliability are explored. The chapter describes the data collection procedures, data analysis methods and ethical considerations that are relevant to this study.

## 4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A broader perspective that has been adopted by Smith et al. (2010), is that methods are simply tools to conduct research and are shaped by epistemology. Smith et al. (2010), further described methodology as the explanation, and the justification of methods used in the study. The methodology refers to how each of the aims, its practicality, principles, and what counts as knowledge informs research. Qualitative methods can help the researcher to understand the nature of life experiences of the participants guided by the researchers' ontological and epistemological assumptions. They are the tools and techniques used by researchers to gather information that translate to knowledge and can shape and advance important questions of educational practice and policy (Kozleski, 2017). Unlike quantitative methods that are used to reveal causal relationships between variables using statistical techniques, Hammarberg et al. (2016), maintained that qualitative methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective, most often from the standpoint of the participants.

This study is qualitative in nature and follows an inductive approach whereby the evidence of the individual's life experiences is derived from observations of what is really happening in their social life rather than handed down from theory or the perspectives of the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this section, the research methodology as it relates to population and sampling, the description of participants, and data collection and analysis are deliberated at length. In this study, I served as the instrument of data collection, using a multi-method approach. In similar vein, Polit and Beck (2012), emphasised that the technique of triangulation includes the use of multiple methods of data collection about a phenomenon. Triangulation is regularly used in qualitative studies and may be based on interviews, observation, and field notes. The following diagram (Figure 7) displays the flow and overview of the chapter.
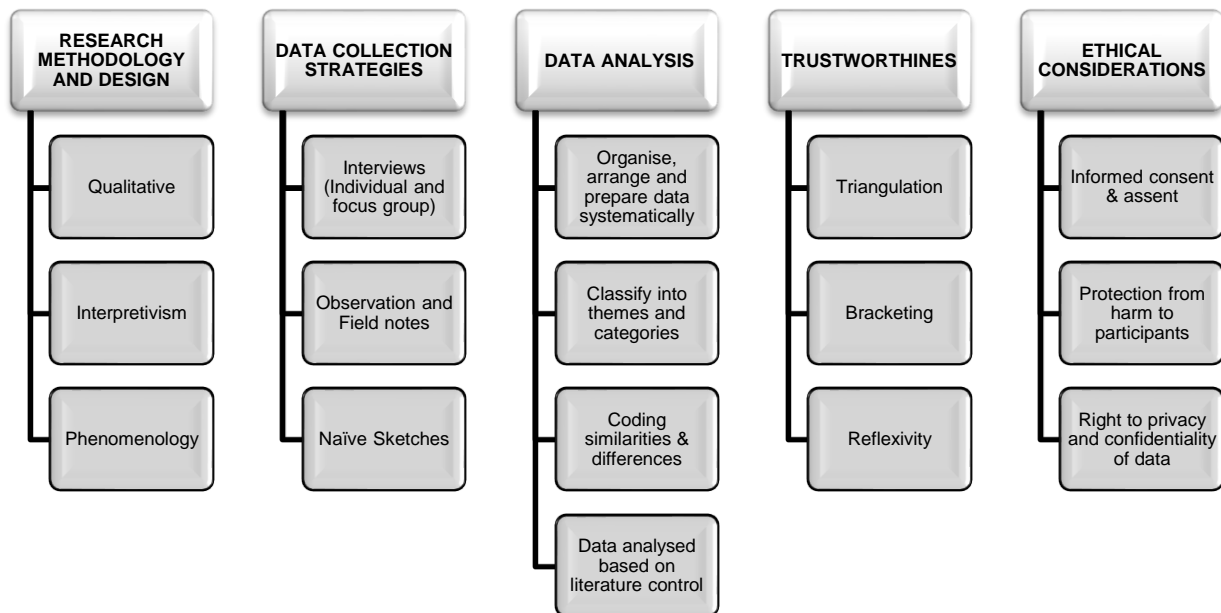


*Figure 7: Overview of chapter 4*

## 4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

This research study followed a qualitative case study approach. The use of qualitative case studies is a well-established approach as stated by Creswell (2014), who described qualitative research as an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human dilemma such as the support offered to learners who have experienced violence in a school context. Qualitative research draws upon the experiences and opinions of participants like principals and teachers (Almalki, 2016). Qualitative research can refer to people's lives, emotions, lived experiences, behaviours, and feelings, for instance towards awareness of support structures offered to learners who have experienced violence. Furthermore, Rahman (2017), described qualitative research as an umbrella term covering a variety of explanatory methods which seek to define, interpret, explain, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, rather than the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world. Thus, qualitative research is fitting in this study because the aim of this study is to discover, designate, explain, and interpret the support structures offered to learners who have experienced violence in a school context.

A broader perspective was adopted by Rahman (2017), who emphasised that the qualitative research approach method is one of the more practical ways of research approach. In this study, a detailed description is provided of support structures, teachers' feelings, sentiments, and experiences of the support structures available for learners who experienced violence. Similarly, Almalki (2016), pointed out that qualitative researchers gather information in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under examination. Almalki (2016), asserted that the goals of qualitative research are to provide a comprehensive narrative explanation and amplification that captures the richness and complexity of behaviours, experiences, and events as experienced by participants, which in this study are principals and teachers. The researcher depends as far as possible on the participants' interpretations of the situation, thereby recognising that the reality of their experiences can only be fully known by them (Fouché & Schurink, 2011).

Maitlis (2017), held the view that qualitative research is often inspired by a desire to understand individuals' lived experiences, people's subjective life experiences, relationships, and time. This was enabled in this study by methods of data collection such as interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. These methods of data collection, therefore, enabled me to understand better the experiences and perceptions from the principals and teachers' perspectives on the support structures that are available to survivors of violence in a school context.

I gathered information myself through investigative documents, observing behaviour, and questioning the principals and teachers. As put by Esiri et al. (2017), qualitative researchers do not tend to use or rely on questionnaires or instruments developed by other researchers; instead, they collect data for themselves. Qualitative research allows the researcher to collect data from the participants through semi-structured interviews, focus-group discussions, observations, document analysis and audio-visual records, rather than depending on a single data source (Cohen et al., 2011). Thus, the qualitative research method was found to be appropriate for this study because it provided abundant information about real life people and conditions (Daniel, 2016).

Despite the above advantages, some limitations are obvious. Data obtained through qualitative approach cannot be replicated. Daniel (2016), postulated that the people who use the qualitative approach are said to create fiction because they have no means of confirming the validity of the findings. As the approach is typified by feelings and personal reports, it is assumed that the approach cannot provide consistent and trustworthy information compared to using quantifiable numbers. However, despite these shortcomings, the qualitative research approach remains an effective approach in exploring the support structures of learners who experienced violence in schools.

## 4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Bryman (2016), referred to research design as the plan according to which the research is undertaken. Bryman further declared that the research design directs the implementation of a research method and the investigation of the subsequent information. Vosloo (2014), viewed research design as a structure for the generation of evidence that

is selected to respond to the research question(s) in which the investigator is interested. Research design, therefore, emphasises all the steps that are used to process the findings leading to the results of the research (Jones et al., 2013). This study, entitled '*Exploring the support structure in place for survivors of violence in a school context*', is aimed at gathering data on the support structures available in five schools in the Johannesburg North District in Gauteng. The qualitative phenomenological design was chosen to solicit information on the phenomenon.

As Groenewald (2004), articulated, the operative word in phenomenological research is description; therefore, the aim of this researcher was to describe as precisely as possible what support structures are in place for survivors of violence in a school context, thus desisting from reliance on any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts. Similarly, Jones et al. (2013), purported that the goal of phenomenology is to get to the truth of issues, to describe the phenomenon as it manifests to the experiencer. In the same vein, Groenewald (2004), postulated that the phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the viewpoints of the people involved. A researcher who uses a phenomenological research design is concerned with relating the lived experiences of the people, such as the principals and teachers, involved in the issue being researched, namely, the support structures of survivors of violence in a school context. Phenomenological research is found to be ideal in this study because it describes rather than explains and starts from a perspective free from hypotheses or preconceptions (Groenewald, 2004).

The phenomenological approach is based on the way people experience social phenomena in the world in which they live as asserted by Moustakas (2000). Similarly, Merriam (2009), contended that phenomenologists believe that human behaviour cannot be understood without appreciating the context in which it takes place. This basically means that the human behaviour is studied in its natural setting. One key aspect within qualitative research is to make sure that the phenomenon under study is studied holistically. It is against this context that the phenomenon should be observed in its natural setting as context conveys a lot of meaning (Fuster, 2019). Therefore, I interviewed the principals and teachers and observed them in their natural settings as this facilitated a

holistic understanding of the available support structures in a school context. This view is supported by Qutoshi (2018), who wrote that to understand the lived experience from the participant's perspective, a researcher must consider their own beliefs and feelings. Hence, I recognised what she expected to discover and then deliberately put aside those ideas. Likewise, Lester (1999), pointed out that phenomenology is concerned with the study of experience from the point of view of the individual, bracketing taken-for-granted suppositions and usual ways of perceiving. Bracketing helps the researcher to see the involvement from the eyes of the person who has lived the experience, in this case, the principals and teachers.

The phenomenological approach in this study translates into gathering in-depth information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as focus-group discussions and participant observation and representing it from the perspective of the research participants; in this case, the principals and teachers (Groenewald, 2014). As explained further by Creswell (2014), the phenomenological research design has strong philosophical foundations and normally entails conducting interviews of some kind. The procedure of interviewing provided me with the opportunity to explore the phenomenon in depth and helped me to see things from the participants' perspective. Therefore, the focus groups allowed me to get a full picture of their experience on the support structures available for survivors of violence in a school context.

Additionally, Greening (2019), contended that phenomenological approaches are good at surfacing deep issues and making voices heard. This is, however, not always comfortable for participants, particularly when the research exposes taken for-granted assumptions or challenges a comfortable status quo. On the contrary, many organisations such as schools value the insights which a phenomenological approach can bring in terms of cutting through taken-for-granted assumptions, prompting action or challenging complacency.

One disadvantage of phenomenological research is that it produces a large amount of interview notes, jottings, audio recordings or other records, all of which must be analysed (Qutoshi, 2018). Qutoshi (2018), further stated that analysis is also disorganised, as data

does not tend to fall into neat categories and there can be many ways of linking the different parts of discussions or observations. Where the data is messy, such as in interview transcripts, unstructured notes or personal texts, the researcher needs to read through and get a feel for what is being said, identifying major themes and matters in each text. Points which are not raised through this process will be added.

## 4.5 RESEARCH PARADIGM

This study is qualitative in nature and is guided by the philosophical assumptions from interpretive practice. The paradigm, often referred to as social constructivism, is a value-based process characterised by multiple realities, the shared construction of data, and the expansion of individual and multifaceted perceptions of phenomena (Willig, 2008). The interpretivist permits the individuals to seek understanding of what is happening around them by developing a subjective sense of their experiences. Human behaviour should be studied and understood within the setting in which it occurs (Wijesinghe, 2011). I explored the lived experiences, behaviours, emotions and feelings to gain a deeper understanding of the research participants' insights, involvement, and opinions (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

The approach thus assisted me to discover the participants' views about support structures available for survivors of violence in a school context; present the participants' understanding of realism in a non-judgmental manner; receive each participants' interpretation of his/her experiences as actual and accurate; and become an insider/player in the participants' social setting during the period of study (Brikkels, 2015). Tlale (2013), affirmed that the core belief of interpretivism is that the whole needs to be studied to understand a phenomenon. Additionally, Tlale (2013) further emphasised that this would permit a researcher to discover the richness, depth, and complexity of the specific phenomenon. This view was supported by Terre Blanche et al. (2006), who contended that an interpretive paradigm involves taking people's subjective experiences seriously as the essence of what is real for them, making sense of people's experiences by interacting with them and listening to what they say about their lives  and making use of qualitative research techniques to gather and analyse information. Unlike the positivist

approach that maintains that the nature of reality is single, tangible and isolable (Gattone, 2020), to an interpretivist, realities are manifold, constructed and holistic and thus the relationships of knower to the known are interactive and inseparable (Wijesinghe, 2011). The goal of the current study is to provide a detailed narrative description of the reality of what kind of support schools provide for learners who have experienced violence in schools.

Phenomenology was used as an approach to the investigation with the philosophical basis of interpretivism. This approach was followed in this study in order to conduct a holistic investigation of the individuals' lived experience; to describe the multiple associations of their experiences; and to determine the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into few categories or ideas (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to De Vos et al. (2005), this approach to inquiry is characterised by participant observation and a description of behaviour through reflection inspired by researcher-participant dialogue. It allows for methodical interpretation of interview transcripts to extract themes common across interviews or unique to an interview and then creating a conceptual link. Accordingly, I aimed at getting as close as possible to the participants by spending time with them to unearth the minutiae of their experiences (Eatough & Smith, 2017). It is through this interaction that deeper meaning can be uncovered.

## 4.6 PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

To provide direction for this study, I took the stance of viewing (1) the nature of reality of the participants (ontology); (2) how I know the reality (epistemology); (3) my ethics and value system (axiology); and (4) methodology (means of acquiring knowledge about the world).

## 4.7 POPULATION

In the view of Banerjee and Chaudhury (2010), the population of a study is the entirety of the possible participants in a study. For this study, the population comprised principals and teachers in five schools in Johannesburg North District. In the words of O'Leary (2009), a population is "the total membership of a defined class of people, objects or

events" (p. 87). Similarly, Magwa and Mugari (2015), confirmed that population is the complete group of persons or set of objects and events the researcher wants to investigate. One significant aspect of population is that, whether viewed as people or objects, conclusions reached from a research sample could be applied to the population.

## 4.8 SAMPLING

Although the population is fairly a large group of individuals, I selected a sample from five secondary schools from Gauteng Department of Education identified with a rash of behaviour problems. The participants were principals and teachers in the schools. Convenience sampling was used to select one principal and six teachers per school who were involved in the support of learners who experienced violence or other barriers to leaning. The participants were selected because of their convenience, geographical proximity, their availability at a given time, and their willingness to participate in the study (Etikan et al., 2016). It is also cost-effective (Guest et al., 2013), and ensures that the knowledge gained is representative of the population from which the sample is drawn. It is designed to understand common processes, shared experiences and to identify shared cultural knowledge and norms. On the other hand, McMillan and Schumacher (2010), stated that convenience sampling has its disadvantages; for example, it is likely to be biased due to the uniqueness of the participants and their social context.

The sample size in the current study was faced with potential limitations such as the identifying incidents of violence, determining the number of learners who had received support, lack of access to hidden rich information from the learners' family history, and available time and resources (Strydom & Delport, 2011).

## 4.9 DESCRIPTION OF CONTEXT UNDER STUDY

The sample was made up of five principals and six teachers in the five schools selected. The total number of participants was 35. The five schools were chosen for their diverse composition in context and culture. All five schools were based in the Johannesburg North District in Gauteng Province.

The participants were part of the SBST which, as per the SIAS policy, is established in every school to determine the support needs of the school, teachers and learners and co-ordinate support provision (Nel, 2006). The SBST is comprised of the Deputy Principal, Life Orientation (LO) Head of Department and phase teachers. The SBSTs are supported by the DBST which is responsible for designing and implementing properly coordinated learner support systems to support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, teacher, and institutional needs. These two structures have been instituted through the EWP6 (DoE, 2001), and the SIAS document (DBE, 2014).

## 4.10 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

This section defines the data collection strategies and methods used in the study. McMillan and Schumacher (2014), declared that qualitative data collection aligns well with questions that address description, comparisons, correlations, experimental and single-subject approaches to gathering and analysing the data. I wanted to know if survivors of violence were supported in schools. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), qualitative studies look at the kind of behaviour that occurs as well as explanations of why it occurs, and the emphasis on process allows for conclusions that explain the reasons. Similarly, Creswell (2014), defined data collection as a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions. This study used the methodology of conducting qualitative research in the form of field work within the participants' natural setting, while gaining insight into their actions, beliefs and perceptions of their world. The process of enquiry unfolded in two phases. Focus-group interviews with teachers were conducted in the first phase of data gathering and a focus-group interview with principals was conducted in the second phase of data gathering. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the perspective of both the principals and teachers. The in-depth interactive interviews were conducted with participating teachers and principals using the online meeting platform provided by Microsoft Teams. Interviews were transcribed for data analysis. Notes recorded during the sessions, observations and documents were also used in data analysis.

### 4.10.1 Document Analysis

A document is a written text produced by individuals or group which have value or facts about certain phenomenon such as government reports, media articles or learner profiles (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Analysis of written documents was used to validate interviews and observation notes gathered during the inquiry. In this study, documents refer to any formal documents that inform the support and school regulations. This could comprise documents such as SIAS policy, school safety policy, school incident reports and school logbooks, intervention and support strategies, and minutes of meetings. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), written documents could take the form of minutes of meetings, memoranda, working papers and draft proposals.

I thus studied the learner profile that is described in the SIAS, to understand intervention processes followed to support the learners. The document analysis focused on how learners with barriers to learning should be supported in the system and how the SIAS processes are recorded in the learner records. The minutes of the SBST meetings were also evaluated to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of the records before using them.

### 4.10.2 Observation

Maree (2007), described observation as an indispensable data-gathering technique as it presents the opportunity of providing an insider's perspective of the dynamics and behaviours of participants in different settings. I engaged in non-participant observation and made field notes. As indicated by Tlale (2013), a researcher should be a non-participant observer, observing and compiling field notes from a distance, with no direct involvement in the activity or with the people. Tlale (2013), emphasised that observation should be used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings and to note things such as contextual variables and non-verbal information, which could not be audio recorded. However, non-participant observation does not preclude a researcher from seeking clarification from participants during the data collection process (Fry et al., 2017).

Observation allows a researcher to hear, see and begin to experience reality as participants do without influencing the behaviour (Maree, 2007). The primary advantage

in using the field observation notes to study behaviour is that the behaviour is likely to be more realistic, and this increases the external validity of a study (McBride, 2012). To achieve this, I established positive relations with the key stakeholders and familiarised herself with the physical environment to assist orientation (Fry, et al, 2017). While I relied on recording speech verbatim, all senses were employed for documentation of qualitative data. I also considered collecting additional information during observations, which included the date, circumstances, time, event or logbook activities, and the communication approach used to answer the research question (Fry et al., 2017). As Maree (2014), indicated, a researcher will learn through personal experience and reflection how the setting is socially constructed in terms of power, communication lines, discourse and language.

### 4.10.3 Focus-group interviews

Kelly (2010) described focus groups as collective conversations or group interviews on a focused topic. In the same vein, Van Breda (2006) defined the concept as being a goal-directed discussion of a topic involving six to ten people who share a similar background or interests. I chose to use focus groups because, as stated by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), they are efficient in the sense that they generate large amounts of material from a few participants in a relatively short time. Similarly, Creswell (2009), held the view that the focus-group interviews are useful for revealing beliefs, attitudes, experiences and feelings of the participants in their social context, which is high quality data which will help a researcher to understand specific problems from the viewpoint of the participants. The use of a focus group is to increase the contributions of a wide spectrum of eligible participants who might not otherwise be able to participate if limited to one method of data collection. In addition, focus groups often produce data that may not be produced through individual interviews and observation and that results in powerful interpretive insights (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), and they allow for the proliferation of multiple meanings and perspectives as well as for interaction amongst the participants.

Despite much criticism against this tool, the strategy allowed me to capture participants' responses in a natural setting, and through focused themes and prompts (Ntshangase,

2015). As a result, I was able to learn the social norms of a particular community, as well as the range of perspectives that existed within that community (Tlale, 2013).

When conducting focus groups, Tlale (2013), stated that a researcher will involve the development of an interview guide, identifying a meeting place, and facilitating participation of the group members. An agenda was circulated to participants before the focus-group, outlining the topics for discussion and related activities. Similarly, Van Breda (2006) attested that a venue that is free from external distractions, background music, noisy ventilation systems and machines is a prerequisite for successful interviews.

I explored one main research topic: the current support structures that are available for learners who survivors of school violence, and the research questions relating to this topic were set out in an interview schedule for principals (Appendix L) and teachers (Appendix M) to guide the discussion. The questions were in line with the context and purpose of the study, which was to obtain the present perceptions of activities, roles, feelings, motivations, concerns and thoughts of the participants and was presented in such a way that it engaged the participants in a dialogue regarding their recommendations for the support structures for survivors of school violence (William & Portman, 2014). This view was supported by Maree (2007), who wrote that, with open-ended questions, participants may propose solutions or provide insight into events, but focus is mainly on their own perceptions, experiences and opinions on the phenomenon being studied. As the conversation progressed, the participants were asked probing questions to:

a) encourage them to concentrate on specific points,

b) check for more detail or clarification, and

c) test the validity of a more general response for more detail and seek evidence (Patton, 2002).

The participants' responses were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The data collection period was scheduled for 10 days to provide the participants with an opportunity to collaborate and confirm previous collected data. Regular triangulation of

stories leads to rigorous inquiry. Berry (2016), argued that longer collaboration between participant and researcher could impact the data collection where a researcher unintentionally influences the participant. However, the value of this close relationship between narrative inquiry researchers and participants often outweighs the negative aspects. The use of observation field notes as an approach of reflectivity will be used as 'preventative' tool (Baillie, 2013), and therefore ensuing credibility and rigour of the research. I based my study on methodological triangulation to verify data and to ensure its authenticity.

## 4.11 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis is a critical part of any research procedure. Kawulich (2004), described data analysis as the method of condensing large amounts of collected information to make sense of them. He further specified that during analysis, data is organised, reduced through summarisation and categorisation and patterns in the data are identified and linked. Figure 8 illustrates the data analysis procedures.

*Figure 8: Overview of the data analysis procedures*
*Source (adapted from Creswell, 2014)*
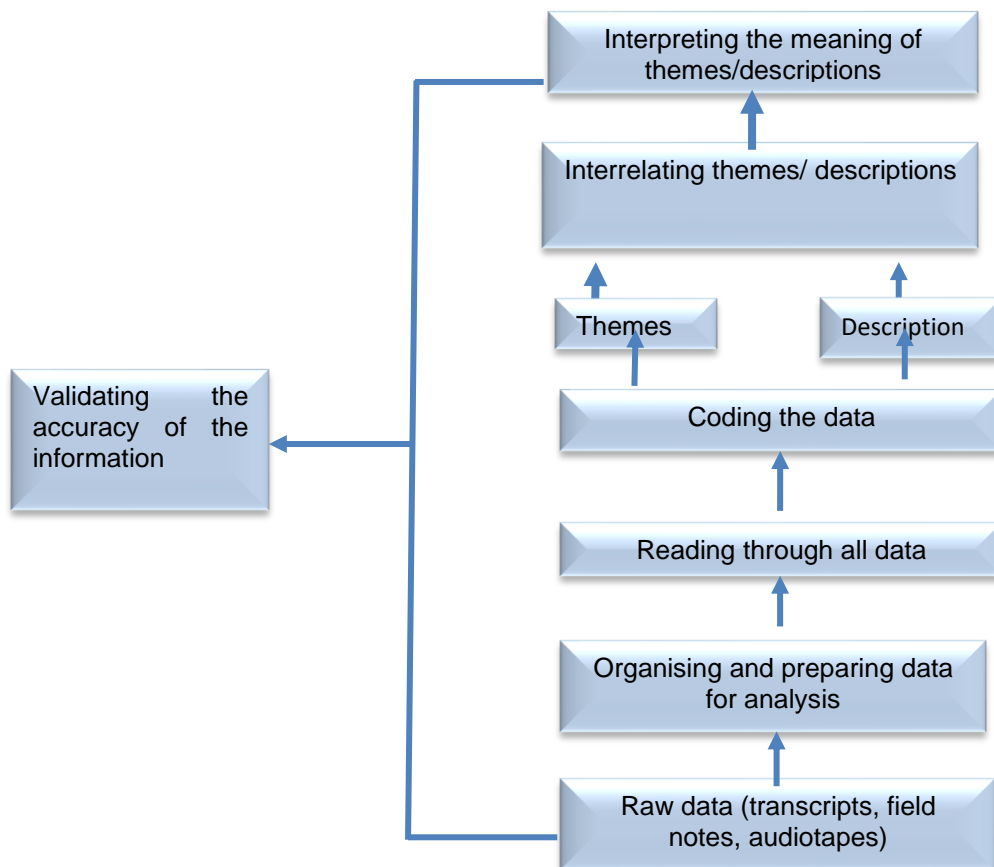
Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011), stated that qualitative data analysis tends to be an ongoing and iterative process. I, therefore, analysed the data iteratively, meaning that the analysis of the data started during the period of data collection. The iteration process "involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation" (Merriam, 1998, p. 178). A qualitative content analysis approach was adopted in this study to analyse and interpret qualitative data concerning support structure of survivors of school violence in Johannesburg North District in Johannesburg Gauteng. As pointed out by Hsieh and Shannon (2005), the goal of content analysis is to provide information and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, which, in this study, was to explore the support structures of survivors of school violence. I used content analysis, which, according to Kyngas (2008), is a method that can be used in an inductive or deductive way, thus, I adopted the inductive approach since this approach is recommended where there is little former knowledge about the phenomenon or knowledge is fragmented (Streefkerk, 2019).

At the beginning of data analysis, I transcribed data from recorded interviews, focus-group discussions and handwritten field notes from observations (Creswell, 2014). After transcription, I organised the data into easily retrievable sections. Each interview was given a code. Interviewees were given code numbers such as TA1 (Teacher A School 1) in order to anonymise them. Kawulich (2004), stated that a qualitative content analysis approach entails reading and re-reading transcripts, searching for similarities and differences that permit the researcher to develop themes and categories. Thus, I listened to recordings, read and re-read the data, making memos and summaries before the formal analysis started. Similarly, Hsieh and Shannon (2005), echoed the same sentiments that data analysis begins with reading all information several times to achieve immersion and obtain a sense of the complete narrative as one would read a novel. This was corroborated by Elo and Kyngas (2008), who stated that no insights or theories can be developed from the data without the researcher becoming entirely familiar with them.

After familiarisation with the material, the data was coded and categorised. I carefully read the transcribed data word by word to derive codes line by line and then divide the data

into meaningful analytical units (segmenting the data) (Cho & Lee, 2004). Cho and Lee (2004), further indicated that after locating a meaningful segment of text in a transcript, the researcher should assign a code or category name to signify that segment. This process was done until all the data had been segmented. The purpose of formulating categories was to provide a means of describing the phenomenon to increase understanding and to generate knowledge, in this case, of the support structures of survivors of school violence (Elo & Kyngas, 2008).

The last process in data analysis involves the interpretation of the findings (Creswell, 2014). Themes or patterns, ideas, concepts were used to explain the conclusions. The findings were, therefore, presented in a descriptive, narrative form rather than as a scientific report (Creswell, 2014; Denscombe, 2007). The findings should answer the question under investigation. I then summarised the main points of the data based on the coding and analytic memos (Schreier, 2012). Moreover, to verify my interpretations, I did member checking, peer review and triangulation as suggested by Kawulich (2004).

## 4.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

While I carried out the research study, I was guided by ethics in research. Ethics is that branch of philosophy that relates to human conduct with respect to the appropriateness or wrongness of certain actions, and to the badness or goodness of the motives and ends of such actions (Makore-Rukuni, 2001). Likewise, Daniel (2016), defined ethics as professional rules and codes of conduct that guide researchers in their dealings with participants like principals and teachers. In essence, ethics in research ensure that a researcher shows acceptable conduct to protect the participants, oneself. It is vital to the success and failure of an educational research study (Daniel, 2016). I observed ethical principles such as informed consent, privacy, confidentially and anonymity and non-maleficence.

Prior to the study, informed consent was sought from the participants as required by research ethics. A clearance letter to carry out the study was sought from UNISA Research Ethics Committee of the faculty of education (Appendix B). I received the permission to conduct the study in secondary schools from the Gauteng Education

Department, Provincial in Gauteng Province (Appendix E).Permission to carry out the study in schools was received from the Heads of the District, the District Director (Appendix F) and the principals of secondary schools (Appendix G). Informed consent letters were sent to parents or guardians of the learners requesting their permission to access documentation that relates to their children to be utilised in the study (Appendix H). The letters spelled out the nature of the study and how the documents will be utilised. Learners who had survived violence in school context were requested to complete the assent forms (Appendix I), to allow their information to be utilised, and teachers and principals filled in the consent forms for the focus-group interviews (Appendix J). An interview confidentiality was signed and participants and were made aware of both the pros and cons of participation (Appendix K). The benefits and the risks that could arise if they participate in the study were clearly outlined (Makore-Rukuni, 2001). Thus, I explained the purpose of the research and the research procedure to the participants (Best & Khan, 2000). Participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from participating at any time if they wanted to. This then meant that participation in the research was voluntary. All signed informed consent copies were kept in a safe place in case of complaints upon release of the report (Jones et al, 2013).

Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011), indicated that a researcher should respect the participant's right to privacy. This then means that the participants' personal and private attitudes, actions, and views on the support structure of survivors of violence in a school context should not be investigated without their consent. Best and Khan (2000), emphasised that a researcher should not use cameras, video cameras and loudspeakers without the participants' consent. Therefore, I sought permission to use audio recordings during data collection from principals and the teachers.

I observed the principle of confidentiality and anonymity (Jones et al., 2013). In the same vein, Bryman (2016), treated the issue of confidentiality as a separate principle of ethics. He observed that if researchers did not observe the confidentiality of what was said to them, it would be impossible for people to talk to them in future. Guided by this philosophy, I assured participants about the protection of their identity, and that confidential information would not be revealed. The participants were assured that the information

collected from them would only be accessed by me and would be kept in a secure location such as lockable carboard. The identifying information was kept separate from the data so that participants' identity could not be discovered. For the sake of anonymity, codes and pseudonyms were used for the participants' names and schools where data was collected.

Furthermore, I adhered to the principle of non-maleficence. Jones et al. (2013), stated that research should do no harm to participants or institutions through identity exposure or through the revelation of information that could cause damage to individuals or organisations. The same sentiment was echoed by Daniel (2016), namely that researchers should do no harm as they gather information from participants and report findings to participants. Thus, the identities and records of participants is maintained as confidential. I also ensured that when the findings were presented, the participants were not identifiable; hence, I used pseudonyms (Bryman, 2016).

The researcher is responsible for protecting participants from any physical, emotional, or social harm that might result from the research and anticipating any potential adverse consequences. The participants were considered vulnerable due to their possible emotional instability and could require additional safeguards to protect their welfare. Gatekeeping in the form of counselling and trauma debriefing was made accessible to protect principals and teachers from any form of emotional trauma. I regarded beneficence as of greater importance than potential harm.

## 4.13 TRUSTWORTHINESS, CREDIBILITY AND CONFIRMABILITY

The purpose of the research, how it was conducted, procedural decisions, and details of data generation and management should be transparent and explicit (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Trustworthiness stems from the co-construction and interpersonal contact with participants and the subsequent data and is a method of ensuring rigour in qualitative research without compromising relevance (Guercini et al., 2014). I thus provided a detailed description of the setting and all components of the population in this study. The results of a study will demonstrate not only that the intervention worked with a specific group but that what was gained has social value in a specific context. A reviewer should

be able to follow the progression of events and decisions and understand their logic because there is adequate description, explanation and justification of the methodology and methods (Richards & Hemphill, 2018).

As per the data collection schedule, my prolonged engagement with the participants aimed at building trust and rapport with them to foster rich, detailed responses. I enhanced this process by allowing adequate time to collect data and obtain an understanding of the participants' life experiences. Prolonged engagement provides scope; however, persistent observation (a researcher's attention to the feelings or emotions of the informant or situation being studied) provides depth to the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of narrative inquiry as research method also contributed to the trustworthiness of the study, with its focus on the experiences of the participants and how they gave meaning to these experiences.

Cope (2014), described credibility as the criterion for evaluating the truth value or internal validity of qualitative research. A qualitative study is credible when its results, presented with adequate descriptions of context, are recognisable to people who share the experience and those who care for or treat them. To enhance credibility, I provided an audit trail in the form of audio recordings and notes used in the research process that documented the researcher's decisions and assumptions. The audit trail can be reviewed by another individual to draw the same study conclusions (Cope, 2014). Examples of study materials included interview transcripts, data analysis and process notes, and drafts of the final report.

As the instrument in qualitative research, the researcher defends its credibility through practices such as reflexivity (reflection on the influence of the researcher on the research); triangulation (where appropriate, answering the research question in several ways, such as interviews, observation and documentary analysis); substantial description of the interpretation process; and the use of verbatim quotations from the data to illustrate and support their interpretations (Sandelowski, 1986). Where excerpts of data and interpretations are incongruent, the credibility of the study is in doubt.

Yin (2011), stated that multiple sources of evidence are a basis for trustworthiness and credibility. The more agreement on different data sources on a particular issue, the more reliable the interpretation of the data (Patton, 2002). Triangulation was used to enrich credibility and trustworthiness of the study (Casey & Murphy, 2009). Triangulation can bring both confirmation of findings and different perspectives, adding breadth to the phenomenon of interest.

Confirmability of a study means that the data upon which interpretation is based and that the findings of the research are a true reflection of the responses of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Confirmation of the content to ensure that the findings of the research are the result of the experiences of and ideas of the participants was achieved on two levels. To avoid biasness, data was audio-recorded and thematically analysed. Then, member checking was used to obtain each participant's confirmation of content as being a true reflection of what they said. Participant or member checks were also conducted to verify and validate findings by providing copies of a draft report to the participants. Because of the sensitivity of content shared by the participants, only selected properties and dimensions of each category of content that could be beneficial to the population were disclosed for ethical reasons.

## 4.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter outlined the methodology that was applied in the study. The qualitative phenomenological research design was adopted in the study. The population and the sampling procedures were outlined. Research instruments which entailed focus-group discussions, observations and document analysis were discussed. Their merits and demerits were emphasised. Procedures adopted to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the study were elucidated. The data collection, analysis and interpretation procedures and ethical considerations were outlined. The next chapter presents the data presentation, analysis, and discussion.

# CHAPTER 5:

# FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Having discussed the research design and methodology in the previous chapter, this chapter presents analysis and discussions on the support structures for learners who have experienced violence in schools. This chapter encompasses thematic analysis of the data from five focus groups, observation and document review. The teachers and principals were interviewed by means of Microsoft Teams and observational data was derived from interactions. Data was recorded and coded. Seven major themes emerged. Although the five schools presented certain common apprehensions, each had its own unique context and character, thus demanding consideration of their contexts.

In presenting and analysing the data, I wanted to ensure that the voices of the participants were not lost. To this end, verbatim quotations are used throughout in the data presentation and discussion. Pertinent findings are then analysed through content analysis as discussed in the previous chapter on the research design and methodology.

## 5.2 DESCRIPTION OF SITES AND PARTICIPANTS

In this study I chose five Gauteng Public Ordinary Schools, based in Johannesburg North District, Gauteng Province. The schools are in four circuits within the Johannesburg North District. The participants were one principal and six teachers per school bringing the total number of participants to thirty-five.

### 5.2.1 School A

The school is situated in Orlando, Soweto. All the learners admitted are from the nearby previously disadvantaged townships and some use public transport to school daily. The school uses English as medium of instruction. The school complies with the policy of inclusive education and caters for 699 learners in Grades 8–12 and has 36 teachers.

### 5.2.2 School B

The school is situated in Pimville, Soweto. All the learners admitted are from the nearby previously disadvantaged townships and some use public transport to school daily. The school uses English as medium of instruction. The school complies with the inclusive policy and has 51 teachers. It caters for 1277 learners in Grades 8–12.

### 5.2.3 School C

The school is situated in Westbury. All the learners admitted are from the nearby previously disadvantaged coloured townships and some use public transport to school daily. The school uses English as medium of instruction. The school has 45 teachers and 1 397 learners in Grades 8–12.

### 5.2.4 School D

The school is situated in Randburg. The school is a public school for learners from Grade R to Grade 12. It hosts over 550 learners. The medium of instruction is English, and the National Curriculum is followed. All learners are from different areas and use a combination of private and public transport to school.

Teaching and learning take place in a nurturing environment with smaller classes, individual attention, specialised teaching by well-qualified experienced teachers. The school has a holistic approach to education and learners are encouraged to take part in the variety of sports and cultural activities offered by the school.

### 5.2.5 School E

The school is in the heart of Diepsloot informal settlement and has become a refuge from parental abuse, a place to get a daily nutritious meal and, above all, is a centre for learning for the most under-privileged township youth. The school caters for learners from Grade R–12. All the learners admitted are from the nearby previously disadvantaged townships and some use public transport to school daily. The school use English as medium of instruction. The school complies with the policy of inclusive education. The School and has 48 Teachers and 1 644 learners.

The following table represents the participants from five schools who are principals and teachers who deal with support in schools.

**Table 4:**

*Description of Participants*

| School | Participants | Area |
|---|---|---|
| **School A** | Principal | Diepkloof |
| | 6 x Teachers | Soweto |
| **School B** | Principal | Pimville |
| | 6 x Teachers | Soweto |
| **School C** | Principal | Westbury |
| | 6 x Teachers | |
| **School D** | Principal | Randburg |
| | 6 x Teachers | |
| **School E** | Principal | Diepsloot |
| | 6 x Teachers | |

## 5.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The diverse themes that developed from this data were utilised to advance an understanding of the support structure available for learners who have experienced violence in schools. The data from the focus-group interviews was primarily analysed and pertinent themes (Table 5) were identified. No notable theme was found other than those that emerged from the focus group interviews. The themes that emerged from the focus group interviews are discussed in the following sections.

**Table 5:**

***Themes that Emerged from Interviews***

| THEMES | SUBTHEMES | CODES |
|---|---|---|
| **Unclear understanding of support structures** | • Implementation of White Paper Six<br><br>• Roll out of Screening Identification and Assessment implementation<br><br>• Rotation of LO teachers<br><br>• Undedicated support of teachers appointed in the School Based School Team<br><br>• Changes of SBST coordinators year in and out | • Policy implementation challenges<br>• Misunderstanding and misinterpretation of policies<br>• Disjointed policies<br>• Undedicated teacher support<br>• Behaviour issues of over age learners and or progressed learners<br>• Instability of support structures<br>• Lack of continuity in support structures |
| **Lack of confidence in giving effective support to learners** | • No clear protocol of referral system<br>• Lack of management plans and turnaround time of cases. | • Disjointed referral system<br>• Uncoordinated referral system<br>• Erratic support structure<br>• Lack of clear turnaround time<br>• Poor planning |

| THEMES | SUBTHEMES | CODES |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | • No clear mainstream understanding of support structure | • Ineffective support<br>• No clear roles defined |
| **Management of safety measures in supporting learners** | • Challenges of adhering to code of conduct<br>• Non-Functional SBST | • Lack of discipline management<br>• Poor safety measures in place<br>• No clear turnaround time for support<br>• Ineffective safety strategies<br>• Uncontained bullying<br>• Drug abuse |
| **Uncoordinated intersectoral collaboration** | • Social development<br>• Lack of proper intervention<br>• Non-collaborative support<br>• Interference of School Based Support Team functioning | • Lack of planning<br>• Creating confusion in the smooth running of School Based Support Team<br>• Lack of proper decision making |
| **Ineffectiveness in strengthening support structures** | • Unattendance of training<br>• Microwave workshops<br>• Bad timing of workshops and training<br>• DBST incompetency | • Unfitting workshops<br>• Bad timing of training<br>• Inability to identify early<br>• Inability to intervention |
| **Dysfunctional School Based Support Teams** | • Uncoordinated School Based Support Team<br>• Nonparticipating School Management Team<br>• Inadequate DBST support to School Based Support Team | • Lack of interest in supporting learners<br>• School Based Support Team seen as extra work and non-essential |
| **Family as a support structure** | • Single parenting<br>• Non-functional family structure<br>• Disinterest parents in the education of their children | • Misunderstanding of what support is<br>• Domestic violence<br>• Antisocial behaviour<br>• aggression,<br>• Child abuse |

| THEMES | SUBTHEMES | CODES |
|---|---|---|
| | • Lack of parental support | • Lack of family support and<br>• Bad persuasive/influential peer support |
| **Challenging management of safety measures in supporting learners** | • Learner to learner fights.<br>• Drug usage<br>• Lack of support from school governing body | • Poor school-based support interventions<br>• Unstained support<br>• Teacher fatigue |

**Table 6:**

***Key of Coding for Interpreting Findings from the Focus Group Interviews***

| Code | Participant description |
|---|---|
| **PA** | Principal from School A |
| **PB** | Principal from School B |
| **PC** | Principal from School C |
| **PD** | Principal from School D |
| **PE** | Principal from School E |
| **TA1-6** | Teacher 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 from School A |
| **TB7-12** | Teacher 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 from School B |
| **TC13-18** | Teacher 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 from School C |
| **TD19-24** | Teacher 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 from School D |
| **TE25-30** | Teacher 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 from School E |

The themes that developed not only addressed the research questions delineated in Chapter 1 but also provided information of the support structures available to learners who experience violence in schools. Perceptions of participants varied. However, of value in the focus group interviews was that the majority regarded the SBST as an integral part of the support structure in schools. The principals and teachers interviewed were cooperative and honoured the focus-group interview time slots.

Teachers with a positive approach and who were part of the support structure seemed to be eager to motivate and support learners amidst the challenges the school support structure was facing. The themes that emerged from the focus group interviews are discussed in the next sections.

## 5.4 UNCLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF SUPPORT STRUCTURE

A challenge that the five schools faced was unclear characterisation and understanding of support structures and processes to be followed in supporting learners. This unclear characterisation was influenced by the lack of dedicated support of teachers that are appointed to the SBST and the constant changes in SBST coordinators which seem to happen year in and out. The principal of School A noted that, generally, teachers are often confused when they must give support, where there is no clear definition or roles are blurred. This was corroborated by participants from two different schools who provided a varied characterisation of a support structure that is in place in their schools. To summarise their responses all the participants highlighted the following point "…*a support structure is disciplinary committee that consists of SBST Coordinator, rep from SMT, pastor, adopted cop* [South African Police Service], *social worker, pastor, learner support teacher, SGB representative*" (Participant, PB), whereas another participant described a support structure as "a *functional SBST committee, that has a well-designed curriculum that is inclusive and caters for the needs of all the learners and has enough resources for effective teaching and learning*" (Participant, PE).

Although the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014), was introduced to address barriers to learning and facilitate support, and the training roll out has been done on different platforms, it seems that township secondary schools have not reached the full application, implementation

and understanding of the policy as proper referral procedures are still not followed and most teachers seems confused.

The legislative framework discussed in Chapter 2 responds to the inclusive education system that complies with the prescripts of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, in the Bill of Rights, the SASA 84 of 1996 and the EWP6 (DoE, 2001) in addressing support issues. Ungar et al. (2013) contended that if appropriate and proper support measures are not put in place, including a clear understanding and the strong characterisation of support structure, learners who experienced violence in schools will continue to struggle and may display psychological, cognitive and social problems that require advanced services of a multi-disciplinary system, instead of the problems being resolved earlier and intervention programmes being applied promptly at school level.

Organised and coordinated support structures are essential at school for learners to actualise their optimal potential. Malindi and Theron (2010), contended that a developing child is in continuous interpersonal engagement with the structural features in their environment like the family, school, neighbourhood and church. This is in line with Bronfenbrenner (1979), who posited that schools, supportive families, and community organisations create the environment in which support should be provided. Tugade and Fredrickson (2004), argued that support of learners is essential and is a shared responsibility that cannot possibly be carried out one-sidedly by any school system or policy.

The SIAS (DBE, 2014), is aimed at supporting teachers in identifying the level of support required in schools and in the classroom to increase academic performance and enhance their resilience. The policy as indicated previously (Chapter 2.5), clearly stipulates the roles and responsibilities of various support systems within the school. On an operational level, the SMT should plan, support and monitor the implementation of the policy to ensure all learners are supported and given an opportunity to participate meaningfully in the learning process.

However, there is still confusion and misunderstanding about the roles of the members of the committee, as clearly indicated by one participant that *"I'm not sure who has to support, whether it's the SBST coordinator or the class teacher. The SBST coordinator takes all that we need to do as class teachers"* (Participant, TB).

This is also indicated and is echoed in the same sentiments that "*principals sometimes want to be seen to be working hard. They are just like the LO teachers who excuse us in certain decision making where we need to be supporting the kids"* (Participant, TC). The provision of specialised staff like the SBST; the provision of resources for learning and support, partnership programmes, curriculum differentiation; training and guidance; and environmental access are all mandated responsibilities of the SMT.

There is an indication of lack of human resources as per the previous statements, and this makes it difficult for teachers to deal with learners who have been identified as needing support because the teachers do not have the required skills to do so. *"We do not have relevant skills in addressing challenges that our learners face in a regular basis"* (Participant, PC).

## 5.5 LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN SCHOOL STRUCTURES

Another challenge that the five schools faced was the lack of confidence in the formal school support structures and processes in resolving conflicts among learners. The principal of one of the schools noted that, generally, learners tended to take the law into their own hands. *"I find that, especially with high school learners, if there is an issue (of conflict) to be sorted out, they think of reporting the matter to the school authorities as the last resort. Most times, they have a feeling that they can resolve the problem themselves. That is a big problem. It is especially so with boys and now also quite often with girls as well. They simply have a go at each other"* (Participant, PC). The above finding was also reiterated by a participant who said that, "…*they (learners) don't have any confidence, trust or faith in the school support structures to protect and support them and that is a serious problem. They also feel that once they leave the school premises (after school hours) they are vulnerable in the open out there. No matter what reassurance that we can give them in the school - that reassurance won't mean much outside the school. So, the*

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*tendency is not to report the need for support to the school authorities. They feel they must sort it out themselves"* (Participant, PA).

The above quotations suggest that some learners view their school support structures as not doing enough to address support for them and as such, the aggrieved learners tend not to trust school authorities to protect them and resort to taking the law into their own hands to see that justice is done. Davies (2009), stated that support structures in schools are essential for learners to circumvent societal aggression and the acceptance of violence and no support as a solution to a problem. Similarly, in a study conducted by Bloom (2009), among more than 15 000 teenage learners in the US, it was found that the majority of them did not feel safe to request support because of lack of confidence in the support structures at school. They also perceived external solutions as an acceptable solution and support to their problems. Likewise, studies conducted by Mudege et al. (2008), in the slums of Nairobi in Kenya and The Nelson Mandela Foundation (2005) in South Africa, found that there were feelings of insecurity among learners because of the schools' failure to support them.

These two latter studies also reported that those entrusted to support learners at schools (the teachers) were not able to ensure it, or were, in some cases, the source of insecurity themselves. Schools are, however, expected to support learners and not to neglect them and if this does not happen, it is a form of dereliction of duty on the part of the school authorities. The sense of insecurity among learners promotes the kind of thinking where learners do not have trust and faith in the school structures to protect them against support after experiencing violence in schools; hence the need to take the law into their hands by fighting back instead of reporting cases to school authorities. The sense of insecurity is also prevalent in some communities in South Africa where members of the community do not trust the police and the criminal justice system to be even-handed and so resort to vigilantism to resolve problems of crime and violence. In some communities, for example, some people have formed vigilante groups such as People Against Gangsters and Drugs (PAGAD) which is very strong in the Western Cape, Mapogo-a-Mathamaga in Limpopo and Mbokodo in Mpumalanga provinces (Sekhonyane & Louw, 2011).The print and electronic media are also replete with examples of communities

taking the law into their own hands all over South Africa because of lack of confidence of support in the police and the justice system of the land (Govender, 2020).

The above examples are just a few to demonstrate the lack of support in the South African society and lack of confidence in giving effective support to learners, which can have a negative effect on all. But this lack of confidence in giving effective support to learners originates from somewhere, which among others, is the frustration as a result of the justice system that is seen as unresponsive to the plight of the victims. This is observed at various levels of society (the school level or the societal level). If the authorities like teachers, school governors or the police do not respond appropriately and timeously, something must give; hence, the cycle of endless violence. Some learners indicated that some teachers do not listen and assist them when they report cases and request support. Consequently, they protect themselves, and find other ways to support themselves. Bloom (2009), further posited that handling minor misbehaviour appropriately can keep it from escalating into a crisis.

The above findings are also corroborated by Harber (2004), who stated that "…the school may actually be harmful if it fails to support learners from violence and suffering when it could do so" (p. 45). Failure (through omission or commission) by teachers to support learners is also a violation of the in loco parentis principle which places a duty on the teachers to protect learners while in their care (Shaba, 1998, 2003). Similarly, positive behavioural support by teachers can be used to prevent and reduce disruptive behaviour among the learners. To this end, Thompson et al. (2010), posited that learners must feel that someone is available to listen to them, no matter the context or the situation. The learners need to be told that an open-door policy to the principal and teachers exists for them and their families. In addition, Bloom (2009), posited that teaching conflict resolution skills and non-violence strategies to learners to resolve conflict situations with their peers can go a long way to reducing violence problems at schools.

## 5.6 UNCOORDINATED INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION

In addition, as indicated in the research methodology chapter, I also used documents reviews in this study. All five schools allowed me access to school documents such as

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the Code of Conduct for Learners, Incident Books and Logbooks which gave me an insider view of what was occurring at school pertaining to stakeholder involvement on support. The records perused had a long list of support recorded in the past two years which was a focus of the study. These included support from external stakeholders like South African Police Service (SAPS), Johannesburg Metro Police Department (JMPD), DREAMS that is funded by USAID, Learner Support Assistants (LSA), Ke Moja coaches, different Non-Governmental Organisations and the Department of Social Development.

The principals of all the five researched schools also showed me an assortment of intervention plans and support programmes by different organisation and individuals as they supported the school. The findings from the interviews were thus corroborated by both the documents reviewed as well as observations. A principal participant told me that "*we are overwhelmed by the support from all over. Sometimes my classes are disturbed by all these disturbing activities of the people from outside*" (Participant, PE). One other participant indicated that "*we do not have time for these Social workers. Curriculum is the core and we must conclude the syllabus*" (Participant, PB12).

Another participant who was worried about too many activities as support given to learners showed that *"there is this one today, tomorrow it's that one. And when they go, we are confused which process to follow. At the same time, the kids suffer."* (Participant, TC18) another indicated that *"I had confiscated a home-made gun from a boy who had intended to use it on another learner whom he accused of bullying. This shows the seriousness of violence in some of our schools*" (Participant, PB).

The principal of School D indicated that in his school, there have many stakeholder involvements that comes to school for intervention and support. He said that *"we have Ke Moja coaches and LSA groups at the school. These Ke Moja coaches perform stage-plays against drug abuse, violence and two or three teachers and parents are also involved. These are learners that are interested in creating a drugs-free society and a violent free society. We have those Ke Moja coaches who have groups talks at morning assemblies from different NGOs coming in, talking and motivating our learners. But then the policies that work well generally would be where, at the start of each school year, you*

*spend at least an hour or two hours discussing and explaining the Code of Conduct to the learners; where the class teacher will discuss those rules and regulations with the learners and the learners also recommit themselves to that Code of Conduct"* (Participant, PD).

The Code of Conduct for Learners booklets were also made available to me by all the school principals and dealt with all possible issues of support, violence and other kinds of misconduct that schools could face. The presence of the code of conduct for learners which was reviewed regularly in some schools, also suggests that the schools are aware of the legal requirements in dealing with the challenges they are facing. The code of conduct booklets of each school contained mainly procedures of how the policy worked; the various acts of misconduct documented according to different levels from very minor misdemeanours (level 1) to very serious ones (level 4) that warranted suspension or even expulsion from the school. The schools had other documents such as logbooks while others had a thick exercise book (called 'Incidents Book') which was used solely for recording details of learners' acts of misdemeanours including support provided by DBST. Through these documents, one got a sense of the lack of support from different stakeholder. If support was granted, it was more uncoordinated and was not responding to the policy of support which is the SIAS. I perused the previous two and half years' records. What was very noticeable was the frequency of fighting among learners and the confiscation of dangerous weapons among learners, but what was more of a concern for me was that there was limited individual support for learners who experienced all this violent behaviour at school. The documents also seemed to corroborate findings from the interviews. This corroborated what the participants had to say, namely, that *"there is little support from the DBST. The District Support Based Team is under resourced. Whenever we request support from them, they either are busy or will come months after the support request. and if we request support from e.g. DSD, they will come and disrupt the school and not follow the SIAS process"* (Participant, TB6). One participant indicated that "*in all three structures, they all of them do things/support differently"* (Participant, TD25).

Further, the above quotations on the uncoordinated support of learners who experienced violence in the school community suggest the relative influence of the context both within and outside of the school and its impact on school support (Le Roux & Mokhele, 2011).

This community influence on the school is also corroborated by the SA Human Rights Commission Report (2006), which stated that South Africa was experiencing unacceptably high levels of violent crime which clearly need a coordinated approach by all stakeholders. If not, the report stated, we would then find the violent behaviour spilling over into the schools and playgrounds. Similarly, Astor et al. (2006), Edwards (2008), and Phillips et al. (2008) also stated that what was happening in schools reflected what was happening in society, i.e. the context in which the school is located interacts with external stakeholders and principals to influence levels of support in schools. These layered and nested contexts include the school (social climate, availability of policies of support); the learners' families (education and family structure); cultural aspects of learner and teacher population; and the economic, social and political makeup of the country. Similarly, viewed from a social control theory, a school is a microcosm of the larger society and is therefore affected by the contexts in which it is built. If the society in which the school is located is supportive and structured, the school will inevitably be affected by the support structures within its environment. Thus, the teachers should familiarise themselves with Departmental support policy and refer the learners to the relevant authorities for rehabilitation and counselling. The parents must monitor their child and report the child's progress or regress to the counselling authorities.

A circle of networks in the community has been established to support learners who have experienced violence in schools One of the focus group participants acknowledged the services offered by 'Nthabiseng Clinic' (Psychologist) and NGOs like the 'DREAMS Centre' and SANCA Drug and Alcohol rehabilitation centre in Diepkloof. Hammond, (2010), (Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3) asserted that a strong relationship between the external service providers and schools is important to enhance mental health and build the resilience of affected learners. Although these services have a protective value for the entire school community, according to participants in school B, some of these networks are no longer functional due to alleged misuse of funds that led to their closure.

Most of the focus-group participants from both schools indicated that various service providers are easily accessed by the school and the parents. This was different with some of the participants particularly in school B, as they did not seem to be aware of the available external resources at their disposal. However, those that were aware of the service provides acknowledged that they existed but indicated that they had never received any support from them. It appears that the service providers are underused in all schools. One participant indicated that she used a private counselling psychologist to support his child even though he was aware that there was one at school because he was never referred to her. Even though there was an in-house school occupational therapist and a psychologist employed in an SGB post, the participants indicated that more psychologists and social workers are needed considering the number of learners they are servicing (Participant, TD23).

The SAPS is also found to be a resource for schools although the participants were concerned about their delayed response time and disruption of contact time. One participant from school D acknowledged that "*we do work with SAPS but because it is a child they do not want to take them, they do not want to remove them and quite often the police comes at the same time the school comes out because to them it is not a serious issue and there is nothing serious about a learner being in the school premises. Our hands are actually tied*" (Participant, TE34). However, the visibility of the police was confirmed in all schools. In addition, school B participants appeared to be content with the services social worker in the DSD and said that *"they are easily accessible to learners, … because if we do encounter certain challenges or the parents encounter certain challenges in their respective homes, we do actually advise them to engage with those service providers and they usually respond to the challenges which those parents or families encountered*" (Participant, TA4). They indicated that SAPS played a big role in handling some of the problematic learners in one school but in another school, it was not the case.

## 5.7 INEFFECTIVENESS IN STRENGTHENING SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Another challenge that the five schools faced was ineffectiveness in strengthening support structures and processes in making sure that the support structures took on the core responsibilities of support within a school context.

There was a sense by all five schools that the support structure was ineffective, and learners would pick that up. The ineffectiveness then suggested that learners might not be confident enough to go to their teachers for support since there was a lack of trust in effectiveness. This would then mean that learners who were aggrieved might not trust school authorities to protect them and thus resorted to taking the law into their own hands. Schools are, however, expected to support learners and not to disappoint. The lack of confidence of learners was an indication that teachers themselves were not well-equipped by the developmental workshops that they attended. The developmental workshops were not equipping teachers to be confident and carry authority in supporting learners.

It is also important to note that the school only relied on workshops to be able to equip the teachers with knowledge and skills to deal with problematic behaviour. One participant mentioned that "*the workshop that we have attended was a hit-and-run kind of workshop. We are expected to attend workshops in the afternoon, and we are damn tired*" (Participant, TD24).

It can therefore be concluded that the workshops alone were not enough as some of the teachers did not attend these workshops. It is true that individuals often can and do modify, select, reconstruct, and even create their environments, but this capacity emerges only to the extent that the person has been enabled to engage in self-directed action as a joint function not only of his biological endowment but also of the environment in which he or she develops (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

School D seemed to be better off because a psychologist and occupational therapist, speech therapist and few psychologist interns were based at the school. The focus group participants, however, reckoned that it was not sufficient for the school as more learners accommodated in the school were displaying behavioural challenges in such a way that

"*the cases that they have to deal with are sometimes a lot for them because we have a few of challenging learners in this school. The teachers in the school are well trained to deal with such learners but there are is a process that is followed. Even if we follow this process, the Department takes time to resolve and give feedback. It's frustrating*" (Participant, PD).

Teachers worldwide require insight into how best to facilitate the support of learners who have are survivors of violence in a school context. It is the responsibility of the SBST to provide support to learners who exhibit social, mental, emotional or behavioural difficulties in the classroom. A growing corpus of research, however, such as Bautista et al. (2018), Bennet (2017), Herman et al. (2018), and Schuck et al. (2018), questions teachers' capacity to undertake this important role, particularly given the limited time afforded to capacitate them. Focus group participants from all schools acknowledged that they did receive professional development or training in dealing with support of learners. They were also encouraged to engage in personal development activities and register with higher institutions of learning to develop themselves. Most of the focus group participants indicated that they attended development workshops and "…*some of us also attended a continuous assessment programme*" (Participant, TD10). However, one participant pointed out that "*I just wanted to say it is not all of us teachers who have received training, and sometimes these workshops are just not enough*" (Participant, TG24). Other participants felt that the process of selecting teachers who should attend such professional development or training courses was discriminatory because they had never attended such. They also indicated that only those who taught LO were selected to attend such workshops and trainings.

The participants seemed to feel powerless when it comes to supporting learners who are survivors of violence in schools. One of the participants (Participant, TA4), pointed out that they were aware of the procedure, but some thought that it needed more skills than just being an ordinary teacher to be able to interact with such learners. A problem was that the training and workshops that teachers attended seem to be focused on curriculum development and neglected the skills in implementing support structures, which was a major distractor to accessing learning.

It can be concluded that there is a gap between the organisers of the workshops or the selecting committee when it comes to selecting those who should attend the workshops. According to Weist et al. (2018), teachers need to be appropriately skilled to addressing behaviour problems at school and to be comfortable in supporting learners. One focus group participant indicated that "*I am powerless when it comes to handling the learners… I think it needs more skills than just an ordinary teacher who will use normal discipline only*" (Participant, TA6). Graham et al. (2011), suggested that teacher training did not adequately equip teachers to practically respond to the realities of the everyday classroom. This may be influenced by a complex interplay between teachers' constructions of behaviour problems, the importance they place in mental health promotion in schools, issues of teacher confidence, role identity, conflict and school culture, as well as teachers' own sense of mental well-being (Graham et al., 2011). It is the responsibility of the school management to ensure that no member of staff should be denied the opportunity to develop themselves to be able to execute certain duties in line with their work. School D appeared to be proactive when the participants mentioned that "*in the beginning of every year, since we sometimes get new staff. We have staff meetings where we do advocacy and train newly appointed teachers regarding the process of support* ". Other capacity-building sessions included "*…class management in the beginning of the year on how to manage your class workshops arranged by the district and get speakers to address the staff*" (Participant, TD 22; Participant TD24). The bad timing of workshops and training was one aspect that teachers were complaining about as indicated that "*the workshops are always at the end of the day. We are exhausted at that time. We are not robots*" (Participant, TC18). Besides teachers thinking of themselves as being robots, one participant indicated that "*the teachers believe that the workshops are not of good standards, it's a hit-and-run*" (Participant, PA).

It can be concluded that the progressive workshops and turnaround time dimensions regarding supporting learners who had experienced violence in schools seemed to be a challenge in all schools under study. It is critical for each school to have its own psychologists and social workers based at the school in departmental posts. It is also imperative to note that lack of attendance at training programmes and the so-called

'microwave' workshops should be investigated so that teachers can receive thorough training that will equip them to be self-assured to support learners.

## 5.8 DYSFUNCTIONAL SCHOOL BASED SUPPORT TEAM

The EWP6 which serves as operational guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education introduced the need for holistic integrated support through inter-sectoral collaboration. It was through such collaboration that the DBST was introduced (Makhalemele & Tlale, 2020). The function of the DBST is to assist the SBST to identify and address barriers to learning and promote effective teaching and learning (Engelbrecht et al., 2016). This approach takes note of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory in that it acknowledges the importance of the influence of sub-systems within the main system of the DBST in the implementation of inclusive education in the provision of support in schools. It highlights the importance of interactions at the different levels of the system within a social context and how they impact relations which are important in the process of child development. This process is however disrupted if the SBST is constantly changed by authorities when the annual teacher allocation is done, and or the school committees are re-elected. One participant specified that "*I was an SBST coordinator in 2019 and I was then removed to be in the sports committee. Now they allocated me back in the SBST and I missed out on some developmental workshops. How am I supposed to support learners let alone follow and understand the SIAS process when you are allocated from pillar to post?*" (Participant, TB11). Another one said that "*this SBST is just an irritation. One day this teacher comes to the SBST meeting; the other day they don't come*" (Participant, TE29). Teachers feel overwhelmed by the amount of work as they must teach and address social issues experienced by learners. *"We are expected to complete the curriculum and the ATPs and be part of the SBST. We end up concentrating on the curriculum and not on this SBST. It's just an added responsibility. On the other hand, the social problems really are a lot of work for teachers as well"* (Participant, TD20).

School D also experienced the same problem even though there was a psychologist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, and intern psychologist based at the school. The

participants also acknowledged lack of manpower in the DBST to support and make sure that the SBST was functional. The participant declared that, "*the SBST need to have consistent members. We have psychologist interns who serve in the team and when they conclude their internship new ones come in. There should be consistency*" (Participant, TD23). Another participant asserted that *"I'm not sure if the SBST will ever work, unless they create a post and appoint a person to coordinate and be responsible to induct members coming in and out, just like they appoint Head of Department in a post. This is just an added job"* (Participant, TB9).

It can be concluded that the support received by learners from the schools to address problems seemed to be minimal. As a DBST member, I can attest to the lack of human resource capacity in the department to address and support all the SBSTs and acknowledge that it is difficult and almost impossible to have a functional DBST. These aspects are mainly because, practically speaking, there is minimal time to act as a member of a DBST and do case management as per the demands of the SIAS (DoE, 2014) process. On the other hand, the predominantly active DBST members are mainly found in the Inclusion and Special School (ISS) unit that is understaffed and overworked. It therefore means that SBST will have to find other means to be supported for it to be functional and be able to support learners as per the protocol.

## 5.9 FAMILY AS A SUPPORT STRUCTURE

Since the new democratic era in 1994 in South Africa, there has been a major change in the roles that parents must play at school level. Parents were given a governance role (RSA, 1996b), but as Donald et al. (2004), argued, parental participation needs to go beyond election to the SGB and partaking in parent-teacher meetings. There are many other productive contributions to the life of the child, such as involvement in life skills education programmes and supporting learners to help address the range of needs in the classroom or school as well as providing parents with services and information so that they can assist their children. Stoll (2020), argued that it is imperative for parents and teachers to have a shared understanding of learners' educational needs to promote their learning development.

In addition, the schools need to communicate with parents on a range of issues, not only on the educative process, including support. Engelbrecht and Green (2007), argued that parents are the source of information for teachers in determining the exact nature of a child's barriers to learning and should be made aware of their ability to make choices regarding additional support services and alternative placements. The SIAS policy emphasises the role of the parent or caregiver as an equal partner in education. UNESCO (2009), also confirmed that parents were crucial stakeholders in their children's education and, without their support, children's odds of obtaining entrance to higher education and training could be compromised. In addition, through collaboration, parents could become effective advocates for improved standards and provisioning. This association can likewise play a vital role in capacity-building since they can be provided with opportunities to develop their governance, fund-raising, lobbying and administrative skills (UNESCO, 2009).

Most of the participants stated that parents should take an active and central role in the education of their children. They indicated that it would be very difficult to support the learners at school while the parents showed no interest and there was no continuity of support at home. Participant TB8 emphasised that "*we cannot take the role of teachers and parents at the same time. When we give support, we expect that parents continue with that kind of support at home. Unfortunately, that's not happening; that's why we get exhausted*".

Some of the lack of support may be attributed to a decrease in available resources and adult supervision. The lack of supervision may be attributed to single parenting, working parents or child-headed families. Much of the lack of support disappears when there is adequate support, income, and continuity in extended family support. *"These learners stay with parents who do not care. These parents are happy when schools are open because they send their problem(learners) to us to support while they do other duties"* (Participant, TA4). Another participant, TE8 avowed that *"the parents do not have time to listen and support their children. They wake up in the morning to catch the earliest bus to work and knock off late. They barely see their children to listen to their stories. It's sad."*

Looking at this from a socio-ecological systems perspective, in the microsystem, family instability, economic deprivation, and poor parenting support appear to be the most important risk factors in providing support. The participants felt that the many families with low economic status constituted the family type as the most likely not to support their children. When a mother or a father raises a child alone, there is a possibility of a failure in the childhood environment to provide sufficient support for its psychological and social development.

In summary, the relationship between children and parents is important in making sure that support given at school is continued at home. The economic deprivation of family life, in combination with other sources of strain and stress, is a major source of lack of support from the family.

## 5.10 CHALLENGING MANAGEMENT OF SAFETY MEASURES IN SUPPORTING LEARNERS

In all the five researched schools, the participants indicated that they faced a myriad of safety measures leading to poor support due to a myriad of challenges. These challenges ranged from drug taking to drug-selling among learners, stealing of cell phones, fighting mainly among boys but of late between boys and girls too, drinking of alcohol, bullying, insolence, physical violence (stabbings and assaults), late coming and absconding from classes. Other problems included smoking tobacco, dagga and nyaope.

More specifically, the lack of safety measures was found to be related to a hands-off approach by SGBs and SMTs, particularly the ability to provide structure, direction and leadership. Participants felt that compromising safety measures that lead to serious violent behaviour which needed to be addressed was not within the competency of the SBST, but the SGB and the SMT needed to deal with this. Participant TD20 declared that *"these learners who cause a lot of violence in schools and bully others, should not be referred to the SBST. The principal must deal with them, what must the SBST do? There is nothing they can do."* On the same note, Participant TA5 stressed that "*there is so much that the SBST can do. There are corners where learners hide everywhere in the school*

*and the SGB must deal with that misdemeanour. They are governors and they must deal with such."*

Participant TE7 stated that "*the learners bring this bad behaviour they get from home and they bring it to school. They bully each other, smoke dagga, and nyaope, bring knifes to school. This is criminality and should be dealt with by these SGB. As teachers we have a lot to deal with."* Participant TC15 avowed that *"drugs and substance abuse at our school is a problem but it involved less than ten percent of the learner population but we have to take action and prioritise it as it could have a ripple effect in the school if not nipped in the bud"* (Participants PD). Participant PE complained that "*we sometimes get tired of these learners. Today its drugs, tomorrow is bulling, the next day its alcohol, and then after smoking all these drugs, then they fight. But it's not many learners like it may be 10%, and we must get it fixed quickly, though this is tiring".* Participants believed that violence needed to be stopped before it escalated although this was a difficult task.

Further, participants also indicated that drugs and substance abuse was a problem in their school and had a snowball effect. Participant TC18 said that "*there is the problem of drugs and alcohol abuse. Drugs are freely available. This is a sickness in our society. The informal tuck-shops that are around the school sell drugs and alcohol to learners. The police were notified and closed them down. Soon two more mushroomed elsewhere. Honestly, how do we support such learners, it would be better if this school was a drug rehabilitation centre so that they can get support, because we clearly can't cope with these many cases".*

Similarly, Participant PE re-affirmed what the above participants have echoed on the kinds of learner violent problems they were regularly experiencing. Participant PE said that "*we have problems of fights. Sometimes other learners are caught with cakes laced with drugs; others are charged for acts of misconduct such as stabbing other learners or fighting; others are caught with assortment of dangerous weapons that they bring to school – allegedly to protect themselves. These drugs are a problem of all these violent acts. Really, it is scary. Two weeks ago, we had to sit in a meeting where a learner had stabbed another after a quarrel and the allegation was that the other boy (who was alleged*

*to have started the fight) had been seen smoking the nyaope earlier near the school's toilets. This is the responsibility of governors*". The schools had various approaches to deal with the challenges but felt the management of these schools needed to look into them so that the support given was correct and intentional. They used the services of NGOs outside the schools such as National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO), South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA) and government departments such as the SAPS, JMPD, the DSD, the Correctional Services and the Health Departments.

To conclude this section, this study found that support is key, and lack of support can negatively impact on learners' access to schools and academic achievement in many ways. Generally, because of lack of a structured support culture in some of the schools and communities, schools breed an attitude of "you are on your own" among learners, consequently leading some to perform poorly and eventually to leave school, or even to become involved in acts of violent retaliation. It was also found that most learners who leave schools prematurely (through fear of violence, pregnancy or other reasons), do not report when they leave. In trying to understand support for learners who have experienced school violence, theorists, researchers and practitioners together acknowledge the increased complexity of comprehending the support structures available, which' is important in the development of a learner. The development of childhood disorders is understood as a function of complex interactions between multiple etiological factors (Ntshangase, 2015), and Bronfenbrenner's model introduced the dialogue about this complexity in postmodern society.

## 5.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the experiences and perceptions of various school principals and teachers elicited through the focus-group interviews, document review, and observations were presented and discussed in terms of research questions, the theoretical frameworks as well as literature review. In a nutshell, schools face multiple challenges of support structures. In order to respond proactively to the challenges, they face, they have realised

they need a multiple-pronged strategy. In the next chapter, I present and discuss the conclusion and recommendations.

# CHAPTER 6:

# SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one, directly affects all indirectly". Martin Luther King Jr*

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter was dedicated to the demonstration, investigation and conversation of support structures that are available for learners who are survivors of school violence. This chapter concludes the data presentation section by presenting the effect of the availability or non-availability of support structures for learners who are survivors of violence in schools. As in the two preceding chapters, an evaluation of the findings is then enabled through questioning the research questions, theoretical frameworks and literature review which were discovered at great length in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. Appropriate findings are then analysed through content analysis as explained in the research methodology chapter.

This chapter is dedicated primarily in summarising the main findings of the study. It seeks to draw together the main themes that have been discovered through the key research questions in chapter one and five. Recommendations arising from the results are delineated and the subsequent endorsements informed the development of a framework, rooted in Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model, to explore the support structure that are available for learners who are survivors of violence in a school context. The conclusion is wide-ranging and reflects on the importance of the prospect of the implementation plan of support structures available for learners who are survivors of violence at school. Against this background, I believe that the aim of the study is consummated.

To remind the reader of the study aims and broad critical questions which were presented in the introductory chapter and to maintain focus, the critical questions are re-presented here:

**Main Research Question**

The primary research question is: What are the current support structures that are available for learners who are survivors of violence in schools?

**Secondary Research Questions**

In order to answer the main research, question I explored the following secondary research questions:

- What are the main causes of violence in schools?

- What are the benefits of having the support structures for the learners who are survivors of violence in schools?

- What role is the principal and teachers playing in supporting the learners who are survivors of violence in schools?

- What are the intervention strategies that can be used in support of the learners who are survivors of violence in schools?

**6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

Chapter 1 provided the motivation for the study and the explanation of the problem. It sketches the aim of the study; the methodology employed and elucidates noteworthy thoughts of the study. Aspects touched upon are the support structures that are available for learners who are survivors of violence in a school. What is obvious from literature is that there are challenges in giving support, and there are challenges in the support structures functionality that are available in schools for learners who are survivors of violence in a school context. There are many explanations for these situations. Many of these support structures lack the capacity, competence and the leadership to provide support to learners who are survivors of violence. Such circumstances may, in addition, be lack of qualified specialist teachers and lack of parental support to provide appropriate quality support services. Aims of the study research questions, research design and methodology, population as well as sampling were outlined. The instruments that were

used to collect data consisted of focus group interviews, document analysis and observations. Trustworthiness, credibility as well as ethical consideration and confidentiality were also considered for this study.

In chapter two, the international expansions on inclusive education with regard to support structures of learners who are survivors of violence in schools were scrutinized. This chapter explored global trends in educational change intended at including all learners in a quest towards support for everyone. The methods which countries around the world address issues that concern support structures of learners who are survivors of school violence and the provision of learning support were looked at. The literature review merged a discussion on legislative approaches and diverse levels of support process for support structures of learners who are survivors of school violence. In addition, chapter two measured intervention and support programmes which include amongst others the different committees available, external stakeholders, family support. Finally, the educational support structure of learners who are survivors of school violence through education were discussed

The literature review in chapter three focused on the theoretical framework sustaining this study. The theoretical framework of this study is well-versed in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. This theory looks at a child's development within the background of the system of relationships that make up their environment. Bronfenbrenner's theory defines complex layers of environment, each having an outcome on a child's development. The interface between influences in the child's maturing ecology, his direct family and community environment stimulates and drives the child's development. Changes or conflict in any one level will ripple all the way through other levels. To study a child's behavioural influences then, we must look not only at the child and their immediate environment, but also at the interactions with the larger environment as well. The ecological systems theory recognizes five ecological systems, namely, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. The cornerstone of Bronfenbrenner's model is a belief that individual human development, socialisation plainly, arises as a consequence of interactions within and between multiple surrounded ecological systems impacting upon the developing child. The importance of this theory in

application to support structures in schools is the interaction between support structures of learners who are survivors of school violence.

Chapter four gives an in-depth account of the research design and methodology used in conducting this study. This is followed by a discussion on the philosophical paradigm and for this study I decided to employ interpretivism. Interpretive paradigm considers the experiences of individuals as the main source of interpreting social reality. The benefit of conducting this study within this research paradigm is that it allowed me to understand and make sense of the actions and views of principals and teachers from an individual perspective and to understand that different people can observe the similar social phenomenon in dissimilar ways. Furthermore, data collection strategies are discussed in detail. This is followed by an explanation of how I envisioned to analyse and interpret the collected data. In addition, an explanation is given on how trustworthiness and credibility of the study are guaranteed as well as the ethical guidelines that give direction to the study.

Chapter five delivers a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of data collected through focus group interviews, document analysis and observations. The description of each of the schools that participated in the study is stated. This is followed by a thematic interpretation and discussion of data collected through focus group interviews, document analysis and observations linked to understanding the support structures of learners who are survivors of school violence, different levels of support and their education. The findings from the results are further charted against international and national initiatives regarding relevance of support, education and how to better support so that the learner can perform much better in their academic studies as revealed in the literature in chapters two and three of this study.

In this concluding chapter of the study closing remarks are made as the final analysis. This chapter looks at the summary of the study and this is followed by the exploration of research questions. The recommendations are examined on the basis of the research findings, as discussed in the literature review (chapter two) and chapter five. These recommendations are structured according to Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model.

The aim of these recommendations is the improvement of the current support structures, education and intervention programmes from a socio-ecological perspective. Lastly, a framework for improved support, different stakeholder involvement is proposed and diagrammatically represented.

## 6.3 EXPLORATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS WITH THEMES

I will now examine the four research questions using the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data collected. The themes and sub-themes that emerged not only addressed the research questions outlined in chapter one, but also provided information on the available support structure, the composition of the support structure in different schools, the role played by stakeholders. Some of the themes that emerged here were confirmed by observation and document analysis. No noteworthy theme was found over and above the themes that developed from the focus group interviews.

## 6.4 EXPLORATION OF THE KEY RESEARCH QUESTION WITH THEMES

The purpose of this study was to explore, describe and explain the support structures that are available for the learners who are survivors of violence. The research questions that guide this inquiry are presented in Chapter one. In this section, I address the four secondary research questions using the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data collected, and in the process attempt to address the primary question as well.

### 6.4.1 Secondary Research Question 1:

What are the main causes of violence in schools?

The recurring key theme throughout this study was that schools faced a myriad of indiscipline and school violence problems among the learners and that there was a strong relationship between violence at school and the broader social conditions both at homes and in the communities where learners reside and how this negatively impacted on the school (Mokhele, 2011; SA Human Rights Commission Report, 2006). Researchers such as Johnson, and Barsky (2020), have postulated "violence in South African schools is embedded in the broader violent South African environment. Linked to this, the study

participants stated repeatedly that schools were a microcosm of society and what happens outside (the school) also affects the school (Pillay, 2020). The violence was viewed as symptomatic of a society (See 5.10) whose morals and values were in decay and this was directly affecting the schools. Therefore, when attempting to understand school-based violence in the South African context, one needs to explore the problem from multiple perspectives taking into account the many dynamics that have influenced this phenomenon (Helmer, Kasa, Somerton, Makoelle, & Hernández-Torrano, 2020).

The challenges that the five schools faced ranged from drug taking to drug-selling among learners, stealing of cell phones or forcefully taking other learners' lunch-packs and mugging by big or bullying learners, drinking of alcohol, bullying, insolence, physical violence (stabbings and assaults), teenage pregnancies, late coming and absconding from classes, increasingly to female teachers, cigarette smoking (including dagga and wunga) truancy, absenteeism, inappropriate boy-girl relationships and failure to complete school tasks such as homework and assignments(See 5.10).

Further, the literature on school violence cited extensively in Chapter Three clearly showed that the prevalence of drugs and violence in the school community was suggestive of the relative influence of the context both within and outside of the school and its impact on school violence (Le Roux & Mokhele, 2011). The community influence on the school is also corroborated by the South African Human Rights Commission Report (2006), which states that South Africa is experiencing unacceptably high levels of violent crime and this was spilling over into the schools (See 5.10). Similarly, Astor, Benbenishty and Marachi (2006), Paolini (2020), and Ferreira, Frota, de Vasconcelos Filho, Bastos, Luna, and Rolim (2020), also state that what is happening in schools mirrors what is happening in society, i.e. the context in which the school is located interacts with internal school and learner characteristics to influence levels of victimisation in schools. These layered and nested contexts include the school (social climate, availability of policies against violence), neighbourhood (poverty, social organisation and crime levels), the learners' families (education and family structure), cultural aspects of learner and teacher population and the economic, social and political makeup of the country as a whole.

Similarly, viewed from a social control perspective, a school is a microcosm of a larger society and is therefore affected by the contexts in which it is built. If the society in which the school is located is violent and losing control of its young people, the school will automatically be affected by the violence in its environment. The addiction of learners to drugs, alcohol and substance abuse has a ripple effect in that other learners want to emulate them, and this may end up being the problem of the entire school. More often than not, some parents were unsure how to respond to this challenge and fell back on the schools to provide assistance. From the social control theory perspective, this is symptomatic of communities who have lost their moral fibre and were looking at others to do for them what they should do for themselves.

However, it was noted that the schools in this study were pro-active in that they were doing something about the challenges of violence and indiscipline they were facing. In addition, the participants seemed to understand that school violence and indiscipline was a broader social problem (See 5.10) consequently they utilised a multi-pronged approach to resolve the problem. These included their own internal processes at school as well as also enlisting help and services of non-governmental organisations such as the local churches, SANCA, NICRO as well as sister departments such as Social Welfare, the SAPS, the Correctional Services and the Department of Health. Another sub-theme was that the drugs problem had a snowball effect in that the police closed the informal tuck-shops near the schools where the drugs were sold but they mushroomed elsewhere. At least three of the four researched schools indicated that they also worked with their local Community Policing Forum (CPF), to resolve serious criminal school problems. This was positive in that the schools were not working in isolation but with the local community structures to face the challenges of school violence. The presence of the code of conduct for learners and other discipline policies also suggest that the schools were aware of the legal requirements in dealing with the challenges they were facing.

## 6.4.2 Secondary Research Question 2

What are the benefits of having the support structures for the learners who are survivors of violence in schools?

It is evident that SBSTs are fundamental and critical for the support structure to benefit learners who are survivors of school violence. What came out of the data is that their professional preparation is critical to the provision of support to learners (See 5.4). It was also revealed in the literature that the SBST need to advise the teachers on some of the factors, including the process and the kind of support that need to be offered so that learners can benefit.

Research also revealed that there are variations in how the SBST implement support in different countries in different contexts, hence this study will have to establish support strategies utilised by the SBSTs in the Gauteng Province to support learners who are survivors of school violence. The SBST as a multi-disciplinary team is expected to support all learners in the school in a systematic and consistent manner. The success of such a task depends on the adequacy of their professional preparation, their understanding of the SIAS process and in making sure that there is consistency in support strategy implementation.

It is therefore evident that the benefits of having support structures for the learners who are survivors of violence in schools is vital for the success of learners in their studies. Different stakeholders, such as teachers, parents and external stakeholders, depend on the School Based Support Teams for advice and guidance so that they can support learners who are survivors of violence in schools However, all these stakeholders must collaborate to ensure that learners benefit from such a structure within a school. Collaboration of all stakeholders (See 5.6.) in making sure that the support is available and beneficial to learners is critical. However, the School Based Support Teams must have access to training that is intensive to address identified gaps. It is critical that teachers who are to be appointed in the SBST, have appointment letters that clearly state the roles and responsibility of every member. The appointment letters must indicate the number of years to serve in the SBST, for continuity, sustainability and retention of skills. It is critical for all teachers appointed in the SBST to reflect on whether their preparation and support offer has enabled them to contribute to the success of the school support structure and that learners understand the benefit of a support structure.

The SBST members do not have all the solutions to the challenges experienced by learners, as they are part of a wider system that goes beyond the School Based Support Teams (SBST) realm of authority. The participation and capacity-building for support strategies across all levels of the school system could help ensure that the benefit of the support structure is known and highlighted in the school environment.

### 6.3.3 Secondary Research Question 3

What role is the principal and teachers playing in supporting the learners who are survivors of violence in schools?

Teachers are confronted first-hand by the misconduct and violent behaviour of learners. They have to deal with the support of learners, draw up reports of the support given, and communicate the learner's misconduct and support given to the Head of Department and to the learner's parent if required. All these procedures were time consuming and hampered the teacher's core duty of teaching. This is corroborated by Zulu, Bhengu, and Mkhize (2021), who states that teachers admit that their teaching would be more effective if they did not have to spend so much time dealing with support issues. It was evident that teachers and school principals and teachers were the front line in the implementation of the SIAS policy which deals with the support and teachers worked in collaboration with the DBST as they were interacting with the learners on daily basis. The teachers at all the five researched schools acknowledged that they were responsible for the management and implementation of the SIAS process at their schools. It must however be noted that the SGB also plays a crucial role of governance and support of all learners.

Wolhuter, and Van der Walt, (2020), as well as Mestry and Khumalo (2012), affirm that a governing body of a school should realise that a statutory or legal duty rests upon it to establish a structured and purposeful school environment" in terms of Section 8A (2) of the SA Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 although the principal, the SMT and other teachers normally form the most visible front line in the support process.

This study found that schools were facing a major challenge in getting parents involved in the supporting role of their children. Opere, Kamere, and Wawire, (2020), points out

that there are barriers which seem to hinder their involvement such as parents' attitude towards teachers; their low self-esteem; the school environment and the lack of clear roles that parents have to play, which hinder parents from actively participating in their children's support at schools. A study by Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004), strongly indicates that parents from impoverished backgrounds also need to be empowered if they are to make a meaningful contribution to the education of the learners. The role of the principal must lead the institution and lead in the support and guidance of everyone. The principal has a great role to play in his leadership position if parents do not know how and what to do, they should not cause chaos at the school, but they should be led and guided on what to do to support their children. The teachers that are appointed in the School Based Support Team, must be led by the principal on the protocol of support to learners who have experienced violence in schools. The role of everyone should be clearly explained in the School Based Support Team policy that is formulated by the school, while taking care of certain aspects that should be incorporated in the policy. The policy will also be guided by the Institutional District School Officer who is the person authorised to authenticate the policy to be signed off by the District Director, so that the policy is implemented correctly and consistently.

Sommer, Leuschner, Fiedler, Madfis, and Scheithauer (2020), also state that the support structure should consist of at least the principal or deputy principal, the chairperson of the SGB, a parent member of the governing body, a teacher and a learner in. The inclusion of parents in support structures will create an environment more conducive to parental involvement in schools, but actual parental involvement is South African Schools remain weak (Won, & Chang, 2020). However, democratic governance theory requires that all stakeholders should be represented in all the committees including the School Based Support Team where important decisions are taken. The failure by some parents to avail themselves to serve on some committees in the schools defeats the noble aims of democratic governance.

It is evident from this discussion that all participants concurred that the implementation of the support structures is primarily the duty managed by teachers and the school management. However, it is the duty of a properly constituted School Based Support

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Team to attend to more serious cases of support and curb violence among the learners. Furthermore, the role played by parents was found to be minimal because of various reasons and this was a major challenge. While Opere, Kamere, and Wawire, (2020), suggests that the successful implementation of any school policy requires the leadership of the principal, the support of teachers and learners, the involvement and support of parents is equally important.

### 6.3.4 Secondary Research Question 4

What are the intervention strategies that can be used in support of the learners who are survivors of violence in schools?

All the participants acknowledged the importance of parental involvement in the maintenance of support and the quest for violence-free schools. The majority also indicated that where parents were more involved, there was more success stories of support. However, they presented divergent and sometimes contrasting pictures of how parental involvement operated in each of the schools and how this impacted on learner support. While other School Based Support Team committees appeared to be proportionately staffed with all relevant constituent members and working well, others seemed to be struggling. The lack of leadership and guidance involvement went beyond the School Based Support Team non-functionality into parents who failed to turn up when invited to schools, especially on support-related issues and this impacted negatively in speedily in giving support to learners that is consistently, intentionally and sustainable.

### 6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study of availability of support structures for learners who are survivors of violence has surged over the past decade in many disciplines, including studies of individuals and relations in the community sciences. The recommendations and suggestions proposed from this study may perfect supports structure services in schools. An African idiom that promotes communal working together in learners that says "motho ke motho ka batho" advocates the importance of support from an early age. Likewise, learners need to be capacitated and be supported after experiencing violence in preparation for life after

schooling and to advance their learning. This can only happen if support is done sooner and parents, teachers and caregivers are capacitated to provide support and act accordingly.

### 6.5.1 Recommendation 1

This study has highlighted that schools experienced a cocktail of violence incidents which are caused, not by one but many reasons such as individual reasons, home context, school and community reasons. Rather than focusing on individual aspects when dealing with school violence, an integrated, comprehensive (whole school) approach that is immediate, effective, consistent, based on human rights, social justice and sustained through continuous human resource (SGB and other key community members, the school principal and SMT members, teachers). Teacher development programmes is recommended to allow teachers the confidence to be able to support learners who are survivors of violence in schools.

This calls for an integrated (whole school) approach that will allow collaboration with all stakeholders in the community when supporting learners who are survivors of school violence (Cowie & Jennifer, 2007; Burton, 2008; Burton & Leoschut, 2012). An integrated approach is also consistent with the strength-based approach framework utilised in the research methodology in this thesis in that it "brings voice" to survivors of violence as important role-players in their own lives.

### 6.5.2 Recommendation 2

Similarly, literature presented in this thesis shows that understanding the problem context is important in understanding the underlying issues of ineffective support structures. Further, in the introductory section of this thesis extensive literature was presented to show that South African is a post-conflict country which has challenges with the core definition of support and inclusion, and that support structures have to be framed in that context. This calls for deeper understanding of the support structures of survivors of violence and that any support given should then respond appropriately. Teachers, school leaders and governors have to be continuously trained to understand these deeper issues

Larri, and Colliver (2020), also posit that violence at school is not simply a school problem. Specific features of the local neighbourhood and wider community, such as violence often pervade school communities, creating a climate of fear and anxiety among young people and staff. Therefore, cooperation between learners, teachers, principals, SGBs, parents/caregivers, non-governmental organisations, other government departments outside the school are extremely important when offering support to learners who are survivors of violence in a school context, in order for support to more likely succeed (Jung, & Jun, 2020).

### 6.4.3 Recommendation 3

According to Lerner, von Eye, Lerner, Levin-Bizan, and Bowers (2010), contextual and inherent assets are crucial for young people to thrive and flourish. Experiencing a strong sense of belonging and connectedness to school can thus be considered a critical factor in overall positive youth development, contributing to social and emotional well-being, and academic growth in early adolescence. Learners should feel safe and be heard in a school, especially learners who are survivors of violence in a school context. The more they feel that they have a sense of belonging to a school, they feel that they are being heard, the more they will thrive and flourish, especially academically. It is thus important that the support structures available in all school gives that sense of belonging and a listening ear to learners who are survivors of school violence (Jung, & Jun 2020).

### 6.5.4 Recommendation 4

Similarly, to have effective and strengthen support it is suggested that schools should establish partnerships with stakeholders who have an interest in education including the small business people around the schools, the youth formations, the SAPS and CPF, NGOs and sister departments in some kind of an integrated school support approach. The benefits of involving internal and external stakeholders is immense because they bring along diverse expertise. This calls for strong, committed, innovative and visionary leadership at all levels especially at a school management level to drive the process (Zuze & Juan, 2020). The success of this approach, Netolicky (2020), posit, lies in all the members of the school community being empowered to participate meaningfully in its

development and implementation. This approach is also in line with democratic school governance theory which incorporates the inclusive and democratic pillars of involvement, providing information, participation/consultation, collaboration and partnership (Shaked & Schechter, 2020).

### 6.5.5 Recommendation 5

This thesis has shown that schools in South Africa are grappling with new policies and regulations as they navigate the new terrain of inclusion and support. There is an urgent need for change from discipline to support where school leadership and teachers have to be continuously empowered to faithfully employ support principles for learners who have experienced school violence. In this new democratic environment, teachers should be more understanding and inclusive and be examples themselves, to be open to understanding without judgement, but empathetic, so that learners would find it very easy to approach them when the need arises. The school leadership and teachers should understand that the changes they implement will not bear fruits overnight but will be a long process. This understanding that is needed from school leadership will assist in policy implementation. The policy implementation will have the potential to succeed but more time will be needed to gel with the school ethos and culture (Shengnan & Hallinger, 2021).

### 6.5.6 Recommendation 6

The district is currently the lowest local office that has personnel which should have expertise to direct schools regarding supporting learners who are survivors of school violence. It is recommended that the DBST officials should work closely with schools and other interested stakeholders to combat school violence and intensify support. The DBST should also be capacitated in order to support schools. Professional experts should be employed at District offices to guide and support schools intensely (Kheswa, 2020).

## 6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This section outlines the recommendations of this study based on the findings. These are categorised in terms of three areas that the results of this study focus on: (a)

recommendations for practice, (b) recommendations for policy and (c) recommendations for future research.

## 6.6.1 Recommendation for Policy

The study endorses that it might be necessary for schools to consider revising their policies. The recommendation for policy should be on how SBST members are professionally equipped to support the implementation of inclusive education by providing support in schools, the sustenance of the SBST members within the committee for knowledge continuity and consistency in the implementation of policy. The study revealed inconsistencies on how SBST members implement support and their understanding of what support is (4.1.1). Some SBST members were trained to be subject specialists and or phase specialist and not necessarily experts in offering support. This suggests that specialist training will assist the SBST members to be able to support learners with diverse support needs. The policy should look at the inconsistencies on how SBST members were prepared, and their attitude towards supporting the implementation of the SIAS policy.

## 6.6.2 Recommendation for Practice

The study contributes to all levels of the schooling system and recommends strategies that can enhance professional preparation of SBST members to ensure that inclusive education and support is implemented successfully in schools. It is important to note the factors that may impede the SBST members in executing their responsibilities.

The study should also look at all systems that impact on professional preparation and learner support and what is entailed in providing support to learners by considering both the theory and practice. The field of inclusive education, and support is riddled with inconsistencies and is defined differently in different contexts. Therefore, professional preparation might assist to close gaps in implementation by applying relevant strategies that can benefit learners and teachers at school level without focusing on the definition of the concept itself. Internal and external stakeholders will have to play a critical role in

making sure that they support the school especially the school leadership, in building and inclusive supportive school ethos.

These recommendations have informed the idea and propose of a framework on the suggested content of support, functionality of support structure, and collaboration with stakeholders (see Fig. 6.1).

## 6.7 SUGGESTED FRAMEWORK FOR LEARNERS WHO ARE SURVIVORS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

The context that I am proposing draws from the theory of Bronfenbrenner and emphasise the important role of teamwork in the support process. The proposed framework utilises proven methods established and tested by interpersonally oriented researchers who put relationships and interpersonal skills at the core of their intervention strategies (Makhalemele, & Tlale, 2020). The framework also makes use of ecological theory, which proposes that individual development is influenced by a variety of interacting systems, including the family system, the peer system, the social system, the cultural values, customs, and laws as well as the dimension of time as it relates to a child's environments and elements within this system can be either external, such as the timing of a parent's death, or internal, such as the physiological changes that occur with the aging of a human.

The suggested framework also integrates the SBP Framework which adopts proven methods developed and tested by researchers of resilience (Zettler, 2021), as something nurtured through support rather than something innate. Resilience is much more than an individual's capacity to overcome adversity. It is also the result of how well individuals, their families, schools, and communities work together to support learners who are survivors of violence navigate their way to the support they need for wellbeing, and whether support is made available in ways that are meaningful to them. The framework takes cognisance of positive inherent attributes and capabilities that learners who are survivors of violence possess and how that inherent positive attribute and be utilized and enhanced and integrated through support (Moore, Astor, & Benbenishty, 2020).

Figure 9 is an illustration of the suggested framework to support learners who are survivors of school violence.
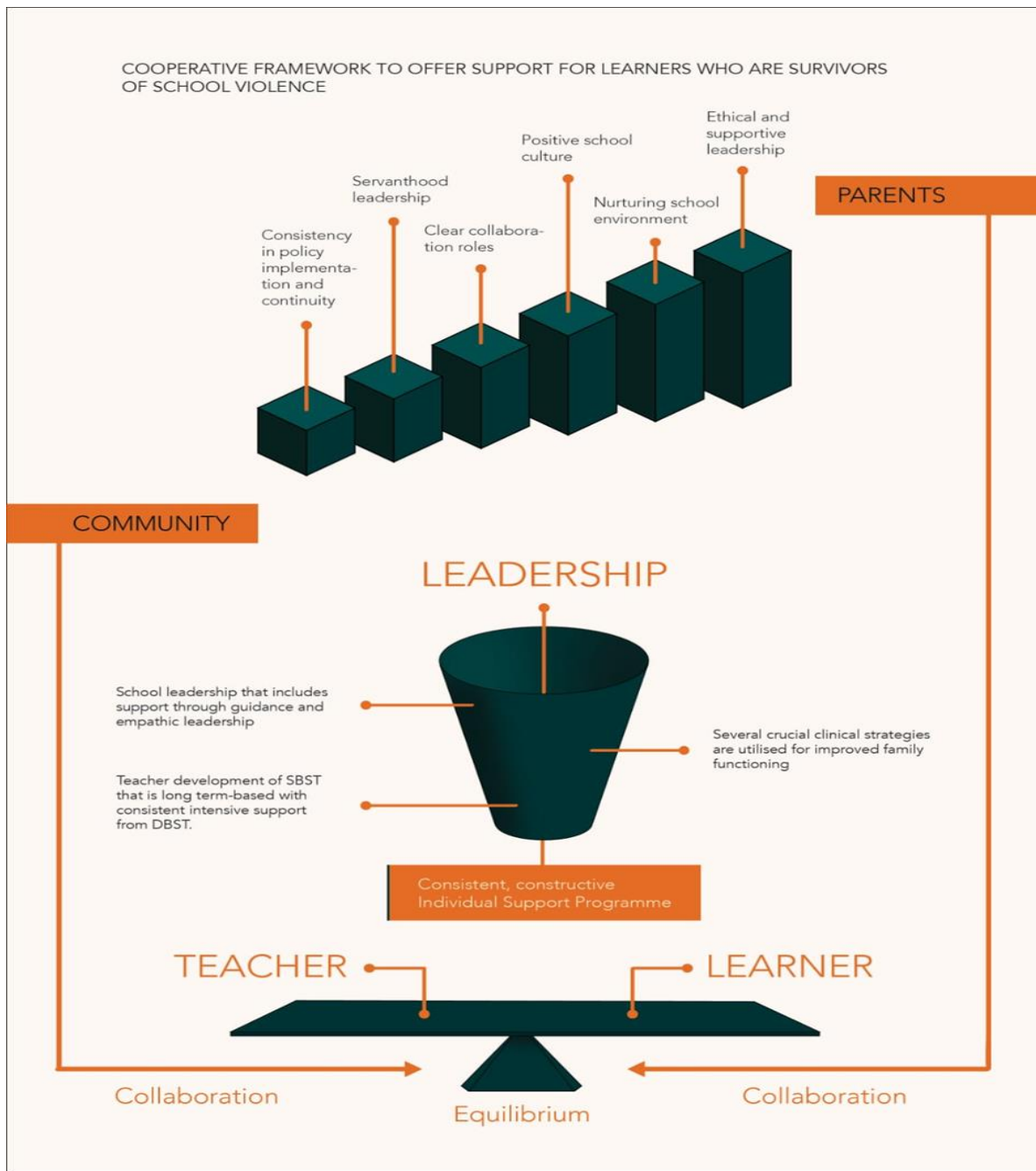


*Figure 9: Cooperative framework to offer support of learners who are survivors of school violence*

*Source*: Own compilation

**6.7.1 Conceptualising the Suggested Framework**

Several assumptions are critical to the design and implementation of cooperative intervention framework:

6.7.1.1 Comprehensive link of family support to individual support success

As suggested from Bronfenbrenner's ecological theoretical model in the area of support structures, it is multidetermined from the reciprocal interplay of individual, family, peer, school, and community factors. Intervention in this proposed framework assesses and speaks out to these probable success factors in a comprehensive, yet individualised manner.

6.7.1.2 Constructive outcomes when parents collaborate and are active caregivers

In cooperative intervention framework the parent is critical stakeholder. Expert and professional support is initiated only after exhausting resources in the family's natural ecology. Professionals may genuinely care, but customarily will leave the child's life for reasons such as professional growth or change of work. It is consequently vital to develop parenting skills in support and strengthening the family's original support system and in this way treatment realisation is more likely to be maintained.

6.7.1.3 Support Monitoring and Evaluation

Support trustworthiness and consistency is needed to achieve desired outcomes. This can be accomplished through development of an Individual Learners Support Plan. Hence intensive quality assurance procedure and support monitoring and evaluation must be maintained at all cost for the success of this support plan. The quality assurance aims to enhance support validation, consistency and continuity.

6.7.1.4 School-Based Support Programme

School-based programmes for the prevention of juvenile crime are oriented towards learners, teachers, curricula, administration, and the physical design of the school, parents, security personnel, community and legislation. This programme is geared

towards positive outcomes, including improvement of social adjustment, improvement of scholastic performance, reduction in violation of school rules, reduction in classroom disruption, and greater attachment to school.

### 6.7.1.5 Individual Learner's Support Plan

The ISP describes a plan designed for learners who need additional support or expanded opportunities, developed by teachers in consultation with the parents and the School Based Support Team. It describes the learner's present scholastic functioning as well as their immediate and long-term educational and personal goals. This individualised programme also explains related and specific services necessary for the learner to achieve their ambitions, as well as the manner in which such services will be provided (Ní Bhroin, & King, 2020).

In many instances ISP development and implementation has been shown to be difficult due to inconsistencies in policy implementation, lack of understanding of ISP worth, change of SBST coordinator, and lack of qualified teachers who have the background and training to adequately implement each child's ISP. The difficulties associated inconsistencies and sustainability complicates the implementation of a learner's ISP.

### 6.7.2 Objectives of Cooperative Intervention Framework

- To promote educational, support and occupational success
- To sustain parent empowerment, which include approaches for sustained family support.
- To provide comprehensive programmes for learners who are survivors of violence.
- To develop an ISP. The ISP is an essential element in providing quality education for learners who need support to achieve their maximum learning potential and therefore should be individually adapted for each learner.

The cooperative intervention framework is aimed at being an intensive school-based as well as a community-based intervention that addresses the multiple determinants of appropriate support structure to learners who are survivors of violence in a school context. This approach views an individual as being nested within a complex network of

interconnected systems that encompass an individual, family, peers, school and the neighbourhood factors as entrenched from Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model. It also acknowledges that an individual has inner strength with positive inherent attributes and capabilities that learners who are survivors of violence possess and how that inherent positive attribute and be utilized and enhanced and integrated through support as embedded in the Strength Based Approach.

Cooperative intervention framework is embedded in Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological model of development and Strength Based Approach. It is a highly individualised, cognitive-behavioural, community-based support intervention program. It realises challenges specifically related to challenges experienced by learners who are survivors of violence in a school context and adapts to the child's strengths, weaknesses as well as their ecology. Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, collaborative intervention framework for learners who are survivors of violence in a school context is shared and linked to an individual learner and their family, peer group, school, and community contexts. Intervention here is aimed to ease and support the learner by building on the child and family strengths on an individualised and comprehensive base. An emphasis on parental empowerment is critical for this framework.

Cooperative intervention framework is intended for the provision of SBST to support learners who are survivors of school violence. Based on Bronfenbrenner's theory of socio-ecology, the proposed framework assumes that the emotional challenges of children are best understood within the context of the child's social environment. The school therefore plays and important role in all of this. However, the school leadership is more important to realise this nurturing school social environment through the promotion of the positive school culture and ethos. The leadership also serves as a great support enabler by supporting, leading and guiding the SBST to be functional and operational.

The framework predicates that a child's behaviour is influenced by their interactions with their primary social systems including family, peer groups, school, neighborhood, and community. The nucleus essentials of this framework include ecological legitimacy and empowerment of schools as caregivers.

Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological theory emphasise that a complete understanding of child behaviour is gained from first-hand observations, changes made in the real-world setting like at home, in school and in the community. Collaborative intervention framework does this by providing support at school, home or wherever the problem occurs. In this framework the school, precisely the SBST, which is led and guided by the principal, work intensely on empowering the parents of learners who are survivors of school violence. The collaborative intervention is beefed up through collaboration with external stakeholders within the community.

The support programme starts with isolating a support challenge and then locating the resources which are behind the support problem and the main factors that can counter this behaviour are prioritised for intervention. A variety of interventions individually tailored to the needs and situation of learners who are survivors of school violence are explored. All the way through the healing process the ultimate objectives are consistently assessed and barriers to effectiveness of intervention are identified.

It is important to note that the proposed framework should not be used in an assessment capacity. Rather, it is meant to be a pilot project from which improvements can be recognized. Research shows that practices like support are implemented with the hope to change learner behaviour (Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Although the strategy emerged from good intentions, it may be harmful and discriminatory in nature. It is thus the responsibility of the parents, school and the community to establish meaningful relationships to capacitate systems of support for learners to be able to navigate and negotiate for the resources to enhance their well-being.

## 6.8 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The limitations of this study reside in the fact that the data are drawn from only one District, based in Gauteng, and therefore it may be hard to generalise the results of this study to other regions. Therefore, there is a need for further research into this topic. To help generalise the understanding of supports structures available for learners who are survivors of school violence other schools of varying sizes, geographical locations, and compulsory versus optional participation should be included.

In this study a qualitative research design was used to explore the support structures available for learners who are survivors of school violence. While a qualitative approach produces rich and detailed information, such methods are rarely appropriate for very large sample sizes. Current findings cannot be generalised to the larger population of support structures available for learners who are survivors of school violence. and are limited by the particular characteristics of the sample in this study. Conversely, the strength of the qualitative approach rests in its ability to capture the thoughts, feelings and behaviours support structures available for learners who are survivors of school violence in a depth and detail that is not possible with quantitative methods.

Given the exploratory nature of this study, a qualitative research design was purposefully chosen with a small sample. Purposeful sampling was done to ensure that the selected participants were homogenous and would be able to meet the necessary requirements of the study. The study focused on a specific population, namely, principals and teachers who are support structures for learners who are survivors of school violence. and for this reason, care should be exercised in generalising the findings to other contexts. However, the findings are sufficient to make meaningfully recommendations to the Departments of Basic Education with regards to the exploration of support structures available for learners who are survivors of school violence.

## 6.9 CONCLUSIONS

"*Without labour, nothing prospers'*. Sophocles

The above recommendations will help school SBSTs to support learners who are survivors of school violence. It is only in a non-threatening supportive environment that learners can concentrate on their lessons and make progress: violence and rule out the child's constitutional right to education. The most effective programmes for developing supporting schools are those that focus on collaboration, the development of psycho-social skills and socially competent behaviour. The role of all education stakeholders is immense. Great support structures can only be promoted by providing an environment in which learners are kept consistently nurtured, and where there is a caring and visionary

leadership that promotes an expectation of academic achievement in a strength-supportive environment.

## 6.10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH

It is recommended that additional qualitative research of this nature be undertaken within other Schools, Districts, or Provincially. This might allow a bigger generalisation of the findings and thus be more representative of the support structures in place for learners who are survivors of school violence. Further studies may counter the findings of this study thus requiring additional research into the success of support structure programmes.

It is therefore proposed that further qualitative research be conducted to investigate how best the education system can ensure that learners who are survivors of violence are offered appropriate support within schools. Additional objectives, such as, support from leadership, governance and family should be researched in greater detail to determine if there is a relationship between great support structure and collaboration of these stakeholders.

In addition, a qualitative study might explore some of the fully functional School Based Support Team as support structures that are available and effective in supporting learners who are survivors of violence in schools, District or Provinces not researched.

Another area of support structures programmes that need research study is the effectiveness of short-term support strategic programmes as opposed to long-term programmes with regard to successfully meeting particular ISP objectives. In this regard, schools, may benefit from knowing which type of learners are more vulnerable based and need long term or short-term support based on the family context. This information could then be used to modify an ISP of a learner who is a survivor of violence within a school context and offer continuous support to build resilience.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: REGISTRATION LETTER

UNISA | university of south africa

1526 M1RST

METSING K N MRS
8809 MOEKETSI DRIVE
DR MASIBI -LANGA
KAGISO 2
1754

STUDENT NUMBER : 0831-631-7

ENQUIRIES NAME : MAPONYA PP
ENQUIRIES TEL : 0124415702

DATE : 2021-03-08

Dear Student

I wish to inform you that your registration has been accepted for the academic year indicated below. Kindly activate your Unisa mylife (https://myunisa.ac.za/portal) account for future communication purposes and access to research resources.

DEGREE :                 PHD (PSYCHOLOGY)          (90058)

TITLE :                  Understanding and exploring the support structures in place for learners who
                         are survivors of violence in a school context

SUPERVISOR :             Prof LDN TLALE (tlaleldn@unisa.ac.za)

ACADEMIC YEAR :          2021

TYPE:                    THESIS

SUBJECTS REGISTERED:     TFPSY02  PhD - Psychology Education

A statement of account will be sent to you shortly.

You must re-register online and pay every academic year until such time that you can submit your dissertation/thesis for examination.

If you intend submitting your dissertation/thesis for examination you have to submit an Intention to submit form (available on the website www.unisa.ac.za) at least two months before the date of submission. If submission takes place after 15 November, but before the end of January of the following year, you do need not to re-register and pay registration fees for the next academic year.  Should you submit after the end of January, you must formally reregister online and pay the full fees.

Please access the information with regard to your personal librarian on the following  link:
https://bit.ly/3hxNqVr

Yours faithfully,

Prof M S Mothata
Registrar

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

## APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNISA | university of south africa

### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/03/10

Ref: **2021/03/10/8316317/06/AM**
Name: Ms KN Metsing
Student No.: 8316317

Dear Ms KN Metsing

**Decision: Ethics Approval from**
2021/03/10 to 2026/03/10

**Researcher(s): Name:** Ms KN Metsing
E-mail address: Momzeneiro@gmail.com
Telephone: 082 219 8297

**Supervisor(s): Name:** Prof L.D.N Tlale
E-mail address: tlaleldn@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 429 2064

**Title of research:**

**Exploring the support structures in place for survivors of violence in a school context.**

**Qualification:** PhD Psychology of Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/03/10 to 2026/03/10.

The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/03/10 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 will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

3. 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 UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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 requires additional ethics clearance.

8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2026/03/10**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2021/03/10/8316317/06/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,

**Prof AT Motlhabane**
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**
motlhat@unisa.ac.za

**Prof PM Sebate**
**EXECUTIVE DEAN**
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

## APPENDIX C: TURNITIN REPORT

THE MANGAUNG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPAL AREA IN THE FREE STATE", Bloemfontein: Central University of Technology, Free State, 2016

< 1% match ()

Nabo, Sandisiwe Sifanelwe. "Human Trafficking: narratives of non-governmental organisation caregivers in the Eastern Cape", Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities, 2013

< 1% match ()

Mfidi, Faniswa Honest. "Promotion of adolescent mental health through a social and emotional learning programme in South African high schools", 2015

< 1% match ()

Knafo, Tilana. "Experiences of practitioners in early childhood development centres in impoverished and marginalised predominantly white communities", 2015

< 1% match ()

Mudzingwa, Kudzayiishe. "Perceptions of stakeholders on management development programmes for beginning secondary school heads in Zimbabwe", 2018

< 1% match ()

Thobela, Nompapa Regina. "The perceptions of principals and teachers of learners with HIV/Aids", Stellenbosch : University of Stellenbosch, 2009

< 1% match ()

Du Toit, Willem Johannes. "The operationalisation of cluster foster care schemes : a social developmental perspective", 2014

< 1% match ()

Kekeya, Joseph Lingawa. "Investigating National Curriculum Implementation in Papua New Guinea (PNG)", University of Waikato, 2013

< 1% match ()

Lebona, Teboho Godfrey. "The implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in the Lejweleputswa education district / by Teboho Godfrey Lebona", Welkom: Central University of Technology, Free State, 2013

< 1% match ()

Van Niekerk, Chantell. "The benefits of agritourism : two case studies in the Western Cape", Stellenbosch : Stellenbosch University

< 1% match ()

Mthethwa, Goitsemang. "Internet regulation of harmful content affecting children", 2015

< 1% match ()

Ah Shene, Walter T. "Community development through the ward committee structures in the Northern areas of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality", Faculty of Arts

< 1% match ()

Nichols, Henry James. "School involvement experiences of parents who affirm the same-sex sexual orientations of their children", 2019

< 1% match ()

Dlani, Siyongwana Archibald. "Teachers' perceptions of the mentoring of novice teachers in the King William's Town District", Faculty of Education, 2012

< 1% match ()

Shadaya, Girlie. "The implementation of inclusion policy for learners with special education needs: a case study of four primary schools in the Grahamstown District", Faculty of Education, 2012

< 1% match ()

Parker, Rianah-Leigh Marr. "Educator' perspectives on collaboration in Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs) of schools in the Wynberg, Grassy Park and Pelican Park area", University of the Western Cape, 2013

< 1% match ()

Mamogale, Majuta Judas. "Examining bureaucratic performance of South African local government: local municipalities in Limpopo province", 2016

< 1% match (Internet from 12-May-2021)

https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10413/14120/Derera_Evelyn_2015.pdf?seque=

< 1% match (Internet from 18-Jul-2020)

http://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/9443/Ngcobo_Nelisiwe_Rhonasia_2012.pdf;sequence=1

< 1% match (student papers from 06-Mar-2017)

Submitted to University of South Africa on 2017-03-06

< 1% match (student papers from 14-Oct-2015)

Submitted to University of South Africa on 2015-10-14

< 1% match (student papers from 03-Nov-2015)

Submitted to University of South Africa on 2015-11-03

< 1% match (student papers from 24-Nov-2015)

Submitted to University of South Africa on 2015-11-24

< 1% match (student papers from 21-Nov-2013)

Submitted to University of South Africa on 2013-11-21

< 1% match (student papers from 08-Jul-2016)

Submitted to University of South Africa on 2016-07-08

< 1% match (student papers from 04-Jun-2015)

Submitted to University of South Africa on 2015-06-04

< 1% match (student papers from 03-Aug-2015)

Submitted to University of South Africa on 2015-08-03

< 1% match (student papers from 04-Apr-2016)

https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/11448/Mthiyane_Siphiwe_Eric_2013.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

1% match (student papers from 24-Feb-2021)

Submitted to University of South Africa on 2021-02-24

1% match (Internet from 01-Nov-2019)

https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Publications/School%20Safety%20Framework%202016.pdf?ver=2016-02-19-133421-363

< 1% match (Internet from 15-Oct-2018)

http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/23457/thesis_motitswe_jmc.pdf?sequence=1

< 1% match (Internet from 15-Oct-2018)

http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/23457/thesis_motitswe_jmc.pdf?sequence=1

< 1% match (Internet from 02-May-2021)

http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/27230/dissertation_malatji_rm.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match (Internet from 20-Aug-2018)

http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/3038/dissertation_landbrook_m.pdf?seque=

< 1% match (Internet from 19-Jul-2020)

http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/8484/dissertation_mchunu_nb.pdf?sequence=1

< 1% match (Internet from 08-Sep-2017)

http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/22731/thesis_nonyane_dl.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match (Internet from 04-Jan-2017)

http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/21509/thesis_ngema_m.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match ()

Mapiet, Junia Alberts. "INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AT SCHOOLS IN THE MANGAUNG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPAL AREA IN THE FREE STATE", Bloemfontein: Central University of Technology, Free State, 2016

< 1% match ()

Nabo, Sandisiwe Sifanelwe. "Human Trafficking: narratives of non-governmental organisation caregivers in the Eastern Cape", Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities, 2013

< 1% match ()

Mfidi, Faniswa Honest. "Promotion of adolescent mental health through a social and emotional learning programme in South African high schools", 2015

< 1% match ()

Knafo, Tilana. "Experiences of practitioners in early childhood development centres in impoverished and marginalised predominantly white communities", 2015

< 1% match ()

Mudzingwa, Kudzayiishe. "Perceptions of stakeholders on management development programmes for beginning secondary school heads in Zimbabwe", 2018

< 1% match ()

Thobela, Nompapa Regina. "The perceptions of principals and teachers of learners with HIV/Aids", Stellenbosch : University of Stellenbosch, 2009

## APPENDIX D: CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

**Blue Diamonds Professional Editing Services (Pty) Ltd**

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Website: www.jaybe9.wixsite.com/bluediamondsediting

21 May 2021

### Declaration of professional edit

EXPLORING THE SUPPORT STRUCTURES IN PLACE FOR LEARNERS WHO ARE SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE
IN A SCHOOL CONTEXT
by
Kemoneilwe Noreen Metsing

I declare that I have edited and proofread this thesis. My involvement was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency and referencing style. I did no structural re-writing of the content.

I am qualified to have done such editing, being in possession of a Bachelor's degree with a major in English, having taught English to matriculation, and having a Certificate in Copy Editing from the University of Cape Town. I have edited more than 200 Masters and Doctoral theses, as well as articles, books and reports.

As the copy editor, I am not responsible for detecting, or removing, passages in the document that closely resemble other texts and could thus be viewed as plagiarism. I am not accountable for any changes made to this document by the author or any other party subsequent to the date of this declaration.

Sincerely,

*Baumgardt*

**Dr J Baumgardt**
**UNISA: D. Ed. Education Management**
**University of Cape Town: Certificate in Copy Editing**
**University of Cape Town: Certificate in Corporate Coaching**

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Sole Director: J Baumgardt

**APPENDIX E: LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT GAUTENG SCHOOLS**

**GAUTENG PROVINCE**
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

**GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER**

| Date: | 08 December 2020 |
|---|---|
| Validity of Research Approval: | 08 February 2021– 30 September 2021 2019/711 |
| Name of Researcher: | Metsing KN |
| Address of Researcher: | 8809 Moeketsi drive |
| | Kagiso 2 |
| | Mogale city |
| Telephone Number: | 071 107 1128 |
| Email address: | Kemoneilwe.metsing@gauteng.gov.za |
| Research Topic: | Exploring the support structure in place for learners who are survivors of violence in a school context |
| Type of qualification | PhD Psychology in Education |
| Number and type of schools: | 5 Secondary Schools and HO |
| District/s/HO | Johannesburg North |

**Re:   Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research**

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1.   Letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

1

*Making education a societal priority*

**Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management**
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

**APPENDIX F: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FROM DISTRICT DIRECTOR: TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

**Research study on: Exploring the support structures in place for survivors of school violence.**

P.O. Box 3201

Wilrogate

1731

25 January 2021


District Director

Gauteng Education Department

Gauteng


Dear Sir/ Madam


**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AT FIVE SCHOOLS**


I am a doctoral student at UNISA doing PhD Psychology of Education. I am kindly requesting permission to carry out a study in your schools. My study is entitled, **Exploring the support structures in place for survivors of school violence.** The study aims to build on available literature on violence in schools in high schools in Johannesburg area. The researcher will explore support structure of survivors of violence and how it is being responded to, in selected high schools, through principals and teachers' voices. In addition, the study aims to build on existing literature on understanding the support survivors of violence in schools and knowledge in understanding it. Policymakers may gain insight into support, perceptions and attitudes which may influence the support of survivors of violence in schools.

Five schools will participate in the study. In each of the five schools, six teachers and one principal per school will be participating in the study. The total participants for the study will therefore be 35 participants.

The study involves semi-structured open-ended questionnaires. The interview process will be approximately 60 minutes. Interviews process will be done through Microsoft Teams and will be recorded with your permission and the participants.

All five schools are willing to do their interviews through Microsoft Teams. Schools have Smart board where they will project the meeting for everyone to see and follow the interview process. During the research period, all Standard Operational procedure governing schools in the management of COVID-19 will be adhered to. The researcher wishes to clarify that participation in this study, is voluntary, and participants are under no obligation to consent to participate.

The table below summarises the participants involved in the research.

| School | Participants | | Total |
|--------|-------------|--|-------|
| **School A** | Principal | | 7 |
| | 6 x Teachers | | |
| **School B** | Principal | | 7 |
| | 6 x Teachers | | |
| **School C** | Principal | | 7 |
| | 6 x Teachers | | |
| **School D** | Principal | | 7 |
| | 6 x Teachers | | |
| **School E** | Principal | | 7 |
| | 6 x Teachers | | |
| **Total** | | | 35 |

The researcher will furnish the school with the findings from this study in the form of a copy of the thesis. The school is free to invite me to share my findings with Life Orientation teachers and School Based Support Team coordinators and the principal upon completion of my studies.

For any further details regarding this study, you are free to contact me on +27 082 219 8297 or my supervisor Prof L.D.N Tlale on +27124292064 or at tlaleldn@unisa.ac.za. Yours sincerely

Ms Kemoneilwe Metsing

**APPENDIX G: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FOR PRINCIPAL: TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

**Research study on: Exploring the support structure in place for survivors of school violence.**

P.O. Box 3201

Wilrogate

1731

25 January 2021


The Principal


Dear Sir/ Madam


**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH:**


I am a doctoral student at UNISA doing PhD Psychology of Education. I am kindly requesting permission to carry out a study in your school. My study is entitled, Exploring the support structure in place for survivors of school violence. The study aims to build on available literature on violence in schools in high schools in Johannesburg area. The researcher will explore support structure of survivors of violence and how it is being responded to, in selected high schools, through principals and teachers' voices. In addition, the study aims to build on existing literature on understanding the support survivors of violence in schools and knowledge in understanding it. Policymakers may gain insight into support, perceptions and attitudes which may influence the support of survivors of violence in schools.

The study will involve one principal and six teachers. The total number of participants is seven. The study involves interactive interviews using open-ended questionnaires through Microsoft Teams. The interview process, which will be approximately 60 minutes. Interviews through Microsoft Teams will be recorded with your permission and participants.

The researcher wishes to clarify that participation in this study is voluntary and they are under no obligation to consent to participation.

With your permission, the researcher will utilize Smart board to project the meeting for everyone to see and follow the interview process. During the research period, all Standard Operational procedure governing schools in the management of COVID-19 will be adhered to. These are participants at the school that will be involved in the research:

The researcher will furnish the school with the findings from this study in the form of a copy of the thesis. The school is free to invite me to share my findings with the principal and teachers and upon completion of my studies.

For any further details regarding this study, you are free to contact me on +27 082 219 8297 or my supervisor Prof L.D.N Tlale on +27124292064 or at tlaleldn@unisa.ac.za.

Yours sincerely

Ms Kemoneilwe Metsing

**APPENDIX H: CONSENT FOR PARENTS FOR INFORMATION OF CHILDREN TO BE USED IN THIS STUDY (RETURN SLIP)**

**Research study on: Exploring the support structure in place for survivors of school violence**

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree that if any information of my child found in the documents to be analysed, the researcher will make sure that names are blurred and not used. I agree that that researcher will make sure that no names of myself and my child will be explicit such that anyone can identify either of us.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant

Name & Surname (please print) _____

Participant Signature _____          Date: _____

Yours sincerely

Ms Kemoneilwe Metsing

**APPENDIX I: ASCENT FOR LEARNERS FOR INFORMATION GATHERED IN DOCUMENT ANALYSIS TO BE USED IN THIS STUDY (RETURN SLIP)**

**Research study on:  Exploring the support structure in place for survivors of school violence.**

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my ascent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.
I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).
I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree that if any information of myself found in the documents to be analysed, the researcher will make sure that names are blurred and not used.  I agree that that researcher will make sure that no names of myself will be explicit such that anyone can identify me. I fully understand that information taken from document at the school
I have received a signed copy of the informed ascent agreement.

The following documentation will be analysed to triangulate the research findings; The documents will be requested to be scanned and emailed for scrutiny.

- Name type(s) of documents:

School safety policy

Screening Identification Assessment and Support referral document. (e.g. number of learner referrals)

School incidents reports. (e.g. number of incidents reported)

School visitor's logbook (e.g. number of school visits from District Based Support Team)

The researcher will obtain the documents from school principals. The documents will be requested to be scanned and emailed for perusal. During the research period, all Standard Operational procedures governing schools in the management of COVID-19 will be adhered to. Notes recorded during the sessions, that includes observation and documents will also be used in data analysis.

The researcher will observe ethical principles such as informed consent, privacy, confidentially and anonymity and non-maleficence. Prior to the study, informed consent will be sought from the participants as required by research ethics. A clearance letter to carry out the study will be sought from UNISA Research Ethics Committee of the faculty of education. The researcher will seek the permission to conduct the study in secondary schools from the Gauteng Education Department, Provincial in Gauteng Province. Permission to carry out the study in schools will be sought from the Heads of the District and the principals of secondary schools. Informed consent letters will be sent to parents or guardians of the learners requesting their permission to access documentation that relates to their children to be utilized in the study.

The researcher will also observe the principle of confidentiality and anonymity. Guided by this philosophy, the researcher will assure the participants identity will be protected, and that confidential information will not be revealed.

You are assured that the information collected from about you will only be accessed by the researcher and will be kept in a secure location. The identifying information will be kept separate from the data so that your identity cannot be discovered. For the sake of anonymity, the codes and pseudonyms will be utilised for the participants' names and schools where data will be collected.

Participant

Name & Surname (please print) _____

Participant Signature: _____          Date:_____

Yours sincerely

Ms Kemoneilwe Metsing

**APPENDIX J: CONSENT FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (RETURN SLIP)**

**Research study on:  Exploring the support structures in place for survivors of violence in a school context**.

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview proceedings.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant

Name & Surname (please print) _____

Signature: _____         Date: _____

Yours sincerely

Ms Kemoneilwe Metsing

**APPENDIX K: INTERVIEW CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

**Research study on: Exploring the support structures in place for survivors of violence in a school context.**

I _____ agree that the interview and opinions expressed during interview may be used by the researcher for research purposes. I am aware that the interview will be audio-recorded and grant permission for the recordings with the understanding that confidentiality will be maintained in as far as possible.

Participant's title; Name and surname: …………………………………………….

Participant's signature: ………………………………………………………………….

Researcher's name: Ms Kemoneilwe Metsing

Yours sincerely

Ms Kemoneilwe Metsing

**APPENDIX L: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS THROUGH MICROSOFT TEAMS.**

**Research study on: Exploring the support structure in place for survivors of school violence.**

Open ended questionnaires document will be designed with the following questions:

| |
|---|
| 1. What support structures do you have in place for learners who are survivors of violence in your school? |
| 2. How would you define a support structure? |
| 3. What safety measures are in place to complement support structure for violence not to happen in this school? |
| 4. What protocol do you follow to report and request support for learners who are survivors of violence in this school context? |
| 6. What is the turnaround time to receive support for learners who are survivors of violence in this school? |
| 7. Do you have any District Based Support Team member giving support to your school? If so, do you think the support given is enough? Explain. |
| 8. What is your opinion regarding the support given to learners who have experienced violence in the school? Do you think that the support given is effective/ineffective? Please explain? |
| 9. How do you think the support structure can be improved? |
| 10. Explain the support structure that is available for learners who are survivors of violence in this school context? |

| 11. In your opinion, do you think that the support structure available in this school is effective/ineffective? Please explain. |
| --- |
| 12. In your opinion how best can the support structure be improved? |
| 13. What role does the Life Orientation teacher and the School Based Support Team play in preventing violent behaviour being repeated in your school? |
| 14. In your opinion, what can cause a learner to display violent behaviour? |
| 15. How do you manage violent behaviour displayed by learners in your school? |
| 16. In your opinion do you think support is enough to combat violent behaviour in your school? Explain. |
| 17. What can be done to help learner who is a survivor of violence in this school context? |
| 18. What kind of support systems should the school have in place, to assist a learner who is a survivor of violence in this school context? |
| 19. What kind of training will be beneficial in helping you to better support and assist learners who are survivors of violence in this school context? |

**APPENDIX M: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS THROUGH MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**Research study on: Exploring the support structure in place for survivors of school violence**.

Open ended questionnaires document will be designed with the following questions:

| |
|---|
| 1. What support structures do you have in place for learners who are survivors of violence in your school? |
| 2. How would you define a support structure? |
| 3. What safety measures are in place to complement support structure for violence not to happen in this school? |
| 4. What protocol do you follow to report and request support for learners who are survivors of violence in this school context? |
| 6. What is the turnaround time to receive support for learners who are survivors of violence in this school? |
| 7. Do you have any District Based Support Team member giving support to your school? If so, do you think the support given is enough? Explain. |
| 8. What is your opinion regarding the support given to learners who have experienced violence in the school? Do you think that the support given is effective/ineffective? Please explain? |
| 9. How do you think the support structure can be improved? |
| 10. Explain the support structure that is available for learners who are survivors of violence in this school context? |

| |
|---|
| 11. In your opinion, do you think that the support structure available in this school is effective/ineffective? Please explain. |
| 12. In your opinion how best can the support structure be improved? |
| 13. What role does the Life Orientation teacher and the School Based Support Team play in preventing violent behaviour being repeated in your school? |
| 14. In your opinion, what can cause a learner to display violent behaviour? |
| 15.How do you manage violent behaviour displayed by learners in your school? |
| 16. In your opinion do you think support is enough to combat violent behaviour in your school? Explain. |
| 17. What can be done to help learner who is a survivor of violence in this school context? |
| 18. What kind of support systems should the school have in place, to assist a learner who is a survivor of violence in this school context? |
| 19. What kind of training will be beneficial in helping you to better support and assist learners who are survivors of violence in this school context? |

**APPENDIX N: MS TEAMS TRANSCRIPT**

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APPENDIX M: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS THROUGH MICROSOFT TEAMS.

Research study on: Exploring the support structure in place for survivors of school violence.

Open ended questionnaires document will be designed with the following questions:

1. What support structures do you have in place for learners who are survivors of violence in your school?

We have an SBST committee that sits and discuss cases that are referred to them.
We also have a priest that comes and pray.
There is a social worker who assists the school sometimes
The Deputy Principal is helpfull.

2. How would you define a support structure?

It is a committee that supports learners who are having life difficulties or social issues. Its talking to learners and they being able to listen to you.

3. What safety measures are in place to complement support structure for violence not to happen in this school?

We have a safety committee. But we also have do ground duties during break to monitor learners.
The scaß should be the one making sure that the school is safe, this is their competence.
We also have Adopt-a-cop that we call to address learners.
- There is a security officer/personnel at the gate.

4. What protocol do you follow to report and request support for learners who are survivors of violence in this school context?

When a learner is violent, ussually they are taken to the principal office. The IDSO is informed and we seek guidance from the District.
Ussually the SBST is not involed.
Disciplinary action is then taken against the learner in a disciplinary hearing.
The District is informed and support is then asked. The IDSO is informed.

3. What safety measures are in place to complement support structure for violence not to happen in this school?

We have a safety committee. But we also have do ground duties during break to monitor learners.

The SGB should be the one making sure that the school is safe, this is their competence. We also have Adopt-a-cop that we call to address learners.

- There is a security officer/personnel at the gate.

4. What protocol do you follow to report and request support for learners who are survivors of violence in this school context?

When a learner is violent, ussually they are taken to the principal office. The IDSO is informed and we seek guidance from the District.

Ussually the SBST is not involved. Disciplinary action is then taken against the learner in a disciplinary hearing. The District is informed and support is then asked. The IDSO is informed.

consider the syllabus and the ATP's. So we offer support just for a brief time. Besides we have not being trained to offer counselling. The social worker also who comes to the school do offer support when they can.

9. How do you think the support structure can be improved?

Support structure can be improved if we can have at least a social worker or a counsellor appointed at the school.
We can also be trained on how to deal with such learners. The training should also take into consideration that I was trained as a teacher and not a social worker or a counsellor. I cannot be expected to do many things that I was not trained to do.

10. Explain the support structure that is available for learners who are survivors of violence in this school context?

These learners receive a talk by a particular teacher. I cannot truly say it is what its called support. Its just a small talk and we get back to the usual which is teaching and learning.
The social worker who comes sometime and talk to the learners.
The District ISS sometimes comes when they have time.

11. In your opinion, do you think that the support structure available in this school is effective/ineffective? Please explain.

Clearly the support structure is ineffective. It is just a task by a particular teacher. There is never a follow up or an assessment to measure whether the support went well or not. We just talk to a learner for a particular time and go back to our normal life

12. In your opinion how best can the support structure be improved?

We need training that is relevant. We need a social worker or a counsellor to be appointed at the school.
The training that they give us should note that we were trained at college to be teachers and not social workers

13. What role does the Life Orientation teacher and the School Based Support Team play in preventing violent behaviour being repeated in your school?

The LO teacher is teaching LO. In this LO class she teaches them about life skills and how they should handle life issues, and how they should handle life issues, The SBST has little to help. As I said we just have a talk with the learner.

**14. In your opinion, what can cause a learner to display violent behaviour?**

There are many things that I think can cause a learner to misbehave and be violent. It can be where the learner come from which is their home. It can be peer pressure and negative influence by friends or television. It can be because they are smoking drugs or nyaope or something. Sometimes it can just be a learner who is badly brood-up. Sometimes these learners have wrong role models.

**15. How do you manage violent behaviour displayed by learners in your school?**

I call them to order. I also report to the Deputy Principal or the Principal. The Deputy principal is ussually the one who assist in discipline matters.

16. In your opinion do you think support is enough to combat violent behaviour in your school? Explain.

Support is not enough, that's why these learners are probably failing or leaving school. I think if we can enough support many learners will excel in their studies and the results of the school would be high. Right now our results are poor and its probably these learners just come to school because what can they do. They must come to school it is tough out there. School is important

17. What can be done to help learner who is a survivor of violence in this school context?

The learner can be referred to the District to be assisted or counselled. Or we can appoint a social worker or a counsellor to help them. These learners need help, sometimes life can be tough and they dont know what to do
We do listen to them, but we do not give them enough time so that they can talk.

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18. What kind of support systems should the school have in place, to assist a learner who is a survivor of violence in this school context?

The SBST must have meetings and lets discuss what is going on. The social worker should come at least three times a week. The school can also appoint a social worker and or a counsellor. The SGB must also come and listen to us as teachers. We should work together, together is power and strength

19. What kind of training will be beneficial in helping you to better support and assist learners who are survivors of violence in this school context?

Counselling training.
Training on how to see learners who are having problems
Training that will make us to encourage parents and learners.