THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GROUP INTERVENTION PROGRAM
AMONG LEARNERS OF ONGOYE HIGH SCHOOL IN DEALING
WITH SCHOOL VIOLENCE

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Declaration

I Nosipho Salvatoris Dlamini, hereby declare that the work presented in this study which talks about “The effectiveness of group intervention program among learners of Ongoye High School in dealing with school violence” is my original work and my own initiative. The sources used and cited are well acknowledged in the text as well as in the references.

Signed by:  
Ms N.S. Dlamini  
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Abstract

The study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of a group intervention program among learners of Ongoye High School in dealing with school violence. Ultimately, the study wanted to assist and encourage emotional well-being by improving the current intervention program aimed at helping learners deal with psychological effects of violence in Ongoye High School.

The sample consisted of ten (10) participants which included learners from grade eleven to twelve. The study was conducted for a period of two weeks. The results of the study were drawn from focus group discussion including the distribution of pre and post questionnaires. The results brought on additional knowledge that could be incorporated into the program and be administered at other High Schools in dealing with the issues of school violence.
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Chapter: One

1.1 Introduction

According to most recent studies conducted in South Africa, violence in schools amongst learners is increasing enormously. In dealing with this problem usually only one part of the problem is dealt with and that aspect is the physical aspect. In this study the researcher attempted to go further by looking into the emotional aspect which is often ignored. Various media reports have highlighted tragic incidences whereby learners were reported to be involved in violent behaviour and these reports have a negative impact to the children in school. This chapter is basically an outline of what the study entails.

According to Ohsako (1997) violence is amongst the sensitive problems that provoke anxiety, brings out negative emotions and negative images to individuals. Studies in several industrialized countries overseas found that there are long-term effects on the formation of personality to adults who are exposed to violent behaviour at a younger age (McGuckin & Lewis, 2008). Eric Erikson’s theory of personality states that the formation of personality depends on a successful resolution of each of the eight stages of life cycle and failure in resolution in any stage may result in a form of physical, cognitive, social, or emotional maladjustment (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). The reason why violent behaviour is often not seen as a problem in society is because such behavior is accepted and perpetuated by those we regard as our role models.
In the study that was conducted in the Northern Ireland to ascertain the nature of management towards bullying observed during school violence, findings revealed that progress was made through the development and implementation of an anti-bullying policy in schools (McGuckin & Lewis, 2008). Ohsako (1997) argues that it is impossible to deal with this problem by using one approach, but it can be coped with, by using a holistic approach (which is management strategies and education).

Greenberg, Warwar and Malcolm (2008) described two of the interventions that they found to be successful when dealing with violent behaviour. These interventions deal with emotional injuries through the emotional-focused therapy (EFT) and the psychoeducation groups (PG) (Greenberg et al., 2008). The EFT’s emphasis was based on accessing primary adaptive feelings and maladaptive emotion schemes in order to make them amenable to change. This therapy collaborates with various psychological approaches that are problem-solving oriented (Greenberg et al., 2008). The PG’s were more workshop-orientated and had a rationale for participation to its members (Greenberg et al., 2008). These, however, are not the only useful strategies in dealing with school violence. That is why the researcher has attempted to conduct a study by introducing an intervention program that focuses on the victims of school violence and a strategy which is more practical and enjoyable for the learners.
1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problem was formulated based on the researcher’s observation on the severity of trauma that has been experienced by learners in South African schools. The researcher’s interest was developed after discovering that illegal substance abuse, easy access to dangerous weapons, gang involvement, teachers, personal and peer characteristics played a major role in violence that takes place in schools. Stanko (2002) states that all over the world we read about young people who engage in criminal behaviour that entails a lot of dramatic and horrible violence.

In an article on the Times newspaper, the World Health Organisation (WHO) gave a report that South Africa has one of the highest rates of young people who have alcohol abuse disorders, which even the government system cannot control, though they have extended the rights of permission for consuming alcohol to the age of 21 (March, 2011). Another article in the Times newspaper reported that parents of a 13 year-old grade 7 learner of Orchard’s Primary School in Johannesburg, accused a white teacher of being racist after hearing that their son was called a “kefir” in front of the other learners (March, 2011).

An article in the Independent on Saturday newspaper, reported that a 19 year-old student in the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) was later found murdered in her room by her fellow block-mates (March, 2011). A newspaper article in Isolezwe reported that three teachers of eMbeka High School in Mzinyathi (KZN) were reported to have a tendency of teaching under the influence of alcohol (February, 2011). Another article in the Isolezwe newspaper reported that a learner in Sewula Junior Primary was found
dead as a result of substance abuse, an addictive drug called “wunga” which is a lethal mixture of anti-retroviral drugs (February, 2011). Such news reports raise many questions about the impact of emotional and psychological disturbances suffered by these learners which contradict with an environment that is suitable for learning.

1.3 Motivation of the study

The researcher was motivated by the fast growing rate of violence in schools especially in South Africa. A study that was carried out in Ethiopia revealed that 60 percent of pupils who experience a high-to-medium level of negative impact of violence during the teaching or learning process affect their emotions (Ohsako, 1997). More than 40 percent of the students in another study conducted by Ohsako (1997) reported that they had either repeated classes or dropped out of school due to violence. The other motive for conducting this study was based on the consequences of school violence, such as the disruption of family relationships, vandalism in schools, enormous financial loss, physical injury and death, and the detrimental psychological damage to the learners which were found to be the outcome of violent behaviour in schools (Cruz, 2002).

1.4 Aims

In conducting the study, the researcher aimed at investigating the experiences and consequences encountered by learners who were exposed to violence at Ongoye High School. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher wanted to educate learners
in developing coping skills and strategies with the emphasis of seeking help on problems experienced in schools (for example providing information on resources and help lines that the learners can contact). Then, finally the pre-test and post-test question was used in evaluating the participants’ experiences of school violence and the impact that the program had on the participants.

1.5 Resumé

This chapter highlighted the research problem, the motivation of the study and the aims that were followed in conducting a meaningful study. Various examples were given of newspaper articles that reported on the traumatic incidents of violent behavior that took place in South African schools. These newspaper articles articulated what cannot be researched on a daily basis and formed a good basis of what is considered to be school violence.
Chapter: Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains literature collected and reviewed on school violence. It begins by giving a brief discussion on the historical impact of school violence which supports the fact that school violence is not a new discovery but has been out there for years. Further on, the chapter explores the concept of school violence and gives the reader the underlying meaning of this broad concept (concepts such as victimization, bullying, and aggressive behavior are included). It concludes with a discussion of the prevention and the intervention strategies that offer possibilities of change in the personal, cognitive, emotional and/or social development for learners who are victims of school violence.

The literature survey is grouped into a number of themes: family violence, peer influence, substance abuse and media exposure and provides the reader with a broader understanding of the root cause of what we see today as constituting violence in schools.

2.2 The historical impact of school violence in society

Most studies in the past have focused on bullying behaviour when referring to school violence. This focus was not enough because it excluded all the other behaviours that today are counted as violent acts amongst and/or against learners in the school context.
According to Tattum and Lane (1989) because of the violent histories of bullying and criminal behaviour, now there is a need for providing support services in schools, parents and learners in areas related to behaviour difficulties. In the study conducted in Islington Educational Centre, the research series approach used was informed by the researcher’s orientation over a period of 15 years, and the urban schools that were included in the study contained more problematic males than those in rural areas (Tattum & Lane, 1989). The home environment contributes to the way which a child behaves and long-term exposure to violence teaches the child that criminal activities are acceptable and shapes his or her parenting style.

The problem of young people having easy access to weapons illegally and engaging in violent protests in order to be heard began during the apartheid era (in 1976). Learners were overpowered by their emotions to the extent that they vandalized school property, got involved in serious criminal acts of theft, robbery, murder and arson in their communities because of the unfavorable education system. June 16, 1976 does not only mark the violent and aggressive demonstration of the youth, but it also marks the uprising when the youth of our country rebelled against the apartheid regime in its quest to institutionalize apartheid further by making the language of the oppressor the medium of instruction (North Coast Times: June, 2011). When the situation so dictated, these young people sacrificed everything they had to fight with supreme sacrifice so that those who survived the South African revolution could enjoy the fruits of freedom. During this time the whole of South Africa became a battle field as black students swelled the ranks of the liberation movement and people’s glorious army “Umkhonto Wesizwe” in pursuit of the noble objectives.
Another historical event of violence in South Africa is the battle of the Shell House which took place in 1994 before the April elections. Many people died when they woke up to march on the streets of Johannesburg not knowing that the march will turn into a war. Repeated images of these events remain buried at the back of every South African
citizen’s mind. Van Dijk (2006) states that recent studies show that the media has an influence on the human spirit and the impact of the media on humans may lead to personality changes. News reports have shocked so many people as it gave updates during the June 1976 and April 1994 about the violence in South Africa and left emotional and psychological scares that even the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) could not heal.

Today we read about learners who protest on the school premises because of teachers who do not fulfill their duties properly. Such an incident took place in Stanger South Secondary School whereby learners marched as they raised their voices to be heard and burnt down classrooms in demand that something be done about this situation that has been going on for weeks (North Coast Times, March 2011).

The need for preventive strategies was informed by the mention of violence amongst learners. According to Kupchick and Bracy (2009), over the past few decades, a contradiction has emerged in schools (USA) and their efforts to prevent crime, and that despite the attempt to implement a variety of school discipline and security measures, it has failed to decrease the high ratio of violence in schools. These strategies, however, created an anxious learning environment and disturbed the levels of concentration in some learners (Kupchick & Bracy, 2009). Over the years school administrations and teachers have tried to find a solution by using systems of security, employing metal detectors, surveillance cameras, identity tags, and drug sniffing dogs but these systems turned schools into a prison-like atmosphere and affected the learners. Tesser (1995) states that human aggression depends on life orientation and it is a response to specific
conditions in the environment. Sadock and Sadock (2007) share that behavioural choices and life experiences can aggravate academic difficulties. For example, a learner who seems to be performing poorly can replace his or her academic pursuits with activities such as drug use.

2.3 The concept of school violence

According to Kreiner (1996) violence is the use of physical force that causes harm against property (vandalism to school property) or persons (striking out with hands or feet, guns and knives to hurt or kill the other person). Casserly, Bass and Garrett (1980) agree that school violence is the destruction of property by the youth and stems largely from delinquent behaviour. Licata (1997) asserts that violence is one way of expressing very strong feelings using physical force to injure or abuse someone or something. Stanko (2002) argues that understanding violence requires one to develop rather an imagination of what happened during the incident to fulfill this concept, which is centered on social identities, social meanings, and social context. This has made it difficult to separate the social and legal meaning of an incident from its wider social, political, and economical context. According to Greene (2005) the term is defined when the epidemiological data is summarized. It is when a topology of violence reduction in the strategies and procedures to effectively implement evident-based programs are done (Greene, 2005).
The use of weapons is amongst the mostly used objects to inflict pain on the other person in the US and despite the public support for gun control, access to guns is relatively easy (Kreiner, 1996). Studies reveal that every year 3 million thefts and violent crimes occur in or near the schools and once every six seconds a student or teacher is a victim of crime (Kreiner, 1996). Casserly et., al (1980) have conducted studies that revealed the extent of school vandalism, which includes arson, theft or loss of property in the US.

According to Strawhacker (2002), school violence is a growing area of concern and demands a selective type of school nurses to explain this perspective. Strawhacker conducted a national study that identified a collection of risk factors for the youth violence and school shootings as a guide to identify learners that were in need of assistance. This also speculated the nurse’s role in a multi-disciplinary approach, and in developing violence prevention strategies in schools and the community (Strawhacker). However, Kupchick and Bracy (2009) found that the media plays a major role in shaping fears on school violence through the analysis of news reports from the New York Times and USA Today Papers, where they examined the frequency and content of the journalists’ reports. In this study they found that the media reports were articulated in a manner that was limited to a review of prior research on the media’s coverage of crime in general (Kupchick & Bracy, 2009). Kreiner (1996) disagrees by saying that we cannot shift the blame to the media reports because it reports what’s already out there. Although a school is assumed to be a safe place for learning often when or if violence occurs it brings about fear which can reduce the ability for the learner to get good results.
2.4 Causes of school violence

There are various reasons why violence occurs and these are mentioned in the following discussion. Violence in a philosophical understanding is caused by an argument whereby an attempt is made to convince the other person that the claim is true or accepted which includes a collection of statements (Van Den Berg, 2005).

McCann (2002) highlights the following consequences of school violence as;

- increased corporal punishment by parents and teachers,
- innocent learners joining gangs because of fame and substance abuse,
- disrupted family relationships,
- development of fear and insecurity in learners,
- development of false ideas that violence is a workable means of solving conflicts,
- moving away from home,
- prevalence of young girls that become victims of school violence, for example, rape and sexual harassment by teachers and their fellow classmates,
- and high rate of premature deaths, disability, and injury.

Sonn (1999) states that the reason why learners misbehave can be explained in many ways such as having a personal crisis that might give the person some difficulty when attempting to solve the problem. According to Havelin (2000) children who come from
violent homes may suffer from guilt, shame and fear as well as aggression, depression and trauma. Violence is a learned behaviour which children happen to witness from their parents who use violence to solve problems (Havelin, 2000). Gouws, Kruger and Burger (2000) agree, that the family environment has an impact on high levels of violence, through high-level of parental conflict, social isolation of the family due to child abusing parents, early separation from parents—which may lead to lack of empathy and attachments, marital conflicts, low socio-economic status and families with diverse psychopathologies.

Brezina, Piquero and Mazerolle (2001) conducted a study examining the variation in criminal behaviour across communities, schools and other social units which were explained in terms of the social organization and sub-cultural values. The Agnew’s macro level strain theory (MST) was used as additional explanation and argued that the macro-level differences (schools, neighborhoods and metropolitan areas) in crime and deviance can be explained in terms of aggregate levels of anger and frustration, where the learner’s anger is fostered by a problem in behaviour with others (Brezina et.al., 2001). In a study conducted by Sonn (1999), teachers were interviewed regarding their views on discipline. The study revealed that bad behaviour in classrooms was a problem that the teachers had to deal with on a daily basis (Sonn, 1999). Teachers also reported cases where teaching and learning became difficult and they came to a point whereby they no longer understood what discipline meant anymore because it had escalated to a level of being uncontrollable in classrooms (Sonn, 1999).
The cause of violence has a complex set of influences or multiple causes operating at the individual, community, and national level and cannot be explained on a solitary basis. Violence includes the community and the neighborhood as the perpetrators, such that socially notorious neighborhoods, with high rates of crime, social disorganization, over population, can create a socially toxic environment for a school. These communities are flourished by gangs and believe that they cannot be policed or protected. So, these gangs create alternative opportunities for income based on drug economies and recruit young people especially those who are at a school-going age into their fold. Some examples of such communities are Hilbrow (Johannesburg, Gauteng) and The Point (near Durban Coast, KZN) which are famous for its illegal drug smuggling, prostitution, theft, etcetera.

Woolfolk (2007) asserts that, social constructionism is clearly explained by Vygotsky's Learning Theory as social interaction, cultural tools, and activity which shapes the individual's development and learning. Akiba, Gerald, LeTendre, Baker, and Goesling (2002) point out that mass media indeed, does have an influence on the public perceptions in a way that promotes fear. Even though articles were reporting that school crime is getting better, there are also examples that indicate that school crime is getting worse. The presentation of raw numbers regarding crimes at school (without context) is alarming and does not leave the reader with the impression that schools are safer and its consistency evokes fear to the readers’.

To some extent, the combined effect of fictional images in movies and the dramas in the news and advertising media communicates a distorted and/or undeveloped picture and
shaped our response in ways that invoke more violence. Today children are exposed to these images through Playstations, PC games and cartoons. Baron, Byrne and Branscombe (2006) agrees, that exposure to media violence can be counted as a contributing factor to the high levels of violence in countries and South Africa being anchored along, because such materials are viewed by large numbers of persons.

Another alarming cause of violence in schools is the use of drugs, for example, tobacco, alcohol, dagga, heroine, cocaine, mandrax etcetera. Gouws, Kruger and Burger (2000) state that alcohol abuse is usually the first drug that adolescents try even before puberty and this interferes with their intellectual and thought processes, impairs their perception and sensory-motor coordination, and prevents that person from functioning normally. Elizabeth and Stanko (2006) point out that the early use of drugs and perceived prevalence of drug use among peers was found to affect the amount of violence in which teenagers engaged in. Learners who used any substances were more likely to have engaged in the following acts on school property: carrying a weapon, being threatened or injured with a weapon, being in a fight, having property stolen or damaged, and being absent from school because they did not feel safe (Elizabeth & Stanko, 2006).

According to Leigh (1986) drugs have been of enormous benefit to people for centuries, and most of the fatal diseases were cured by a simple course of drugs but the misuse of these drugs became extremely dangerous. Louw and Edwards (1997) support Leigh, in that since earliest times people from all cultures have used drugs to assist them to relax, cope with stress, avoid unpleasant realities or feel adequate in interpersonal
situations under careful supervision of doctors and pharmacists. Abusing drugs is internally and externally harmful and has fatal consequences (Leigh, 1986).

**Case study**

Let’s take an example of a boy called John who had unconsciously blocked the memory of the first time his father abused his mother. John blamed his father for the fights and when he was eight years old he tried to hit his father to make him stop but he failed because his father just pushed him away. He couldn’t understand why his mother took the abuse and blamed his family for the fights. He thought that it was his mother who provoked his father’s anger. One day John’s mum yelled at him because his room was untidy. Without thinking he pushed her away, when his mother tried to hit him he struck back. His mum walked away and minutes after the incident, he heard her crying downstairs. John felt sad and never thought that he could ever hurt someone he loved. (Courtesy of K. Havelin)

The above case study shows us that children have a tendency of repeating mistakes that have been made by their parents. The above example also supports the view that many men abuse their partners (discourse of femininity and masculinity). Some males
have a negative reaction to rejection and use violence to protect their masculinity ideologies. Ignoffo (1999) states that if you see yourself as a meaningless person leading a purposelessly life then you will not be able to manufacture confidence.

According to Havelin (2000) boys who are reared in an abusive environment are more likely to become aggressive, have problems controlling their temper and become disruptive in classrooms, and girls may be withdrawn, become passive, and act dependently. Parent’s involvement in discipline strategies plays a vital role in solving this problem. An article in the Sunday Times newspaper reported that parents are to a certain level accountable for their children’s behaviour as in various traditional communities, rearing a child is a collaborative endeavor whereby everyone in the community has the freedom and responsibility to educate, manage and discipline children (June, 2011). What parents are modelling in nowadays is a total ignorance of unacceptable behavior that would be limited or forbidden in their own homes. They have abdicated their responsibility to teach children basic manners.

Elizabeth and Stanko (2006) indeed, points out that reports have shown that there is a link between parental behavior and attitudes with their children’s violent behavior. Among the 9th and 10th graders the risk of engaging in physical fights, carrying a weapon to school, or threatening a peer has increased as parental responsiveness and demandingness decreased (Elizabeth & Stanko, 2006). The parent’s attendance to their children’s emotional and developmental needs is needed while maintaining parental control of the child’s behavior through monitoring and supervision. According to Gouws, Kruger and Burger (2000) juvenile delinquency is caused by socio-economic status and
class, affluence and hedonism, violence in peer group involvement and influences, neighborhood and community influences, social and cultural change of disorganization and unrest.

On the other hand, violence can be caused by mental illness. The American Psychiatric Association (2000) classifies a number of behavioural problems as a result of mental illness in the DSM-IV-TR (Attention-Deficit/hyperactivity Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Disruptive Behavior Disorder Not Otherwise Specified and Antisocial Personality Disorders). Patients with these problems need to be present with these symptoms at an early age; the symptoms must occur in different settings, and must be uncontrollable. During my training I often came across many parents who merely thought that such behaviour is “part of growing up and that it will eventually weigh off with age”.

Licata (1997) argues that often the angry person cannot cope with the emotions and feels that the only way of “letting off the steam” is by punishing the other person (which can be a parent, teacher or a classmate). Gcubeshe (2009) reveals that the key causes of aggression in learners are due to socio-economic factors whereby some learners come from child-headed homes and they become frustrated because they have to take on the responsibility of looking after their siblings with no food to eat thus leading them to criminal activities for survival. Some children are born with certain brain-functioning differences that can have adjustment problems in school. These could be differences in neuropsychological functions and intelligence that develop in a child’s brain because of a variety of factors. Indeed, a child who does poorly in academic work and feels rejected
by the school may become alienated from school and act out aggressively. Sadock and Sadock (2007) agree that the origin of stable patterns of disruptive behaviour is widely accepted as a convergence of multiple contributing factors such as biological, temperamental, learned, and psychological conditions.

### 2.5 Victimization

According to Gottfredson and Gottfredson (1985), learner victimization occurs to those learners who have had the first-time experience of being raped and seriously assaulted, and most of the time victims believe that they are being bullied because they are overweight or that they are different from others and that there is no help for their experiences. They may also be scared to disclose because of the fear of what can happen to them if they disclose to someone else and would rather prefer to take the threats and the harm from the perpetrator. Akiba, Gerald, LeTendre, Baker, and Goesling (2002) state that the definition of violence utilizes the victim’s perceptions by defining violence as “any physical or psychological assault, or threat of assault, of learners on other learners or teachers in school which are perceived as violent by the victims”.

Kathleen, Albus, Weist, and Perez-Smith (2004) state that there is a large area of impending research which indicates that victims of violence are more likely to be perpetrators of violence, and that individuals who are most likely to be victims of personal crime are those who report the greatest involvement in delinquent activities
(this shows that there is a social interaction between student offenders and victims turning out to be offenders). Greene (2005) states that the probability of a learner becoming a homicide victim throughout the course of a school year is approximately 1.7 million to 1 and that fewer than one hundredth of all homicides of 6- to 18-year olds are school associated. It is often assumed that females are the victims of violence, but Elizabeth and Stanko (2006) conducted a study exploring bouncers in the night club and found that bouncers were hired to be intimidating by using violence to maintain order in the night clubs. It was mostly the males who were victims that came to the attention of the police because they were beaten up or injured by the bouncers (Elizabeth & Stanko, 2006).

2.6 Bullying and Aggressive behaviour

Many teenagers may lose confidence during their identity versus role confusion stage of development (which is about 13 years to 21 years in Erikson’s stages of development) as the result of violence (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). They might feel the pressure to please their parents at the same time try to please or fit in the gang at school (Licata, 1997). The choices to be made, become hard for that young person and make that person develop self doubt which later can develop to depression. Depression affects the child’s self-esteem and the psychological understanding of bullies or bullying behaviour. According to Sadock and Sadock (2007) children and adolescents who have depression present with clinical symptoms that are different to those of adults. In children these
symptoms include irritable mood, failure to make weight gains, excessive clinging on parents or others, truancy, sexual promiscuity, poor academic performance and antisocial behaviour (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). Greene (2005) did a special theme and longitudinal study which provides valuable information on the nature and prevalence of school violence. These included studies of sexual harassment, the expression of bias-based actions or attitudes (e.g., homophobia and racism), bullying, attitudes and beliefs about the use of violence and aggression (Greene, 2005). The results reveal that physical aggression is less frequently perpetrated than verbal aggression and the most common forms of school-based violence are predominantly verbal—bullying and sexual harassment (Greene, 2005).

According to Sadock and Sadock (2007) bullying is defined as the use of a person's strength or status to intimidate, injure, or humiliate the other person who is less powerful than he or she is, which can be in a physical, verbal, or a social form. This emphasizes the point that there is a link between bullying and aggressive behaviour across all genders and races. Aggressive behaviour is an expression of an emotional act towards someone or a situation (Licata, 1997). According to Licata a person becomes violent when he or she is angry and reacts on his or her emotions without realizing that he or she is causing harm to others. Baron, Byrne and Branscombe (2006) argue that human aggression is based on the social, cultural, personal and situational factors. Elliot (1992) states that bullying behaviour cannot be cured just by treating the physical symptoms presented.
According to Greeff and Grobler (2008) various studies have been conducted internationally that reveal that school bullying has negative effects on its victims as well as long-term effects. Greeff and Grobler (2008) found a high incidence of bullying being reported, the significant differences that were identified for both the grade and gender groups of children reported mean-name calling, or being teased in a harmful way. Manning and Bear (2002) argue that based on their findings, they found that there is a significantly higher ratio on either gender roles with the absence of teacher-reported overt aggressive behaviour.

Woods and Wolke’s (2004) study focused on the association between bullying behaviour and the academic achievement by investigating a sample of 1016 learners from primary schools (6-9 year-olds) in the U.K. The findings reveal that there is no relationship between direct bullying behaviour and decrease in academic achievement. The Special Educational Needs (SEN) outlined that being a learner from the rural schools or low socioeconomically status (SES) has an impact on the low academic achievement in the grade two learners (the 7 year-olds), which isolates the theory of underachievement and frustration at schools that lead to direct physical bullying behaviour (Woods & Wolke, 2004). Brezina, Piquero and Mazerolle (2001) argue that there is a high level of anger in learners that can foster violent behaviour and the likelihood of these learners interacting with angry peers which may result in conflicts.
2.7 Prevention

According to Strawhacker (2002) creating safe schools is the process that must begin either from within the school or the greater community. Strawhacker emphasizes the outcomes of the programme, which is the development of resistance to peer and media pressure in using substances, the development of a positive self-image, amendment of the school’s policy and the constructive behavioural management strategies through the use of the school administrators, teachers, school counselors, governing body, parents, community councilors and the police. Kathleen, Albus, Weist and Perez-Smith (2004) state that school-based prevention programs targeting violence exposure as a solitary risk factor appear to be missing the broader context in which violence occurs. In order to be more effective these programs needs to address violence in conjunction with other risk factors such as substance use and risky sexual practices (Kathleen et. al., 2004).

Greene (2005) offers three critical areas of preventive school-based violence. Firstly, is the need for additional research to evaluate the impact of security strategies, peer-led programs, threat assessment and crisis response initiatives. Secondly, the effective and realistic school-based assessment strategies need to be established to identify and address organizational barriers to the selection and adoption of an integrated and comprehensive array of targeted evidence-based violence prevention strategies (Greene, 2005). Lastly, the development of realistic guidelines through which schools can effectively monitor and implement evidence-based programs can be beneficial (Greene, 2005). Gottfredson and Gottfredson (2002) used the probability study with a sample of 3,691 school-based prevention activities operating in the spring of 1998 to
describe the quality of implementation of typical school-based prevention practices. The study reveals that there is a low quality of school-based prevention practices and can be improved through (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2002);

1. better integration of these activities into normal school operations,
2. more extensive local planning and involvement in decisions-making,
3. great organizational support in the form of high quality training,
4. supervision and principal support,
5. greater standardization of program materials and methods.

Charlebios, Brendgen, Vitaro, Normandeau and Boudreau (2004) conducted a study to examine the predictive effect of 58 disruptive boys’ (6 years-old) attendance to a prevention program on the post-intervention academic and behaviour, as well as the potential moderating effects of child and family characteristic in that context. The study reveals that there are close relations between the family characteristics and the boys’ post-intervention behaviour and academic achievement (Charlebios et. al., 2004). Thus, a study conducted by Syvertsen, Flanagan and Stout (2009) about a hypothetical peer’s dangerous plan to intervene directly at school found that, the adolescents reported that their teachers created a democratic environment, positive contribution to the prediction of the willingness to take direct action at a primary level.

Elizabeth and Stanko (2006) points out that the main goal of the preventive program is to create an atmosphere in which all learners feel safe and valued, barriers between social cliques are torn down and learners themselves make sure everyone is treated with respect. According to Stueve, Dash, O’Donnell, Tehranifar, Wilson-Simmons,
Slaby, Ronald and Bruce (2006) the framework of prevention of school violence included the role of the bystanders. Bystanders refer to learners who witness fights or violent behaviour, overheard conservations, veiled threats and changes in behaviour (Stueve et. al., 2006). Bystanders to school violence are not limited to learners only but can include a wide range of adults in the community. These adults in the course of their daily activities also witness aggressive acts on school grounds and frequently have recommended that if acted on this can help in preventing violence in schools (Stueve et. al, 2006).

2.8 Interventions strategies

Stanko (2002) states that dealing with this problem can be viewed from a holistic approach which is the peace agreement (referring to an acceptable level of violence), but the idea denied the impact of the victims and favored the perpetrator. In an explorative study on the role of teachers in helping learners overcome negative impact of sexual child abuse in South Africa, Phasha (2008) found that there is a negative impact of childhood experiences of sexually abused learners who were selected to participate in the study. This study points out that we have spent too much time worrying about finding the perpetrator and ignoring the victims who needed our attention the most. The laws in South Africa simply state how the perpetrator should be punished but not offering any guidance to the young innocent victims. Educational support is significant in creating a safe classroom environment and teaching approaches that cater for the victims to experience success (Phasha, 2008). Van Deventer and Kruger (2003),
however, give a different opinion, stating that through conflict management people can create a peaceful environment by the implementation of creativity and innovation. Ndlovu, Bertram, Mthiyane, and Avery (1999) state that the positive intervention strategy involves;

1. principals leading rather than instructing,
2. new schools trying to reduce the ranks on the hierarchical ladder to produce more open and participative structures,
3. roles played by teachers must be more flexible and share responsibilities amongst each other,
4. leadership being about empowering learners, not initiating or forcing power over them,
5. commanding respect through stature not status (modeling good behavior in school),
6. emphasizing effective school progress not simply efficiency and,
7. creating a culture of learning rather than controlling behaviour.

Strawhacker (2002) argues that designing an intervention strategy requires to be examined from the primary, secondary, or tertiary approach and to organize this approach requires the school and community to work together in order to build common visions of beliefs and values. The primary approach is more universal in examining the expectations for the learner behaviour, instruction and skills training. The secondary approach targets those learners who are at risk of behaviour problems by making use of adult mentors, teaching new positive behavioural strategies and providing support. The tertiary approach is aimed at those learners who already exhibit behavioural problems
and focuses on providing services from both within and outside the school setting (Strawhacker). The Sunday Times newspaper placed an article, where The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa working together with the World Health Organisation (WHO) had a street protest pleading for protection of children against second-hand smoking as they had found that three million children and young people are smokers and of these, 150 million would die of smoking-related causes in a later life (June, 2011). Such protests are good platforms to debate plans on how we as a nation can protect our children from any sort of harm.

Gcabashe (2009) comments that a good school management and engaging learners in different activities and practices (shifting their attention) that the school adopts can assist in promoting a culture or ethos of nonviolence. Gcabashe conducted a study that explored how schooling as a site could offer possibilities to promote the culture of non-violence at Nonhlenvu Secondary School (KZN). The South African educational policy has introduced the governing body system to deal with violence in schools and even though there has been a major shift but the system did not eliminate the problem. So, this means that a more strategic plan needs to be implemented to solve violence in schools. Smith and Sharp (1994) found that empowering learners was an appropriate technique that encouraged them to take positive action against bullying through collaborative conflict resolution, peer counseling and assertiveness training. These techniques helped to build essential skills of effective communication which can help them to resolve these problems themselves and offer support to their peers (Smith & Sharp, 1994). Elizabeth and Stanko (2006) state that through the inclusion of school nurses the school can benefit by using the crisis management. This will benefit both
staff and learners and provide leadership in collaboration with the community emergency medical system, district staff, and administration to develop a comprehensive community-specific plan (Elizabeth & Stanko, 2006).

Rue (1997) states that peer mediation can assist in empowering learners. These programs include mediation sessions with the help of the mediators. Rue (1997) also states that the most significant part of peer mediation process is honest communication whereby each person talks about how he or she feels instead of acting out in a violent way. Gail (1991) agrees that peer groups are important for children and allows them to practice the skills they learn even at home with their parents and controlling their internal emotions. In a study that was conducted by Barth, Dunlap, Dane, Lochman and Wells (2004) a sample of 65 classrooms in 17 schools over a period of 2 years was chosen and revealed that peers can serve as reinforcers and they model out positive behaviour to one another. Secondly, they found that classrooms containing high numbers of learners with poor academic skills were most likely to promote the same behaviour to their peers. But, Ignoffo (1999) asserts that the meaning and purpose in ones life is a useful intervention strategy. By looking at the mirror one may try to think of himself or herself as “there is only one me in all human history, I am here for a reason, I have a talent that the world needs, if I don’t develop my talent than the world will never have it, I need to become what I was meant to be, and I here for a reason” (Ignoffo, 1999).

Gcabashe (2009) identified an activity that is often not seen as important (in dealing with school violence), an activity such as the assembly time where the teachers and
learners get together to share interests, ideas and awareness of God that offers a potential space for promoting unity, respect and togetherness (spiritual development). Smith and Sharp (1994) agree that schools need to set education within the context of spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development for the learners. Kupchick and Bracy (2009) assert that social constructionism and the news media can actively shape a citizen’s view of social life. They do so by providing only a certain type of information about these problems and subjectively framing issues in ways that lead the public to adopt particular beliefs. A good example of this is Dr. Nelson Mandela who fought during the struggle (for freedom and a more democratic country) without being violent by spending half of his life in prison even though some of his ANC comrades were involved in violent acts.

Gouws, Kruger and Burger (2000) affirm that not only is this an educator’s role but that the inclusion of family intervention can be an advantage, through improving the communication skills of families to modify cognitive sets, expectations, attitudes, and affection reactions in order to establish new interpretations and meaning of behaviour. Piersel and Kratochwill (1979) argue that the implementation of the concept of self-observation as a behaviour change technique can bring about a positive turnover towards dealing with violence in schools. They reveal that this goal could be achieved through the concept of self-monitoring which is an essential element in effective intervention rather than the use of the school policy (Piersel & Kratochwill, 1979). Kathleen, Albus, Weist and Perez-Smith (2004) conducted a study that assesses the relation between health risk behaviours and varying levels of exposure to violence in an effort to inform assessment and intervention efforts of school-based mental health
program. They found that a complete understanding of associations among health risk factors and violence exposure variables has potential to improve through implementation of school mental health services for the youth (Kathleen et. al., 2004). Kathleen et. al., (2004) found that understanding the broader socio-cultural context where violence exposure occurs will enrich the clinician's preventative and intervention work in adolescents.

Greene (2005) has rather a different approach to intervene by using the violence reduction program as the psychosocial and psychoeducational programs. These programs include counseling, teaching, coaching, and/or training which are provided to promote individual behavior change with respect to cooperative, pro-social, and peaceful strategies to resolve conflicts (Greene, 2005). Jason, Ferone and Anderegg (1979) conducted a study that evaluated the differential effectiveness of conceptually distinct consultation programs (ecological, behavioural and process) in inner-elementary schools. The findings illustrates that there are significant reductions only in the observed and rated behavioural problems occurring in classes that provided behavioural consultation than it has on the other consultation programs (Jason et. al., 1979). Shear and Shapiro (1993) attempted a different approach when they conducted a study on how to reduce the levels of disruptive behaviour from a school for learners with behaviour disorders being videotaped. The intervention condition entails the participant's either self-observed or self-recorded behaviours (Shear & Shapiro, 1993). The results showed idiosyncratic effects across measures of treatment integrity and treatment acceptability, but self-recording their behaviour while observing themselves
on videotape was not effective in reducing disruptive behaviour (Shear & Shapiro, 1993).

2.9 Resumé

The literature presented in this chapter gave the reader the foundation on school violence in South Africa. The historical information was drawn from the reports on the June 16, 1976 uprising and the battle of the Shell House in 1994. Though some of the strategies that were being used before were successful but they had to be rescreened and examined from the primary, secondary and tertiary approach for improved results. Data collected depicted that South Africa is not the only country that has had an increase in school violence but the problem is experienced all over the world equally by rural and urban areas. School violence cannot be explained by a solitary concept neither can it be as a result of a single condition.

The chapter also gave preventive strategies that can be utilized in schools, by parents at home, and the communities in order to eliminate school violence. The studies presented reveal how school violence impacts on gender differences and academic achievement. Lastly the intervention strategies included a holistic approach through the media and, learners empowering one another through peer mediation and extra-mural activities for promoting a culture or ethos of nonviolence.

The following chapter presents the research methodology
3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to illustrate the methodology followed by the researcher in soliciting the data needed to accomplish the aims of the present study. As stated in chapter one, the present study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the group intervention program among learners of Ongoye High School in dealing with violence. Ultimately, the study wanted to assist and encourage emotional well-being by improving the current intervention program aimed at helping learners deal with the psychological impact of violence at Ongoye High School. This chapter, is therefore, a layout of all the procedures followed to accomplish the above mentioned aims.

3.2 Research methodology

When conducting research, the research methodology applied should be able to make justifiable and accountable conclusions of the study. Huysamen (2001) states that the research methodology comes into play at three different, yet overlapping and integrated stadia, namely, the creation and development of techniques and strategies to collect data, secondly the selection of items to be retained in a summarized attitude scale, and lastly the analysis of the scores. This study used a qualitative approach in order to help
the learners of Ongoye High School deal with school violence. According to Louw and Edwards (1997) qualitative research is the basis of most research in psychoanalysis and humanistic psychology it uses a method that collects information in the form of words which give an in-depth understanding of the nature of the peoples’ experience. For Leedy and Ormrod (2005) qualitative research tries to simplify what is observed by the researcher which should be as little as possible influenced by any perceptions, impressions and biases that the researcher has. This helps the researcher to study various dimensions and layers without limiting the researcher to a specific theme and approach. According to Cohen and Crabtree (2006) qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret, make sense of their experiences and the world they live in.

In qualitative paradigm, the researcher should be able to interpret and make sense of what is seen as critical for understanding any social phenomenon. The researcher’s experience and perspective influences the research results (cultural background, religious values, ethnicity, and educational background). In order to capture the participant’s understanding of school violence, the researcher becomes immersed in the data, that is, he or she enters the participant’s mind and lives, exploring their assumptions and biases and discovering what they take for granted, what they believe in and their own experiences (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Here the researcher aims to develop a close relationship with the participants and arrive at a mutual understanding. In this study data was analyzed by extracting themes and presented in the form of words and the statistical meaning indicated in the questionnaires. Babbie and Mouton (2001) summarize the main features of qualitative research as follows:
1. Research is conducted in the natural setting of the participants meaning that the subjects are viewed holistically within their context.

2. Research is based on the process rather than the outcome. This allows for underlying meanings to emerge.

3. The aim of the research is to gain an in-depth, rich description of the life of the participants, where actions and events are included.

4. The main concern of research is to view social action within a specific context and to try not to generalize according to some theoretical population.

5. The research is inductive, resulting in new hypotheses and theories.

6. The researcher is the main tool in the research process.

This type of research tends to have biases in terms of age, gender and geographical background. For this reason, the study was conducted in a public township school and only involved learners from grade 11 to 12. The learners were closely observed during the discussions and interviewed as a focused group. This study used an explorative research approach to satisfy the researcher’s curiosity, desire for better understanding and reporting the researcher’s observation (Babbie, 1995).

3.3 The Sample

The sample was drawn through consultation with the Deputy Principal of Ongoye High School in the township of KwaDlangezwa (KwaZulu-Natal), who granted the researcher permission to run the intervention program on the school premises. All 10 participants
had to fill-out a consent form which required their personal details (see, Appendix B). The consent forms were the screening process for those who were allowed to participate in terms of age and grade-level. All discussions were held at a facility on which the participants were notified on. All the sessions were supervised and led by the researcher.

In choosing the sample the method used was the non-probability sampling. The random selection was used where the selection procedure aimed to guarantee that each element (person, group, and class) has an equal chance to be selected. The technique that was used was the convenience sampling, which involves using what is immediately available (Herek, 2007). Theoretical sampling was also used to obtain information from the population sample that the researcher had knowledge of (Walliman, 2006). The participants selected ranged from the primary to the secondary victims of school violence. The participants attended the program five times for a period of two weeks.

The researcher selected the following sample to collect data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>11-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data was analyzed by making use of tables and themes. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) the *grounded theory* holds a basic tenet that qualitative researchers do not go around testing hypothesis to add to an already existing body of knowledge. It is a building of a specific theory literally block by block using the open coding (creation of categories pertaining to certain segment text), axial coding (a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding), and systematic coding (the process of selecting a core category, systematically relating it to another category, validating those relationship) (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The reason for choosing this theory is mainly because the intervention program that was tested in this study was the researcher’s initiative.

### 3.4 Techniques for Data Collection

The following tools were used to collect data:

- Focus groups interviews
- Informative discussions
- Questionnaires (pre-test & post-test)

The researcher chose the focus group interviews to collect data. Babbie and Mouton (2001) states that the focus group interviews in qualitative paradigm are used in two ways, firstly what Ineke Meulenberg-Buskens used to call the “get-ten-for-the-price-of-one” whereby the researcher chooses between 8 and 12 respondents and sit them in a circle and going around the circle ensuring that everyone speaks. Secondly, it is used to
find information that the researcher would not otherwise be able to access allowing for space in which people may get together and create meaning amongst themselves (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Leedy and Ormond (2005) state that interviews yield a great deal of useful information and those in the qualitative research are rarely structured than those in quantitative research.

Huysamen (2001) states that, a group administration is used when the researcher wants to be in full control of the completion of the questionnaires. During the pre-test, participants were given the questionnaire individually and answered giving their own personal opinions and understanding of the questions asked. The biographical information included in the questionnaire was gender, age, grade-level, marital status, and location.

3.4.1: Table A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learners</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade-level</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Semi-urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Township</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the first session rapport was created and consent forms were given to all the participants. Then the pre-test questions were distributed in an attempt to establish their understanding of the concept “school violence”. During the second session the researcher conducted the group-focus interviews and the informative discussions in measuring the impact of school violence on its victims. The third session was mainly discussions on the management of school violence. The fourth session focused on empowering the participants. The last session was the distribution of post-test questions (NB: refer to the Appendices).

3.5 Ethical considerations

Leedy and Ormond (2005) assert that whenever human beings are the focus investigation it is the duty of the researcher to look closely at the ethical implications of what he or she may be proposing. According to Louw and Edwards (1997) a code of ethics is set as a guideline that is designed to ensure that members of that profession behave completely within appropriate limits. Ethics give the most important summarized
legal agreement that prevail in research. Babbie (1995) states the following four as being very important aspects for ethical issues;

1. informed consent (signed agreement by the participant to take part in the study),
2. confidentiality, protection from harm,
3. deception and
4. voluntary participation.

All 10 participants were given consent forms at the beginning of the program (Appendix B). The voluntary participation was used in this study whose main concern is to achieve unforced participation, whereby participants are given freedom to discontinue participating at any point during the study. Another exception that was ensured was the protection from any physical, psychological, or emotional harm of the participants. Confidentiality was ensured throughout the entire study. Permission was obtained from the school deputy principal to have the study conducted within the school premises (Appendix A).

3.6 Resumé

In summary, a qualitative approach, grounded in the framework of explorative phenomenology was used in this study. This was deemed to be the method that would satisfy the researcher’s curiosity, desire of novel understanding of the participant’s experiences. Convenience and theoretical sampling was employed in the selection of the participants, and data was collected through pre and post test questions,
unstructured interviews, which were group-focused and informative discussions. The data was analyzed using tables and themes to make sense of the experiences of the participants. Careful ethical codes (consent forms, confidentiality, protection from harm and deception, and voluntary participation) were considered in carrying out the study in a proper way.

Data obtained will be analyzed in the following chapter.

Chapter: Four

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected for this study along with the responses on the significant findings. The chapter begins by presenting the results in a table form which gives an indication of how the data was analyzed. The analyses include tables and graphs, and themes that emerged from the pre- and post-test that was used to collect the data.
4.2 Biographical data

Table: 4.2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that there was a difference between genders, 5 of the participants were males and 5 of them were females.

Table: 4.2.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade-level</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eleven</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that more grade 11’s participated in the study than grade 12’s.
The above table indicates that there were differences between locations and from this difference both participants from semi-urban and urban areas responded equally (there was a balance in the responses that were given by males and females who were from semi-urban and urban areas).

- No difference was found in the marital-status as all the participants reported to be single.
- No difference was shown in the racial-group, since all the participants were Africans.

Table: 4.2.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 years-old</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table illustrates that there were differences in ages. Notably the older respondents responded more maturely to the questions asked.

*Analyses that was made based on the gender differences.*

The pre-test results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Respondents’ understanding of school violence</th>
<th>Respondents that experienced school violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of respondents</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The study shows that 4 of the respondents comprising of both males and females do not understand what school violence is. Only 5 of the male respondents are exposed to school violence and the 5 comprised of female respondents have not experienced school violence. According to the results of the study, it is evident that a group intervention program has to be implemented more often to raise awareness. It is interesting to note that literature has revealed that females are mostly known to have been victims of school violence but this study reveals that no females have been exposed to school violence. This implies that the females who were included in the study were not comfortable to disclose such information amongst their classmates. Most of the males reported that they expect the program to be more informative whereas most females reported that they expected the program to be about awareness.

The post-test results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Were the respondents’ expectation met?</th>
<th>Respondents recommendation of this program in other schools</th>
<th>Respondents additions of the to make the program more useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3 Yes 3 No</td>
<td>5 Yes 0 No</td>
<td>4 Safety 1 Psychologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the post test results the respondents gave positive feedback with regards to commenting if their expectations were met, or not. Such results indicate that those who attended the group gained a lot from the program. They also felt that the program could benefit other learners in other schools as well. The forth column gives an account of 8 respondents who were dissatisfied with the omission of safety issues in the program. This study was based more on intervening on the psychological well-being which includes emotion, support, skills in dealing with trauma and resource centers where one can get more information and help. The fact that the respondents reported that more needs to be done on safety measures is accounted for by the fact that the participants did not see the need to consult a psychologist.

4.3 Analyzing the focus-group Interviews

Session one

The data produced from the session indicated their understanding of school violence as manifested by the graffiti on the school walls, name-calling, throwing of objects like pens and erases on others, learners selling drugs to learners in lower grade-levels (grade 6, 7, and 8) or bringing drugs, knives to school. Notably the school
security guard is also a care-taker who has a lot of responsibilities. During the breaks the teachers sit in the staff room and depend on the school prefects to keep guard on the school grounds. There are no prefects located in the toilets as they are bullied by those who usually smoke. Victims are often intimidated during break times and they have to hide from the bullies to avoid being harmed. Little or no incidents are reported in the principal’s office as violence has become a norm in this school. Fights are usually reported during class time because the teachers are present and they supervise behaviour.

Session two
The main discussion in this session focused on the effects school violence has on its victims. This was a complex question for some of the participants and more clarification had to be made. The researcher talked about how trauma and depression are linked to violence and its symptoms with reference to the DSM-IV-TR, and the causes of these problems. The participants were alarmed by the different presentation of the clinical features in adults and children. The second part of the discussion focused on the level of school drop-out, carrying of dangerous weapons in defence from the bullies, drugs etcetera.

Session three
In this session the researcher talked about the clinical treatment that is available for the problems suffered by the victims such as the emergency numbers of police department and hospitals etcetera. The discussion also included encouraging
learners to go for support therapy or consulting the school counselors and/or psychologist for treatment when necessary. The other skills are self confidence, self-esteem (*the new you*) and engaging in activities in school like sports such as beach surfing, camping, joining a musical group, etcetera.

Session four

The discussion entailed empowering these learners with problem-solving skills which according to the gestalt approach were to ask how problems are represented in a person’s mind; which is reorganization or restructuring (Goldstein, 2008). Empowering the learners involved dealing with the emotions, dealing with stress and staying healthy (exercising, gym, etc). The discussion entailed reading books, newspaper articles and internet surfing on issues of school violence. The interesting part for the learners was the spiritual fulfillment (affiliating yourself with a certain belief system or religion). The main subject was on the role that is played by the psychologist and school counselors. It came to the researcher’s attention that there are no counselors in this school and as a result the learners rely on the guidance teacher to help them. Secondly, most learners didn’t understand the need for a psychologist/school counselor and had stereotypes about people who consult these professionals. So, the researcher had to help them understand the role of a psychologist.

Session five
This session was based on getting feedback on the program and distributing the post-test questions to the participants.

**4.4 Themes from the Questionnaires**

**4.4.1 Pre-test Questions**

*Question one* (What is your understanding of the concept “school violence”?): four respondents stated that their understanding of the concept relates to abuse two of the respondents said it was about emotional and physical abuse the other respondents reported that there their understanding relates to learners doing wrong things, trauma experience, violation and discrimination, and others were not sure what it meant.

*Question two* Have you ever experienced school violence? Yes/No : five respondents reported that they have experienced school violence on a primary / secondary level and the other five respondents reported that they had not. It might be assumed that those who did not experience school violence are amongst those who did not understand the concept as well as those who had the anxiety to disclose.

*Questions three* (What do you expect from the programme on school violence?): three respondents reported that their expectations of the program were to get a clear explanation of what school violence entails. Three respondents stated that they expect
for the program to provide useful interventions on this problem. Two respondents reported that they expect the program to focus on improving life and encourage learners to focus on their studies rather than engaging in violent behaviour or acts. The others reported that they expect to learn more about abuse in order to help others, the security measures, and teenage pregnancy as part of school violence.

4.4.2 Post-test Questions

*Question one (Were your expectations of the programme met? Please briefly explain):* in this question 7 of the respondents reported that the program was helpful to them and only 3 said that the program was not helpful to them. From the 10 respondents, 4 reported that the program was significant and informative, 2 respondents reported that the program assisted them in protecting themselves against school violence, and 1 of them reported that they were not sure even though they knew it was a life changing experience. The interesting thing about the outcome of the program is that it satisfied what the researcher had anticipated or worked towards while presenting the program. The respondents (3) who reported that the program wasn’t helpful identified the lack of more detail on the measures of protection that can be taken as the problem.

*Question two (Would you recommend this program to be offered in other schools? Yes/No. Please give a reason for your answer above):* five respondents reported that
the program was informative and the other five indicated that the program helped them acknowledge the emotional and psychological effects they suffered even though that did not disturb their academic achievement and would recommend it for other schools as well.

**Question three** *(What else could have been added in the program to make it more useful/effective to you as learners? List as many things as you wish.):* four of the respondents were of the view that the information that can be added on the program can be on surveillance cameras and the legal implementations involved (protection order for the victims). Four of the respondents reported that they would feel safe if police officials were also placed to parade on the school premises. The other two respondents reported that additional information can be on teaching learners to respect their teachers and parents. As a researcher, I felt that the respondents did not pay enough attention to the aims of the program.

### 4.5 Resumé

The program was effective as many respondents gave positive feedback and proposed that other school can benefit from the program presented in this study. The study revealed that the male respondents equally experienced school violence as the female respondents had. Those respondents who were older responded in a matured manner as they displayed more insight to the questions and discussions held during the
program. There was no difference between the respondents in semi-urban and in urban areas as all seemed to have experienced similar school violence. The program revealed that a holistic approach will be more helpful. Some of the respondents gave positive feedback that was helpful and this was in line with what the researcher had anticipated and had worked on.

The following chapter will provide the conclusions and recommendations.

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Chapter: Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the present study on the basis of the data collected the implication of the findings for the literature reviewed and makes recommendations for future research in the field of violence in schools.
5.2 Summary of the Findings

On the aims of this study it can be concluded that more males reported that they have been primary and secondary victims of school violence even though the gender was equal. The difference found between locations indicated that whether one comes from an urban or township settlement he or she is more likely to become a victim of violence in schools. Although the general assumption is that only those learners who are in lower grade-levels are most likely to be bullied, this study established that even those learners in higher grade-levels (grade 11 and 12) do also experience school violence.

The analyses of the pre-test results revealed that the learners had a positive attitude towards the program and had anticipated what impact the program would have in their lives. It also showed the level of insight that the participants had on school violence. The results of the post-test revealed that the program was a life-changing experience that educated the learner’s on the importance of emotional and psychological well-being.

The analyses of the group-focus discussions revealed that the learners of Ongoye High have been bullied and are anxious to disclose to others (teachers and friends). Victims of school violence go to the extreme measures in attempt to avoid harm, for example, by staying away from school to be safe. This indicates that Kreiner (1996) is right in his assertion that the school is no longer a safe place for some learners.
These learners suffer from various problems as a result of school violence both physically and emotionally.

Through this program victims were assisted in realizing that psychological help is needed to deal with trauma or depression whether it is mild or severe. Victims were also encouraged to engage themselves in sporting activities that could help them develop self-esteem and self-confidence. The themes showed that even though the participants had been affected by school violence, the intervention program motivated them to find meaning and purpose in life.

The limitation of the study is that all the participants were single and African. As a consequence thereof, the results are bias. Another limitation is that the questions were written in English and this created problems for some of the respondents in giving accurate responses. Some of the participants left during the first week of the program and this delayed the process of the program. The study cannot be generalized for the whole population because it is not representative of all South African learners who are victims of school violence. Only grade eleven’s and twelve’s were available to participate in the study and this made it difficult for the researcher to establish how learners in other grades felt/knew about school violence. Some of the participants needed to be constantly reminded on the times and days of the program.

5.3 Recommendations
• This kind of intervention program should be initiated in South African schools. It can help victims of school violence to deal with problems, ultimately leading to fulfillment and a much safer school environment.

• The introduction of a group intervention program can support and psychoeducate learners about the importance of emotional and psychological well-being.

• Peer support groups should be implemented in schools and help the victims to establish a network of support groups during a preserved time that will not interfere with their daily time-table.

• A study assessing the correlation in different school can be useful rather than concentrating on one school as a sample.

5.4 Conclusions

From the literature reviewed in the study it is quite obvious that school violence is a social problem that is on the increase in South Africa. The need for belonging is negatively informed by peer pressure and drug use in learners. The causes of victimization in school violence have been reported to be a result of a lack of good management system, family violence, influence from others, media exposure of (retain) violence, etcetera. Additionally victims face depression and trauma as problems in school violence.

This study adopted the group intervention program as an effective approach in dealing with violence among learners of Ongoye High School. In this way a more collaborative approach was used to deal with school violence without ignoring the
large research area of the physical intervention strategies that have been mostly researched over the past years. The program sensitizes the society to other aspects that victims need to concentrate on when dealing with school violence, for example, the discussion on the measures of school violence regarding its intensity, the psychological and emotional factors that are primarily experienced by the victims and management through empowerment sessions or support groups in schools. The results of the study confirmed that an intervention program is a useful tool in improving the victim’s emotional and psychological well-being.

The program was successful in encouraging and empowering the victims of school violence. The positive outcome of the intervention program on victims of school violence should encourage further research and the implementation of other group intervention programs in South African schools. The results emanated from the study indicated that the group intervention program was successful in achieving its aims, which included eliciting the needs of the victims, initiated a group intervention program and helping the victims.

The sample consisted of 10 participants and the researcher who adopted a teaching and participant observer role. The program ran for 2 weeks. The motivation to initiate the support groups was planned by the researcher through her experience of the problems that have been reported by media reports and research studies on school violence. The size of the sample made it difficult from the researcher to generalize the results amongst the South African population of learners. Notwithstanding the limitations
of the study, the feedback obtained from the participants is encouraging and suggests that such a program warrants further exploration.

Reference


Appendix A

34B Van Der Wagen Drive
Rockypark
Kwa-Dukuza
4450

The Principal
Ongoye High School
Private Bag X 1005
KwaDlangezwa
3886

16 March 2009

Dear Sir/Madam

Requesting for Permission to Conduct a Research Study

My name is Nosipho Salvatoris Dlamini, studying MA. CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY at the University of Zululand. I am currently carrying out a study on “the effectiveness of group intervention program among learners of Ongoye High School in dealing with school violence” and would like to use your school to facilitate the whole study. The study will commence as soon as I am granted the permission to conduct the study and the will need a sample of 10 participants (learners in grade eleven and twelve). The study is scheduled for a period of 2 weeks using pre-test and post-test questionnaires to collect data. Consent forms will be given to all participants at the beginning of the program and clear ethical codes will be carried out.

I will greatly appreciate your response and respond any questions you may have regarding the program. For further information please contact Nosipho Dlamini on 0747371379/0848674229,
email address- nosiphodl@gmail.com. Or contact my supervisor Prof. Thwala on 035 902 6602/6611 or fax: 035 902 6082

Thank You.

Yours Sincerely

_________________________ (Ms N. S. Dlamini)

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Appendix B

Consent form

I ………………………………………………………………… voluntarily agree to participate in a study that involves group interventions to victims of school violence. I fully understand the terms and conditions of the study and I am aware of my right to discontinue participation at any stage of the programme should I feel uncomfortable. I am also aware that the programme will run for a period of 2 weeks. The researcher has also explained to me that the information obtained during the period of my participation in this program and in the write-up of the final document will be confidential and there will be no mention of my name or any information that will make me identifiable.

Signature of the participant:

_________________________

Date:

_________________________

Thank you for your agreeing to participate in this study.

Miss Nosipho. S. Dlamini

M1 Psychology Student

University of Zululand
Appendix C

**The Group Intervention Programme for Victims of School Violence.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time schedule (break times) for a period of 2 weeks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesdays: 11H45-12H15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesdays 11H45-12H15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Sessions conducted by the group facilitator, on:

- Focus group interviews
- Informative discussions
- Pre-test and Post-test questions

**Session: One**

- Signing of the consent forms
- Distribution of pre-test questionnaires
- Discussions of their understanding of school violence

**Session: Two**

*Discussion of the measures of school violence.*
• Intensity
• How it affects them
• Psychological factors
• Emotional stability
• Physical defence

Session: Three

Discussion on the management

• How to manage the problem (self-confidence)
• Getting immediate help (emergency numbers and resources available)

Session: Four

Empowerment

• Read more material about school violence
• Dealing with the stress
• Spiritual fulfillment
• Staying healthy (gym, exercising and engaging in sporting activities)
• Dealing with the emotions (anger, sad, shyness, guilt and self-pity)
• Getting psychological help

Session: Five

Distribution of the post-test questionnaires.

Appendix D

Pre-test Questions

1. What is your understanding of the concept “school violence”?
2. Have you ever experienced school violence? Yes/No.
3. What do you expect from the programme on school violence?
Post-test Questions

1. Were your expectations of the programme met? Please briefly explain.
2. What else could have been added in the programme to make it more useful/effective to you as learners? List as many things as you wish.
3. Would you recommend this programme to be offered in other schools? Yes/No. Please give a reason for your answer above.
Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

This letter serves as proof that Ncimphele Salweuti's Dlamini, studying MA. Clinical Psychology at the University of Zululand has been granted the permission to conduct a research study at Ongoye High School. The study is about "the effectiveness of a group intervention program among learners of Ongoye High School in dealing with school violence."

The study will take a period of 2 weeks with a sample of 10 participants which was requested by the researchers and clear ethical consideration was ensured for the participants.

Thank you

Yours Sincerely,
S.J. Mlenzane(MS)
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

ONGOYE HIGH SCHOOL
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
TEL: 035 793 3208

SIGNATURE: ___________________________
DATE: 16/03/2009