



**REDUCING SCHOOL VIOLENCE: A PEACE EDUCATION  
PROJECT AMONGST STAKEHOLDERS IN UMLAZI**

**SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF  
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## ABSTRACT

Violence occurring within South African schools is a concern for all stakeholders. Violence takes various forms including bullying, theft of property, robberies and vandalism, sexual violence, harassment and rape, gang related violence, violence related to drugs and alcohol abuse, physical violence, shooting, stabbing and murder, violence through student protest and racially motivated violence. Every form of violence has devastating effects on the school system such as physical and psychological effects, educational damage and societal breakdown. The aim of this study was to explore school violence in the South African high school context, review existing strategies that seek to minimise it and thereafter devise and incorporate more effective strategies to prevent this scourge from increasing. There are numerous services currently in place to support abused victims and perpetrators, including, school level support plans and specialised support services, however, the problem persists.

The study was built on the foundation of three related theories; firstly, the social learning theory, which states that the behaviour of an individual is learned from their surrounding environment through the process of observational learning; secondly, the restorative justice theory, which supports the use of healing approaches instead of punitive measures; and lastly, the Cure Violence model, which includes visualising and treating violence as if it were an infectious disease that spreads from one person to another. For the purpose of the study, a qualitative research approach was chosen to employ a case study research design. Institutions involved in the study were two secondary schools in the Umlazi district, Durban. Semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and focus groups discussions were used in a triangulation approach to enhance validity and reliability. I also wrote field notes while doing interviews and conducting focus group discussions to document participants' responses and other observations which transpired in the process. Action research, premised on the Cure Violence model, utilising the information obtained from data collection was planned, implemented and evaluated in one school. Specialised groups – the *We Care* (WC) group and the *School Peer Educators* (SPEs) were trained and empowered to be agents of peace in this context.

Participants' responses on what they thought were the causes of violence were grouped into the following themes: environmental factors; resistance to parents; lack of awareness; influence of poverty; peer influence; love relationships; culture and religion. The WC and SPE groups were imparted with invaluable knowledge during this study, knowledge which is intended for use in years to come in the school and in the surrounding communities. The WC group reported to be very functional in dealing with cases involving parents when I returned for follow-up visits and reflection.

## DECLARATION

I Lucia Zithobile Ngidi declare that

- i. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated is my original research.
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.....  
Lucia Zithobile Ngidi

I hereby approve the final submission of the following thesis.

.....  
Dr. S.B. Kaye

.....  
Professor G.T. Harris

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to: my parents - Agnes Nomathamsanqa Mkhize and my late father, Simon Ndlondlo Mkhize, who strived for my education against all odds, I salute them; the *We Care* group and *School Peer Educators* who are the true agents of peace, and sacrifice(d) their happiness to brighten the lives of other people.

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- The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education for providing the permission to conduct the study.
- The principals of the two high schools involved in this study; as well as the educators, learners, parents and community members who willingly participated in the study - without them this study would not have been possible.
- The *We Care* group and *School Peer Educators* who sacrificed their time to learn and live peace, prepared to face difficult challenges to spread the words and actions of peace to every stakeholder.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CJCP	Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention
CPF	Community Police Forum
DoE	Department of Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FESCI	Student Federation of Cote D'Ivoire
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
GTU	Gambia Teachers Union
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOD	Head of Department
HRM	Human Resource Management
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ITP	Integrative Theory of Peace
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSSF	National Schools Safety Framework
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SAPS	South African Police Services
SBST	School Based Support Team
SGB	School Governing Body
SLTU	Sierra Leone Teachers Union
SMT	School Management Team
SPE	School Peer Educators
SRSA	Department of Sport and Recreation South Africa
SSC	School Safety Committee
TLO	Teacher Liaison Officer
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

USA	United State of America
WA	West Africa
WARO	West Africa Regional Office
WC	We Care
WCARO	West and Central Africa Regional Office
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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# **PART ONE**

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The scourge of violence in South African schools is cause for concern: daily reports appear in written and electronic media about the high levels of physical, sexual and gang-related violence in our schools (Mncube and Harber 2013: 1). However, school violence is not only a South African problem, most countries' experiences are similar (South African Council of Educators (SACE) 2011: 15). In Italy, approximately 28% of secondary school children have been victims of school violence (SACE 2011: 14). According to Dunne *et al.* (2013: 286), violence against children has been widely documented throughout the world and sadly it occurs in places where they should be most protected, that is, in their homes, foster institutions and schools.

There are more prevalent forms of school violence such as bullying, fighting, stabbing, rape and murder (Mncube and Steinmann 2014: 204). Statistics provided by Burton and Leoschut (2013: 7) stated that in the 121 South African secondary schools, more than a fifth of learners had experienced violence in school, 12.2% had been threatened with violence, 6.3% had been assaulted, 4.7% had been sexually assaulted or raped and 4.5% had been robbed at school. Despite the existence of various interventions proposed by different authors, South Africa still faces this dilemma, which is an area of concern for every stakeholder in the country (Mncube and Steinmann 2014: 204). Stakeholders (educators, learners, parents and community members) need to be empowered and exposed to methods of dealing with conflict in socially acceptable and non-violent ways in order to curb the cycle of violence. The empowerment of all stakeholders is an important element of this thesis.

This study was conducted in South African secondary schools in the Phumelela circuit of the Umlazi district in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). According to the Local Economic Development Plan (2008: 5), Umlazi Township is located approximately 17 kilometres south of Durban's Central Business District and immediately west of the Southern Industrial Basin. The area of Umlazi is 4 481.7 hectares and forms part of eThekweni Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal.

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent of school violence in South African schools. Additionally, it sought to analyse existing strategies used to reduce violence, and their effectiveness, as well as develop and evaluate strategies that could be more effective in solving this crisis. De Wet (2009, 60),

fears that schools focus on violence control strategies, such as expulsion, instead of educating learners to resolve conflicts positively and peacefully. Mncube and Harber (2013: 13) believe that with regard to school violence there is a connection between what goes on outside the school and what goes on inside the school. This study also incorporated the Cure Violence model from Gary Slutkin, which views violence as a disease that needs to (and can) be cured (Ransford *et al.* 2013: 10). The Cure Violence model is premised on the idea that violence is a contagious disease as it meets the definitions of a disease and of being contagious. Infectious diseases kill people and spread from person to person just like violence appears to spread across people in a locality (Toscano 2015: 6). The Cure Violence model will be described in detail in chapter 4, 5 and 7.

According to Toscano (*ibid*), violence is similar to infectious diseases in the following ways: firstly, violence clusters in certain areas much like a disease such as cholera; secondly, violence spreads like a disease and lastly, violence is transmitted through exposure (in the case of violence, this is done through modelling, social learning, and norms). In order to change group and community culture, regarding violence, we need to view violence through a health lens and treat it as a health issue (Slutkin *et al.* 2014.: 95).

This study was an action research project that intended to empower stakeholders to take part in detecting violence and blocking its transmission using the same methods used to block contagious diseases (Ransford 2013: 5). According to Burton and Leoschut (2012: 2), if stakeholders are to successfully address the challenges of school violence then they need reliable and standardised data on the extent, nature and characteristics of violence related to schools in South Africa. Data was collected from two secondary schools through focus group discussions, open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and observation. Analysis of data was categorised under four broad themes each with subthemes. This data was then presented to an action team for planning an intervention in the school. This is detailed in subsequent chapters.

## **1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Prinsloo (2005 cited in Masitsa 2011: 163) states that the South African Constitution and legislation make provision for the protection of the rights and safety of learners in schools but in many schools, violence is still escalating. A study conducted by Burton and Leoschut (2013: 91) pointed out that young people who experience violence are likely to end up with a wide range of emotional, behavioural and educational problems that could affect them throughout their lives. Experiencing and exposure to violence goes hand in glove with poor performance, low concentration levels and dropping out of school (Burton and Leoschut 2013: 92). Mncube and Harber (2013: 17) support Burton and Leoschut (2013: 91) when explaining that

school violence could result in serious, long-standing physical, emotional and psychological problems for learners including low self-esteem, reduced school attendance, impaired concentration, diminished ability to learn, depression and suicide. On a similar note, Ward (2007 cited in SACE 2011: 30) asserts that young people or children who are exposed to violence at a young age are more likely to become caught up in cycles of violence, repeatedly being victims and/or perpetrators of violence. Traumatic experiences impact brain development in young people and result in difficulties in learning and cognitive functioning (Burton and Leoschut 2013: 92).

According to Bester and Du Plessis (2010: 220), educators' lives are also negatively affected by high levels of school violence. These symptoms might manifest immediately or over a long term period. School violence is arguably one of the factors leading to the decrease in the number of young people choosing to become educators, the increase in the number of educators resigning from the profession and the recorded high levels of educator stress and depression (SACE 2011: 31). Educators often feel that the Department of Education (DoE), parents and the school community are not supporting them in fighting this pandemic however, they still expect educators to produce excellent results.

The abovementioned references clearly show that school violence is a grim societal problem. The effects of this epidemic are far reaching and chronic. It is with this realisation that I decided to tackle this issue and use this study to test the work of Gary Slutkin as a possible solution to school violence in this context.

### **1.3 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study was influenced by the work of Gary Slutkin, as noted above, an epidemiologist who has worked on eradicating many infectious diseases in various refugee camps in North and Central Africa (Cureviolence.org n.d). Upon returning to his native country, the United States, he realised that they were experiencing an epidemic of their own – not cholera or tuberculosis, but violence. Slutkin started doing more research regarding violence, and quickly stumbled on the similarities that exist between violence and infectious disease. Slutkin realised that most city's crime rates spiked in geographic clusters, like the viruses he had treated in Somalia and Uganda, and that those who had experienced violence had a greater likelihood of committing it, signifying its contagious nature (Sanburn 2016: 24).

Initially, Slutkin started a group that tapped people with connections to high crime areas to serve as violence interrupters (Sanburn 2016: 24). After receiving tips from community members, they reached out to people who had experienced a violent episode, mediated ongoing conflicts and worked with high-risk residents to change their behaviour much in the way that doctors treat outbreaks of contagious diseases (Sanburn 2016: 24). It worked within a year: Slutkin's approach led to a 67% decrease in shootings in one of Chicago's

most violent areas (Sanburn 2016: 24). Slutkin's idea to treat violence like a disease triggered my curiosity if adopting the same method to reduce school violence in South African secondary schools would be effective. The intention of this study was to work with stakeholders to detect violent behaviour in order to block its transmission from one person to another. The overall aim of the study was to assess violence in South African schools and develop a strategy to reduce school violence.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To explore the nature, extent, causes and consequences of violence in high schools.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of current strategies used to reduce violence in schools.
- To investigate different strategies that can be applied by each stakeholder in violence reduction.
- To design, implement and evaluate alternative strategies to reduce school violence.

## **1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW**

School based violence in South Africa is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by many dynamics (Snodgrass and Heleta: 2009: 41). Different parties within the school environment are involved either as perpetrators or victims of a violent act. Witnesses to violence are also deeply affected. Learners may act violently towards each other or to educators; educators may also inflict violence on learners (Snodgrass and Heleta: 2009: 41). In some cases, the dilemma is rooted outside the school environment such as one that is caused by family or community members (Nconsta and Shumba 2013: 1). Research shows that this disease is increasing in different schools despite measures put in place by the DoE and schools themselves (Nconsta and Shumba 2013: 1). An environment that is full of crime and violence is not conducive to teaching and learning, hence, the first objective of this study focuses on the nature, causes, extent and consequences of school violence. The remaining objectives involve examining current strategies in place by stakeholders and suggesting new interventions.

### **1.4.1 Nature of school violence**

School violence in South Africa is not a new phenomenon (Mncube and Steinmann 2014: 203). It is likely that for as long as formal schools have existed so has violence (in some form or another) within them. However, it is only during the last few decades that school violence has provoked a lively debate and a fair amount of public anguish (Mncube 2014: 416). The increase in the number of reported school violence cases requires immediate attention by stakeholders. These violent incidences have become so common, that the media now reports them on a daily basis (Mncube 2014: 416).



According to Burton (2008 cited in SACE 2011: 6), violence in the school context can range from mental to physical forms of violence. The SACE (2011: 6) lists the different types of violence: bullying; theft of properties, robberies and vandalism; sexual violence, harassment and rape; gang-related violence; violence related to drug abuse; physical violence and use of weapons; shooting, stabbing and murder; violence through student protests and racially motivated violence.

#### **1.4.2 Causes of school violence**

School violence is a complex issue with a variety of influencing factors. In order to cover all of the suspected causes of school violence, I used the ecological theory of human development by Bronfenbrenner (1989) as I felt that it holistically described the possible causes of school violence. Harkonen (2007: 1) explains that the ecological theory of human development views school violence as a phenomenon influenced by a combination of factors, these factors can be grouped into 5 broad categories, namely: microsystem; mesosystem; exosystem; macrosystem and chronosystem factors. If these factors are adverse, they negatively trap learners and have an impact on their growth and development Harkonen (2007: 1). A study conducted by Du Plessis (2010: 219) shows similarity with Harkonen (2007: 1) in stating that individual, family, community and social factors shape the behaviour of a learner in school and form the basis for school violence. Allen (2010: 7) posits that bullies and victims tend to come from families where parenting was either passive or authoritarian.

According to the National School Safety Framework (NSSF) (2012: 14) there are various reasons that cause an increase in school violence, such as the desire to become popular and gain attention and modelling violent behaviour learned from the community or home. Burton's (2007: 3) work revealed similar conclusions with the NSSF in explaining that political factors such as protests for basic services contribute to school violence as learners learn that their needs can be met through violence. Burton (2007: 3) further commented on the easy availability of drugs and weapons within communities as other contributing factors to the increase in school violence.

#### **1.4.3 Consequences and extent of school violence**

School violence has an undesirable impact on the lives of young people, educators and parents, and it also negatively influences effective teaching and learning (Mkhize *et al.* 2011: 40). They conducted a study in the Swayimana rural area in KZN and concluded that the experiences of violence by young people are likely the results of a wide range of emotional, behavioural and educational outcomes that occur across a victims' entire lifespan. Singh (2014: 84) concurred with this study, stating that learners with antisocial and violent behaviour tend to have low self-esteem and have experienced Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Furthermore, crime and violence are severe threats to the fragile democracy, peace and economic stability that exist in South Africa (Singh 2014: 84). According to Njuho and Davids (2012: 271), there is a profound interaction between the environment and the individual. These previously mentioned authors observed that violence in schools affects every stakeholder operating within the environment. According to Snodgrass and Heleta (2009: 41), conflict in schools exists among different stakeholders, i.e.: learner-to-learner; learner-to educator and educator-to-learner. Burton and Leoschut (2012: 40) reported that much of violence experienced by learners in school is perpetrated by other stakeholders. Espelage *et al.* (2013: 75) believe that there are incidents where learners also attack educators, unfortunately the area has been neglected and understudied. According to Allen (2010: 3), educators are not only the victims of learner abuse, some are the abusers themselves. Ngqela and Lewis (2012: 94) state that violence in schools reflects a specific gender-based physical, emotional and verbal type of violence. Ngqela and Lewis (2012: 94) explained that males are often identified as the perpetrators of this school violence with girls often bearing the impact. Snodgrass and Heleta (2009: 41) warn that gender-based violence commonly reported in any society is related to power inequities based on gender roles, which are marked by the domination of men and the subordination of women (Njuho and Davids 2012: 271). The extent of violence in South African schools varies from minor crimes to major crimes and offenses. This is discussed extensively in the next chapter.

#### **1.4.4 Services available to victims**

Behavioural problems are commonly experienced in schools, however various services should be in place in an effort to assist the victims and perpetrators of school violence. According to the KZN DoE (2015: 29), schools should have a plan indicating types of services available for the victims and perpetrators of school violence. Currently, such a plan is found in the form of a learner handbook called *Speak Out*. The *Speak Out* handbook has been written specifically to help learners understand sexual harassment and violence (KZN DoE 2015: 4). Schools should also work interchangeably with external specialised support services such as legal services, medico-legal services and therapeutic services to achieve the goal of assisting victims and perpetrator of all forms of violence. It is questionable if these services are sufficient, effective or even known to learners. This is discussed later in this thesis.

#### **1.4.5 Strategies on school violence reduction**

The SACE (2011: 22) revealed that the government was actually prioritising the issue of school violence, but the DoE had limited data on the levels and extent of violence. De Wet (2009: 60) explained that schools in South Africa primarily relied on two violent stop violence: punitive and security measures. The punitive approach involved disciplinary measures within the school, such as office referral, in-and out-of-school suspension and expulsion. Security measures involve the South African Police Services (SAPS) in arresting

suspects for acts that are punishable by law. There are other strategies in place by the DoE to fight against the increase in school violence such as conducting crime awareness campaigns for learners, the formulation of school safety committees involving educators, parents, SAPS, learners and Community Policing Forums (CPF); and the partnership agreement between the DoE and the SAPS to prevent, manage and respond to incidents of crime and violence in schools (DoE and SAPS 2009: 4). However, most are post-violent strategies as they only apply once the act of violence has been committed. They all focus on violence control measures rather than educating learners to resolve conflicts positively and non-violently.

## **1.5 INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

School violence occurs throughout the world and affects a significant proportion of children and adolescents (UNESCO 2017: 9). According to UNESCO (2017: 9), an estimated 246 million children and adolescents experience school violence in some form every year. With improved internet connections, countries now have access to reports of school violence that happens outside their country of origin. It's crucial for South Africa to note the similarities and differences of school violence we share with other countries prior to intervention strategy. This is discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

## **1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

According to Reyneke (2015: 65), restorative practices should be adopted as a strategy against punitive measures. Restorative justice can be defined as all the strategies, approaches, programmes, models, methods and techniques used on a preventative level to prevent misconduct, as well as to address the harm caused by misconduct at an intervention level (Reyneke 2015: 65). In order to understand violence, a distinction has to be made between personal and structural violence. According to Galtung (1969: 170), personal (direct) violence refers to the type of violence where there is an actor that commits the violence; whereas structural violence (indirect) is a case where there is no actor who commits violence but a person is killed or mutilated. It means the violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power relations and consequently as unequal life chances. To devise strategies to reduce violence more predictably, factors that trigger violent behaviour should be diagnosed. Hence, the social learning theory was included in the study – the social learning theory gives a comprehensive breakdown on the possible causes of violence (Bandura 1971: 2). Slutkin (n.d.: 94) sees violence as a phenomenon driven by the brain, as the brain regulates and controls behaviour. Slutkin (n.d.: 94) believes research and understanding regarding the brain is still in its infancy, and that we still have much to learn and comprehend about the matter. Understanding the brain can lead to understanding the nature of phenomena powered by the brain, such as violence (Truesdell 2015: 71). Therefore, for the purpose of this study and understanding the true nature of violence, restorative justice, the social learning theory and Cure Violence model were all used and discussed extensively. The

interaction of these theories creates a framework of understanding violence and the means to reduce such behaviour in human relationships. This is detailed in Chapter 4.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A research design is a plan to investigate the research question, accomplish the research objectives and to make sense of the data gathered in a specific manner. The design selected for the purpose of this study is a case study. This design was selected because the investigation was located within two schools in Umlazi. This was an empirical study of a qualitative nature and it aimed to provide an in-depth description of a small number of cases (Mouton and Marais 1996: 149). This is a case of two high schools where I interacted face-to-face with participants to get their personal views on school violence and to develop an intervention in one of the schools - interviews and discussions were conducted in both schools, action research that involved stakeholders was only planned and implemented in one of the two schools - Vukuzakhe. Action research aims at finding the desirable solution(s) for a particular practical problem situated in a specific, applied setting (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell 2005: 25). This study was conceived to be an action research project where stakeholders were empowered to interrupt the occurrence of violence, stop the spread of violence and then change group/community norms regarding violence. Training workshops were provided to capacitate outreach workers. Firstly, I interacted face-to-face with learners, educators and community members and sent open-ended questionnaires to parents to gather information on school violence and approaches. Secondly, the action teams formed, described below. We planned and implemented the Cure Violence strategy using data collected from stakeholders as a base. The Cure Violence model was implemented in its entirety in cases that the teams thought were relevant and beneficial. The stakeholders at the school were educated and trained on how to use the Cure Violence model even after the study was no longer functioning at their school.

### **1.7.1 Population**

The study was conducted in Umlazi, KZN. The Local Economic Development Plan (2008: 5) gives a brief explanation of Umlazi as a township on the east coast of KZN, South Africa, and located South West of Durban. It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest township in South Africa, after Soweto and Thembisa. The population is estimated at over one million residents; based on an average of four (4) members per household, an estimate of 1, 677, 556 million inhabitants is plausible. Umlazi has inherited the devastating effects of apartheid planning policies characterised by spatial and economic isolation. This area experiences the typical South African township problems; however, they are magnified due the large size of the township. These problems include: severe housing shortages, major informal settlements, high levels of unemployment, low levels of economic development, high rates of unemployment and high crime rates. Schools in this location are

ranked from quintile one (the poorest areas) to quintile five (affluent areas) as per the DoE. However, school violence is reported across ranking levels. This is discussed in detail in chapter 5.

According to Stats SA (2014: vii) 39% of Umlazi residents are unemployed and 30% live in informal settlements. Murder and assault are common at Umlazi township; in 2014, 133 people were murdered and 746 assaulted (Stats SA 2014: iii).

### 1.7.2 Sampling method

This study is qualitative in nature and non-probability sampling was used. Cohen *et al* (2011: 165) explains that selection in non-probability sampling involves targeting a certain group with the full knowledge that it does not represent the broader population, but instead represents the group itself. They further explain that it is mostly used in small scale research where findings cannot be generalised. Tustin *et al.*, (2005: 116) stated that non-probability sampling relies on the discretion of the researcher and the degree of the sampling error cannot be determined.

The relevant type of non-probability sampling for this study is purposive sampling. Cohen et al. (2011: 155) describes purposive sampling as a feature of qualitative research that allows the researcher to hand-pick cases to be included in the sample on the basis of his/ her judgement of typicality. This allows the researcher to build up a sample that is satisfactory for his/ her needs. In this study I chose participants with the purpose to understand the extent of school violence and in order to design and implement intervention strategies. Stakeholders irrespective of the gender, race, age and education qualifications were selected. Participants were educators and learners from 2 schools, parents of learners from the same schools and community members. Samples from both schools were:

- *School A:* The sample was drawn from educators and learners to participate in 2 focus group discussions as follows: 8 educators and 8 learners participated in focus group discussions separately from each other. 20 parents responded to the open-ended questionnaires. A total of 3 community members responded to the request for in-depth interviews.
- *School B:* A group of 8 educators and 8 learners was selected to participate in 2 focus group discussions independently of each other. A total of 20 open-ended questionnaires were distributed to parents and 2 community members responded to individual interviews.

The action research component of this study was only conducted at School A. On my arrival, at school, they had two organisations working with learners, which are School Peer Educators (SPEs) and Star for Life. SPEs build unity amongst learners and encourage good relationships within the school. Star for Life

empowers youth with information and motivation to take decisions that will reduce the risk of them contracting HIV. It is also committed to building attitudes and changing risky sexual behaviours in ways that empower young people to realise their dream of a better future. I, along with 2 participants from each stakeholder group (who were randomly selected) formed an action research project called *We Care* (WC), composed of 9 participants in total. WC was introduced to fight school violence. Their objective was to block the transmission of violence from one person to another. I empowered WC workers using the Cure Violence model strategies that are to detect violence, block its transmission and change group norms. On completion of training, WC educated SPEs on the same content of Cure Violence model. The two structures agreed to work hand in hand, where SPEs would mediate violence internally and WC externally. We all agreed that SPEs would work with educators and learners within the school, whilst WC would work with parents and community members outside the school environment. SPEs would refer cases that involved parents and community members to the WC should they come within the school. I volunteered to assist these two structures in the future should the school wish to continue with this method. This is further discussed in chapter 4.

### **1.7.3 Pilot testing**

A pilot test of the open-ended questionnaire was conducted with 20 parents in both schools prior to the main survey. The feedback was incorporated into the questionnaire before being disseminated to the larger sample. These parents were not included in the main sample.

### **1.7.4 Data collection**

Swanepoel and Erasmus (2000: 99) explain that the choice of data collection method and sources of data used in a study depend on the nature of a problem and the purpose of conducting the research. For this study, 4 qualitative data collection methods, namely the focus group discussions, open-ended questionnaires, in-depth interviews and observations, were used to collect data on school violence. Permission to conduct research was granted by the KZN DoE, afterwards conducting focus group discussions and the distribution and collection of questionnaires was discussed with the principals of the two schools. I arranged to conduct in-depth interviews with community members. In addition, the permission to plan and implement an action research project that focused on Cure Violence as an approach was given by the principal of the school concerned.

Data collection was largely split into two broad categories – primary and secondary. Primary data collection incorporated all data that was collected from stakeholders involved at both schools, whilst secondary data was collected from those participants (in the community) who were identified by stakeholders as good candidates for the implementation of the Cure Violence model.

#### **1.7.5 Data analysis**

For the purpose of this study, I followed the process of data analysis as portrayed in a sequence of seven steps suggested by Cohen *et al.*, (2011: 245). I adhered to the steps in evaluating, assessing and grouping the collected data by the themes of focus groups, open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The findings of the data collected were presented in themes, each with several sub-themes, but mainly addressed the following: actuality of violence in schools, causes of school violence, reduction strategies and empowerment using Cure Violence model.

#### **1.7.6 Findings and empowerment**

All participants declared schools as unsafe and pointed out the common forms of school violence to be substance abuse, theft, vandalism, physical violence, religious discrimination, sexual violence, cyber bullying, gender-based violence and gambling. They explained that learners usually committed violence against each other, although they pointed out some cases where educators, parents and community members were the perpetrators. Participants pointed out the negative impacts of school violence on learners, educators, parents, the education system and the community at large. When the impacts of school violence were discussed, all participants were very emotional and referred to previous incidents they had come across. They were worried about the number of physical incidents, such as fights, which led to injuries or even death and the psychological effects that followed such as high rates of school drop-out, poor results and low self-esteem.

There was not one factor that was said to cause school violence rather a series of interrelated factors which impact on young people in different ways. According to Mazerolle *et al.* (2011: 5), individual factors such as being male, having learning difficulties at school, being involved with drugs, having family problems, poor impulse control, feeling rejected at school or a learner's values such as a belief in the value of obtaining social status through control, seemed to be the major causes of school violence. Participants' responses were grouped into the following themes: *environmental factors, resistance to parents, lack of awareness, influence of poverty, peer influence, love relationships, culture and religion*. The majority of participants blamed schools and the DoE for failing to reduce school violence.

The effectiveness of existing violence reduction strategies by schools (Learners' Code of Conduct, Code of Professional Ethics and School Safety Committee (SSC) and the DoE (*Stop Rape*, school based crime prevention, management of physical violence, *Opening Our Eyes* and National Strategy for The Prevention Of Alcohol And Drug Abuse) were deeply evaluated. This study implemented the Cure Violence model to resolves conflicts. The Cure Violence model relies on three key elements to stop the transmission of violent behaviour: interrupt transmission directly, identify and change the thinking of potential transmitters (i.e.: those at highest risk of perpetrating violence) and change group norms regarding violence. The WC group and SPE were trained and empowered to be the agents of peace. During the study the Cure Violence model was implemented in its entirety in the home of one of the violence perpetrators at Vukuzakhe Secondary School.

#### **1.7.7 Limitations and delimitations**

The study concentrated on two high schools. Other high schools were excluded, but they are also victims of school violence. However, the findings cannot be generalised to every secondary school of Umlazi district, it rather indicates that the problem of learners' violent behaviour is serious. Major challenges were experienced when I approached participants to be part of the study, issues such as the non-availability of some participants ruined the gender equity and the study was solely based on availability. Inappropriate training space and high levels of noise in some instances destructed training programmes and disturbed the recording of audiotapes. Unavailability of some WC and SPE members in other training programmes compromised training for those days. High levels of crime in the community limited the programme of the WC group who wished to visit homes identified by SPE. Resistance to participate by victims and perpetrators of school violence, particularly parents, and the lack of warm welcomes at learners' homes ruined the intentions of the WC group to embark on several home visits.

Similarly, the efficacy of such a study is best recognised over a longer period of time. My limited time at these schools and communities may not paint an accurate picture of the complex dynamics that are present before and after such a study.

#### **1.7.8 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Participants were informed in writing and made aware that participation in the study was voluntary. They were assured that their identities would remain confidential as pseudonyms were used. Protecting participants' identities encouraged them not to hide any information in fear of being victimised after the study. Their real names were known only by members of WC and SPE since they were active structures operating in the school. All participants were advised that the data collected was confidential and was used



for the purpose of the study only. The study involved learners who were above 18 years, therefore, no parental consent forms were necessary. This information was communicated to all participants prior to any interview, focus group discussion or distribution of open-ended questionnaires. Participants were assured that feedback would be given to them to verify the truthfulness of the data before the final draft was made. WC and SPE workers could not be anonymous or confidential due to the interactive nature of their work.

#### 1.7.9 **Validity and reliability**

Guion *et al.* (2011: 1) explained that “validity, in qualitative research, refers to whether the findings of a study are true and certain, “true” in the sense that research findings accurately reflect the situation, and “certain” in the sense that research findings are supported by the evidence.” They also state that triangulation is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies by analysing a research question from multiple perspectives. Patton (2002 cited in Guion *et al.* 2011: 1) warns that it is a common misconception that the goal of triangulation is to arrive at consistency across data sources or approaches claiming that inconsistencies may give strength to different approaches. He suggests that inconsistencies should not be seen as weakening the evidence but should be viewed as an opportunity to discover deeper meaning in the data.

I enhanced the reliability of the study by making use of open-ended questionnaires to allow parent participants to elaborate on what they wanted to say. Furthermore, during interview and focus group discussions I ensured that participants understood the question in the same way and asked them to feel free to contribute or share any other relevant information during the process. This gave the participants an opportunity to speak freely. Multi-data collection methods strengthened the validity of this study. I used triangulation methodology which enabled me to study the data from more than my perspective as a researcher. This triangulation involved the use of multiple methods in qualitative, focus group discussions, open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to strengthen and minimise the weaknesses of using one data collection technique. Different data gathering methods have the potential to increase validity, as the strength of one approach can compensate for the weakness of another. Thus, different methods of data gathering were employed to enhance the validity and reliability of this research.

With that being said, this study only represents a fraction of schools in South Africa experiencing violence. Although violence exists in all schools, this is by no means a study that can be said to generalise and represent all schools accurately. Dynamics that affect violence differ per school and locality, and consideration of such factors should be considered when evaluating violence in these schools.

#### **1.7.10 Ethical considerations**

Permission to conduct this research was granted in writing (Ethical clearance) by the KZN DoE prior to approaching the principals of the two secondary schools. I then asked for permission from the principals of high schools concerned after receiving permission from the DoE. Participants were asked verbally and in writing for their participation and made aware that participation was voluntarily. All participants in this study were over the age of 18. Anonymity and confidentiality were applied to focus group discussions, in-depth interview and open-ended questionnaires. However, WC and SPE remained actively known structures and confidentiality did not apply to them.

### **1.8 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS**

This study sought to understand the reality of school violence and the strategies that could be applied to minimise it, despite its long history in most South African schools. This chapter has briefly explained the Cure Violence model which inspired my study. It has also outlined the specific aim and overall objectives that guided this research. Furthermore, the research design, research methodology, data collection methods and data analysis approach were also defined.

Chapter two discusses international studies of school violence, and recognises that it is a global phenomenon that has severe and negative consequences on learners and educators, as well as their social and socio-economic lives.

Chapter three looks at what school violence is and the extent to which violence has occurred especially in KZN schools. It unpacks the causes of school violence and draws a clear distinction between different types of violence. It also explains the physical and psychological consequences it has on learners, educators, parents and society at large. It also points out services available to victims and perpetrators of school violence. Strategies by schools as well as the DoE to reduce school violence are clearly explained.

Chapter four conceptualises the importance of understanding the theoretical perspectives of school violence, including restorative justice, structural violence, the social learning theory and the Cure Violence model as preventative and corrective measures.

Chapter five sets out the research design, research methodology and data collection methods used. It also explains the data analysis process. It offers a broad description of the whole research process and narrates the challenges and successes of empowering stakeholders to detect violence, block its transmission and change the group norm.

Chapter six describes and analyses the findings that were obtained at both schools. The physical environment and infrastructure of the schools is examined, and its possible influence on violence explored. Participant responses are illustrated and evaluated.

In chapter seven, the findings of the data collected are discussed under four main themes, each with several sub-themes. The major themes are: actuality of violence in schools, causes of school violence, reduction strategies and empowerment using the Cure Violence model. The implications of the implementation of the Cure Violence model are evaluated and discussed.

Chapter eight looks at the conclusions, recommendations and reflections of the entire project. It discusses recommendations for each stakeholder group as well as for the DoE. The benefits of involving community members outside of the school environment are also looked at. My reflection on the entire action research journey is included. The reflections of some study respondents are also discussed.

## **1.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has introduced the purpose and aims of the research. My intentions in conducting this study are explained, and the model that inspired this research is introduced and explained. This chapter also briefly discussed the research approach, the theoretical framework and data collection methods. Causes, nature and consequences of school violence are highlighted. Strategies to minimise school violence were concisely pointed out. Findings to accomplish the postulated research objectives were looked at and the validity and reliability of the study were discussed. Ethical considerations were also explained, as the study involved human subjects.

## **PART TWO**

### **CHAPTER 2**

#### **INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ON SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

##### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Fourth International Conference on School Violence and the newly created International Journal of School Violence are reminders that school violence is a global phenomenon (Benbenishty and Astor 2008: 59). According to Benbenishty and Astor (2008: 59), time and again, the public in countries ranging from Japan to Ethiopia are alarmed by atrocious acts of senseless violence in schools. These authors believe that with today's internet coverage, media access and globalised culture, an incident in a school in one corner of the world can have a devastating effect on many others across the world. The negative outcomes of sharing the bad news about violence in schools are already upon us. We need to leverage this global interdependency to learn from each other and prevent violence in our schools. According to Benbenishty and Astor (2008: 62), one of the important functions of examining school violence in different countries is to allow cross-country comparisons. Such comparative data could be used to gain a perspective on how extreme the school safety situation is in a given country. This greatly facilitates policy creation surrounding school violence in specific countries. A clear distinction of school violence is drawn between different countries as discussed below:

##### **2.2 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA)**

Espelage *et al.* (2013: 75) sees violence directed against K–12 educators as a serious problem that demands the immediate attention of researchers. “K–12 is a term used in USA and possibly other countries like Canada for the combination of primary and secondary education” (Espelage *et al.* 2013: 75). Dogutas (2013: 87) believes that in order to understand violence in American schools, one should distinguish between two kinds of violence. One is violence perpetuated by trespassers who enter school building to steal, rob or assault someone. The other type of violence is committed against educators, administrators, other staff members or fellow classmates by students enrolled in the school. This is supported by Duplechain and Morris (2015: 145) in their school shooting study conducted in the USA, which revealed that school shootings are most commonly committed by either a student who goes to the school or by an intruder from off campus who has a connection to someone within the particular school. Dogutas (2013: 87) believes that students' acts of violence may include stealing or extorting valuables or money, verbal abuse, intimidation, and physical assaults. Some examples of interpersonal violence in schools are “verbal insults; threats to

students, threats to teachers; pushing, shoving, grabbing, or slapping; kicking, biting or hitting someone with a fist; threatening someone with a knife or gun; using knives or firing guns; and stealing” (Dogutas 2013: 87).

At this regard, a report on the study of American school violence and prevention conducted by Cantor *et al.* (2002: iii) revealed that the vast majority of the schools had relatively low levels of serious crime. While fighting did occur and the presence of weapons was not unheard of, the combination of the two was rarely seen in the same school. Theft was much more common than robbery, and while educators may have been verbally abused, they very rarely were attacked or threatened with a weapon. Fear of disorder did not seem to interfere with the learning process (Cantor *et al.* 2002: iii).

Contrary to the previous study, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (2010: 1) conducted a study on school shootings in America which revealed that school violence has come into the public eye after deadly multiple shootings in Littleton, Colorado; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Santee, California; Red Lake, Minnesota; Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania; and Cleveland, Ohio. The possibility of school shootings has become an issue for urban, rural, and suburban communities alike Bureau of Justice Assistance (2010: 1). The study reports that since 1992, more than 40 schools have experienced multiple victim homicides, many in communities where people previously believed it was unlikely to happen.

Based on these alarming issues, Espelage *et al.* (2013: 75), supported by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (2010: 4), proposed that any comprehensive examination of school violence must consider schools as multilevel systems with complex dynamics that affect educators (and other school personnel) as well as students, parents, and the entire community. They argue that focusing solely on student victimisation to the exclusion of educator victimisation not only results in an inadequate representation of the issues but also restricts an array of possible solutions to the complex problem. Therefore, these authors suggest the involvement of all relevant factors involved in this phenomenon and a multisystem approach best suited for attaining a comprehensive understanding. Multisystem models are needed to effectively study the early detection and prevention of student disruptive and aggressive behaviours directed at educators and to target school-level contexts that focus on students, educators, staff, and community (Espelage *et al.* 2013:79).

According to Teasley (2013: 195), school-based personnel must continue to be mindful of children’s exposure to violence and its effect on their socialisation, education, and behaviour in schools. This author explains six methods for assessment, prevention, and intervention with children and school violence that should be adopted by American schools:

- Attention to warning signs: attention to and follow-up on the spotting of warning signs are of critical importance in preventing school violence. Often, when acts of school violence are planned, warning signs are evident. The need for continued observation, “keeping one’s ear to the ground,” and continuous examination of the context in which students interact and respond to the dynamics of the school community are key to school violence monitoring.
- Site-specific assessment: the goal is data collection and continuous and comprehensive assessment of characteristics of specific school and community problems that warrant attention. After analysis of the collected data the next step is the necessary adaption of school safety programs. Therefore, principals and school educators will need political buy-in and continued communication and feedback in carrying out school violence assessment measures.
- Prevention programming: the 2002 passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 mandated the development of evidence-based approaches to school violence prevention. Evidence-based programming must be based on thorough assessment and crafted for the needs of individual schools. After-school programmes have a strong track record of violence and delinquency prevention. Thus, school-based after-school programmes are an essential component of violence prevention.
- School wide interventions: positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS) is an evidence based approach to violence prevention based on a multi-tier framework for the purpose of establishing evidence-based practices, implementing reliable practices with evaluative measures, and maximizing student academic and social behavioural outcomes.
- Collaboration and practice: Preparation and collaboration by educators, administrators, school nurses, counsellors, social workers, psychologists, and others can make a difference in both violence prevention and intervention. “Collaboration is a course of action in which various participants work together to achieve a common goal by pooling their knowledge, skills, and resources. In the prevention or reduction of school violence, collaborative practice requires leadership, professional trust, initiative in gaining cooperation, and the development of best practices.
- Cultural competence: Related services personnel must consider how racial, ethnic, gender, and disability groups within school systems are affected by violence and must understand particular implementation practices for working with each group. Related services personnel, particularly school social workers, should attempt to understand the school community, including racial and

ethnic relations and community dynamics. The development of prevention planning, the specifics of social skills programming, and a host of other cultural issues must be taken into consideration in the design of violence prevention measures for a given school community. Minority community members should be included in all phases of school and community interactions in addressing school violence.

## **2.3 EUROPE**

As with African countries; laughing and teasing, stealing, damaging others' property, bullying, and fighting are common in European schools. This is reported by Ortega *et al.* (2010: 259) in explaining that in Spain and Italy, verbal and visual violence consists of insults, jokes, insults via graffiti, or jokes showing pornographic material. This type of violence comprises of behaviour such as gender harassment or public sexual harassment; sexual harassment with physical contact, including all the behaviours aimed at sexual cooperation involving physical contact Ortega *et al.* (2010: 259). Vieno *et al.* (2011: 544) noticed that in comparative research, school violence in Italy was being reported at a higher level than that which had been found in other European and Western countries, such as, being about twice as high as the school violence in England and almost 3 times higher than the school violence in Norway.

Caputo (2013: 271) reports on the outcome of the Third Italian Report on the Condition of Childhood and Adolescence conducted in 2000, which indicated that more than 30% of children say they have witnessed threats or acts of force at their school; 15.5% of the younger children and about 40% of elementary school students and 28% of middle school students say they have been the victims of bullying "sometimes or quite frequently"; and 20% say that they have inflicted physical violence on their schoolmates sometimes or quite frequently. Caputo (2013: 271) believes that specific characteristics of Southern Italy, such as, high unemployment; the strong presence of organized crime, which is almost accepted as a normal event in everyday life and "mafia-like feelings," which often pervade school communities, people's habits, and behaviours, can easily support attitudes of moral disengagement and consequently, school violence. Lotrean *et al.* (2011: 141) states that the combination of individual, family, school and community factors is associated with dysfunctional behaviours. They concur with the assessment that Italian secondary and high school students used verbal or physical violence to resolve conflicts, further, that boys were more likely to be engaged in acts of violence than girls and that stealing or destroying belongings of other people was more common amongst boys. This was also associated with acts of physical or psychological aggression to resolve conflicts, the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs. Among secondary school students destructive behaviour was also associated with the existence of strained relations in the family and with frequent quarrels between parents (Lotrean *et al.* 2011: 143). Given these observations, they conclude that

comprehensive measures have to be implemented at different levels: individual, family, school and community:

- Individual level: Children should be educated on how to achieve self-control, the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully, the ability to integrate themselves in the society, and resistance to pressure and negative influences that may arise from the peer-environment. It is also important to encourage sport, hobbies, and student involvement in various activities which allow them to channel the energy and creativity for positive goals. The combination of violent and destructive behaviour with alcohol and drug use, suggest that violence prevention programmes may have better effects if combined with programmes to prevent illicit and licit drug use.
- Family level: parents should be taught their important roles and responsibilities in shaping the child, helping him to acquire communication and social integration skills, increase his self-confidence and respect for others. At the same time, it is an important task for parents to supervise their child and his/her friends, to avoid situations of family conflict as well as to try to communicate with the child, providing the support and affection that he/she needs.
- School level: schools can play an important role by adopting an anti-violence policy, which should involve both pupils and teachers and train the teaching staff to have knowledge about the psycho-social development of adolescents such as tackling aggressive behaviour. Schools should encourage among students' teamwork, creativity, development of moral feelings and behaviours, a tolerant attitude towards the others views and an intolerant attitude towards any kind of aggression. On the other hand, school is a proper educational environment for the implementation of actions to prevent tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug use, and educating students to acquire skills of conflict resolution and management of tense situations. It also recommended that better cooperation with families and schools take place in order to detect problems that could lead to violent behaviour.
- Community and social level: there are necessary measures that include manifest disapproval of aggressive behaviour, education measures for groups including adolescents with behavioural problems, helping families with poor socio-economic statuses and creating economic and professional opportunities for adolescents from these families.

## **2.4 AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

According to Dunne *et al.* (2013: 288), Africa has reported various forms of violence such as sexual harassment and abuse, bullying, intimidation and threats, verbal abuse, taunts and insults, physical violence



and assault, emotional abuse and psychological abuse. Of concern is that corporal punishment is one of the widely reported forms of school violence despite the fact that 117 countries have banned its use in schools (Leach *et al.* 2014:23). Its practises persist in many countries, despite evidence that it can result in psychological problems including depression, serious injury, truancy and drop-out (Leach *et al.* 2014: 23). Dunne *et al.* (ibid) refer to an incident that took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2008 in Adisadel College in Ghana which starkly illustrated the use of corporal punishment and the consequent anxiety and hostility it can generate in students. A student was purported to have jumped to his death from the fourth floor of a classroom block to escape corporal punishment from the senior housemaster of the school.

UNICEF (2010: 3) reports that following the release of the World Report on Violence against Children; Action Aid, Plan West Africa Regional Office (WARO), Save the Children Sweden West Africa (WA) and UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO) joined forces in 2008 in an education and child protection initiative, with the objective of strengthening and accelerating interventions against violence in schools in West and Central Africa.

**Nigeria:** According to Fareo (2015: 435), school violence is a serious problem for young people in society and Nigeria at large. This author states that school violence wears many faces and includes gang activity, locker theft, bullying and intimidation, gun use, assault or just about anything that produces a victim. Students specifically physically, mentally or verbally abuse one another these days (Fareo 2015: 435). Aluede (2011:137) believes that the use of guns, knives, dangerous weapons and other abuses – physical or psychological - is now more common in the Nigerian school system than ever. Fareo (2015: 439) and Aluede (2011: 141) support each other stating that in a nation-wide situational analysis survey of school violence in Nigeria, conducted by the Federal Ministry of Education (2007), it was revealed that physical violence and psychological violence accounted for 85% and 50% respectively of the bulk of violence against children in schools. Across school locations, physical violence was more prevalent in rural (90%) than in the urban areas (80%). Across regions, physical violence in schools is higher in the southern Nigeria (90%) than in the Northern region (79%).

From the situational analysis of school violence in Nigerian schools, it transpired that the Nigerian school system is littered with ever growing evidence of school violence Fareo (2015: 439). Aluede (2011: 142) reports that in an effort to reduce school violence, schools have increasingly turned to school counsellors and other helping professionals in the school for leadership and help with establishing policies regarding safety. School counsellors and psychologists are the primary agents of change and prevention within the school system (Aluede 2011: 142). UNICEF (2010: 3) reports that the National Strategic Framework on Violence-Free Basic Education is part of a range of activities conducted by the Federal Government and

State Authorities with support from UNICEF in the area of violence in schools. It aims to ensure all children can access and complete basic education in Nigeria (UNICEF 2010: 3). Following-up on the Assessment of Violence against Children at the Basic Education Level, a draft national framework for action was devised in 2007 by the Federal Ministry of Education with support from UNICEF (UNICEF 2010: 3). Linked to the development of the framework, a range of activities have been implemented:

- Sensitisation of teachers and students from selected primary schools on causes of violence in schools and possible prevention responses.
- Training of 100 education managers from the North Central and North Western regions on violence prevention in schools.
- Capacity building of education stakeholders (school management committees, parent teacher associations, teachers) to develop strategies on violent-free schools relevant to their own context.
- Development of guidance counselling in school.
- Institutional capacity development activities in state colleges of education (South-West region) on guidance, counselling and violence prevention in schools and teacher development programmes (pre-service and in-service).

The draft National Strategic Framework on Violence-Free Basic Education presents strategies and implementation activities on (Federal Ministry of Education 2007: 1), including a vision for a violence-free schools, adequate counselling, creating capacity of learners and educators.

It further identifies the role and responsibilities of duty bearers in all relevant sectors at federal, state and school level, including the role of the media. The draft National Strategic Framework on Violence-Free Basic Education has been reviewed and approved by the Federal Government and is currently being utilised in all states (Federal Ministry of Education 2007: 1). The National Strategic Framework on Violence-Free Basic Education and the Minimum Standards for the Establishment and Management of Schools at the Inspectorate Division of the Federal Ministry of Education provide the basis for the formulation of a policy that addresses school-based violence in Nigeria.

**Côte d'Ivoire:** According to Sany (2010: 1), in Cote d'Ivoire, political conflict seriously damaged an already struggling education system, relegating education to the bottom of the national priority list and preventing thousands of stakeholders - both students and teachers from gaining access to it. Unlike other African countries, school violence is mostly rooted outside the school environment. Armed groups and military forces destroyed, damaged, looted or used 500 schools and universities during 2010-2011 post-

election crisis (GCPEA 2014: 1). Members of Student Federation of Cote D'Ivoire (FESCI) created an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in secondary schools and universities by injuring and sometimes killing fellow students, educators and administrators (GCPEA 2014: 3). They refer to an incident which happened on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2010 where FESCI and the National Student Union of Cote D'Ivoire (of the Dimbokro modern high school) fought battles in Dimbokro. Eight FESCI members, armed with machetes, attacked and killed a student in the city centre (GCPEA 2014: 3). About 23 schools were used by armed forces during the crisis which made school children vulnerable to attack or intimidation (GCPEA 2014: 3). Moreover, UNGEI-UNESCO (2013: 4) report that a 2010 survey by the Ministry of National Education of Côte d'Ivoire found that approximately 50 % of teachers reported having sexual relations with students, with figures as high as 70% in one region.

UNICEF (2010: 3) proposes "Rewrite the Future" as a Save the Children Alliance international initiative focused on securing quality education for children out of school in both conflict and post-conflict countries. One objective of the programme is to develop a safe and conducive learning environment for children. It is within this framework that the development of teachers' and school staff codes of conduct has been taking place, both in schools and at a national level (UNICEF 2010: 3). While the National Code of Conduct established by unions provides ethical guidelines for the profession, the school based codes are negotiated between children and school staff (UNICEF 2010: 3).

There are 10 key elements to be included in a school code of conduct - codes must include issues such as (UNICEF 2010: 3).

Corporal punishment:

- Degrading attitudes.
- Sexual abuse.
- Discrimination.
- Alcohol and tobacco consumption in the learning environment.
- Chores and other tasks children are requested to undertake by teachers.

Codes must promote:

- Respect for human dignity and children as individuals.
- Children's participation.
- Positive relationships between teachers and parents and between teachers and students.
- Appropriate clothing.

The Code of Conduct developed by the teachers' union was validated by the Inspectorate. It is about to be officially adopted by the Ministry of Education. This will complement the decree enacted by the Ministry of Education in September 2009 which forbids degrading and corporal punishment and reiterates respect for the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child such as the best interest of the child and child participation (UNICEF 2010: 4). The successes and challenges of such efforts are noted below:

<b>Success factors</b>	
<b>School level</b>	The wide range of content integrated in the codes; the varied practices around the composition and the remit of the steering committee in charge of implementation follow-up have led to a rich mixture of experiences based on which key elements of code content and structure have been identified for scaling-up the project;
	Support from high level authorities such as regional education authorities was a key in the success of the initiative and its buy-in from schools and communities.
<b>National level:</b>	Bottom-up process; appropriation of the code by unions which resulted in their initiative to present the code to the Ministry of Education for approval.
	Unions can mobilise and engage teachers and professional staff across the country effectively.
<b>Challenges</b>	
<b>School level</b>	Resistance of school staff and communities to recognise the problems faced by children in schools.
	Ensuring the best interests of the child at all stages of the development, implementation and monitoring of the code.
<b>National level</b>	Some individual and corporate resistance, linked to varied political agendas, need to be overcome to ensure total ownership of the document by the entire teaching population.

**Sierra Leone:** Violence in schools, in particular the sexual abuse of girls, is explicitly recognised as a barrier for achieving “Education for All” and the other Millennium Development Goals in Sierra Leone (Government of Sierra Leone 2015: 1). As a result, one of the key objectives of the Education Sector Plan (2007 - 2015) for achieving universal primary education is to ensure that schools provide a safe environment for all children especially with regard to sexual exploitation, abuse and discrimination (Government of Sierra Leone 2015: 1).

Implementation strategies are to (Government of Sierra Leone 2015: 4).

- Provide nationwide sensitisation on issue.

- Revise the terms and conditions of the service of teachers to ensure the protection of children.
- Enact and enforce legislation criminalising sexual harassment by teachers and agree on a Code of Ethics with the Sierra Leone Teachers' Union (SLTU).
- Provide a safe environment for girls including separate toilet.
- Institute severe penalties for child abusers.

The Education Sector Plan of (Sierra Leone: 2007: 10), outlines that it is within this framework that development partners and national stakeholders supported the development of a professional Code of Conduct and its implementation and enforcement in schools. Based on two existing documents, a draft code of conduct from the SLTU and a draft code developed by the Ministry of Education with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), all stakeholders joined forces to develop, with support from UNICEF, a first draft of the national professional Code of Conduct (Sierra Leone: 2007: 10). The Education Sector Plan explains also that multi-stakeholder consultations were organised in all regions and districts of the country to inform the development of the final version of the code, then approved by the Ministry of Education. The code was launched in October 2009, nationally and in each region (Sierra Leone: 2007: 10). In parallel, UNICEF supported the development of a training manual on the content and role of the Code of Conduct for school stakeholders (teachers, union representatives, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and school management committees) (Sierra Leone: 2007: 10).

The wide participation in consultation activities carried out for the development of the Code of Conduct resulted in increased awareness among a range of education stakeholders that violence in schools, especially sexual violence, is a violation of children's rights and a major obstacle to achieving education for all, and needs to be urgently addressed (UNESCO – UNGEI 2015: 3).

The training manual provides sessions for a three-day workshop on the Code of Conduct and related fields, including (Sierra Leone: 2007: 10):

- Classroom and positive behaviour management (alternatives to corporal punishment and classroom management techniques).
- Commitment and attitude to the profession (components of the Code of Conduct).
- Human and children's rights.
- Child exploitation and abuse, including sexual abuse.
- Governance, accountability, corruption and record keeping.

**Success factors:** Factors that contributed to the success of the activities included:

- Close collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the SLTU in developing the code.
- The role of the SLTU in implementing and enforcing the code at national and local levels.
- Community support of the initiative ensured through consultation.

### **Challenges:**

The enforcement strategy, in the absence of a Teacher's Commission, is in line with procedures applicable under the laws and regulations of Sierra Leone (Sierra Leone: 2007-2015: 10). Although the Ministry of Education recently established a complaints section to monitor and document cases of abuse and complaints, the operationalisation modalities are yet to be tested (Sierra Leone: 2007-2015: 10). Questions therefore remain regarding access to justice and transparency of procedures when dealing with cases of abuse. Similarly, it is foreseen that school management committees will appoint a sub-commission responsible for recording and following-up complaints in each school, but until 2011, the strategy was not yet implemented (Sierra Leone: 2007-2015: 10).

**Mauritania:** An initiative has been taking place within a broader partnership between UNICEF and the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Traditional Education aiming at strengthening the management and teaching capacity of Koranic schools at pre-primary and primary education levels and at raising awareness about children's rights in traditional education settings UNICEF (2010: 3). Its main objectives were to:

- Raise awareness against corporal punishment of children in schools ("Mahadras" or Koranic schools) and at home and clarify the position of Islam vis-à-vis corporal punishment.
- Develop pedagogical standards for "Mahadras".
- Develop a guide on children's rights for Koranic teachers.

UNICEF (2010: 3) reports the outcomes of the results on a national study conducted by RIODEF with UNICEF's support in 2009 on corporal punishment against children in Islamic Law (Sharia). It aimed at identifying the causes leading to corporal punishment and clarifying the position of Islam on violence against children. The study concluded that corporal punishment was not allowed by Islam. Following the validation of the study by the national authorities and Imam Networks, UNICEF and RIODEF hosted a workshop in April 2009 where 30 participant Imams (Muslim religious leaders), from the Adrar and Inchiri regions, and UNICEF representatives gathered together to discuss the possibility of enacting a fatwa (a religious edict) against corporal punishment of children.

Religious leaders enacted the following fatwa against corporal punishment in the school or the home: "In view of all of the foregoing, it is necessary to desist immediately and finally from beating children,

regardless of the pretext given. This is not only required by law and piety, or in accordance with the principles and purposes of the glorious Sharia, but it is also essential for the good of the child, the educator, the family and society. It is also necessary to adopt scientific educational methods in the upbringing of children, following the example provided by the first educator and teacher, Mohammad, whose teachings are all kindness, love and goodness” UNICEF (2010: 3). The fatwa is currently being disseminated throughout the country in Koranic schools, but also more generally in formal education and family settings. It is used to invite Imams to reflect on corporal punishment and, more broadly, on children’s rights (UNICEF 2010: 3).

### **Challenges:**

According to UNICEF (2010: 3), one of the challenges has been to familiarise local religious leaders and ensure appropriation of the fatwa. A similar process will then have to take place between the local religious leaders, schools and the communities. The fatwa, enacted by influential Imams, has to be seen as relevant and necessary in community contexts UNICEF (2010: 3).

**Gambia:** Gambia is dominated by an increasing number of media reports on cases of sexual abuse against girls in schools (Sarr and Hydara: 2005: 10). The Gambia Teacher’s Union (GTU) felt the need for a response which would both protect children and teachers (Sarr and Hydara: 2005: 10). The above authors believe that with support from Action Aid, the GTU engaged in the development of a Code of Professional Ethics and Conduct in a bid to increase professional standards in schools. The development process was bottom-up. The GTU facilitated cluster meetings with teachers and school staff throughout the country to discuss issues regarding the ethics of teaching and the professionalisation of the teaching profession. Based on the information collected at the outset, the GTU developed a draft code which was discussed in a multi-stakeholder national forum before finalisation and validation (Sarr and Hydara: 2005: 10). In addition to the development of the code, the initiative has strengthened partnerships for education at national level and has demonstrated that the GTU could be a powerful ally (Sarr and Hydara: 2005: 10). Fewer cases of sexual abuse have been reported to the GTU Secretariat since the adoption of the code, but their absence of monitoring mechanisms this could be explained by the fact that cases are dealt with on the regional rather than national levels (Sarr and Hydara: 2005: 10).

### **Success factors:**

Factors that contributed to the success of the activities included:

- The involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in the consultation.

- The technical support from organisations such as Action Aid or Education International and their sharing of practices from around the world.

### **Challenges:**

In addition to some resistance from teachers who perceived the code as a restraint on their freedom, and from communities where speaking out about issues of school-based and gender-based violence was difficult, the main challenge has been to reach all schools and communities in order to disseminate the code and raise awareness of its principles (Sarr and Hydara: 2005: 10). Financial constraints have not enabled the GTU to fully undertake its planned promotion and dissemination activities.

## **2.5 DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND OTHER COUNTRIES:**

This chapter indicated that violence is not a phenomenon that is unique to South African schools, but schools all over the world (Deveci *et al.* 2007: 25). Countries like the USA, Europe, Italy, Spain, Nigeria, Cote d’Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Gambia were used as global references to give the reader a clear idea of the magnitude and scope of violence across the world. Similarities and differences are noted in the above mentioned countries.

### **2.5.1 Similarities**

School violence is not unique to South African schools. Countries such as the United States, Europe, Cote d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone experience school violence in different forms and levels. In the United States, threatening someone with a knife or a gun, stealing, pushing, shoving, pinching and bullying are reported to be common. In Europe, stealing, damaging other’s property, bullying and fighting are very popular cases. In Spain, Sierra Leone and Gambia sexual abuse amongst girls serves a barrier to achieve equal education for all. Like in South Africa, the government of these countries is committed to providing safe environment for all. Like in African countries, in Italy, the high level of verbal and physical abuse violence among learners is associated with individual, family, school and community factors. In many African countries such as Nigeria, Cote d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone, corporal punishment was banned; however, it is still used despite its physical and psychological consequences.

### **2.5.2 Differences**

Even though most cases of school violence are similar when comparing African and western countries, there are variations in the most prevalent types of violence across regions. For example, school shootings with multiple deaths are common in areas of United States, for example, Littleton, California, Florida and



Colorado. In Cote d'Ivoire the dysfunctional behaviour of children is blamed on political conflicts where armed groups and military have destroyed schools.

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

School violence is not only a South African problem, but rather a global one that involves African and international countries. Western countries such as the USA and Europe are also no exception in this disease. Learners in African countries demonstrate violence born from different factors, such as political influences. It is noted that most schools still use corporal punishment in an attempt to correct the behaviour of learners even though it was long banned. Despite the use of corporal punishment, they apply different strategies to a problem, others being successful while others are full of challenges. However, it should be emphasised that even though school violence applies to all countries of the world, there are similarities and differences in the manner in which they apply.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND REDUCTION STRATEGIES**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

South Africa is a democratic country that values the rights to human dignity, equality, freedom to basic education and to an environment that is not harmful to the health or well-being of all citizens (Du Plessis 2010: 108). A number of legislations that protect the rights and safety of learners have been passed such as Child Care Act 74 of 1983, South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 and Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 (Smit 2010: 14). However, acts of violence are escalating. According to Du Plessis (2010: 108), the problem regarding safety and violence in schools has become one of the most pressing educational issues in South African schools. While this phenomenon exists around the world, it is particularly acute in South Africa. Quite often we see school violence on television news broadcasts, social media and newspapers. Smit (2010: 14) and SACE (2011: 6) support the claim that violence in schools could result in physical and psychological harm, destruct the quality of education and fragment society. Mncube and Harber (2013: 3) define school violence as “any behaviour of learners, educators, administrators or non-school persons, attempting to inflict injury on another person or to damage school property”.

Nearly one in four learners and educators in South Africa have experienced violence on or near school premises (Pahad and Graham 2012: 3). SACE (2011: 23) outlines that school violence is a widespread problem in South Africa that is manifest from a wide range of causes. According to Burton (2007 cited in SACE 2011: 23) there is no single cause of violence, but rather, “a series of interrelated factors impact[ing] on young people in different ways”, one of which is the perpetration of violent acts against other young people and society in general. Conflict in school exists between learners, learners and educators, between educators, school administrators and educators, and educators and parents (Snodgrass and Heleta: 2009: 41). According to Bray (2005 cited in Snodgrass and Heleta: 2009: 41), South African schools are viewed as undisciplined and disorderly places where learners openly disrupt the educational process while confused and ignorant stakeholders seem unable to tackle learner misconduct and restore discipline.

This study seeks to examine the causes, nature and extent of school violence. Consequences of school violence will also be explained. The effectiveness and/or ineffectiveness of school violence intervention strategies will also be analysed. Moreover, the benefits of adopting restorative justice over punitive justice will also be discussed.

### **3.2 CAUSES OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

The SACE (2011: 23) states that when one attempts to understand the reasons for such high rates of school-based violence in South Africa, one needs to explore the problem from multiple perspectives, taking into account many different dynamics that have influenced this phenomenon. School violence is a multi-pronged problem that has no clear-cut causes (SACE 2011: 23). There is no single factor that causes school violence, but rather a series of interrelated factors impacting young people in different ways (SACE 2011: 23). Figure 2.1 below depicts the ecological theory of human development, which explains processes and conditions that may contribute to violence within the actual environments in which one lives (Bronfenbrenner 1994: 37). Ecological development is conceived as a human element that is dependent on correlated factors – hence the nesting of categories and subcategories displayed in the diagram (Bronfenbrenner 1994: 39). Galtung (1969: 170) blames the source of violence on the world hierarchy where structures produce unequal distributions of power, influence and resources. Power inequalities are built into these structures, yielding violent results (Taylor 2013: 258).

### 3.2.1 Ecological theory of human development

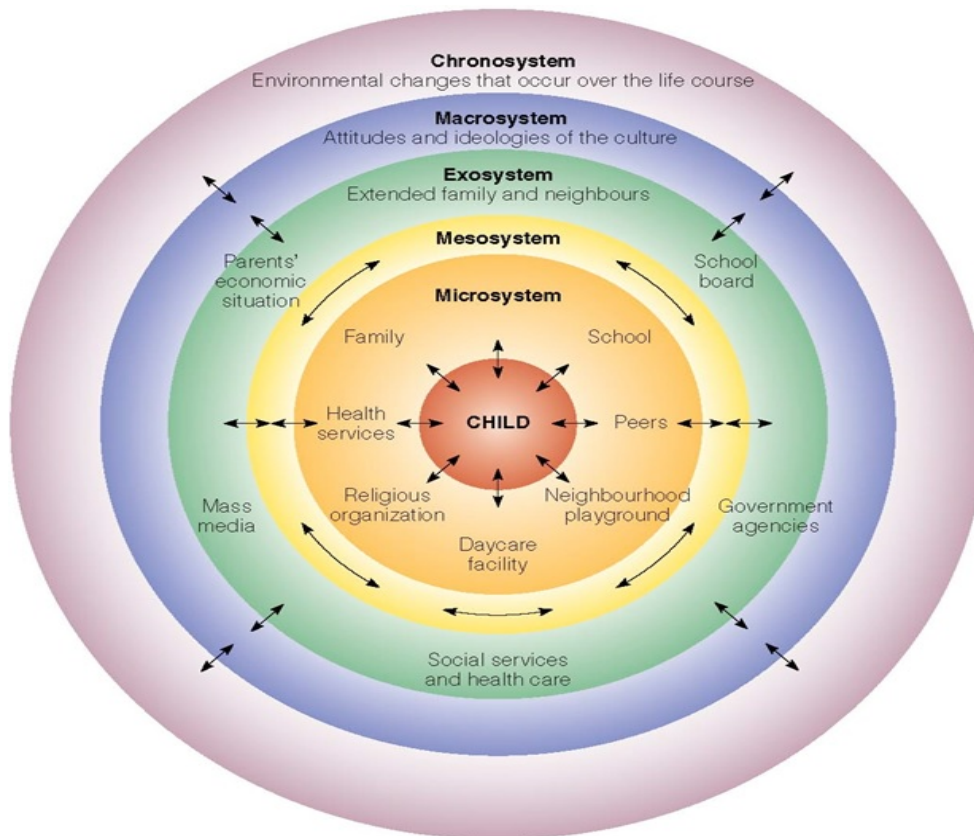


Figure 3.1 The ecological theory of human development (Source: Bronfenbrenner 1994).

#### 3.2.1.1 The microsystem

According to the ecological theory of human development, the individual potentially possesses biological and personal factors that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence, or that protect the individual from becoming a victim or a perpetrator. Krug *et al.* (2002 cited in Pahad and Graham 2012: 5) and Ngqela and Lewis (2012: 90) believe that a combination of the propensity to be violent (a *psychological* factor that resides within the individual committing the act) and the trigger to a violent act (which is a *social* factor that resides outside the individual committing the act) are the two main components of a violent behaviour. These two factors are discussed below.

##### ➤ *Psychological factors*

Within a person, individual temperaments and acquired biological deficits may contribute to his/her violent disposition and tendencies (De Wet 2003: 89). Bester and Du Plessis (2010: 209) believe that antisocial personality types, attention deficit disorders, impulsivity, hyperactivity, low resting heart rate, neurotoxin

exposures as well as serious head injuries are among the factors that may push a child in the direction of violent behaviour. De Wet (2009: 9) argues that some internal factors cause school violence – such as low self-image, frustration caused by learning or emotional problems, inadequate involvement on the part of learners in the formulation of school rules, truancy, group pressure, involvement in and the influence of gangs as well as learners' inability to handle conflict situations and frustrations.

Authors such as Bester and Du Plessis (2010: 209) and De Wet (2003: 89) perceive the main causes of learners' violent behaviour to be academic tension and the violence modelled by society. This is linked to the traditional perception that violence may have an institutional origin. This is supported by researchers such as Marais and Meier (2010: 46); Bester and Du Plessis (2010: 209) and De Wet (2003: 89) who believe that greater incidences of violent acts are found in schools where learners achieve limited success in the academic field. Moreover, learners who fail scholastically are often involved in violent crimes (Marais and Meier 2010: 46). According to Bester and Du Plessis (2009: 209), if learners feel that the curriculum is irrelevant or too complicated for their level of understanding, they may lose interest and then turn to violent behaviour. Bester and Du Plessis (2010: 209) revealed that many learners misbehave because they are starved of attention, hence ignoring such learners will not help. The behaviour of educators who pay more attention to those learners who are academic achievers makes it hard for learners struggling academically to cope with the demands placed on them by educators and the school as an academic institution (Marais and Meier 2010: 46).

The above authors also referred to the huge problem in the recently desegregated schools, that is, the disparity between the English proficiency of black learners and the proficiency required of them in order to master all the learning areas through the medium of English. When placed in classes where the ability to communicate fluently in idiomatic English is often assumed, these learners find themselves at risk of underachievement. In this regard they are more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviour.

However, a study conducted by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013: 8) in four South African schools' points at the indiscipline of learners rather than academic tension as the major cause of school violence. According to the study, 90% of the respondents reported that school violence is caused by indiscipline, as learners are uncontrollable and do as they wish. One educator who participated in the study blamed the indiscipline of learners on disrupted homes where learners were not taught discipline and the lack of recreational facilities in schools.

➤ ***Social factors***

The SACE (2011: 25) explains that in order to understand the reasoning behind violent behaviour demonstrated by learners, one needs to examine the concept of reciprocal behaviour. Reciprocal behaviour is the child's behaviour that is prompted by the reactions of the surrounding environment (SACE 2011: 25). According to the SACE (2011: 25), the individual observes and constructs behaviour from the experience of the people closest to them. Du Plessis (2008: 19) explains the microsystem as the pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations of the home, school and peer settings experienced by the developing person in the environment in which the person lives. He believes that in the South African environment, there are a range of individual, systemic and contextual drivers to violent and antisocial behaviour in young people.

Much of the behaviour of aggressive children involves social interaction with their peers and with the community. Such interaction plays a crucial role because learners learn not only a number of social skills but also important lessons that will stay with them for life (Gasa 2010: 17). According to Baron and Richardson (1994 cited in Gasa 2010: 17) human beings are not born with the knowledge of how to use a weapon, how to inflict pain on a victim and on which words or actions will be hurtful to their target, they learn it through their interaction with others.

### **3.2.1.2 The mesosystem**

The ecological theory of human development explains the mesosystem as the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner 1994: 40). This involves experiences at school, home, church or neighbourhood. Like the microsystem, people play a role in constructing the experiences they have (Bronfenbrenner 1994: 39). It is the relationship between the child and microsystem, such as the relationship they have with their home and school.

#### **➤ The family**

Gasa (2010: 18) states that the family is the most influential factor when modelling behaviour as well as when mediating other factors such as poverty, school truancy and peer pressure, which may increase the risk of school violence. This is supported by Burton and Leoschut (2013: 60) who state that the attributes of a young persons' family and home environment plays a key role in child's risk for victimization and violence perpetration. These authors perceive family as the primary context where young people learn about behaviours that are considered acceptable and unacceptable in the society. They believe that children who have been exposed to some form of interpersonal violence between family members are likely to replicate and imitate that violence. The SACE (2011: 10) concurs, stating that exposure to crime and violence within the family increases the risk of being victimized within the school context. Burton and Leoschut (2013: 60) claim that family composition is one feature of family life that has regularly been linked with school

violence. The above authors support each other in explaining that experiencing violence through having family members who were involved in criminal activities or who have been incarcerated also increases the risk of exposure to school violence.

Gasa (2010: 19) distinguishes two different kinds of families, namely nuclear and non-nuclear family. He writes that the nuclear family comprises of a husband, wife and their children living together in their own residence, whereas a non-nuclear family comprises of relatives, grandparents or either a man or a woman and one or more children, i.e.: single parents or a group of people merely living together outside the bonds of matrimony. Shea (2013: 5) believes that non-nuclear families are unsure themselves, what their roles are, where their boundaries should be placed and even what they should be called. According to Shea (2013: 5), many people find themselves in this type of family for a variety of reasons, including divorce, spousal death, downturn in the economy, inconsistency of grandparents or the choice to raise a child out of wedlock without the participation of both biological parents. He further states that most learners that demonstrate violent behaviour in schools can be traced to a non-nuclear family. This demonstrates the importance of involving both nuclear and non-nuclear families in school violence reduction strategies since they are the key role players in children's lives.

#### ➤ ***Peer relationships***

According to Bhana (2013: 41), one significant risk factor that contributes to school violence is peer influence. This is supported by Burton and Leoschut (2013: 66) who believe that during adolescence, peers become an increasingly important influence on learner's attitudes and behaviours. In conducting their study, they reported that some learners spend time away from home in order to spend it with delinquent and anti-social peers often involved in drug-related, sexual or criminal activities. In most disorganised neighbourhoods, children have an unusually large amount of free, unsupervised time at their disposal. Due to the lack of family control and supervision, children in slums form play groups as a way of acquiring social acceptance and support. Play groups develop leaders and the so-called "stake-out turf", which maximises opportunities for fighting (Gasa 2010: 18). Most leaders are desensitised to violence by having been victims themselves (Gasa 2010: 18). In their minds, violence is the only way to resolve disputes and the only response to criticism. Each gang tries to control a specific area and many of them take over entire neighbourhoods. The need for status and power among peer groups can be understood as one of the causes of violence amongst youth (SACE 2011: 25). Bhana (2013: 41) believes that male and female learners embark on different needs to avoid peer exclusion; male learners seek to be seen as brave and masculine in order to be accepted, while girls experience pressure to be sexually active in order to be accepted as real women in a group.

### 3.2.1.3 Exosystem

Ward (2007 cited in SACE 2011: 27) states that: “South Africa’s young people live in an environment where they are taught violent behaviour, where violence is rewarded and where they feel that violence is likely to solve their problems and make them feel powerful and worthy.”

Gasa (2010: 17) believes that the instability of a community can be traced to political violence, social violence, suicide and crimes, such as hijacking, kidnapping, rape, hostage-taking, housebreaking, senseless killing and gangsterism. According to Gasa (2010: 17), most learners become involved in violent actions because of the behaviour of the community in which they are brought up. If the community in which learners grow up is characterised by violence, learners may become involved in violent actions. If learners live in fear of being attacked they may feel the need to learn survival skills to defend themselves (Gasa 2010: 17). Some of them end up joining community gangs in order to protect themselves and aggressiveness starts to characterise their lives; such a community or environment may place learners in a stressful situation and compel them to be aggressive (Gasa 2010: 17).

Mkhize *et al.* (2012: 40) stated that aggressive behaviour is learned and maintained through environmental experiences. Learners who are exposed to an antisocial environment learn to participate in antisocial behaviour. Society exposes learners to new behaviours which were not acquired at home during their childhood. These behaviours may be positive or negative, depending on the environment. Learners may experience psychological problems in adjusting to these behaviours and end up believing that violence is the only way to address problems (Mkhize *et al.* 2012: 40). Van der Westhuizen and Maree (2010: 4) warn that experiences of violence have become normalised within South African society. According to Pahad and Graham (2012: 10), schools are microcosms of the broader communities in which they are located. For this reason, the social ills prevalent in communities are known to permeate the school environment to various degrees. Community characteristics such as levels of social disorganisation and crime affect scholars’ risks of being exposed to violence within the school environment (Pahad and Graham 2012: 10). This indicates that in trying to understand school-based violence one cannot divorce the neighbourhood in which the school is located from the high rate of violence within the school.

However, as it was indicated in the psychological factors of the microsystem, De Wet (2009: 89) maintains that the violent behaviour of learners relates to academic tension, not consequences of behaviour and violence modelled by the community. Moreover, in a report on national school violence by Burton (2008: 10) most learners indicated that they felt safe in and liked their neighbourhoods. They felt that there was no correlation between community behaviour and increased rate of violence in schools (Burton 2008: 10).



#### **3.2.1.4 Macrosystem**

The macrosystem is the combination of the micro, meso and exosystem characteristics that are highly influenced by the culture in which an individual lives (Bronfenbrenner 1994: 40). It is viewed from a societal level, which looks at the broad societal factors that help create a climate in which violence is encouraged. Political and economic factors are just some of the societal factors that have an impact on violence (Bronfenbrenner 1994: 40). Factors like inequality, poverty and unemployment, which were heightened by the apartheid regime in South Africa, influence the individual directly (Bronfenbrenner 1994: 40). These factors are clearly discussed below:

##### **➤ *Political culture***

According to Ngqela and Lewis (2012: 91), school violence may stem from larger community and societal factors over which the school has little or no control. Ngqela and Lewis (2012: 91) believe that political violence in South Africa from 1948 onwards led to high levels of intolerance and subsequently to much violence especially within the black community. Youth violence in South Africa resulted from apartheid racial structures where black learners learned to protest (Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 91). Pahad and Graham (2012: 12) support Ngqela and Lewis (2012: 91) in stating that the violent history of apartheid and more recent societal changes affected the levels of school violence in South African townships. Similarly, they argue that the high level of violence in schools reflects a complicated combination of past history and recent stresses at an individual, school, and community level in society. During the apartheid system, South African schools became exceptionally violent due to the fact that the education system favoured white schools as key beneficiaries while black schools were the most disadvantaged (Smith and Foster 2002: 74). The education system was racially demarcated into four categories namely: The House of Assembly for Whites, The House of Representatives for Coloureds, The House of Delegates for Indians and The House of General Affairs for Blacks (Smith and Foster 2002: 74).

Black South African learners opposed bantu education policies and violence was socially approved under the name of liberation (Bunting 2000: 36). According to Bunting (2000: 36), bantu education was the South African segregation law which enforced racially separated educational facilities with the purpose of directing black or non-white youth to the unskilled labour market. The heroes of the day were young people who carried guns and fought (Meyer 2005: 14). Learners learned to protest, and riots were popular in South Africa (Meyer 2005: 14). Burton (2008: 3) warns that even today, common community protests for basic services, such as the provision of housing, teach learners to be violent in order for their needs to be met. Currently, the country has to manage the after effects of the apartheid regime in which discriminatory

policies entrenched structural forms of inequality and promoted high levels of unemployment and poverty (Singh and Steyn 2013: 3).

➤ ***Economic culture***

One cannot ignore the fact that when apartheid ended and democracy commenced in 1994 there was a need to redefine the role of youth. The role shifts implied that youth no longer played a leading role in society, but rather a peripheral one (Bunting 2000: 36). According to Van der Merwe (2012: 2), the main barriers to this transition were high rates of poverty, inequality (both social and economic) and unemployment – which continue to prevail and push youth to criminal and violent activities today. Van Der Merwe (2011: 2) claims that the level of unemployment amongst the parents of learners in South African townships is also very high. It can be argued that apartheid developed a generation for whom violence was (and still is) the only means of making a change.

Bunting (2000: 36) believes that apartheid also resulted in the development of a generation of parents who were products of an abnormal society and broken family structures, therefore tending to lack vital parental skills needed to raise healthy children. A study conducted by Singh and Steyn (2013: 3) in KwaZulu-Natal schools reveals that poverty, broken homes and poor parenting are key elements that contribute significantly to antisocial learner behaviour. Contrary to Singh and Steyn, Carl (2011: 130) believes that poverty, hunger, unemployment and the shortage of housing do not necessarily lead to an increase in crime or rebellious behaviour, even though admitting that they are the challenges that South Africa face.

➤ ***Township culture***

Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya (2014: 46) believe that gangsterism, criminal and domestic violence as well as substance abuse are concerns in most South African township areas. They view the forming of gangs in South African townships as an aspect associated with poverty, unemployment and the changing patterns in family life caused by urbanisation. Van der Merwe (2014: 70) believes that young boys with poor economic prospects, caused by the impact of post-apartheid globalisation and the neoliberalism of the economy, are more inclined to aspire to the lifestyles of gangsters. According to Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya (2014: 43), gangs in schools should be seen as a community problem in South Africa since schools are a part of the community and therefore reflect the problems of the community. The formation of gangs in communities has many root causes including poor socio-economic conditions such as unemployment, low-income, unemployment and inadequate living conditions (Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya 2014: 43). Umlazi, the site of this study, as noted in the introduction, is one of the largest townships in South Africa with high levels of violence, poverty and unemployment.

### **3.2.1.5 Chronosystem**

The chronosystem takes into account the history and time which shapes one's development (Bronfenbrenner 1994: 40). It encompasses changes or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of a person but also in the environment which that person lives (Gouvan and Cole 1994: 40). This implies that a change in human behaviour is highly influenced by changes during their life course, such as changes in family structure, employment, socio-economic status or place of residence (Gouvan and Cole 1994: 40). According to Bronfenbrenner (1994: 40), the chronosystem is concerned with development over short or long periods of time.

Of particular note are the influences of traumatic events. The above authors believe that some people go through certain transitions in life such as a divorce or the death of a family member that have an impact on their behaviour. Learners cannot be divorced from these issues as they result in emotional crisis. Learners differ in the ways that they express grief, as some may feel helpless, angry, scared, anxious or frustrated and demonstrate dysfunctional behaviour (Gouvan and Cole 1994: 40). This is supported by Gasa (2010: 20) in explaining that children of divorced or deceased parents respond with anger, resentment, anxiety, depression, confusion and aggression. The author reports that divorce and death affect boys and girls differently, boys are more vulnerable to the effects of divorce and death than girls. They perform more poorly and become more aggressive while girls tend to withdraw, the trauma they experience is not easily erased from their minds and has aftereffects that destroy their sense of self-esteem (Gasa 2010: 20). Learners in Umlazi experience family trauma and in addition, conditions contribute to both physical and structural forms of violence. Before apartheid ended in 1994, townships such as Umlazi were built in such a way that the residents were provided with the most minimal, poor quality and basic facilities possible, such as housing, recreational areas, inferior and poorly equipped schools. After apartheid, townships improved somewhat, however, many of the original conditions remain. Violence pre-1994 was internal – overcrowding, crime and poverty – and external – political and anti-apartheid violence.

### **3.2.2 Structural Violence**

According to Wolhurter (2006: 130), South Africa's implementation of Apartheid saw one of the most dramatic racial policies ever established. Through the formalization of racial ideology, South Africa was able to institutionalise social concepts that majority of the world had tried to discourage and bury (Wolhurter 2006: 130). This author believed that the National Party of Apartheid-South Africa was able to legitimately harm the majority of the population by preventing them from accessing their most basic needs and rights. They were also able to incorporate violence into the structure and organisation of the South African community from 1948 to 1994 (Wolhurter, 2006: 130).

Galtung (1969: 170) explains that structural violence is tied to the "hierarchical ordering of the world" where unequal chances consequently lead to unequal life chances. According to Taylor (2013: 258), the establishment of a hierarchical society leads to the disadvantaging of those who occupy the bottom rungs of society. Through this form of violence, harm or suppression is unavoidable as it is fundamentally found in the formation of the state or society (Taylor 2013: 258). It is, by all means, interwoven with the daily activities of individuals, inherent in policy formation and clearly present in the minds of the community. It must be noted, however, that structural violence does not affect all individuals equally; the stratification of society results in severe social injustices to a given community of people, this discrimination may be on the grounds of race, ethnicity, classism, sexism, amongst many others (Taylor 2013: 258)., Schraivesande (1991 4), explains phases of structural violence as follows: rural underdevelopment and the seizure of land by rich; high rate of child mortality; fleeing to cities where families face unemployment, overcrowding and substandard housing in slums; failure of parents to take care of their children and children fleeing to the streets to live by begging, prostitution, stealing, and some get involved in crime and drug dealing

### **3.3 FORMS OF VIOLENCE**

The SACE (2011: 7) believes that violence in schools is gender-based as girls and boys tend to be exposed to different forms of it. The SACE (2011: 7) views girls as victims of sexual violence, harassment and rape, contrary to boys who experience bullying and mostly physical assaults. The national school violence study conducted by Burton and Leoschuit (2012: 13) differs with results of the SACE, claiming that the violence experienced by learners is to a similar degree across all age and gender cohorts. Du Plessis (2008: 65) highlighted the importance of distinguishing the various kinds of violence as it can be perceived as a single or general problem in society. A clear distinction is drawn between different types of violence.

#### **3.3.1 Bullying**

According to Venter and Du Plessis (2012: 1), "Bullying means repeatedly attacking a person psychologically, physically and/or emotionally in order to inflict harm." Turkmen *et al.* (2013: 143) identify three criteria that should be present for behaviour to be considered bullying: firstly, aggressive behaviour or the intention to harm or to cause distress at the time of victimization or in the future. Secondly, the actions are performed repeatedly and over time; and thirdly, the actions occur in an interpersonal relationship defined by an imbalance of power. These criteria differentiate bullying from other forms of conflict or aggression. Duy (2013: 987) identifies bullying as the main form of school violence common not only to learners but also to educators. Ncotsa and Shumba (2013: 5) made a reference to one educator in a certain school, who commented that, "Bullying is most common in our school. The bullies take money from other kids, eat their lunch and when the learners do not have money or lunch they are beaten and harassed".

A deeply disturbing aspect of bullying is that an individual can be targeted because of gender, race, ethnicity, academic standing – all attempts to accentuate the “otherness” of the person being bullied. That “others” are different and inferior is a step towards a prejudiced response to a group. The consequences are such prejudices are the justification of such bullying and discrimination. The racist policies of apartheid, which allowed for the separate and unequal treatment of a person solely because of race fostered demeaning behaviour.

Turkmen *et al.* (2013: 143), Duy (2013: 988) and Blake and Lown (2010: 111) classify bullying into three categories:

- firstly, physical bullying such as beating, punching, pushing and kicking;
- secondly, verbal abuse such as cruel name calling, verbal abuse, threatening, insulting and spreading gossip or rumours;
- lastly, psychological abuse such as damaging or vandalizing one’s possessions, writing threatening or frightening notes and isolating the victim socially.

However, it should be noted that through the advancement of information and communication technology, there is a new form of aggression emerging among high school learners referred to as cyber-bullying (Geldenhuys 2015: 32). South African children, particularly those younger than 18, are no exception to this and many of them have joined their global counterparts in "sexting" each other, without realising that this trend can get them into conflict with the law (Geldenhuys 2015: 32). These new forms of bullying are discussed below.

### ➤ ***Cyber-bullying***

Cyber-bullying is clearly defined by Tustin *et al.* (2014: 14), Smith (2015: 1) and Moodley (2012: 539) as a modern form of bullying that is deliberate and repeatedly performed with some kind of electronic text to cause harm. Cyber-bullying does not require physical proximity between a victim and perpetrator. These violent behaviours can be carried out by means of a cell phone, electronic mail, internet chats and online spaces such as YouTube, Facebook and personal blogs (Moodley 2012: 539). By using e-mail, text, Twitter, Skype or other forms of electronic communication such as Facebook and WhatsApp, people can interact socially in cyberspace (Geldenhuys 2015: 32). Smith (2015: 2), Mienie (2014: 147) and Burgess *et al* (2008 as cited in Tustin *et al.* 2014: 15) explain various types of cyber bullying:

- Online fights, known as flaming, which imply the use of electronic messages with hostile and vulgar language.

- Slandering, a modality that implies online disparagement, for example, sending cruel images or rumours about others to spoil their reputation or social relationships.
- Impersonation (hacking) by infiltrating into someone's account in order to send messages that make the victim lose face, endangers the victim or harm the victim's reputation and friendships.
- Defamation by spreading secrets or embarrassing information about someone.
- Deliberate exclusion of someone from an online group.
- Cyber harassment or the repeated sending of messages that include threats of injury or intimidation.

Cyberbullying has an added advantage to the bully in that he/she need not engage in physical violence and only infrequently suffers punishment, partially because the laws are unclear about the illegality of cyberbullying and also because it is hard to trace. The bully can post defamatory statements anonymously. Thus, this form of violence has wider and more damaging effects. There is good evidence to suggest that cyberbullying, given its broad and more permanent effect, has been the cause of many suicides and murders. This type of bullying is a form of public humiliation that profoundly hurts a person.

#### ➤ ***Sexting***

According to Geldenhuys (2015: 32), the term "sexting" is a combination of the words "sex" and "texting" that was first popularised around 2005. Dike *et al.* (2013: 74) and Sabbah-Mani (2015: 532) define sexting as the practice of sending or posting sexually suggestive text messages and images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via cellular telephones or over the Internet. Cell phone sexting activities involving children particularly teenagers, are a reality and many parents are not aware that their children are sending semi-nude or nude picture of themselves via their cell phones to friends (Dike *et al.* 2013: 74). However, sexting is more common than many think and is a common activity among children and young people (Dike *et al.* 2013: 74). According to cyber-forensic specialists in Johannesburg, in October 2014 they dealt with a case in which more than 200 Grade 11 learners from Johannesburg were sending or receiving images of themselves and classmates posing naked (Hoskens 2014 cited Geldenhuys 2015: 32). In the space of one month's time, these cyber forensic specialists received three cases of mass sexting involving Pretoria and Johannesburg schools. According to Coetzee (2013: 752), The South African Films and Publication Board conducted a study in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg schools, among 934 learners between 13 and 17 years' old, which revealed that 60% of the learners were aware of friends distributing website addresses of pornographic sites to one another and 81% were aware of friends having pornographic images on their cell phones.

Geldenhuys (2015: 32) uses a scenario to warn against sexting, "Benny and Angie are both 14 years old and have been together for three months. Benny sends Angie a text which says: "Send me a sexy photo of

you wearing nothing." Angie is worried that Benny will "dump" her if she doesn't, so she sends him a naked photo of herself via WhatsApp on her cell phone, asking him to promise that he won't show it to anyone else. He assures her that he won't. However, it's not long before he sends the photo to his friend. Within less than a week, almost everyone in school has seen Angie's naked photo."

This is just a simple example of sexting, which is something that thousands of South African children engage in, often with devastating consequences. Moreover, educators themselves can perpetrate sexting against learners, such as an educator who sent a photograph of himself sitting naked in the bathtub to a 16-year-old learner (Coetzee 2015: 2108).

#### ➤ *sex videos*

Thinking of children as sexual offenders is disturbing and even more so if one considers that the manufacturing and distributing of the pornography takes place at schools. According to Coetzee (2013: 752), learners filming sexual acts by co-learners, distributing videos of co-learners having sex, receiving or being in possession of messages containing pornographic images, sexting, accessing pornographic websites while at school are increasingly becoming 'normal' acts for learners. In September 2012 the Internet Watch Forum's analysts investigated how many instances of self-generated, sexually explicit online images and videos of young people were on the internet and found a total of 12224 such images and videos, 88% of which were uploaded from the original websites to parasite websites (Internet Watch Foundation 2012 cited in Le Roux, 2014: 2). Schools are faced with the dilemma of having to observe learners' rights and promote the use of technology, but simultaneously fulfil their obligations to protect learners from exposure to pornographic material, educating learners on the responsible use of the internet and cell phones, and disciplining learners who commit cyber sexual misconduct (Coetzee 2013: 752).

However, Coetzee (2015: 2108) argues that pornography is in the news not only because of Star Sat's attempt to legalise the broadcasting of hard-core pornography on television in South Africa but also because of educators who have exposed their learners to pornography. Coetzee (2015: 2108) makes provision of the underneath examples which exposed educators to be the perpetrators of pornography in schools:

- A Cape dance teacher exposed girls as young as 12 to pornography.
- A principal showed a sex video to a learner on his cell phone.
- An educator watched pornography while his computer was unknowingly still connected to the projector, thereby exposing the whole class to pornography.
- An educator took learners into the storeroom to watch a pornographic movie.

According to Coetzee (2015: 2110), in South Africa, exposing a child to child pornography or pornography as part of a sexual grooming process is criminalised in section 18(2) of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007. Schools should incorporate rules on cyber misconduct in existing school codes of conduct and adopt school policy on computer and cell phone use. However, educators find it difficult to address the pornography problem as older learners access pornographic websites from their homes where there is less or no supervision and bring videos or images to school to share with younger learners (Coetzee (2015: 2110).

Bullying is on the rise globally despite measures in place to curb it Raaska *et al.* (2013: 594). This is supported by Mitchell and Borg (2013: 143) in reporting that the government of Australia has increased anti-bullying campaigns, but despite all those measures, bullying remains a pervasive problem with significant implications that need to be considered deeply and broadly. Raaska *et al.* (2013: 594) believe that bullying always occurs in a social context which makes children with good social skills less often victims compared to children with poor social skills who are the major targets. Raaska *et al.* (2013: 594) view bullying to be more prevalent in township schools than other school settings. Contrary to Raaska, Turkmen *et al.* (2013: 144) believe that different types of bullying may affect different groups of learners in different types of schools, irrespective of their social skills. They regard bullying as a global phenomenon that affects millions of learners across all races and classes.

### **3.3.2 Theft of property, robberies and vandalism**

A study conducted by Ncontsha and Shumba (2013: 6), in four South African high schools indicates that vandalism is a major problem in schools. Various schools face the dilemmas of broken doors, stolen door handles and broken windows, which are deliberately vandalised to gain illegal access inside classrooms (Ncontsha and Shumba 2013: 6). Learners constantly lose their textbooks, calculators or even their exercise books with written work through theft - in other cases, learners' books are torn up (Ncontsha and Shumba 2013: 6). Van Jaarsveld *et al.* (2012: 125) explain that it is not only learners' property that is targeted, school properties such as furniture, computers and consumable items are no exception.

Maphalala and Mabunda (2011: 62) reports that in 2004 the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) established the Safe Schools Programme aimed at working with schools to ensure safe school environments for effective teaching and learning to take place. The programme's strategies included installing security systems while also addressing the social environment by influencing learner behaviour and working with schools to mobilise community support for safe schools. Safe Schools worked in partnership with local police and community organisations such as neighbourhood watches and Community Policing Forums (CPF) (Maphalala and Mabunda 2011: 62). A Safe Schools' Call Centre was also launched in order to



receive calls from learners experiencing any form of abuse, and to provide a contact point for reporting burglaries, vandalism and other incidents that impact on efforts to ensure safe schools (Maphalala and Mabunda 2011: 62). This programme and all other initiatives that have been implemented since then have not borne any positive results as the theft of learners' and school property, robberies and vandalism are still on the rise (Maphalala and Mabunda 2011: 62).

### **3.3.3 Sexual violence, harassment and rape**

Smit (2010: 30) states that South Africa reportedly has one of the highest rates of violence against women in the world. One of the most traumatic forms of violence in schools is that of sexual harassment and rape. Rahim and Liston (2011: 805) worry that sexual harassment and rape are learned by male learners outside of the school through their families, communities and the media. According to Steinmann (2014: 206) sexual violence occurs in prestigious, pre-dominantly white schools, in impoverished, pre-dominantly black township schools, in schools for the disabled and even in primary schools. However, Burton and Leoschut (2012: 34) worry that cases of sexual harassment are less frequently reported in schools than other forms of violence. They further reported that victims of sexual harassment are exposed to such incidents at least twice or more.

There is also an increasing practice of male educators demanding sex with schoolgirls or female educators. This shows a selfish disrespect for the rights and dignity of woman and young girls. Having sex with learners betrays the trust of the community, further, it is against the law - it is a disciplinary offence. Tragically it is also spreading HIV/AIDS and bringing misery and grief to these precious young people and their families (SACE 2011: 8).

Rahim and Liston (2011: 780) believe that girls are more often victims of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape than boys. These authors explain that the language of harassment with words such as: "slut", "bitch", "hoe", among other misogynistic terminology, are a constant reminder to young women that their world is one of potentially dangerous complexity. However, sometimes girls like to be seen as victims of sexual crimes and falsely frame boys Rahim and Liston (2011: 780). In other cases, girls desire boys equally Rahim and Liston (2011: 780). Smith (2010: 30) warns that one should remember that boys could also be the victims of sexual abuse although the legal definition of a rape does not include the rape of males. Soobramoney (2015: 2) reported that two Chatsworth schoolboys aged 8 and 9 were allegedly gang-raped in the school's toilet by 4 of their older peers. This creates an alert that sexual harassment and rape are not only gender based and intervention strategies needs to be implemented for both males and females – the interventions may vary according to gender.

Eom *et al.* (2014: 430) support Rahim and Liston (2011: 799) in defining sexual harassment as verbal, physical and psychological behaviour that polices the boundaries of traditional heterosexual gender norms. Eom *et al.* (2014: 430) report that sexual harassment in eighth grade resulted in increased problems with substance use, lower self-esteem, and symptoms of depression approximately three years later. It has also been reported that sexual harassment can increase school absences, worsen academic performance and create mental stress leading to mental health problems (Eom *et al.* 2014: 430). In addition, sexual harassment can increase an adolescent's preoccupation with their appearance and thus increase the risk of developing eating disorders (Eom *et al.* 2014: 430). It is therefore evident that nonviolent preventative measures to protect learners from sexual violence are crucial and urgent in all schools. Such interventions are complicated in instances of educators' abusing learners or with educators not seeing much wrong with such behaviour. Interventions are also complicated if learners, parents and community see little wrong or take a passive approach to ensuring that victims are protected and assisted, and that perpetrators are held accountable.

### **3.3.4 Gang-related violence**

Bonilla-Matthe (2013: 147) defines gangsterism as, "The evolution of an urban identity determined along racial and economic lines. It includes the formation of groups with the aim of committing violence and crime, and to defend themselves physically against violence of other groups." Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya (2014: 43) see the problem of gangsterism as a global phenomenon – they also reported that many secondary schools in the United States have seen an increase in gangster-related violence. South Africa is no exception, gang related activities in South Africa are reported on a daily basis (Maphalala and Mabunda 2014: 61).

Musick (2000 cited in Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya 2014: 43) classifies gangs into three different categories namely: scavenger, territorial and corporate gangs. Scavengers usually do not plan their crimes and transgressions and usually are low achievers or school dropouts. Territorials are well-organised in that members have initiation rites that separate them from non-members. Members have to prove their loyal and commitment to the group by fighting. The last category of corporate gangs is a highly structured criminal conspiracy group that are organized to sell drugs. All gangs have names and recognizable symbols (Musick (2000 cited in Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya 2014: 43).

Gangsterism emerges within communities and is rooted in various socio-economic conditions such as unemployment, low income employment and poor standards of living which result in poverty and deprivation (Mncube and Madikizela- Madiya 2014: 43). This implies that learners who have learning difficulties, are economically deprived or have low self-esteem become easy recruits and targets for

gangsterism. In other cases, innocent learners can become gangsters as a way of gaining a sense of belonging (Mncube and Madikizela- Madiya 2014: 43). Gangsters lure learners with false information or offers a sense of belonging to a young person who feels alone and isolated.

As with the instances of gender-based violence, the implementation of measures by all stakeholders to reduce gangsterism among learners is essential. It is argued that school gangs do not function in isolation and reflect the values, culture and behaviour of the broader community. Bonilla-Mathe (2013: 147) warns that the presence of gang members in schools increases the incidents of victimization of non-gang members, further leading to increased membership in a gang for protection. The role of all stakeholders - educators, parents and the community – is important as a united effort has more chance of success than only one segment of society. This is frequently illustrated in cases of cyberbullying as well. One parent alone or one learner alone will find it daunting to take on the cyberbully or gang. Such a united effort can be showing non-gang members that they are not alone in protecting themselves from gangsters.

### **3.3.5 Violence related to drugs and alcohol abuse**

The Drug and Drug Trafficking Act 140 of 1992 (cited in SACE 2011: 9), prohibits the use of or possession of, or the dealing in, drugs and of certain acts relating to the manufacture or supply of certain substances. According to Volkmann *et al.* (2013: 66), drug trafficking is a form of external violence, it originates outside the school and then gang members within the school facilitate the activities of selling drugs, where other learners may be willing to consume them. Burton (2008: 48) states that easy accessibility of alcohol and drugs in communities, places lives of school-going age children at risk. They confirm that there is a strong connection between the high levels of alcohol consumption and the use of drugs, with the increased levels of aggression and violent crime. Recurrent alcohol use results in failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school or home such as poor work performance or absenteeism. This is supported by the drugs-violence nexus theory which is a framework for understanding the relationship between illegal drugs and violence in communities (Volkmann 2013: 67).

Smith (2010: 26) warns that the accessibility of prescription medicines to youngsters in South African townships and suburban areas impacts negatively on education in general and on what happens in the school in particular. Furthermore, as it was indicated earlier in the national school violence study conducted by Burton and Leoschut (2012: 47), 85% of teenagers knew where to access drugs such as marijuana, while 47% of the subjects indicated that they knew people at their schools who smoked marijuana. Smit (2010: 25) shows concern regarding the increasing availability of drugs and alcohol among learners and educators, and alludes to the fact that some educators are using learners to get alcohol from shebeens or are missing classes to go and drink. According to Smit (2010: 25), shebeen is the common name used to refer to an

unlicensed establishment selling alcohol and are typically regarded as disreputable. Furthermore, Smit (2010: 25) is concerned that the age at which learners start drinking is getting lower and lower, this demonstrates the need to educate learners on drug awareness and the dangers of addiction. However, given that drug abuse is increasing, it is questionable whether awareness programmes are effective. Awareness alone may be insufficient without an understanding of why drugs are being used is vital for any drug awareness programme. Various factors incite a person's use of drugs as discussed below. These factors are explained below, followed by protective factors, decreasing the chance of drug abuse.

➤ ***Risk factors***

Risk factors are aspects which increase an individual's risk of taking drugs (United Office on Drugs and Crime 2004: 5). The greater the number of risks the child or young person experiences the greater the likelihood of drug use occurring (Pahid and Graham 2012: 5). The United Office on Drugs and Crime (2004: 5) conducted a study on drug abuse in South Africa and pointed to the existence of certain factors that increase people's risk of using drugs as well as factors which act to protect them from doing so. Individual and family factors, peer networks and social and environment milieu are all identified as risks factors in drugs taking (United Office on Drugs and Crime 2004: 5).

**Individual factors:** According to Pahid and Graham (2012: 5), individual factors that increases the chances of taking drugs include low self-esteem, poor self-control, inadequate social coping skills, attention seeking, depression, anxiety and stressful life events relates to drugs taking.

- *Being male:* the Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre (2004: 5) conducted a study on effective substance abuse prevention work among the youth in South Africa, and discovered that gender makes a difference when considering the risk of drug use. It is generally the case that in most countries more men than women use drugs (Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre 2004: 5) Drug use among girls and women tends to be abuse of licit or legal over-the-counter prescription drugs and alcohol, which are more socially accepted.
- *Being young* – according to Montesh *et al.* (2015: 105), youngsters use drugs because of the following reasons: to feel good, to have a good time, to get high, to feel on top of the world, to be happy, to relieve boredom and to get energy. When one is young, one is constantly struggling to define and affirm identity - in the course of this process young people often start experimenting as part of their search for an identity (Montesh *et al.* 2015: 105). They may use substances in order to define their belonging to a particular group or to relieve feelings of anxiety or stress in this search of self (Montesh *et al.* 2015: 105). However, while the transition, instability and change which

characterise adolescence may well make the adolescent vulnerable to some degree, it is dangerous to think of adolescence per se as being the cause of drug taking.

- *Genetic factors* - according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2004: 5), one of the factors that increases people's risk of using drugs are genetic factors. Montesh *et al.* (2015: 105) suggest that there are people who are genetically predisposed to become addicts. This means that if exposed to other personal or environmental risk factors, a minority of people are more vulnerable to becoming addicted because of their genetic make-up.
- *Mental health* – according to Pahad and Graham (2012: 5), there is high incidence of drug abuse in psychiatric patients as well as a high incidence of mental disorder among drug abusers entering treatment. A number of studies also point to an association between suicidal behaviour and drug use in adolescents (Pahad and Graham 2012: 5). The effect of this research has been to point to the existence of a relationship between mental disorder and drug abuse (Pahad and Graham 2012: 5). It has not, however, established the nature of this relationship such as the chain of causality.
- *Poor personal and social skills* – according to Mohasoa and Fourie (2012: 37), undeveloped or underdeveloped personal and social skills also put a person at greater risk of substance use. Personal and social skills include the ability to accept decisions, to express what one feels, to assert oneself and/or to solve problems (Mohasoa and Fourie 2012: 37). If these skills are not strong, the person is more likely to follow what his or her group of friends does. Young people with poor personal and social skills are also less likely to be able to cope with difficult situations (Mohasoa and Fourie 2012: 37). Individuals who are introverted, submissive and feel inferior, who lack confidence in themselves and others, and who have a great need for recognition may take drugs to acquire a sense of well-being (Montesh *et al.* 2015: 105).

**Family factors:** According to Volkmann *et al.* (2013: 65), family risk factors include: family disruption, ineffective supervision, criminality and drug use in the family. These risk are increased if a young person is homeless or does not have a secure family environment (Volkmann *et al.* 2013: 65). It is also present if the family does not take care of the youth emotionally or physically or does not provide appropriate support and guidance (Volkmann *et al.* 2013: 65). There is added risk if the young person is being abused mentally, physically or sexually (Volkmann *et al.* 2013: 65).

**Peer networks:** According to Smit (2010: 25), the most important reference group for a young person in the community is often his or her peers. Social interaction with friends and peers may thus provide opportunities for drug use or may encourage or support this type of behaviour (Smit 2010: 25). Part of the

transition during adolescence involves moving from reliance on the family to individuality (Smit 2010: 25). Here peer groups come to replace family as a social support mechanism during what can be a turbulent and emotional time. Because the peer group is seen as such a vitally important support mechanism for the adolescent, he or she may go to great lengths to maintain acceptance and status within it. As a result of peer pressure youngsters use drugs to be accepted in the group, to fit into the group, to impress their friends and to appear cool in front of their friends (Montesh *et al.* 2015: 105).

**Social and environmental milieu:** According to the SACE (2011: 9), having few or no opportunities for education or demonstrating poor school attendance has been shown to contribute to a higher risk of using drugs. However, some school drop outs may have entirely satisfactory academic records but may have still become alienated from the school system (SACE 2011: 9). Mohasoa and Fourie (2012: 36) state that youth who are homeless or have a tenuous home connection often adopt high-risk lifestyles which can include drug use. Situations where there are few or no job opportunities have been associated with the risk of drug abuse (Mohasoa and Fourie 2012: 36). Related to both these risky school and work settings is an abundance of free unstructured time in which there are no constructive, imaginative and challenging activities to take part in (Mohasoa and Fourie 2012: 36). Another risk factor is that the laws and regulations intended to discourage or prevent illicit drug use are not enforced stringently (SACE 2011: 9). Finally, in this category one must also include the role which the media and advertising play in promoting lifestyles the inappropriate use of these substances (Mohasoa and Fourie 2012: 36).

#### ➤ ***Protective factors***

Protective factors are those which generally reduce the likelihood of experimentation with drugs (Kempen and Baloyi 2015: 42). Reducing harm from drug use is a collective responsibility between young people, schools, parents, families and communities. Below are protective measures that can combat the risk factors identified above.

**Family factors:** family interventions can change risk factors through focusing on helping children develop appropriate and positive behaviours (Kempen and Baloyi 2015: 42). This demonstrates the need for bonding and positive relationships with at least one caregiver outside the immediate family. Kempen and Baloyi (2015: 42) believe that children are much less likely to get into drug problems if their parents have a good relationship with them, communication is open and honest and parents have an interest in their children's school life. Parents also need to determine whether or not learners have good relationships with their educators, ensure that they go to school as often as possible and help them to become involved in extramural activities at school. A study conducted by Mohasoa and Fourie (2012: 36) in Zeerust, North West Province, South Africa reveals that some children resort to drugs due to lack of communication with their family

members. This demonstrates that learners should be taught at home about the consequences and dangers of getting involved in drugs. This bad behaviour should be stopped in its tracks before it develops into addiction.

**Educational factors** - schools should also have measures in place to help to protect children, which could include the following: establishing and enforcing zero-tolerance policies with regards to the presence of drugs, alcohol and weapons; establishing policies that declare that anything that is illegal outside of school is also illegal at school (Kempen and Baloyi (2015: 43). This is supported by Montesh *et al.* (2015: 109), who suggest that the following principles must be in place in schools to protect learners from drug abuse:

- An emphasis on learning outcomes, environmental factors and collaborative partnerships are vital to the success of school-based education for drug abuse prevention.
- Drug-related learning outcomes should be addressed in the context of the health curriculum or other appropriate learning areas that can provide sequence, progression, continuity and links to other health issues that impact on students' lives.
- The school environment should be conducive to achieving educational outcomes and building productive partnerships.
- Collaborative partnerships should be developed for decision-making;
- Teaching and learning should be interactive.
- Educational programmes for the prevention of drug abuse should be responsive and inclusive.
- Training teachers in drug abuse prevention and education to enhance the impact and sustainability of drug abuse prevention programmes.
- Programmes, strategies and resources should be designed to support the teacher, to help achieve drug-related learning outcomes and to contribute to the long-term improvement of the school environment and ethos.
- Drug abuse prevention programmes and their outcomes should be evaluated regularly to provide evidence of their worth and to improve the design of future programme.
- Policies and procedures for managing drug-related incidents at schools should be collaboratively developed and widely publicised in order to elicit a positive response.

**Individual characteristics:** Haefele (2011: 79) believes that the availability of positive role models, positive life skills training and high levels of awareness regarding the dangers of substance abuse, gangs

and crime can protect young people against drug addiction. This will ensure high self-esteem, low inclination to be impulsive and a high degree of motivation (Haefele 2011: 79). But Rosenberg (2010: 1) argues that high self-esteem does not prevent children from taking drugs, it can foster experimentation which may increase early drinking or drug taking.

### **3.3.6 Physical violence and use of weapons**

The term weapon refers to: any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; any chemical substance, device, or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or death; or any device or instrument that is used to threaten, strike terror, or cause bodily harm or death (Botha and Myburgh 2013: 2). Weapons availability sometimes extends from the community and streets into schools (Mncube and Harber 2013: 5). According to Botha and Myburgh (2013: 2), learners carry weapons to school for different reasons including protection, security, power and status, or to sell them. The risk factors for physical and weapons-based violence are similar, and a range of individual and school level factors have consistently been shown to predict both (Botha and Myburgh 2013: 2).

Mazerolle *et al.* (2011: 5) indicate that some learners engage in physical violence, or bring a weapon to school, in response to previous violent encounters at school. The severity of a learner's violent response also seems to be in accordance with the seriousness of the experience(s) to which the learner is responding (Mazerolle *et al.* 2011: 5). For example, learners seem more likely to carry a weapon to school when they have been threatened with a weapon, or miss a large number of school days due to fear. Additionally, Mncube and Harber (2013: 5) suggest that the likelihood of learners responding to violence with violence is influenced by their belief in their school's ability to ensure their safety. Some learners may resort to carrying weapons and violence as a self-protective measure when they do not feel that their school is able to protect them.

### **3.3.7 Shooting, stabbing and murder**

The major problems present in schools are fighting, shooting, stabbing and murders (Gina and White 2014: 64). Gina and White (2014: 64) conducted a study on the safety and security of learners and educators in KZN schools, and the findings disclosed that it may be dangerous to be at certain schools in KZN because people are assaulted and even killed in these schools. Regarding stabbings, one of the educators who participated in the study emphasized the seriousness of violence in her school and indicated that a learner had stabbed another learner with a sharpened rod within the school premises (Gina and White 2014: 64). Another respondent in the same study who is an HOD at another school revealed that a grade 12 learner gunned down another grade 12 learner in a fight over a girlfriend (Gina and White 2014: 64). The incidents



of murder in KZN demonstrate the need to educate learners on anger management and conflict resolution skills.

### **3.3.8 Violence through student protests**

Section 17 of the Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa 1996: 8) explains the rights pertaining to assemblies, demonstrations, picketing and petitions: “Everyone has the right, peacefully and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket and to present a petition”.

This is reflected in Chapter 2 of our Bill of Rights. The Regulation of Gatherings Act, originally proposed by the Goldstone Commission, is designed to protect public protests and gatherings as they are essential to the democratic process (Lewis 2016: 1). Schools and universities recognise the right of students to express their opinions and to participate in lawful protest action aligning themselves with the broad constitutional rights of all South Africans to freedom of conscience, opinion and expression (Lewis 2016: 1). However, this right does not condone any form of violence, threat or damage of property

Unfortunately protesting students infringe on this right when they embark on violent protest action, damage university property and intimidate students when they protest (Lewis 2016: 1). The recent transformation of students’ demographics in South Africa, especially in universities, has been recognised, but financial affordability of black students, especially those from rural areas, remains the challenge in higher education sector (Lewis 2016: 1). This is witnessed by the recent protests that took place mid-October 2015, where thousands of students from various South African universities protested against the rising tertiary fees in a campaign popularly known as “Fees must fall”. Students marched to Parliament in Cape Town, Luthuli House, the ANC Headquarters in Johannesburg, and the Union Buildings, the seat of government in Pretoria. The catalyst was the government’s announcement of a 10.5% university fee hike for 2016 (New African 2015: 87). Students infringed on the peaceful right to strike when they damaged university properties by burning school buses and buildings (Lewis 2016: 1). Secondary schools follow suit when high schools like Kwadedangendlale, Letshego and Luswazi violently protests against poor infrastructure, safety at school and racism (Postman 2018: 1). The New African (2015: 87) warns that student protests in South Africa trigger memories of the Soweto Uprising, which was a 1976 youth protest against teaching *Afrikaans* in schools. *Afrikaans* was seen as the language of the oppressor. This uprising was violently suppressed by the apartheid police, who killed 12 students, including Hector Pieterse, who became a symbol of the uprising and of the courage of youth. The question of whether education really is for all in the new democratic South Africa is still yet to be answered and is linked to problems such as inequality, poverty, poor quality of many rural and township schools.

### 3.3.9 Racially motivated violence

Historically, when the National Party came into power in 1948, the government implemented policies of apartheid such as the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which promoted racial separation in education in order to “enable each race to promote its culture through education” (Wolhurter, 2006: 129). Each racial group had its own government, schools and universities. Teacher training colleges were divided into four categories namely for whites, coloured, Indians and blacks - blacks were taught Bantu Education (Wolhurter, 2006: 129). After 1994, the major challenge facing the democratic government was the transformation of apartheid education; the democratic government emphasised the importance of standardised education and allocated nine provinces instead of four (Wolhurter, 2006: 129).

With the dawn of democracy, previously segregated South African schools opened their gates to all races. The doors of historically white schools were officially opened to black learners. This transformation allowed learner populations of different racial groups to share the same school. However, this great success and achievement is being ruined by racial tensions demonstrated by learners within the same schools (Wilmot and Naidoo 2011: 28), who posit that racial or ethnic discrimination based on skin colour or cultural differences is another form of school violence. They believe that besides wider apartheid political systems among races, schools themselves have been used to overtly or covertly teach learners to hate learners from other ethnic groups. To mention the few examples of secondary school that have experienced racism, in Parkhill Secondary School in Greenwood Park, north of Durban, learners at the school refused to attend classes demanding that the school address allegations that an educator made racist insults (Vilakazi 2018: 1). In Pietermaritzburg Girls High, a white girl referred to a group of black girls as “kaffirs” in retaliation of failing to pronounce her name correctly (Nyoka 2017: 1). This results in racial and ethnical tension and violence in a range of different societies Wilmot and Naidoo (2011: 28). These authors state that racial tensions prevail in schools, which escalate and throw the schools’ functionality into turmoil and disarray. Racism and ethnicity are discussed below.

- ***Racism***

Racism is the discrimination or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one’s own race is superior (Van Ommen, 2013: 199). According to Van Ommen (2013: 199), racism can be overt or covert since it has a wide range of manifestations. The subtler forms of racism are sometimes even more harmful than open racism (Van Ommen, 2013: 199). Botha *et al.* (2012: 409) indicate that the high levels of aggression and violence at different levels of society are a culmination of the historical and contemporary influences of socio-economic and political factors. Black youth felt that they had to resort to violence and aggression in order to bring about change to the socio-economic inequalities, such as poverty

and overcrowding, as these injustices had a negative impact on families, schools, communities and the South African society at large (Botha *et al.* 2012: 409). Thus, the violence and aggression reflect an intention to reach the goal of bringing about change. In other words, aggression, by means of expressing one's intention to inflict pain or harm on others is used as a mechanism for social change.

The SACE report (2011: 28) describes the ignored experiences of white youth as they were viewed as beneficiaries of the apartheid government's legislation and policies, not victims of oppression, and their experiences of the structural violence is viewed vastly different from those of the black youth. White learners may now experience disempowerment - a loss of the power, control, and privilege which their families and communities enjoyed during the apartheid years. Today's youth did not experience apartheid first-hand, however, the effects of apartheid are clearly visible. Anger is expressed against weaker, more readily available person, since fighting the system is much more difficult (SACE 2011: 28).

The prejudice against another racial group is similarly expressed in gender-based violence. A study conducted by Lau and Stevens (2010: 627) on the exploration of the psychological exteriority and interiority of men's violence against woman in South Africa, describes violence as an experience of both losing control of oneself and having control over another. It seems as though the more contemporary view of violent and aggressive behaviour is not only about the intention to harm or injure another person but also the need to gain power and/or control with deliberate, intentional or rational actions.

- ***Ethnic prejudices***

An ethnic group is a group of people classed together according to common traits and culture as well as common myths of origin and territory, which differentiates it from other groups (Ekanola 2009: 45). Culture may include the totality of belief systems, values, tradition, language, and unique behaviour of a group of people (Ekanola 2009: 45). In the South African context, ethnicity encompasses both racial and linguistic differentiation, wherein members of a given race group can further be distinguished from one another on the basis of their native language, which subsequently leads to their definition as being distinct ethnic groups (Thomas 2011: 71). South Africa has also witnessed widespread xenophobic attacks since 1994 in provinces such as Gauteng, Western Cape, Free State, Limpopo and KZN (SAHO 2018: 1). According to SAHO (2018: 2), foreign children attending school in South Africa have been affected by the xenophobic attacks and teaching and learning was also disrupted in some schools, as some foreign nationals teaching in South Africa were afraid to report for duty amid the violent attacks. Although ethnicity is often described negatively, it is not inherently a negative attribute of human social life. It can encourage constructive competition and innovativeness and also help to keep positive cultural traditions alive if properly handled (Thomas 2011: 71).

Nonetheless, ethnicity is frequently found at the centre of cases of conflict and violence in contemporary society, especially in the developing societies of Africa (Olowu 2008: 302). When ethnic groups contend against one another, in order to achieve objectives that are perceived to be mutually exclusive, ethnic conflict is the result (Olowu 2008: 302). Particularly in South Africa, ethnic prejudices prevailed during the xenophobic attacks, where attacks were unleashed on numerous black Africans by black South African mobs in South African townships in May 2008 (Olowu 2008: 302). It is also possible in the South African context to consider xenophobia to include nationalism. Of note, however, is that the violence is not linked to race – black versus white, for example. While the phenomenon of xenophobia - the deep feeling of hatred and fear towards people considered foreigners, strangers and/or outsiders, is not particularly confined to South Africa, what shocked the world was the sudden unanticipated erasure of the euphoria that followed the 1994 democratic transformation in South Africa (Thomas 2011: 71). Foreign youth in schools can experience xenophobia directly when such attacks erupt.

### **3.4 EFFECTS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

School violence has serious and traumatic implications for all stakeholders. It has an undesirable impact on the lives of young people, educators and parents and it also negatively influences effective teaching and learning (Carroll-Lind *et al.* 2011: 9). After an act of school violence, victims are likely to experience a number of reactions that range from physical to psychological stress and trauma Carroll-Lind *et al.* (2011: 9). This is supported by Mkhize *et al.* (2011: 40) who stated that educators and learners who are affected by school violence experience depression, social isolation, loneliness, anxiety and apprehension. Consequences directly related to educational outcomes include a decline in academic performance, lack of interest in school, lowered concentration, school drop-outs and truancy by Mkhize *et al.* (2011: 40).

Carroll-Lind *et al.* (2011: 9) discovered that the common problems associated with violence could be serious long-standing physical, emotional and psychological implications including: distress, reduced self-esteem, increased risk of depression and suicide, impaired concentration, fear and a diminished ability to learn. Moreover, criminality and violence have severe treats to the delicate democracy, peace and economic stability in South Africa (Singh 2014: 84). Sifo and Masango (2014: 1) believe that learners who are exposed to violence are more likely to become caught up in cycles of violence, repeatedly being victims or perpetrators of violence. Below are a broad range of repercussions that are caused by school violence.

#### **3.4.1 Physical implications for both learners and educators**

Carroll-Lind *et al.* (2011: 9) define physical violence as being punched, kicked and beaten, hit or getting into a physical fight such as a punch-up. A study conducted by Shield *et al.* (2014: 8) in Cape Town schools

concluded that educators had been exposed to high levels of learner aggression and violence, especially being verbally harassed by learners, and high levels of physical violence between learners and violence directed toward educators themselves. A grade 8 boy at Glenvista School in Johannesburg attacked an educator with a broom in class and the educator had to run out of the class while the boy followed and continued throwing the broom at him (Kara 2013: 1). Physical violence has taken an additional unusual turn where educators are also being physically abused by parents. An incident at Mbalasi Primary School in Umlazi, KZN left the nation in shock when parents physically threw the principal out of her office and carried a coffin around the school premises that symbolised her funeral (Zuma 2016: 19). Below are a few incidents of physical violence directed at learners in KZN:

- A teacher was suspended for allegedly using a plastic pipe to discipline pupils at Lugobe High School near Umbumbulu on the South Coast of KZN (Nene 2014: 1).
- A woman from Nquthu tied a 9 year old boy to a pole with a rope, beating him with a stick and sjambok on suspicion of stealing a cell phone (Corke 2015: 1).
- A learner was severely assaulted for allegedly waking up an educator who was sleeping during school hours at Lemetja Secondary School in Limpopo (Maponya 2016: 1).

Sifo and Masango (2014: 1) believe that the effects of physical abuse can be acute and far-reaching. These authors explain that the immediate effect of physical abuse may be a bruise or a cut that can be treated by physicians or health providers, but the long-term effects may be as drastic as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Porter (2000 cited in Smith 2010: 68) warns that the possible side-effects of physical violence interlink with psychological effects. These effects are accident-proneness, suicidal tendencies, neurosis, low self-esteem, shyness, poor peer relationships, increased worry and poor relationships with adults Porter (2000 cited in Smith 2010: 68). It was also found that learners tend to become submissive and compliant out of fear of punishment (Sifo and Masango 2014: 1).

### **3.4.2 Psychological implications in learners**

Singh (2014: 84) claims that learners with antisocial and violent behaviour tend to experience low self-esteem and PTSD, which are discussed below:

#### **➤ *Low self-esteem***

These learners are unable to gain recognition from others in socially conventional ways, such as through academic activities, sport or extracurricular activities (Singh 2014: 84). They are anxious, insecure and frustrated with their inability to gain needed recognition and resort to aggressive behaviour in order to gain

recognition and feel better about themselves. However, the victims of violent behaviour suffer feelings of anxiety, insecurity and fear - feelings of inferiority and guilt may cause loss of self-esteem and predispose youngsters to depressive and suicidal tendencies (Singh 2014: 84). These learners' inability to cope with the injustice, helplessness and hopelessness of their situations results in them repressing their feelings and expressing antisocial behaviour in the form of absenteeism, reclusiveness and substance abuse (Singh 2014: 84). Skipping classes or staying at home for fear of being bullied at school leads to academic underachievement where the learner falls behind in his/her assignments, homework, tests and assessments. Consequences directly relating to educational outcomes include a noticeable decline in academic performance, a lack of interest in school and its related activities, lowered concentration, school drop-outs and truancy (Singh 2014: 84).

#### ➤ **PTSD**

A PTSD study conducted by Calitz *et al.* (2014: 15), at the Free State Psychiatric Complex, reveals that the most common traumas are caused by witnessing violence, such as being robbed or mugged and witnessing a family member being hurt or killed. They further explain that symptoms in these individuals are: avoidance of activities, places or people that arouse recollections of the trauma; avoidance of thoughts, feelings or conversations associated with the trauma, irritability or outbursts of anger and intense psychological distress at exposure to traumatic reminders. Children and adolescents can develop post-traumatic stress disorder after exposure to a range of traumatic events, including domestic, political or community violence, violent crime, sexual abuse, hijackings and motor vehicle accidents (Calitz *et al.* 2014: 25). Such exposure can pose a severe threat to a child's well-being. Venter and Du Plessis (2012: 3) supports Calitz *et al.* in stating that victims of violence often experience high levels of post-traumatic stress and this can often lead to other mental health problems.

A child's vulnerability to the damaging effects of stressors is greater than that of adults (Calitz *et al.* 2014: 25). Severe stress triggered by a traumatic event has been linked to increased risk of children developing psychological problems such as depression and PTSD (Bach and Louw 2010: 25 and Calitz *et al.* 2014: 25). Mkhize (2012: 38) support Burton and Leoschut's 2012 study (2013: 91) in reporting that in South Africa, exposure to violence has been found to be associated with anti-social behaviour, including a cycle of abuse in which victimised individuals are more likely than their non-victimised peers to engage in subsequent acts of violence. The impact of violence is thus observed at a primary as well as a secondary level that interferes with the normal development of healthy adult and peer relationships. Taking all these implications into consideration, one cannot ignore the damaging effect of school violence on the minds of young children.

### **3.4.3 Psychological implications in educators**

Bester and Du Plessis (2010: 204), Van der Westhuizen and Maree (2010: 1) and Steffgen (2007: 41) show concern that the media often focus on the explicit details of violent incidents in schools and capitalise on the sensation these incidents create. Very rarely do they focus on the vulnerability of educators in coping with the overflow of violent symptoms from society into our schools. Authors such as De Wet and Jacobs (2013: 464) and Burton (2008: 10) believe that there is a limited body of knowledge on the consequences of high levels of violence on educators and how they are able to cope in the South African schooling context.

Van der Westhuizen and Maree (2010: 6) and Steffgen (2007: 82) reveal that school violence results in educators suffering from negative developmental outcomes, decrease in academic achievements, less supportive interpersonal relationships, exhibiting withdrawal and negative social behaviour as a coping mechanism and a method of social functioning. Van der Westhuizen and Maree (2010: 6) and Steffgen (2007: 82) believe that the degree of violence against educators and its consequences has even led to the identification of “battered teacher syndrome”, characterised by a combination of stress actions including anxiety, disturbed sleep, depression, headaches, elevated blood pressure and eating disorders. Educators experience a range of emotional reactions in response to learners’ behaviour (Steffgen 2007: 82).

Case (2011: 30) reveals that exposure of educators to school violence could lead to physical, emotional and psychological implications such as distress, reduced self-esteem, risk of depression and suicide. Other possible outcomes are the decrease in the number of people interested in becoming educators, high levels of educator burnout and the high levels of educators deciding to resign from the profession (SACE 2011: 31). Some educators suffer from high levels of stress and depression (Case 2011: 30). This is supported by the study conducted by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013: 10) in South African high schools which indicated that the morale of the educators is very low and educators are completely demotivated. It seems that educators feel alone and unsupported by the DoE and school management teams (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 10). According to Du Plessis (2008: 71) educators are being disabled by an unsupportive system. Selesho (2011: 59) contradicts the above authors, with the results of his study showing that in South African most secondary school students have a positive attitude towards teaching as a profession, and they recognise the rights of educators and their roles in educational development. The findings of the Selesho (2011: 59) confirmed that high school learners in almost all townships and some former model C schools generally exhibited a positive attitude towards teaching as a profession regardless of their gender, school type and location. It is difficult to draw firm conclusions since conditions at schools are varied to an extreme.

#### **3.4.4 Educational damage**

One of the best documented facts about antisocial and violent learners is that they do not perform well at school (Bester and Du Plessis 2010: 215). As was mentioned earlier, learners with poor academic skills become frustrated, lose academic motivation and as a result eventually resort to antisocial and violent behaviour (Bester and Du Plessis 2009: 209). Violent learners constantly experience failure because of their lack of concentration, they then become envious of their peers' success and as a result they become easily bored, disrupt lessons, join unruly peers, harass other students and become delinquents (Singh 2014: 84). A study conducted by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013: 6) about school violence in South African secondary schools of both educators and learners revealed that the majority of learners who experience or witness incidents of violence may become depressed and this may negatively affect their ability to learn. The study found that 72.2% learners reported that they had lost concentration because they were afraid of what the perpetrators would do to them during break time or after school. One learner said, "I get worried all the time and I cannot concentrate on my studies. This affects my performance in class and sometimes I feel like not coming to school. I am scared of the bullies" (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 6).

Most learners reported not being able to concentrate on their studies because of school violence (De Wet 2007: 673). Learners felt threatened by their peers and sometimes did things they never intended to do, such as stealing from fellow learners for bullies (De Wet (2007: 673). According to De Wet (2007: 673), schools with high rates of crime and violence are less effective in educating learners. No effective teaching takes place when learners are uncontrollable, ill-disciplined, and unmanageable (De Wet (2007: 673). This is supported by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013: 9) who revealed that violence disturbs effective teaching, which leads to poor results. Ncontsa and Shumba (2013: 9) worry that learners became uncontrollable and difficult to manage, in turn, much time is wasted on conflict resolution meetings instead of learning and teaching. These schools had lower levels of learner achievement, higher rates of absenteeism and more dropouts Ncontsa and Shumba (2013: 9). Learners ended up bunking classes and in some cases some even dropped out of school because of peer victimisation (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 9). A number of learners reported to have repeated grades because of school violence interruptions which impacted negatively to their academic performance (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 9).

#### **3.4.5 Societal breakdown**

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (1994: 1) expressed the concern that, "our society is destroyed by violence, our families are torn by violence, our faith is tested by violence and our children are poisoned by violence". According to Tambawal (2012: 5), the effects of school violence in society are numerous, they range from loss of lives to the displacement of people due to increasing tension in inter-



community relations and the development of a violence culture. Violent phenomena produce generally aggressive behaviour in the society (Tambawal 2012: 5). An incident of one form of violence in society leads to another – many children who are physically abused have a greater tendency of being involved in violent crimes during adulthood (Tambawal 2012: 5). According to Duy (2013: 988), children who grew up in families or societies where there is violence often become violent themselves. These children are likely to become drug abusers as well as to react violently in their relationships later on in life (Duy 2013: 988). This again illustrates how the environment acts on the individual, and the individual on the society. The above 1994 reference to the destructiveness of violence indicates that the problem of violence has continued for decades and as noted by the studies cited above, continues as a new generation of learners is affected.

### **3.5 THE EXTENT OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

Violence is on the rise among the youth (Njuho and Davids 2012: 270). Philipps and Malcolm (2010: 21) are concerned that schools all over the world are experiencing this trend. Philipps and Malcolm (2010: 21) stated that youth are now more likely than ever to be confronted with the daily reality of an omnipresent model of physical aggression and violence. This was supported by Njuho and Davids (2012: 270), referring to a study based on a national population-based household survey on the incidence, behaviour, and communication of violence in South Africa, conducted in 2008 by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). The study revealed that 5.1% (n = 14,359) of participants aged 12 years and older reported to have witnessed someone in the household being physically assaulted by another person in the community within the past 12 months.

Below are a few examples of recent physical and psychological school violence incidents that took place in KwaZulu-Natal. They illustrate that violence continues to be a frequent method of resolving conflict and achieving certain goals.

- 21 July 2015: A fight in a high school leaves Mbuyiseni Ntshangase, aged 16, dead and another teenager seriously wounded (Wicks 2015: 1).
- On 14 August 2015: A 15 year old boy uses his father's gun to shoot another boy at a school in Pietermaritzburg (Jansen 2015: 1).
- On 21 August 2015: A grade 12 boy shoots and kills another pupil and then turns the gun on himself at Qantayi High School in Empangeni (Jansen 2015: 1).

- On 5 November 2015: Lungisani Ngema, aged 17, is stabbed to death at Hlamvana High School in Isikhawini (Ngwane 2015: 3).
- On 6 November 2015: A 12 year old learner stabs two learners to death at Vulindlela Primary School in Newcastle (Ngcobo 2015: 3).
- On 6 February 2016: 5 boys from Lamontville High School allegedly gang rape a 15 year old girl in a classroom during a free period (SABC 2016).
- On 3 March 2016: An educator from Qondokuhle Primary School in Umlazi strips a 6 year old child naked for soiling his pants and tells other pupils to pour water over him (SABC 2016).
- On 12 March 2016: 18-year-old Mngqobi Gcumisa is stabbed to death by a fellow learner on the school premises in a fight over the drug “whoonga” at Ekupholeni Secondary School, KwaSwayimane (Ntsele 2016: 3).

Burton and Leoschut (2013: xi) examine the results from the 2012 study conducted by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP), which is the follow-up to their 2008 study focusing on secondary schools in South Africa in order to identify any changes or patterns in the levels of violence affecting secondary schools nationally. The DoE’s Education Management Information System (EMIS) 2012 constructed the sampling frame, from which a total of 121 schools were randomly selected. A sample of 5,939 learners, 121 principals and 239 educators was identified. Four specific types of violence were explored in the study – namely, threats of violence, assault, sexual assault (including rape) and robbery that occurred either within the school grounds or immediately outside the school gates. In addition to these forms of violence, data was collected on other forms of victimisation that affected learners, including theft of personal belongings and violence perpetrated through various forms of information and communication technologies such as cyber-bullying. Other forms of school violence such as murder, sexting and sex videos impact on learners’ behaviour, but there is no data collected on these forms of violence. Below are some of the results of the study conducted by CJCP as reported by Burton and Leoschut (2013: 12). Some of the figures have been transposed to adopt the entire South African population of school-goers:

- A total of 22.2% of the learners had experienced a form of violence while at school in the 12 months between August 2011 and August 2012. This translates to just over a million learners (1,020,597) across the country.

- Threats of violence were frequent occurrences at school and constituted the most common form of violence experienced by learners. One in ten (10%) learners had been threatened with violence by someone at school.
- A physical assault was reported by 1 in 16 participants, about 6.3%. This percentage was up by 2% from the 4.3% observed in 2008. This amounts to a total of 289 629 high school learners across the country that had been assaulted in the past year, at a rate of 63 per 1000 learners.
- Close to 1 in 20 (4.7%) learners had been sexually assaulted or raped at school. The figure extrapolates to 216 072 learners who had succumbed to sexual violence on the school premises in the past year, at a rate of 46.9 learners per 1000.
- Robbery was reported as occurring in less than 1 in 20 learners. 206 878 high school learners across the country reportedly had their property taken from them by force while being at school, at a rate of 45 per 1000 learners.
- Theft was experienced by 44.1% of learners, constituting the most frequently reported crime among secondary school learners (including violent and non- violent crimes). The 2012 figure amounts to a total of 2 027 403 learners who had their personal belongings stolen while at school, at a rate of 441 per 1000 learners.
- Classrooms were the most common sites for violence in schools and were identified as the place where victimisation occurred in 9 out of 10 thefts (91.5%), 3 out of 5 (60.2%) robberies, 1 out of 2 assaults (51%) and sexual assaults (54.2%), and 2 out of 5 cases where learners were threatened with violence (44.3%).
- The South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) prohibits the use of corporal punishment within educational institutions. However, a total of 49.8% of learners reported being physically hit, caned or spanked by educators or principals for their wrongdoings.
- The accessibility of alcohol and drugs within the school environment has been found to increase the perpetrators of violence within schools.

- The study demonstrated an acute awareness of percentages of people that are aware that there are other people using drugs/substances: ranging from using drugs, 47.1% knew people who smoked marijuana; 12.2% knew people who used illicit drugs, to buying (12.7%) or selling drugs (6.3%).
- Furthermore, 1 in 7 (15.5%) reported knowing people at their schools who had done things that could have gotten them in trouble with the police, such as, stealing, selling stolen goods or assaulting others.

A number of features associated with family life were also found to increase vulnerability to violence outside of the home. Parental criminality, sibling criminality, exposure to family violence as witnesses as well as direct experiences of violence within the home was found to increase the risk for assaults, threats, robberies and sexual assaults outside of the home such as at school.

The most worrying fact is that school violence has a devastating effect on the entire school system Njuho and Davids (2012: 270). According to Njuho and Davids (2012: 270), violence in school can come from different sources, take on many forms and involve different actors. For example, bullying may be learned outside the school environment but perpetrated inside the school because the school ignores it or does not deal with it satisfactorily. Snodgrass and Heleta (2009: 41) discovered that violence may involve different actors at different times inside the school, for example, learners may bully each other, educators may bully each other, educators may bully learners, learners may bully educators, parents may bully educators, and principals may bully educators or be bullied by them.

**Learner-to-learner school based violence:** As noted in the preceding sections, violence has become a part of everyday life in some schools in South Africa. Ngqela and Lewis (2012: 87) write that they see the school as an institution that is supposed to offer a safe environment in which authentic learning and development should take place, but violence invariably taints the school environment and jeopardizes the educational process. It also infringes on the learner's right to an education and to the freedom and security of the person. The national school violence study conducted by Burton and Leoschut (2012: 40) revealed that much of the violence encountered by learners at school is perpetrated by other pupils, either classmates of the victims, other learners at the school or youth from outside the school. Schools also experience the presence of informal gangs that terrorise and victimise learners (Burton and Leoschut 2012: 40).

**Learner-to-educator school based violence:** Educators have the right to a working environment in which they feel valued and respected; where they may actively support learners' development and learning and where they are free from fear, threat and harm (Singh 2006: 45). However, school violence has a debilitating

effect on the morale of school principals and educators (Espelage *et al.* 2013: 75). Singh (2006: 45) sees educator victimisation as an area that has been neglected, making it difficult to assess the depth of the problem. Espelage *et al.* (2013: 75) claims that this problem is understudied and has received limited media and policy attention internationally. Singh (2006: 45) and Espelage *et al.* (2013: 75) believe that the information on the rate and scope of teacher victimisation is critical for increasing awareness, developing effective support and intervention and promoting positive school/classroom climate. An extremely shocking media report about South African schools reveals an increase in the incidents of learners violently attacking educators. Below are a few incidents that took place between learners and educators in South Africa:

- A 14 year old pupil from Jim Fouche Primary School, in Johannesburg, allegedly punched his 41 year old female educator after he was asked to take off his jersey because it was not part of the school uniform (SAPA 2013: 1).
- Grade 11 learners, aged 17 and 18, threatened an educator and smashed the windscreen of her car (Peters 2014: 1).
- A Sasolburg High School educator was allegedly shot in the leg by a 15-year-old boy who brought a gun to school (ENCA South Africa 2013: 1).

A study conducted by the SACE (2011: 19) involving principals of 5 secondary schools' highlights incidents in which learners inflict violence on educators:

- Up to 3 out of the 5 secondary schools have received reports of learner-to-educator verbal abuse.
- 1 out of 5 secondary schools reported cases of physical violence against educators.
- 2.4% of the reports included learners sexually assaulting educators.

Cangelosi (1988 cited in Bester and Du Plessis 2010: 210) suggests four reasons a learner may choose to abuse an educator physically. Firstly, learners may feel backed into a corner and feel that striking out at the educator is the only way to maintain 'face' with peers. Secondly, an educator may be in the position of being an accessible target for the learner at a moment when the learner is reacting angrily. Thirdly, the learner may attempt to exert control over authorities, win favour with peers, seek revenge on the one in authority, or relieve boredom, by carrying out a prank that endangers the wellbeing of the educator. Lastly, the learner may feel obliged to defend himself against the perceived danger that the educator poses.

According to the results reported by Du Plessis (2010: 210), the most common reasons by learners for learner on educator violence are: learners wanting to exert control over authorities and to win favour with their peers. Some educators and principals believe that this increase in violent behaviour is as a result of students' increased access to alcohol and drugs (Du Plessis 2010: 210). Janis *et al.* (2011: 8) explain that drugs and alcohol are in many cases linked to learner violence against educators in schools, which has also increased rapidly in recent years. A study conducted in New Zealand, examining possible links between violence and drug use consistently found a strong relationship between delinquent behaviour and drug use among adolescents and adults (Ellickson and McGidan 2000 cited in Janis *et al.* 2011: 9). Their work also revealed that not only was there a relationship between delinquent behaviour and drug use but that there was an escalation from minor delinquency drug use to more serious offences and increased use of illicit substances which might cause learners to be engaged in more fights.

**Educator-on-learner school based violence:** Most studies on school violence are learner-centred and neglect cases involving educators as perpetrators of school violence. Educators are not only the victims of learner abuse, some of them are physical or sexual abusers themselves (Allen 2010: 3). However, there has been a limited amount of literature that addresses violence by adults on learners (Allen 2010: 3). Educator-centred violence examines the infliction of violence by educators on learners. Allen (2010: 3) defines the bullying educator as, “the one who uses his or her power to punish, manipulate or disparage a student beyond what would be a reasonable disciplinary procedure”.

Educators have an innate duty, based on their profession, as well as a delegated duty, based on the authority delegated to them by the parents or guardians of the children enrolled at the school, to act in *loco parentis* (Prinsloo 2008:145). Yet, some of these educators create an unsafe teaching and learning environment through their bullying behaviour. De Wet (2014: 1) fears that children who have a negative relationship with their educators, especially those who experience frequent verbal abuse by the educator are likely to miss out on important learning opportunities with regard to academic content and furthermore, may be at risk of behavioural, emotional and social maladjustment. Additionally, it increases the risk of academic, physical, psychiatric and social problems, including poor self-esteem and suicidal tendencies (De Wet 2014: 1).

A study conducted by Burton and Leoschut (2013: 29) confirmed that educators are sometimes perpetrators of school violence against learners. A South African study conducted by Smit (2010: 25) about the role of school discipline in combating violence in schools in the East London region revealed that a total of 28.1% of principals had cases reported at their schools where educators had verbally abused learners; 14% had cases of physical violence against learners by educators brought to their attention and 2.5% of principals

also reported cases involving sexual violence against learners by educators. On a similar note, the SACE (2011: 16) conducted a study using the principals of 5 secondary schools to report incidents in which the educators inflicted violence on learners, the results can be found below:

- In all 5 of the schools, principals reported at least 1 case in which an educator verbally abused children.
- 1 in 5 school principals received reports in which educators physically abused learners at school.

However, educators may have a different perspective on what constitutes violence towards a child. A study conducted by Govender and Sookrajh (2014: 7), from seven primary school educators in KwaZulu-Natal revealed that educators perceive corporal punishment as a normal practice of discipline. From their past experiences, these participants perceived that corporal punishment was used to control behaviour; encourage normalising judgement through subservience to school rule, and establish the authority of an educator as a giver of knowledge. The national school violence study report by Burton and Leoschut (2012: 29) provides evidence to indicate the continued use of physical punishment within South African schools as a means of inflicting discipline. According to this study report, a total of 49.8% of learners surveyed claimed to have been caned or spanked by educators or principals as punishment for wrongdoings (Burton and Leoschut 2012: 29). The national school violence study report also indicates that the provincial rates of corporal punishment ranged from 22.4% to 73.7% with the highest levels of corporal punishment observed in KZN (73.7%) (Burton and Leoschut 2012: 29). According to Allen (2010: 3), this phenomenon continues despite the abolishment of corporal or physical punishment in South African schools since 1996.

Educators were found to be in “love relationships” with learners (SACE 2011: 16). Love relationships are sexual relationships between educators and learners. These relationships range from being secretive to being common knowledge to other learners (SACE 2011: 16). It appears that many learners fear that disclosing these relationships will result in negative consequences, such as being failed or kicked out of class (SACE 2011: 16). De Wet (2007: 14) reported that South African educators sexually abuse learners. The authors further found out that educators in Zimbabwe, Ghana and Malawi often pursue sexual advances and other forms of inappropriate behaviour towards their female learners too. The SACE (2011: 13) reported that between 1999 and 2002, 32 educators had been struck from the teaching roll with the majority having engaged in sexual relations with learners. However, there is no evidence of other forms of punishment against the accused educators.

**Gender-based school violence:** Gender-based violence and in particular violence against women is a reality in South Africa and is linked to the spread of school violence (Bhana *et al.* 2009: 50). As noted in

the above discussions, gender-based violence occurs in myriad ways and situations. At the heart of gender-based violence is inequality: De Lange *et al.* (2012: 499), posit that there is a correlation between gender inequality and gender-based violence. Bhana *et al.* (2009: 50) conducted a study in South African secondary schools where male educators explain that gender inequality is a result of muscular power - that men are biologically superior over women, however, this is a simplistic explanation as physical force varies not only between male and female, but between male and male. For physical force to be the determining factor of inequality appears to be a justification. In spite of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Republic of South Africa: 1996: 5) as well as the South African Schools Act of 1996 (Republic of South Africa 1996: 6b) providing the framework for bringing about equality in society and school, legislation alone is insufficient given the diversity in terms of who the people are, where they come from, what they believe and where they live (Bhana *et al.* 2009: 50).

### ➤ ***Masculinity***

A major factor in gender-based violence is the way in which masculinity is conceptualized. According to Gqola (2007: 115), masculinity is associated with characteristics such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, dominance, strength, courage and control. These characteristics result from a combination of biological, cultural and social influences and relate to people's understanding of power in society as a whole (Gqola 2007: 115). It is also linked to bullying, corporal punishment, verbal abuse and sexual violence in schools, and is often authoritarian schools that allow masculine power to flourish De Lange *et al.* 2012: 504). Women educators and girls are vulnerable to aggressive sexual advances from male learners and male educators within the school and also males outside the school such as gang members and taxi drivers (De Lange *et al.* 2012: 504). Gender violence appears to be part of school life, in the name of putting women educators or girls "in their places" and restoring the culture of respect as highly valued by African men in particular (Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 94).

There is a widespread belief in communities or society that it is natural for men to be violent (Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 94). Boys see violent behaviour as being synonymous with manliness. This is supported by Hamlall and Morell (2012: 484), who explain that boys are prepared to defend, advocate or subscribe to certain values as part of the process of constructing masculinity. These authors believe that boys are raised to compete, assert themselves over others, to feel entitled to certain resources, positions and status. In turn, the bundle of values which are associated with maleness are endorsed by society and become dominant or hegemonic, serving to legitimise male behaviour as well as to shape goals and aspirations. It is in this context that violence can occur to secure and assert power. This is supported by the SACE (2011: 8) stating that families' beliefs, attitudes and values towards shaping children at an early age tend to feed socially



based sex role stereotypes. Girls are expected to be caring and sensitive whereas boys are taught very early not to cry, to be strong and successful - which in turn makes them replicate the aggressive and power-seeking nature of adult males SACE (2011: 8). These constructions and expectations of masculinity increase the risk of boys engaging in violent conflict which sometimes leads to death SACE (2011: 8). Regularly the media - television, newspapers and radio - reports cases of violence in which boys take the lead. The trend shows an ever increasing number of fatal attacks on educators and learners at schools SACE (2011: 8).

These perceptions result in the subordination of females to the authority of males, which can lead to physical, sexual or psychological harm. This contributes to the socialisation of both males and females (De Lange *et al.* 2012: 502). Women are presented as being less capable, holding an inferior position, and being unable to take up certain “freedoms” (De Lange *et al.* 2012: 502). A study conducted by De Lange *et al.* (2012: 504) in South African schools revealed that female educators described having turned down promotions in order to avoid being accused by the community of having had sex with a male figure in power as a pathway to promotion. According to the women educators in this study, the inequality is visible and begins at home, it is further played out in the school, the workplace and the community.

- **“Queer” learners**

A study conducted by Msibi (2012: 515) in South African township schools warns of another type of gender-based violence directed at “queer” learners in schools. Msibi (2012: 516) explains the term “queer” as the identification of people’s sexuality on the basis of sexual practices or some perceived or constructed gender identification. This involves gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender people under the same category (Msibi 2012: 516) Verbal abuse appears to be a prevailing theme across all studies detailing the experiences of queer learners (Msibi 2012: 516) What is particularly problematic is that this abuse comes from both students and educators (Bhana 2012: 307). Smith (1998 cited in Msibi 2012: 518) notes that educators are not only complicit in their silence when queer learners receive this abuse, but are also equally active in contributing to the stigmatisation, ostracising and discrimination of queer learners. According to Bhana (2012: 307): “The heinous attacks against gays and lesbians provide educators with a crucial opportunity to open dialogue and critique about the meaning of sexual equality; the ways in which violence is engendered; and the connection between schooling and the responsibilities of learners to the development of South Africa’s democracy”.

Mostert *et al.* (2015: 124) explains some social difficulties that homosexual learners experience which include discrimination, stereotyping, stigmatisation, peer victimisation, humiliation, isolation, and a need to belong. Despite a constitution that prohibits discrimination against anyone on the grounds of sexual

orientation, homophobic victimisation of learners at secondary schools still occurs. When one focuses on the negative experiences that queer learners are exposed to in schools, it becomes very easy to view this group as a helpless and powerless group that is victimised in schools and in society. A study conducted by Mostert *et al.* (2015: 125) in South African private secondary schools reveals that actions of bullying and intimidation, such as, teasing, mocking, ridiculing and gay bashing are common abuses against homosexual learners. Educators need to become more prepared for sexual diversity in schools as study results show that student educators are ill-prepared to engage with such issues in schools (Johnson 2014: 1265).

### **3.6 SERVICES AVAILABLE TO VICTIMS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

One critical aspect of South Africa's responsibility to respond to school violence is its duty to provide robust services to the learners who have been subjected to such abuse. According to the KZN DoE (2015: 29), every school should develop a school level support plan that will support victims and perpetrators of violence. The KZN DoE argues that both learner victims and learner perpetrators should be seen as children in need of care and support. Consequently, the principal must ensure that support and rehabilitation plans are in place for the victim and the perpetrator respectively. This suggests that school level support plans should work interchangeably with external specialised support services.

The government can arrest and prosecute abusers, but in order for the victim to make it through medical exams, testify in court, return to school and eventually recover, he or she must have access to a myriad of specialised support services (KZN DoE 2015: 29). These services range from medical examinations to legal assistance to psychotherapy and trauma counselling (KZN DoE 2015: 29). Where the government fails to provide such services, it denies victims adequate remedies for the crimes committed against them. In this way, the government becomes complicit in the crimes and often re-victimises individuals in the process. In South Africa, the government considers medico-legal services, therapeutic services, court preparation and legal aid as services to be provided for the victims or survivors of violence (Centre for Applied Legal Studies 2014: 37).

#### **3.6.1 School level support plan**

The DoE (2010: 4) supports services to assist victims of violence. This is shown by the introduction of the *Speak Out* handbook to assist youth to handle any sexual abuse they may encounter while at school or at home (DoE 2010: 4). The *Speak Out* handbook guides the victim on the steps he/she must take so that the person guilty of sexual abuse is forced to stop and to face the consequences of his/her unacceptable behaviour. An extensive list of useful contacts is provided in the same handbook to help connect the victim to people specially trained to assist him/her handle sexual harassment or violence. Organisations like Child

Line, South African Police Services (SAPS) Crime Stop, SAPS Emergency, Child Protection Unit, Life Line and National Institute for Crime Prevention and Re-integration of offender organisation and Rape Crisis offer support in issues of violence and abuse. Moreover, the KZN DoE has suggested guidelines to develop and implement a support or rehabilitative plan for both the victim and the perpetrator. Below are the guidelines:

- Schools should form school based support teams (SBST's) for the development of a support and rehabilitation plan.
- SBST's should acknowledged that in most cases of violence there is a legal element of investigation which can be conducted internally by Departmental Officials or there may be an external investigation involving the police, prosecution, Department of Social Development and Health. Often in cases both forms of investigations happen concurrently.
- Whilst the investigative processes are proceeding the school must ensure that the learner is supported, feels free and can proceed with his/her daily schooling activities with minimum disruptions.
- SBSTs should identify the range of support interventions required such as counselling services, court preparation, referral to a place of safety, legal representation, medical assistance, admission to rehabilitation programmes and keeping track of follow up appointments.
- Consulting with the district psycho-social services and other relevant experts for guidance provides and facilitates the range of intervention required for the affected learner by networking with the schools' network of support providers and other government departments.
- Whilst some of the support services may be provided by outside organisations or government departments, the SBST must ensure the implementation of the plan, monitor and review the support plan.
- SBST's should ensure that if the learner is referred to an outsider agency for support, the school has to be in communication with the agency to maintain a continuum of support for the learner.
- Progress is monitored via progress reports from relevant agencies and there should be follow ups on intervention strategies.
- SBST's also keep the learner and his/her parents informed on progress of the case and reports from the various role players.
- All the records of the case should be kept in school's child violence and abuse register.

### 3.6.2 Specialised support services

In addition to the school based support plan, schools should work with support structures outside of the school. Educators should ensure that victims of violence abused are referred to institutions where they will be assisted. Below are external support services available in South Africa to assist the victims of violence.

**Medico-legal services:** According to the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (2014: 37) the South African Department of Health provides medico-legal services to victims of sexual assault; these services include medical care, as well as the collection and recording of medical evidence for the criminal justice system. Medico-Legal Service centres are located in major hospitals, including the Chris Hani Baragwaneth Hospital in Soweto (Centre for Applied Legal Studies 2014: 37). A multi-disciplinary team of government officials and designated civil society organisations manage these one-stop centres (Centre for Applied Legal Studies 2014: 37). Centre for Applied Legal Studies 2014: 37). Among other services, the centres offer a victim-friendly reporting process, medical examinations, counselling, transportation, legal consultations, and court preparation (Centre for Applied Legal Studies 2014: 37).

**Therapeutic services:** Inadequate access to therapeutic services is a serious problem for learners who are victims of violence. According to the Centre for Applied Legal Services (2014: 39), therapeutic services include psychological services such as counselling and trauma support. The Centre for Applied Legal Studies (2014: 39) acknowledges that the availability of government provided therapeutic services is limited. As a result, a number of organisations, such as Trauma Centre and Childline have stepped forward to provide these services to victims for free. Childline is an organisation that provides therapeutic services, many of which are targeted at learners. It also runs a toll-free hotline that is available to individuals reporting abuse or those who have questions or concerns about child abuse. A study conducted by Burton and Leoschut (2012: 95) reveals that Childline offers an online counselling facility in partnership with Mxit and is currently the only South African online counselling service available to young people that deals specifically with issues of violence and abuse both online and offline. Burton and Leoschut (2012: 95) also acknowledge the national TV coverage of the educational TV shows, Soul City and Soul Buddies, as positively impacting on safety and child protection as well as health and wellbeing.

**Court preparation services:** According to Centre for Applied Legal Studies (2014: 37), in South Africa legal services are expensive and not easily available to anyone. The above centre believes that learners who are abused find it difficult to access such service and mostly depend upon a criminal justice process that does not always take their interests into account as they rarely have the means to seek legal advice or pursue civil remedies. In response, a number of organisations, such as, Child line have developed programmes to provide legal services to indigent individuals.

**Legal services:** The service providers such as Childline have stepped forward to provide important resources to victims and survivors of sexual violence. Without their support, it is likely that many victims would not have access to crucial services. Their work is incredibly important and helps to fill critical gaps in government services despite the number of challenges that prevent them from providing services to all victims who need their assistance. Almost every service provider experiences inadequate resources as the greatest challenge in providing services to victims of sexual abuse and violence (Centre for Applied Legal Studies 2014: 41).

### **3.7 STRATEGIES ON SCHOOL VIOLENCE REDUCTION**

Unacceptable violent behaviour in schools constitutes an infringement of the constitutional rights of educators and learners alike. However, the DoE has implemented some strategies to fight against this pandemic. As early as 2001, the DoE launched some programmes to fight the increase in school violence. For generations, South African schools adopted punitive approaches as the most appropriate strategy in dealing with misbehaviour (Jansen and Matla, 2011: 85). The main focus of this approach is to determine what rule was broken, who is to blame, and what the punishment should be (Jansen and Matla, 2011: 85). Despite the use of punitive measures, maintaining discipline is becoming an increasing problem in South African schools (Jansen and Matla, 2011: 85). The Constitution has transformed the traditional aims of punishment and stressed the importance of restorative justice which focuses on the rehabilitation of offenders through reconciliation with victims and the community at large (Wachtel 2013: 3). Reyneke (2015: 30) defined restorative justice as strategies and techniques used to address misconduct at an intervention level. The above author suggests that schools should adopt restorative justice as a possible solution to protect, promote and restore the dignity of violence victims in schools.

#### **3.7.1 Measures to fight violence**

The DoE introduced measures such as: *Stop Rape*, school based crime prevention, management of physical violence at school, *Opening Our Eyes* and the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug Use Amongst Learners in Schools (DoE 2013: 7). The text below clarifies these services:

***Stop rape:*** *Stop Rape* is a campaign that was launched by DoE (2013: 7) on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2013 for the 10, 2 million learners in all South African schools. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2013, all schools across the country were instructed to call special assemblies as from 08h00 am till 08h30 and to sing the national anthem (DoE 2013: 7). Following the singing, principals, educators, learners and activists were instructed to address the assemblies for 15 minutes about rape and sexual crimes. The focus was on education/awareness and more importantly what to do following an assault. Learners were requested to

report any form of abuse from anyone to the authorities, this was suggested by the Minister of Basic Education at the time, Angie Motshega. In addition, a pledge based on the Bill of Responsibilities, which includes a statement on violence and rape, circulated and educators and learners were urged to adopt it at assemblies. The pledge was available in 11 official languages. Schools were also requested to prepare worksheets for learners about violent and sexual crimes using the guideline that was provided by the DoE. Learners were instructed to complete these worksheets at home, with their families if possible, and return them to their educators as part of the education/awareness programme (DoE 2013: 7).

**School based crime prevention:** The Department of Basic Education in partnership with the South African Police Services (2009: 9) are working together to prevent, manage and respond to incidents of crime and violence in schools. The SAPS commit themselves to develop a critical range of sustainable and replicable short, medium and long term school-based crime prevention interventions to prevent and address the predisposing and precipitating factors to violence and victimisation in South African schools (South African Police Services 2009: 9). They embark on rendering a school-based crime prevention service that is proactive and is characterised by the development and implementation of interventions that deter potential offenders and empower potential victims and past victims (South African Police Services 2009: 9). Their main objective is to assist in building capacity for the school community, especially learners, to manage and address school safety issues by promoting their participation in the development, implementation, sustaining and evaluation of school safety programmes (South African Police Services 2009: 9). This strategy also calls for the use a community-based and inclusive approach to address the needs of a school community through effective school-based crime prevention and policing services (South African Police Services 2009: 9).

**Management of physical violence:** According to DoE (2014: 9) Management of Physical Violence at school is a campaign introduced by the DoE that compels all educators and parents to take initiatives in combating school violence. Educators are expected to involve themselves in what goes on outside of their classroom as they always feel responsible with what happens inside them. School-based violence includes violence within the playground and classroom (DoE 2014: 9). In between classes, an educator should be at his/her door monitoring learner's behaviour - keeping his/her eyes and ears open (DoE 2014: 9) This is a time to learn a lot about learners' behaviour. Educators should enforce the School Code of Conduct for Learners at this time (DoE 2014: 9) If they hear a group of learners cursing or teasing others, they should adopt a "no tolerance approach". This campaign urges educators not to turn a blind eye on an inappropriate behaviour. They should listen to conversations between learners and raise the situation to the principal's attention immediately (DoE 2014: 9). They should get involved with all activities led by learners to avoid violence and familiarise themselves with danger signs. Schools are also encouraged to discuss violence prevention with learners. If school violence is discussed in the news the educator should bring it up in class.

This helps the educator to teach learners what they should do if they know someone who has a weapon or is planning violent acts. Combating violence should be a combined effort by all learners, parents, educators and administrators. Parents are also encouraged to take the initiative in violence management by remaining good role models to their children (DoE 2014: 9). Parents should show children how to resolve conflict by using non-aggressive strategies in settling the disputes that they have (DoE 2014: 9). Educators are also encouraged to teach conflict resolution and anger management skills. This will enable learners to resolve conflicts non-violently (DoE 2014: 9).

***Opening Our Eyes:*** The DoE (2011: 116) introduced this programme to instruct educators to be “change agents” and to create the sorts of environments which support healing processes in response to a trauma. However, it has to be acknowledged that educators themselves often have attitudes and beliefs which may be difficult to reconcile with any desire to support their learners and colleagues and which may influence their responses to the trauma of others DoE (2011: 116). Their own personal experiences of trauma may be behind these attitudes and beliefs, therefore educators need on-going training in the management of destructive emotions which are likely to incapacitate rather than facilitate their own well-being and integration in society DoE (2011: 116). The ideal model of educator training and development will draw heavily on indigenous cultural and spiritual values as well as on professional outside help in providing support for emotionally disturbed learners.

➤ **National strategy for the prevention and management of alcohol and drug use amongst learners in school**

According to the DoE (2013: iv) the main goals of this strategy are to retain learners in school and to create a safe learning environment that contributes towards quality education. The strategy is based on four pillars: to create an enabling environment for the prevention and management of alcohol and drug use; primary prevention that serves as the main thrust of the strategy as most learners do not use or abuse alcohol and drugs, and education being the comparative advantage of the schooling system; early detection that focuses on identification of early signs of alcohol and drug use and dependence; and treatment, care and support that is focused on setting up referral links for learners to access required services DoE (2013: iv).

The Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (Republic of South Africa, 2013: 1) argues that while the Department of Basic Education has taken concrete steps to advocate a holistic and whole-school approach to violence prevention at schools, there is substantial work that needs to be done at the provincial and school level to ensure the implementation of such an approach. Rather than adopting piecemeal and intuitive response-driven strategies, approaches that are led by evidence, and that focus on prevention of violence are required. These need to be school-based, with local diagnostic and prevention plans developed and

implemented, based on local priorities and resources that draw on the experiences and contributions of everyone within the school body: learners, parents, school management and administrative staff (Republic of South Africa, 2013: 1). This will ensure that strategies are appropriately targeted and that resources are allocated where they can achieve the most significant and sustainable impact. School management need to be held accountable for safety outcomes. Standardized indicators, with data collected at a district, provincial and national level will allow for on-going monitoring of levels of violence, and appropriate remedial steps to be taken (Republic of South Africa, 2013: 1). Finally, the school environment is inextricably embedded in the broader social and community context, and parents and community members have an important role to play in making school safe. Failure of parents to engage in a constructive way with school authorities will undermine the ability to achieve safe school.

### **3.7.2 Punitive measures**

The punitive approach consists of the uses of dominance, control and punishment to bring about behavioural change in learners (Reyneke 2011: 134). This is supported by de Wet (2009: 61) in emphasising that this approach involves disciplinary measures within the school such as office referral, in-and out-of-school suspension and expulsion. The approach focuses on the past and the aim is to determine who should be blamed and what the person is guilty of (Reyneke 2011: 134). An adversarial relationship and process characterise the retributive approach, with an authoritarian figure, such as the educator or principal, in charge of the process and having the power to decide on the wrongdoer's guilt and punishment. If the transgressor is found guilty, he or she is punished in order to ensure deterrence and to prevent future misconduct. Reyneke (2015: 58) reveals that the most prominent disciplinary methods being used to discipline learners are additional school work, withdrawal of privileges, menial tasks, detention, humiliation, behavioural management contracts and, although illegal, sometimes corporal punishment. According to Reyneke (2011: 134), punitive forms of punishment tend to result in the exclusion of the transgressor.

However, Walker and Gresham (1997: 203) believe that this is a tough adversarial process that could create a great deal of negative emotions and feelings with all the parties involved. These authors believe that the practices used to punish are known to educators, however what is probably unknown and needs to be considered is the fact that punishment leads to shaming, and that shaming leads to negative behaviour. According to Reyneke (2015: 60) educators are thus unknowingly contributing to the anger that they experience from learners. These retributive measures undoubtedly infringe on the right to freedom and security of the person and on the right to education of the transgressor, which is contrary to section 7 of the



Constitution, which provides that the "state must respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights" (Reyneke 2011: 128).

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (Republic of South Africa 2013: 2) emphasises that the current punitive system i.e. the system of punishing people for crimes committed seems to have only limited success, hence the need for a different approach and response. This is supported by Laas and Boezaart (2014: 2672) in explaining that in a school setting, and specifically when learner on learner violent action takes place, both these parties are children, therefore, the conventional punitive approach to restore justice might not be the most appropriate one. An alternative approach is called for, specifically restorative justice. Hargovan (2013: 39) suggests that schools should adopt restorative justice to institutionalise peaceful approaches to harm, problem-solving and violations of legal and human rights aiming specifically at reconciliation.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

Violence occurring within the school is a complex phenomenon that results from various causes such as the microsystem, mesosystem, macrosystem and exosystem (Bronfenbrenner 1994: 39). There are various forms of violence that learners encounter at schools such as bullying; theft of property, robberies and vandalism; sexual violence, harassment and rape; gang related violence; violence related to drugs and alcohol abuse; physical violence and use of weapons; shooting, stabbing and murder; violence through student protest and racially motivated violence (SACE 2011: 7). School violence has devastating effects on the entire school system such as physical and psychological effects, educational damage and societal breakdown. Violence in schools can come from different sources, learners may bully each other, educators may bully each other, educators may bully learners, learners may bully educators and parents may bully educators (Ngqela and Lewis 2012:87). Another popular form of violence is gender based school violence where male educators or learners perpetrate violence on female educators or girls (De Lange *et al* 2012: 499). There are services in place to provide support to the abused victims such as school level support plans and specialised support services that are provided outside the school environment (Centre for Applied Legal Studies 2014: 37). The DoE has implemented strategies to fight this pandemic, however, the problem continues. Therefore, researchers suggest that schools should adopt restorative justice rather than punitive justice as a way of dealing with learners' violent behaviour.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

### **SCHOOL VIOLENCE OR PEACE**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The rise of democracy in South Africa, as discussed in the preceding section, has not brought about the end of school violence (Du Plessis (2010: 108). A considerable amount of research has explored the school context in an effort to identify the risk factors contributing to academic failure and anti-social behaviour in schools. School violence is a global phenomenon that has severe and negative consequences on learners and educators, as well as their social, socio-economic lives and the school's functioning (Dunne *et al.* 2013: 286). It occurs in every country of the world (Deveci *et al.* 2007: 25). The current study builds on three related theories.

Firstly, the social learning theory, which states that the behaviour of an individual is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning (Bandura 1971: 2). The social learning theory posits that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur through observation and direct instruction (Collins 2013: 31). This theory explains how people can learn new things and develop new behaviours by observing other people. In addition to the observation of behaviour, learning also occurs through the observation of rewards and punishments. The social learning theory views school violence as the combination of multiple dynamic factors that emphasise the importance of involving community in the development of a child (Collins 2013: 31). I have used the social learning theory to gain a further understanding on the nature of violence and what its possible causes may be.

Secondly, restorative justice which is a theory of justice that emphasises repairing the harm caused or revealed by criminal behaviour (Reyneke 2015: 1). It is best accomplished through cooperative processes that include all stakeholders. The idea behind the theory is that crime causes harm and justice should focus on repairing that harm. People affected by crime should participate in resolution Laas and Boezaart (2014: 2672).

Lastly, is the Cure Violence model which incorporates visualising and treating violence as if it were spreading from one person to another, like an infectious disease (Toscano 2015: 3). This model has been proposed as a possible corrective measure in secondary schools to fight the violence pandemic. The Cure

Violence model sees violence as a contagious disease that must be treated like all health problems. The model is premised on the idea that violence spreads like an epidemic, and that it can be treated using the methods employed to combat and control disease (Sederer 2014: 1). The model posits that people learn violent behaviour through everyday interactions with friends and family members, especially those they admire the most (Sederer 2014: 1). Therefore, I have used the Cure Violence model as a possible resolution to the observed violence in this study.

## **4.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

Several theories aim to explain the causes and possible solutions to end violence in schools. Many of the studies on school violence focus on the development of children as a basis to understanding the root causes of violent behaviour. When approaching the causes of violent behaviour from this angle some focus on the internal processes of children and others on the external influences related to developmental changes. Prominent theories (such as the one used in the theoretical component of this study – the social learning theory) are primarily concerned with understanding and determining what triggers violent behaviour in a person. As earlier stated, two core ideologies have been used in this study, namely: the social learning theory and the Cure Violence model: the first being used to probe the possible causes of violence, and the latter as a possible solution to end violence.

### **The social learning theory**

The social learning theory states that learning is a “cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation and direct instructions” (Bandura 1971: 2). Behaviour can be channelled through observation (Bandura 1971: 3) The social learning paradigm is organised around three major regulatory systems whereby behaviour is acquired, maintained, and modified (Bandura 1971: 3). In instances where schools are located within a community where violence is seen as a common, normal and effective way of communication, learners experience and observe violence, thus the social context can trigger violence. In the South African context, Collins (2013: 31) supports this theory in stating that violence is widely accepted and is seen as an appropriate and effective way of regulating interpersonal behaviour. Parents see violence as an essential tool in raising children, Collins (2013: 31), a useful disciplinary technique in educational institutions, an acceptable strategy in pursuing sexual encounters, an indispensable resource in intimate relationships and an effective way of establishing social status. Across the board, it is regarded as a useful and effective resource. Learners observe this extremely “popular” action, through observation, their behaviour is highly influenced and they are channelled to become violent as well. To understand the different behaviours that people demonstrate, the social learning theory examines human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental

influences (Collins 2013: 31). The text below discusses the two main aspects of social learning theory which are learning by experience and modelling:

**Learning by experience:** According to the social learning theory by Bandura (1971: 3) new patterns of behaviour can be acquired through direct experiences. Collins (2013: 34) believes that learners do not only observe violence, but also experience it first-hand and repress the resulting traumatic emotions. The unresolved emotions continue to exist outside of conscious awareness until they are later triggered by situations of stress, fear or humiliation, at which point they erupt uncontrollably into acts of violence. He further argues that that violence in schools is the end results of early childhood direct experiences. Wekerle and Wolfe (1999: 441) support this theory in claiming that direct experiences cannot be divorced from the type of behaviour an individual portrays at a later stage. Wekerle and Wolfe (1999: 441) made an example of maltreated children who have an increased risk of relationship violence, because the foundations for such violence, while organized in childhood, become activated in adolescence with the onset of dating. Wolke and Wolfe further explain that the cumulative effects of exposure to and experience of violence may be observed, in particular, during the adolescent dating stage. Adolescence is closer in time to their previous maltreatment experiences than adulthood, and is also a time when parental abuse increases (Collins 2013: 34). Youth with histories of maltreatment are particularly vulnerable, most likely because of their confused notions of the expressions of love and their need for acceptance (Wekerle and Wolfe 1999: 441).

The social learning theory is governed by the rewarding and punishing consequences that follow every given action. People are confronted with situations with which they must deal with one way or another. Various responses are tested: some prove unsuccessful while others produce favourable results. While undergoing this process of reinforcement, modes of behaviour seen as effective are adopted while unsuccessful ones are rejected. Collins (ibid) further explains that it is assumed that responses are strengthened by their immediate consequences. Some people alter their performances through reinforcement without even noticing the correlation between one's actions and outcomes. This implies that the theory of reinforcement serves informative and incentive functions.

**Modelling:** Apart from the rewarding and punishing consequences that channel behaviour, most of the behaviours that human beings portray are learned either purposefully or erroneously through the influence of observing the behaviour of others (Bandura 1971: 5). Miller and Dollard (1941 cited in Bandura 1971: 5) explain that in order for modelling of learners to occur, observers must be motivated to act, they must be provided with an example of the desired behaviour, they must perform responses that match the example and their initiated behaviour must be positively reinforced. Collins (2013: 31) further explains that violence is also understood to be a tool of broader social negation. For example, in South Africa, strikes are believed

to be effective only if they include violence. The Marikana August 2012 massacre showed how brute force may be used even by those trying to manage social disruption and dissent. Collins continues to explain violence as a tool that is widely used for political mobilisation, as evidenced in the “Kill for Zuma” and “Kill the Boer” sloganeering by Julius Malema as a way of eliminating the threat of democratic political competitors. Learners look to some of these political activists as role models in their lives - it is through this perception that learners become violent in school in mimicking their role models. Similarly, the “Fees Must Fall” campaign was under the same influence, where students demanded and dictated the reduction of South African universities fees violently. Although the original campaign advocated peaceful means, it did not take long before violence occurred.

### **4.3 CONCEPTUALISING PEACE TO REDUCE SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace (2008: xii) stated that: “To reach peace, teach peace.”

UNESCO (2013: 2) states that: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”

Very often in South Africa, violence is chosen as a means of resolving conflict (Carl 2011: 129). Society is constantly exposed to a culture of violence and children are the most vulnerable. Violence has consequently become a way of life for the majority of the youth (Power 2014: 47). Carl (2011: 129) warns that without peace, South Africa cannot prosper in any terrain. Our future lies with our youth, which is why it is imperative that the current generation of school learners be educated on striving to achieve and maintain peace. Spinoza (1677 cited in Castryck and Duquet 2010: 12) believes that peace is not merely the absence of war but it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence and justice. The peaceful state of mind that Spinoza refers to is not just a characteristic that people are born with but rather the result of their education.

Harris (2003 cited in Demir, 2011: 1739) believes that peace education aims to improve the behaviour and knowledge necessary to form a secure world and a supportive environment. Contrary to the above, Demir (2011: 1739) argues that peace is generally perceived as weak, passive, boring, and dull and is only found in the amateur programmes of voluntary institutions. Power (2014: 47) suggests that South Africa must re-engineer national systems of education, replacing education with a culture of war with education with a culture of peace, as a fundamental aspect of laying the foundations for creating alternatives to war. Harris (2002 cited in Danesh 2006: 56) identifies ten goals for effective peace education: to appreciate the richness of the concept of peace; to address fears; to provide information about security systems; to understand violent behaviour; to develop intercultural understanding; to provide for a future orientation; to teach peace

as a process; to promote a concept of peace accompanied by social justice; to stimulate a respect for life; and to end violence. However, one needs to completely understand the concept of peace before adopting it as a strategy to minimise school violence: peace education is discussed below.

**Peace education:** This is a discipline that focuses on teaching students' concepts such as human rights, freedom, democracy, environmental protection, as well as informing them about the negative consequences of conflict and violence (Olayeke and Ezeokoli 2015: 664). Danesh (2011:11) focuses on the necessary contents of the curriculum. Peace education is the process of promoting knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavioural changes in individuals (Castrick and Duquet 2010: 17). It enables children, youth and adults to prevent conflict or violence, both overt and structural; to resolve violence peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level (Olayeke and Ezeokoli 2015: 664; Castrick and Duquet 2010: 17). Peace education instils a disposition within people that helps them to manage anger, depression and improve communication skills (Castrick and Duquet 2010: 17). Humanity needs to take lessons from its past in order to build a new and better tomorrow. According to Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace (2008: vii) one lesson learned is that, to prevent our violence-ridden history from repeating itself, the values of peace, non-violence, tolerance, human rights and democracy will have to be inculcated in every woman and man, young and old, children and adults alike and the most relevant platform to achieve such is through peace education.

Galtung (1969: 183) clearly explained that just like violence has two dimensions, that is personal and structural, peace also has two sides, the absence of personal violence and absence of structural violence (social justice), they are referred to as negative peace and positive peace respectively. The above author further explains that in formulations, the absence of personal violence and social justice are preferred. The reason for the use of both negative and positive is that the absence of personal violence does not lead to a positively defined condition, whereas social justice is a positively defined condition. Therefore, peace conceived this way is not only a matter of control and reduction of the overt use of violence, but of what we refer to as vertical developments (advancement in a person's thinking capability). Meaning peace theory is connected equally with conflict theory and development theory.

This is emphasised by Castrick and Duquet (2010: 12); Grewal (2003: 4); Carl (2011: 132) and Balasooriya (2001: 10) in making the distinction between negative and positive peace. According to these authors, negative peace refers to the absence of violence, pessimism, but not always by peaceful means. It implies the ending of indirect or structural violence and replacing it with wealth, social justice and democracy; whilst positive peace refers to structural integration, optimism and prevention by peaceful means. It can

only be fostered if people themselves possess the willingness and the skills to end structural violence. People should be empowered to do this. Peace education is highly associated with negative peace as it mainly concentrates on teaching learners to stay away from conflicts and end violence to ensure peace in schools (Carl 2011: 132). Negative peace merely implies the absence of various types of violence such as nature, direct, structural, cultural and time violence (Grewal 2003: 4). This is currently the most common approach to inclusion of peace in school curricula and highly adopted by many schools concerned with peace (Balasooriya 2001: 10).

Education for peace focuses on helping students, educators, staff, and parents/guardians to become peacemakers by developing inner, interpersonal and intergroup peace (Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace 2008: 14). It refers to the presence of just and non-exploitative relationships, as well as human and ecological well-being, such that the root causes of conflict are diminished (Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace 2008: 14 and Carl 2011: 132). This goal is accomplished by emphasis on the acquisition of unity-based worldviews founded on universal principles of peace, which form the framework for teaching all subjects of study (Carl 2011: 132). De Wet (2009: 61) believes that South Africa should promote good values. Akinsola (2010: 656) suggests that stakeholders should be empowered with the skills and knowledge to make positive decisions in dealing with anger or frustration. Education for peace highly relates to positive peace Akinsola (2010: 656). Grewal (2003: 4) projects positive peace as a higher ideal than negative peace. He argues that peace research shouldn't merely deal with the narrow vision of ending or reducing violence at a direct or structural level but seek to understand conditions for preventing violence. For this to happen, peace and violence need to be looked at in totality at all levels of human organisation. This requires the understanding of peace and conflict studies eclectically (Grewal 2003: 4). Positive peace includes nature peace, direct positive peace, structural positive peace and cultural positive peace (Grewal 2003: 4). The overall implication is that violence and peace breed themselves; and that positive peace is the best protection measure, as preventive is the better than cure. It is within these parameters that this study mainly deals with education for peace to effect positive peace in schools. The study seeks to empower stakeholders with anger or frustration management skills in order to make the informed decisions concerning their behaviour.

The escalating rate of school violence in KwaZulu-Natal indicates weakness in the current peace education efforts and the heightened need for urgent preventative measures through education for peace among all stakeholders. Literature has revealed that education for peace is marginal and seriously under researched as most peace studies that have been done concentrate on peace education.

#### **4.3.1 Restorative Justice**

According to Laas and Boezaart (2014: 2672): “Restorative justice is an option for doing justice after the occurrence of and offence that is primarily oriented towards repairing the individual, relational and social harm caused by the offence”. This is supported by Reyneke (2015: 1) in defining restorative justice as reactive, consisting of formal and informal responses to crime and other wrongdoing after it occurs. The approach aims to involve victims, offenders, families concerned and community members in collectively identifying harms, needs and obligations through accepting responsibilities, making restitution, and taking measures to prevent a recurrence of the incident and promoting reconciliation (Laas and Boezaart 2014: 2672).

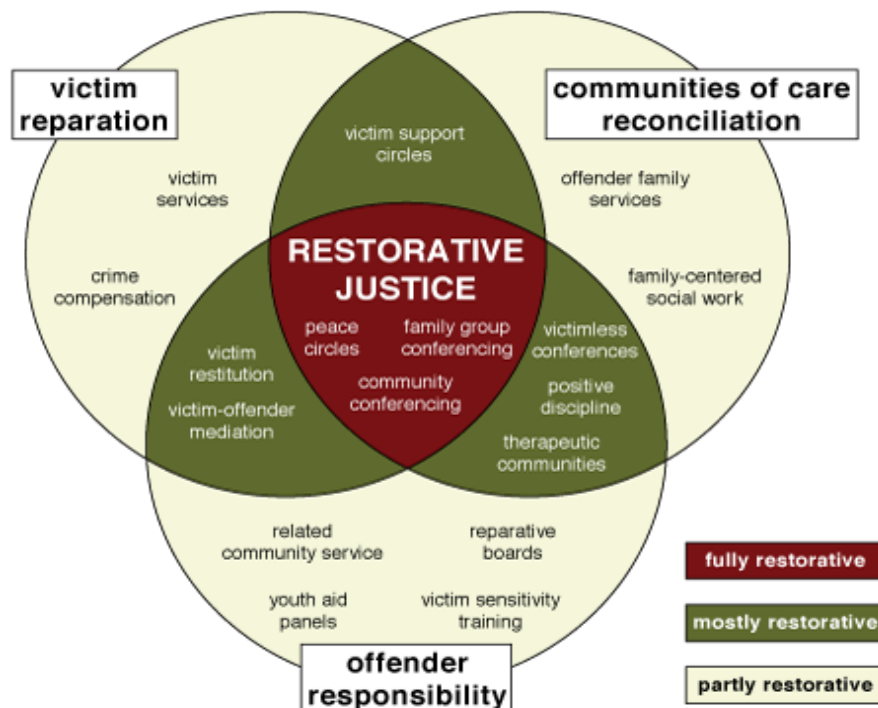


Figure 4.1: The Typology of Restorative Justice Typology (Source: Reyneke 2015)

Wachtel (2013: 3) states that the process involves three primary stakeholders in determining how best to repair the harm done by an offender. These primary stakeholders are the victims, offenders and their communities of care, whose needs are, respectively, obtaining reparation, taking responsibility and achieving reconciliation (Wachtel 2013: 3). The degree to which all three are involved in meaningful emotional exchange and decision making is the degree to which any form of social discipline approach will be fully restorative (Wachtel 2013: 3). The three primary stakeholders are represented in figure 2.2 by the three overlapping circles. The very process of interacting is critical in meeting stakeholders’ emotional



needs. The emotional exchange necessary for meeting the needs of all those directly affected cannot occur with only one set of stakeholders participating. Most restorative processes involve the active participation of all three sets of primary stakeholders. When criminal justice practices involve only one group of primary stakeholders, as in the case of governmental financial compensation for victims or meaningful community service work assigned to offenders, the process can only be called partly restorative (Wachtel 2013: 3). When a process such as victim-offender mediation includes two principal stakeholders but excludes their communities of care, the process is mostly restorative (Wachtel 2013: 3). Only when all three sets of primary stakeholders are actively involved, such as in conferences or circles, is a process fully restorative (Wachtel 2013: 3).

I feel that the right to have peaceful schools is an essential condition for effective teaching and learning and quality education to take place. Power (2014: 48) believes that peace education must start in early childhood in order to develop the essential values and behaviour patterns needed to live in harmony. This is supported by Perry *et al.* (2015: 4) in emphasising that peace education is a process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavioural changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence to create the conditions conducive to peace. Parents play a critical role in laying the foundations for human development. In both the home and schools, children need to be given opportunities to learn how to relate to others and to resolve conflicts peacefully. They also need to learn that resorting to violence is unacceptable as a way of dealing with conflicts and difficulties.

#### **4.3.2 The Cure Violence model**

I believe that in order to ensure peace building skills in schools the Cure Violence model needs to be adopted. The appeal of the Cure Violence model for me lies in the simplicity of the logic behind it, the ease of its implementation and its high rate of recorded effectivity in past studies. Butts *et al.* (2015a: 1) explains that the Cure Violence model was developed by Gary Slutkin in the 1990's, a Chicago physician and epidemiologist who turned to violence prevention after spending more than a decade fighting epidemics such as cholera, malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS in Africa. The Cure Violence model is a public health approach to violence reduction that seeks to change individual and community attitudes and norms towards violence (West and West 2011: 20). The model is based on the idea that violence is actually a disease, contagious in nature, and that it can be treated using the methods used to cure contagious diseases (West and West 2011: 20). West and west further explain that it also tries to demonstrate to those individuals (directly involved in violent activities) and to the broader community that there are more acceptable and less harmful ways to resolve personal conflicts and disputes. It posits that people learn violent behaviour

through everyday interactions with friends and family members, especially those they admire most - which supports the social learning theory in emphasising that behaviour is acquired, maintained, and modified.

According to the National Academy of Science (2015: 94), violence is a contagious disease since it meets the definition of a disease and of being contagious. The National Academy of Science (2015: 94) believes that violence spreads from one person to another. Violence is currently more recognised as a health problem whereas many years ago the words violence and health were hardly used in the same sentence. Sanburn (2016: 23) believes that like any disease, violence can be cured. The model has crossed the geographic boundaries of Chicago and influences other city's programmes such as *Save our Streets* in curbing America's violence epidemic on a local level, *Safe Streets* in the East Baltimore neighbourhood of McElderry Park and the TRUCE project that was implemented in Phoenix, Arizona (Sanburn 2016: 23). The key is in their unorthodox approach. Unlike police, who are tasked with arresting criminals to be brought into the formal justice system, they approach violence like doctors would approach disease - as a contagious bug that must be diagnosed, contained and treated (Sanburn 2016: 23).

Sanburn (2016: 24) explains that in 2000, Slutkin started the Chicago Ceasefire (currently known as the Cure Violence model), a group that tapped people with connections to high crime areas, to serve as "violence interrupters". After receiving tips from community members, they reached out to people who had experienced a violent episode, mediated on-going conflicts and worked with high-risk residents to change their behaviour; much in the way doctors treat outbreaks of tuberculosis and cholera Butts *et al.* (2015a: 40). It worked. Within a year, Slutkin's approach led to a 67% decrease in shootings in one of Chicago's most violent areas (Sanburn 2016: 24). Since then, Cure Violence initiatives have led to similar results in other cities, notably in four high-crime Baltimore neighbourhoods, where there were as many as 56% fewer murders and 44% fewer shootings from 2007 (when the first programme began) to 2010 Butts *et al.* (2015a: 40). Currently, the model has spread to more than 20 American cities (Sanburn 2016: 24).

The Cure Violence model relies on three key elements to stop the transmission of violent behaviour: interrupting transmission directly, identifying and changing the thinking of potential transmitters (i.e.: those at highest risk of perpetrating violence), and changing group norms regarding violence. These three key elements are discussed below.

**Interrupting transmission directly:** According to Butts *et al.* (2015a: 40): "The interruption of violence occurs by preventing retaliatory shootings, mediating on-going conflicts and continuing to follow up to keep the conflicts cool."

The National Academy of Sciences (2014: 96) made a clear distinction between epidemic diseases, i.e.: clustering, spread and transmission. This idea is premised from Slutkin (2012: 1), who established that in the same way that cholera clusters around water sources, violence clusters in “hot spots” where local conditions create a much higher rate of violent events. Violence also spreads like an epidemic disease, both temporally and geographically Slutkin (2012: 1). Temporally, violence can be seen to spread non-linearly with rapid increases as “crime waves” break out National Academy of Sciences (2014: 96). Slutkin (2012: 1) further explains that geographically, violence has been shown to move from one area of origination to surrounding areas, much like an epidemic disease spreads. Finally, transmission is the passage of infection from one organism to another Slutkin (2012: 1). Classic infectious diseases are transmitted by invisible infectious agents such as viruses or bacteria, while violence is transmitted from human to human by equally invisible and now newly discovered pathways Slutkin (2012: 1). Essentially transmission means that the disease or condition causes something of itself to be communicated, causing another person or animal to take on some of the same characteristics. According to Toscano (2015: 6), in the language of infectious diseases, it simply means that being exposed to the disease makes it more likely that you will also develop the symptom complex that is characteristic of the same disease. Toscano (2015: 6) believes that violence is transmitted through exposure, modelling, social learning, and norms.

According to Slutkin (2012: 1)) the Cure Violence model deploys a new type of worker called violence interrupters who are specially qualified and trained to locate potentially lethal, on-going conflicts and to respond with a variety of conflict mediation techniques both to prevent imminent violence and to change the norms around the perceived need to use violence. Violence Interrupters are culturally appropriate workers who live in the affected community, are known to high-risk people and have possibly even been gang members or spent time in prison, but have made a change in their lives and turned away from crime Slutkin (2014: 3). According to Butts *et al.* (2015b: 40). interrupters receive specific training on methods for detecting potential shooting events, mediating conflicts, and keeping safe in these dangerous situations. Butts *et al.* (2015b: 40) emphasise that violence interrupters are selected for their ability to establish relationships with the most high-risk youth in the community, usually young men between the ages of 15 and 30.

Their main function is to block the transmission of violence from one person to another by defusing potentially fatal altercations (Slutkin 2012: 3). Violence interrupters use a variety of methods to detect conflicts including: “interrupting rumours,” going to hospitals after shootings occur to prevent retaliation, paying attention to anniversaries and other important dates, being present at key locations, and being a resource to those in the community with information who are not comfortable contacting the police (Slutkin 2012: 3). Mediations occur through many techniques, such as: meeting one-on-one with aggrieved

individuals; hosting small group peace-keeping sessions to foster diplomacy between groups; bringing in a respected third-party to dissuade further violence; creating cognitive dissonance by demonstrating contradictory thinking; changing the understanding of the situation to one which does not require violence; allowing parties to air their grievance; dispelling any misunderstandings; conveying the true costs of using violence, and buying time to let emotions cool (Slutkin 2012: 3). Interrupting an on-going conflict before it becomes lethal cuts off a chain of events that are commonly known as retaliations (Slutkin 2012: 3). Importantly, it also prevents the exposure of others in the community to the potentially violent act, thus inhibiting transmission of the behaviour and perpetuation of the norm Butts *et al.* (2105b: 40).

**Identifying and changing the thinking of potential transmitters:** The Cure Violence model employs a strong outreach component to change the norms and behaviour of high-risk clients, an approach that has been shown to be effective in other settings (Spergel 2007: 81). Outreach workers act as mentors to a caseload of participants, seeing each client multiple times per week, conveying a message of rejecting the use of violence, and assisting them to obtain needed services such as job training and drug abuse counselling (Slutkin 2014: 5). The outreach worker develops a risk reduction plan for each high-risk participant that is intended to move him away from accepting the use of violence (Spergel 2007: 81). Outreach workers are also available to their clients during critical moments when a client needs someone to help him avoid a relapse into criminal and violent behaviour (Spergel 2007: 81).

What particularly sets the Cure Violence model apart from other approaches is the level of risk to the participants; the model calls for working only with those at high-risk for involvement in violence (Ransford *et al.* 2013: 10). To determine risk level, outreach workers employ a list of risk factors specific to the community usually including whether an individual is between 16 and 25 years of age, a recent victim of a shooting, recently released from prison, and a carrier of a weapon (Ransford *et al.* 2013: 10).

In order to have access and credibility among this population, Cure Violence employs culturally appropriate workers, similar to the workers used in other public health models (Ransford *et al.* 2013: 10). Having status as someone from the community who has lived the life of the served population is essential to the ability of outreach workers to access and treat the highest risk. Many well-designed programmes fail to affect violence because of their inability to reach or gain the respect of those who are actually committing or likely to commit violence (Ransford *et al.* 2013: 10).

**Changing group norms regarding violence:** In order to have lasting change, the norms in the community that accept and encourage violence must change (Slutkin 2012: 19). Slutkin further explains that at the heart of Cure Violence's effort at community norm change is the idea that the norms can be changed if multiple messengers of the same new norms are consistently and abundantly heard. Cure Violence uses a public

education campaign, community events, community responses to every shooting, and community mobilization to change group and community norms related to the use of firearms (Slutkin 2014: 20). These efforts involve all willing participants, particularly seeking to include community residents, local businesses, clergy, social service agencies, and police (Butts 2015a: 21). Currently in affected communities, people are encouraged to respond violently to petty grievances, acts of disrespect and small financial issues. But if new norms reject the use of violence, or if existing norms opposing violence are better communicated to everyone in a community, they erect a barrier to violent behaviour that is difficult to overcome. When new norms rejecting violence become established in a community, they can eventually create a group, sometimes referred to as herd, immunity to violence (Butts 2015a: 21).

Three additional elements are essential for proper implementation. First, with all of these components, data and monitoring are used to measure and provide constant feedback to the system (Butts 2015b: 50). Second, extensive training of workers is necessary to ensure that they can properly carry out their duties. This process includes an initial training before workers are sent out on the streets, follow up trainings every few months, and regular meetings in which techniques for effective work are reviewed (Butts 2015a: 51). Third, the program implements a partnership with local hospitals so that workers are notified immediately of gunshot wound victims admitted to emergency rooms (Butts 2015a: 52). These notifications enable workers to respond quickly, often at the hospital, to prevent retaliations.

#### **4.3.3 Limitations of the cure violence model**

Cure violence model seeks to create individual-level and community-level change in communities where it is a norm for young people to carry guns and caters more for serious crimes which makes it difficult to apply other types of violence. It also recommends the use of high-risk individuals who were once involved in serious crimes, such as ex-prisoners. Reform is very complicated to achieve. The cure violence model uses three steps, making it is very time-consuming to move people from one step to another and very difficult to add new members who have missed the training of some steps in the model. It is very complicated for outreach workers to get time to meet and attend to training sessions because the group is composed of diverse people with busy lifestyles. Therefore, the level of absenteeism in scheduled training is very high. The model needs funding to employ violence interrupters, therefore, if there is no funding it becomes a huge problem to sustain outreach workers. The safety of outreach workers in visiting perpetrators in different places (homes, prisoners, hospitals) is not guaranteed. In spite of the limitations, the model does provide a framework for reducing violence and is thus worthwhile to test.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

The theoretical framework behind the possible causes of violence (the social learning theory) was explored. The social learning theory emphasised that behaviour is learned and that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context through observation and direct instructions (Bandura 1971: 2). The theoretical framework behind the support of healing violence against punitive measures was discussed in conjunction with the restorative justice theory, thereafter the possible solutions to end violence (the Cure Violence model) was explained.

Having identified factors that contribute to dysfunctional behaviour, it was noted that learners need to be taught and understand healthy coping skills to adjust to life and ritualise their movement to a new peace. It was acknowledged that the concept of peace needs to be highly emphasised to learners and the difference between peace education and education for peace clearly distinguished. Teaching peace to learners is the responsibility of all stakeholders (Olayeke and Ezeokoli 2015: 6641). Of particular importance was the realization that violent behaviour is a contagious process and that treating it as a contagious process completely changes the outcome (Toscano 2015: 3). Exposure to violence increases the risk that the behaviour might be unconsciously adopted, and that the behaviour will become further locked in by norms that encourage further spread (Slutkin 2012: 1). The health care approach to violence proposed by the Cure Violence model was discussed at length and analysed. The purpose of using these theories in the study were then outlined.

## **PART THREE**

### **CHAPTER 5**

#### **RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION**

##### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The focus of this chapter is on the research design and methodology that were used to fulfil the research objectives. This chapter deals with the research design and methodology, which includes the data collection techniques, the sample of the study, empirical research procedures and action research. The techniques include among others: a focus group discussion; in-depth interviews; open-ended questionnaires; participants' observation and participatory action research. Institutions involved in the study were two secondary schools in the Umlazi district. I conducted pilot testing, using questionnaires with 20 parents prior to actual data collection.

For the purpose of the study, a qualitative research approach was chosen as a suitable research methodology to employ with a case study research design. This design aimed at collecting in-depth information from the purposefully selected participants and subsequently develop and test an intervention at one school. Maree (2010:75) defines case study research as a systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events that aims to distribute and explain the phenomenon of interest.

To achieve the objectives of the study, I employed three data collection tools: focus group discussions were conducted in both schools - 2 for learners and 2 for educators; open-ended questionnaires were issued to 40 parents of learners in both schools, 20 per school; 5 in-depth interviews were conducted with community members for both schools as follows: 2 for the first school and 3 for the second school. I also wrote field notes while doing interviews and conducting focus group discussions to document participants' responses and other observations of what transpired in the process. Action research based on the information obtained from data collection was planned, implemented and evaluated in one school (Vukuzakhe Secondary School). According to Fletcher *et al.* (2015: 1), participatory action research (PAR) emphasises the connection of research with action in a real-world setting, resulting in cogeneration of knowledge between researchers and participants. PAR is multidisciplinary and can be conducted using a variety of methods. Whilst some authors describe a difference between PAR and action research, for the purposes of this study, the terms are used interchangeably as both advocate the participatory nature of the research as discussed below.

As the study is qualitative in nature, non-probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling, was used. Participants in the research were selected purposefully to provide the information by virtue of knowledge and experience about school violence. I decided what needed to be known and set out to find people who could and were willing to provide the information. Ethical issues and gender sensitivity were taken into consideration and practised. However, some selected participants withdrew from the study at the eleventh hour which ruined the gender balance of the study, and diverted the selection method to availability and willingness.

## **5.2 THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM, OBJECTIVES AND AIMS**

The nature of the study was explorative, this involved a review of the existing literature about the experience of school violence in order to describe the nature and the effects of the action and propose possible intervention strategies. Isidiho (2009:7) states that research demands a clear and unambiguous statement of the goal, in other words, what the research intends to accomplish. The overall aim of the research was to explore the nature school violence and existing strategies used to combat it and then design an effective intervention strategy to reduce it.

The following research objectives served to focus the investigation, namely to:

- Explore the nature, extent, causes and consequences of violence in high schools.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current strategies used to reduce violence in schools.
- Investigate other strategies that can be applied by each stakeholder in violence reduction.
- Design, implement and evaluate an action research project to reduce school violence.

As previously discussed, violence in schools occurs in various forms such as sexual violence, assaults, bullying, and theft of property, drug abuse, shooting, stabbing and murder (SACE 2011: 6). The manner in which learners experience it differs from one individual to the other. For this study to reach the aforementioned objectives I formulated a set of in-depth interview questions, open-ended questionnaires and focus group discussion questions for the participants to answer. In addition, I used an observation schedule as a suitable method of data collection in order to develop a rich and comprehensive understanding about violence in the chosen secondary schools. PAR was also conducted at one of the schools involved, the Vukuzakhe Secondary School, to test the effectivity of the suggested violence reduction strategy.



### **5.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Cohen *et al.* (2011: 115), a research design is governed by the notion of fitness for purpose. The purpose of the research determines the methodology and design of the study. Mouton and Marais (1996: 175) explain that the research design indicates the plans that the researcher will implement to investigate the research problem that has been formulated. The design assists the researcher to plan, structure and carry out the project in a way that maximises the validity of the findings (Mouton and Marais 1996: 175). The design also provides a full account of how the research has been structured, planned and executed.

This study focused on eliciting the ideas, perceptions and experiences of stakeholders with regards to school violence. These ideas, perceptions and experiences formed the basis of the data. I aimed to elicit from the stakeholders' a common understanding and themes regarding school violence: the nature, extent, causes and consequences of violence in high schools, effectiveness of current strategies and suggested strategies. I chose to use action research, with the emphasis on participatory action research (PAR) methodology as the basis of this study, because PAR seeks to understand the world by changing it. I intended to involve stakeholders to reduce the spread of school violence through curing it like a disease, with the aim to hopefully impact directly on the actions that change the behaviour of the individuals.

Cohen *et al.* (2011: 345) view action research as the combination of action and research that is concerned with changing individuals, on one hand, and on the other hand, the culture of the groups, institutions and societies to which they belong. These authors further elaborate that the culture of a group can be defined in terms of the characteristic substance and forms of the language and discourses, activities and practices, and social relationships and organisation which constitute the interactions of the group. McHugh and Kowalski (2010: 223) further elaborate that action research commences with a general idea and data is sought about the presenting situation. During this stage of the research, participants spent time identifying the problem they wished to study, setting the agenda for a plan of action and prioritising issues that were important for them, reflecting on their experiences as well as responses from the participants and drawing up actions they considered to be possible and pertinent to school violence.

This study describes the involvement of learners, educators, parents and community members of Umlazi Township in KZN, South Africa in a PAR project.

#### **5.3.1 What is PAR?**

Cohen *et al.* (2011: 345) define action research as a powerful tool that combines, diagnoses action and uses reflection, focusing on practical issues that have been identified by participants and which are problematic yet capable of being changed. These authors further suggest that the combination of action and research

renders action as a form of disciplined, rigorous enquiry in which a personal attempt is made to understand, improve and reform practice. This is supported by McHugh and Kowalski (2010: 223) who define PAR as an emerging process that engages participants in research and results in a practical outcome that is related to the experiences of the participants.

PAR belongs to a fairly new methodology of research used mostly in social sciences. Action research is said to be part of a family of “practices of living inquiry that aims, in a great variety of ways, to link practice and ideas in the service of human flourishing” (Reason and Bradbury 2008: 1). It is regarded not so much as a methodology but rather an approach to inquiry which aims to “create participative communities of inquiry in which qualities of engagement, curiosity, and question posing are brought to bear on significant practical issues” (ibid). In other words, this approach is concerned with more than knowledge creation, in the sense that it seeks to address the social problems brought to light by the inquiry. Most importantly, this approach moves away from the traditional practice of viewing researched individuals and communities as sources from which information can be extracted, rather, they participate in the research as co-researchers (Reason and Bradbury 2008: 1). Sonn *et al.* (2011: 93) add that learner, parent, educator and community participation in school-based research and development programmes is important for the development of learners as citizens of the school and the community, and for the development of school-based interventions. PAR has attracted attention across the world, in its empowerment and emancipation (Reason and Bradbury 2008: 1). It ideally requires that participants be involved in all stages of the research, from the identification of the problem to the dissemination of the findings (McHugh and Kowalski 2010: 223). Thus, to ensure the involvement of stakeholders in school violence reduction, PAR was planned and implemented.

In this study, PAR was implemented in order to test the effectivity of the Cure Violence model as a possible violence reduction strategy in South African schools. This model involves every echelon of the community, but it revolves around identifying “high risk” individuals and limiting the spread of their potential violence to others (McHugh and Kowalski 2010: 223).

For the purpose of this study, Vukuzakhe Secondary school was used for primary data collection and for the performance of action research. Mziwamandla High school was only used for primary data collection. This action research process was developed, implemented and evaluated based on the three phases of the Cure Violence model. The model was discussed in detail in Chapter 4 and is premised on the idea that violence spreads like an epidemic, and that it can be treated using methods employed to combat and control disease (Toscano 2015: 6).

A total of 8 stakeholders - 2 learners who are above 18 years old from grade 11 classes, 2 educators, 2 parents and 2 community members - were selected to participate in the action research stage of the study.

Learners and educators were selected from the participants of the focus group discussions, parents were selected from open-ended questionnaire respondents and community members were selected from the respondents of the semi-structured interviews questions. The major goal for all the participants was to change norms and behaviours of all stakeholders involved in the chosen school with the intention of minimising school violence. I was challenged when trying to balance gender and the effort to achieve gender balance yielded limited results, nevertheless it was mentioned earlier that participants' selection ended up being based on their willingness to participate and availability.

From the primary data collected we were able to identify participants who would benefit from the Cure Violence model ("High risk" individuals). These participants formed part of the secondary data phase where we implemented all phases of the Cure Violence model.

#### **5.4 EMPOWERMENT THROUGH CURE VIOLENCE MODEL**

South Africa has a long history of conflict that dates back to pre-colonisation (Loureal 2008: 65). Since then, reactions towards the need for conflict resolution has proven to follow either violent or non-violent behaviour. The Battle of Isandlwana in 1879 and Anglo Boer War are just a few examples of the battles fought to resolve conflict violently in South Africa (Loureal 2008: 65). In some cases, protests began peacefully but ended with the use of violent force against unarmed people (Loureal 2008: 65). The Mahatma Gandhi protest in 1914, the Treason Trial in 1956, the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, Soweto uprising in 1976 and the Marikana Massacre in 2012 are some of the non-violent alternatives to conflict resolution observed in South Africa (Loureal 2008: 70). Currently, the country's actions of violence have gained media attention and have influenced life in many schools (Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 87). Sadly, some peaceful incidents are negatively reported by various media coverage framing victims as perpetrators. Here are a few examples of murders, compiled by Fick (2014: 1), where the general public were made to understand that victims were violent and that the perpetrators defended themselves: Andries Tatane died on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2011 after police intervention at Ficksburg community protests. The conduct of police officers at Marikana on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2012 left 34 mineworkers dead. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2013, Mido Macia died after police officers dragged him about 400 meters tied to their vehicle and allegedly beat him at the Daveyton police station. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2014 a vendor in Tshwane died after being shot by officers serving in the capital city's Metropolitan Police Services. Three days later, two people died at Brits when police fired at service delivery protestors. The most worrying factor is the exposure of these incidents to children which makes them perceive violence as a defense mechanism and a way of life, as opposed to peace and non-violence.

Schools were expected to break patterns of violence and provide skills to communicate, to register and support peaceful solutions to conflict; instead, young people are still at a risk of falling victim to violence as they still experience it in the homes and community in which they live (Burton and Leoschut 2012: 1). The biggest concern is the increase in violent conflict resolution methods, especially in secondary schools.

This research study adopted the Cure Violence model to empower stakeholders to resolve conflicts non-violently. As noted in the discussion of this method, Gary Slutkin (2014: 10) claimed that violence actually was a disease and should be treated as such, following a close study between the patterns of disease and those of violence. The Cure Violence model relies on three key elements to stop the transmission of violent behaviour: interrupt transmission directly; identify and change the thinking of potential transmitters (i.e.: those at highest risk of perpetrating violence) and change group norms regarding violence.

#### **5.4.1 Initial training**

Out of all the study participants, a few were carefully identified and selected from educators, learners, parents and community members to work as outreach workers. They were trained on different methods to detect and mediate conflicts as suggested by the first stage of the Cure Violence model (i.e.: Interrupt the transmission of the disease). The outreach workers democratically named themselves We Care (WC). Their main objective was to brainstorm and to learn how to peacefully block the transmission of violence. Training for the WC group and SPE took 4 days each with 2 sessions for each training day. All training sessions followed the same pattern where all participants actively partook in different ways, such as leading brainstorming sessions, communicating, negotiating and/or debating.

I trained outreach workers on different methods to detect and mediate conflicts as suggested by the first stage of the Cure Violence model – “interrupt transmission of the disease” (Toscano 2015: 6). Training took place for 4 days every Thursday from 13:00-16:30. The entire phase took 6 weeks; it started on the 25th of August 2016 to the 29th of September 2016. Although the training programme was intended for 4 weeks, there were challenges and unforeseen circumstances at the school and my scheduled dates were affected. All training sessions took place on Thursdays which was chosen based on minimal disruptions and inconvenience to the school. Thursday was a sporting day at the school and the last period ended at 13:00, after which learners were allowed to go to various sporting activities. Unlike other school days, Thursdays had no afternoon study period which usually kicked in from 15:00 to 16:00. Outreach workers were trained on various aspects. The training programme curriculum included anger and conflict, conflict resolution and mediation, paraphrasing, reflecting feelings, and understanding thoughts, feelings and actions. Non-violence and peace studies were discussed. The core element of the training was based on training individuals on how to control anger in order to avoid conflicts. Most importantly, how to resolve

conflicts non-violently (peacefully) to assist individuals who are affected by it. Hence, the Cure Violence model was discussed to equip individuals with the ability to treat violence like a transmittable disease. Appendix A indicates the full training programme for 4 days. WC was named based on the understanding that most learners, parents and community members do not know that some of their actions constitute violence, hence they commit violence unintentionally. WC indicated that they took care of peoples' lives and wanted to preach peace to save lives. They committed themselves to non-conflict resolutions rather than violence.

Below is a description of the training sessions for each day:

### **Day 1**

I started the session by introducing myself and explaining the purpose of our training; which was to intervene in reducing school violence and work as peace servants. Participants introduced themselves to each other. We negotiated and agreed upon training and refreshment breaks times, ground rules and commitment towards the programme. Training sessions commenced at 13h00 until 16h30, including a refreshment break from 14h30 - 15h00. The following ground rules were adopted by all:

- Respect time.
- Listen to one another and respect each other's opinions.
- Keep your cell phones on silent.
- Participate in all activities.
- Raise your hand when you have a question or comment

I opened the first training session with the Bible verse, Matthew 5:9, which says: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God." I further explained that the world was meant to be peaceful, but it was currently anything but peaceful. Participants correlated the concept of peace with words such as: humanity, tolerance, morality, diversity, solidarity, equality, harmony, respect, democracy, responsibility, universally, freedom, justice, cooperation, rule of law and rationality.



Figure 5.1: The We Care group brainstorming peace concepts (day 1, session 1)

In the second session of day one, I asked them what breaks peace in our homes, schools and community and the majority pointed at the word anger. We started defining the word anger and most participants defined anger as a reaction to a perceived threat or a sense that we have been intentionally wronged; and it is often accompanied by an urge to attack or defend. Others associated anger with frustrations of all sorts. The majority of them viewed conflict as an appropriate way to express anger. Anger and conflict concepts were brainstormed in order to establish a relationship between them. Most participants perceived conflict as a cause of violence which could not be avoided. I made a distinction between appropriate and inappropriate way of dealing with anger. Appropriate ways are constructive and encourage people to resolve conflict positively and peacefully, while inappropriate ways lead to aggression - which encourages people to resolve conflict negatively and violently. I opened up a platform to discuss conflict resolution as a way to find peaceful resolutions to disagreements. Concepts such as paraphrasing, mediation, reflecting feelings and understanding thoughts, feelings and action were discussed. They were all viewed as related to appropriate way of dealing with anger.

Although anger is a natural and normal human emotion it can be difficult to manage. It varies from mild irritation to highly charged rage, there may also be elements of defensiveness, revenge or even violence present.

## Day 2

During the first session we all agreed that conflict could not be avoided for different reasons, such as: lack of common understanding; different methods of pursuing objectives; differences in perspectives, values, interest and attitudes; information differences; blocked communication and diverse value structures. However, good conflict resolution enriches a positive way of life in which those involved seek to win, defeat injustice and choose love instead of hate.

The entire second session of day 2 was spent discussing conflict resolution stages such as negotiation, dominance, withdrawal, mediation and arbitration. Participants expressed their understanding of these concepts based on their experiences and previous knowledge. Eventually, they were all explained as follows: negotiation was viewed as process whereby parties strive to reach a fair, reasonable and mutual acceptance deal on an aspect that is of concern to both parties. However, participants indicated that the success of negotiation depends on the willingness of all parties. Dominance was seen as the power to influence others, but was criticised by participants as a way to resolve conflict effectively. Participants explained withdrawal as a system whereby one of parties take a step back and compromises, in order for the other one to win. One parent participant explained:

This is how we survive in order to maintain peace and harmony in our families, at work and in the community. We compromise a lot under the name of ensuring unity. We are living in a world where male have power over female and there is no win-win situation rather win-lose condition. As female we are the victims of win-lose condition, male dominate us everywhere and we tend to withdraw even if we are right to let it go for the sake of peace and continuity. (Parent 1, WC group)

Quite often conflict resolution is not achieved particularly in our homes because one person might withdraw from negotiations which calls for the involvement of the third person who will be neutral with the situation. Sometimes family members may come together and make a decision on your behalf which they think is to the best interest of everyone. (Community member 1, WC group)

According to Rodriguez-ruiz *et al* (2015: 480), comparisons of adults' conflict resolution styles at home and at school seem to be very informative. These authors point out that there are three main styles of conflict resolution: negotiation, dominance and withdrawal. Negotiation involves trying to understand the other's position and using constructive reasoning tactics to work out compromises. The result increases mutual knowledge and understanding. The second style is dominance, which involves using a power assertion strategy to rigidly maintain control. As expected, constructive conflict resolution styles (e.g.: negotiation)

provide better opportunities to satisfy the adolescents' need for autonomy than destructive or less constructive styles (e.g., dominance and withdrawal). Constructive conflict resolution in the family has been associated with high levels of school grades, high self-esteem, low levels of depression and risky behaviour as well as low levels of behavioural problems (Nel *et al.* 2016: 281). Destructive conflict resolution has been positively associated with higher levels of aggression, depression, anxiety, and delinquency (Nel *et al.* 2016: 281). The evidence for conflict resolution in schools is sparse, but conflict resolution styles in schools run parallel to those found in families (Nel *et al.* 2016: 281). In a more supportive conflict resolution climate, educators respond consistently and effectively to conflicts and social problems among students, and in the case of learner– educator conflicts, they listen and negotiate. In a less supportive conflict resolution climate, educators often ignore peer harassment and aggressive behaviour, detach themselves from these conflicts or, alternatively, simply intimidate or impose their power unilaterally. According to Nel *et al.* (2016: 281), mediation involves acknowledgement of the credibility, knowledge and reliability of a mediator, as well as his or her trustworthiness. Arbitration is seen as the next step following mediation where the third party isolates the pertinent factors causing the conflict and makes a decision as to the best solution. Usually, the conflicting parties have previously agreed to accept the arbitrator's solution.

### **Day 3**

In the first session I introduced the idea of promoting win-win conflict resolution at home, in the community and even at schools. We discussed peace-building in schools. I also introduced and explained the Cure Violence model and the rationale behind the model. The model is premised on the idea that violence spreads like an epidemic, and that it can be treated using the methods employed to combat and control disease. Some participants were initially reluctant to accept the idea of this model as they had the mentality that violent behaviour is inherited and cannot be changed. I explained that violence is an epidemic and that it can actually be likened to a disease. Numerous examples were given by participants to prove that violence is contagious and spreads from one person to another. Eventually we agreed that it was indeed a disease and like with all other diseases, it needs to be diagnosed, treated and cured.

The introduction of three phases of Cure Violence model were introduced in the second session. Together we discussed the fact that the Cure Violence model relies on three key elements to stop the transmission of violent behaviour:

- Interrupting transmission directly.
- Identifying and changing the thinking of potential transmitters (i.e.: those at highest risk of perpetrating violence).



- Changing group norms regarding violence.

Participants brainstormed different techniques on how to mediate conflicts, interrupt transmission directly, interrupt conflicts, block transmission, change the potential transmitter, mentor individuals and change the norm of a group. We acknowledged that most learners, parents and community members do not know that some of their actions constitute violence, hence they commit violence unintentionally. We committed ourselves to start a programme that would educate people about violence and preach peace to save lives. We planned to involve the SPEs as suggested by the School Management Team (SMT) to enhance the programme.

According to Slutkin (2014: 3) the Cure Violence model deploys a type of workers called violence interrupters who are specially qualified and trained to locate potentially lethal, on-going conflicts and respond with a variety of conflict mediation techniques both to prevent imminent violence and to change the norms around the perceived need to use violence. Violence interrupters are culturally appropriate workers who live in the affected community, are known to high-risk people and have possibly even been gang members or spent time in prison, but have made a change in their lives and turned away from crime. Interrupters receive specific training on methods for detecting potential shooting events, mediating conflicts, and keeping safe in these dangerous situations. Butts *et al.*, (2015a: 40) emphasise that violence interrupters are selected for their ability to establish relationships with the most high-risk young people in the community, usually young men between the ages of 15 and 30.

Their main function is to block the transmission of violence from one person to another by defusing potentially fatal altercations. Violence interrupters use a variety of methods to detect conflicts including: interrupting rumours; going to hospitals after shootings occur to prevent retaliation; paying attention to anniversaries and other important dates; being present at key locations and being a resource to those in the community with information who are not comfortable contacting the police (Slutkin 2012: 3). Mediations occur through many techniques, such as: meeting one-on-one with aggrieved individuals; hosting small group peace-keeping sessions to foster diplomacy between groups; bringing in a respected third-party to dissuade further violence; creating cognitive dissonance by demonstrating contradictory thinking; changing the understanding of the situation to one which does not require violence; allowing parties to air their grievances; dispelling any misunderstandings; conveying the true costs of using violence and buying time to let emotions cool (Slutkin 2012: 3). Interrupting an on-going conflict before it becomes lethal cuts off a chain of events that are commonly known as retaliations. Most importantly, it also prevents the exposure of others in the community to more potentially violent acts, thus inhibiting transmission of the behaviour and perpetuation of the norm Butts *et al.*, (2015a: 40).

#### **Day 4**

During the first session participants recapped on the three days of training and related the newly learned information with the school concerned. We agreed to mentor and work together with SPEs and divided ourselves into 3 groups of 3 members in each. In the final session the different groups met to discuss the information to share with SPEs. We agreed that each group would lead training the SPEs for a specific day. We then had our closing ceremony.

#### **5.4.2 Implementation -identify and change the thinking of the potential transmitter**

WC members trained and capacitated SPEs on how to resolve conflict non-violently and how to break the cycle of school violence. Training sessions were led by We Care members using the same style and the same content discussed above.

- Day 1: Anger and Peace concepts were discussed.
- Day 2: Conflict and conflict resolution stages.
- Day 3: Violence is like health problem and Cure Violence Model.
- Day 4: WC and SPE committed to work together to reduce school violence.

Prior to the commencement of the second phase of training, the SMT introduced the School Peer Educators (SPEs). They explained who the SPEs were, their aims and responsibilities. They suggested that I should work with this structure as a way of capacitating them further. They admitted that SPE had shortfalls in the dealing with school violence and reduction strategies. SPE and WC work as sister bodies.

The SPEs are made up of 2 educators (1 male and 1 female) and 6 learner volunteers from all grades (Grade 8-12, irrespective of gender and age). SPEs operate following the guidance of their code of conduct that is administered by the school and their supporting Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) called Star for Life. Appendix B provides the full constitution of SPEs.

At the beginning of the second phase training, the WC group acted as mentors for SPEs. They trained and capacitated SPEs on how to identify and change the thinking of potential violence transmitters - that is the second stage of the Cure Violence model. They trained them on the same curriculum that they were trained on as outreach workers. Training took place on Thursdays for 7 weeks from 13 October 2016 to 24 November 2016. The programme took longer because the school was closed from 30 September 2016 to 10 October 2016. Initially, training was supposed to be 4 weeks. On completion of the training programme, SPEs were empowered to locate potentially lethal, on-going conflicts and respond with a variety of conflict

mediation techniques both to prevent imminent violence and to change the norms around the perceived need to use violence. After training, SPEs and WC had the common function to change group norms regarding violence as suggested by the third stage of the Cure Violence model.

On the 30th of November 2016, the WC group together with SPEs were formally launched by the principal and other members of SMT as two structures that would work together to assist in school management. The two structures were divided as follows: SPEs worked with internal components of the school (i.e.: educators and learners) and WC worked with external components of the school (i.e.: parents and community members). The WC group was introduced as the structure that would try and interrupt violence outside the school environment, especially in learners' homes. SPEs were a well-known structure but the school emphasised that they would introduce the new role of teaching learners how to minimise conflict and resolve conflicts peacefully. All school stakeholders were informed of the structures including the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) representing the parents' component. They both worked to block the transmission of violence from learner to learner, educator to educator, learner to educator, educator to learner, parent to educator, educator to parent, learner to parent, parent to learner, community member to learner and learner to community member by defusing potentially fatal altercations within the school environment as suggested by the Cure Violence model. These two structures were launched at a critical time of the school where a former grade 9 learner had stabbed and killed a grade 11 boy. They planned to visit the family of the boy who had stabbed another.

Since the launch was towards the end of the year, the SPEs could not commence their role of having sessions with learners. However, in 2017, they suggested to the SMT to use the same day that was used for their training (Thursday) to conduct workshops in different grades. The SPEs and WC work is detailed in Chapter 7.



Figure 5.2: WC and SPEs planning to visit the family of the boy who killed another student (Day 4)

#### 5.4.3 Changing group norms regarding violence

We Care visited the family of the boy who had killed another with the intention of giving help where possible, mainly by educating them about possible ways they can use to block the transmission of violence. We educated them about stages of non-violent conflict resolutions, as well as treating violence like a disease that need to be cured. We mainly emphasised the importance of identifying potential perpetrators in order to “cure” the person sooner. However, the mother of the murder accused boy indicated that she had noticed that the boy had become very rude and suspected drugs abuse, but had never found the time to talk to him. She complained about working hard as she has many part-time jobs and comes back home very late and tired. We talked about conflict resolution at home where she indicated that punitive punishment is mainly used. She made no link between the life at home and the life demonstrated by the boy at school. She believed the school should teach learners how to behave.

She pointed out that most arguments she had with her boyfriend end up becoming a fight, but argued that it had nothing to do with children. She insisted in not involving children in their love relationship but complained about the area where they were staying, which has drugs and weapons easily available and might have an impact on such incident. She pointed out that the sharp weapon the boy used to kill the other learner does not belong to her family. We discussed that children model what they see at home and apply it. We elaborated on alternatives to violence where she promised to try and apply these techniques but pointed out that the problem will remain with her boyfriend. WC committed to arrange to come back and

talk to her boyfriend. The WC group also promised to meet and devise a strategy to teach the community about non-violent conflict resolution methods.



Figure 5.3: The WC Group Visiting the Family of the Murder Accused Boy

## 5.5 METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was the most suitable for this study, since the research sought to identify and understand attitudes and behaviours which are best understood within their natural settings, unlike the artificial settings of experiments and surveys (De Gouven 2010: 37:). This research is “live” in the sense that the process, events and actions were observed as they were experienced, rather than being reconstructed in retrospect. It sought to study the participants according to their own definitions of their world and, as such, it focused on the subjective experiences of the participants as individuals and also tried to be conscious of the contexts in which the participants interacted with each other (De Gouven 2010: 37). This was an action-oriented research project, the basic aim of which was to seek social and individual transformation. Burnett (1998 cited by De Gouveia: 2010: 36) believed that the depth of violence experienced in the school context could not be measured quantitatively meaningfully.

The key features between qualitative and quantitative methodology by Tustin *et al.* (2005: 90) are tabulated below.

**Table 5.1: A brief analysis of qualitative vs. quantitative methodology**

Comparison dimension	Quantitative	Qualitative
Types of questions	Probing	Limited probing
Sample size	Small	Large
Information per respondent	Much	Varies
Administration	Requires interviewer with special skills	Fewer special skills required
Type of analysis	Subjective, interpretive	Statistical, summarisation
Hardware	Tape voices, projection devices, videos, pictures, discussion guidelines	Questionnaires, computers, printouts
Ability to replicate	Low	High
Researcher training	Psychology, sociology, social psychology, human behaviour, marketing and marketing research	
Type of research	Exploratory	Descriptive or causal

**Source: Tustin *et al.* (2005: 90)**

### 5.5.1 Qualitative approach

According to Maree (2010:50), qualitative research is research that attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied. It therefore focuses on how individuals and groups view and understand the world and construct meaning out of their experiences (Maree 2010:50),

This study was therefore qualitative in nature. This design was chosen as it was concerned with engaging participants' insights and gaining an understanding of their experiences. Further, it allowed for the acknowledgement of the context of the participant. The rationale for using qualitative methodology was to gain a view of how people perceive issues in their social world by examining their opinions, behaviour and experiences instead of simply relying on numbers. The qualitative research design examined one phenomenon of interest as stated at the purposefully selected sites for the sake of a better understanding of the phenomenon of school violence, regardless of the number of participants, social settings, processes and activities. Furthermore, there are multiple data collection strategies with a qualitative approach, such as, verbatim accounts, low-inference descriptors, mechanically recorded data and participants' reviews of their experiences in their own terms (Cohen *et al.* 2011: 55). Maree (2010: 86) states that qualitative research can be either exploratory or fully interpretive in nature. It offers insight into reasons behind events. The



investigation into the factors related to the prevalence of violence in schools shed light on the reasons for the acts of violence in the Umlazi district. This research required intense and prolonged contact with the “field” or life situation, which warranted a qualitative approach. Creswell (as cited in Cohen *et al.* 2011: 55) suggests that effective qualitative research is based on enquiry as a major feature and can follow one or more different traditions: biography, ethnography, phenomenology, case study and grounded theory.

For the purpose of this study, I opted for a case study which included semi-structured focus group discussions, semi-structured interview questions, open-ended questionnaires and participant observation. This research design was aimed at providing a comfortable atmosphere for participants’ disclosure in order to understand behaviour, beliefs, opinions and emotions from the perspective of the study participants themselves. According to Cohen *et al.* (2011: 298), a case study is a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle. Cohen *et al.* (2011: 298) further stated that a case study is a single instance of a bounded system, such as a child, a clique, a class, a school, or a community. In this study, the bounded system was the school and the case was reducing school violence. Moreover, a case study allows the researcher to have a multiple perspective analysis in which the research considers not just the voices and perspectives of one or two participants in a situation, but the views of other groups and the interactions between them. This is a case study involving two high schools in the Umlazi district. This enabled me to gain understanding and insight about the causes of school violence in Umlazi and how this can be addressed to promote peace in schools. The study fits the qualitative model because it needed information about attitudes and behaviour. It aimed at understanding reality using interviews, open-ended questionnaires and focus groups discussions with stakeholders to discover the meaning that they attached to this particular problem.

## **5.6 DATA COLLECTION**

A whole range of data collection tools supported the researcher in collecting research data in order to address a research problem. Swanepoel and Erasmus (2000: 99) explain that the choice of data collection method and sources depends on the nature of the problem and the purpose of conducting research. For this study, 4 qualitative data collection methods, namely the focus groups, open-ended questionnaires, in-depth interviews and observation, were used to collect data. Conducting focus groups discussions; and distribution and collection of questionnaires was discussed with the principals of the two schools concerned.

### **5.6.1 Sampling, participant selection and the procedures**

Vukuzakhe High School and Mziwamandla High School are both located at Umlazi M and L sections respectively. Participants were educators, learners, parents and community members of the 2 schools. They

were all selected based on the following: educators based on willingness, learners based on age criteria, particularly those above 18 years, parents and community members based on availability. Participants were interviewed in their schools with the assistance of a voice recorder.

### **5.6.2 Instruments**

Below are details of each method.

#### **5.6.2.1 Focus group discussion**

Tustin *et al.* (2005: 170) state that, “a group of people will produce a wider range of information, insight and ideas than individual responses secured separately”.

Hennink *et al.* (2011:136) agree with Tustin *et al.* (2005: 170) in that a focus group is a situation where a focus group moderator keeps a small and homogenous group of six to twelve people focused on the discussion of a research topic or issue. Hennink *et al.* (ibid) further explain that focus group sessions generally last between one and three hours and are recorded by means of audio and video tapes. In this study, I used four focus groups in two purposefully selected secondary schools in the Umlazi district, KwaZulu-Natal province. Each focus group was made up of 8 participants. Considerate of the issue of gender in each group four male and four females were purposefully selected to form a focus group in each school. In total, the study engaged 32 participants (i.e.: 8 learners and 8 educators in each school).

The advantage of using a focus group was that it was a useful tool for exploring ideas and obtaining in-depth information about how people think about the issue of violence in schools. It was also good for measuring attitudes and eliciting other content from research participants. Unlike a series of one-on-one interviews, in a focus group interview participants get to hear one another's responses and to make additional comments beyond their own original responses as they hear what other people have to say (Tustin *et al.* 2005: 170).

However, participants need not agree with one another or reach any kind of consensus (Hennink *et al.* 2011:136). The object is to obtain high quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others (Tustin *et al.* 2005: 170). Maree (2010: 90) states that group interactions are productive in widening the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experiences and releasing inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participants from disclosing information. In focus group interviews, participants are able to build on each other's ideas and comments to provide an in-depth view not attainable from individual interviews.



**Procedure for the focus group interviews:** The sample was drawn from 2 secondary schools and consisted of 32 participants in 4 focus group discussions, that is 2 groups per school (1 for educators and 1 for learners) with 8 participants per group formed. In all the focus groups discussion, before the discussion started, I introduced myself to the focus group and explained the purpose of the study to the participants; what was to be done with the data collection; and the outcome of the research such as intervention strategies by the schools themselves and the Department of Education to minimise school violence. For the effective management of the focus group, I laid down ground rules for the participants to follow throughout the interviews, such as listening without interruption, speaking audibly for effective capturing of the voices and switching off of cell phones to avoid disturbances. I further informed the participants about ethical considerations such as confidentiality of participants and anonymity of data. Participants were informed that their participation in the research was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw their participation from the project at any stage should they feel so. Permission was sought for audio-recording and for the use of the recorded information explained. After explaining details of research and procedure, participants were asked if they were willing to be part of the discussion and if so, they were asked to sign consent forms for the discussions.

In all focus groups discussions, I maintained two core qualities at all times: firstly, consistency through the use of semi-structured questions, secondly adherence to seven key attributes as suggested by Malhotra (cited in Tustin *et al.* 2005: 168). Questions were asked in a non-directive way without leading the participants.

#### **5.6.2.2 Semi-structured questions**

Semi-structured questions involved direct participation with the group. Conco (2005: 65) explains two differences between traditional structured questions and semi-structured questions:

- Although there are guiding questions but semi-structured questions are not in a formal structure like questionnaires.
- Open-ended questions enable reordering, further probing and the exploring of new issues. The researcher can direct the discussions to meet the objectives of the study.
- There must be a mixture of kindness and firmness; disciplined fairness and understanding empathy in order to create the required interaction.
- Permissiveness - demonstrate tolerance but remain alert to signs that disintegrate the purpose of the discussion.

- Involvement - encourage and stimulate personal involvement of all participants.
- Complete comments - participants must be encouraged to be more specific about generalised comments by demonstrating complete understanding.
- Encouragement - encourage non-responsive members to participate in discussion.
- Flexibility - show willingness to deviate from the agenda but stay positive to the purpose of the discussion.
- Sensitive - always guide the participants on an intellectual and emotional level.

**Purpose of using a note pad and audio taping:** Cohen *et al.* (2011: 112) warn that audio tapes might be selective, filter out important contextual factors and neglect the visual and non-verbal aspects of the discussion. These authors emphasise that non-verbal communications give more information than verbal communication and that this information cannot be left unattended to. Cohen *et al.* (2011: 112) give caution that there is no single correct transcription and suggest that a combination of transcripts be collected for more reliable data. For the purpose of this study a note pad was combined with an audio tape for effective and efficient data collection. As suggested by Cohen *et al.* (2011: 112), I ensured that the audio tape recorded the following data:

- Everything that was being said.
- The tone of the voice of the speaker; e.g.: harsh, kind or encouraging.
- The inflection of the voice; whether it is rising or falling; questions, statements, pauses and opening or closing the lines of inquiry.
- Emphasis made by speakers.
- Pauses and silences whether short or long.
- Interruptions and who was speaking to whom.
- The speakers' mood (e.g.: excited, angry, bored, resigned, happy or grudging).
- The speed in which the participant was speaking, whether it was fast, slow, hesitant or confident.
- The number of people who were speaking simultaneously
- Whether a speaker was speaking continuously or in short phrases.
- Any other events that were taking place at the same time that the researcher can recall

### 5.6.2.3 In-depth interview

According to Boyce and Neale (2006: 3), in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation. The above authors further explain that in-depth interviews are useful when you want detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviours or want to explore new issues in depth. Interviews are often used to provide context to other data such as outcome data, offering a more complete picture of what happened in the programme and why. Hennink *et al.* (2011:109) state that an in-depth interview is a one-to-one method of data collection that involves an interviewer and an interviewee. Hennink *et al.* (2011:109) believe that an in-depth interview indicates a special kind of knowledge-producing conversation between interviewers and their respondents. Chabangu (2014:37) describes an interview as a data collection method in which an interviewer asks the interviewee a series of questions, often with prompting for additional information.

For the purpose of this study to achieve in-depth data collection, 5 community members from L and M sections (in Umlazi) responded to in-depth interviews. With the help of learners who formed part of PAR, I made appointments with community members targeted in the study. These respondents were randomly selected following the same general process as is followed for other research projects - i.e.: plan, design instrument and collect data as suggested by Boyce and Neale (2006: 4).

According to Tustin *et al.* (2005: 415), the preliminary stage of an interview is the point where the purpose of the research is decided. This involves the outlining of the theoretical basis of the study, its broad aims, its practical values and the reasons why the interview approach was chosen. Moreover, Boyce and Neale (2006: 4) state that the researcher has to identify stakeholders who will be involved in the study. For the purpose of this study, I identified and listed the names of the community members that were interviewed. I also ensured that the research followed international and national ethical research standards.

**Instrument design:** Tustin *et al.* (2005: 415) explains that instrument design involves translating the research objectives into questions that will make up the main body of the schedule. These authors emphasise that this needs to be done in such a way that the questions adequately reflect what it is that the researcher is trying to find out. Moreover, Boyce and Neale (2006: 4) suggest that the following points for the interviewer should be included in the protocol:

- What to say to interviewees when setting up the interview.

- What to say to interviewees when beginning the interview, including ensuring informed consent and confidentiality of the interviewee.
- What to say to interviewees in concluding the interview.
- What to do during the interview such as take notes or audiotape or combine the two.
- What to do following the interview such as fill in notes or check audiotape for clarity
- How to summarize key information for each and submit written findings.

In this study, I adhered to the above protocol and developed instructions that were followed for each interview to ensure consistency between interviews, and thus increase the reliability of the findings. I developed an interview guide that lists open-ended questions and issues to be explored during the interview.

**Data collection:** The last stage is the setting up and conducting of the interview. Legard *et al.* (2003: 142) believe that in-depth interview makes a number of demands on the mental and intellectual abilities of an interviewer. These authors suggest three key requirements that the interviewer must adhere to during the process of interview. Firstly, the ability of the researcher to listen is fundamental to the art of interviewing. The researcher must hear, digest and comprehend the participant's answer in order to decide how to probe further. Secondly, good in-depth interviewing requires a clear and logical mind. The researcher needs to be able to think quickly to distil the essential points of what the participant is saying; exercise judgement about what to pursue and simultaneously formulate the relevant questions. Thirdly, a good memory is an important attribute. It is often necessary to make a mental note of a point made earlier on by the participant and return to it at a judicious moment in the interview to further clarification or elaboration. For the purpose of the study, the above key requirements served as guiding principles for me throughout the interviews.

The five participants were selected from the community member. My aim was to create a collaborative partnership with them, of creating an understanding and a comfortable zone in the interview. Hennink *et al.* (2011:124) write that when meeting an interviewee for the first time, it is important not to rush straight into asking the interview questions, but to take time to become acquainted with the interviewee so that both become comfortable. It was always important to remain a sensitive observer who recorded phenomena as faithfully as possible while at the same time raising additional questions. The advantage of using this method was that it allowed probing and posing of follow-up questions and provided information about the participants' subjective perspectives and ways of thinking regarding the problem of school violence and intervention strategies to reduce it.

#### 5.6.2.4 Open-ended questionnaire

Makola (2009: 49) explains that a questionnaire is a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain useful information about a given topic. When properly constructed it becomes a vital instrument by which statements can be made about specific groups or people or entire populations (Makola 2009: 49). They are a valuable method of collecting a wide range of information from a large number of individuals, often referred to as respondents (Cohen *et al.* 2011: 349). According to Cohen *et al.* (2011: 382), open-ended questions enable participants to write a free account in their own terms, to explain and qualify their responses and avoid limitations of pre-set categories of response. Tustin *et al.* (2005: 396) add that open-ended responses also known as free response calls for a response in the respondents 'own words. Moreover, an open-ended question is a very attractive device for smaller scale research or for those sections of a questionnaire that invite an honest and personal comment from respondents. Good questionnaire construction is critical to the success of a study. A useful method for checking a questionnaire and making sure it is accurately capturing the intended information is to issue pilot questionnaire prior to data collection (Cohen *et al.* 2011: 349).

For the purpose of my research, 40 parents responded to open-ended questionnaires (i.e. 20 per school). Consent letters were issued to learners' parents through learners explaining that the involvement in the study was voluntarily, and participants may withdraw at any time should they wish to do so. Parents who wished to participate in the study signed and returned their consent forms through their learners. The questionnaires respondents' enabled me to obtain their thoughts and understanding of school violence and evaluate their intervention strategies to reduce it.

**Pilot testing:** According to Cohen *et al.* (2011: 402), the wording of a questionnaire is of paramount importance and pre-testing it is crucial to its success. These authors believe that a pilot study has several functions, principally to increase the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted as a starting point to the data collection process. Twenty parents of learners from Vukuzakhe and Mziwamandla high schools completed the questionnaire. The distribution of pilot questionnaire was equal in each school i.e. 10 per school. The intention of this pilot was to:

- Check the clarity of the questionnaire items, instructions and layout.
- Identify commonly misunderstood or non-completed items in order to eliminate ambiguities or difficulties in wording.
- Gain feedback on the validity of the questionnaire items, the operationalisation of the construct and the purpose of the research.

- Identify omissions, redundancy and irrelevant items.
- Check the time taken to complete the questionnaire in order to check whether the questionnaire is too long or too short, too easy or too difficult.

In addition to the above areas of concern, I also wanted to get the overall perceptions of respondents towards the value and appropriateness of such research. The pilot study was useful in that it pointed to certain minor adjustments that had to be made. It also sharpened the focus of the sampling technique to be used and paved the way for the start of the research.

#### **5.6.2.5 Observation as a data collection technique**

According to Tustin *et al.* (2005: 266): “Observation research is the systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of people, objects and occurrences without questioning or communicating with them”.

Cohen *et al.* (2011: 456) link positively with Tustin *et al.* in that observation is not just looking, but rather it is a situation where a researcher systematically gathers the live data from naturally occurring social situation. According to the above authors, this allows the researcher to look directly at what is happening in the institution rather than relying on second-hand accounts. This is supported by Hennink *et al.* (2011:170) in explaining that observation is a research method that enables researchers to observe and record people’s behaviours, actions and interactions systematically. Cohen *et al.* (2011: 456) emphasise that observation is a highly flexible form of data collection which allows the researcher to obtain a detailed description of social settings or events in order to situate people’s behaviours within their own socio-cultural context. Moreover, Buchanan and Bryman (2011:478) state that observational techniques are based on the idea of a systematic process of observing, noting and later categorising the observed activities. The key to observation is to record words, activities or events without judging them. Morrison (as cited in Cohen *et al.* (2011: 457) suggests that observations enable the researcher to gather data on the following four characteristics:

- The physical setting- the physical environment of the school or the organisation.
- The human settings- the organisation of the people (group settings or individuals) and their characteristics, like their class, gender, race and age.
- The interaction settings- interaction that are taking place like verbal or non-verbal and learner involvement.
- The programme setting- resources used in the school and formal or informal presentation styles.

For the purpose of this study, I carried out two types of observation to gather data. The literature reviewed has already indicated that contributing factors to school violence may be linked to a school itself, families and society where the school is located (SACE 2011: 21). Firstly, I observed the surroundings within and outside both schools. I noticed that both schools were surrounded by informal settlements, some as close as by the school gate. In school A (Vukuzakhe Secondary), it was observed that about 500 meters away from school there was a tavern while in school B, about 1 km away from school there was a night club. I noted also that in school A, the girls' toilets had violence-inciting words written, directed to each other, such as "hoe", "bitch" or "slut". Secondly, I observed behavioural patterns of all participants during focus group discussion and in-depth interviews. The physical and human resources, as well as the school environment for both schools are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

## **5.7 POPULATION AND RESEARCH SITE**

The study was conducted in Umlazi in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). Umlazi is a township that was established in the early 1940s and is on the east coast of KZN, South Africa; located South West of Durban (South African history online 2014). It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest township in South Africa after Soweto and Thembisa (South African history online 2014). It is the only township in the country that has its own registration plate - NUZ (South African history online 2014). Umlazi is divided into 26 sections, A through to Z, with the exception of I, O and X but with an addition of AA, BB and CC (South African history online 2014). According to Stats SA (2014: vii) 39% of Umlazi residents are unemployed and 30% live in informal settlements. Murder, assault, rape, vandalism, high rates of theft and hijacking are common in this township (South African History online 2014). In 2014, 133 people were murdered and 746 assaulted (Stats SA 2014: iii). Umlazi has been criticised following the number of incidents of violence particularly in Glebelands hostel that were reported in media-television and newspapers. It is one of the townships with negative publicity due to the high rate of hijacking (South African history online 2014). The study was conducted at Vukuzakhe and Mziwamandla high schools, both located at Umlazi about 15 km away from Glebelands Hostel and 10 km away from each other.

Glebelands Hostel is a public hostel at Umlazi that accommodates people of different gender and ages from different rural areas (South African history online 2014). The hostel has gained notoriety with various incidents of violence, including 67 people being killed from March 2014 to April 2016 (Ngcobo 2016: 1). Some learners at Vukuzakhe and Mziwamandla high schools reside in the Glebelands Hostel where violence and brutal killings are right in front of their eyes.

## 5.8 PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING

This study is qualitative in nature and non-probability sampling was used. Cohen *et al.* (2011: 165) explain that selection in non-probability sampling involves targeting a certain group with the full knowledge but that does not represent that broad population instead represents the group itself. These authors further explain that it is mostly used in small scale research like involving one or two schools with three or four groups of educators or learners where findings cannot be generalised. Tustin *et al.* (2005: 116) seem to positively link with Cohen *et al.* (2011: 155) in that non-probability sampling relies on the discretion of the researcher and the degree of the sampling error cannot be determined.

The relevant type of non-probability sampling for this study was purposive sampling. Tustin *et al.* (2005: 346) explain purposive sampling as a feature of qualitative research that allows the researcher to hand-pick cases to be included in the sample on the basis of his/ her judgement of typicality. This allows the researcher to build up a sample that is satisfactory to his/ her needs. In this sampling method I chose participants with this purpose in mind: to understand the extent of school violence in order to design, implement and evaluate intervention strategies. Educators, learners, parents and community members were selected ensuring balanced gender equity particularly with participants in focus groups and interview.

### 5.8.1 Selection criteria of data collection participants and schools

Interviews: The research focused on high school educators, learners, parents and community members. For the in-depth interviews I identified five community members from Umlazi sections L and M, where the two schools of the study are located. I listed the names of the community members and set appointments with them in writing. Open-ended questionnaires were issued to parents through learners in both schools.

Maree (2010:79) highlights that purposive sampling simply means that participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them the holders of the data needed for the study. Sampling decisions are therefore made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to answer the research questions and often continues until no new themes emerge from the data collection process.

Focus groups: The study has a sample of two focus groups of educators, one in each school, purposefully selected for in-depth focus group discussion. Each focus group consisted of eight educators with four males and four females to ensure gender balance. The idea of balancing gender was to find out whether violence experienced by males was the same as violence experienced by female educators. The purpose of selecting this sample was not based on whether educators were victims or perpetrators, but to identify a particular



group of persons who were knowledgeable and informative from whom it would be possible to obtain open-ended data. Educators were selected irrespective of the race, age and education qualifications.

Schools: Two secondary schools were selected from the population of all secondary schools in the Umlazi district. Schools were chosen based on the perception that these schools are more violent, as per media news and discussion with educators and parents, as well as the location of the schools. Furthermore, selection was also based on the criteria that the selected schools were convenient in respect of access and nearness in space and time. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2015, South Africans were shocked by a video depicting the bullying of a high school pupil at Vukuzakhe Secondary School (Maune 2015: 1). Mziwamandla High School was chosen based on the perception that this school is more violent, as per informal discussions with the schools' educators and parents. Since this study was an action research, the intention was to minimise violent behaviour and build peace particularly in Vukuzakhe Secondary School.

Learners: The selection criterion of learners was based on age. I requested permission from the principals of both schools to work with learners above 18 years of age to form focus groups and WC groups. The intention was to obtain perception of learners about violence and empower them to cure it. Learners under the age of 18 were not selected in the study.

Parents: Using probability sampling, parents were randomly selected to respond to open-ended questionnaires. Probability sampling ensured that the different units in the community had equal probabilities of being chosen. This sampling method was chosen because it provides accuracy of the generalisation from the population. In this study, probability sampling helped in the explanation of the generalisation of responses. A randomly selected sample was used because it offered the same chance for all respondents to be selected.

## **5.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

To be ethical is to conform to accepted professional practices (Grix 2004: 57). It is unethical for researchers to harm research participants, especially if it is without the person's knowledge and permission. This includes deceiving a respondent about the true purpose of a study, asking the respondent questions that cause him or her embarrassment, causing emotional turmoil by reminding him or her of an unpleasant experience.

Grix (2004: 57) emphasises that ethical considerations tend to be greater when using qualitative research, taking into consideration peoples' personal lives and confidentiality issues which arise out of this. Tustin *et al.* (2005: 47) link positively with Grix (2004: 59) in emphasising that participants should not be harmed,

deceived and should be willing and informed. All participants were assured that their names would remain confidential and untraceable as pseudonyms were used during the data collection process.

For the purpose of this research all participants and respondents were asked in writing to voluntarily participate in the study. All procedures of the research were explained allowing the participants to choose whether to take part in the study or to withdraw as suggested by Crandall (as cited in Cohen *et al.* 2011: 77). The purpose of the study and the procedures to be followed during focus group discussion, open-ended questionnaires and interview were detailed in the consent forms. Educators, learners, parents and community members were asked to sign consent forms. Through the cooperation of educators, learners, parents and community members, the signed consent forms were returned to the researcher for verification. All participants and respondents were informed that collected data would be stored at the Department of Public Management at Durban University of Technology and would only be used for the purpose of the study. They were also informed that the study involved educators, learners, parents and society and assured that feedback would be given to them prior to the final draft of the research.

## **5.10 DATA ANALYSIS**

Cohen *et al.* (2011: 237) explain that data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities.

Tustin *et al.* (2005: 483) state the fact that good quality data is of limited use if the captured data cannot be analysed effectively. In qualitative research, data analysis commences during the data collection process. This involves the interpretation of data whereby the researcher analyses cases in their social context over a specific period of time (Grix 2004: 61). Qualitative studies accumulate large amounts of data, early analysis reduces the problem of data overload by choosing important features for future focus (Cohen *et al.* 2011: 537). The process of data analysis is portrayed in a sequence of seven steps as suggested by (Cohen *et al.* 2011: 551).

- Establish data analysis units and indicate how these units are similar or different from each other.
- Create a domain analysis where items and clusters are grouped together into related themes and patterns.
- Establish relationship between linkages and domains to ensure that the data, their richness and context-groundedness are retained.
- Make speculative inferences where the research will move from description to inferences.

- Summarise and write a preliminary summary of the main features, key issues, key concepts, constructs and ideas uncovered thus far.
- Seek negative cases and discrepancies to weigh the significance of disconfirming issues against confirming issues.
- Generate theory that is derived from and grounded in the data and emerges from it.

I adhered to the above steps in evaluating, assessing and grouping the collected data per themes from participants. The data was collected in English therefore there was no need for translation of any information. The following four themes were identified: actuality of violence in schools; causes of school violence; reduction strategies and empowerment, each with several sub-themes such as:

- Environmental influences.
- Resistance to parents.
- Lack of awareness.
- Influence of poverty.
- Learners' behaviour.
- Power and groups.

These themes form part of findings and are discussed in detail in Chapter 6. The focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were conducted with the assistance of a tape recorder, the participant's responses were listened to thoroughly and each one of them classified under a theme. A notepad was also used to transcribe important data. The interpreted responses were given back to participants to verify if data interpretation by the researcher was correct. Discussions of the study are presented in Chapter 7.

## **5.11 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Guion *et al.* (2011: 1) explain that: "validity, in qualitative research, refers to whether the findings of a study are true and certain: "true" in the sense that research findings accurately reflect the situation, and "certain" in the sense that research findings are supported by the evidence". These authors also state that triangulation is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies by analysing a research question from multiple perspectives. Patton (as cited in Guion *et al.* 2011: 2) warns that it is a common misconception that the goal of triangulation is to arrive at consistency across data sources or approaches claiming that inconsistencies may give the strengths of different approaches. He suggests that inconsistencies should not be seen as weakening the evidence, but should be viewed as an opportunity to discover deeper meaning in the data.

Cohen (2011: 272) states that in qualitative inquiry: “the researcher is the instrument”, therefore validity and reliability hinge to a great extent on the skills and competencies as well as the sensitivity and integrity of the researcher doing the research. I enhanced the reliability of the study by making use of open-ended questionnaires to allow parent respondents to elaborate on what they wanted to say. Furthermore, during interview and focus group discussions, I ensured that participants understood the question in the same way and asked them to feel free to contribute or share any other relevant information during the process. This gave the participants an opportunity to speak freely. The fact that I used multi-data collection methods strengthened the validity of the study. I used triangulation methodology which enabled me to study the data from more than one perspective in addition to my perspective as a researcher. This triangulation involved the use of multiple qualitative methods such as: focus group discussions, open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to strengthen and minimise the weaknesses of using one data collection technique. Different data gathering methods have the potential to increase validity, as the strength of one approach can compensate for the weakness of another. Thus, different methods of data gathering were employed to enhance the validity and reliability of the research.

## **5.12 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study concentrated on two high schools, other high schools were excluded yet they are also victims of school violence. It is highly unlikely to generalise the findings to the whole of the Umlazi district schools. However, the findings may indicate that the problem of stakeholders’ violent behaviour is serious in the Umlazi district and possibly more widely than the two schools in the sample. Major challenges were experienced when I approached participants and respondents to be part of the study. The non-availability of some participants ruined the gender equity and the study was solely based on availability. Inappropriate training spaces and high level of noise in some cases disrupted training programmes and disturbed the use of audiotape. Unavailability of some WC and SPE members in other training programmes compromised the training for a day. High levels of crime in the community limited the programme of WC group who wished to visit identified homes by SPEs. High rates of resistance by victims and perpetrators of school violence, particularly parents, and lack of a warm welcome in learners’ homes ruined the intentions of the WC group to embark on home visits.

## **5.13 CONCLUSION**

This chapter discussed the approach that was used in this research: methodology, data collection, analysis of results and limitations that were put into effect during the process of conducting research. The case study method was favoured as the most appropriate for gaining an understanding of the two schools. Various methods of data collection were used: focus group discussion, in-depth interviews and open-ended

questionnaires. I also observed the reaction of all participants to obtain data that might be communicated through actions. Qualitative analysis was carried out on the data to justify the research findings. Validity and reliability of data was ensured through the use of the triangulation methodology. The case study findings which include the analysis and interpretation of research findings are presented in Chapter 6.

## **PART FOUR**

### **CHAPTER 6**

#### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

##### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter focused on the research design and methodology that were used to find answers to the postulated research questions. Prior to the discussion, which is presented in Chapter 7, it is important to describe, analyse and compare the observations and present findings from both schools used in the study. To attain accurate information at each school, I initially recorded my observations while being given orientations by the respective principals. Whilst observing, certain issues caught my attention and I then asked for clarity either from the principal or learner(s) concerned. This assisted me to comprehend crucial facts that I used in data collection.

This chapter presents and compares different features of both schools. Physical, human, interactive, programme and environment factors were deeply analysed and compared. The physical factors referred to the physical resources of the school. The human factors dealt with the organisation of the human resources and the group dynamics observed like class, gender, race and age. The interactive factors referred to the communications that took place, such as verbal or non-verbal and learner involvement. The programme factors referred to the resources used in the school and formal or informal presentation styles. Environmental factors dealt with the surrounding area that the schools were located in. Miscellaneous structures such as tuckshops, nutrition centres, food gardens and sport grounds were evaluated and compared, as they were observed to be areas where violence commonly occurred within the school.

The abovementioned comparison of resources at the respective schools was done in order to establish whether there was a link between the specific resources and the level of violence within the premises. The participants' responses and discussions on the causes, nature and the extent of the violence that occur within the schools are presented and discussed in this chapter.

##### **6.2 SCHOOLS IN THE RESEARCH**

There were two schools involved in the research namely: Vukuzakhe High School and Mziwamandla High School. The underneath gives the background and the description of each school.

### **6.2.1 Vukuzakhe High School**

Zungu (2010: 1) explained the history of Vukuzakhe High School as the following:

Vukuzakhe High School is a public boarding school that was established in 1971. The first principal was Mr Dlamini followed by Dr Kubheka who served from 1972 to 1988. Currently, the principal is Miss Fulela. In 1995 the school was given a rare honour of being visited by Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh. Dr Kubheka had originally planned on keeping township learners at school from 6h30 until 17h00. That rationale was in the acknowledgement that the home environment of most learners was and is still not conducive to any home learning. This in turn instilled a sense of responsibility towards education in pupils that resulted in this school (located in the sprawling Umlazi township) consistently achieving 100% matric pass rates even during the dark days of apartheid. The school still achieves good pass rates for matrics, although they are diminishing (e.g.: the recorded matric pass rate at Vukuzakhe in 2016 was 72%).

### **6.2.2 Mziwamandla High School**

When interviewed on 15 September 2016, Mrs Ngcobo (Mziwamandla senior educator) stated that Mziwamandla High school is a public secondary school that started as a primary school in 1965 and converted to a secondary school in 1983. The first principal of the school was Mr Khanyile - currently Mr Nzimande is the principal. The grade 12 pass rate seems to be declining at the school, with recent matric pass rates falling as low as 46%. In 2016, the school had the honour of receiving an award for obtaining a 94% accounting pass for the class of 2015. The ceremony was held at Mangosuthu University of Technology and the award was sponsored by P.C. Training and Business College.



Figure 6.1: School A (Vukuzakhe High School)



Figure 6.2: School B (Mziwamandla High School)



### **6.3 PHYSICAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

The main task of a school is to provide an education which involves a series of programmes and activities (Sindhi 2013: 79). The successful conduct of these programmes and activities mainly depends upon the availability of physical and human resources (Sindhi 2013: 79). Physical resources refer to the physical facilities of the school. According to Nirav (2012: 10), physical resources refer to classrooms and other multipurpose rooms, laboratories, administration blocks, staffrooms, libraries, sport grounds, water; electricity and sanitation; furniture and apparatus (along with equipment) essential for imparting education. The human resources of a school refer to educators, learners and support staff (Sindhi 2013: 79).

A school should be set up in a suitable atmosphere as its location can have an enormous impact on education (Nirav 2012: 10). It should have plenty of space with shady trees around, far away from the noise of crowded cities and a polluted environment. There should be a calm and quiet atmosphere which is conducive to teaching and learning. It should have space, utility and attractiveness. According to Sindhi (2013: 78), effective education provision relies on schools to having healthy environments. Nirav (2012: 13) and Sindhi (2013: 79) concur in defining a healthy school environment as the physical, emotional and social climates of a school that are designed to provide a safe physical establishment as well as a healthy and supportive environment that foster learning.

School A: This is a very big school with lot of space, the parking lot accommodates about 25 cars and other space around the school can be used to park about 30 cars. Most educators park inside the school and I followed suit during data collection and action research. The school has modern, well-constructed and properly maintained buildings constructed with face brick and few with blocks.

School B: This is a small school and the parking bay can accommodate about 15. Educators' cars occupied the entire space and I used to park outside the gate. This school looks very traditional, some buildings constructed with blocks while others are prefabs and had received minimum upgrades.

### **6.4 COMPARING PHYSICAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IN BOTH SCHOOLS**

According to Veriava (2012: 1), the juxtaposition of “tree schools” (schools without classrooms or basic services) against the former model C (historically white) schools, with their Olympic-sized pools, multiple sports fields and well-equipped laboratories and libraries, highlights the enduring infrastructure disparity in South Africa’s public schools. Between these extremes, there exists a wide spectrum of schools, from traditional mud structures and township schools to urban and suburban schools. In other instances, there is a direct correlation between the wealth of a school and its violent behaviour (Veriava 2012: 1). According

to Veriava (2012: 1), the least well-off schools are mainly black and are faced with the vulnerability of unfenced schools to surrounding criminal elements. It is not certain that the most urgent needs of learners are addressed. This is supported by Johnson *et al.* (2011: 332), in claiming that both the school social and physical environment influence the amount of violence that happens at school. According to Johnson *et al.* (2011: 332), there is a correlation between the student perceptions of the security of the school, the amount of disorder and the presence of drugs and graffiti and school violence.

In comparing the physical and human resources in both schools, the following prevailed:

**Table 6.1 Physical and human resources in both schools**

Features	School A	School B
<b>Educational spaces</b>		
Classrooms	27	13
Specialised teaching classrooms	4	0
Physical science laboratory	1	0
Life sciences laboratory	1	0
Computer laboratory	1	0
Internet café	1	0
Library	1	0
<b>Administration spaces</b>		
Principal's office	1	1
Deputy principal's office	2	1
Administration office	1	0
Departments heads offices	5	0
Support staff offices	6	0
Staffroom	2	1
Reception area	2	0
Boardroom	1	0
Strong room	1	1
Printing room	1	0

Pastoral care:		
• Sick room	1	0
• Counselling room	1	0
Kitchenette	1	0
<b>Supporting spaces</b>		
Food garden	0	1
Nutrition centre	0	1
Tuckshop	1	0
Security room	1	0
General purpose hall	1	0
Parking bay	30	15
Sports ground	3	0
Boys toilet seats	12	4
Girls toilet seats	16	8
Male educators toilet seats	5	1
Female educators toilet seats	6	2
Water taps	8	1
<b>Human resources</b>		
Educators	45	21
Support staff	40	0
Learners	1150	581
Overall school fencing	Concrete fence	Wire

Source: own data.

#### 6.4.1 Educational spaces

According to the DoE (2012: 5), educational spaces refer to critical teaching and learning spaces in a school which are essential for carrying out the core teaching and learning functions. Educational spaces are largely based on physical settings which allow teaching and learning to take place. The term is commonly used as a more definitive alternative to classroom, but also refers to an indoor or outdoor location, either actual or virtual. Specialised classrooms, laboratories and libraries in schools are also part of this space.

#### **6.4.1.1 Classrooms**

The classroom is the backbone of all school infrastructure (Sindhi 2013: 81). Every school should have an adequate number of classrooms and every classroom should have a pleasant look. According to Nirav (2012: 10), walls should be painted with light colours, rooms should be carefully decorated and paintings should be fixed on the walls. The front wall should have a blackboard at an appropriate height (Sindhi 2013: 79). Nirav (2012: 10) further explains that walls at the back of the classroom should have built-in cupboards for keeping books, tools, crafts materials, apparatus for experiments, maps and other teaching aid materials. In a classroom where there are movable seats and work tables; where varied resources for learning are readily available in storage cabinets, the seating should be changed in a variety of activities simultaneously. The classroom should be well lit so that learners seated at different corners are able to see an educator and the blackboard. Rooms should be airy with good natural lighting, in the event that an electricity failure occurs.

School A: In this school, there are 27 classrooms which are approximately 48 - 60 square meters each. The classrooms have a face brick interior and exterior, steel windows (6 per classroom), a lockable door and a security gate. The windows were recorded as well maintained as I only observed two broken window panes throughout the entire school. All classrooms have white ceiling board and floor tiles. Classrooms follow the same pattern of having a large chalk board at the front and a large notice board at the back. The first thing displayed on the notice board is the subject class timetable. In the right hand corner at the front of the classroom, they have unlockable cupboards for learners to put their textbooks in. At front of each class, there is a table and chair used by educators for different purposes. All classrooms are fully electrified, however, there is not even one classrooms where the electricity is functional. All classrooms are without plugs and globes which makes it very difficult for learners and educators to work especially on dark days. Cords for the light switches are hanging from ceiling boards and wall sockets uncovered, this appears to be dangerous for the educators and learners. In observing this dilemma, I asked the principal what had happened and the response was as follows:

Our school is a victim of crime and we are fighting a losing battle, let me give you a picture: Initially, the school had electricity and it was stripped off by thieves last year (2015) before June. The SGB budgeted for the reinstallation of electricity which was done in September 2015. It only took three weeks after installation and it was stolen again. At the beginning of this year, in March 2016, the DoE wired the school again but look at it now, it's all gone. The issue of crime in this community has taken an advanced level, they remove tiles on the roof to find access to the classrooms and strip electricity. They do not steal lights and plugs only

but stripped all the wires inside the ceiling board. As it stands, educators cannot use overhead projectors in classrooms, learners and educators suffer on dark days as they cannot see clearly, educators fail to conduct early morning classes, learners who stay in informal settlements usually used the school for evening studies which is now impossible. All I can tell you is that, crime impact on the school's results and destroys the future of learners. (Principal, School A)

School B: In this school, some classrooms are built with building blocks while others are prefabs. There are 9 classrooms built with building blocks and 4 prefab classrooms. Like in school A, classrooms that are built with blocks are approximately 48 - 60 square meters, but the prefabs are smaller than normal classrooms size approximately 40-50 square meters each. All classrooms have aluminium windows (6 per class). The building block classrooms are highly taken care of as they are neatly painted inside and outside, but the prefabs seem neglected. The majority of the prefabs have broken windows, unlockable doors, floor planks that are broken and the walls that are damaged, so much so that learners can look outside through the wall. Other classrooms have unlockable doors but lockable security gates and concrete floors. School B also follows the same pattern as school A of having a chalk board at the front, a notice board at the back and unlockable cupboards at the front. The prefabs have the same set up, without the cupboards at the front of the classroom. All the classrooms were fully electrified, however, the prefabs are without electricity as the wires (and accessories) were stripped off by criminals. The principal indicated that thieves had stolen all lights, switches and plugs in the prefabs because they were/unlockable. In the other classrooms, the electricity is functional. The major problem in the classrooms is the lack of furniture since the number of desks is insufficient. I noticed that there were as many broken desks as there were functional desks. The principal indicated that the issue of furniture vandalism was a major problem that was reported to the SGB and the DoE.

#### **6.4.1.2 Specialised teaching classrooms**

There are many benefits of offering specialised subject education in schools. According to the DoE (2012: 160), subjects such as music, dramatic arts, maritime economics, engineering and graphic design support brain function and memory in academic subjects and add value to education. These subjects require specialised rooms that are conducive to their effective learning.

School A: The school offers all four subjects mentioned above and has specialised rooms for each subject offered. However, of the four rooms, the music room has been highly vandalised. The principal alluded to the fact that the room had a piano, melodies, key boards, saxophones, guitars and drum set, but now the room only has a piano. She explained that thieves used the same method to steal instruments and strip

electricity (i.e. removing tiles on the roof to gain illegal access inside). Currently, music learners are suffering as they do not have the tools they require for the subject.

School B: Of the possible specialised subjects mentioned above, the school only offers dramatic arts. This subject shares the space with the prefab dedicated to the physical science laboratory, which is also highly vandalised.

#### **6.4.1.3 Laboratories**

Laboratories are an essential part of a school. This is the place where experiments are performed and hypothesis are tested and verified (Sindhi 2013: 79). According to Nirav (2012: 12), every school needs life science, physical sciences, chemistry and computer laboratories. The physical sciences lab should be equipped with optical, electrical, thermodynamics and mechanical instruments Nirav (2012: 12). The chemistry lab should be equipped with different types of solutions, salts and elements (Nirav 2012: 12). The life sciences laboratory should be equipped with microscopes, specimens and organic samples (Sindhi 2013: 79). The computer lab should be equipped with a series of computers and software systems (Sindhi 2013: 79). Mere knowledge is not sufficient for building the required competence in these specific content areas. When theory is supported by practices, clarity is maintained and psychomotor skills are developed (Nirav 2012: 12).

School A: This school has four laboratories namely for physical sciences, life sciences and computers. These laboratories enhance learners' understanding and give them a chance to relate practise to theory. However, learners destroy the computer laboratory by stealing parts such as mouse, cables and keyboards. They also use computers for inappropriate purposes instead of researching school work. When asking the principal how effective the computer laboratories were for learners, the principal said:

Our learners are very fortunate to have all resources they need but not appreciative of that. Our school has internet in both computer laboratories. They know that in order to have access to each laboratory, they must contact information technology educator and request the permission to use it during study period that is from 3pm to 4pm. They are supposed to use the internet to do different subject projects. When I randomly check the website they opened, it usually showed sex movies, nude pictures and sending such to their cell phones and other learners. Another problem is the issue of theft, learners come to computer laboratories with their bags as they cannot leave them in classes due to high level of stealing, but that gives them a chance to stripped off computers and steal parts such as mouse, keyboards and cables which sometimes takes too long to realise that a certain computer has been destroyed. We have decided as a school that, they will no longer use computer laboratories, I know it's harsh to dedicated learners because computers are here to help them but their mind-sets forces us to do so. (Principal, School A)

School B: There are no laboratories at all. However, there is one classroom that has been converted into a computer room and a prefab that is used as physical sciences laboratory and a dramatic arts studio. In the prefab room, there is a cupboard that stores all the physical science experiments tools, but the rest of the room has been highly vandalised. The problem is that this room cannot be locked as it is also used by dramatic arts learners, the Learners Representative Council to hold regular meetings and educators to attend to parents. The principal indicated that the vandalism of this room is a huge problem. He emphasised that science kits and experiments need to be handled with care and stored in a safe place where learners could not have unauthorised access to. However, when I observed the room (containing the science kits), all the windows were broken and learners were playing inside.

The principal emphasised the difficulty incurred when renovating a prefab, as it was all too easy for learners to vandalise and destroy it again (after renovations). This occurrence supports the study conducted by Ncontsha and Shumba (2013: 6) in four South African high schools which indicated that various schools face the dilemma of broken doors, stolen door handles and broken windows, which are deliberately vandalised to gain illegal access inside classrooms. The classroom that was converted into a computer laboratory is fully protected with barbed wire on the roof. In communicating with the school principal, he indicated that thieves had previously stolen school computers using illegal roof access and then the SGB decided to secure the room with barbed wire.

#### **6.4.1.4 Libraries**

A library is an integral part of a school's physical infrastructure. It plays a vital role in the learning process at schools (DoE 2012: 5). The library is an essential component of a good school. The library should be located in a place where students will not get disturbed by noise. It is a useful means of storing and communicating theoretical knowledge, and a tool that an effective educator body cannot do without (DoE 2012: 5). A library is a repository of books and should have textbooks, workbooks, reference books, fiction, non-fiction books (at various reading levels), maps, charts and periodicals placed systematically.

School A: The school has a very big and beautiful library, but it is filled with very old and outdated resources. The principal indicated that the lack of a librarian in the school had repercussions with regard to how easily and regularly the library could be used. She mentioned that the school is not currently using the library for its true purpose, but rather as a store room. Apparently learners have never showed any interest in using the library. I noticed that the back window was broken and that it was missing a burglar guard. When questioned about this, the principal said:

Can you believe it? This is an embarrassing one, when the incident was investigated, it transpired that two girls organised to break the window and cut the burglar guard to have illegal access inside and have “privacy” with their boyfriends during the study period. I have observed that other girls are very sexually active in this school yet they are very good at framing boys and pretending as if they were the victims should we find them. (Principal, School A).

School B: The school does not have a library but has library boxes which were donated by the READ organisation several years ago. During a walk around the school with the principal a library box was pointed out, which was sitting on top of a cupboard, way out of the reach of children in the classroom. When the principal questioned the educator about why it was there, it was clear that the educator did not know what it was - the box had never been opened. In one classroom, donated books were scattered around the classroom and torn up at the back.

#### **6.4.2 Administration spaces**

According to DoE (2012: 5), educational administrative spaces refers to the areas in a school that are used by school management and staff for the day-to-day running of the school. In the school’s infrastructure, the administrative block should be well planned. The leadership and service functions are performed in administrative block DoE (2012: 5). The school office should be centrally located to serve as a good co-ordination centre; easily accessible to visitors, educators and learners DoE (2012: 6). The principal's office should be large enough to accommodate small conferences. The administration block should have various offices and rooms, such as: a reception area, sick room, counselling room, printing room and a staffroom, (which includes a toilet and kitchenette) (DoE 2012: 6)

##### **6.4.2.1 Offices**

The offices of a school should respectively include offices for the: principal, deputy principal, departmental heads, support staff and administration DoE (2012: 16). The roles of the office of the principal, deputy principal and departmental heads ensures that teaching and learning takes place, which is the core function of a school DoE (2012: 16). Support and administrative staff fulfil administrative duties and roles within the school, and it is recommended that each school should have such an office to ensure effective functionality. According to the DoE (2012: 16), the average size of a principal’s office (in South Africa) ranges from 15 to 20 square meters, while other offices range from 12 to 15 square meters.

School A: This school has a very big administration block with various offices. They are allocated as follows: one for the principal, two for the respective deputy principals and five for the respective departmental heads. There are four other support staff offices allocated for the following functions: human



resources, finance, procurement, and typing. All of the offices in the school comply with the abovementioned size averages as they are spacious, fully fitted with office chairs, desks, built-in cupboards and air conditioners. All administration offices at the school are highly secured with burglar guards and monitored alarm systems. However, the principal mentioned that there have been several incidences where criminals attempted to enter the building but failed because of the alarm system.

School B: This school has no administration block, but contains two offices allocated for the principal and the deputy principal. The three departmental heads share the computer room. The offices of the deputy principal and principal are joined to the computer room in order to share the barbed wire on the roof. However, the size of these offices does not conform with the average found by the DoE. They are both too small approximately between 7 - 9 square meters.

#### **6.4.2.2 Staffroom**

Within the physical infrastructure of a school there must be a room where educators can meet and interact with each other; do corrections of home/class work of learners and prepare to go to class DoE (2012: 16). This room should have lockers for educators so that they can safeguard their various instructional materials and personal belongings. According to the DoE (2012: 16), the staffroom should be a part of the administration space, however, some schools have staffrooms separated from the administration space.

School A: This school has two spacious staffrooms separated from the administration space. There are 37 educators sharing these two staffrooms. The criteria for sharing is guided by subject combinations (i.e.: educators teaching languages and commercial subjects share the first staffroom; educators teaching science and humanities share the second staffroom). In communicating with the principal about the safety of both staffrooms, the response was:

There are several cases of theft reported by educators. In most cases it's the stealing of cell phones and money left by educators in their bags while going to class. I am not sure whether learners enter the staffroom and open educator's bags or some educators steal from others in their absence. That's a very confusing issue that I don't want to talk about, but all I can confirm is that the staffroom is not safe for educators. (Principal, School A)

School B: The school has one medium size prefab staffroom that is shared by 16 educators. Educators use this staffroom to sit and carry out their day-to-day school work, however, it is highly vandalised. In asking the principal about the vandalism, he said:

We are working in a rough environment, stealing is the name of the game. Since there are no burglar guards in this prefab, they break the windows and find access inside. Educators have learnt not to leave their personal

belongings inside but criminals always get inside, torn educators' files and learners' books and messy everything. In one incident they deliberately shitted on top of the educator's table. It's unfortunate that we are really the victims of crime here. (Principal, School B)

#### **6.4.2.3 Other rooms in the administration block**

The DoE (2012: 7) specifies other rooms to be available in the administration block, these include the: reception, strong room, printing room, sick and counselling rooms, board room and kitchenette. Tasks such as receiving and sending letters, attending phone calls and attending to visitors are carried out in the reception area. The strong room is designed to protect valuable items against fire or theft. The printing room ensures that the printing and duplication of papers takes place to enable effective teaching and learning. The sick room allows for short-term supervision of ill learners and the ability to summon further medical assistance if required; whilst counselling mainly deals with academic, career, personal, and social needs of all learners within the school setting. The boardroom ensures that the school management team and educators meet regularly to discuss matters that support teaching and learning. The availability of a kitchenette ensures that the educators' food is prepared and stored in a proper place.

School A: The school has all the above-mentioned support rooms in a secured administration block, surrounded with burglar guards and alarm system. The principal emphasised that administration block is the most protected area onsite as it houses all of the schools valuable.

School B: As earlier mentioned, the school has no administration block, however the school has a very small strong room joined to the principal's office. Since it is adjoined to the principal's office, it also has barbed wire as a form of security on the roof.

#### **6.4.3 Support spaces**

According to the DoE (2012: 5), educational support spaces refers to areas in a school which are not of critical importance but are required for carrying out the core functions of the school. This includes food and nutrition centres, tuckshops, sport grounds, water, electricity, security and hostels where applicable.

##### **6.4.3.1 Food gardens and nutrition centres**

Previously it was mentioned that broken homes and poor parenting contribute significantly to learners' violent and antisocial behaviour (Singh and Steyn 2013: 3). In an attempt by the DoE to reduce such behaviour, possibly caused by broken homes, nutrition programmes and food gardens are administered in some schools. According to the DoE (2004: 8), the provision of a school nutrition programme is determined by the level of affordability of learners in that particular school, i.e.: by using quantile rankings. Quantile

rankings range from 1 - 5, where 1 is extremely poor and 5 is extremely rich. Only quantile 1 and 2 schools receive school nutrition programme. These schools are strongly encouraged to have food gardens in order to capacitate learners to follow suit at home. However, quantile 3 - 5 schools are also allowed to have food gardens should they have enough space and wish to do so.

School A: This school is ranked at quantile 4, therefore a school nutrition programme is not available. However, a food garden is available, not for the school but for a local cooperative project called “Masibumbane”. “Masibumbane” is a community cooperative sponsored by the local municipality as one of the ways to alleviate poverty. They cultivate different vegetables such as potatoes, sweet potatoes, spinach, cabbage, carrot, beetroot, onions, tomatoes and green pepper. However, their major concern is theft of their vegetables. The principal indicated that they intend to consume their vegetables domestically and sell to educators and the local community. However, they are disturbed by people who steal their vegetables especially at night. She highlighted that crime is dominating the entire area.

School B: The school is ranked at quantile 2, therefore a nutrition programme is available. The school is currently using a container as a kitchen due to the unavailability of a proper kitchen. There are 3 volunteer food-handlers who receive a stipend from the DoE at the end of the month. The principal indicated that according to the policy from the DoE, 1 food handler handles 200 learners and since there are 581 learners the school qualifies for three. At break time, learners are supposed to form a queue outside the container to be served through the window by food handlers. However, they do not form a line, they all want to be served first and become very aggressive and violent. They push, swear at each other and sometimes physically fight. The principal revealed that the situation frustrates food handlers and indicated that they need educators’ intervention which is not currently available as the educators’ job description does not include nutrition supervision. He indicated that in one particular incident, food preparations were delayed due to a gas problem, during eating time learners pushed their way into the kitchen, causing a food handler to fall down and get injured on the knee. The school has no food garden since its highly challenged with the shortage of space.

#### **6.4.3.2 Tuckshop**

A tuckshop is a shop, typically one on the school premises, that sells confectioneries, snacks, fast food and soft drinks. The school tuckshop is an opportunity for students to increase their nutrient intake and complement other meals. According to Kim *et al.* (2012: 138), school tuckshops can also be places for children and adolescents to practice healthy eating behaviours that they have been taught in the classroom. Recently, school tuckshops have focused on promoting healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables because of the beneficial effects of these foods in controlling obesity, which is a serious public health problem to

Kim *et al* (2012: 138). However, the tuckshop is also an area known for high rates of bullying (Kim *et al* (2012: 138). The majority of learners, especially the young ones, are afraid to go to tuckshop because it is where the culture of aggression is most dominant (ibid). Bullies get a chance to abuse other learners since high school educators are rarely available to supervise learners during break times

School A: The school has a very big, modern and well equipped tuckshop next to their grade 12 block. As per school protocol, learners are only supposed to buy from the tuckshop during break time (from 11:00 – 12:00) and after normal school hours (from 14:15 - 15:00pm), before the commencement of the afternoon study at 15:00. Learners are supposed to form a queue to be served and it is a well-known policy by every learner that the queue should be a matter of first come, first served. However, junior learners who are doing grade 8 and 9 experience difficulties when trying to buy. When the bell rings for break time, the young ones run very quickly to the tuckshop, trying to buy before the older bullies arrive. They are used to being the first ones to come, but unfortunately the last ones to be served. The bullies from Grade 10,11 and 12 harass, push and shove them out of the line in order to be served first. This tuckshop bullying is more common with boys as I did not witness any girls bullying other learners. However, young girls are bullied in the same way as the young boys. Bullies sometimes demand and take money from younger learners. In observing this violent behaviour, I asked two young learners (i.e.: a boy and a girl) why they were pushed out of the line, and I also asked a bully (a boy) why are they push younger learners out of the line and the responses were as follows:

These older boys always buy first and don't follow the queue like we were told by aunty in the tuckshop. They sometimes take our food by force. I wish educators can build our tuckshop where they will not come to push and sometimes beat us. (Young boy being bullied, school A)

They don't want us in the tuckshop and always take our money and we go back to classrooms hungry. One day they took my R20 which included R11 taxi fare, I travelled home barefooted a very long distance, I was afraid of criminals and on the way I cried. I came home very late. We can't even report them to educators or parents because they will beat us after school or during the weekend. Mem, everybody is afraid of them, so it's better to keep quiet. (Young girl being bullied, school A)

We are seniors in the school and our responsibility is to teach these little kids basic rules of the school, respect and manners. These are the freshers, they don't make rules, theirs is to comply as big brothers are saying. This was done to us when we were freshers, we did not complain that is why we are strong. They must wait for us to be served first, we cannot buy their leftovers. One day they will be school seniors; they will do the same or maybe worse. This is not something new, it has been like this many years ago, even our brothers who are no longer in school know the culture. (Tuckshop bully, school A)

In communicating with the school principal, she indicated that educators and the Representative Council for Learners (RCL) are supposed to regularly patrol the tuckshop during break time as stipulated in the duty roster by the school. She emphasised that the school is not supposed to have such a reputation and expressed deep shock upon hearing of such incidents. She promised to meet with the RCL and educators to discuss the matter. Moreover, she promised to address learners in the assembly about the school policy regarding bullying and the correct channel of reporting any bullying whether inside or outside the school premises.

School B: The school does not have a tuckshop but has a nutrition programme provided by the DoE. The DoE aims to enhance the learning capacity of learners through the provision of healthy meals at schools. Whilst learners are provided with nutritious meals, the school is encouraged to establish a food garden from which they can obtain fresh produce to supplement the DoE menu. This school contains a vegetable garden with cabbage, spinach, carrot, onions and tomatoes. Learners are responsible for the garden under the supervision of educators. However, the challenge is the use of garden tools as weapons by learners, in order to fight other learners. In communicating with the school principal, he revealed that they had had numerous cases where learners attempted to hurt each other using these tools. He even admitted that one learner was injured by a spade in the presence of an educator and the perpetrator claimed it was a mistake. In critically questioning the perpetrator, he agreed that it was intentionally done to avenge himself after being made a laughing stock while coughing in class.

#### **6.4.3.3 Sports grounds**

According to Pule *et al.* (2015: 42), the DoE and the Department of Sports and Recreation South Africa (SRSA) integrated in 2011 to form a school framework called “Memorandum of Understanding”. The ministers of both departments committed to deliver a sustainable integrated plan to provide children the opportunity to participate in physical education and organised school sport. It is important that the interests of children be well catered for at schools in sport - sport has a meaningful role to play in promoting physically active lifestyles among the youth of the country (Pule *et al.* 2015: 42). The National Sport and Recreation Plan of 2011 indicated that the promotion of sport and physical education at schools played an important role in creating the motivation for and commitment to life-long participation (Pule *et al.* 2015: 42). In view of the pressing need to promote school sports, the DoE and the SRSA aimed to entrench a democratic value-system to accelerate the transformation and integration of society; to ensure and increase access and accessibility of facilities and school sports; and to develop the capacity of delivering quality school sport programmes that will lead to lifelong participation in sport. The DoE (2012: 13) states that schools should have areas where soccer or rugby and netball or volley-ball could be practised, the school should have at least one sporting field for soccer or rugby and one for netball or volley-ball. At least one

sporting field should be large enough to accommodate athletics tracks. Sporting facilities should be accessible to learners with disabilities in order to ensure their meaningful use of such facilities (Pule *et al* 2015: 42).

School A: The school has three sports field (i.e.: for soccer, netball and volleyball). However, there is a decline in the provision of various sports because most educators lost interest in sport. The sport period happens every Thursday from 13:00. However, only soccer is evident with very few learners and educators who are actively involved. During the sports time most learners loiter around with no educator supervision. This is the time where the most violence occurs. According to the principal, the environment where the school is located is highly violent, so the school is reluctant to have more sporting activities because they seem to invite outside perpetrators to enter the school using illegal entrances. This was witnessed in a stabbing incident in September 2016, while I was collecting data at the school. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2016, while I was conducting the first session of the Cure Violence model, a former grade 9 boy entered the school premises during sport time and stabbed a grade 11 boy. The boy was rushed by an educator to Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital where the doctors tried to save his life, but unfortunately on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2016 he passed away. On the day that the sad news was delivered, learners aggressively went out to go and burn the home of the perpetrator. The family members of the perpetrator were violently protecting their home and educators were running along the road trying to stop learners from attacking the family. I noticed that only educators tried to calm the situation, security guards watched like strangers, as if nothing was wrong. Fortunately, the SAPS responded quickly to the call before any injuries occurred.

The principal admitted that sports are not done as per the expectation by the DoE in collaboration with SRSA, and the willingness to offer them is minimal on the side of educators.

If it was according to my wish, I was going to eradicate sport time. Educators are highly stressed about this time. The level of drugs in the community and in the school is very high and learners get drunk and become violent during sport time. If anything happens to a learner the DoE expects us to account. Another thing, our security personnel is not fully functional as we expect, so to offer sports where there is no one ensuring that outsiders do not enter the school premises is very risky, it's like gambling with educators' and learners' lives because we know how dangerous this environment is (Principal, school A).

School B: The school is not actively involved in any sporting event. Participation in school sport is an exception despite the keen interest shown by learners to actively engage in sports. From a practical standpoint, the absence of a sports ground limits learner's opportunities to participate in sport and physical activities. In discussing sport with the school principal, it transpired that the unavailability of all sporting facilities is a barrier to any sport offering. He highlighted that the pressure in offering sports is high,

especially coming from the learners. In 2015, they tried to use the community sport ground which is 10 kilometres away from the school and a number of problems prevailed, such as, transport, the safety of learners and the lack of parental involvement to give consent for their children to leave the school premises before normal time. The major problem is the unavailability of space within the school which even limits learners' ability to play around during break time. There is a sporting time every Wednesday from 13:00 - 15:00 but it is currently used for gardening.

#### **6.4.3.4 Water, electricity and sanitation**

According to the Government Gazette (2013: 8), schools have made significant progress in the supply of water, electricity and sanitation facilities. Most schools comply with the stipulated conditions on the supply of water, electricity and sanitation as stipulated by Government Gazette (2013: 8). Below are the specified conditions:

Electricity	All schools must have some form of electricity
	Choice of electricity supply must be based on the most appropriate source
	Forms: grid; generators; solar power; wind power
Water	Sufficient basic water supply
	Sufficient water-collection points
	Sources: municipal; rain water; mobile tankers; boreholes; local reservoirs
Sanitation	Sufficient and accessible to all; provide privacy; promote health and sanitation
	Sources: Small bore sewer reticulation; water borne; septic tanks; ventilated pit latrines; composting toilets
	Plain pit and bucket latrines are not allowed.

School A: As per the stipulations of the Government Gazette, the school has water, electricity and sanitation facilities. As indicated in the table above, there are 8 water taps; and water borne toilets as follows: 12 for boys, 16 for girls, 5 for male educators and 6 for female educators. All buildings in the school are electrified inside and outside.

Water: Learners mainly use water taps during break time after having their meals and during the sports period. The school has 8 taps in 4 different water stations around the school arranged as 2 taps per station. They are allowed to use any station with no demarcations. Logically, they are supposed to form a queue and take turns in fetching water but they all want to serve themselves first. They shove and push each other to get water first even if the queue is not long. In another observed case, a boy found only three learners at

the station but still wanted to serve himself first. He closed the tap while the first girl was still fetching water and demanded her to move aside. The girl resisted and he started swearing at her. In another incident, a female learner fetched water carelessly and accidentally poured it onto another girl, when the victim complained the perpetrator retorted disrespectfully.

I also observed a case where one boy deliberately poured water on another boy, in response to that callous act the victim swore at the perpetrator. Throughout all my observations at the water station, I realised that foul and vulgar language had become a colloquial form of conversation. Phrases such as, “fuck you”, “asshole”, “bastard” and “piss off” are commonly used to express learners’ feelings and attitudes. Even if they are chatting peacefully as friends, vulgar language dominates their conversations which clearly expresses their mind-set.

Electricity: As it was indicated when discussing educational administration spaces, the level of school property vandalism is high. In this school the major problem is the stripping off of electricity in classrooms which highly disturbs effective teaching and learning from taking place.

Sanitation: These facilities are sufficient, however, learners’ toilets (both female and male) have vulgar language written all over the walls – the very same vulgarity that I witnessed when they were talking to each other during break times is written in their toilets. They even associate certain learners with certain phrases. The word “bitch” was the most dominant form of written vandalism in the girls’ bathroom.

School B: As per the stipulations of the Government Gazette, the school has water, electricity and sanitation facilities. This school has 1 water tap, 4 Jojo tanks, is fully electrified and has a septic tank system for sanitation. There are 4 toilets for boys, 8 for girls, 2 for female educators and 1 for male educators.

Water: The school only has 1 water tap and 4 jojo tanks for all learners and educators. During the time of data collection all Jojo tanks were not functional. Nevertheless, the school came up with the idea of having water buckets in classrooms to avoid pushing for 1 tap. That approach seems to be functional even though boys demand to serve themselves first, especially after having their lunch during break time. I noticed that there are no fights for water at tap, unlike at school A. The school had to get plastic water pipes and tap after their old copper pipes and tap were repeatedly stolen. The principal indicated that they replaced the copper pipes three times before deciding to change to plastic.

Electricity: The school is fully electrified. The electricity is functional but in some classes globes and plugs have been stolen, but not the wires. The principal indicated that another major problem with the school is the illegal connection of electricity which the school is not sure whether criminals are consuming from the school’s electricity or the municipality’s. He emphasised that the illegal connections result in poor supply



of electricity in the area which affects the school negatively especially during examination periods when they have to duplicate question papers.

**Sanitation:** The school has sanitation facilities, although 1 toilet for male educators is not sufficient for all the male educators at the school. Like in school A, girls' and boys' toilets have vulgar language written on the walls. During the data collection period, the water system in the learners' toilets was not properly functioning hence toilets were filthy and dirty. All the used toilet materials particularly in girls' toilets were thrown on the floor. In communicating with the principal, he indicated that the school is highly challenged by crime, dust bins that were meant to be used by girls to dispose of their used sanitary towels were stolen each time they had been replaced. He mentioned that it has been alleged that the stolen bins are now being used as containers for home-made sorghum breweries for those who are selling it. He highlighted the disturbances caused by stealing copper water pipes to the normal running of learners' toilet system:

The toilet system was fine before they stole copper water pipes, now we are faced with these blocking toilets that the school does not have money to fix. The problem was created with the conversion of pipes. (Principal, school B).

#### **6.4.3.5 Safety and security**

The lack of safety in schools is often a critical obstacle to learning. Crime, violence and abuse affect all aspects of our community; and schools are not free from fear, intimidation and victimisation (DoE (2012: 11). Fear is common within South African schools taking into consideration the rate at which learners are victimised in schools (Burton and Leoschut 2012: 35). According to the DoE (2012: 11) these forms of security measures should be available in all schools:

- Every school site, including the school sporting fields and outbuildings should be surrounded by appropriate fencing to a height of at least 1.8 meters.
- Schools should be provided with some form of security measures such as the following:
- All ground-floor buildings and other areas built at ground level, that are accessed by learners and educators, should at least be provided with burglar proofing.
- Every school should have an arrangement pertaining to a security company/ guard.
- An alarm system, in addition to burglar proofing and security personnel is advisable, and will exceed the minimum security requirements.
- School buildings and other buildings should comply to all laws relating to fire protection.

- Fire extinguishers should be provided at a ratio of at least one extinguisher per every 150 square meter.
- Laboratories and other hazardous areas should have at least one fire extinguisher per every 50 square meter.
- The provision, maintenance and replacement of fire extinguishers should conform national guidelines.
- Appropriate material that are not harmful to learners must be used. Asbestos, mud, zinc and wooden structures are not acceptable and shall render the school unsafe.

School A: Firstly, the school is a boarding school which means that the DoE gives them more funding to go towards security (DoE 2012: 14). There are 12 security guards within the school who work alternatively to watch the school 24 hours a day. They are divided into 2 shifts (i.e.: 6am to 6pm and 6pm to 6am) and are paired into 3 members per shift. As per their job descriptions, they are supposed to divide themselves as follows: One security guard is supposed to remain at the gate to register and question all the people and cars that enter the school during school hours. The second one is supposed to survey the school for illegal activities, suspicious behaviour or dangerous situations. The third one is supposed to look after learners' properties in both hostels (i.e.: for girls and boys and ensure the safety of boarders at all times). However, in reality that is not the case – the 3 guards merely sit together at the gate all day. Throughout the duration of my data collection at the school my car was never registered for entering the school nor was I ever asked to explain my reason for visiting the school. Even after parking at the parking bay, which is within their vicinity, they didn't bother to attend to me as a visitor. On the first day I visited the school, I approached them to ask for the principal's office and they pointed at the admin block, but did they did not accompany me there, instead they continued sitting, talking and laughing.

Secondly, the school is well fenced with a concrete fence of about 1.8 square meter height as stipulated by the DoE. The school considers fencing as one of the key elements of school based crime prevention. The concrete fence surrounds the entire school, including, classrooms, hostels to playgrounds. However, the fence is highly vandalised because of the environment where the school is located. The principal considers learners themselves and community members as perpetrators of vandalism in the school. Most of the fence corners are broken, where pieces are either left laying down or are taken by vandals for their own use.

Thirdly, the school has alarm system monitored by Chubb security company. Only areas that are highly valued by the school are monitored (i.e.: the administration block, staffroom, computer rooms, laboratories and library). Fourthly, the school has established and maintained a School Safety Committee (SSC). A SSC

comprises of internal and external stakeholders. Internal members comprise of representative from learners, educators, SGB and security personnel. External role players include the SAPS, local ward councillors, social workers and the Community Police Forum (CPF). The major role of the committee is to ensure that school infrastructure is protected, learners and educators are safe and that the school is a violence free zone. The committee oversees the development and implementation of initiatives that address factors contributing to crime and violence.

Lastly, the school is working with the Non-Government Organisation (NGO) Star for Life to minimise violence and give counselling to learners on different issues that affect their learning. Learners also are engaged in maintaining a good learning environment by preserving the RCL.

The school complies with the DoE in having fire extinguishers in every classroom, staffroom and administration room. However, they do not fully conform to all health safety expectations of the DoE as some of the classrooms are roofed with asbestos while others with corrugated iron.

School B: This school is totally different from school A as it is for day scholars and is not a boarding school. Firstly, the school does not have any security personnel from the DoE. The principal explained to me that the SGB of the school hired a privately paid individual to look after the school at night as the school could not afford to pay two security guards. During school hours, people were entering the school without reporting to anyone. However, the rate of crime was too high and the principal was concerned about learners' and educators' lives.

Secondly, the school is entirely fenced with a wire fence not a concrete fence. The school regards fencing as the number one measure to ensure safety within the school premises especially in the absence of the school security guard. However, the level of fence vandalism is incredibly high. At the back of the school, the fence was stripped off by perpetrators and stolen. The principal claimed that the fence was stripped two days after it was installed. At the sides and the front of the school, the fence is cut and illegal entrances are as big as the gate itself.

Thirdly, the school once had an alarm system that is no longer operational due to financial constraints. Lastly, unlike school A, the school does not have a SSC and the principal indicated that such a committee could not be established due to lack of cooperation between the school, parents and community members. There is no NGO working with school B.

These schools have different security measures but the common feature is the failure to actively participate in addressing and promoting school safety. They have both established and value the RCL as a structure proposed by the DoE to represent learners' interest within the school. In school A, the principal highlighted

that the RCL, under the supervision of the Teacher Liaison Officer (TLO), meet regularly to discuss issues pertaining to learners; which is not the case with school B where the principal has indicated that they have never met to discuss anything. Both schools have a learners' code of conduct that addresses sanctions on wrongdoing. Principals of both schools admitted that the RCL is not as functional as it should be due to certain limitations. School A's code of conduct was written in English and was distributed to parents for signing, but most parents did not get the message that was communicated, hence they were reluctant to sign it. School B have translated it to Isizulu but have not yet distributed it to parents for signing as the principal was worried about lack of resources (i.e.: paper, ink and a copying machine).

## **6.5 HUMAN RESOURCES**

The number of educators per school is determined by the number of learners and the weighting of different subjects as determined by the DoE (2012: 31). The DoE reserves the right as an employer to appoint any person, promote and transfer any educator based on post establishment of a public school. Support staff is appointed also by the DoE which ensures employment equity, fairness and efficiency DoE (2012: 31).

School A: As indicated above, the school has 1,150 students, 45 educators and 40 support staff. All educators, learners and support personnel in the school are black. All classes are mixed gender. The gender diversity is also observed in educating staff which contains 24 females and 21 males. The support staff has 23 females and 17 males. There are no age criteria attached to each grade at school, learners of different ages share classes. However, I observed that in Grade 8 and 9, there was a broad range in age with learners varying from children to young adults. I asked the principal if the situation caused any problems and she responded that it does. She said that in most cases, the younger learners sought to fit into a group of older learners who had started illegal activities such as drugs, alcohol, smoking or stealing and in turn acquired bad behaviour from them. She indicated that it is a struggle that the school cannot win as the Constitution of South Africa clearly states that every individual has a right to be educated and not to be discriminated against in any form.

School B: As stated above, the school has 581 learners, 21 educators and no support staff. The school contains black people only, and has no physically challenged learner or educator. Gender diversity in each class is observed. Learner age is not a criterion for admission. As with school A, learners of different ages share classes. But the principal supports the principal of school A indicated that mixing different age groups in a single class is a problem, as older learners tend to influence the younger ones. He believes that the cultures of drug addiction, smoking, drinking and stealing in schools develops through this phenomenon, but it will not be resolved as secondary schools are inclusive.

## 6.6 INTERACTION SETTINGS

According to Habaci *et al* (2013: 690), communication has great value for humans - people with good communication skills are able to convey their thoughts, knowledge and ideas effectively to other people. As in all dimensions of social life, in educational organizations, good communication is crucial. For an active and productive education system, effective communication skills are needed among the SMT and educators, both in the school environment and outside of it. Communication in educational administration includes SMT - employee, learner - employee, educator - educator, and educator - learner relationships. Effective communication in a school setting influences the motivations and satisfaction of the SMT, educators, and learners. A principal with effective communication skills makes it easier for the school to reach targets. Effective communication between educators can provide even more fruitful results.

School A: In discussing the communication channels observed in the school with the principal, she said:

Interaction is a problem especially because the school has so many educators and support staff. Unequal power relations between the SMT and educators which stem from promotional posts play a role in the increasing conflict in this school. Different people have different perceptions and beliefs in different situations. There are people who believe in talking behind someone's back or gang up for another person. It's worse with me as a female principal, I was accused of being a "bitch" for sleeping with an official to obtain this position, others believed I paid thousands of rand for it. On the other side, the support staff are not the professionals, as they are not employed per qualification, which makes things worse on human relations. Recently, the SMT had to intervene in the case of two cleaners who shouted and insulted each other in front of learners while cleaning girls' toilets. (Principal, school A).

This conversation supported the study evidence found by De Lange *et al.* (2012: 504) in South African schools, which revealed that many female educators turn down promotions to become head educators in order to avoid being accused by the community of having had sex with a male in power as a pathway to promotion. According to Beef (school A educator focus group), the inequality is visible and often begins at home - however, it is further played out in the school, the workplace and in the community.

School B: In communicating with the school principal concerning human relations in school, he did not dwell so much on the educators, but rather on the learners. He was worried that it seemed like learners had never been taught the correct way of expressing themselves, should they wish to communicate with each other or with educators. He showed concern that the most common vocabulary is vulgar language and that they do not see any problem with it. They perceive vulgarity as an acceptable and correct way to express themselves.

## **6.7 PROGRAMME SETTINGS**

According to the DoE (2011), the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was developed for each subject to replace subject statements, learning programme guidelines and subject assessment guidelines in grades R-12. With effect from 2012, CAPS was introduced as an amendment to National Curriculum Statements (NCS). The aim of CAPS is to lessen the administrative load on educators and to ensure that there is clear guidance and consistency for educators when teaching. The DoE provides a list of subjects permitted to be taught in each school. Each school should choose the subject combination from the list provided, however, there are guidelines on how to combine the subjects. In additions to the teaching and learning programme, schools are allowed to have other programmes such as sport, nutrition, support, welfare and special events.

School A: The school starts from Grade 8-12. Grade 8 and 9, so-called General Education and Training (GET) offer the same nine subjects per grade; while grade 10-12, normally called Further Education and Training (FET), have streams with different subject combinations. There are three streams (i.e.: commerce, science and humanities). Each stream is accompanied by core subjects, namely: mathematics/ mathematical literacy, life orientation, IsiZulu and English. There are other programmes in the school as indicated above, such as sport, counselling and special events, like the matric dance, when the need arises. The principal was worried about what was called the “FET syndrome”, as learners tends to discriminate each other based on streams. Science stream learners tends to undermine other streams based on subject difficulty and the level of thinking needed for subjects. According to the principal, this syndrome is even present in educators.

School B: The school starts from grade 8-12 and offers the same subject combinations. Other programmes in the school involve nutrition and welfare services. In asking the principal about learner differences in streams, he reported no indifferences.

## **6.8 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

Both schools are located in Umlazi township. As pointed out earlier, Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya (2014: 46) explain that gangsterism, criminal and domestic violence as well as substance dependence are a concern in most South African township areas. They view the forming of gangs in South African township societies as an issue associated with poverty, unemployment and the changing patterns in family life caused by urbanisation. Van der Merwe (2014: 70) believes that young boys with poor economic prospects caused by the impact of post-apartheid globalisation and the neoliberalism of the economy are especially more inclined to foster the lifestyles of gangsters.

According to Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya (2014: 43), gangs in schools should be seen as a community problem in South Africa since schools are a part of the community; they reflect the problems of that community. These authors believe that learners are often challenging and dismissive of legitimate authority. Gangs emerge from within communities themselves and this phenomenon has many root causes; this includes socioeconomic conditions such as unemployment, low-income and poor living conditions which all lead to conditions of poverty and deprivation. A study conducted by Van der Merwe (2011: 2) showed that level of unemployment amongst the parents of learners in South African townships is very high.

According to Bunting (2000: 36), it can be argued that apartheid developed a generation for whom violence was the only means of making change. Bunting (2000: 36) believes that apartheid also resulted in the development of a generation of parents who were products of abnormal society and broken family structure, therefore tending to lack vital parental skills needed to raise healthy children. Allen (2010: 7) alludes to the fact that bullies and victims tend to come from families where parenting is passive or authoritarian. A study conducted by Singh and Steyn (2013: 3) in KwaZulu-Natal schools reveals that poverty, broken homes and poor parenting are key elements that contribute significantly to antisocial learner behaviour.

## **6.9 ACTUALITY OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS**

Up to this point, I have been comparing the resources of the schools that were involved in the study. This was done to gauge whether the settings, resources and surroundings of the school have any impact on the level of violence within the school itself. The remainder of the chapter presents the findings and discussions of the causes, nature and scope of the violence that occurs in these schools. It is worth noting that there is an increasing concern within South African schools, particularly in the Umlazi district, about widespread violence (SACE 2011: 25). Below are several first-hand accounts of school violence from victims and perpetrators of the phenomenon.

### **6.9.1 Demographics of the participants**

The table below presents the number and characteristics of focus groups and in-depth interview participants in the study. The demographics for educators include position, subject taught and teaching experience (in years). For learners, the demographics covered subject streams, grade, age and the number of years that they have spent in school are specified. Community members' demographics involved their position in the community, locality section where a person stays, age and gender. However, open ended questionnaires for parents had no demographic specifications, participation was based on the willingness, and therefore the demographic variables of respondents include gender and age only.

**Table 6.2 Focus groups and in-depth interview participants' demographics**

School A- Educators in Focus Group						
No.	Pseudonyms	Position	Subject Teaching	Gender	Teaching Years	Ages
1	Beef	Educator	Isizulu	Female	11	38
2	Chicken	Educator	Life orientation	Female	08	33
3	Pork	Departmental head	English	Male	15	41
4	Mutton	Educator	Mathematics	Male	12	40
5	Salam	Educator	Isizulu	Female	03	25
6	Burger	Deputy Principal	Accounting	Female	24	46
7	Vienna	Educator	Economics	Male	13	35
8	Bacon	Educator	English	Male	07	29
School B- Educators In Focus Group						
No.	Pseudonyms	Position	Subject Teaching	Gender	Teaching Years	Ages
1	Ay	Educator	Dramatic Arts	Male	06	28
2	Bee	Educator	Life orientation	Male	09	31
3	Cee	Educator	English	Female	11	37
4	Dee	Educator	Physical Sciences	Female	13	39
5	Ee	Educator	Business Studies	Female	05	27
6	Eff	Educator	Economics	Female	02	25
7	Gee	Educator	Mathematics	Male	14	37
8	Haitch	Departmental head	Life Sciences	Male	19	44
School A- Learners in Focus Group						
No.	Pseudonyms	Subject stream	Gender	Grade	Years in School	Ages
1	Banana	Commerce	Female	11	5	18
2	Orange	Science	Male	11	6	18
3	Apple	Science	Male	11	5	19
4	Grape	Science	Female	12	7	21



5	Guava	Humanities	Female	12	5	20
6	Nectarine	Humanities	Male	11	4	19
7	Plum	Commerce	Female	11	6	18
8	Peach	Commerce	Male	11	5	18
School B- Learners in Focus Group						
No.	Pseudonyms	Subject Stream	Gender	Grade	Years in School	Ages
1	Spinach	Commerce	Female	11	6	19
2	Carrot	Commerce	Female	11	7	21
3	Cabbage	Humanities	Female	11	5	18
4	Onions	Humanities	Male	11	7	22
5	Butternut	Humanities	Male	11	7	21
6	Potatoes	Science	Female	11	6	20
7	Tomatoes	Science	Male	11	6	20
8	Broccoli	Commerce	Male	11	5	18
Both Schools- Community Members in-Depth Interview						
No.	Pseudonyms	Position	Employment Status	Section	Years in a Section	Ages
1	Nhloso	CPF member	Unemployed	M	41	45
2	Happy	Community member	Employed	M	40	52
3	Funani	SGB member- school A	Unemployed	L	33	55
4	Buddy	SGB member- school B	Employed	M	15	36
5	Sister	Community member	Unemployed	L	23	37

Table 6.3 Parents Open Ended Questionnaires Demographics

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES OF RESPONDENTS	
GENDER	
Male	13
Female	27

AGE	
30 years and younger	16
31-40	09
41-50	13
51-60	02

### 6.9.2 Causes of violence

The results of the study revealed that school violence is a product of various factors from different actors and influences. As discussed in Chapter 3, there is not only one factor that causes school violence, but rather a series of interrelated factors impacting on young people in different ways. According to Mazerolle *et al.* (2011: 5), individual factors such as being male, having learning difficulties at school, being involved with drugs, having family problems, poor impulse control, feeling rejected at school and learner's individual beliefs seem to be the major causes of school violence. Participants' responses on what they thought the causes of violence were, were grouped into the following themes: environmental factors, resistance to parents, lack of awareness, influence of poverty, peer influence, love relationships and culture and religion.

Environmental influences- All participants in the study blamed the community for improper behaviour that affects school learners, such as, selling drugs and alcohol to learners. All participants in school A were convinced that certain community members worked hand-in-hand with security personnel of the school to conduct illegal activities on the premises.

Both groups took time to describe the communities surrounding their school.

Township people are full of different views, others are drug dealers, alcoholics, stylish, misbehaving while others are very disciplined. It's a township of different ideologists and principles, where people view things differently. A person decides which route to follow, it's the survival of the fittest, children choose their role models. Other role models are hijackers, thieves, murderers or professionals. Townships are full of unemployed and poor graduates and very rich thugs, so learners may idolise criminals and follow their footsteps. They might make wrong choices because thugs are extremely rich and throw big bashes, drive expensive cars and wear big brands, so they want to be like them and start practising that at school. (Beef, school A educator focus group)

They emphasised that the community lacks parental figure and that most of the children in the school do not have parents; they are raised by grandparent and often lead their own lives, as their grandparents are not strict.

Haitch (School B educator) had two phrases to sum up the community, which are “corrupt” and “crime zone”. They perceive the community to be very dangerous, where gangsterism is considered a lifestyle and people have become desensitised to criminal activity. Young children are sent to buy marijuana, whilst adults smoke it on the road right next to where the children where play. Young mothers drink and smoke with their children to such an extent, that if an infant is to cry, the mother rubs their gums with alcohol to get them to become intoxicated and sleepy. The community is full of well-known hijackers who are highly honoured and respected by children for stealing expensive assets such as cars. Sometimes they spin those cars on the road and the adults watch and clap hands for them - they become heroes for hijacking. Children are taught a life of crime from a young age.

All participants say that there is no “ubuntu” left in townships anymore and that there are now too many evils that exist. Gangsters in this township operates under the slogan, “If a nigga pisses you off, take him down” - meaning, if someone blocks your way, kill him. Gangsters throw big parties on the road in front of children to celebrate the money they get from selling stolen cars. If one of the gangsters passes on, there is a well-known ritual that follow: on the day of a funeral the coffin is removed from the hearse and put on the road; other gangsters spin their cars around the coffin, then proceed to burn one of the cars and fire gun shots on the scene. Once this is done the gang moves to the cemetery to bury that person, all of these events happen in front of and are watched by children, community members and the police. Several participants suspected that gangsters bribe the police to let them get away with the crimes that they commit. They call hijacking a career and a culture. In townships, funerals are used to demonstrate the lifestyle that deceased lived while they were still living. For example, when they bury an alcoholic, the funeral goers drink a lot; for a smoker, they smoke heavily and for a prostitute they wear revealing clothing and perform erotic dance.

However, there are programmes run by other community members to reduce violence, such as the CPF, who enforce discipline through physical punishment in the township. CPF correct violence with violence, but other members of the community do not support them. One CPF member who participated in the study expressed their commitment and dedication to support schools and the community at large in the fight to minimise corruption. Nevertheless, he indicated two major challenges they faced in rendering their service. Firstly, there are very few of them and secondly, they do not get support and appreciation from parents and community members. In most cases, parents view them as abusers when they discipline their children. He made a reference to one of the parents who laid criminal charges against them for beating a boy who had robbed a girl of her cell phone. The presence of the CPF was acknowledged and appreciated by participants from school A who viewed them as incredibly supportive. The few complaints that the participants (from school A) had about the CPF were mostly about the fact that there are too few CPF members. In school A,

there are only 10 CPF members while school B does not have any at all. Another thing that was highly criticised in the CPF is the use of violence to correct violence.

I perceive the source of school violence to be the community where everything is happening in front of us, our fathers beat our mothers, our brothers steal, our aunties swear at our uncles or at each other and our sisters cheat and fight for their boyfriends, so we grew up knowing this is life. When we go to school, they don't encourage us rather looking for opportunities to use us to perpetrate violence under the name of business and earning income to support us. In one incident one community member approached a boy who sells chips in school to sell dagga for him because educators will not see, they will think learners buy chips. (Guava, school A learner focus group)

Participants' responses also support the social learning theory which states that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation and direct instructions (Bandura 1971: 2). The social learning paradigm is organised around three major regulatory systems whereby behaviour is acquired, maintained, and modified. Schools are located within communities where violence is seen as a normal and effective way of communicating. Collins (2013: 31) supports this theory in stating that violence is widely accepted in South Africa and is seen as an appropriate and effective way of regulating interpersonal behaviour. The aforementioned author warns that violence is understood as an essential tool for raising children, a useful disciplinary technique in educational institutions, an acceptable strategy in pursuing sexual encounters, an indispensable resource in intimate relationships and an effective way of establishing social status. Across the board, it is regarded as a useful and effective resource. Learners observe this popular action and through observation their behaviour becomes highly influenced by violence as well (Collins 2013: 31).

According to the stakeholders' targeted model, any intervention being planned or adopted by schools or institutions should aim at helping learners to learn to behave responsibly as members of the society. For example, being able to resolve problems and disputes non-violently, refraining from bullying others and respecting other students and staff. The major aims are to strengthen students' communication skills, power of negotiation and ability to maintain self-discipline – this will in turn, improve students' level of tolerance; assist them with time management, study skills, choice of a career, choice of extra curricula activities, budgeting, leadership, group dynamics, working as a team, gender issues and social problem solving skills in general Akinsona (2010: 659). Akinsona (2010: 659) believes that parents are the agents of primary socialisation and should be a source of support for their children throughout their life span. In traditional African systems, the home constitutes the power house for providing social support during the time of dire need Akinsona (2010: 659). Therefore, the family should collaborate with the school in order to prevent or control school violence.

Learners resisting parents- According to the learners, another cause of the violence epidemic is the lack of parenting skills, as many parents do not tell their children the differences between right and wrong in many situations. Learners insisted that they imitate the violence they observe at home and apply it at schools. Alternatively, educators were worried that in cases where parents do happen to come to school, they side with their children. Some parents know that their children are sexually active and do not worry about it. They do not monitor the whereabouts of their children; children often lie to their parents and say that they are visiting a friend when going to see lover/partners, and parents easily accept it. Some parents advise their children to take contraceptives to avoid unwanted pregnancies. Some parents claim their children behave normally at home, therefore they cannot misbehave at school.

Some parents are very selfish; they neglect their children to fulfil their own individual happiness. Many parents do not even know the grades that their children are getting in school, because they simply do not care. In many cases older siblings are forced to act as parental figures. In some cases, parents get divorced and re-married and then just abandon the children from their first marriage. There are also learners that have never known their responsibilities because they have never been taught their responsibilities. Sometimes educators struggle to supervise a child that has never been supervised in their lives, so trying to implement rules at school creates tension which then leads to conflict, and eventually results in violence. These learners often do not have responsible father or mother figures as role models in their lives.

However, the educators blamed the respective schools for being too understanding and lenient when it came to parent-learner problems. They believe parents should sign a code of conduct and commit themselves to working together with the school. Parents who respond and attend parents' meetings are generally the parents of high achieving learners. Other parents know that their children are problematic and when they are called to school they do not turn up. Educators were also incredibly worried about the language that parents used when talking to their children regarding educators. Educators expressed that parents should learn to respect and talk professionally about educators in their homes, in order to set principles of respect within learners. However, educators also accepted some of the blame for parents' attitudes, as they felt that they did not always act professionally. Some educators do things such as; get drunk within the community, in front of learners, impregnate local learners or join local gangs. They emphasised that educators need to be professional constantly in order to receive the respect that they desire.

We can't keep on going to school, we are working in places where you have to be available for you to get paid - I can't have my salary doted by coming to school because my child has done something wrong. Educators are trained to teach our children and deal with misbehaving learners, it's their job that they are paid for, they are not helping or doing us a favour. Why are they calling us? I can't waste my time I have things to do (Parent, open ended questionnaire).

Sometimes I blame school violence to parents because of two things: firstly, everything that is incorrect in our homes is corrected by violence, they beat us and we thought its ok to do it to another person if you want to correct something, after all they are adults who should lead by example. Secondly, our parents are too busy with different things in their lives hence do not have our time. They should make time for us in order to make us people they were made by their parents. There are so many things that we wish to learn from them. They do not appreciate good from us but shout loud for improper behaviour. We are a lost generation with no one to show us direction and we grasp whatever comes first in our ears as a way of life. (Peach, school A learner focus group)

Culprits are the parents, let them show interest in their children education. Some children from township go to former model C schools (multiracial schools) where they fully cooperate but they don't play an active role in our schools. When you have a problem with a learner, it's easy for a parent to tell you that he is at work or very busy. Parents are very distanced, they dump their children with us here, even in collecting reports they ask neighbours not even family members. Sometimes learners come with drunk uncles or aunties that are hired on the shebeen to pretend to be parents (Ee, school B educator focus group).

According to Pahlad and Graham (2012: 8), there is a strong link between violence in adolescents and poor attachment between parents and children. The nature and style of parenting can be as significant as the child's physical environment. The above authors believe that the influence of parental and familial relationships contributes to school violence as learners imitate the models of behaviour exhibited by their parents or family members. The aforementioned authors also claimed that parents do not care about their child's behaviour until the child has been involved in a serious incident.

Lack of awareness (by parents)- Responses from the parent questionnaire revealed many contradictory views. Most of them approved the use of negative forms of discipline, such as physical punishment to their children, but disapproved of the use of violence. They do not associate physical punishment with violence. They acknowledged that they have a huge responsibility in raising their children and being responsible citizens. Very few believed in talking and counselling children as the majority favoured physical punishment. Those who supported physical punishment said that it had nothing to do with the violent behaviour demonstrated by their children at school or in the community. They see physical punishment as the only way to control the behaviour of a child.

Parent respondents were also worried that children who were raised by single mothers were at a disadvantage when compared to those raised by both parents. They believe children raised by both parents are more disciplined as they know that their fathers can beat them more severely than their mothers. Their

responses support Gasas (2010: 19) who believes that most learners that demonstrate violent behaviour in schools can be traced back to non-nuclear family.

It was obvious from parents' responses that they believed physical punishment to be the most effective discipline method. Educators stated that they believed that the behaviour of learners would change if they were given more love and attention from their parents. One educator explained that she transformed the life of a very rude learner by giving him the love and attention that he didn't receive at home

Our parents are our role models, when they do things we assume they are right and we follow. When they have problems, they smoke heavily or go to taverns and drink and say they release stress. We grew up knowing that if you are stressed, you should smoke and drink in order to be relieved. We are doing exactly like them but they seem worried and I don't know why (Cabbage, school B learner focus group).

According to Erickson (2010: 1), children are like sponges, meaning that they observe everything that a parent does and incorporate what they see into their own lives. It is important that parents set the right examples for their children. Negative examples can be detrimental to a child's development and can lead to bad behaviour Erickson (2010: 1). Children's early life experiences, which are in large part provided by their families, set the stage for how they will develop the ability to think, feel, trust, and relate to others. Particularly during the early years, when children have not fully developed the cognitive ability to understand and interpret their experiences, they are more vulnerable to violence exposure, and their early experiences may have long-term psychological impacts.

Influence of poverty- Most parents and community members emphasised that poverty is a major problem that they are facing as a community. Community members raised the concern that being poor has killed peoples' morality. They referred to cases where parents allow their children to date older people in exchange for financial support, including free groceries. Educators were concerned that most of the learners in these schools come from poor families and therefore harbour anger because of the situations that they are in, they then use substances with the intention to release this frustration. Participants agreed that coming from a poor background sometimes made them over sensitive; if they were involved in minor incidents they often overreacted. Being needy is incredibly complex, sometimes one desperately requires something, but cannot afford it, which eventually pushes them to steal in order to survive. Sometimes these learners want to prove that they are equal to their wealthier peers, so they seek attention by swearing, taking drugs, drinking and using vulgar language. In their minds, they want to gain status by assuming control.

We are worse than what the Bible said when it talks to Sodom and Gomora, we are selling our own flesh and blood for food. We allow older people to sexually abuse our young children to benefit financially. We

perpetrate prostitution to our children. We referred to these perpetrators as our sons in law which is disgusting. I wish I was dead not to witness this disgrace (Nhloso, community member in-depth interview).

A study conducted by Der Merwe (2011: 2) revealed that in South African townships the level of poverty and unemployment amongst the parents of learners is very high. One cannot ignore the fact that with the end of apartheid, and commencement of democracy in 1994, there was a need to redefine the role of youth. The shifts in roles implied that youth no longer played a leading role but rather a peripheral one. The main barrier to this transition was economic inequality; specifically, high rates of poverty, inequality and unemployment, which continue to prevail and push youth to criminal and violent activities. A study conducted by Singh and Steyn (2013: 3) in KwaZulu-Natal schools reveals that poverty, broken homes and poor parenting are key elements that contribute significantly to antisocial learner behaviour

Peer influence- Then various responses showed that peer influence remains a major contributing factor to school violence. Educators, parents and community members complained that children treat their friends like God. No adult opinion supersedes what their friends have said, no matter what. Learner participants clearly explained that their friends drive their lives.

If you are friends, you do the same things. If they bully someone, you do the same to be cool or if they smoke, you also smoke in order to fit in a group. In a group you cope by the rules, you don't argue, question or refuse to do something because you might find yourself in trouble (Chicken, school A learner focus group).

The participants' responses support Burton and Leoschuit (2013: 66) in believing that during adolescence, peers become an increasingly important influence on learners' attitudes and behaviours. In conducting their study, they reported that some learners spent significant amounts of time away from home in order to spend it with delinquent and anti-social peers often involved in drugs-related, sexual or criminal activities.

Love relationships/ romantic relationships- Some participants were convinced that love relationships are also a cause of violence. In cases when couples broke up, they often fought over being dumped or for cheating. Other learners might become aggressive because of the ridicule that they receive for not having a romantic partner. In some love relationships, boys force themselves on girls and end up raping them to prove their manliness. Other boys believe they should beat their girlfriends and that it is within their rights as a man.

We compete with the number of girlfriends we have and strive to have more than our friends. If you do not have a partner because you aimed at finishing your studies first, you look like a fool and everybody pity you. With us, things such as a person should wait for marriage before sex do not exist (Banana, school B learner focus group).



The above response is substantiated by a statement from Bhana (2013: 4) claiming that male learners seek to be seen as brave and have girlfriends in order to be accepted, while girls experience pressure to be sexually active in order to be accepted in a group as real women.

Culture and religion- Culture and religion are the main causes of different views which leads to violence. It was explained earlier that the school A was religiously diverse, but the school had chosen to adopt Christianity in its workings. One educator instructed two learners from the Nazareth Baptist church to cut their hair, when they tried to explain their religion, the educator (a Christian) did not understand and took a pair of scissors to their heads. A few of the parent participants complained about the morning assembly, which only observes Christian prayers. They feel as if their religious and learners' rights have been violated. They revealed their unhappiness because their learners are not given a chance to promote their religions but forced to pretend to be Christians.

Religious and spiritual leaders, such as Martin Luther King, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Mohandas Gandhi, and Mother Teresa, have all tried to put various theologies into practice. Under the leadership of such figures, organisations of faith attempting to transform the world have contributed significantly to social change that aims at correcting injustices. However, intensive activism in the name of religion has also been demonstrated in numerous historical and recent acts of violence, war and terrorism across the world. This description of violent activism in the name of religion is consistent with the assertion that more wars and deaths have been caused by religion than any other institutional force on Earth (Dobrot 2007: 2)

### 6.9.3 COMMON FORMS OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

The responses from 4 focus group discussions, that is 2 groups per school (1 for educators and 1 for learners) formed by 8 participants per group, 40 open-ended questionnaires by parents and 5 in-depth interviews by community members can be found below.

**Table 6.4: Summary on Forms of Violence**

<b>Forms of Violence</b>	<b>Number of Participants Responding on Common Forms of Violence</b>			
	<b>Educator Focus Group</b>	<b>Learner Focus Group</b>	<b>Parents Open Ended Questionnaire</b>	<b>Community Members Interview</b>
Bullying	16	16	38	5
Theft and robbery	15	15	35	5
Substance abuse	16	13	32	5
Sexual violence	14	10	37	2
Vandalism	16	12	30	4

Physical violence	12	10	29	3
Gender-based violence	10	12	12	3
Cyber-bullying	12	15	05	1
Gambling	09	10	10	2
Religion bashing	08	07	09	0

Substance abuse: Substances such as dagga, alcohol and cigarettes are reported to be highly consumed by learners in both schools. 32 parents and 5 community members emphasised their concern that they have noticed learners going to school under the influence of alcohol and drugs. According to parents, drunken and high bullies want to be respected through victimising their children and seemingly they achieve their aim because even educators are now afraid of them. The fact that educators allow these drunk learners to share classrooms with their children means they are afraid of them. They indicated that they are usually made aware by their children that drunk learners abuse them while educators stay in the staffroom. In school A, Guava and Nectarine (learner focus group) showed concern that alcohol is highly consumed, even in cases where there are school events and performances. Substance abusers believe alcohol consumption makes them less shy and more productive in front of an audience. They further indicated that “space muffins” (muffins that include dagga as one of the ingredients) are usually sold on sports days. Learners were worried that educators were aware of the situation, but did very little to tackle the situation. Educators were also worried that “space muffins” were being baked at homes where there were adults present. An educator in school A and a learner in school B divulged the following:

Excessive drug abuse is dominating the school, particularly during break time and sport period. There are so many drug dealers within the school who are working for some community members. This goes back to the issue of irresponsible security guards because during break time, we find learners next to the fence where they pick up drugs that were dropped by community members. Every drug dealer knows his spot to collect the stuff and sell. If security guards were patrolling, they were going to find the stuff prior to drug dealers. In one incident when we were visited by another school for sport, two boys sold space muffins to other learners. Learners were so drunk in such that the girl who ate three muffins had to be taken to the local clinic because she was unconscious. These boys are still here with us as if nothing happened, we did not see or heard any punishment imposed to them by the SMT (Pork, school A educator focus group).

Drugs are so popular in this area and easily availability to learners. The most worrying factor is the behaviour of learners after using them. With boys, most of them disturb classes, arguing with educators, swearing at other learners and not doing class works. It’s worse with girls because they just sleep around with anybody anyhow. This tells us that the issue of teenage pregnancy and the spread of HIV/AIDS is complicated to minimise. Sometimes they buy these drugs and smoke them inside the school toilets so that they can be brave

to do anything wrong they have been thinking of while they were sober (Carrot, school B learner focus group).

According to Ngqela and Lewis (2012: 91), the ready availability of drugs in communities, as well as the high number of adults who are drug addicts further increases the probability of youth involvement in this form of violence. The above participants showed their concern regarding adults influencing learners to become drug dealers. An increase in the relationship between drugs and criminal behaviour is shown through an increase of drug related wife battery and domestic violence cases; abusive relationships, stealing from home to pay for drugs, broken families, prostitution and divorce (Marimuthu 2016: 112). According to a 2008 youth risk behaviour survey by the National Medical Research Council (NMRC) where more than 10 000 pupils in grades 8 – 11, in over 200 public secondary schools countrywide were interviewed, alcohol increases the likelihood of other risky behaviours, such as drug use, exposure to violence and unsafe sexual behaviour (Marimuthu 2016: 112). Alcohol and other drugs of abuse may act on brain mechanisms that cause a high-risk individual to engage in aggressive and violent behaviour (Marimuthu 2016: 112). Participants above were convinced that alcohol abuse and substance abuse are consistently associated with school violence in any form.

Theft and robbery: Community members warned that the issue of stealing needed to be addressed by the entire community because children steal were not only stealing from their schools, but everywhere. They complained that the community encouraged stealing by buying stolen items. Funani (community member in L section, in-depth interview) shared a story where a school boy stole wet clothes hanging on a clothesline in broad daylight, he then sold them in a nearby tavern where people bought them. Cases where learners steal each other's items such as bags, calculators, instruments or even school textbooks are very popular in both schools. However, learners confirmed that they had never heard of any educator stealing from learners, but there were cases of learners stealing from educators. Educators were worried that phenomena of theft and robbery were escalating so much, that learners sometimes even stole items that they had no use for, or couldn't sell. When the matter was discussed, participants responded in the following way:

Some learners are so advanced in stealing ... in one incident, a grade 11 boy bunked a particular period and find an illegal access to boys' hostel where he jumped inside a room that stays an educator. He stole takkies, golf shirts and a tablet, surprisingly someone was waiting for those goods outside the school fence. After everything, the boy went back to class as if nothing was wrong. Security guards did not see or suspect anything as usual but one boy who is a boarder had flu on that day and could not attend classes, he witnessed everything and testified, goods were recovered by the police (Apple, school A learner focus group).

Learners steal everything, sometimes they steal items that are supplied free of charge to them by the school such as stationery. When they steal from us, they do not understand how big is the issue of losing your

property when you explain at home. They impose violence twice to us, the first one is when they steal our properties and the second one is at home when our parents punish us in different ways for being careless and fail to take care of our school properties. We account a lot at homes for losing any property at school (Plum, school A learner focus group).

The issue of stealing has become a norm and a culture for our learners. In one incident we received sealed boxes of exercise books and used learners to offload them from the truck and carry them to one earmarked classroom. They did not know what was inside but knew the room where boxes were kept. They break that classroom at night and steal almost half of the boxes that were supplied. They are so used in stealing in such that anything that is delivered in school has to be stolen. They steal even desks, chairs or any item left outside by learners. As we speak, the school does not have a pole where the South African flag was displayed because they stole it (Bee, school B educator focus group).

To add on what educator 2 has said, in other cases, educators tip learners on what has arrived in school so that they organise to steal it. In one incident new computers arrived very late after all learners have left but educators were still on school attending a staff meeting. They were kept on the computer room; luckily it has barbed wire on the roof to give extra protection. On the same night, people tried to enter and steal them but failed. Everybody was confused about how did they know that computers had arrived? (Cee, school B educator focus group).

According to Erasmus (2015: 1), theft in schools is a major issue with the KZN DoE. During their oversight visits, they have witnessed many schools where the perimeter fencing was non-existent, allowing easy access to criminals to help themselves to school resources. Van Jaarsveld *et al* (2012: 125) explained that it is not only learners' property that is targeted, but school property such as furniture, computers and consumable items too, as it was reported at school B. Cuts in the wire fence at school B allows everyone to have access to school and makes stealing school property very easy.

Vandalism: Vandalism is the act of deliberately damaging property that belongs to other people. It is a rife and major problem in schools. All 5 community members' participants in the in-depth interview complained that learners learn vandalism from adults and made an example of a man who stripped a school fence with his child. Both schools indicated that learners destroy school property such as desks, chairs, tables, chalks, dusters, windows and doors.

Vandalism is a major problem, not only in learners, even with outside people. Here in our school classrooms have no electricity, which was stripped off by criminals. Our learners are guilty also of this vandalism, when they open the classroom doors, they kicked them. They don't care even if they fell down or break. They leave classrooms doors and windows wide open after school, furniture outside and break water taps and windows

now and again. They don't have a culture of taking care of school properties (Mutton, school A educator focus group).

Vandalising is worse here, people who smoke woonga [a common street drug] break and steal all school resources such as classrooms doors, gutters, water taps or windows. They always find illegal access to school looking for something to steal. In one incident, as educators we laughed because someone break the window trying to steal the table but I guess it was too big and impossible to take it out through the window, and resorted to steal the table drawer. They vandalise a big thing to steal a minor item inside (Dee, school B educator focus group).

In many South African communities, vandalism at their schools has become a serious problem that places a heavy burden on educational budgets. Teaching often collapses and, by logical succession, this affects the quality of learning and infringes upon the rights of learners to be taught in an inviting and safe environment. The execution of vandalism at school A led to their environment being perceived and experienced as unsafe and violent. Several educators spoke about the problem of vandalism in school B which disturbed teaching and learning. One educator emphasised that their school is very poor and vandalising what has been obtained with great effort becomes a major problem.

Physical violence: The use of dangerous weapons was identified by both schools as the main issue that required immediate intervention. Parents blamed the high level of fights between learners on gossiping and name calling. Educators and learners from both schools supported each other in saying that learners thought it more effective to solve disagreements with physical fights rather than verbal communication. Learners fight over minor issues such as taking each other's stationary without permission, accidentally bumping into someone else or allegations that another learner is spreading rumours about another learner. Participants in school A admitted that carrying weapons is a necessity because the school is located in a township and because of the weak protective measures at the school. The school environment also appears to be negatively influential as it has unclear and inconsistent rules regarding violence; low levels of school attachment and involvement; and poor relationships between learners and educators. Such conditions have all been shown to enhance the risk of violence within schools (Mncube and Harber 2013: 5). Participants in school B indicated it was a matter of "survival of the fittest" at their school - when gangsters approach the school with any dangerous weapon looking for a learner, educators also fear for their lives and lock themselves in the staffroom, leaving learners outside to fend for themselves. Even after school when they travel back to their homes, they say that there is still a need to protect themselves and therefore they cannot be without weapons. Learners and educators were also concerned about the number of school fights that have fatal consequences.

Most learners engage in physical violence, or bring a weapon to school, in response to previous violent encounters at school. They seem more likely to carry a weapon to school when they have been threatened with it. Some learners may resort to carry weapons and violence as self-protective measures when they do not feel their school is able to protect them (Orange, school A learner focus group).

The majority of fights results from their stories that happen outside the school environment. The worrying factor is that their fights are very dangerous because they carry guns, knives and other dangerous weapons at school. One day on a Monday morning, during the assembly for morning prayers, one boy stood behind the other one, when an educator asked us to close our eyes to recite the Lord's prayer, he stabbed another at the back to retaliate for something that happened while they were at a party the previous Saturday. Fortunately, he did not pass away. Their issues overlap to school and becomes very complicated for educators to intervene because usually they involve many outside contextual factors (Butternut, school B learner focus group).

It was earlier explained that weapons' availability could extend from the community and streets into schools (Mncube and Harber 2013: 5). According to Botha and Myburgh (2013: 2), learners carry weapons to school for different reasons including protection, security, power and status, or to sell them. Mazerolle *et al.* (2011: 5) indicate that some learners engage in physical violence, or bring a weapon to school, in response to previous violent encounters at school. The severity of a learner's violent response also seems to be in accordance with the seriousness of the experience(s) to which the learner is responding. For example, learners seem more likely to carry a weapon to school when they have been threatened with a weapon or miss a large number of school days due to fear. Additionally, Mncube and Harber (2013: 5) suggest that the likelihood of learners responding to violence with violence is influenced by their belief in their school's ability to ensure their safety. Some learners may resort to carrying weapons and violence as self-protective measure when they do not feel their school is able to protect them.

Religion: Religion provides a wide variety of services to local communities including the learners. When conversing with the participants it became apparent that religious indifference was a new, but very common form of school violence.

One violence that has gained popularity recently is the fight over the best religion. The school is characterised with different religious denominations such as Christianity, Nazareth Baptist Church, Hindus and those learners who believe in ancestors, but as a school we only observe Christianity. The issue now is that learners form groups based on their religion which discriminates other learners from different religions. They have these debates about the real religion which usually leads to physical fights. In some cases, it involves outsiders from each religion and become a big issue with lot of misunderstanding and fighting. Currently, there is an ongoing issue which involves Nazareth Baptist Church and Christians and it's so huge such that it can no longer be dealt with at school level but it started here. Christianity is divided into two: one for traditional

churches which are under the guidance of reverends and another one for the born again under the guidance of pastors. Born again usually meet during break time to pray together, now that there is this fraction of tension with Nazareth Baptist Church. When they [born again Christians] pray, the Nazareth Baptist Church unite and sing their songs next to the venue where they are which disturb them. It's a huge misunderstanding (Bacon, school A educator focus group discussion).

Most learners in this school are not involved in religious dominations, you hardly see a learner having a bible. As a school, we don't know their religious dominations, therefore we had never observed any violence from the side of religion. However, there are boys who refuse to cut their hair and trim their beard claiming to belong to Nazareth Baptist Church (Haitch, school B educator focus group).

According to Oliver (2011: 21), the church is perhaps the only institution with the beliefs, literature, liturgy, practices, social structure and authority necessary to rescue people from violence and other deforming features of modern-day life. South Africans cannot claim to be Christians when there is little or no attempt to live according to basic biblical principles of the faith. Olivier (2011: 2) said that the first reformation is about beliefs, the second needs to be about behaviour. Basically, I believe that this means that the spotlight should fall on how to change social behaviour, which is not the case with learners in school A. Learners exposed to different religions should demonstrate practises of each and behave positively. Debating and arguing do not form the basis of any religious belief.

Sexual violence: Sexual violence perpetrators were mostly identified as educators in both schools. All learners complained about cases of rape by educators that are very common, but they go unreported because learners are afraid that educators might victimise them in different ways such as ensuring that the learner repeats the grade. Learners are also sometimes scared to come out and share the victimisation caused by educators because some parents do not believe their children. They even complained about male educators who were sexually molesting young boys. Two boys shared a story of a boy who was sexually abused by a male educator while being transported home after a school trip. Learners were disturbed that educators, as adults who are supposed to be ethical and protect them, were the ones that abused them the most. Educators in school A did not complain much about such violence, however educators in school B expressed their attitudes. Female educators complained about sexual harassment from male educators that often lowered their self-esteem. They expressed that when they deny their proposal to have sex with them, the male educators make them feel as if they are worth nothing. What annoys them the most is that most of these male educators are married adults, but continue to abuse and harass them as young female educators. Learners and parents in school A, made a big deal about sexual violence. In explaining this violence, participants said:

A grade 8 learner got 10% on a certain subject during November examination. A subject educator informed her of this percentage and the learner cried and begged an educator for a second chance, but the educator asked for sex in exchange for inflating marks. The girl desperately agreed in order to proceed to the next grade (Guava, school A learner focus group).

I am the living testimony, recently, I was approached by an educator old enough to be my father to have a love relationship with me. He promised to take care of me and cater for all my financial needs. Because I refused I am now his worst enemy, when punishing learners, I got double punishment, in class he ignored me even if I raised my hand to answer or ask a question. It is now noted by other learners and the class representative asked me about it and I explained, she told my class educator who has called me two days ago to get my side of the story. I am waiting for resolution from my class educator but I suspect it will be worse now that other educators will know what he is capable of. I am disturbed, not only in his subject but my entire grade, meaning I am disturbed in my entire future (Onion, school B learner focus group).

These educators see our learners as sex slaves or prostitute, they have sex with them in return for money. They take advantage of the situation because we are poor. Other learners in this community have children whose fathers are educators, surprisingly they fail to support them, but they have moved on to abuse other learners. These educators are well known by community members and the school but nothing is done to them (Parent, open ended questionnaire).

Smit (2010: 30) states that South Africa reportedly has one of the highest rates of violence against women in the world. Rahim and Liston (2011: 805) worry that sexual harassment and rape are learned by male learners outside the school environment through their families, communities and the media. According to Steinmann (2014: 206) sexual violence occurs in prestigious, pre-dominantly white schools; in impoverished, pre-dominantly black township schools; in schools for people with disabilities and even in primary schools. However, (Burton and Leoschuit 2012: 34) worry that cases of sexual harassment are less frequently reported in schools when compared to other forms of violence. Learners emphasised that most of these cases go unreported because learners are afraid to be victimised by their perpetrators. They further reported that such victims are usually exposed to such incidents at least twice or more. Rahim and Liston (2011: 780) believe that girls are more often the victims of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, even though boys in both schools agree with each other that young boys are sexually abused the same way like girls.

Bullying: According to Venter and Du Plessis (2012: 1), bullying means repeatedly attacking a person psychologically, physically and/or emotionally in order to inflict harm. Learners indicated that bullying is more common when educators are not present, such as, in toilets, during break times, at the tuckshop, at the sports ground and in classrooms (in the absence of an educator).



Cluster bullying dominates the school where a learner asked for an assistance from other learners or outsiders to bully another. One girl from grade 9 had a fight with another in the same class and later called a group of four girls who are her relatives from grade 11 to beat her opponent. They approached the girl and bullied her, later the victim told her relatives in another school who waited for that grade 9 girl outside the school premises and beat her. Grade 9 girl reported at home and her brother waited for perpetrator's relatives to pay revenge. This cluster bullying becomes a recurring thing which involves lot of outside people and violence in school. Cases like this have created groups in this school (Carrot, school B learner focus group).

Bullying is worse in this school anytime when adults are not around such as in tuckshop, sport ground and toilets. Bullies form groups to ensure that no one retaliates for their actions and do as they please. In tuckshop they take our money for their own use and don't follow the queue. It's worse in toilets because we only go there to release ourselves, but they allow us only to pee not to poo claiming they don't have time for our solid waste smell. Sometimes they ask us to watch educators for them. I personally tempted to join one group so that I will be free at school, enjoy my money and do as I pleased (Plum, school A learner focus group).

Mncube and Madikizela- Madiya (2014: 43) warn that innocent learners can become gangsters as a way of gaining a sense of belonging. Gangsters lure learners with false information, which necessitates the need for the implementation of measures by all stakeholders to reduce gangsterism among learners. Bonilla-Mathe (2013: 147) warns that the presence of gang members in schools increases the incidents of victimisation of non-gang members. School A participants clearly explained the victimisation of non-gang members in the school. Educators in both schools identified bullying as one of the main forms of school violence common not only to learners but also to educators too.

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment, such as, cell phones, computers and tablets; as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chatting platforms and websites. Learners from school A spent an extensive amount of time discussing this topic.

Our school has a very bad reputation because of 2015 cyber-bullying video that goes viral in social media showing a group of learners watching while one girl beat another in the dormitory. We still carry this stigma wherever we go and most people referred to us as disrepute learners in such that other parents do not like the school and cannot send their children to learn here (Grape, school A learner focus group).

Our school has a computer laboratory that we used to do projects and other subject related researches. However, we are no longer allowed because of our behaviour as learners. Some of us were using school computers to watch sex movies, send pornography to their friends and their cell phones. The laboratory was not used for its cause and educators decided not to send us there. We are suffering now when we had projects,

worse with us as boarders because we cannot go outside the school premises to find internet café (Guava, school A learner focus group).

Cyber-bullying is clearly defined by Tustin *et al.* (2014: 14), Smith (2015: 1) and Moodley (2012: 539) as a modern form of bullying that is deliberate and repeatedly performed with some kind of electronic text to cause harm. Cyber-bullying does not require physical proximity between a victim and a perpetrator. These violent behaviours can be carried out by means of a cell phone, electronic mail, internet chats and online spaces, such as: YouTube, Facebook and personal blogs. Participants pointed out that since the school is a boarding school, some learners secretly take naked pictures of others and send them to learners of the opposite sex. They made a reference to a girl who was captured in a naked picture (without her knowledge), the picture was then circulated around the school without her consent. A few weeks later her parents removed her from the school because she attempted suicide.

Gender-based violence: This form of violence involves men and women, but with females generally being the target – it is derived from unequal power relationships between men and women (Moodley 2012: 539). This type of violence therefore usually pertains to females (and transgender individuals).

Boys in this school have ancient mentality of being superior to girls. Even in class, they don't want to sweep and labelled it as girls' duty. Boys claim they are stronger, better and smarter than girls. In playing games such as soccer, boys discriminate girls. It's very common for a boy to ask a girl to do something for him such as fetching water for him. This is unacceptable as they will grow with mind-set of inequality which might lead to the abuse of their intimate partners (Beef, school A educator focus group).

Schools are the key sites for the production and reproduction of gender relations and inequalities. In my view, educators perpetrate this masculinity issue, because they separate boys from us, even in assembly we stand in different queues. They create this division even in minor things such as when demanding to know the reason for classrooms to be dirty and not swept, they have never asked boys. Each time they talk, they don't address us as learners rather as boys or girls separately. If they can raise awareness to break down inequitable gender relations maybe discrimination can be reduced (Onion, school B learner focus group).

The issue of gender has established a clear connection between males and school violence. Bhana (2013: 39) sets the scene for an examination of school violence as the monopoly of males. Corporal punishment, learners' violence against educators and the sexual harassment of girls in schools by male educators are some of the reported forms of gender-based violence in schools (Bhana 2013: 39). Learner participants in both schools explain that gender violence is present in these school and perpetrated by the culture of schools. They also believe that educators are contributing towards this disease, and that that needs to be corrected.

**Gambling:** Gambling is to play any game or place a bet in order to gain money or something of value. Participants in school B were very concerned with the habit developed by learners to card games associated with gambling, that in turn might lead to addiction. They were worried that many learners did not understand that gambling addiction is much like alcoholism where someone cannot simply have a single drink and stop. They referred to gambling addicts (who were learners) who were a few rounds of a card game and simply walk away from the table.

One of the learner participants was a self-confessed gambler, and he admitted the following:

At home my parents told me that my grandfather was a gambler playing cards and always win with the queen card. When I started gambling, I won couple of times and I was so sure that I inherited the winning path from my grandfather. Each time I go for gambling I have the winning mentality just like him. Eventually, I started to loose but each time I lose my mind tells me I will win next time. Now I have lost everything, my money, cell phone, some of my clothes but still I don't stop because I am convinced I will win one day. It's very difficult sometimes because it means stealing, begging, cheating and telling lies after another. I wish I can stop but I don't have strength on my own (Tomatoes, school B learner focus group).

The major problem is gambling, these learners play spin or play cards for money and when one group loses its becomes a big fight. In one incident, two groups from grade 9 had a huge fight where one learner was stabbed at the back of an ear with a pen. The fight ended up involving so many learners even from other grades (Eff, school B educator focus group).

The issue of gambling is quite popular in our society, many teenagers try out different gambling activities, including: poker, dice, scratch cards, sports betting and others (Mental Health and Wellbeing 2015). Few adults and adolescents are aware of the risks associated with excessive gambling, which is expressed by a gradual loss of control over gambling behaviour (Mental Health and Wellbeing 2015). The participants in school B expressed that learners as young as grade 9's develop a gambling habit. Educators were worried that there was not much they could do as a school except inform learners on the consequences and the dangers of addiction.

#### **6.9.4 Extent of violence**

Upon discussing the safety of learners and educators in both schools, participants indicated that they felt unsafe within the school environment. Educators and learners at School A indicated that they were concerned about the security guards at their school who were not doing their job, while participants at school B showed concern over not having a security guard at all. Both groups of participants were worried

about the fact that people could get in and out of the school premises as they pleased, without anyone asking them their reasons for visiting the school. Below are some of the participants' elaborations on school safety:

I don't feel safe at all here because people who are supposed to look after the school, the so-called security guards, are not functional. They are supposed to patrol every corner of the school but instead they sit in the gate and greet everyone who enters or leave the school. They don't even register the school visitors. Recently, two people entered the school after break and went to grade 11 block where they entered in one classroom and demanded a cell phone at gunpoint from a lady educator in front of learners. They took it and went through the gate again (Beef, school A educator focus group).

There are so many illegal entrances to the school which give access to anyone who wants to commit crime. Security personnel are just physically present or I can say pictures who are decorating the gate. They don't register people who are entering and leaving the school - as a result drugs and alcohol easily find access to the school. They don't patrol classes or the school, worse if something happens such as physical fight by learners, they just vanish, nowhere to be found. Security guards are so scared of learners, in one incident, learners were making unusual noise and educators informed them, they didn't even try to find out the reason or come closer to the incident, instead they disappeared and left the gate wide open. I am a boarder, so I hang around the school after hours, I was robbed of a phone twice within the school premises where I am supposed to be protected (Banana, school A learner focus group).

We don't feel safe here because the school is located in the well-known dangerous section. It's worse if learners are not in school, especially after examination times when they are no longer coming to school because we feel safe if they are around us. They know the thugs for the area and some of them are also hooligans so by being around they are protecting us because nobody can enter the school premises. They are well known dangerous hooligans because of the horrible criminal offences they commit (Ay, school B educator focus group).

Learners don't feel safe because the school does not have the security guard. The school is surrounded by violent people and drug dealers where shooting and stabbing each other is done in front of everyone on a daylight. Criminals cut the fence, so anyone can enter the school (Spinach, school B learner focus group).

According to Gina and White (2014: 57), security refers to the actions taken to make people or places safe. A safe and secure school is one in which its' inhabitants are physically and psychologically safe; it is further characterised by good discipline, a culture conducive to teaching and learning, professional educator conduct, good governance and management practices, as well as the absence of crime and violence. The KZN DoE has revealed, through KZN parliamentary questioning, that nearly half of all provincial schools have no security personnel (Erasmus 2015: 1). In the absence of a security guard, these schools become an even greater soft target (Erasmus 2015: 1). This is true with regard to school B where there is no security

and no protection at all levels. However, findings indicated that even schools that have security guards are unsafe due to the lack of competency to perform the job (Erasmus 2015: 1). This author explains competency as knowledge, capabilities, behaviour or attitudes that embody outstanding performance in a specific context. According to the participants in this study, the lack of competency demonstrated by the security guards at school A has allowed school violence to escalate. Their lack of competency and diminished ability to perform their jobs compromises the safety of learners and educators within the school environment.

Parents, community members, learners and educators reported that school violence involves different role-players at different times, such as: learners bullying each other, educators bullying each other, educators bullying learners, learners bullying educators or parents bullying educators.

Educator behaviour: Parents and learners in school A confirmed that the school does not use corporal punishment or any form of bullying such as swearing at learners by educators. However, learners indicated that there are educators who propose love relationships or ask them for sex, as earlier mentioned by a participant.

A series of school violence related problems and incidences were revealed by participants from school B.

Learners and educators are violently equally. If I bully a learner in class and reported to the educator, he will beat me in the staffroom. So its violence for violence in this school. The language we all understand and talk is beating each other. I would like to make a difference between punishment and beating. Punishment is used positively with the intention of correcting a mistake but beating is used negatively like a fight with the intention to harm or hurt. With this school it's not punishment but beating, however, we are used to this violence now which does not transform us instead make us worse. Let them beat us we don't care (Potatoes, school B learner focus group).

The issue of violence is so much here, in one incident in 2015, two boys who are drug addicts run around like crazy in the morning assembly, swearing at educators very bad. They learned from them because our educators swear at us anyhow, anywhere. It can be in class, assembly, in the morning by the gate when they beat us for late coming or calling us to the staffroom where they will be supported by their colleagues. As learners, we know that if you are called in the staffroom there are two options either swearing at you or be beaten but we have developed to be stubborn and don't care, after all we are used to that now (Butternut, school B learner focus group).

We know that educators punish learners for coming late to school as it starts at 7:00am, but what had disturbed me the most is when I had to take my child to clinic because an educator insisted on beating her on the bums

despite explaining to him that he had a tumour. She was in severe pain and an educator did not care (Parent, open ended questionnaire).

In discussing corporal punishment with educators at school B, the matter raised a lot of emotions very high. In the entire group of eight educators only two were against it. The discussion lasted longer than expected because they all explained their beliefs.

We are guilty as charged, we do shout and embarrass them because after the abolishment of corporal punishment, we were not given an alternative to discipline learners. In our Zulu culture we beat children like we are supposed to do as parents. The bible condones the hitting of a child. Let me make one thing clear here: punishing learners is not a first option but we resort to corporal punishment as a way out of the situation if they repeatedly not listening to us. I came here to teach not as a soldier to shoot and kill learners but if they don't adhere to my strategies, they force me to corporal punishment (Dee, school B educator focus group).

The majority agreed that sometimes a learner abuses an educator which, in turn, forces them to throw back harmful words in retaliation. There are cases when a single learner disturbs an entire class, and that is usually when punishment is administered. They believe learners respect educators who use corporal punishment. Educators who are against corporal punishment argue that it is a temporary solution; they claim that you can beat a learner for the same thing repeatedly, but once the pain is gone, the learner goes back to performing that condemned action again. Nevertheless, they all agreed that they repeatedly advise learners about acceptable behaviour. The English educators supported each other in saying that when grade 10 and 11 learners were debating about corporal punishment, the majority supported corporal punishment and those that were against were those who were involved in some kind of illegal activity. They used the analogy of a child crawling next to the stove and intentionally letting him burn [as a parent/guardian] in order to teach him a lesson, to describe the effect of corporal punishment on learners. Educators against corporal punishment warned that sometimes learners retaliated, they then referred to an incident where a learner and educator had a physical fight in class.

However, all educators agreed that sometimes when they called parents to discuss the problem of learner behaviour, the parents did not respond. Educators blame the DoE for not informing them of disciplinary measures acceptable to replace corporal punishment. Several parents expressed their dissatisfaction with some of the educators' conduct, claiming that they continue to use corporal punishment. However, in some cases parents use this conduct to bribe educators, by threatening to report the teacher to the DoE or police. The educators participating in this study agreed with this and recounted incidences where parents blackmailed teachers who had punished their kid, in order to gain money.

Burton and Leoschut (2013: 29) discovered that educators are sometimes perpetrators of school violence against learners. A total of 28.1% of principals had cases reported at their schools where educators had verbally abused learners and 14% had cases of physical violence against learners by educators brought to their attention. The study provides evidence that indicates the continued use of physical punishment within South African schools as a means of effecting discipline, despite its legal abolishment.

In discussing educators' behaviour towards each other, they did not explain it in many words, yet their body language made it clear that there were problems that existed between staff.

Eff responded like this:

It's a "cold war" between educators but we compromise because of maturity and professionalism (Eff, school B educator focus group).

Learner behaviour: Educators at school B expressed that certain female learners felt the need to compete with female educators for the attention of male educators. They even felt offended when male and female educators were talking to each other – this is apparently the reason why certain female learners get hairstyles, manicures and makeup like the female educators. In doing all of this they often pretend to be the victims when they are caught out. Female educators also expressed concern over the sexual harassment they receive from boys when they wear skinny jeans, mini-skirts or dresses. One of the female educators in the group claims that a boy once complimented her and expressed his wish to "have" her the entire night – nevertheless, the educator pretended as if it were an acceptable joke in order to avoid confrontation. Cases of confrontation between learners and educators were reported as very rare in both schools. Educators in school A stated that learners are more violent towards each other than they are toward educators. Nonetheless educators were still worried about the increasing amount of anger that existed in learners.

We are dealing with a very angry society; maybe he or she may have been in the same grade for three years then he ended up being confused, don't know exactly why he was here and sometimes the anger also comes, not only is he angry to other learners he may also be angry on educators as well. Sometimes their circumstances make them to be angry for parents, community, themselves, situation and environment because nobody ever showed love and care for them. These learners are not valued by anyone; they grew up on their own to take care for themselves. Some have to feed and dress themselves. When we punish them we make them worse since they are used in the abuse by people who are supposed to love and protect them. As educators we are faced with huge societal problem because parents are not there in their children's lives to take their roles and responsibilities (Beef, school A educator focus group).

Some participants indicated that the influence of the media was a major contributor to bad learner behaviour.

Media plays a very big role in perpetrating violence because as young generation we spend most of our time watching television, where sometimes we see the wrong things and copy them. Learners watch movies particularly action where they adore their favourite actors. They believe the role played by starring is real and can be followed. They practised what is played on television in real life (Grape, school A learner focus group).

#### **6.9.5 Consequences of school violence**

Participants pointed out the negative impact of school violence on learners, educators, parents, the education system and the community at large. When the impact of school violence was discussed, all participants were very emotional and referred to previous incidents that they had encountered. They were worried about the number of physical incidents which lead to injuries or even death; and psychological incidents such as high rate of school drop-out, poor results, low self-esteem which often results in poor learner-to-learner relationship, stress and depression. Parent participants were worried about the proximity of alcohol distributors to the respective schools; school A is located a mere 500 m away from a tavern and school B 1 km away from a club. Most parents blame the loss of their children's lives (literally and figuratively) on the owners of taverns and clubs who sell alcohol and drugs to learners even when wearing a school uniform. They linked the problem of school violence with unruly behaviour demonstrated by clients in taverns and clubs.

Physical implications: Educators and parents blamed learners for exposing themselves to abusive relationships in school. They were worried that girls were beaten, punched and kicked by boys under the name of love. These young girls got injured but refused to speak out in order to protect their so-called lovers. There was a concern by community members about gangsters who intimidate educators to push their children through to the next grade, however, none of the educator participants supported these allegations. Learner participants believed that malicious physical actions from both learners and educators could result in loss of children's lives

I can't count the number of injuries or death within or outside school premises. In 2013, a school boy was killed next to the school gate but the case was not followed by the school because he was outside school boundaries. Almost everyday learners fight with each other whether reported or not. In most cases, girls are the victims of their boyfriends because boys believe it's within their rights to beat their partners. They rarely communicate peacefully to solve a problem. Surprisingly, it's not only learners who perpetrate violence, even educators sometimes do the same. In one school here at Umlazi, one boy died because he came late to school and an educator beat him with a pipe and he tried to run away, unfortunately he fell off the stairs and died but the story was changed to protect the educator. School violence has resulted in many cases of murder, others shelved to protect perpetrators (Banana, school A learner focus group).



I can't recall the year, but a grade 12 boy was arrested in this school for raping a girl in class after school hours. They were reported to be allegedly studying when the incident happened. The boy is still serving the sentence in prison. In another incident, a grade 9 learner violently stabbed another with a pair of scissors they used in creative arts subject. Really, this violence pandemic has a long serious effects in learners' lives (Cee, school B educator focus group).

Carroll-Lind *et al.* (2011: 9) define physical violence as being punched, kicked, beaten, hit or getting into a physical fight, such as a punch-up.

Sifo and Masango (2014: 1) believe that the effects of physical abuse can be both acute and far reaching. These authors explain that the immediate effect of physical abuse may be a bruise or a cut that can be treated by physicians or health providers, but the long-term effect may be as drastic as PTSD. Porter (2000 cited in Smith 2010: 68) warns that the possible side-effects of physical violence interlink with psychological effects. These side effects are accident-proneness, suicidal tendencies, neurosis, low self-esteem, shyness, poor peer relationships, increased anxiety and poor relationships with adults.

Psychological implications: Most participants agreed that school violence discourages children from attending school and parents from sending their children to school. School violence can lead to high absenteeism in learners and educators. Educators and learners have different perceptions of psychological implications. Educators feel as if they are the victims of the learners and parents, whereas learners feel as if they are the victims of educators. Educators link their high levels of stress and depression with the violent behaviour of learners which they face on daily basis. Learners see their poor performance and high rate of school dropout as a result of poor relationships with educators.

This tension between learners and educators increases the rate of school dropout because we are scared in this school. We are scared of other learners and educators as well. Educators beat us like animals and some hold grudges with learners and fail them at the end of the year, even though they deserve to pass. If a learner had a misunderstanding with an educator, they tell them that they will fail at the end of the year. Even if the learner tries to change during the course of the year, they claim it's too late for him to pass. The most painful exercise is when educators promote their favourites to the next grade even if they failed. Learners who date educators know that they don't need to study because they always pass (Spinach, school B learner focus group).

Educators who have sex with learners deprive the right for learners to learn. Learners are afraid to approach them and ask questions because they might ask for sex and if they refuse become victims. Even learners who have sex with educators, they are denied their right to be free in class because they don't ask anything, they keep on recalling what they normally do in bedroom which makes the learner to fail at the end of the year. Other incidents are worse as they lead to suicide, other learners take their lives if educators raped them. For a learner, it's very difficult to speak out about rape because no one believes you. Friends, parents and relatives

blame you for lying about being raped by an educator, so a learner might see suicide as a solution (Apple, school A learner focus group).

The hatred is too much between learners and educators and sometimes you feel as a person that you are tired of this battle. Learners do not want to listen yet the DoE make us accountable with our lives for their safety at school. We are always stressed and other educators are depressed because of this learner behaviour. The majority of us wish to quit education system, but don't have other jobs (Salam, school A educator focus group).

Mkhize *et al.* (2011: 40) indicate the experiences of violence by young people are likely to result in a plethora of psychological conditions that are chronic in nature. Similarly, Singh (2014: 84) states that learners with violent behaviour tend to experience low self-esteem and PTSD. Van der Westhuizen and Maree (2010: 6) and Steffgen (2007: 82) reveal that school violence results in educators suffering from negative developmental outcomes, including a decrease in academic achievements, less supportive interpersonal relationships and withdrawal from society. The above authors believe that the degree of violence against educators has even led to the rise of "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. Educators experience a range of emotional reactions in response to learners' behaviour. Case (2011: 30) reveals that exposure of educators to school violence results in serious long-standing physical, emotional and psychological implications including distress, reduced self-esteem, risk of depression and suicide. Some educators suffer from high levels of stress and depression (Steffgen 2007: 82).

Damage to the education system: Participants supported each other in saying that school violence destroys the education system. They perceive the future of learners as depending equally to their academic achievements and the level of violence in schools. Violence damages the culture of teaching and learning within the school premises.

Poor results are the most common effect of this problem because learners get traumatised and fail to concentrate in class. This results to high rate of school dropout because learners are scared of perpetrators in school. Sometimes learners change streams which divert their future career because of being harassed by educators. In this school learners and educators are equally violent (Onions, school B learner focus group).

Violence downgrade the country when compared to world countries because we are judged by our level of education but now the pass rate is very low which lowers our standard and dignity (Tomatoes, school B learner focus group).

One of the best-documented facts about antisocial and violent learners is that they do not perform well at school (Bester and Du Plessis 2010: 215). Learners with poor academic skills become frustrated, lose academic motivation and as a result, eventually resort to antisocial and violent behaviour (Bester and Du Plessis 2010: 215). As they constantly experience failure, violent learners become envious of their peers' success and as a result they become easily bored, disrupt lessons, play truant, join deviant peers, harass other students and become delinquents (Singh 2014: 84). A study conducted by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013: 6) on both educators and learners reveals that the majority of learners who experience or witness incidents of violence may become depressed and this may affect their ability to learn in a negative manner. The study found that 72.2% learners reported that they lost concentration because they were afraid of what the perpetrators would do to them during break time or after school.

Societal breakdown: Banana, Broccoli and Bacon in focus groups discussions expressed that school violence had divided the society into 3 groups: those who perpetrate violence, those who fight against school violence and lastly, those who support school violence in different ways, such as those that buy stolen items.

It brings down the country's economy because learners fail to obtain grade 12 certificates which makes it very difficult for them to find proper and decent jobs. Those who fail to finish school want the government to give them everything. If they don't find them they burn schools, libraries, tires on the road and vandalise public goods. It's all start in being a failure in school. They complain about unavailability of jobs yet they don't have qualifications (Banana, school A learner focus group).

Teenage pregnancy becomes very high as is the case with our school. This creates dependency syndrome because learners get pregnant to receive social grants. They do not count the number of children but amount to receive with a certain number of them. This is a big threat to our society because it spreads HIV/AIDS (Broccoli, school B learner focus group).

The community that children grow up in has a profound effect on the adult they become. Exposure to violence is among detrimental experiences children can have, impacting how they think, feel and act. Children who experience violence are more likely to become ensnared in a cycle of violence that leads to future violent behaviour including aggression, violent crime and child abuse (Bacon, school A educator focus group).

The effects of school violence in society are numerous, they range from loss of lives, to the displacement of people from increasing tensions inter-community relations and the development of a violent culture (Tambawal 2012: 5). The phenomenon produces general aggressive behaviour in the society. The incident of one form of violence in society can lead to another. Many children who are physically abused in the society have the greater tendency of being involved in violent crimes during adulthood and later on in life

(Tambawal 2012: 5). According to Duy (2013: 988), children who grew up in a family or society where there is violence often become violent themselves; when parents, school authorities and societal members become frustrated by these learners' behaviour and try to curtail it, these learners may either leave home or drop out of school. These children are likely to be drug abusers as well as react violently in their relationships later on in life (Duy 2013: 988).

## **6.10 CONCLUSION**

School A and school B are both public high schools, however they are different in terms of physical and human resources. The DoE stipulates the required resources for a public high school, however, in comparing two schools, it transpired that school A has more resources than school B. Educational spaces such as classrooms, laboratories and libraries were analysed and compared, however, school B does not have laboratories and a library. It was noted that most of the classrooms were severely vandalised. Administration spaces such as offices, staffrooms and other rooms in the administration block were explained and compared, however, school B does not have an administration block, but only two free standing offices. Supporting resources such as food gardens, nutrition centres, tuckshops, sport grounds, water, electricity, sanitation and security were described; it transpired that most bullying occurs in within or regarding these supporting spaces areas. Human resources, interaction settings and programme settings were also analysed and compared. The environment where both schools are located played a role in the violent behaviour of the learners, and high level of theft and vandalism in school. This study discovered that unequal distribution of resources does not impact on the level of violence demonstrated by stakeholders. Learners' mind set is not influenced by the availability of resources in their school.

Participants pointed out environmental influences, learners resisting parents' instructions, influence of poverty, peer influence, love relationships, culture and religion as the main causes of school violence. Substance abuse, theft and robbery, vandalism, physical violence, different religions, sexual violence, bullying, gender-based violence and gambling were identified as common forms of violence. Participants also emphasised that both educator and learner behaviour resulted in school violence.

The findings of this study are similar to those of Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 94, and Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 4); with stated that school violence resulted in a range of issues, such as anger, hopelessness, unwillingness to report sexual abuse, the negative coping mechanism, and damage to educators and learners. Learner participants in both schools showed concern regarding the number of unreported cases of sexual violence, with female learners often feeling helpless. Educator participants in school B stressed that female educators also experience sexual harassments from both male learners and educators. All learner

participants from both schools indicated that perpetrators copy violence from each other. The negative effects of school violence were uniformly confirmed by all participants of the study

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter focused on the findings and discussions for both schools, and the environments where the schools are located. This chapter evaluated the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of violence reduction strategies implemented by schools and the DoE. I also evaluated the execution of the Cure Violence model at Vukuzakhe High School. The motive to implement Cure Violence is discussed, its success and challenges are highlighted and the way forward is presented in this chapter. The effectiveness of the model in South African schools is also evaluated. Although I worked extensively with the WC and SPE groups during my stay at the school, they still continued with the use of the Cure Violence model once I was gone. In this chapter, I also explore the case studies of the individuals that the WC and SPE groups regarded as high risk once I had left the school (on a full-time basis). During my follow up visits, to catch-up, they shared the news and the details of different cases they had attended to. Out of all cases, four major ones were recorded and the WC and SPE groups used the Cure Violence model to diagnose, mediate and treat these cases.

#### **7.2 VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGIES BY SCHOOLS**

In collaboration with the DoE, schools should support and implement violence reduction strategies. In addition, they are also bound to develop and implement their own strategies; educators and learners should be familiar with guides from the South African Schools Act and the Code of Professional Ethics. These two documents remain critical components of the school in terms of learner and educator behaviour. As stipulated in Section 8 of the South African Schools' Act no. 84 of 1996, the learner code of conduct spells out the rules regarding learner behaviour at the school and describes the disciplinary system to be implemented by the school concerning transgressions by learners. The Code of Professional Ethics is a framework that guides educators to act in a proper and becoming way, such that their behaviour does not bring the teaching profession into disrepute (SACE 2011: 12). They should avoid any form of humiliation and refrain from any form of abuse (physically or psychological). In addition, each school should devise a plan to work with support structures outside of the school to assist the victims of violence. In an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies to reduce school violence, the following prevailed:

##### **7.2.1 SCHOOL A**

Learners' code of conduct: Both educators and learners affirmed that they had seen the learners' code of conduct given to all learners to be signed their parents. However, educators had two concerns. Firstly, the

code of conduct was supposed to be discussed and adopted by the SGB – the panel of educators, learners and parents - who present it at parents’ meeting for approval – but it was presented. Secondly, the learners’ code of conduct was supposed to be written in the learners’ home language in order for parents to clearly understand the message communicated before signing – which again, this was not done. Neither of the above processes took place, instead the school principal came with a ready-made learners’ code of conduct to be issued by class managers to learners. They claimed that no stakeholder was involved in its formulation, hence, learners were not even aware of its significance, let alone being able to abide to it. Learners claimed class managers did not clarify the motive of providing this code, therefore abiding to it seemed “sort of optional”. Most parents did not understand it; hence they did not bother to sign it. The school principal admitted that even though the code of conduct was issued to learners, very few learners returned them but the principal seemed unsure of the reason for this. Lack of communication and cooperation between the principal and educators jeopardises the good intentions of implementing such tool.

Educators’ Code of Professional Ethics: As discussed in Chapter 6, educators, learners, parents and community members complained about the sexual abuse that educators constantly demonstrate with no shame. Burger (educator focus group), a senior educator at a school, raised concerned about the SACE as a body that regulates educators’ behaviour. She based her argument on two facts: firstly, she seemed unsatisfied with the way educators joined the SACE. Educators simply fill in a registration form and pay registration fee in order to be registered members with SACE certificate, there is no formal training on the purpose of being a member of the organisation. For some, their objective is merely to obtain a SACE number that will enable them to be recognised as educators. Secondly, when the SACE was introduced in 1999, they conducted workshops for all educators, and gave out files which stipulated expected educator behaviour with all stakeholders. They carried on with training workshops until 2003. Those who were employed after 2003 were not trained and did not receive files. Currently, they train SMT members to disseminate the information to educators, however, with this method, the availability of accurate information is no longer guaranteed. She viewed the above as having an impact on the negative behaviour portrayed by young educators in the profession, as they do not know acceptable and unacceptable educator behaviours. She expressed her wish to see the SACE really developing educators, especially since educators pay a monthly membership fee. Beef (educator focus group) complained that the SACE is one-sided, as they have never heard of an intervention for learner on educator abuse, however, they are very quick to charge educators for their abuses. The principal (who is a SMT member) assured me that educators have all the workshop information from the SACE. She showed me minutes indicating different dates where SMT engaged educators about the Code of Professional Ethics. She was convinced that any dysfunctional behaviour or abuse perpetrated by educators in the school was intentional.

SSC: The school has a functional SSC with a clear policy and minutes of cases attended to. It is composed of learners, educators, SGB members, security personnel, SAPS, social worker, local ward councillor and the CPF. The SSC policy, evidence of cases attended to and other relevant information are neatly organised in a file that is kept in the strong room. The principal explained that even though the committee is available there are no scheduled dates for meetings. Meetings are determined by the urgency and needs of an incident. The principal identified that one of the major challenges of the SSC is the unavailability of committee members when they are needed. Minutes indicated that there was no single meeting where all of the members were collectively present. She further explained that the existence of such a committee at a school is monitored by DoE officials.

Speak Out handbook: In addition to above the strategies, the principal showed me a handbook called *Speak Out*. This handbook explains in detail what constitutes sexual harassment. It assists learners to handle sexual abuse and stipulates steps to be followed in the case of an abuse. A list of useful contacts is provided to connect the victim to specialised people who can assist them. Educators and learners affirmed that they had seen the handbook, but it has not been individually issued to learners since its last supply in 2010. However, the school makes copies of the important information and pastes it in each class for easy access for everyone.

The three-part structure: Educators and learners disclosed that the school has a three-part structure (the SPEs, the school councillor and the NGO, Star for Life) that attends to the social problems of learners, including any form of abuse. The school councillor and social worker from Star for Life give counselling to those learners who disclose different challenges. However, they were worried about the lack of cooperation from the learners that are affected by those challenges.

Sober Jammers: This programme was introduced by the school to assist drug addicted learners who intended to stop taking drugs. The programme encouraged drug addicts to communicate with the school councillor, the social worker from Star for Life or anyone they could trust within the school in order to be assisted. The main aim of the programme was to determine the extent of learner drug abuse and where necessary refer them to the rehabilitation centre for help. However, they indicated that in the entire programme which took three years, only four learners admitted to being drug addicts and were referred to the rehabilitation centre. Of the four, only one completed the entire rehabilitation centre programme. They viewed the programme as unsuccessful as their intention was to assist learners to complete their high school education, and to use them as ambassadors of drugs and alcohol awareness campaigns by sharing their stories with other learners.



### **7.2.2 SCHOOL B**

Learner code of conduct: Educators and learners are convinced that there is no tool called the Code of Conduct and claimed not to be aware of what it is supposed to address. When discussing with the school principal, he showed me a copy of the code of conduct which was clearly translated into Isizulu, but pointed to the lack of time and resources as a barrier in communicating and distributing it to educators and learners. He complained about his busy schedule and stressed that the school is under-resourced with minimal photocopying paper, machines and ink. However, he denied that educators did not know that the tool existed, but agreed that it was not yet functional in the school. This major tool, which is regarded by the DoE as the first weapon to fight school violence, is not yet utilized in the school.

Educators' Code of Professional Ethics: Educators agreed that the SMT conduct workshops and hand in circulars and other relevant information from the SACE workshops. No educator complained about the lack or inaccuracy of information from SMT, therefore, they knew which behaviour was acceptable or not. However, they seemed dissatisfied with the service they got from the SACE, claiming the organisation is a fault-finder. They were worried that they did not get recognition for their good behaviour but were watched like prisoners for any possible misbehaviour.

SSC: The principal showed me the names and positions of people in the committee, but there was no evidence of meetings or issues attended to. Their names are kept in a file with other documents referred to as "school documents". According to Haith (school B educator focus group) who is a committee member elected on grounds of seniority, the committee has no policy, meetings or minutes. They do not meet, even if there is a case that compromises the safety and security of educators and learners at school. All safety and security issues are addressed by the school principal, he invites the SGB depending on the severity of the case. There was no evidence of the functioning of the committee.

Motivation: One strategy mentioned by the principal was to rely on motivational talks by educators during morning assemblies. Educators take turns in advising learners on different social problems that might lead to violence. He mentioned that other educators quote from the Bible whilst others came with nice phrases from the internet, or any source. He was confident that their strategy helps the learners who wish to listen and be helped.

### **7.2.3 Specialised support services**

It was mentioned in Chapter 3 that in addition to school violence reduction strategies, schools should make contacts and work with support structures outside of their school to ensure that victims are referred to institutions where they will be helped. These services are applicable to major incidents of crime such as

murder and sexual abuse. Both schools in the study have contacts with medico-legal services, therapeutic services, court preparation and legal services. Their contact numbers and persons are written down in each school. In cases where the abuse prevails they follow the following steps:

- Medico-legal services: They contact a school nurse in a local clinic to visit the school. The nurse advises of all health procedures such as the collection and recording of medical evidence for the criminal justice system. It becomes the responsibility of the nurse and a parent (where possible) to proceed the case to a hospital.
- Therapeutic service: School A uses the Star for Life social worker and school B consults the local social worker to organise counselling and trauma support. The school B principal reported that sometimes he contacts Childline depending on the nature and the age of a victim.
- Court preparation and legal services: Both schools contact the SAPS to assist victims with legal steps, such as opening cases and arranging legal assistance for court preparation. Principals are grateful that schools are working in collaboration with the Department of Health and SAPS. Each school is allocated a nurse and a police officer to look after the affairs of the school.

### **7.3 VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGIES BY THE DoE**

Five school specific services, devised by the DoE, were explored in the study, namely: *Stop Rape*; school based crime prevention; management of physical violence; *Opening Our Eyes* and National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug Used Amongst Learners in School. However, after a long discussion with participants in both schools about the effectiveness of these programmes, the following was revealed.

Stop Rape: Educators all agreed that the programme was launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2013. They called a special assembly at 8 a.m. to sing the national anthem and chosen learners delivered a speech on rape and sexual crimes. On that day, learners were encouraged to report any form of abuse which happened within or outside the school premises. In addition, learners adopted a pledge on school violence and crime. However, neither of the schools prepared worksheets to be completed by learners and their families as suggested by DoE. Nevertheless, educators criticised this violence reduction strategy as one without a purpose and significance. They complained that it only took 30 minutes in one day and nothing after. Only one learner participant, Grape (school A learner focus group) seemed to remember the launch of *Stop Rape*, but claimed that there was nothing new about this intervention because learners know that sexual harassment is a crime. According to her, the strategy did not prevent boys from sexually harassing females, or assist girls to be brave enough to report it such crimes.

School based crime prevention: This strategy supports the partnership between the school and the SAPS to respond to cases of school violence. This strategy seems to be effective in both schools and was highly applauded by principals, educators and learners. They all agreed that SAPS responded to school violence, nevertheless, there were times where they took long to respond but eventually they did come. Sometimes they come to school unannounced for random check-up of drugs, alcohol and weapons. They also address learners on the consequences of committing violence, such as going to jail. This strategy was reported by all as very effective.

Management of physical violence: This violence reduction strategy revolves around a joint effort from all stakeholders to fight school violence. It was discussed in Chapter 3 that educators are expected to be alert and not to turn a blind eye on violence. They should be with learners during break times or in sports periods to defuse violence and identify potentially violent situations. Educators are also encouraged to teach conflict resolutions and anger management skills. Parents are encouraged to take the initiative in their learners' safety and remain role models to their children. During discussions with the principals of both schools, they indicated that educators should supervise learners at all times, even during break times. Both schools showed me their duty roster indicating how educators are supposed to take turns in supervising learners. However, both principals revealed that educators reject this policy. I further enquired about the consequences of defying a policy and they did not have anything as yet. In discussing this matter with educators, they revealed that they are workers and entitled to have a lunch hour at work. They claimed that it becomes too much to take their only break and supervise learners, because they also use it to eat. They admitted to not teaching conflict resolution skills and anger management as they claimed there was no time set aside for these items. They revealed that their subjects' annual teaching plans were tight, and that there was no way to deviate and teach something else. Learners agreed with both principals acknowledging that they are not supervised outside their classrooms and that they are not taught anything apart from their subjects. The implementation of this policy is not currently successful.

Opening Our Eyes and National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Amongst Learners in School: These two strategies were unknown by the principals, educator and learners. The *Opening Our Eyes* strategy is reported to have been introduced to instruct educators on how to become change agents and create the sort of environment which supports the healing processes in response to trauma. The *National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Amongst Learners in School* was introduced to create safe learning environment that contributes towards quality education. They are both documented in DoE (2011: 116) and DoE (2013: iv) respectively.

According to Chicken (school A educator focus group), there are two other approaches (War Room and Dealing with Substance Abuse) that I did not come across in my literature review. These programmes were implemented by the DoE in an attempt to improve efficiency within government departments and fight drug abuse in schools. The educator explained that War Room was a platform where different stakeholders such as the SAPS, local councillors, traditional leaders, Home Affairs and religions could meet to discuss issues that disturb teaching and learning, including school violence. She further explained that Dealing with Substance Abuse was a policy received by a school on how to deal with substance abuse. She didn't dwell much on it as she claimed it was not unpacked and it was still only functional on paper.

Out of the five school violence reduction programmes, only one (school based crime prevention) strategy seemed to be well known by all participants and fully functional in both schools. Learners in both schools showed no understanding of the other four violence reduction strategies and approaches. Educators seemed to know of Stop Rape and the management of physical violence strategies, although they admitted that they were non-functional and did not serve any purpose. They boldly indicated that the other two programmes (Opening Our Eyes and National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Amongst Learners in School) were not active in their schools and they knew nothing about them. They supported Chicken (school A educator) in saying that they had heard of War Room and Dealing with Substance Abuse. However, they emphasised that they were non-functional. All they understood was that the documents were safe should the DoE need them one day.

Five educator participants in school A (Salam, Pork, Mutton, Burger and Vienna) believed that there were no programmes that could reduce school violence except corporal punishment. Their belief concurs with all of the educator participants from school B who believe that punitive measures solve school violence. For generations, South African schools have adopted punitive approaches as the most appropriate strategies in dealing with misbehaviour (Jansen and Matla 2011: 85). The main focus of this approach is to determine what rule was broken, who is to blame, and what the punishment is going to be (Jansen and Matla 2011: 85). Educator participants in this study reminisce of the years when they were young, and recalled how corporal punishment shaped their lives and brought them to where they are today. Beef (school A educator focus group) shared that if it was not for corporal punishment she would have left school in Grade 4 because she hated an educator who taught her Geography. The HRM 1 of 2017 emphasises the abolishment of corporal punishment, but these schools continue to favour it. According to the DoE (2000: 9), there are educators who believe that corporal punishment is wrong, but they do not always know what to use in its place.

Strategies to reduce school violence were introduced as early as 2001, but even in the year 2018 the problem still exists. After discussions with all stakeholders it transpired that the only tools that they know of to correct behaviour are punitive measures. Therefore, the implementation of corrective and restorative measures was necessary to change their mind-set, and to positively influence the behaviour of learners. Educators should be guided to use constructive, positive discipline instead of punitive or punishment-oriented discipline. A commitment from educators to encourage positive discipline with the underlying values and attitudes of peace, tolerance, respect, dignity and human rights is central to the behavioural change of learners (DoE 2000: 10). This study concurs with the DoE that encouragement of the use of restorative justice to cure violent learners would be effective.

After careful analysis of the data collected from all participants, I realised that there are times when stakeholders perpetrate violence unintentionally because they do not understand what constitutes violence. I decided to implement the Cure Violence model in order to introduce concepts such understanding violence, conflicts and conflict resolutions, humanity, anger, negotiations, love, peace and harmony, to mention a few key concepts. The motive for this was to educate all stakeholders that violence is spread from one person to another, therefore it needs to be cured before infecting many people. I implemented the model with a positive attitude, believing that peace could be learned as violence is also learned. The section below discusses the importance of the Cure Violence model in the lives of all stakeholders, how it was implemented, its success and challenges and the way forward. The relationship between WC and SPE is also clearly explained.

#### **7.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF CURE VIOLENCE MODEL IN SCHOOL A**

One of the aims of the study was to design, implement and evaluate an action research project to reduce school violence, hence, the Cure Violence model was selected. The Cure Violence model maintains that violence is a learned behaviour and that it can be prevented by using disease control methods. The Cure Violence model has three core components that are essential to disrupt the transmission of violence. After data collection, the WC and SPE decided to eradicate school violence through the use of the core components of the Cure Violence model, which are to detect and interrupt potential violent conflicts, treat those at highest risk of involvement in violence and group and community norm change. When I returned for the follow up on the model's implementation, WC and SPE were very effective in dealing with cases, some of which are explained later on in this chapter. Follow up visits were conducted from the 16<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> of October 2017, a year after the introduction of Cure Violence model in school. The intention was to evaluate the effectiveness of Cure Violence model in changing people's lives.

#### **7.4.1 Detect and Interrupt Potential Violent Conflicts**

WC and SPEs agreed to work hand in hand, where SPEs would mediate minor cases within the school and refer major cases that involve parents and community members to WC for intervention. SPEs who worked together with the school councillor and Star for Life social worker used specific methods to locate potential lethal situations and respond with a variety of mediation techniques. They clustered abnormal behaviour demonstrated by learners into four categories, that is: violent cases and common behavioural indicators of physical abuse, such as neglect, sexual and alcohol and drug abuse. These categories came as a result of training on different types of abuse, conflict and conflict resolutions that I provided to SPE and WC group. They applied the knowledge obtained from these trainings to detect learners' violent behaviour; however, they supplemented these categories with new information as they worked.

Violent cases: WC and SPEs observed wounds such as surface injuries, the imprint of an instrument, burns and unusual bruising patterns that appear on areas of the skin that are less likely to be bruised accidentally. They viewed the above as the result of various forms of violence such as bullying, theft, assaults, alcohol and drug abuse, shootings, stabbings and murder.

Common behavioural indicators of physical abuse: This involves either aggression or withdrawal, jumpiness, being fearful, being uncomfortable undressing in front of peers, being overly eager to please adults or being wary of adults, being very afraid to go home or frightened of their parents, and seeming very afraid of getting into trouble (DePanfilis 2006: 26).

Common behavioural indicators of neglect: These cases often include frequent hunger at school, fatigue, falling asleep in class, listlessness, clinginess, depression, begging and stealing (such as stealing from other learners' lunchboxes), wearing inappropriate clothes based on weather; unattended health concerns such as severe skin rash or a persistent cough; poor hygiene, body odour or unkempt appearances; and coming to school early and leaving late, as there is no one at home to take care of them (DePanfilis 2006: 26).

Common behavioural indicators of sexual abuse: this involves the sudden change in the child's normal behaviour. The child starts acting differently, running away, regressing to more childlike behaviour, changes in relationships with adults, lower school engagement and achievement, exhibiting sexually provocative behaviour or becomes promiscuous, talking about friends that are unusually older, talking about having sex or being touched, and is extremely avoidant of undressing or physical contact at school (DePanfilis 2006: 26).

Common behavioural indicators of alcohol and drug abuse: A learner tends to experience an increase in aggression or irritability, changes in attitude/personality, lethargy, sudden changes in a social network, dramatic changes in habits and/or priorities, financial problems, involvement in criminal activity, lack of hygiene and grooming, withdrawal from friends, loss of interest in normal social activities and hobbies, glassy eyes and constant sniffles or runny nose (DePanfilis 2006: 26).

The Cure Violence model is premised on the idea that the first stage of dealing with violence is to detect and interrupt it. The above categories assisted the two teams in associating learner behaviour with different types of abuses and intervene based on the suspected type. Once detected, SPEs interrupted and prevented further recurrences of violence through various conflict mediation techniques. Depending on the case, dispelling any misunderstanding, changing the understanding of the situation to one that does not require violence, bringing in a respected third party to dissuade further violence and meeting one-on-one with the aggrieved individuals. It is important to note that SPE decides whether to continue with the case or refer it to WC. Minor cases which do not involve external stakeholders - parents or community members - are mediated by SPEs. Major cases and those that involve external stakeholder are referred to WC.

#### **7.4.2 Treat those at highest risk for the involvement of violence**

The Cure Violence model aims to shift the perspective away from calling violent offenders “bad” people toward seeing them as people with health problems that need help. The WC group divided their services into three categories, which were to assist high risk learners who intend to reject violence, to help learners who are the victims or perpetrators of violence and to assist parents or community members who are the perpetrators of violence. The intention was to block and Cure Violence before it was transmitted to other stakeholders. It must be remembered that during data collection, there were times where parents and community members were identified as violence perpetrators.

High risk learners who intend to reject violence: The WC group consulted with high risk learners’ multiple times conveying a message of rejecting the use of violence, and assisting them to obtain needed service such as drug abuse counselling, or referral to the rehabilitation centres depending of the level of alcohol and drug intake. However, the biggest challenge was to get them to open up about their challenge and commit to a change. Most suspected learners (who were approached) denied the use of alcohol and drugs, which disturb inhibits the possibility of positive behavioural changes. During my stay at the school, only one learner admitted to using weed and Marlboro cigarettes; they were then taken for counselling. Nonetheless, during data collection, all participants identified alcohol and drug abuse as the major problem in the school and within the community. WC consulted the Drug Rehab Centre at Umlazi, V section, in terms of referring students to them; however, they have not yet referred any cases to date. On my follow up

visit to evaluate the implementation of Cure Violence, WC informed me that they had once resorted to the use of another strategy to assist the victims who were either sceptical or on denial. They had identified the friends of the victims, but WC quickly learned that the learners change friends once they start abusing alcohol. That strategy has not been successful yet. They promised to continue looking for options best suitable for the school. However, they indicated that there were two Grade 8 girls, aged 13 and 14, who were identified as drunk at school by SPEs and they received counselling from SPE and the Star for Life social worker. They intended to cure them before they introduced alcohol to other little girls.

Dealing with learners who are the victims or perpetrators of violence: Data analysis indicated that physical abuse, neglect and sexual abuse are very prevalent in the school. SPEs and WC developed their plans of intervention depending on the nature of the cases. Different strategies were applicable for different cases, but in most cases, SPE documented a learner's suspicious actions before approaching them. The motive was to be sure that the incident was recurring rather than to worry about actions that were temporary. Repeated signs allowed the SPEs to approach a learner. WC obtained the information from SPEs prior to approaching a learner. Their guidelines of treating cases included the following:

- Every case is handled to assist the victim and to protect other learners from experiencing the same.
- Gather information about suspicion without implicating or accusing any person.
- Do not point a finger rather approach the suspected victim and enquire about what happened.
- Listen to the child and show that they understand; take seriously what the learner is saying.
- Assure the learner that he/she did the right thing by telling.
- Tell the learner that he/she is not to be blamed for any form of abuse.
- Document all the information in a file (information from the child, information from other learners and/or parents, and reports from parents and educators, any other people who may assist).
- Conduct home or community visits where necessary.
- Treat each piece of information as highly confidential (all information gathered is placed in a separate file and stored in a locked cupboard, and is not discussed with other people).
- Refer some cases either internally (school principal) or externally to their working partners such as SAPS, rehab centres, Childline family care and the local clinic.

Dealing with parents or community members who are the perpetrators of violence: WC visits parents or family members who are identified as perpetrators of violence. Depending on the nature of a case, some parents were visited while others were called to the school. In Chapter 5, it was discussed that during my stay at school, WC visited a family of a perpetrator who had stabbed and killed another boy in school, with the intention to support and detect the possible cause of the incident and teach them about ways to block



violence before transmitting it to other children. They introduced the concept that violence needs to be treated like a contagious disease that needs to be cured before spreading to other people. They warned the mother that her young children might model what they see and get infected with violence as well. The mother pointed out her boyfriend as the cause of fights they had and WC promised to arrange other sessions with them. On my follow up visit, they indicated that they had visited the family twice, but the father of the boy refused to be a part of the discussions. They intended to keep on trying as they wanted to help the father, as they believe the mother is making good progress. Several consultations with parents on different cases have been made with the intention to educate people about the effect of violence. To sum up their experiences on home visits, three facts prevailed: parents as abusers; parents do not always know that their actions constitute violence and parents knowing their children are abused, but may not act for various reasons such as the following:

- financial dependence on the abuser;
- fear of punishment or beatings by the abuser;
- having no other place to go to;
- custody and maintenance fears and problems.

They will need support and discretion from other people who become involved in an abuse situation. WC were mindful of the fact that curing learners without their homes or community members is like someone who receives an antibiotic but continues to have an open wound that keeps getting re-infected. Hence, they are currently using the three teachings observed during home visits to formulate the education and training programmes to convince people to reject the use of violence. They also discuss the cost and consequences of violence and teach alternative responses to different situations. They started to work with the people involved or most likely to be involved in violence, that is, the parents of identified learners. They use different platforms to change the way parents and community members think and behave, as indicated in the next step (change the group and community norm).

#### **7.4.3 Group and Community Norm Change**

WC engaged parents and community members, aiming to convey the message that violence is harmful to everyone, it is unacceptable and it must be stopped. To achieve their goal, they spread information in order to change behaviours and norms and teach methods of reducing violence. Chapter 5 explained that SPE and WC were trained on anger and peace concepts, conflict and conflict resolution stages and to treat violence like a disease in order to block and cure it. They used the knowledge acquired to communicate the message. They have started to use door-to-door visits for the parents identified by SPE, participate in community events such as local councillor community meetings, school parents' meetings and school parents'

consultations. For learners they relay the message in different forms, such as consultations, open speeches in the assembly, plays, poetry and songs where possible. WC ensures to respond to any case referred to them without discrimination. During my follow up visit, they reported to have obtained a slot in one parents' meeting and one local councillor community meeting to relay the message of Cure Violence. They were convinced that the first step was effectively done, which is to identify a child that is abused and needs help, although they admitted that it is a long journey that needs time.

## **7.5 EVIDENCE OF WC AND SPE FUNCTIONING**

The WC and SPE groups were imparted with valuable knowledge during this study, knowledge which they will be able to use for years to come in the school and in the surrounding communities. On my follow up visit, they reported to have organised violence awareness day on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2017. Their theme was based on the Cure Violence context "I refused to be transmitted with the violence disease, and you?" They also reported to be very functional in dealing with cases involving parents. Underneath are the major cases they attended to from February 2017 to September 2017. I believe that the identification of the individuals/cases and the mediation that followed can be used as evidence for the Cure Violence model and its effectivity within this school

### **➤ Case 1: Child battery**

The case was reported on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2017. It was reported that a mother of 14-year-old girl in grade 9 often projects her unhappiness on the girl, and blames the girl for her predicament. The mother often says that if the girl had not been born she would not be suffering so much. The abuse started at a very early age, so much so, that at 6 years old the girl had to be placed under the care of a children's home. However, she missed her mother and lied about being sick in order to be taken back home. Her mother discovered that she lied about being ill and beat her for that. The girl is living with physical and emotional abuse on a regular basis. Her body was full of old and new bruises. The girl told the WC group that she wished to commit suicide. SPEs referred her to Ekuphileni clinic, in Umlazi, for medical treatment and Childline Family Care, in Umlazi, for social care. The examination report revealed that the child had marks all over her body from being beaten with a belt, scratch marks at the back of the left hand and fork stabs at the back of the right hand. While SPE worked hand in glove with Childcare Family Care to assist the child, WC started the process of visiting the mother of a child with the aim of educating her about violence. At first, she was reluctant to open up to the group but on the third visit, she trusted them and started talking. She explained that she fell pregnant at the age of 16 years and her boyfriend then dumped her. She left school to look after the baby and suffered severely. She described the most painful part of the entire ordeal was to see her former classmates living luxurious life while she was very poor, unemployed and stayed in informal

settlement. She becomes very furious when she sees her child, because she believes the child robbed her of the life she once dreamed of. WC invited a Star for Life social worker to give her counselling. They explained the impact of violence to her and her child. Their family visit sessions ended in July 2017 after unifying both the mother and the child. The child is observed not to have any new scars and seems happier than before.

➤ Case 2: Threats of assault

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2017, a 17-year-old girl in grade 9 reported to being emotionally abused by her mother. Her mother threatened to kill her, chop up her remains and then place her remains in a refuse bag outside the girl's father's house. She reported that her mother claimed to be tired of taking care of her while the girl's father was busy with all the "bitches" in the township. She also reported that her mother deprived her of the right to go to church. Her mother and father are no longer in a love relationship. According to the girl she was afraid of sleeping in the same room as her mother as they hardly spoke to each other. SPE arranged the Childline Family Centre for therapy. WC visited the mother of the child who denied she had ever said anything of that nature to the child but admitted to have minor differences with her daughter in other cases. She claimed to love her child and take care of her. She revealed that she hates the father of the girl because he is irresponsible. WC invited both parents of the learner to the school because that was the only neutral venue convenient for both of them. After a long discussion with both of them they reached the following agreements:

- The girl was allowed to go church under the supervision of her aunt but only during the day not at night;
- She was permitted to visit her father who stays at Inanda one weekend in a month and during school holidays;
- Her father committed himself to fulfil all school needs and medical expenses but requested to be shown school reports every term;
- The mother committed to take care of other needs such as food and clothing.

➤ Case 3: Threats of assault

WC explained that a 13-year-old boy in grade 8 was physically and emotionally abused by his parents. The parents are staying together but are not married. The boy reported the case on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2017. He reported that he was being beaten with a stick, strangled and thrown to the ground by his father while his mother pushed him towards his father in order for him to receive this physical abuse. His father threatened to kill him and the boy was afraid because he once heard that his father was a murderer. He explained that he once beat him and left him unconscious, after that incident, he bought him a live chicken to apologise to

the ancestors. The boy had bruises, marks on his back and neck, swollen nose bridge, a swollen left leg and marks on his bums. The SPEs referred the matter to Childline Family Care while WC visited the family of a boy. On the first day, the father refused them the entrance to his home but the mother showed willingness. They came back repeatedly until the father gave them a chance to talk. While they were still talking about violence, he got furious and accused them of interfering with their lives and did not finish the session but left the mother behind. During his absence, the mother showed them her own scars, and cried very loud while explaining that she loves her boy very much but is very scared of his father. She explained that her boyfriend is always threatening to kill her and his son should she leave him for another man. She admitted that her boyfriend was once arrested for a murder case a long time ago, but she thought he has changed. The case is still ongoing, as the WC group is still trying to get through to the father who refuses to talk.

➤ Case 4: Rape

This case was reported on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2017 by an 18 year old girl in Grade 8. She reported that when she was 5 years old she was raped by her older sibling. She did not inform anyone about the incident because she did not understand at that time what happened to her. She realised later that it was rape but kept quiet again because she was afraid that no one would believe her. Now, she is struggling to live with it. She hardly concentrates in class nor sleeps at night. She is more stressed now that her parents want her to go for a virginity test. She sees herself as a disgrace and wishes to take her life because she lost her virginity, which she intended to value and cherish. The SPEs referred her to Ekuphileni clinic for medical treatment, Childline Family Care for therapy and social workers for behaviour assessment. Behaviour assessment was requested after noticing the following:

- Strange behaviour patterns in class, such as beating others;
- Her sister in the same school confirmed that she does strange things at home;
- Being violent towards other learners and making excuses about it, such as she was playing.
- Quickly loses concentration in class;
- The fact that she is an 18-year-old but is still in Grade 8.

WC visited the family to share the news. The family was divided, some blaming WC for influencing the child to lie with the intention of dividing the family, others in shock but not believing the story while others believe the incident. The case is still on as the girl refused to tell which sibling is responsible claiming the family might kill him. WC and Childline Family Care are still attending to the case.

## 7.6 EVALUATION OF THE CURE VIOLENCE MODEL

The Cure Violence health model is used by more than 50 communities in the United States of America, as well as countries ranging from El Salvador to Kenya (Kecskes 2016: 1) as it deals with blocking violence before it is transmitted to others. Schools are no exception to places where violence occurs, but they have different forms of violence, indicating that it can be adapted to a school environment. In the context of this study, the model was totally revolutionary as participants transformed from understanding violence as a moral corruption or human failing that calls for punitive strategies to address it, to one that includes an understanding and addressing of violence as a health problem – a contagious epidemic. Not a single one of the study's participants had ever thought of the violence as a contagious disease before and they were all excited to be part of the programme. The above recorded cases are the evidence of its effectiveness within the school. In addition, positive reflections by those heavily involved in the programme (SPEs and WC), the school principal and the mother of a suspected killer strengthen the resultant success of the model. I personally witnessed the reduction of vandalism in classrooms and vulgar language written in toilets compared to my first visit at school. The TLO reported a decrease in the number of bullying cases after the project's implementation when compared to the year 2016.

However, there are certain challenges experienced by WC group that have hindered the effective large-scale implementation of the programme:

- The model was originally designed to reduce gun shootings, which is a very rare phenomenon in South African schools, and caters more for serious crimes than school violence.
- They rely on SPEs to refer cases, meaning that a lack of efficiency in the SPEs could affect the entire programme.
- It also recommends the use of high-risk individuals who were once involved in serious crimes, such as ex-prisoners, which is impossible in the school environment.
- It uses three steps, and it is very time-consuming to move people from one step to another, this process often takes weeks.
- It is very complicated for the group to get time to meet and attend to cases because the group is composed of diverse people with busy lifestyle. Therefore, the level of absenteeism in scheduled meetings is very high.
- The model needs funding to employ violence interrupters, however, in a school environment, there is no funding for WC and this lack of funds is a huge problem for their sustainability. As it stands they do not have money for their transport or meals during their gatherings.

- The safety of WC group is not guaranteed, as made evident in cases where they were chased away during home visits.

## **7.7 SUSTAINABILITY OF WC AND SPE**

When one observes all the cases that the WC and SPE groups have dealt with it, it is clear that the parents are the main cause of violence in these scenarios. Parents project their own life problems onto their children, and use brute force and violence to express their anger and frustration. These children are then more likely to become violent characters themselves as we have learned that violence is a contagious behaviour, transmitted from person to person. Improvements were noted in some of the cases. Where improvements were not made, this can be attributed to the reluctance of individuals to be counselled and assisted. This can be noted as one of the possible caveats of the model, as it prevents the model from being effectively implemented. But it can be noted that the SPE and WC groups have demonstrated that they are effective and passionate – it is predicted that their work will continue to reap positive results within the community. I also intend on having follow-up visits to review the progress of the aforementioned cases and new cases that they take on.

The WC group has resorted to using a standardised procedure as a way to ensure continuity:

- To accept and orientate new members at the beginning of each year, should they join the group, and set no limit on the number of members.
- To have a violence awareness day once a year.
- To work with anyone irrespective of their gender and age.
- To have scheduled seminars with learners and educators, preferably one a month, during sports day (on Thursdays).
- To conduct conflict awareness and Cure Violence workshops for all parents in the school concerned.
- To encourage and assist other schools to apply cure the violence model.
- They wish to introduce Cure Violence to at least one school per year.

## **7.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter evaluated school violence reduction strategies implemented by the schools and the DoE. The implementation of the three steps (to detect and interrupt violent conflicts; identify and change the thinking of potential transmitter and change group norms regarding violence) of the Cure Violence model in one school was also evaluated. Analysis of follow up visits with the WC and SPE groups was also included in this chapter. It can be said that the Cure Violence model showed noticeable results when applied to certain

cases. The lack of success of the model in cases where it did not work can be attributed to the reluctance of perpetrators to take accountability and be counselled. The evaluation of the strength and weaknesses of the model was also included. The effectiveness of the model and the sustainability of SPEs and WC were also included in this chapter.

## **PART FIVE**

### **CHAPTER 8**

#### **CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter concludes the study by drawing the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings presented in the Chapter 6 and 7 regarding school violence. Reflections by SPEs, the WC group and myself, after the implementation of the action research are also highlighted. It was stated previously that violence at and associated with schools continues to be common across South Africa, and that the impact on learners is becoming increasingly evident (Du Plessis 2010: 108). The concern is rooted in its changing nature and magnitude (Du Plessis 2010: 108). It is clear that the situation requires immediate attention by all relevant stakeholders. Equally evident is the association between violence at schools and violence experienced and witnessed in homes and in the community, a characteristic that lends credence to the need to treat violence like a contagious disease that needs to be cured (Butts *et al.* 2105b: 40).

##### **8.2 CONCLUSIONS**

The overall aim of the research was to explore the nature of school violence and existing strategies used to combat it and then design an effective intervention strategy to reduce it. The following research objectives served to focus the investigation, namely to:

- Explore the nature, extent, causes and consequences of violence in high schools.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current strategies used to reduce violence in schools.
- Investigate other strategies that can be applied by each stakeholder in violence reduction.
- Design, implement and evaluate an action research project to reduce school violence.

The safety of learners and educators is of concern considering the environment where the schools are located. Educators and learners complained about the non-availability of security personnel in school B, and the futility and dysfunctionality of the personnel in school A where they are available. Therefore, educators and learners do not feel secure within the school premises. School fences were observed to be broken and cut down which allowed illegal entrance to potential violence perpetrators.

Abuse of substances such as: dagga, alcohol and cigarettes are reported to be high. Most parents and community members emphasised their concern about learners who go to school under the influence of



substances. Most learners complained about other learners who consume alcohol to avoid shyness and those who sell space muffins during school events, despite the fact that it is a well-known tendency by educators. Several participants blamed the community for improper behaviour that affected the school, such as, selling drugs and alcohol to learners. Learners also blamed educators for turning a blind eye on those learners who abuse substances within school premises.

It was found that several types of violence originate outside the school premises. Some forms of violent behaviour such as stealing and vandalism may be learned in families and communities beyond the school. However, this does not imply that there is nothing that schools can do about such external violence. Cases where learners steal each other's items such as bags, calculators, instruments or even school textbooks, that they all received from educators, are very popular in these schools. However, there were no cases of educators stealing from learners but suspicions of learners stealing from educators.

Most community members complained that learners learn vandalism from them (the external community). Participants at both schools showed concern over the high levels of vandalism, where learners destroy school properties, such as: desks, chairs, tables, windows and doors. Community members were also accused of vandalism, such as stripping electricity in classrooms, stealing water pipes and generally breaking into the school looking for anything that they can steal.

The use of dangerous weapons was identified as the main issue that requires immediate intervention. Most participants blamed school fights on gossiping, romantic relationships between learners and poor communication. Other learners viewed the carrying of weapons as a necessity since the schools are located in a township where protective measures are very weak. The schools' codes also seem to be increasing violence as they have unclear and inconsistent rules regarding violence. Such conditions have all been shown to enhance the risk of violence within the school environment.

Religious bashing was identified as the newest form of school violence, although it is not as prevalent as other forms of violence currently. However, religion indifferences among learners were reported to be very strong particularly between learners of the Nazareth Baptist church and other Christian denominations. Most educators complained about such tension which impacts negatively to teaching and learning.

Sexual violence perpetrators were mostly identified as educators. Learners indicated that there are educators who propose romantic relationships or ask to have sex with them. Learners also complained about cases of rape by educators that are very common but go unreported because victims are afraid of the consequences thereafter. Female educators complained about sexual harassment from their male colleagues that lowers their self-esteem, such as asking for sex or touching them uncomfortably. When they deny their proposal of having sex with them, they make them feel worthless. Male learners were no exception in this regard.

Female educators revealed that they also experience sexual harassment from male learners because they pass remarks when they are wearing certain clothes such as jeans, mini-skirts or tight dresses.

A very clear relationship was made between bullying and other forms of violence, particularly criminal victimisation. Learners who are bullied at school are more susceptible to criminal victimisation and more serious forms of violence. This is particularly significant in light of the strong relationship that exists between experiences of violence and the risk of engaging in, or perpetrating violence. Cyber bullying and other forms of online violence were reported to be common.

Some learners have developed the habit of gambling, particularly to play spin and card games for money within the school premises. Educators were concerned that many learners did not understand the consequences of being a gambler. They warn that gambling is addictive and hence healing is very complicated. They expressed their wishes that the government, in collaboration with schools, should intervene to assist gamblers at an early stage.

Participants identified the negative impacts of school violence as physical and psychological, experienced by learners, educators, parents, the education system and the community at large. They were worried about the number of physical incidents which lead to injuries or even death. This was evident during the data collection period where a grade 11 learner was stabbed to death by a former pupil within the school premises. Psychological incidents such as high rate of school drop-out, poor results, low self-esteem were reported to be the cause of poor learner-to-learner, learner-to-parent and educator-to-learner relationships which leads to stress and depression.

Parents and community members showed concern about the proximity of taverns and clubs with the respective schools. Parents were not convinced that township taverns and clubs apply age restrictions since they have physically observed the admission of children under the age of 18. They linked the problem of school violence to the increased number of taverns and clubs in townships and related unruly learner behaviour with what they observe and demonstrate in such places.

Fear of violence can be as harmful in developing healthy pro-social relationships as actual victimisation. Levels of fear of violence at schools were reported to be very high particularly in places such as toilets, tuckshops, sportsgrounds and classrooms in the absence of an educator. Findings suggest that fear of school violence is the same among educators and learners. Educators expressed their high level of fear in the absence of learners. They believe the presence of learners protects them, because they are part of the gangs within the community. These findings are important in terms of creating an environment in which educators and learners can concentrate on teaching and learning rather than worrying about life or death.

Resistance by parents and lack of parenting were identified by learners and educators as one of the major causes of school violence. Study participants insisted that violent behaviour demonstrated by learners at school is modelled at home and in the community. However, parents were convinced that educators were to be blamed for school violence.

Educators blamed parents for failing to instil the correct values and teach their children the truth and injustices of life. They were also concerned that most parents do not show up when they are called at school to discuss the learner behaviour. Those who respond to the schools calls and attend parents' meetings are parents of intelligent and well behaved learners. However, should parents of misbehaving learners respond to a schools call, they almost always side with their children. They shift the blame to children's friends claiming they influence them with bad behaviour. They defend their children's misbehaviour insisting they are well behaved at home, and therefore the problem is not with them but with their friends. Equally, educators blame schools for being too understanding and lenient with parent-learner problems. They believe parents should sign the code of conduct and commit themselves to working together with schools, which is not the case in some secondary schools.

Ironically, parents believe educators are to be blamed because they do not use physical punishment at school. Parents referred to their school days, when they were physically punished by educators when they misbehaved and associate that with minimum misbehaviour in school. Most of them do not associate corporal punishment with violence, therefore approve the use of this negative form of discipline. However, they unanimously disapprove the use of violence towards learners. They acknowledged that they have a huge responsibility in raising children to be responsible citizens. However, very few believe in talking and counselling children as the majority favoured physical punishment. They claim physical punishment has nothing to do with the violent behaviour demonstrated by children either in school or community. They see physical punishment as the only way to control the behaviour of a child as it was done to them. As a matter of fact, they worry that children who are raised by single mothers are at a disadvantage compared to those raised by both parents. They believe children with both parents are more disciplined because they know that their fathers can beat them more severely than their mothers.

Community members believed poverty is the most serious problem facing people particularly in townships. They were concerned that being poor had killed peoples' morality. They referred to cases where parents allowed their children to date older people in exchange for financial support.

Structural violence was also identified as a contributor to school violence, where unequal distribution of resources and power change the mind set of individuals and encouraged the growth of violence. Rural

underdevelopment, overcrowding, substandard housing in slums and lack of parents (to take care of their children) are amongst other factors that contribute to school violence.

Schools, in collaboration with the DoE, were reported to have measures to minimise violence. One school reported to using a three-part structure (SPEs, the school councillor and the NGO Star for Life). They indicated that these three initiatives were used to reduce violence, of which none were 100% effective in reducing school violence and its consequences. The same school indicated that they tried to assist drug addicts who intended to quit by opening up an initiative called Sober Jammers. The other school indicated that they motivated learners in the morning assemblies before praying and go to classrooms. They encouraged them not to involve themselves with drugs, alcohol, physical fights or sexual offences.

The DoE has introduced some programmes in response to the high rate of school violence. Educator participants mentioned strategies they had heard about from the DoE that deal with school violence such as Stop Rape, school based crime prevention, management of physical violence, War Room and Dealing with Substance Abuse. However, educators were ill-informed on how to implement these programmes. Educators did not dwell much on these programmes except indicating that they were only present on paper. However, the school based crime prevention which was reported to be functional. Participants denied the existence of other programmes that are documented by DoE as existing in schools, such as Opening our eyes and National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Amongst Learners in School.

During the data collection, I realised that participants favoured punitive measures against corrective ones. I decided to persuade the opposite and build my study based on changing the mind set and behaviour of individuals. The idea was premised on the understanding that the behaviour of an individual is learned from the environment through the processes of observational learning (social learning theory). I was determined to repair the harm caused or revealed by criminal behaviour (restorative justice), therefore I decided to implement the Cure Violence model as a part of my research.

Cure Violence model was expected to empower stakeholders to resolve conflicts non-violently. This model is premised on the idea that violence is contagious and spreads like an epidemic; and that it can be treated using the methods employed to combat and control disease. The Cure Violence model relies on three key elements to stop the transmission of violent behaviour: interrupt transmission directly; identify and change the thinking of potential transmitters (i.e.: those at highest risk of perpetrating violence) and change group norms regarding violence. The WC group and SPEs were trained and empowered to apply the Cure Violence strategies in violence reduction and to be the agents of peace. SPEs represent peace internally while WC group are the agents of peace externally.

## **8.3 REFLECTIONS**

After the implementation of the action research, the SPEs, the WC group and I gained new and insightful experience. Before we parted ways, we reflected back and shared different views based on our involvement.

### **8.3.1 Personal reflections**

This research revealed a number of experiences unfamiliar with before. I personally did not know that violence could be considered as a disease and that it could be cured as such. My journey was long, exciting and full of challenges, however, obtaining permission from the DoE and the respective schools to carry out my research in the field was easily granted. Stakeholders in the two high schools were overwhelmingly supportive and participated willingly in my study. Although my stay in the school came to an end in November 2016 after the implementation of the model in a family of a boy who stabbed another, I was heartened in October 2017 to see the number of cases attended after I have left the school. My biggest wish is to get another chance to capacitate more stakeholders particularly learners on the Cure Violence model so that the youth can become facilitators and make sure that the programme is sustainable in the future.

This research demonstrated to me the effectiveness of action research as an appropriate tool for peace building practitioners and researchers like myself. It was also a blessing for the stakeholders because they discovered that they could do more to make a difference in their own communities. They were all excited to discover that they can have an impact in reducing school violence. They were surprised to understand that conflict is a natural and normal part of life, and that it is possible to learn new ways of handling it. They were surprised to know that perpetrators also need to be cured. The Cure Violence workshops draw on everyday experiences helping people to move away from violent or abusive behaviour by curing violence like a disease, as a way of dealing with conflicts. Cure Violence believes that all forms of violence are contagious which spreads from one person to another however, it is curable by blocking its transmission.

### **8.3.2 Reflections on my last day at school**

The findings overwhelmingly show that most participants reported that the Cure Violence workshops have been helpful. They described the workshops as being helpful in a variety of ways in their lives. They expressed their joyful feelings on terms that were brainstormed and explained. They were proud to understand the difference between positive and negative conflict resolutions. They reported to have come across the Cure Violence programme for the first time and stated that these workshops have extended their knowledge and ability to handle violent situations. The following statements are taken from study

participants; and indicate that they are able and willing to integrate the workshop experiences into their lives in an effort to manage conflicts more peacefully.

I found the whole lot very interesting because I've never experienced anything like this before and it has helped me a lot to teach me how to control my anger. My highlight was the understanding that, as parents violent behaviour towards each other as a family affects children psychologically and physical punishment is violence to children. Our violent behaviour goes a long way beyond what we think (Parent participant).

I am getting better control of my anger and conflict resolution skills, thanks to Cure Violence workshops. I am extremely happy to understand that violence is a contagious disease and everyone should work tirelessly to block its transmission. If we all stand against violence we will defeat it one day (Community participant).

I never thought that violence is a sickness but Cure Violence programme taught me a lot. I understand now that it is my responsibility and yours to help violent people to cure their sicknesses before spreading it to other people. We have a huge responsibility to detect it and block its transmission the same way we do to block sicknesses such as Tuberculosis or cholera. However, we need to capacitate others to do the same as our effort will be a drop in an ocean in the entire South Africa but it all starts with me (Educator participant).

Learner participants sounded very scared and reluctant to transmit the knowledge gained from workshops to other people. They understand the importance of curing violence, however, they foresee resistance and lack of respect from people they might approach trying to explain the programme. One of them said:

It will be difficult for us to talk to people who have not attended the workshops, how are we going to convince a person that violence is a disease that can be cured? (Learner participant).

After a long and serious discussion, we agreed to work together and I offered to assist them to conduct workshops where possible. Another challenge particularly for WC was the platforms they would use to conduct workshops. Participants suggested the involvement of local councillors to create platforms to talk to people in cases where there are community gatherings. Another suggestion was to have a slot to address parents at a parents' meetings, this was unanimously agreed upon by all participants. SPEs who work internally proposed the use of morning assembly as their usual platform to address learners and educators.

Most participants overwhelmingly expressed their joy and satisfaction to be part of the programme. Some expressed a sense of surprise and pleasure in comparing their knowledge before and after workshops.

### **8.3.3 Reflections on the follow up visit a year afterwards**

WC reported to be in full functioning force as made evident by the cases they attended. However, they seemed worried about the challenges explained under the evaluation of the model above.

SPEs reported that on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2017, they had a violence awareness day in school. On that day, they had violence banners addressing common violence such as drug abuse, bullying and sexual harassment displayed around school. Some banners addressed how the banners were donated by Star for Life. The awareness day involved SAPS, Social workers, an Ekuphileni clinic sister and a ChildLine Family Care representative. The theme for the day was, “I refused to be transmitted with violence disease, and you?” Most learners in the school relayed the message of violence reduction through music, poetry, drama, dance and games. Invited guests were given a chance to deliver speeches about violence. It was a campaign that was viewed as successful.

The TLO reported that the most common form of violence is bullying. However, she reported the decrease in the number of bullying cases reported in 2017 compared to 2016. In 2017, 27 bullying cases were reported in the school compared to 46 of 2016. She associates the decrease of these cases with the existence of the SPE and WC structures in school.

The mother of the murder accused boy explained as follows:

From your visits, I learned to give love to my children. I always thought that being a parent is to provide for your children’s financial needs. However, after your visit I am a new mother to my children. I now realised that my greatest responsibility as a parent is to give time to my children, like you said time equals to love. Despite my high level of poverty which normally frustrates me in most cases, I now listen to, talk to, joke with and control my children’s whereabouts. My neighbourhood has many wrong views, behaviours and ideologies, I monitor my children’s behaviour and provide leadership in order to correct the wrongs the outside community is teaching them. My family is transforming for the better, not financially but peace, love and unity. However, my biggest worry is my neighbours, I wish you could advise them like you did to me. I still do not know the whereabouts of my boy who was suspected to killed another at school. I admit that I did not give myself time to understand him. However, my biggest wish is to ensure that something of this nature must never happen to this family again. (Mother of murder accused learner)

The principal’s view towards the SPE and WC groups was reported in the following way:

I am so grateful that you chose this school in your study. Since the beginning of this programme, there are gradual changes in the mind-set of learners and educators, very low level of vandalism, language usage and cases of bullying. Normally, at the beginning of the year, we repair classroom windows, doors and fence. We even clean toilets walls to remove vulgar language, but towards the end of the year its used to be a futile exercise as you observed last year. This year it’s much better than the previous five years of my principalship in this school. For the first time after so many years, the school fence is not cut. As a school, we fully support WC and SPE, that’s why we allowed SPE to have violence awareness day and assisted them to invite other stakeholders. (Principal, school A)

We took a walk and I observed that very few windows were broken, the fence had not been cut and only two doors were broken out of all the classrooms. The toilet walls still had vulgar language written on them, but there seemed to be a visible decrease in the vulgar vandalism when compared to the state of the walls in 2016.

## **8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.4.1 Modifying the curriculum**

Children should learn to deal with their emotions in an acceptable way and be taught how to do so at an early age. During my stay at the school, I discovered that one of the subjects taught is called Life Orientation. This subject deals with social, personal, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical growth and development of children. I recommend that the DoE curriculum planners, in Life Orientation, should include topics such as responding to anger, responding in peaceful and positive ways, creative and positive conflict resolutions skills and conflict avoidance as early as in Grade R curriculum. This will teach young children ways to find peace in their lives. Education for peace is important in our fragile schools. It can help children deal with the trauma, manage and address conflicts, and build dialogue processes for enhanced understanding of others. The amendment of the Life Orientation curriculum is my suggestion for future research.

### **8.4.2 Involvement of stakeholders**

Fighting school violence should be a combined effort by all stakeholders. The school, parents, community members and the government should determine how best to intervene in order to solve the problem.

School: As discussed in Chapter 3, the Constitution requires schools to adopt restorative justice as a possible solution to protect, promote and restore the dignity of violence victims. Restorative behaviour encourages schools to transform from traditional aims of punishment, to strategies and techniques used to address misconduct at an intervention level. I recommend that schools should adopt this approach. The first critical step is to ensure that everyone is on board with the introduction of a restorative justice system. Educators, learners, SMT and parents need to all feel included and able to play a role in this new world of behaviour management. Once the school is ready to adopt restorative approaches, a number of techniques can be used as an alternative to traditional discipline such as mediation. Mediation is at the core of restorative solutions; sessions should be led by trained facilitators and take place with both the victim and the perpetrator. It is crucial for schools to adopt the Cure Violence model prior to restorative justice system, in order to have trained violence interrupters such as the WC group. Communication with



learners about new expectations and goals is also vital – once they understand that a greater responsibility has been laid on them, they are less likely to want to let each other down, therefore the schools should make use of their SPEs to enforce this new way of intervention.

The second effort by each school is to teach children what abuse looks like, what it sounds like, what impacts it has on the individual. During my data collection, it became evident that many learners are sexually abused by educators that they trust, but they do not report the incidents due to fear. Learner participants described educators who are abusers as very popular, charming and extremely funny. In most cases they are well known leaders of certain school programmes such as music, sports or dance classes. Most of them are considered to be extremely “cool”, anti-drinking and drugs, and are therefore also greatly respected by parents and their colleagues. They convince everyone, probably even themselves that they act out of “love.” These characteristics make abused learners scared, shy, hopeless and powerless, so it is important for the school to support them. I recommend that the school should have an existing structure of trusted violence interrupters such as SPEs and WC to educate learners. The school should open up confidential reporting avenues such as anonymous boxes where learners can feel free to share their experiences and suggestions, with/without including their names to caution violence interrupters. Schools should have signs such as “Alcohol and drug free zone” and “Weapons free institution”, demonstrated all over, especially in identified violence areas in an attempt to fight against this disease. In summary, the school should adopt the Cure Violence model in order to have trained violence interrupters that will be trusted by victims to handle their sensitive matters.

The third effort by the schools is to support and implement policies planned by the DoE. Chapter 7 analysed different policies that are supposed to reduce school violence, but many of them were not supported by the schools. Strategies such as Stop Rape and the management of physical violence should be fully implemented by schools. Stop Rape was launched in March, 2013; therefore, schools should start a pattern where every year in March, they have a day where learners will deliver speeches about sexual violence and take a pledge. Management of physical violence calls for educators to monitor learners outside of their classrooms, such as during break time and on the sports grounds. Educators should adhere to this call and failure to honour should have consequences (determined by the principal). It was revealed during my data collection that bullies excel in the absence of educators in areas such as tuckshops, water taps and sports grounds.

Parents and community members: Throughout my data collection, parents and community members were modelled as the ones who expose children to violence. The positive alternative is that they can be used to expose children to peace and harmony, because children model what takes place in their social context

through observation and direct instructions. The social learning theory explains that behaviour is acquired, maintained and modified; therefore, parents and community should be agents of peace and positive conflict resolution. The dissemination of the same information to parents and community members can assist to model the correct behaviour and block the source of school violence (homes and community). I recommend that more schools should adopt the Cure Violence model and recruit more parents and community members to fast-track the information sooner.

Government structures: Another cause of school violence that was identified during my data collection was the unequal distribution of resources and power. Rural underdevelopment, overcrowding and substandard housing in slums and lack of parents to take care of their children are among factors that results in structural violence. Schools, using violence interrupters and SPEs should work closely with the three government structures (local councillor, social worker and the local clinic) to promote the social wellbeing of the learners. Local councillors should ensure the application of the Expanded Public Works Programme within the area to reduce unemployment and poverty. He/she should look after the poorer children by providing items such as food parcels. Schools should identify learners with various social ills and refer them to social workers to ensure they benefit from various grants. The school should refer neglected children to local clinics to take the matter further until it is resolved. I believe that the combination of these structures will reduce violent acts, like stealing.

#### **8.4.3 Dedicate resources and funding for intervention**

Human resources: It was mentioned that the key element in the delivery of an intervention, such as the Cure Violence model, is trained workers who are experienced in working with high-risk individuals involved in school violence. Stakeholders should dedicate their time and resources to join SPEs and violence interrupters to create violence free schools. Working for a community to plant the correct values is a huge commitment that stakeholders should dedicate themselves towards. Those who are members already, should commit to their ethical guidelines, such as to maintain confidentiality and show low level of absenteeism. This can assist them in gaining the learners' trust and getting them to open up about their problems. This call needs people who dream big, and are passionate and realistic about violence free schools.

Financial resources: Access to finances is critical in the implementation of an intervention, for example, if violence interrupters (such as WC) can have incentives as volunteers in order to accommodate their transport and administrative duties. Providing a meal or an incentive is an important consideration. I therefore recommend that the school plans implementation of such an intervention in their consultations with the SGB to allocate funds to such prevention programmes. With good planning and adequate allocation

of funds for implementation, the school can become a leader in this arena among Umlazi District schools. This can serve as an exemplar that indeed a school can be violence free.

#### **8.4.4 Introduce Cure Violence model to other schools**

It was discussed that school violence has physical and psychological impacts on learners. One critical challenge that faces each school is to work towards achieving violence free school. Again it was mentioned that fighting school violence needs well trained and experienced individuals who are capable of dealing with such. Therefore, each school should have those people to handle various violence cases. My recommendation for schools is to adopt the Cure Violence model in order to have violence interrupters (such as WC) that will be trusted for the victims to open up. These people should be trustworthy in order to ensure the confidentiality of their victims' secrets. SPEs and WC in the school where the model was tested indicated their wish to introduce at least one school per year to ensure the continuity of a model. I also volunteered to assist schools who wish to kick start the model. I was very pleased to notice that WC, indeed adhered to their confidentiality policy because, they gave me the cases attended to without giving the contact information of the learners and their parents. This study has demonstrated that it is possible to apply the Cure Violence model in a school, therefore, it means any school can do it.

### **8.5 SUMMARY**

Overall, it seems that research contributed to the participants' knowledge and an improvement of their conflict handling skills. As a researcher, my understanding of the research question increased, but, apart from the knowledge of the subject matter, I also acquired new research skills and gained a better understanding of action research. I am confident that my research objectives have been achieved and my data will remain relevant in the next improvement that might be executed in the study. I succeeded in identifying the nature, extent and possible causes of school violence in the investigated schools. Upon implementing the Cure Violence model it was evident that it was effective, but it was also largely dependent on the willingness of perpetrators and victims to participate. The enthusiasm of those that were trained using the Cure Violence model gives me hope for the future. Furthermore, the Cure Violence model works best when there are multiple messengers (such as the SPEs, WC and other study participants) spreading the same new norms consistently and abundantly. Since the participants of the study are actively doing this in their community, it is predicted that the Cure Violence model will continue to be more effective in the investigated schools and communities.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Training topics for the outreach workers (We Care)**

#### **Day 1**

##### **1<sup>st</sup> session**

- Humanity
- Rationality
- Tolerance
- Morality
- Diversity
- Responsibility
- Freedom
- Justice
- Solidarity
- Equality
- Harmony
- Respect
- Democracy
- Cooperation
- Rule of law

##### **2<sup>nd</sup> session**

- Anger and conflict
- Abuse (emotional, sexual and physical)
- Conflict resolution
- Mediation
- Paraphrasing
- Reflecting feelings
- Understanding thoughts

- Feelings and Action
- Non-violence (peace)

## **Day 2**

### **1<sup>st</sup> session**

- Way of life
- Seek to win
- Defeat injustice
- Suffering can educate
- Choose love instead of hate
- Believes that the universe is on the side of justice

### **2<sup>nd</sup> session**

- Negotiation
- Mediation
- Arbitration
- Mediation- Arbitration
- Early neutral- Arbitration
- Community conferencing
- Collaborative law

## **Day 3**

### **1<sup>st</sup> session**

- Introduction to the Cure Violence model
- Health problem
- Spread like a disease
- Spread from person to person
- Contagious
- Diagnose, contain and treat
- Can be cured
- Disease control methods

## **2<sup>nd</sup> session**

- Interrupt transmission directly
- Prevent retaliatory action e.g. shooting
- Mediating conflicts
- Interrupt violence
- Block transmission
- Change the potential transmitters
- Norms mentor clients
- Change of norms

## **Day 4**

### **1<sup>st</sup> session**

- Recap of day 1, 2 and 3
- Relating the information with the school environment concerned
- Division of WC members including myself into 3 groups of 3 members in each.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> session**

- Dividing training aspects among members in preparation for SPE training.
- Preparations by each group.
- Way forward
- Closing ceremony

## **Appendix B**

### **CONSTITUTION OF SCHOOL PEER EDUCATORS AT VUKUZAKHE HIGH SCHOOL**

#### **1. PREAMBLE**

WE, the learners of VUKUZAKHE HIGH SCHOOL, acknowledge our loyalty to the school. COMMIT ourselves to the principles and practices of democratic school governance; and ADOPT this constitution for all learners at the school.

#### **2. NAME**

SCHOOL PEER EDUCATORS (SPE)

#### **3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE SPE**

- 3.1 The SPE will uphold the principles of democratic governance.
- 3.2 Every learner shall be represented by the SPE.
- 3.3 No learner shall be unfairly discriminated against.
- 3.4 The SPE shall at all times conduct itself in a responsible and accountable way.
- 3.5 The SPE shall at all times uphold the Code of Conduct.

#### **4. COMPOSITION OF THE SPE**

The RCL will be composed of the learners who are democratically elected by the learners from all classes.

#### **5. AIMS OF THE SPE ARE TO:**

- 5.1 build unity among learners in the school;
- 5.2 address the needs of all learners in the school;
- 5.3 keep learners informed about events in the school and in the school community;
- 5.4 encourage good relationships within the school between learners and educators, and between learners and non-teaching staff;

5.5 encourage good relationships within the school between educators and parents

5.6 establish fruitful links with other schools.

## **6. ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF SPE**

6.1 Learners from all grades voluntarily join SPE group.

6.2 Two educators (male and a female) are elected by other educators.

## **7. ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

7.1 At the first meeting, conveyed by two elected educators within seven days after the

Introduction of SPE learners shall elect an Executive Committee.

7.2 The Executive committee shall be elected from amongst the SPE members.

7.3 The election of the Executive committee shall be held by secret ballot.

7.4 The Executive committee shall comprise at least the following:

7.4.1 The Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson

7.4.2 A Secretary.

7.5 Elected educators shall inform the SMT in writing of the names of SPE and the office bearers.

## **8. DUTIES OF THE OFFICE-BEARERS**

8.1 The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson

8.1.1 Chair all meetings where they are present.

8.1.2 Conduct all correspondence and activities of the SPE.

8.1.3 Enforce the Constitution.

8.1.4 Sign Minutes.

8.1.5 Represent the SPE at official functions.

8.1.6 Perform all duties associated with the office.

## 8.2 The Secretary

8.2.1 Keep minutes and record decisions taken by the members.

8.2.2 Prepare the agenda for each meeting.

8.2.3 Keep a file of all correspondence received and sent out.

## 9. DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE SPE-MEMBERS

9.1 SPE-members must always remember that wherever they go, they represent the school and the principal and must always set the correct example.

9.2 Promote a culture of learning, protect the environment, reuse, recycle and reduce campaigns and encourage abstinence from sex, alcohol and drugs in the school.

9.3 Support the principal, teachers and non-teaching staff in the performance of their duties.

9.4 Assist with the development of the Code of Conduct.

9.5 Help to implement the Code of Conduct.

9.6 Help to organize cultural and sporting events.

9.7 Participate in official fund-raising events.

9.8 Promote the interest of all the learners.

## 10. TERM OF OFFICE

10.1 The members of the SPE will hold office for a period not longer than three years.

10.2 A member or office bearer shall give up his/her SPE status if:

10.2.1 He/she leaves the school.

10.2.2 He/she resigns in writing

10.2.3 He/she is guilty of repeated misconduct.

10.2.4 He/she does anything that causes harm to the image of the school, the principal, teaching and non-teaching staff and learners.

## **11. MEETINGS**

11.1 Ordinary meetings of the SPE shall be held at least once a quarter.

11.2 The Executive committee shall meet at least once a month.

11.3 The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson may convene a special meeting at any time if circumstance require such a meeting.

11.4 A Quorum of the SPE shall be 20% of the members.

11.5 The SPE shall disclose any information for inspection that is requested by a learner, teacher or parent, unless the information requested would constitute an invasion of privacy.

11.6 The SPE shall report to learners at least once per quarter.

11.7 An elected SPE representatives will attend the school meetings that is held every month, where they will hand in a written report on the activities of the SPE and the different committees, present proposals, raise problems, etc.

## **12. MINUTES OF MEETINGS**

12.1 The secretary of SPE shall keep minutes of every meeting and shall submit the minutes to the SPE at the next meeting.

12.2 A copy of the minutes shall be submitted to the principal.

12.3 Minutes of all meetings must be made available to any member on request.

## **13. FINANCES**

13.1 The SPE is subjected to the Official Financial Policy of the school.

13.2 The SGB usually budgets for expenditures of the SPE

13.3 All finances received and spend by the SPE, must go through the school's financial records.

13.4 The SPE cannot open a bank account or have a petty cash.

13.5 The correct procedure must be followed when money is needed for projects and event.

13.6 No sponsorships are allowed to be collected without the prior permission of the principal and necessary letters.