

**SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS:  
Guidelines for the establishment of Health Promoting Schools**

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**I would like to dedicate this study to my God and Savior, the Creator of heaven and earth. You have been my inspiration and guidance throughout my life. Thank you my dear Lord.**

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## **SUMMARY**

**KEY WORDS:** violence / health / health promotion / schools / communities/ educators / learners / contributing factors / education / fighting / physical / psychological / verbal abuse / intimidation / emotional violence / victimization / health promoting schools.

Ten years after the introduction of the new democratic political dispensation in 1994, violence in schools are as rife as before. There has been no significant decrease in school violence during this period. Violence has only increased and become part of people's everyday lives. School violence remains a serious problem for both learners and educators. Various factors contribute to school violence and it has become necessary to determine to what extent school violence influences the learners of South Africa.

Education is available for everyone to utilize. For learners to achieve optimally, safe environments need to be created. In order to eradicate the problem of school violence, it is important to know what the concept school violence entails, which factors contribute to school violence and to what extent school violence has influenced the schools up to date. It is also important to keep track of international trends which promote health in schools globally.

Health is undoubtedly linked to educational achievement. The World Health Organization has initiated a project to promote health and healthy lifestyles universally. To counteract the persisting violence in schools, the possibility of creating health promoting schools in South Africa deserves attention.

In order to unravel the phenomenon of violence in schools, a qualitative method of research was used, with data being collected by means of focus-group interviews, through intentional sampling. The transcriptions were subjected to descriptive analysis. The findings of the research are presented with an overview of school violence in the West Rand region. Factors contributing to school violence in this region have been identified as: drug and alcohol abuse, gangsterism, gambling, intolerance and the influence of educators. Physical and

Psychological violence are the two main categories of violence identified in this region with various sub-categories which include fighting, harassment, sexual abuse, intimidation and victimization which enhance the violence and violent behaviour in this region.

A nation's wealth lies within the youth of a country. They assure the future and our children are the most important natural resources we possess, therefore we need to respond to the challenges – violent behaviour and crime in our schools.

## **OPSOMMING**

**SLEUTELWOORDE:** geweld / gesondheid / gesondheid bevordering / skole / gemeenskappe / onderwysers / leerders / bydraende faktore / opvoeding / veg / fisies / psigologies / skeltaal / intimidasie / emosionele geweld / viktimisering / geondheidsbevorderende skole.

Tien jaar na die totstandkoming van die nuwe demokratiese politieke bedeling in 1994, kom geweld in skole net so algemeen voor soos voorheen. Daar was nog geen merkwaardige afname van geweld in skole gedurende hierdie periode nie. Geweld het egter slegs toegeneem en deel geword van die mense se daaglikse voortbestaan. Geweld in skole is nog steeds 'n baie ernstige probleem vir leerders en onderwysers. Verskeie faktore dra by tot geweld in skole en dit is van kardinale belang om te bepaal tot watter mate geweld die leerders in die skole beïnvloed het.

Die primêre doel van die navorsing was om te bepaal wat die konsep "geweld in skole" behels, te bepaal tot watter mate geweld nog voorkom in die skole en aandag te gee aan die faktore wat bydra tot geweld, 'n internasionale perspektief te verkry op gesondheid en om gesondheid wêreldwyd te bevorder, en die Wêreld Gesondheidsorganisasie se inisiatief om gesondheid en gesondheid wêreldwyd te bevorder na te vors, om sodoende die moontlikheid van die totstandkoming van Gesondheidsbevorderende skole te ondersoek as teenvoeter en voorkomende maatreël vir geweld in skole.

Om bogenoemde te bereik, is 'n kwalitatiewe metode van ondersoek gebruik en is data ingesamel deur middel van fokus-groep onderhoude. Die transkripsies is deeglik geanaliseer en die resultate stel die situasie voor in die Wesrand streek ten opsigte van geweld in skole. Fisiese – en psigologiese geweld vorm die twee hoof komponente waaruit geweld in hierdie streek bestaan. Die sub-kategorieë van geweld in skole sluit in fisiese gevegte, teistering, seksuele misbruik, intimidasie en viktimisering wat geweld en geweldadige optrede aanwakker.

Enige land se rykdom kan gevind word in die jeug van daardie betrokke land. Hulle verseker die toekoms en die nageslag is die kosbaarste natuurlike hulpbron, daarom behoort alle rolspelers te reageer reageer op hierdie uitdaging om geweld en geweldadige gedrag uit skole te weer. Dit is elke leerder se reg om in 'n veilige opvoedkundige milieu onderrig te word. Gesondheid word onomwonde gekoppel aan die opvoedkundige doel en die skool is die ideale omgewing vir die bevordering van gesondheid en die ontwikkeling van die gesondheidsbevorderende skool konsep.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION, STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

### 1.1 Introduction and orientation towards the research problem

Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations states emphatically that: "Education is the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women, protecting children from hazardous and exploitative labor and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment and influencing population growth. Education is a path towards international peace and security" (Human Rights Watch, 2001:1).

World leaders laud education as a key solution to the social ills plaguing many nations and in particular South Africa, but school environments present a major problem that has not received sufficient scrutiny. Schools should be safe havens for learning. Unfortunately, too many schools are not safe and learners' safety is at high risk. When governments tolerate violence in school environments, children learn lessons that legalise violence. Many of the problems faced by the current government in responding to violence in schools are not of its own making, yet they are nonetheless urgent (Human Rights Watch, 2001:3).

According to Morrell (1998:220) South African schools became exceptionally violent ambiances from 1976 onward. The violent confrontation between the state and forces seeking the removal of Apartheid made schools into veritable battlegrounds with students often becoming front-line soldiers. The use of violence by both the state and forces opposing it, created a situation of violence, which naturally affected schools and those teaching and learning in them. It was noble to be on the wrong side of illegitimate laws. Violence was socially approved in the name of liberation: the heroes of the day were young men who carried guns and fought (Simpson, 2001:1).

Harber (2002:1) states that schools in much of post-apartheid South Africa are under siege from local violence. In Durban, school gang-related violence is a major problem, security measures tend to be inadequate and counselling for victims of violence and rape is virtually non-existent. The majority of students report feeling unsafe travelling to and from school. Simpson (2001:1) notes that youth gangs are intruding into the schools of vulnerable communities, using them as markets for drugs, alcohol, weapons and young girls, who are being abducted and raped.

In South Africa the Centre for the study of Violence and Reconciliation (2001:2) says that violence continues to undermine the functioning of schools. They often become battlegrounds for gang wars, with learners the targets of rape, sexual harassment and bullying. It is also noted that crime, vandalism, drug dealing and sexual abuse in schools create insecurity and fear among learners and educators and interfere with the learning environment. A CNN report (2001:1) states that a number of violent crimes also have turned up the heat on the ruling African National Congress. One was the death of Gwendoline Thandi Jele, a 56-year old Soweto Primary school principal who was gunned down by three young men who entered the school by climbing a broken wall. When Jele confronted them, they shot her in the stomach. As she lay bleeding on the ground, they snatched her wristwatch, necklace and car keys. At Jele's funeral, grief-stricken family, friends and learners echoed the growing demand for a crackdown on crime.

According to Benghiat (2001:7) the violent acts reported in South African schools over the past few years read like scenes from a low-budget gangster movie:

- A grade 12 learner at Mokgome Secondary in Meadowlands, Soweto, fired two shots at his girlfriend. The shots missed her, but killed a grade 9 learner. Realizing he had mistakenly shot another learner, the gunman pointed the pistol at his head and committed suicide in front of his fellow learners.
- Andreas Werth, a teacher at the Town View High School in Krugersdorp, Gauteng, was shot dead by an upset grade 11 learner.

- A grade seven pupil in White River, Mpumalanga, was killed when a classmate stabbed him with a penknife.
- A 14-year old pupil at the Primêre Gedenkskool in Jamestown in the Western Cape was stabbed to death during an argument he wasn't even involved in.

The cases mentioned above are just the tip of the iceberg. According to experts more learners are being caught with guns or other deadly weapons at school. Parents must start realizing that their children are growing up in a culture of violence. They start getting the idea that it's "cool" to kill, because they frequently see their role-models killing each other.

Parents need to be able to drop off their children at school without any worries and fears, knowing that they will be safe for the duration of the school day. For students to succeed in school, they cannot be tired, hungry, using drugs, or concerned that violence may occur at any time. These problems not only affect children's health, but interfere with their ability to learn (Anon., 2000:1). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2000:7) states: "Good health is necessary for effective learning". Concerning the development of health education, the statement is made that the health of children and young people constitutes a major factor affecting their capacity to learn (Turunen, Tossavainen, Jakonen, Salomaki & Vertio, 1999:387).

The Scottish Executive (1999:1) makes the statement that "the solid foundation that good education provides is a very positive determinant of the future health and well-being of our nation". Schools provide the most effective and efficient way to reach large portions of the population, including young people, school personnel, families and community members. Promoting health through schools enhances both health and the capacity of learners to learn. Schooling in itself has been shown to be a powerful way to influence health both within and outside the school (Harber, 2001:1).

The World Health Organization states in the Ottawa Charter (1986:2) that: "From country to country, even within different regions and communities of one country, schools have distinct strengths and needs. By building on those strengths and

drawing on the imagination of students, parents, educators and administrators, every school can find new ways to improve health and address health problems. This is the heart of the process of becoming a Health-Promoting School”.

A Health-Promoting School views “health” as physical, mental, social and emotional well-being and not merely the absence of disease. It strives to build health into all aspects of life at school and in the community. Education and health is viewed from a wholesome or holistic perspective. Fundamentally, a Health-Promoting School uses its full organizational potential to promote health among students, staff, families and community members.

It is therefore necessary that a thorough investigation of literature is done and an empirical research project is conducted in order to determine which violence related factors influences our schools today.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Very few people in South Africa have not been touched by some form of violence or aggression. Some are still suffering from the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of such violence. Burke (2002:3) states that while there have been few epidemiological studies of trauma disorders in South Africa, existing research suggests South Africans, especially blacks struggling to make sense of the tragic tapestry of their country’s past, may be suffering from post traumatic stress disorder in numbers far greater than average. Experts point out that while many people who lived through apartheid, suffer from few symptoms today, there are others who are still so affected by yesterday’s atrocities they are unable to work or have meaningful personal relationships. Some have turned to alcohol and drugs to medicate themselves whereas some have embraced violence. Violence has also had an immense impact on the South African economy, including productivity, investment and quality of life.

Escalating crime, violence and conflict at school have brought the issue of youth culpability for violence and crime to the fore. When children engage in crime and violence, who should bear the blame? It is society as a whole that must ultimately assume responsibility for both the victims and the perpetrators. Throughout the

world young people are confronted with violence and criminal behaviour, but the South African case is particularly severe. Young people need to be taught how to avoid becoming victims, how to protect their communities from crime, and how to cope with being victimized themselves. They also need to be educated in alternatives to criminal behaviour (Gray, 1999:1). The more frequently children are exposed to acts of violence, the more likely they are to begin perpetrating acts of violence. A very thin line exists between being a victim of violence and beginning to commit violent acts oneself. Zulu (2003:1) states clearly in his article "Creating safer schools" that whilst most acts of violence that happen within the school premises are perpetuated by the learners against one another, some of the violence is actually imported from outside the school grounds. Gang activities - the most feared in a school context - are imported into the school. This example demonstrates that schools are not islands, they are in fact rather part of a bigger community and as such are influenced by what is happening outside. If instability and violence plague the community, such habits are easily learnt by young people who then act it out with their peers in schools.

Conflict is a normal unavoidable part of life, but, without guidance, some children respond to conflict and violence by giving in to negative pressure or mimicking the violent acts they have experienced. Because violence in response to conflict is learned, not innate, we can help children forget it. Zulu (2003:2) says that there are a number of reasons why schools are the ideal environment for crime and violence prevention initiatives within any community. Children spend most of their time at school and it is here where, because of diversity, different life skill competencies, baggage that the child brings from home and different levels of tolerance of one another. More importantly, schools are in the learning business and this makes the venue ideal to foster alternatives to violence. Teachers can advocate and reinforce the skills and attitudes that lead to peaceful resolution of conflict and avoid violence entirely.

Vergani, Flisher, Lazarus, Reddy & James (1998:46) state that school health education and promotion can play a major role in changing not only knowledge and attitudes, but also behaviour. By targeting youth one can reach them before

they have established behavioural patterns that place them at risk for adverse consequences in terms of mental and physical well-being. Health messages to students also tend to be disseminated to their families and other members of their communities, thereby contributing to the improved health status of the wider community.

Bornman, van Eeden & Wentzel (1998: 378) state that violence should be addressed in the same way as other public health threats, such as smoking, drunken driving and drug abuse among the youth, consequently, we need to focus on prevention. An important way to prevent violence is therefore to teach our young people to solve their conflicts peacefully. Schools should play a major role in teaching conflict resolution skills and implementing violence prevention programmes.

The involvement of other stakeholders, like the family and the community is therefore essential to ensure a safe environment in which skills are strengthened. In many instances violence in the community and poor home environments prevents this additional support. This implies that the efforts by the school are not enough; the extensive socio-economic and political problems in this country should also be addressed. The implementation of the health promoting school becomes, thus, a necessity in the South African context.

Ultimately, the aim is to help children to become successful adults, better prepared to cope with today's world. It is therefore necessary to look at the problem of violence and violent behaviour in our schools from a health promoting school perspective. Health in this sense implies not only physical health, but also psychological-, spiritual-, and social health as well. The World Health Organization's Ottawa Charter (1986:1) states that: "The fundamental conditions and resources for health are peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable eco-system, sustainable resources, social justice and equity." Addressing these needs, especially education, will have a positive influence on health promotion and the eradication of violence and violent behaviour from our schools.

Based on the abovementioned the central research problems this study intends to focus on are:

- To what extent has crime and violence influenced the stakeholders and the quality of education in schools?
- Will the establishment of the Health Promoting Schools Initiative contribute to the creation of a crime and violent free environment in schools?

### **1.3 Aims and objectives of the research**

The research aims to establish the following:

- What is school violence?
- Which factors contribute to violence and violent behaviour in secondary schools in the West Rand region?
- What are the guidelines from a health promoting school's perspective to address the factors that contribute to the violence in schools in this region.

### **1.4 Delimitation of the field of study**

The research project focuses on the ways and means of providing and promoting necessary health services in the education system in the West Rand region of the Gauteng province. Secondary schools in this region were targeted for the research. Although reference had been made to White, Black, Coloured and Indian learners, this does not mean that the aim of the study was to investigate the influence of race on school violence, but rather to study the issue of school violence itself.

### **1.5 Methods of investigation**

#### **1.5.1 Literature study**

The review of literature served as the basis for the investigation. Information was gathered in order to determine the causes of violence in schools, the different types of violence, violent behaviour as well as the effect of violence on the learners in the West Rand region.

A DIALOG – Computer research from the ERIC Database and EBSCO host was undertaken. Articles from various scientific journals, articles, newspapers, educational conference papers and research reports were also studied to supplement information available.

### **1.5.2 Interviews**

Interviews were conducted among learners from various schools in the West Rand region. The purpose of the interviews were to verify existing information and to gather further information regarding violence and violent behaviour in schools, as well as to obtain various opinions and views on the health promoting schools concept and of the violent conduct of learners in schools.

The qualitative research method enables the researcher to gain insight into situations, settings, relationships and people. It allows the researcher to test the validity of claims, theories and generalizations within the real-world context. The interview also enables the researcher to yield a great deal of useful information.

## **1.6 Feasibility of the study**

Sufficient research material was available at the Ferdinand Postma library at the North-West University. Additional information was obtained from the Education Department and the Gauteng Department of Health and Welfare. The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation also served as a valuable resource of information.

## **1.7 Structure of study**

**CHAPTER 1:** Introduction, statement of the problem and methodology.

**CHAPTER 2:** School violence in South Africa: an overview.

**CHAPTER 3:** School violence and health promotion: an overview.

**CHAPTER 4:** School violence in secondary schools: a case study in the West Rand region.

## **CHAPTER 5: Findings, conclusions and recommendations.**

### **1.8 CONCLUSION**

This study focuses on the concept school violence and the influence there of on the education community in the West Rand region. The establishment of Health Promoting Schools will create safe and healthy environments for learners in which they will be able to study, work and play.

The following chapter serves as an overview of the current situation regarding violence and violent behavior in South African schools and highlights the contributing factors.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA: AN OVERVIEW**

### **Abstract**

Ten years after the introduction of the new democratic political dispensation in 1994, violence in our schools are as rife as before. There has been no significant decrease in school violence during this period. Violence has only increased and become part of people's everyday life. A culture of violence has been created in our communities and in our schools. South Africans live in exceptionally violent societies, school violence remains a serious problem for both learners and educators. In this article the extent of school violence in South Africa is fathomed and particular attention is given to contributing factors. It is necessary to utilize the information in order to create Health Promoting Schools in South Africa.

### **2.1 Introduction and orientation**

Our children are our most precious resource. They hold in their hands the future of our country and nation, and that is why safe schools should be everyone's concern and everyone's responsibility (Anon., 2004:1). Although statistically schools are relatively safe places, the recurrent episodes of school shootings and the larger backdrop of youth violence are cause for concern (Strauss, 2003:1). Schools have become venues for violence; crime and violence represent real threats to the achievement of educational goals. Learners and educators take firearms to school, believing that they need them for protection (Domingo-Swarts, 2002:2).

When the shooting occurred at Columbine High School in Colorado, USA, in April 1999, media commentators, in their search to understand this and related tragic school shootings, began to look for similarities among the school shooters such as their personal characteristics, family lives, and peer relationships. This was a natural and understandable response. Parents, policy makers, educators, and

others were anxious to find ways to better understand why these shootings occurred and perhaps even desperate to discover ways to identify vulnerable students who might commit such terrible acts in the future (Furlong, Kingery & Bates, 2001:1).

Vally (1999:1) states that while the world was riveted by the media coverage of the horrific massacre of 13 high school students in the United States in April 1999, the litany of violent acts in South African schools in 1999 alone surpassed in number the tragedy in Colorado. Educators, parents, and students alike have been murdered in South African schools: a school principal murdered in Soweto; a pre-school teacher murdered in full view of sixty children in Gauteng; Rose Mnisi murdered as she walked home from her school in the Northern Province; a school bus driver murdered in the presence of 85 learners; a grade 12 pupil stabbed by a fellow student; and a parent shot while waiting in his car for his daughter outside her secondary school after the principal and his deputy shot at learners who allegedly intended to attack educators. According to the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor at least 115 assaults, 111 acts of sexual violence, and four acts of violence with a firearm were reported to have occurred at South African schools in 2004. These reflect cases which were reported to the South African Police Services only.

The high level of violence in South African schools reflects a complicated combination of past history and recent stresses on individual, school, and community levels – in a society marked by deep inequities and massive uncertainty and change within school operations. Despite the end of apartheid in South Africa, “race” and ethnic tensions remain at the centre of much of the violence in the country (Vally, 1999:2). When students in informal surveys nationwide acknowledge that fighting and violence in schools is one of their major concerns, we know that we have a national problem (Anon., 1999:1). Violence in schools is a worldwide problem: it exists in rich and poor countries alike. To be the victim of violence is mostly a humiliating and frightening experience of physical or psychic pain (Debarbieux, 2001:1).

Studies by the Education Development Center points to numerous dimensions of poverty that are related to high community rates of violence, including high concentrations of poverty, transience of the population, family disruption, crowded housing and the presence of dangerous commodities or opportunities associated with violence such as readily available gun and drug distribution networks (Rosenburg, 2000:1). Dropping out of school and poor school performance are associated with a host of social and health problems, including violence (Anon., 2001:6).

South Africa is so steeped in violence, it has become a way of life, a culture that holds a dangerous allure for today's youth. They are mostly young, some 12 – 13 years old, but they have already been initiated into violence (BBC News, 2002:1). Girls are also at particular risk and we find that rape, assault and sexual harassment of girls are too often the source of violence in our schools. These atrocities are committed by both educators and male students. Girls are frequently harassed and fondled and often verbally degraded. Many of these girls drop out of school which means the end of their education (George, 2001:1).

The aim of this article is to emphasize the serious problems learners in South African schools face and experience. The focus is on the intensity of the problem and the negative impact it has on the future of our country and nation. The questions directing this study are as follows: What is school violence? What is the current scenario in South African schools? Which factors contribute to violence and violent behaviour in schools? How can these insights be utilized to enhance existing approaches towards the establishment of the Health Promoting Schools?

The study is based on a literature review. International trends and the South African situation are reviewed.

## **2.2 The concept: "School Violence"**

Many children around the world experience violence as a regular part of their school experience. Schools have become spaces for violence and crime and violence represents real threats to the achievement of educational goals. The

National Crime Prevention Council (2004:1) states that for some schools, violence may be a minor issue; for others, it may be a daily presence.

Looking at our classrooms, our schools and our communities, there is clear evidence that violence is escalating while peace eludes us (United Nations, 2002:1). The school environment is one component of exposure to violence; such behaviour most often exhibited at school, derives from a non-school-related environment. Violence in school derives mainly from factors external to schools, but may be precipitated or aggravated by the school environment. Youth spend a considerable amount of time in school, on the way to and from school (Nwankwo, Takisha, Jackson & van Rooyen 2002:8).

The Nemours Foundation (2004:1) in the United States of America describes school violence in terms of: Playground fights, vandalism and shootings. Any act that physically or psychologically harms people or damages property in a school setting is considered school violence. According to Pasteur (2004:2) school violence may be present in many forms viz. physical: pulling the hair, kicking, scratching, biting, and spitting. verbally: swearing, shouting, bullying and screaming. mentally: some students/educators sometimes humiliate the others by comparing the quality of academic work. Last (2001:1), however, states in her article "School Violence" that school violence does not start in the school. Most behaviors are learnt responses to circumstances and situations that are exhibited in our everyday life. Home life conditions are influences on all children. If a child grows up in a home where one of the parents is abused, whether verbally or physically, the child will take this as a norm. Studies have proven that a child living in an abusive home will himself become an abuser. Children who witness violence view it as a solution to the problem. The violence they see and experience may sometimes spill over into the very public places like our schools (Anon., 2004:1).

Harber (2002:1) argues that violence may be defined as behaviour by people against people liable to cause physical or psychological harm i.e. how schools can both be violent towards learners and can help to foster violent activity.

School violence is now conceptualized as a multifaceted construct that involves both criminal acts and aggression in schools, which inhibit development and learning, as well as harms the school's climate. It was not until 1992 that the label "school violence" itself was used widely as a term to describe violent and aggressive acts on school campuses (Furlong and Morrison, 2000:2).

Juvonen (2002:1) believes that school violence is not confined to urban schools; it is also prevalent in suburban schools. Violence is most common in large schools, and high school students are the most likely targets of violent behaviour. The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (1999:1) states that in the inner city, there are four types of violence common during childhood and adolescence: childhood aggression, gang violence, robbery, and dating violence. Each of these types of violence functions to meet the adolescent's needs. Juvonen (2002:1) states that students are concerned about violent behaviour and they are fearful of and intimidated by others as well as the less serious forms of peer hostility. These include physical aggression such as shoving and pushing, face-to-face verbal harassment, public humiliation, and rumor mongering. About 20-30 percent of American students repeatedly either engage in or are the targets of bullying tactics that contribute to the climate of fear. In fact, youth ages 8-15 rank bullying as more of a problem in their lives than discrimination, racism, or violence. Children who view themselves as targets of bullying show high levels of anxiety and depression that impede their school performance. The Human Rights Watch (2001:9) argues that discrimination, harassment, and violence hamper students' ability to get an education and take a tremendous toll on their emotional well-being.

There are many psychologists and clinical psychiatrists who, along with independent researchers, compile extensive lists and do studies on what may be the cause of school violence. The only common denominator that exists between them all is the fact that there is no one determining factor (Last, 2001:1). These determining factors have been responsible for the culture of violence which has developed over the years.

### **2.3 A culture of violence**

The term “culture of violence” is often used in South Africa to explain and describe the country’s heightened incidence of violence. The endorsement and acceptability of violence, to which this label refers, is crucial to an understanding of any violent incident in South Africa. Although violence touches everyone in South Africa, the most victimized are the working class, poor African communities and women (Vogelman & Lewis, 1993:5).

According to Carl and Swartz (1996) the level of violence in South Africa has reached frightening proportions. All too often violence is chosen as a means of resolving conflict rather than peaceful problem-solving mechanisms. The entire population (especially children) is constantly exposed to a culture of violence, fed by the mass media or by first hand observations of public violence. Violence has thus become a way of life to the majority of the youth in this country. “Killer”, a gangster working for a car hijacking syndicate in Johannesburg had the following to say: “I was born in a cruel world, I’m living in a cruel world, and I’ll die in a cruel world. I must steal that car to get money to support my wife and children and my brothers. They are all looking up to me” (BBC News, 2002:1).

Furlong and Morrison (2000:7) are of the opinion that males are most involved in school violence. Males are much more likely than females to be physically aggressive at school and to become the victim of attack. For example, females do not engage in dangerous physical behaviour as often as males, but they may act in socially aggressive ways more often than males. Physical and verbal sexual harassment is another class of behaviour that happens more frequently to females than males. Galloway (2002:1) attests that schools, which should be a safe haven, become a place of terror for the girl. Schooling may also be directly interrupted if the girl becomes pregnant or ill, with long term consequences for her social and economic development. Findings confirm that the rape of girls, especially in schools, is a substantial public health problem in South Africa.

Decades of violent enforcement of apartheid policies have fuelled a culture of violence in South Africa. Girls are raped, sexually abused, harassed and

assaulted at school by male classmates and male educators (George, 2001:1). The ways in which violence currently impacts schools in South Africa addresses the ways in which violence remains intertwined with racism in South African schools and the effects of violence on educators, and the resulting impact of violence on the classroom practice of educators often creates a culture of violence in the schools themselves (Vally, 1999:1).

Students and educators want safe places in which to teach and learn, but often racial tension results in fights, name-calling, graffiti and other bias-related incidents (Anon., 1999:1). In reaction to the violence in schools many have called for the re-introduction of punitive discipline such as corporal punishment, and absurdly, the censorship of the popular *Yizo-Yizo*, a Department of Education sponsored television series, which realistically depicted violence in schools. The KwaZulu Natal Education Minister, Eileen Shandu, during her term in office, openly flouted the Constitution and education legislation by supporting corporal punishment, which is now a criminal act. If conditions at township schools are as bad as described, educators who beat learners, or in other ways physically abuse them, are running a grave risk of retaliation after school hours (Cape Times, 1998:1). Numerous studies have shown that, far from curbing violence, corporal punishment in fact encourages anti-social aggression, vandalism and perpetuates the cycle of violence (Vally, 1999:2). Physical violence is thus still rife in most South African schools today.

The Human Rights Watch (2001:3) have found that in Kenyan classes, for example, it was not uncommon for educators to strike children for giving the wrong answer to a problem. If a school did not perform well on national exams, an entire class might be caned regardless of the individual performance of each student. Bruises, swelling, and cuts have been regular by-products of school punishment in Kenya. More serious injuries, including broken bones, temporary or permanent hearing loss, knocked-out teeth, or internal injuries were not infrequent. Many severe beatings have never been reported to authorities, as children and parents fear retaliation from educators and headmasters. The previous South African Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, vehemently opposed

the return of the cane. "There is no possibility that this government will bring back the cane and the whip. Our task is to uphold human rights (Oppelt, 2000:2).

Clearly the violent atmosphere in South African schools is a reflection of the broader society (Vally, 1999:6). Educators, principals, and students are expressing increasing concerns about the presence of drugs, gangs, weapons and crime on school grounds (Kenny & Watson, 2003:1). The solution in the long term is to address the socio-economic conditions that engender the problems of violence. According to Chala (2003:1) fifty six percent of out of school children name poverty as the primary reason for not being able to go to school. Many learners come from situations where unemployment, poverty and abuse are the norm. Vally (1999:7) maintains that most gang-related violence in schools is caused by out-of-school, out-of-work youth and they should be given priority attention. The habitual and frequent nature of violence in South African society and schools has induced a dangerous feeling of disempowerment amongst education actors.

The core family has also been seriously affected by social upheavals. Many youths are not experiencing stability of an enduring nature, and a lot of young people are receiving only fragmented care. The lack of control, supervision and attention is clearly linked to teenagers' negative behaviour such as alcohol and drug abuse, crime, indiscriminate and unprotected sexual activities which contribute to school violence (Malan, 1997:4).

#### **2.4 At risk on the school grounds**

According to Vukani Mde (2003:1) the Medical Research Council and the Department of Health conducted a survey at high schools in all nine provinces in South Africa, with 10 699 learners participating in this survey. One of the alarming findings was that school grounds were found to be "dangerous", with more than 40 percent of learners having experienced bullying at school. Ominously, at least 9 percent reported having gone to school carrying an assortment of guns, knives, knobkierries and other dangerous weapons. The National Department of education's director-general Thami Mseleku, reacted to

findings and said: “ It’s especially alarming where we’re seeing levels of sexual violence and abuse. Simpson (2001:1) states that schools provide a vital point of access to young people who are both the primary perpetrators and victims of violence today. The school is also a contested terrain, precisely because of the fine line separating youth at risk inside the classroom and those whose criminality has been consolidated on the other side of the fence.

The awareness of potentially violent behaviour and early intervention are crucial components in helping kids at risk. Equally important is caring for children who have been victims of school violence. It is common for children to keep quiet about episodes of victimization due to shame, embarrassment and fear of escalated violence. Children who are victimized in school crime often suffer from decreased self-esteem, truancy, depression, post traumatic stress disorder and in extreme cases, suicide and violent retaliation (National Center for Children Exposed to Violence, 2004:1).

The South African province of Mpumalanga’s besieged township educators are demanding guns to protect themselves from criminals and delinquent learners after a spate of robberies, assault and hostage-taking of educators. Gang violence, murder and criminal elements have reduced school grounds to a state of anarchy, leading educators to propose that they come to work armed. The newspaper - *The West*, states in a report that a group of uncontrollable learners have assaulted three educators, bunked classes at will, played dice and smoked dagga on the premises during school hours. These are, however, not isolated incidents. Various incidents have occurred since. The SA Democratic Educators’ Union (Sadtu) has expressed concern at growing discipline problems and violence at schools (Craven, 2003:1).

Zulu (2003:1) states that whilst most acts of violence that happen within the school premises are perpetrated by the learners against one another, some of the violence is actually imported from outside the school grounds. Gang activities – the most feared in a school context – are imported into the schools. This demonstrates that schools are not islands; rather that they are part of a bigger

community and as such are influenced by what is happening outside. If instability and violence plague the community such habits are easily learnt by young people who then act it out with their peers in school.

According to Last (2001:3) there are many reasons why young children choose to join a gang. In the school setting students who are under-achievers, poor learners, or have language difficulties see themselves as losers in the academic setting. They can be approached by a gang and be recruited into the organization. The guns and gangsters hold a glamorous allure for many of the South African youth (Yeadell, 2002:1). Here they become "some-one", part of an organization of kids just like themselves. They have a new "family" who they tend to spend more and more time with. Gang leaders lure them with the promise of fraternity and brotherhood. They are told that the worst that can happen to them if they commit a serious crime is two years in a juvenile facility - a small price to pay for belonging (Last, 2001:3). Those who do not belong have to turn to other means to impress their peers. Harassment and bullying have become everyday occurrences.

Peer victimization is a form of harassment and anti-social behaviour which prevails in all segments of the school community. Bullying can take many forms: physical, emotional, verbal or a combination of these. It may involve one child bullying another, a group of children against a single child or groups against other groups. Bullies are often learners with a history of abuse where they have been bullied or abused themselves. Sometimes they are learners experiencing life situations they can't cope with, that leave them feeling helpless and out of control. They bully to feel competent and successful, to control others, to gain some relief from their own feelings of powerlessness. Bullies are more likely to be involved in other problem behaviour, such as drinking alcohol and smoking (Neser, Ovens, Van der Merwe, Morodi & Ladikos, 2003:1).

The Institute of Criminology of the University of Cape Town (2002:1) argues that the youth of South Africa are its future leaders. But many youngsters will not live to fulfill this role. In South Africa, homicides are the leading cause of death for

males between 15 and 21 years of age. Not only are the youth the victims of gun violence, they are also frequently the perpetrators. The wide availability of guns in South Africa, coupled with poverty, social injustice, substance abuse, family instability and the impulsiveness of youth leads to a situation where guns are used for a crime, settling arguments, proving one's status, protection and in suicide attempts. Anon. (2004:1) states that schools are increasingly the site of gun violence, in which youth are the victims, the perpetrators or both. It is critical that children are able to grow and learn in a safe and secure environment, which is free from fear.

The school plays a central role in the socialization of a child and it is critical that schools offer a safe environment in which learning and growth can take place. Crime and violence in school threaten the well-being of young people in South Africa. Crime and violence contaminate the school environment and jeopardize the educational process. There can be serious long-standing physical, emotional and psychological implications for both educators and learners including: distress, reduced self-esteem, risk of depression and suicide, reduced school attendance, impaired concentration, fear and a diminished ability to learn (Institute of Criminology of the University of Cape Town, 2002:1).

Like all problems that exist in today's society school violence will not go away over night. It is a concern that will require diligent work for all parties combined. Parents, educators, police, counselors, and communities will have to co-operate together with the students guiding them in the right direction, giving them the tools necessary to become non violent individuals (Last, 2001:5).

## **2.5 The Scene**

Harber (2002:6) quotes evidence that problems of violence are considerably worse in schools with a large number of learners which suggests that the impersonal nature of the large institutions contributes to deterioration in interpersonal relations and self-esteem of the learners.

The National Center for Children Exposed to Violence (2004:2) states that the distribution of serious school violence varies widely from community to

community. Serious school violence occurs most often in urban schools. According to the Constitutional Rights Foundation, rates of school violence tend to mirror those of the general population. Typically, community violence in inner cities is more prevalent than in rural areas, which may partially prove that community violence has direct effects on children. Lorion (1999:1) states that children in urban schools regularly confront violence. Educators find themselves spending increasing amounts of time dealing with students' violent and disruptive behaviour. Exposure to violence most affects students and educators in urban schools that are marked by high levels of poverty and low academic achievement. Exposure to violence is psychologically toxic. This exposure may produce problems with aggression, conduct disorder, truancy as well as disruption in interpersonal relationships.

The Institute of Criminology of the University of Cape Town (2002:1) is worried about the fact that crime and violence in schools threaten the well-being of young people in South Africa. A study on security in Durban schools found that "schools are places where drugs, thugs, and weapons move as freely through the gates as the learners". Despite national efforts to restore a culture of learning and teaching, incidents of theft, vandalism, burglary, rape and even murder are reported on school grounds. Crime and violence "contaminates" the school environment and jeopardizes the educational process. There can be serious long-standing physical, emotional and psychological implications for both educators and learners including: distress, reduced self-esteem, risk of depression and suicide, reduced school attendance, impaired concentration, fear and a diminished ability to learn.

Anon. (1997:1) states that violence is becoming rife at schools in the city, and a Newlands principal near Cape Town has warned that action is needed urgently to prevent playing fields turning into battlegrounds. High school heads blame worsening violence on television and film violence, drugs and gangs. Several principals report that old-fashioned playground brawls are becoming serious assaults.

Tshotsho (2004:1) states that some children and adolescents in South Africa have witnessed and/or have been perpetrators of various forms of violence during their formative years and are not familiar with peace and love. Such children are more vulnerable to mental health problems. South Africa has lately experienced an escalation in violence at schools. Violence takes place among educators, educators and students, and students themselves.

A teacher at a Wynberg school near Cape Town confirmed an incident in which a boy who jumping the tuck shop queue during break, was stabbed with a bread knife. In one case, a matric pupil and martial arts expert hit a younger boy so hard after a school dance in Newlands (Cape Town) that he had to have reconstructive surgery. The increase in drug abuse in schools and gangsters peddling drugs were also factors that introduced violence in schools, according to a Claremont teacher. Schools in some Cape flats areas known for gangsterism had a different view of playground violence (Anon., 1997:2).

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2001:1) released a report entitled "Scared at school: Sexual Violence Against Girls in South African Schools," which documented widespread rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and assaults of girls at school by educators, students, and other persons in the school community. According to the report, girls "are confronted with levels of sexual violence and sexual harassment in schools that impede their access to education on equal terms with male students." Violence against women in South African society is generally widely recognized to have reached levels among the highest in the world (Anon., 2004:3). The South African Government was working to improve its responses to domestic and sexual violence, but recommended "a more proactive, coordinated, and system-wide response." The previous Minister of Education, Mr Kader Ashmal, requested that schools establish hot lines to the local police stations and that trauma centers be set up where possible to support the Department of Education's commitment to a national toll free line that would deal with all aspects of violence, and in particular violence against girls in schools (Human Rights Watch, 2001:1).

"All the touching at school, in class, in corridors, all day everyday bothers me. Boys touch your bum, your breasts. Some educators will tell the boys to stop, others just ignore it" said a fourteen – year - old girl. "I left school because I was raped by two guys in my class who were supposedly my friends", said a thirteen – year - old girl (Anon., 2004:4). The law requires schools to disclose sexual abuse to the authorities; however, administrators often disregard the obligation by concealing sexual violence or delaying disciplinary action. Sexual violence and harassment in South African schools erect a discriminatory barrier for young women and girls seeking an education. According to Human Rights Watch (2001:2), girls who experienced sexual violence often left school temporarily, changed schools, or quit attending school to escape continuing abuse; those who remained in school had difficulty completing their studies. The level of sexual violence in schools also increases the risk for girls of contracting HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as unwanted pregnancies.

The U.S. Department of State (2002:22) states in its research report that the South African government introduced initiatives to address school violence; however, it does not have a national policy to address sexual violence and harassment in schools. The Human Rights Watch reported an absence of standard procedural guidelines governing how schools should treat persons accused of sexual violence and harassment. The United Nations (2002:1) says that the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Juan Miguel Petit, has called for urgent efforts to address an apparent increase in sexual violence against children in South Africa. Galloway (2002:1) re-iterates the fact that evidence indicate that child rapes are increasing in South Africa and have found a disturbing tendency for rape to be committed by school educators. Schools, which should be a safe haven, become a place of terror for the girl. Schooling may also be directly interrupted if the girl becomes pregnant or ill, with long-term consequences for her social and economic development. Vogelmann & Lewis (1993:6) state that overcoming violence against women in the South

African context will have to be linked to overcoming violence in society in general as well as to opposing and eradicating gender oppression.

## **2.6 The consequences of school violence**

The Human Rights Watch (2001:2) has found that the results of school violence can be devastating. Children may become depressed and anxious and have difficulty concentrating on their studies. They may use alcohol or other drugs or engage in risky sexual behaviours as a way of dealing with stress. Many skip classes while others change schools or drop out altogether. Some even commit suicide.

The National Center for Children Exposed to Violence (2004:1) indicate that the topic of school violence is one that affects all of society. Aside from interfering with the learning process, the long - range effects of school violence affects us all. Statistically, children who engage in bullying behaviour are more likely to become adult criminals. Many children who display violent behaviour at school are exposed to violence or abuse outside of school and may be in need of help from adults. Rassool (2002:1) asserts that there was a time when society regarded bullying in school as a normal part of school life. Slowly, schools in South Africa and elsewhere are beginning to realize that violence and other forms of aggression are no longer tolerable on the school ground.

Deen (2002:1) states that the United Nations has reported alarming increases in sexual violence against children in South Africa. The report says that rape in South Africa results from several factors, including the general high incidence of violence. The report indicates that poverty, coupled with domestic abuse, is forcing children, mainly girls, into prostitution. Many children drop out of school because their parents are unable to pay school fees. In some cases, a family friend or relative assists the child to attend school, in return for sexual favors. According to Hosken (2004:1) the high level of sexual violence in schools especially in KwaZulu Natal has contributed to a dramatic spread of HIV in learners.

The United States Department of State (2002:21) indicates in its "Country Reports on Human Practices" that a number of factors, including unplanned pregnancies, domestic responsibilities (particularly in rural areas), and gender stereotypes contribute to high drop-out rates and lower secondary school pass rates for girls. During interviews with learners Sylvester (2001:3) found that all rape victims interviewed said that their school performance had declined drastically. They found it difficult to concentrate and had lost interest in school. Social workers said that some children became depressed, disruptive and anxious. There is also the increased risk of contracting HIV/AIDS or falling pregnant which, to many, means the end of education.

Burnett and Waltz (1999:2) says that because gangs are, by definition, organized groups, and are often actively involved in drug, and weapon trafficking, their mere presence in school can increase tension there. It can also increase the level of violence in school. Students in schools with a gang presence are twice as likely to report that they fear becoming victims of violence, than their peers at schools without gangs. Last (2001:3) says that gangs take root in schools for many reasons, but the primary attraction of gangs is their ability to respond to students' needs that are not otherwise being met; they often provide youth with a sense of family and acceptance otherwise lacking in their lives. Fear and the necessity to "belong" are great determining factors for children to join gangs. The deadly connection of gangs, drugs and guns is probably the most evil of all types of school violence. The drug aspect plays a big role in conflicts on school grounds. Chisholm and Napo (1999:36) argue that corporal punishment, unofficial assaults, bullying, rape, sexual and emotional abuse amongst and between both educators and learners are all included in the violence scenario.

Eurekalert (2001:1) conducted a survey in South Africa to determine whether children exposed to violence suffer from post traumatic stress and depression. Eurekalert states that adolescents who either witness or are victims of violence are prone to post traumatic stress and depression. Depression is also associated with all types of violence. John & MacArthur (2002:6) indicates that their studies on post traumatic stress disorder indicated that children who were

exposed to violence revealed responses such as inability to focus attention, intrusive thoughts, fear and anxiety. EurekaAlert concludes that the level of violence in children's homes and communities is far too high, putting them at risk of potentially serious mental health problems.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The aim of this article was to make all stakeholders in education aware of the grim reality of school violence in South Africa, the devastating effect thereof and the negative impact it has on our future and our children. Learners have to face a battlefield everyday on the school grounds and it is our responsibility as educationists to create healthy environments for them.

Children who are exposed to school violence need assistance from adults. Parents, educators, administrators, education department, school mental health workers, police and other health and safety providers have a responsibility towards children to provide them with the safest possible learning environment as well as keeping themselves informed about the violent issues and experiences that children face every day (National Center for Children Exposed to Violence, 2004:2).

The intention is certainly not to blame groups such as educators but try to explore what it is about schooling as a system that can lend itself to a violent interpretation in the hope that understanding what is bad in the social construction of schooling will help in the creation and expansion of what is good (Harber, 2002:2).

Many South African schools are struggling with problems of trespassing, vandalism, carrying and using weapons, drug dealing, rape, sexual abuse and other forms of physical assault and even murder. Even though school violence is not a new phenomenon, it is shifting in severity as fists are replaced with knives and firearms, and in some areas, alcohol and mandrax are replaced by crack (Anon., 2002:5).

School violence is an important component of the daily lives of children in schools. It affects negatively where they walk, how they dress, where they go and who their friends are. As long as educators treat violence at arms' length, as something that is someone else's problem, they will continue to neglect the opportunity to intervene in a crucial aspect of the children's lives. By ignoring school violence, the name-calling, the shoving, the fighting, the harassment, they are condoning it. Children see educators walking by, pretending not to notice, and they learn that the way that we treat others, the way we interact on the street or in the playground, is nobody's business but our own. Educators must talk about violence, they must recognize it, examine it, dissect it, and let children see and understand its secrets and its sources. Without this examination it remains an ugly secret that society cannot understand or control (Furlong and Morrison, 2000:5).

Research showed that South Africa is one of the most dangerous countries as measured by aspects such as rape and murder. In both South Africa and the United States, homicides are the leading cause of death for males between 15 and 21 years of age. Much of its crime stems from political upheaval and has resulted in over 20 000 deaths between 1985 and 1995. Although these statistics are slightly outdated, this is evidence that nine years after the Apartheid regime, South Africa is still struggling to stimulate its economy, revise national government and policy and to undo its strong racial segregation (Nwanko, Takisha, Jackson & van Rooyen, 2002:7). The Centre for the study of Violence and Reconciliation says that the root cause of violence in South Africa has not changed much since the Apartheid era. South Africa's current high rate of violent crime is just as related to economic and social marginalization as it was during the 1980's (Hunt, 2003:1).

According to the Gauteng Department of Education, the following crimes regularly affect school functioning – verbal abuse based on sexism and racism, opportunistic theft, common and sexual assault; assault with a weapon, robbery and burglary; intimidation, gang activity, drug abuse and peddling of drugs, possession of weapons, vandalism, arson (Anon., 2002:6). Bullying is found in all

schools but uncertainty remains about its relevance to young people's health and well-being. It is often considered a common and normal developmental experience but can also be seen to cause significant stress, and emotional problems (Bond, Paton, Butler & Glover, 2002:1).

"If you make me go to school today, you'll never see me again. I'll be dead. I'll be shot dead." Mark changed from a boy who was ready for school long before the rest of the family to one who desperately didn't want to leave the house. It is for boys like Mark that we need to provide safe havens to learn and play (Twiggs, 2004:1). Providing a safe environment in which they can learn and grow will lessen the fears produced by outside forces, and help them to mature into responsible adults. There will always be someone who wants to hurt you or cause trouble because of an insecurity that they are suffering, but with the proper instruction students can handle their problems in a non-violent way (Last, 2001:5).

The concept "Culture of violence" is used in South Africa to explain the country's heightened incidence of violence. Conflict is used as a means to resolve conflict by perpetrators instead of problem solving. This has become a way of life for the majority of youths. The violent atmosphere in South African Schools is but a reflection of the situation in the broader society. David Pinchuck (2004:2) maintains that children acquire their attitudes from a range of sources, most notably by their significant relationships – parents, relatives and guardians. With all the studies done in various countries no determining factor could be found for violence in schools. The only common denominator is the fact that there is no determining factor (Last, 2001:1).

The San Jose Mercury newspaper reported that in the aftermath of the tragic death of Amy Biehl amid the culture of violence that permeates South Africa, he had been asked countless times, "why would anyone want to go to South Africa?" Acts of violence are part of daily life, and killing has become an aspect of the norm. Violence and fear permeate the consciousness of every South African. David's reaction was: " There is a real spirit of hope in the country. This spirit was

epitomized by Peace Day, when people all over the country stopped what they were doing at noon to stand for peace. Some held hands, others stopped their cars along the highway. It was a simple, unpretentious protest for peace. I felt privileged to participate in that expression of hope” (Fetterman, 1993:1C).

From the information available the following may serve as guidelines for health promotion and subsequently the establishment of Health Promoting Schools:

- Teaching conflict resolution is a way of helping learners to cope with their problems in a non-violent way.
- Educators need to talk, recognize, examine, dissect and let children see and understand the secrets and sources of violence in school.
- Determining the bad in the social construction of schooling and helping with the expansion and creation of what is good will present the opportunity to evaluate the positive and negative factors in the school system which might enhance or curb school violence.
- Overcrowding in school presents the opportunity for violence and violent behaviour as a result of inefficient supervision. Large classes, insufficient facilities and rationalization of educators all contribute to the violence in schools.
- Campaigns to make the school grounds a safer place needs attention and
- It is important to involve as much stakeholders as possible in the school environment in order to assist with the prevention of violence at school.

The knowledge procured from this study enhances the World Health Organization’s call for healthy educational environments for all learners so as to nurture the culture of learning and teaching. It also enhances the idea of Health Promoting Schools universally. This is a challenge that faces South Africa and it is unlikely to be solved quickly or simply. There is an urgent, desperate need for us to do something.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

# **SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND HEALTH PROMOTION: AN OVERVIEW**

### **Abstract**

Without a doubt, a nation's wealth lies within the youth of a country. The youth assures the future and our children are the most important natural resources we possess, therefore, we need to respond to the challenges – the challenge of violence, violent behaviour and crime in our schools. It is every learner's right to be educated in a safe educational environment. It is time to take action against rape, harassment, stabbing and shootings. This article aims to: (i) investigate the current situation regarding violence and violent behaviour in South African schools, (ii) explore international initiatives to promote health and healthy life styles universally and in schools and (iii) examine the Health Promoting Schools concept is a possible counteraction to curb the persisting violence in our schools. Some programmes and projects have been implemented but urgent attention and counsel is required to assist with the prevention of this kind of behaviour. Health is undoubtedly linked to educational achievement and the school is the ideal setting to promote health and the Health Promoting Schools concept.

### **3.1 Introduction and orientation**

The 1999 United Nations Human Development report begins: The real wealth of a nation is its people. And the purpose of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives (Gasman & Hart, 2004:1). According to the World Health Organization's Ottawa Charter (1986:1) good health is a major resource for social, economic and personal development and an important dimension of quality of life. For students to succeed in school, they cannot be tired, hungry, using drugs, or concerned that violence may occur anytime. Out of school, children are usually forced by circumstances to leave school – most of them poverty related. Children are kept away or stay away from

school because of a lack of uniform or school fees. Children go to bed hungry. Families have come to accept a reality that includes malnourished children. These factors may also contribute to violent situations at school whether it is as a result of humiliation, victimization or sexual abuse (Chala, 2003:1). These problems not only affect children's health, but also interfere with their ability to learn (Aldinger, 2000:1).

Children have been given priority in the process of South Africa's transformation. The State has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the child, included a special focus on children in the constitution, and initiated the implementation of a national plan of action to address the needs of children. South Africa has thus committed itself to protecting children as a vulnerable group and ensuring that all government policies, laws, programmes, budgetary decisions and executive actions will prioritize children. A specific portfolio committee on Children, Youth and the disabled has been established in national parliament to monitor activities relating to these vulnerable groups. The South African health sector has responded to the challenge by establishing directorates for children at national and provincial levels and by developing a number of policies and programmes to improve the health of children (Shung-King, Abrahams, Giese, Guthrie, Hendricks, Hussey, Irlam, Jacobs & Proudlock, 2000:1).

In every community and country, children are the most important natural resource. They must be at the very heart of "development". Their well-being, capabilities, knowledge and energy will determine the future of villages, cities and nations around the world. As educators everywhere know, a healthy child's vitality, inquisitiveness and readiness for new experiences can be unbounded (World Health Organization, 1998:1). Dr. Desmond O'Byrne from the World Health Organization states that: " Good health supports successful learning. Successful learning supports health. Education and health are inseparable. Worldwide, as we promote health, we can see our significant investment in education field the greatest benefits" (World Health Organization, 1998:1).

Schools can help promote the health of staff, families and community members as well as the health of students. Much is known today about the relationship between education and health. People everywhere can use this knowledge to help create Health-Promoting Schools. In almost every community, the school is a setting where many people learn and work, care for and respect each other. It is a setting where education and health programmes can have their greatest impact because they influence students at such important stages in their lives – childhood and adolescence. By creating schools that are health promoting, school leaders all over the world can foster health as actively as they promote learning (World Health Organization, 1998:1).

Health Minister, Dr. Manto Tshabalala-Msimang stated in a SAPA press release on 12 December 2002 that South Africa had long recognized violence as a health issue and that the health department was currently running a number of programmes to combat the scourge. She said that there were a number of clearly identifiable risk factors for violence, two stood out above all others – poverty and alcohol. Msimang stated that the health department was currently involved in a project along with the Education department for reducing violence in schools. “This has two goals: The one is to reduce violence levels in schools themselves and the other is to assist school aged children to cope with their problems without resorting to violence” Msimang said (Anon., 2002:1). The challenge facing South Africans and the South African government is to redress social and economic injustices, eradicate poverty, increase efficiency and to promote greater control by communities and individuals over all aspects of their lives (African National Congress, 1994:1).

This article aims to explore the Health Promoting Schools concept and to establish whether this concept might be a solution to school violence in South Africa. The questions directing this study are as follows: What is the current scenario regarding school violence in South African schools? What is a Health Promoting School? Which guidelines may be followed when creating Health Promoting Schools?

The study is based on a literature review. International trends and the South African situation are reviewed.

### **3.2 School violence in South Africa**

Many children around the world experience violence as a regular part of their school experience. Instead of facilitating the healthy development of children, schools are too often the source of violence and abuse that undermine children's opportunities to learn, cause children to drop out of school altogether, or cause psychological trauma, physical injury, disability, and even death (Human Rights Watch, 2001:1). Crime and violence in schools threaten the well-being of young people in South Africa. A study on security in Durban schools found that schools are places where drugs, thugs and weapons move as freely through the gates as the learners. Despite national efforts to restore a culture of learning and teaching, incidents of theft, vandalism, burglary, rape and even murder are reported on school grounds (Eliasov & Frank, 2000:2).

According to Nwankwo, Takisha, Jackson & van Rooyen (2002:2) violence is a major public health problem in both the United States and South Africa. Witnessing violence in the home, school or community can leave emotional scars and place young people at risk of becoming involved in acts of violence. As schools in South Africa are integrated, students with different socio-economic backgrounds, cultural norms and ideologies will interact socially, which may increase the likelihood of violence in this context as these differences may lead to confrontations. Friedman (2001:1) reported that on the streets and in the school grounds racism is still a reality, even among communities that have been its longest-suffering victims. This was tragically illustrated when 17-year-old Sebastian de Kock was stabbed to death by a fellow pupil in Port Elizabeth. The incident ignited racial hatred because the alleged victim was coloured and the alleged perpetrator was black. Threats of violence and personal experiences with violence at school negatively affect students and the educational process. According to Eliasov and Frank (2000:2) the school plays a central role in the

socialization of a child and it is critical that schools offer a safe environment in which learning and growth can take place.

The Human Rights Watch (2001:1) states that they have investigated the phenomenon of gender-based violence in schools in South Africa. They have found that rape, assault, and sexual harassment of girls were widespread and committed by both educators and male students. Girls were raped in school toilets, in empty classrooms and hallways, and in hostels and dormitories. Gasman & Hart (2004:1) reported that there is a steady rise in school drop-out rates, more physical and sexual abuse, and teenage violence and suicide.

According to Mirza (2002:1) a third of all child rapes in South Africa are committed by school educators, researchers said in a report on sexual violence against young girls. Schools are a major sight for sexual harassment and rape for children. Dr. Jewkes of the Medical Research council in Pretoria found that 33 percent of South African women raped before the age of fifteen years, were attacked by educators.

### **3.3 Health Promotion as an international trend**

Founded in 1948, the World Health Organization leads the world alliance for health for all. A specialized agency of the United Nations with 191 Member States, WHO promotes technical co-operation for health among nations, carries out programmes to control and eradicate disease, and strives to improve the quality of human life (Medical Schools & Nursing Colleges Worldwide, 2003:1). As today's children are the citizens of tomorrow's world, their survival, protection and development is the pre-requisite for the future development of humanity. As their individual development and social contribution will shape the future of the world, investment in children's health, nutrition and education is the foundation for national development (World Health Organization, 1996:1).

In its efforts to review its Global School Health Initiative (Jones, 1998:34) the WHO identified three very important documents which form the foundation of the initiative:

- The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986) focuses the World Health Organization's initiative on creating healthy public policy, supportive environments, community action, personal skills, and a reorientation of health services. It focuses on creating good health as well as preventing health problems.
- The Jakarta Declaration for Promoting Health (1997) focuses on the WHO's initiative of creating sustainable health promoting programmes.
- The World Health Organization's Expert Committee on Comprehensive School Health Education and Promotion (1995) developed a set of recommendations to improve health as well as education. The goal of the World Health Organization's Global School Health Initiative is to increase the number of schools that can be called "health-promoting schools, schools that constantly strengthen their capacity as healthy settings for living, learning and working.

The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, adopted in 1986 at the first International Conference on Health Promotion states: "Health is created and lived by people within the setting of their everyday life; where they learn, play, and love. Health is created by caring for oneself and others, by being able to take decisions and have control over one's life circumstances, and by ensuring that the society one lives in creates conditions that allow the attainment of health by all its members." The Charter calls on the World Health Organization and other international organizations to advocate the promotion of health in all appropriate forums and to support countries in setting up strategies and programmes for Health promotion (World Health Organization, 1996:1).

The World health Organization's Ottawa Charter (1986:1) defines Health promotion as the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health. To reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living.

Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities. Therefore, health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector, but goes beyond healthy life-styles to well-being. Coulson (2000:1) states that health promotion first entered the South African health system in the 1990's. The national policy for health promotion practice is based on the principles and approach of the 1986 Ottawa Charter for health promotion.

Aldinger (2000:1) states that health is not merely the absence of disease – it is physical, mental, and social well-being. When students are ill, hungry, or distracted by family or social problems, they cannot pay attention or participate fully in class. Unless schools address these barriers to learning, education – and education reform – will not succeed. Just as education is necessary to stay healthy, good health is also a pre-requisite for learning. The Global School Health Initiative (1998:1) states that health is directly linked to educational achievement, quality of life and economic productivity.

The fundamental conditions and resources for health are peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice and equity. Improvement in health requires a secure foundation in these basic pre-requisites (World Health Organization, 1986:1). Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, the Director-General of the World Health Organization said that: "The World Health Organization's domain is health. But it is clear that without proper education, health suffers. And without proper health, good education is not possible. In this our work is linked and it depends on each other..... An effective school health programmes, consisting of four core components – health-related policies, water and sanitation, skill-based health education and school health services – can be one of the most cost-effective investments a nation can make to simultaneously improve education and health" (United Nations, 2000:2).

Kickbusch & Jones (1996:4) state that a school health programme that effectively addresses student's health, and thus improves their ability to learn, consists of many components that require multiple processes to be effective based on co-

ordination, collaboration, and interdisciplinary work. Each component contributes in unique ways yet overlaps with other components in other ways.

According to Aldinger (2000:1) the coordinated school health program typically has eight components:

- Comprehensive school health education
- Family and community involvement
- Healthy school environment
- Physical education
- School counseling, psychological, and social services
- School health services
- School nutrition services
- School-site health promotion for staff

The goal of co-ordinated school health programmes is to build links to community programmes. "Education for all" means ensuring that all children have access to basic education of good quality. This implies creating an environment in schools and in basic education programmes in which children are both able and enabled to learn. Such an environment must be inclusive of children, effective with children, friendly and welcoming to children, healthy for and protective of children and gender sensitive. The development of such child-friendly learning environments is an essential part of the overall efforts by countries around the world to increase access to, and improve the quality of, their schools.

Poor health and malnutrition are important underlying factors for low school enrollment, absenteeism, poor classroom performance, and early school drop-out, as reflected in the World Declaration on Education for All. Programmes to achieve good health, hygiene and nutrition at school age are therefore essential to the promotion of basic education for all children. Good health and nutrition are not only essential inputs but also important outcomes of basic education of good quality (United Nations, 2000:5). A healthy school environment pertains to the

physical, emotional, and social climate of the school. It is designed to provide a safe plan as well as a healthy and supportive environment that fosters learning (Aldinger, 2000:1). The World Health Organization (1996:27) states that in terms of the physical environment, the absolute requirements for promoting health through schools are the availability of clean water and sanitary facilities. Once this has been achieved, many other factors – from illumination levels to noise levels – become important. Factors such as temperature, humidity, and sources of unintentional injury are to be addressed in schools in every country and region. Those schools that continuously strive to maintain and improve positive contributions to health are what the World Health Organization calls “Health Promoting Schools” (World Health Organization, 2002:1).

### **3.4 Health Promoting Schools**

The Health Promoting School movement has its roots in the World Health Organization’s Ottawa Charter (1986:1) for Health Promotion and in the subsequent Health Cities and Healthy Communities movements of the early 90’s supported by the WHO Regional office for Europe. It is also aligned with similar movements such as the Healthy hospitals and Healthy Workplaces agencies.

According to the World Health Organization (1996:1) a health promoting school views “health” as physical, social and emotional well-being. It strives to build health into all aspects of life at school and in the community. From province to province, even within different regions and communities of one province, schools have distinct strengths and needs. By building on those strengths and drawing on the imagination of students, parents, educators and administrators, every school can find new ways to improve health and address health problems. This is the heart of the process of becoming a Health Promoting School (HPS). The World Health Organization (1996:2) states that the Health Promoting School is also a place where all members of the school community work together to provide students with integrated and positive experiences and structures that promote their health. This includes both the formal and informal curricula in health, the

creation of a safe and healthy school environment, the appropriate health services and the involvement of the wider community in efforts to promote health.

Ronson (2003:1) argues that a Health-Promoting School:

- Fosters health and learning with all the measures at its disposal.
- Engages health and education officials, educators, teacher's unions, students, parents, health providers and community leaders in efforts to make the school a healthy place.
- Strives to provide a healthy environment, school health education, and school health services along with school/community projects and outreach.
- Implements policies and practices that respect an individual's well-being and dignity, provides multiple opportunities for success, and acknowledges good efforts and intentions as well as personal achievements.
- Strives to improve the health of school personnel, families and community members as well as learners; and works with community leaders to help them understand how the community contributes to, or undermines, health and education.

Health is inextricably linked to educational achievement, quality of life, and economic productivity. By acquiring health-related knowledge, values, skills and practices, children can be empowered to pursue a healthy life and to work as agents of change for the health of their communities. The WHO's vehicle for promoting the health of children and empowering school community members to create conditions for their own health and the health of others in the Health Promoting School. The HPS concept was conceived in the mid 1980's as a strategy that aimed to improve the effectiveness of health education and promotion in schools, creating environments that are supportive of the health and welfare of the whole school community. It is a whole school approach whereby the issues of school community members are identified and addressed in a democratic and collaborative manner (Australian Health Promoting Schools Association, 1998:1).

There are a number of definitions of HPS currently available. The following are two examples from the Australian Health Promoting Schools Association (1998:2).

- According to the Australian Health Promoting Association (AHPSA) HPS may be defined as schools which display, in everything they say and do, support for and commitment to enhancing the emotional, social, physical and moral well being of all members of their school community.
- AHAPSA also states that a HPS is one which has an organized set of policies, procedures, activities and structures, designed to protect and promote the health and well-being of students, staff and the wider school community members.

Health promotion in schools is a pressing priority. Ensuring the right to health and education for all children is a responsibility shared by all. It is an investment that each society should do in order to generate and augment the creative and productive capacity of all young people, a sustainable social and human future (Anon., 1999:1). Schools provide the most effective and efficient way to reach large portions of the population, including young people, school personnel, families and community members. Promoting health through schools enhances both health and the capacity of learners to learn. Schooling in itself has been shown to be a powerful way to influence health both within and outside the school (Harber, 2001:1).

Flisher, Lazarus & Reddy (1998:1) state that a major challenge facing South Africa today is to improve the health status of all its citizens and particularly of its youth and children. Flisher & Reddy (1995:1) state that the concept of health-promoting schools poses an urgent challenge that should receive the immediate attention of planners and policy makers. It could play an important role in founding a society that is assertive, caring, educated and educative in response to increasingly demanding global pressures.

The South African Departments of Health and Education (2000:16) states clearly that the vision is the creation of a culture of effective teaching and learning

through the holistic development of schools and other learning sites which will promote the optimal well-being of all members of the teaching and learning community through the implementation of the Health Promoting Schools Initiative. The key components of health promotion need to be located within the context of whole school/education institution development.

Lazarus & Reddy (2001:6) argue that the combination of healthy policies, a healthy physical and social environment, health education in the classroom, early detection of problems which can affect health and learning and ongoing programmes to treat, remediate and provide care for children with problems are all part of health promotion. The people involved in the health promoting schools are:

- School principal, school executive and governing body
- Cleaning staff, outdoor staff, tuck shop staff and volunteer safety staff
- All educators and especially those involved in health education
- Health professionals from government and non-governmental organizations
- School health nurses, psychologists, speech therapists, social workers and occupational therapists.

A school setting provides the opportunity for all members of the school community to work together to provide learners with integrated and positive experiences and structures that promote and protect their health (Lazarus & Reddy, 2001:6). The connection between a learner's health and education is a powerful one. Just as health exerts a powerful impact on the ability to learn, so too is regular attendance in school one of the essential means of improving health. The school itself – through its culture, organization and management, the quality of its physical and social environment, its curricula and teaching and learning methods, and the manner in which a learner's progress is assessed – has a direct effect on self-esteem, educational achievement, and therefore the health of the learners and staff. The physical state of schools is also regarded as an essential component of the Health Promoting School, so that pleasant,

aesthetically- pleasing, safe surroundings are present. It is essential to improve the internal and external environment (Dixey, 1996:59). Thus schools are effective as health-promoting environments only to the extent that they are healthy as organizations. The Health Promoting Schools initiative provides a comprehensive vision and a multi-disciplinary approach that considers people in the context of their daily life, in the family, community and society (Kirsten & Viljoen, 2000; Viljoen, 2001).

More and more people are becoming aware of and developing a sensitivity towards the immense challenges that face South African society. There is a growing consensus, that, if we are really concerned about creating a winning nation, everybody should get involved on all levels of society. At a landmark conference dealing with Health Promoting Schools, at the University of the Western Cape, priorities such as the following were identified (University of the Western Cape, 1996:9): poverty, racial prejudice, suicide, substance abuse/misuse, nutrition, gender issues, traffic and other injuries, tuberculosis and other forms of infections, social diseases and violence – all issues that directly impact on health in its broadest meaning. The World Health Organization (1996:4) states that creating a Health-Promoting School means applying a new way of thinking. It means finding opportunities to develop policies, practices and structures that include health promotion in everything done by the school and community.

### **3.5 Possible solutions**

It is unfortunate that a large number of children and adolescents in South Africa have witnessed and/or have been perpetrators of various forms of violence during their formative years and are not familiar with peace and love. Such children are more vulnerable to mental health problems (Tshotsho, 2004:1).

School-based violence prevention has become a growing concern for educators, parents, and researchers. Research in the schools on violence and other problematic behaviour prevention is profoundly affected by national, demographic, political, and educational trends. Our schools house a culturally

diverse array of students, as well as students with physical, intellectual, or emotional handicaps. At the same time, parents are under increasing economic pressure to work more hours, and we are seeing concomitant increases in family stress and all the sequelae that come with this (Hunter, 2001:2).

Professor Gray (1999:375) at the University of New Castle in New South Wales, Australia says that youths are both the perpetrators and victims of crime. However they are involved, society as a whole has to assume responsibility for breaking the cycle of crime and violence. Literature and evidence from existing programmes indicate that crime prevention should begin with children and young people and that the school is the ideal locus for such programmes. If South Africa were to prioritize any area of crime prevention, juvenile crime prevention would be the logical target. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (2000:6) states that a nation's health depends on preventing youth violence.

There are a number of reasons why schools are the ideal environment for crime and violence prevention initiatives within a community. Children spend most of their time at school and it's here where, because of diversity, different life skills competencies, baggage that the child brings from home and different levels of tolerance of one another feature. More importantly, schools are in the learning business and this makes them ideally positioned to teach young people alternatives to violence.

In all countries, the school system can be the most efficient and organized way to reach large portions of the population, including young people, school personnel, family members and local residents. According to the Australian Health Promoting Schools Association (1998:12) Health Promoting Schools are inclusive – the whole school community of students, parents, staff and local agencies are engaged in school activities. More children than ever are attending school. In many developing countries, the school is an ideal setting for health promotion activities. In the school, much of the structure, resources and staff that can contribute to health promotion efforts are already in place. Health services of

some form or another are provided for students in almost every country and many countries have some elements of a school health programme that could become the starting point for a more integrated approach that includes violence prevention. Schools also have the benefit of a staff equipped with tools of teaching and learning. Furthermore, among most students and communities, educators and school staff are highly regarded, positive role models (World Health Organization, 1998:7).

According to Zulu (2003:3) in South Africa, the level at which crime is being perpetrated seems to be at a much bigger scale and quite intense too. Recently, the media has been pointing out that there seems to be a trajectory towards gender-based violence. A number of reasons have been suggested including the myths around how sleeping with a virgin is supposed to cure HIV/AIDS. It was also found that adult crimes such as rape, theft, assault, abduction, gun possession and drug abuse were becoming more prevalent in primary schools. That is how the conceptualization of the "safe schools project" came into being. It became obvious that trauma management alone was not enough and that there was a need for a more comprehensive approach to crime and violence prevention. Eliasov & Frank (2000:2) state that in the South African National Crime Prevention school safety, violence prevention and victim empowerment are listed as core strategic programmes that are school-based. Similarly, the inter-Ministerial Committee on Young people at risk, the National Programme of Action, and the Protocol on Child Abuse and Neglect have all identified the school as a key site for early assessment of children who are at risk. The Department of Education has responded with "No Crime in Schools" as a core theme in its Colts (Culture of Learning and teaching) Campaign and with the national launch of its Safer Schools Project.

Domingo-Swarts (2002:3) describes the Tiisa Thuto and Crime Reduction in schools (CRISP) projects in her paper presented at the Crime Prevention Conference in Melbourne (Australia) while other projects like the Gatehouse project (Bond, Paton, Butler & Glover, 2002:2) aims to develop and promote a positive social environment within schools. Schools can address a broad range of

behaviours, skills, communication patterns, attitudes and school policies and conditions that support and perpetuate violence. For example, educational programmes can challenge the cultural norms that support violent behaviour against women or ethnic/religious minorities, and teach alternative attitudes and skills which enhance the “non-violent solution of conflicts, respect for human rights, democracy, inter-cultural understanding, tolerance and solidarity. They can also prevent violence from occurring on school grounds, thus providing a safe place in which students and staff can work and learn (World Health Organization, 1998:3).

Beyond educators and learner's efforts to curb violence, enlisting the community to combat violence can help reduce the risks and promote protective bonds between young people, their families, schools and communities. The school/community partnership enables the school to draw on the diversity of the local community (Zulu, 2003:5). Programmes for violence prevention have just been introduced in South Africa and are still at the pilot phase. These programmes are age specific and are based on the preventative approach. The main focus is on building skills and empowering carers, educators, children and adolescents (Tshotsho, 2004:1).

The programmes are as follow:

- Training mothers/carers to promote positive interaction between them and their infants;
- Skills training educators and students to prevent violence in school.

The past two decades has seen the proliferation of highly innovative violence prevention programmes. One of these programmes provided training in communication, negotiation, and problem-solving skills to teenagers with behavioural problems. These programmes reduced the number of suspensions attributed to violence (Rosenburg, 2000:1).

Stevens, Wyngaard & Van Niekerk (2001:149) promotes the Safe School Programme and defines a safe school as a place where students can learn and

educators can teach in a warm and welcoming environment, free from intimidation and fear of violence. The only way to deal with violence, according to the writers, is to develop a Safe School Plan in conjunction with all stakeholders at the particular school.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

The aim of this article was to gain insight into the current situation in South Africa regarding school violence. In order to establish Health Promoting Schools, a thorough study will clarify the term Health Promoting Schools, and establish guidelines which will form the basis for the establishment of Health Promoting Schools.

The world has never before been richer than it is today. Yet large populations of the world find themselves without adequate resources to provide for basic needs to remain healthy (Rao & Loewenson, 2004:1). Unfortunately schools have become spaces for violence; crime and violence represent real threats to the achievement of educational goals. Learners and educators take firearms to school, believing that they need them for protection (Domingo-Swarts, 2002:2).

The physical, mental and emotional well being underpins our ability to learn and grow as individuals. Being connected with a supportive and safe environment in the family, the school and the community are key determinants of the ability to learn and of being exposed to learning opportunities, which are in turn key determinants of life outcomes for young people (Bourne, 2002:1).

There are sound reasons to consider schools as important health promotion settings. Young people spend well over a third of their waking hours in school. It is the principal setting in which formal education takes place and for most adolescents a centre of their social lives (Bond, Paton Butler & Glover, 2002:2). During adolescence there are marked changes in attachment to family, school and peers. Disruption or insecurity in these relationships carries a risk of social, emotional and behavioural problems (Bond, Paton, Butler & Glover, 2002:4).

The Minister of Health, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang maintains that schools should create healthy environments for children. She says that it is critical that we promote healthy lifestyles among our children early in their lives. This is the only way we can create a healthy nation (Anon, 2004:1). The China Post newspaper states that the purpose of Health Promoting Schools is to build up healthy environments for studying, working, and daily life (Ho, 2004:1).

Violence and crime is one of the major obstacles and daily challenges for schools in South Africa. From these environments emanates the need to develop models and programmes to turn these environments into safe places for teaching and learning to occur and to encourage the recognition of the school environment as a nurturing and community-centred space (Domingo-Swarts, 2002:2). School-based interventions work best when programmes taking place in the schools are mirrored by those in the community (Domingo-Swarts, 2002:4).

Violence has become a regular part of the school experience and indeed a health issue. Learners cannot be expected to function optimally when they are hungry, ill or scared. The school is an important site to observe and assess children at risk. The Health Promoting School is most definitely a pressing priority. There must be a connection between education and the learner's health. Educators need to teach and learners need to learn in a warm, welcoming environment – free from intimidation, rape, harassment and the fear of violence.

Establishing Health Promoting Schools and promoting health is an effort to curb increasing violence in South African schools. The following guidelines may assist with the implementation of international health promoting initiatives to promote health in schools globally:

- Continuous support for existing programmes such as Tiisa Thuto and CRISP (Crime reduction in schools project) and developing additional programmes where gaps exist.
- Teaching conflict resolution will help learners cope with problems they might encounter in a non-violent way.

- Children from different socio-economic backgrounds and cultures will interact socially which might increase the probability of violence. Emphasizing and encouraging tolerance, good relationships and cultural diversity supports the effort to curb violence in school.
- Violence had been identified as a priority for health promotion, and a starting point, such as the provision of e.g. health services, will encourage a more integrated approach to health promotion at school.
- Learners are the perpetrators and victims of violence. They need to assume responsibility to break the cycle of crime and violence at school. Prevention should begin with the children. Juvenile crime prevention is for example a logic target in South Africa.

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## **CHAPTER 4**

# **SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY IN THE WEST RAND REGION**

### **Abstract**

Schools over the past few decades have been the settings for violence. Perpetrators have been able to deal, smuggle and supply whatever the market required. Drugs, alcohol, weapons, intimidation are all associated with schools in contemporary South Africa. But what is really going on in schools? Are all schools such battlefields portrayed by the media? The primary objective of the research was to determine the extent of violence in our schools in the West Rand region of Gauteng Department of Education and which factors contribute to the violence at these schools. In order to achieve this a qualitative research design was used, with data being collected by means of focus-group interviews, through purposive sampling. The transcriptions were subjected to descriptive analysis. The findings of the research are presented with a view of the situation regarding school violence in the West Rand region. Physical- and psychological violence has manifested itself in this region in various forms. Stabbing, harassment and sexual abuse are prominent features in the physical violence scenario. Psychological violence presented itself in the form of verbal abuse, intimidation and victimization.

### **4.1 Introduction and orientation**

Learning to use other ways of dealing with conflict rather than violence is one of the most important things we can teach our children in school (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 1999:212). Unfortunately, schools have long been violent places for South African children. Schools have become spaces for violence; crime and violence represent real threats to the achievement of educational goals (Domingo-Swarts, 2002:2). A culture of violence had developed in schools and in this country.

Many South African schools are struggling with problems of trespassing, vandalism, carrying and using weapons, drug dealing, rape, sexual abuse and other forms of physical assault (Anon., 2002:5). Although statistically schools are relatively safe places, the recurrent episodes of school shootings and the larger backdrop of youth violence are cause for concern (Strauss, 2003:1). Even though school violence is not a new phenomenon, it is shifting in severity as fists are replaced with knives and firearms, and, in some areas, alcohol and mandrax are replaced by crack (Anon., 2002:5).

Children are not free to learn when they are worried about bullying during their next break or on their way home from school. Victims usually have difficulty with concentration, completing class tasks and homework as well as behaviour problems (Mattise, 2004:1). Bullies are often learners with a history of abuse where they have been bullied or abused themselves. They may be learners with poor social skills or they can't meet school expectations (Neser, Ovens, Van der Merwe, Morodi & Ladikos, 2003:1). Males from their teen years through their early twenties are responsible for the majority of violent crime (Gray, 1999:377).

Males are usually associated with gangs – the deadly connection of gangs, drugs and guns is probably the most evil of all types of school violence. Gangs are not a new phenomenon (Last, 2001:3).

The Minister of Health, Dr. Manto Tshabalala-Msimang said that there are a number of clearly indefinable risk factors for violence. Two stand out above all others – poverty and alcohol (Anon., 2002:1). A vast number of people are engaged in a desperate daily struggle to meet basic needs. Many children's problems start at home. A lot of children's parents are alcoholics as a result the level of respect and moral value is very low (Yeadell, 2002:2). Recent research points to numerous dimensions of poverty that are related to high community rates of violence (Rosenburg, 2000:1).

Many girls interrupted their schooling or left school altogether because they felt unsafe in such a violent environment. Most girls, however, remained at school and suffered in silence, having learned a lesson that sexual violence at school

was inevitable and inescapable (Human Rights Watch, 2004:6). Girls at school are constantly faced with the fear of sexual abuse and harassment by educators and other learners. There is a high incidence of rape, particularly in school toilets, empty classrooms, hallways and hostels. The high level of sexual violence has contributed to a dramatic spread of HIV in learners (Hosken, 2004:1).

School violence is an important component of the daily lives of children in schools. It affects where they walk, how they dress, where they go and who their friends are. As long as educators treat violence at arm's length, as something that is someone else's problem, they will continue to neglect the opportunity to intervene in a crucial aspect of the children's lives. By ignoring school violence, the name-calling, the shoving, the fighting, the harassment, they are condoning it (Furlong & Morrison, 2000:5).

Violence and crime is one of the major obstacles and daily challenges for schools in South Africa.

This article aims to emphasize the dire straits that learners, educators and principals find themselves in regarding school violence. The focus is on the intensity of the problem and the negative impact school violence has on the future of our country and nation. Questions directing this study are as follows: What is the current scenario in schools in the West Rand region? Which factors contribute to violence and violent behaviour in the schools in this region? How can these insights be utilized to enhance existing approaches towards the establishment of Health Promoting Schools?

The study is based on research done in the West Rand region.

#### **4.2 Research design**

This research attempted to offer an educational perspective on the topic, with special reference to school violence. Therefore the focus is on the opinions of the learners on the phenomenon of school violence in secondary schools.

A qualitative research design is used for this research. According to Rubin & Babbie (1989) qualitative research, as an inductive approach, is eminently

effective in determining the deeper meaning of experiences of human beings and gives a rich description of the specific phenomenon that is being investigated in reality. The research was open and was not directed by a conceptual framework, pre-conceived notions or hypothesis. The participants were met in their own world (context), in an attempt to obtain a total picture of the research problem, thus to holistically determine their views (Morse, 1991).

### **4.3 Research method**

In order to explore and describe the opinions of the learners, the following steps were taken:

#### **4.3.1 Sampling of participants**

A research sample of eight Grade 9 learners from five register classes from each of eight secondary schools were randomly selected in the West Rand region, to participate in the research. They were all learners from the same grade from each of the selected schools, and which seemed likely to supply data rich in information. Participants were invited to take part in the interviews. Five focus group interviews were conducted at each school and each focus group consisted of eight learners.

#### **4.3.2 Data collection**

Data were collected by means of focus group interviews. The role of the researcher was that of "research instrument" with no preconceived notions or expectations. Open-ended research questions were put to the participants to gather information on the topic of school violence. The focus-group interviews are especially useful. The learners feel much more comfortable when in a group and they are focused on the topic. The interaction among the learners are more formative than individual conducted interviews.

Various questions directed the interviews but the following questions enabled the researcher to collect most valuable data:

- Have you ever experience or witnessed any form of violence at your school?

- How do the boys solve their differences at your school?
- Do you have any gang activity at school and which learners are involved with these gangs?
- Are you aware of any drugs used by the learners in your school? If yes, what kind?
- Do educators behave aggressively towards learners?
- Are there any boys who harass girls at your school?

A context was created where participants could speak freely and openly. This was realized by making use of the following techniques viz. clarification, paraphrasing, summarizing, probing and minimal verbal as well as non-verbal responses. The research continued for 40 focus group interviews until definite groups and categories became evident and the information became saturated (Schurink, Schurink & Poggenpoel, 1998).

#### **4.3.3 Data analysis**

The audio-tapes of the interviews were transcribed, after which the data was analyzed. Categories and sub-categories were identified. At the same time an independent qualitative researcher was requested to do an independent re-coding of the data in order to determine if the same categories and sub-categories became evident and could be confirmed. Consensus discussions between the researcher and the independent expert were held in order to determine the final results of the research.

The guidelines were discussed with appropriate academic professionals to ensure credibility. A literature study was also undertaken to verify the feasibility of the guidelines.

In order to ensure reliability of the findings, attention was given to the principles of credibility (checking the truth value of the findings), by means of field notes, peer examination and transferability (ensuring applicability of the findings) through comparison of sufficient descriptive data, as well as dense description of

the data. Dependability (ensuring consistency of the findings) was ensured by keeping the raw material, giving a full description of the research method, applying the same procedure right through, peer examination and conformability by keeping an appropriate distance in order not to influence the research.

Care was taken to adhere to ethical measures during research. In order to secure the safety and rights of the participants, they were informed of the prevailing ethical considerations, e.g. informed consent of the school and the participants, voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality and providing feedback (Berg, 1995).

#### **4.4 Results of research**

The research was conducted in the D2 Gauteng West District area which included the towns of Carletonville, Khutsong, Randfontein, Mohlakeng, Krugersdorp, Kagiso and Westonaria.

Eight schools were identified as established schools. The groups were the same type of school (Ex- model C or ex- D.E.T formerly known as Department of Education and Training) which facilitate the same medium of instruction. They accommodated learners from the same socio-economic environment and the fact that their facilities were basically the same. According to this criteria the schools were clustered together to form three groups:

**Group 1: Dual medium schools.**

**Group 2: English medium schools.**

**Group 3: Township Schools.**

The **Group 1** schools are both dual medium schools, i.e. Afrikaans and English as medium of instruction and also known as the ex-Model C schools. The **Group 2** schools are English medium schools and previously also known as Model C schools. These schools serve White, Black, Coloured and Indian learners. These are all well established schools with excellent facilities which included a school hall, athletics-, rugby-, netball-, hockey- and cricket fields. These schools are situated in mining and industrial communities on the south, central and the

eastern parts of the West Rand. The **Group 3** schools were traditionally known as township schools or previously the Department of Education and Training schools. These schools serve basically only black learners. The facilities at these schools were quite poor. Some of these schools might have had a self made soccer field or netball field. New schools that have been built recently had some facilities available, but the well established schools facilities were almost non-existent.

#### **4.4.1 Contributing factors to school violence**

From the research conducted, five factors were identified which contributed to the violence and violent behaviour in the schools. These were: (i) alcohol and drug abuse, (ii) gangs, (iii) intolerance, (iv) gambling and (v) educators.

Groups 1, 2 and 3 gave evidence of **(i) alcohol- and drug abuse** at these schools. The use of alcohol was particularly evident on special occasions such as sports days, field trips and the last day of a term. The use of alcohol was much more evident at the group 2 and 3 schools.

Learners from group 3 had the following to say about the use of alcohol at their schools:

“...When there are sports at school like it is a fun day, some of them go to the bottle stores and buy, sir, then they drink and when they get drunk they come back so that we can see that they are drunk....”

“...Especially those gangsters, they like using alcohol. When we are going out on school trips, guys are using alcohol. Maybe they are saying they are happy to be at another town....”

Dagga was the most common drug used by learners in the West Rand region. It was easily obtainable and fairly cheap to buy. The use and abuse of dagga was quite evident with groups 2 and 3. Group 1 gave evidence of the use of dagga but not as frequent as group 2 and 3. Learners from group 2 indicated the following:

“...They smoke dagga a lot, because dagga is the cheapest....”

Group 3 learners indicated that some learners mix dagga with other kinds of drugs – especially with mandrax. A few learners from this group indicated that cocaine is also mixed with dagga or cigarettes.

“...Dagga – and this pill, they mix it with dagga – the mandrax, and sometimes it is glue and benzene too....”

“...They smoke the cocaine and mandrax. They mix it with dagga....”

“...They use bottle kops, dagga then they just smoke....”

Learners from group 3 gave evidence that drug trafficking takes place at some schools. Learners report that it is fairly easy to get these drugs at school and in the community.

The respondents from group 1, 2 and 3 confirmed the influence and existence of **(ii) gangs** in their schools. Gangs and gangsters had a prominent role in the violence at these schools. The learners in group 3 had the following reaction to the question? Are there any gangs at your school?

“...Yes, sir. One of the gangs they call themselves BOC (boys of corruption) were fighting and they ended up taking out pangas, knives wanting to stab each other....”

Gang activity was much more prevalent among boys in groups 2 and 3 while girls were implicated as the girlfriends of the gangsters. Gangsterism posed a constant threat and they were usually the perpetrators of violence and violent behaviour. A boy from group 3 had the following reaction to gang activity.

“...Most of the girls here in school are involved with gangsters, so whenever they are crossing each other. Especially girls of the guys that are in gangsters, they will just tell you that they will call up their backups, like their boyfriends are some kind of gangster. So even the girls at school, we are afraid....”

Because of the intimidating image of the gangsters, a learner from group 3 confirmed that:

“...The educators are scared of some learners. The gangsters of learners are not respecting some of the educators, so when the teacher is talking, he is scared of that particular person....”

**(iii) Intolerance** led to confrontation between educators and learners . These confrontations varied from verbal - to physical attacks. Group 2 and 3 gave evidence of teacher’s intolerance towards them:

“...Our science teacher got so upset with our class that he took a cricket bat and wacked his table and he was screaming at the class....”

“...there was this one teacher, Mr. R. He use to beat us up, he actually didn’t like us. He would actually swear and hit us for no reason....”

The diversity of cultures at the schools in group 2 lead to intolerance as evident in this example: “...the Coloureds and the blacks, there is major tension between them...” Intolerance usually paves the way for racial issues among different cultures.

**(iv) Gambling** played a significant role in the everyday lives of learners from groups 2 and 3. One of the questions during the interview was: Do you think that gambling is a problem at this school? Learner’s reactions from group 2 were:

“...It is a problem because after playing they fight for the money and somebody gets hurt....”

“...Most of these people are drug users and want to get money for the drugs....”

Learners from group 3 identified gambling as a problem.

“...I think gambling is a problem, because learners do not attend periods because they gamble....” Learners became so involved and obsessed with gambling that they neglected their education. The researcher identified gambling as a contributing factor to physical violence after deliberation with learners from group 2 and 3. Large amounts of money were involved in gambling. Some learners used their school fees, others their traveling money and some stole money from their parents or friends to gamble. Five - to six hundred rand might

be involved at a time. Learners from group 2 stated: “....Sometimes it can be up to R 500-00, R 300-00 or R 600-00 a day sir....”

**(v) Educators** unfortunately contributed to the violent situations at those schools. It was found that there were educators that physically and sexually abused learners. Educators, who were not in their classes when they were supposed to, created opportunities for learners to commit acts of violence. Some educators were intimidated by gangsters at school and therefore lost the respect of the learners. Educators were added to the list of contributing factors to violence on grounds of evidence collected from groups 1, 2 and 3. Group 1 experienced less problems with their educators than group 2 and 3. Respondents of Group 3 had the following reactions:

“....The educators are too violent. They beat this boy and he was alone, they were three educators with their hands beating up on this boy. He was having blood on his hair....”

“....The educators are never in their classes. The boys play dice in the class and they fight. Why is the teacher never there....?”

“...I think the learners use alcohol with educators, because some educators use alcohol in the school trips, so the children see it for them. Like other educators when we were in Mpumalanga they said to us you can drink whenever you drink. He was in that tavern when we were there....”

The response of a male teacher to one of the learners for sexual favours from group 3 was:

“....If you have a child with me it will be better because I am working and I can support your child....”

Male educators were inclined to bribe girls for sexual favours with promises of better grades and reports. “....When you arrive there the teacher says I will help you but in return for me to help you, you must at least sleep with me or agree to be my girlfriend and if you don't agree he will fail me....”

According to the opinions and comments made by the respondents from groups 1, 2 and 3, two main categories and subsequent sub-categories of the various forms of violence in these schools were identified. Category A was identified as physical violence and category B as psychological violence.

#### **4.4.2 Category A: Physical fighting**

After studying the responses from groups 1, 2 & 3 physical fighting was identified as a major form in which violence manifests itself in schools.

Evidence from the interviews revealed that boys were usually the ones involved in **(i) physically fighting**. This does not mean that girls did not physically fight. They also got involved in fights but to a lesser degree than the boys. Groups 1, 2 and 3 agreed that boys turned to physically fighting in order to resolve their differences and that most carried some form of weapon or another with them at school. Physically fighting include actions such as: slapping, stabbing, pushing, mugging, hitting someone else with a stick, pulling hair and shootings. An additional form of violence which was identified in group 3, was corporal punishment.

Responses from the learners at these schools were:

A learner from group 3 gave evidence of stabbings and stated:

"...They were fighting with scissors, they stabbed him on the top of the head...."

The knife was most definitely the choice of weapon among the boys with the result that stabbings occurred at school. Weapons were common commodities at schools these days. A victim of a stabbing from group 3 said:

"...Yes, I myself, I was a victim and I was stabbed in the hand. I didn't do it on purpose, actually I just, it was in a crowd, then I pushed one guy, and he pulled his knife and tried to stab me, but I blocked. He nearly cut off four of my fingers...."

"...Yes, when the school closed the one learner was stabbed with a spear...."

Mugging has become part of the physical violence scene and a learner from group 3 stated:

"...Sometimes, when they come to school, when they gamble, they know there's going to be a lot of money. So if anybody wins a lot of money and it is a small boy, they will mug him...."

Groups 1, 2 and 3 reported the possession of weapons which included knives, sticks, guns, pens, bats or spears at the various schools. None of the schools in group 1 reported any incidents with extremely dangerous weapons such as guns. Groups 2 and 3, however, did report incidents where firearms were involved. A group 2 learner reported:

"...Last year there was this guy. He brought a gun to school. He had an argument with the teacher, so he took out the gun and shot the teacher...."

Learners from group 3 gave evidence of a shooting among gangs at one of the schools:

"...one time two boys were in the gate and they started shooting. They have groups. They call them CMF (Corrupt Mother Fuckers). They started shooting each other...."

The possibility that a disagreement among learners would be settled with some kind of weapon, was good. The old fashioned fist fights had gradually disappeared. Learners found it necessary to be able to protect themselves. The schools in group 3 were particularly violent environments.

Learners from group 2 gave examples of slapping:

"...a teacher was hitting a learner – he was slapping him...."

"...Mrs. J. moans about us all the time for nothing, she slapped a boy...."

Corporal punishment was mentioned as an addition to physical violence and learners from group 3 reported:

"...they beat us, sir. Some do corporal punishment...."

“...Yes, sir. They use corporal punishment like Mr. M. He beats us with a stick...”

Girls from group 1 reacted to the question on pulling hair.

“...she took her by the hair all around the class...”

Violence at school and while going to and fro from school still could lead to disruptive and threatening environments, physical injury, and emotional stress, and could be an obstacle to the learners' achievement.

The Evidence of **(ii) harassment** became apparent. Harassment referred to offensive and often threatening behaviour which included sexual harassment. The male educators and –learners were predominantly the guilty parties. The majority of girls were quite offended by this kind of behaviour, but there were some who enjoyed the attention.

Girls from group 2 reacted to harassment in the following way:

“...Some of the educators are like- naughty or something. Sometimes you will just see your teacher go into your shirt and say: “Fine breasts.” Sometimes they say come here here's a chair sit next to me and hit you on the bum and all that...”

“...When we are passing we are attending a second period the boys hit you and others will squeeze your thighs and when we ask them what is wrong, they just say you are sexy and fat...”

The majority of group 3 girls confirmed that they are harassed and said:

“...Yes, they touch you on the buttocks. They also touch your breasts and on their private parts. When you want to tell they will beat you up...”

Group 2 and 3 reported the majority of harassment incidents. Group 1 indicated that harassment was seldom reported. Harassment and sexual abuse were factors that led to children out of school, teenage pregnancies and contributed to the high HIV statistics.

**(iii) Sexual abuse** was unfortunately a reality in the schools which were part of the research. Girls were raped in empty classrooms and toilets. Group 2 and 3 reported the most incidents of sexual abuse. One of the girls in group 2 had the following reaction when this topic was discussed:

“....My former class mate last year was raped. She is not coming to school, she is pregnant and she has a child now....”

A girl from group 3 reported the following incident from her school:

“....This teacher, I was new in school and he will come and say what is your name. I said that I was here to do Gr.10. He said that if you are struggling in some subject you can come to me and I will help you but when you can sit and say you know the teacher say he will help me so I think I must go and take this chance so when you arrive there the teacher say I will help you but in return for me to help you, you must at least sleep with me or agree to be my girlfriend and if you don't agree he will fail you....”

The endemic violence was now highly sexualized and was aimed at the most vulnerable members of society – the young girls.

#### **4.4.3 Category B: Psychological violence**

Psychological violence was divided into four sub-categories: (i) Verbal abuse, (ii) Emotional abuse, (iii) Intimidation and (iv) Victimization. Groups 1, 2 and 3 gave evidence of these factors as psychological violence. Group 1 added emotional violence to the sub-categories.

**(i) Verbal abuse** was a very common form of violence in all the schools involved with the research, especially among the female learners. They would engage in verbal confrontation and used the following methods to attack or defend themselves: Swearing (quite common among boys and girls), shouting, insults, arguments, threats and name calling.

Group 1 reported the following examples of swearing:

“....There is also a teacher that swears at us. She use to call us “black bastards....”

“...the teacher says we must bring our whole family he will “moer” you with your whole family. Then he says he is going to hang you and call us “mother fuckers....”

Verbal abuse also occurred in the form of racist remarks.

“... You have no manners, why don't you go to the black schools....”

A group 2 learner reported racist remarks among the learners which included remarks such as:

“...There was this other big boys sir, this boy came to me and said: “little kaffertjie wat soek jy hier....” (kaffertjie refers to the American word “nigger” meaning a Black person).

Group 1 learners supplied examples of screaming and shouting among girls in confrontation with one another.

“...and verbally, sir. They also swear at one another and scream and shout and end up fighting....”

Girls were usually involved in name calling as a girl from group 1 reported:

“...the girls with their name calling, is almost a natural thing....”

“...They call each other bitches....”

Arguments were usually caused by petty issues as a learner in group 1 stated:

“Sometimes they fight and hurt each other for stupid reasons like arguing about a pen....”

**(ii) Emotional abuse** referred to humiliation, provocation and jealousy. Educators also engaged in the act of humiliating learners. Learners from group 1 reported the following:

“...Mr. W always carried on about how we looked and always tried to humiliate us in front of the others....”

Another learner from group 1 had the following reaction about a lady teacher:

“...sy sal enige iets doen om jou te verneder. Al sê jy enige iets, sê sy jy praat terug en sal sy enige iets doen om jou te verneder voor almal...”

Girls admitted that they provoked the boys sexually. Provocation led to physical violence – sexual violence or even assault. Some girls from group 2 confirmed this statement.

“...it is not only the boys fault, it is both boys and girls fault because we (girls) also provoke them...”

Group 1 was the only group that added emotional abuse to the sub-categories. Emotional abuse included actions such as deliberate humiliation, jealousy and provocation.

**(iii) Intimidation** was a problem at the schools in group 1, 2 and 3. Educators often described situations where children threatened to harm them. Learners also described incidents of intimidation internal to the school, usually at the hands of older youths and gang members. A learner in group 1 reported:

“...You stink and they will stand back when she passes. They usually say bad things to her...”

A very interesting example of intimidation was discovered during the research. Group 2 girls were intimidated by class mates by using the following method:

“...The “9A Times” was in the form of a magazine and they would stick pictures – like a hair product and they would write: Y this is good for you. And they would stick underwear and say your underwear is too small. They would say N is so ugly. They would change their handwriting too...” This is indeed a unique way to intimidate fellow learners.

Learners from group 2 remarked: “...There is this other group. They irritate the other learners, the learners are afraid to speak up because of how these people look like and how physically can abuse you...”

There were quite a number of learners that came to school every morning - afraid of being bullied at school or even harassed or abused. Even educators were

threatened with physical violence or damage to property. A victim of intimidation from group 3 stated:

“...Sometimes when they don't have money they are waiting for other students in the toilets, those gangsters want the children to pay protection fee. So if you don't pay, you will be beaten....”

**(iv) Victimization** refers to the act of treating someone unfairly, especially because you dislike their beliefs or way of doing things. Groups 1, 2 and 3 reported incidents of victimization.

Boys from group 1 mentioned the following incident:

“...In the first soccer team we had white boys training with us, so they just disappeared. The white guys took them away they must play rugby not soccer....”

Group 2 learners stated that: “...There are classes, especially in Afrikaans there is this other group that sits at the back- the rest is like there. There is this other guy they call him "Dog" they always hold him with his pants, they always mess him around. They like teasing him....”

“...This one boy – his name is D. They took him by his family – it is poor and all that. They don't care. People don't feel free to come to school. What are people going to say...?”

Physical- and psychological violence was a reality in the West Rand region. Futures were in jeopardy and even lives were at stake. Evidence existed of a serious problem and immediate reaction to the challenge was required.

#### **4.5. Discussion**

The research conducted in the West Rand region portrays an alarming picture and supplies evidence of the current state of affairs regarding school violence within the researched region.

Apart from the fact that the contributing factors encouraged violence, a connection existed between those factors. Gangs were responsible for a large

amount of the violence at schools. They were the ones who supplied drugs and engaged in gambling activities. From the research conducted, the drug problem at the schools in this region has become prominent. Learners gambled to be able to get money to buy drugs. They gambled for money which lacks in the communities where especially the group 3 schools were situated. The socio-economic status of the learners at these schools is low. Learners are lured into gambling activities or to join gangs, as it creates an opportunity to gain something from it, either materialistically or authoritatively.

The two categories of violence which had been identified (Category A: Physical violence and Category B: Psychological violence) indicate a distinction between the various forms of violence that exist in the researched region. The results of the research indicate that group 1 was the group least affected by the violence in this region, while group 3 indicates the highest levels of physical violence. The results from group 2 indicates that there is a close correlation between the levels of physical and psychological violence. Group 2, however, has the highest level of psychological violence of all the groups.

Alarming was the fact that groups 2 and 3 reported so many incidents of sexual harassment and –abuse. Male educators and male learners were primarily the perpetrators of these offences. The boys were particularly violent, especially in groups 2 and 3. The violence and violent behaviour of the boys are usually associated with the carrying of weapons which makes the school grounds very dangerous places to be.

Girls were not excluded from the violence scene, as they too engaged in violent behaviour. They too, got involved in physical fighting, but not as much as the boys. Girls were associated with psychological violence and would attack each other verbally. They would rather intimidate each other before engaging into physical violence. In extreme cases they would physically attack each other and sometimes some form of weapon (pen or pencil) might be involved. This was evident from all the groups interviewed and researched.

#### **4.6 Limitations and recommendations**

During the research that was conducted it became apparent that there were some learners, especially from the group 3 schools who sometimes didn't fully understand the questions that were directed to them. Some questions and concepts had to be explained to the learners seeing that they were not English first language speakers. An additional questionnaire would have undoubtedly cast more light on the topic, but it was important to remember that the questionnaires should be translated into the person's home language

The fact that girls were interviewed by a male, made issues such as sexual abuse and harassment a sensitive topic to discuss. The majority of girls didn't have a problem, but there were a few that would have been more comfortable with a lady interviewing them.

The tape recordings were quite adequate, but there were still some learners who didn't speak clearly enough which hampered the transcriptions.

Further research on the topic of school violence and the prevention of school violence is of paramount importance. There were so many learners who were negatively influenced by this phenomenon and as a nation we cannot afford to jeopardize South Africa's future or the future of these learners. Particular attention should be paid to poverty as it has a tremendous effect on the well-being of the learners. Principals and school governing bodies should be made aware of the increasing problem of school violence and threat to the schools well-being. It is advisable to add a questionnaire when conducting research by means of focus-group interviews. The questionnaire will ensure additional information and if translated into the respondent's mother tongue, the respondents feedback will be so much more valuable.

Overall, the interviews and research developed quite fluently and no serious impediments were experienced. The principals and staff were very helpful during the visits to the different schools. The majority of the respondents were more than responsive and very willing to make a positive contribution to the issue of school violence.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

School violence, whether physically or psychologically, should be a major concern to everybody involved in education. Learners leaving school at a young age jeopardize their futures as a result of negative and demoralizing influences, such as school violence, in our communities. Concern for the health of our learners and encouraging the health promoting schools initiative will help to pave a way to a crime and violence-free school environment.

It is quite alarming that alcohol and drug abuse have such a negative influence on learners. The amount of physical violence in schools and the fact that weapons are involved, cause school violence to have become even more controversial issue. The professional conduct of some educators are in question and it is an aspect that needs to be addressed. Educators are supposed to be role-models, not abusers. Unfortunately, the few abusers cause people to be prejudiced towards the entire education community.

The following may serve as guidelines for health promotion and the establishment of Health Promoting Schools:

- Local and national school violence awareness campaigns.
- Schools should adopt, implement and monitor policies and plans for contributing factors to school violence.
- Schools should adopt, implement and monitor policies and plans for the prevention of physical- and psychological violence at school.
- Principals, educators and governing bodies need to be made aware of the threat of school violence to the well-being of schools.

The evidence concerning violence in schools is on the table. School violence is rife in the West Rand region and it is up to the education community in this region to resolve this issue without delay.

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# **CHAPTER 5**

## **FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the research is being concluded by a presentation of the findings, the drawing of conclusions on the basis of the findings, and finally, the formulation of recommendations for future research.

### **5.2 Findings**

#### **5.2.1 Findings on school violence in South Africa: an overview**

- Poverty and unemployment play a very important part in school violence (cf. paragraph 2.1 & 2.6).
- Sexual harassment and sexual abuse are a serious issue which needs urgent attention (cf. paragraph 2.1).
- There is no one determining factor to school violence and therefore it is such a complex issue (cf. paragraph 2.2).
- Stakeholders should be involved with action plans to curb violence at schools (cf. paragraph 2.2).
- Overcrowding creates opportunities for violence in schools (cf. paragraph 2.2).
- Conflict resolution is a way to empower learners to find solutions in a non-violent way (cf. paragraph 2.3).
- Male learners and male educators are mostly involved in school violence (cf. paragraph 2.3).
- Corporal punishment is still being administered which contribute to anti-social behaviour and violence (cf. paragraph 2.3 & par: 2.6).

- Alarming figures of drug and alcohol abuse are reported at secondary schools (cf. paragraph 2.4).
- Crime and violence threaten the well-being of all learners (cf. paragraph 2.4).
- Educators involved in violence at school are of great concern (cf. paragraph 2.5).
- Schools do not disclose violence and sexual violence to authorities. (cf. paragraph 2.5).
- School violence has undergone a major shift in severity – from the old-fashioned fist fight to fighting with knives and an alarming amount of weapons are carried by learners to and fro from school (cf. paragraph 2.4 & 2.5).
- South African schools have become accustomed to a “culture of violence” (cf. paragraph 2.7).
- Evaluation of positive and negative factors of the social construction of schooling is necessary (cf. paragraph 2.7).

#### **5.2.2 Findings on school violence and health promotion: an overview**

- Learners are forced to leave school because of poverty and sexual abuse (cf. paragraph 3.1).
- Teach learners conflict resolution to cope with their problems (cf. paragraph 3.1).
- Learners cannot function when they are hungry (malnourished), ill and scared to go to school (cf. paragraph 3.1 & 3.6).
- Schools are the ideal setting for health promotion (cf. paragraph 3.1).
- Violence threatens the well-being of the child, and is recognized as a health issue (cf. paragraph 3.1 & 3.2).
- Learners from different socio-economic backgrounds may resort to violence (cf. paragraph 3.2).

- All members of the school community (stakeholders) have to co-operate, and be involved in creating and promoting the Health Promoting Schools initiative (cf. paragraph 3.4).
- Health Promoting Schools is a pressing priority (cf. paragraph 3.4).
- Learners are perpetrators and victims of violence and have to assume responsibility against violence.(cf. paragraph 3.4).
- A growing concern is the increasing number of learners who witness violence and violent behaviour at school (cf. paragraph 3.5).
- Parents are under increasing economic pressure (cf. paragraph 3.5).

### **5.2.3 Findings on school violence in secondary schools: a case study in the West Rand region**

- Violence is much alive and rife in South Africa and an increase in school violence has been reported (cf. paragraph 4.1).
- Many schools struggle with problem of violence and violent behaviour (cf. paragraph 4.1).
- We cannot ignore the problem of school violence and it is not someone else's problem (cf. paragraph 4.1).
- Increasing reports of sexual abuse leads to out-of-school children, with the result that they drop out of school and their education is interrupted (cf. paragraph 4.1).
- Physical violence occurs on a larger scale than psychological violence (cf. paragraph 4.4).
- Schools need to adopt policies and plans for contributing factors to school violence (cf. paragraph 4.4).
- Schools need to adopt policies and plans to prevent physical- and psychological violence in schools (cf. paragraph 4.4).

- Learners are just as worried about the violence at school as the education and academic authorities are (cf. paragraph 4.5).
- The non-professional conduct of some educators is an alarming phenomenon (cf. paragraph 4.5).

### **5.3 Conclusions**

#### **5.3.1 Conclusions on school violence in South Africa: an overview**

- As a result of poverty and unemployment, learners try to find alternative ways to provide for themselves – whether by selling drugs, gambling or mugging a fellow pupil. Drug dependency and alcohol abuse are associated with poverty and unemployment and contributing factors to violence and in particular school violence.
- In some cultures the males are the dominant figures in the family and women/girls are seen as possessions when they are attacked. Male educators see young girls as easy prey – easily influenced and intimidated by promising or threatening young girls with passing or failing a grade. Often pure infatuation by attention from a male a few years older is a most tempting proposition.
- There is no one determining factor that could be pinpointed as the origin of school violence. There are so many factors involved which make this a very complex issue which needs as much input and thought as possible.
- It is important that all stakeholders are involved with the campaign to eradicate violence from all schools.
- Overcrowding at school presents an opportunity for violence to erupt at school. Large classes, insufficient facilities and rationalization all contribute to violence at school.
- Teaching conflict resolution gives the learner the opportunity to resolve all problems in a non-violent way. Learners will have knowledge of how to conduct themselves in a conflict situation.

- Traditionally the male is seen as the provider, the warrior and the head of the family. Males therefore play a dominant role in the family, in society and in schools.
- Educators have not been able to cope with the latest developments in class and turn to corporal punishment as a solution. Corporal punishment has created violent situations in the past and a means to humiliate a learner.
- The school environment is a setting that makes it quite easy to sell drugs. To move around among hundreds of other children creates the ideal opportunity to do business unnoticed. Various factors contribute to children using drugs and peer pressure is not excluded. Some learners struggle to cope – in and out of school. Home situations such as a single parenthood contribute to children using drugs or alcohol. It is often seen as an escape mechanism – from a dreadful situation they find themselves in.
- The present situation is not conducive to proper education in schools. No peaceful, healthy or tranquil atmosphere exists which provides the ideal educational setting.
- The teacher's professional conduct should be of such a nature that they set an example. They are the guiding factors to a prosperous nation. Educators who are involved and help to increase school violence jeopardize the educational goal and the future of their learners.
- Principals and school governing bodies might be scared of a bad reputation, or it might be that they are not concerned about the victims. People are weary not to get involved in situations which might influence their work and reputations as educators.
- It is alarming that violence has increased to such an extent that weapons are carried to school for protection. The fact that guns are involved proves that the situation is critical, as people's lives are at stake. Weapons are carried freely to and fro from school and home – making it so easy for perpetrators of

violence at school to conduct their business without any interference from education authorities or the South African Police Services.

- The culture of violence implies that violence has become such a common issue that it has become part of our everyday lives. Educators and learners have become accustomed to the way they interact and conduct themselves at school.
- Determining what is unacceptable in the social construction of schooling and helping with the expansion and creation of what is good will help with a positive and negative evaluation of the school to provide a violence free environment at school

### **5.3.2 Conclusions on school violence and Health Promotion: an overview**

- As a result of the inability of parents to afford school fees, school uniform and other needs of learners and the fact that schools need school fees to survive, parents find it difficult to cope – with the result that learners are forced to leave school. These learners are also known as OSC (Out of School Children). Parents are under great economic pressure as a result of retrenchments, unemployment and other economic and social factors. Alternative options should be available to learners and parents and serious attention need to be given to the violence, poverty, unemployment and other issues which are contributing factors to a loss of education to the large number of out of school children and those who barely survive in our schools.
- Teaching conflict resolution will help learners to cope with their problems in a non-violent way.
- It is quite clear that we do not realize the full extent of the situation in our country regarding poverty and nutrition. If one speaks of many malnourished children, the situation is in dire straits. Educators, provincial government and government need to inform themselves of the present situation in our country. No learner will function optimally and learn when he is hungry, cold, scared and live in poverty.

- The school provides the ideal setting for Health Promoting Schools. Our learners are our future citizens and in order to provide for the future, it is necessary to train, equip and educate the children to appreciate health promotion and the positive influence it has on the entire community. A large number of learners are available to work with and the staff is available to educate and train the learners. Collaboration between all stakeholders in education will provide a sound system.
- Violence is undoubtedly a health issue as violence not only affects the learners physically, but also psychologically. When we talk about educating learners, it is necessary to look at the child holistically – physically, emotionally and psychologically. The whole being of the child is thus influenced by violent action and violent behaviour. Well-being implies harmony and balance between the child's mind and body. The negative influence of violence causes an imbalance between mind and body.
- Children from different socio-economic backgrounds and cultures will interact socially and increase the probability of violence. It is of paramount importance to teach tolerance, the value of good relationships and the wonder of cultural diversity.
- Health promotion is not only the responsibility of the principal and staff at a school. Parents, governing body, the community, NGO's and all stakeholders in education will be responsible for Health promotion. They are all role-players in children's lives and can exert a positive influence on healthy lifestyles and providing a healthy environment to be educated in.
- The current crime and violence situation in South Africa necessitates immediate action. Time is of the essential importance as today's youth is tomorrow's parents. Health promotion is thus a crucial priority.
- Learners are perpetrators and victims of violence. They need to assume responsibility to break the cycle of crime and violence. Prevention should then

begin with the child. Juvenile crime prevention is a logical target in South Africa.

- To witness violence everyday and experience the trauma of violence has a significant influence on a person's life, especially when the child is of an impressionable age. This is a lifestyle that we have got use to and we cultivate a culture of violence. Parents, who are abusive at home, have a negative influence on their children's behaviour. These children will most probably be abusive parents as well. Violence has thus become a lifestyle.
- The school is the ideal setting for the prevention of violence. It has become clear that school grounds have become battlefields. With proper preventative measures and programmes in place, assistance from all stakeholders and trained staff, it is possible to contain violence and have a positive influence on learners. The school grounds are settings that can easily be controlled and access and exit easily monitored. This is where learners spend the greater part of their day.
- It has been well-noted that poverty and unemployment has a very negative effect on the lives of parents and their children. One cannot expect any child to learn optimally when they are ill, hungry or scared. These factors influence the child's well-being negatively i.e. the mind and body.

### **5.3.3 Conclusions on school violence in secondary schools: a case study in the West Rand region**

- Violence in schools is a daily phenomenon. Learners are faced with an increasing amount of violence and violent behaviour. Poverty, drugs and alcohol have a significant role to play as they have been identified as some of the main contributing factors to violence.
- Violence in schools does not only include isolated incidents, but occurs regularly at most of the schools. Some schools struggle more than others as a result of the socio-economic status of the community, the setting of the school, efficiency of staff and the involvement of all stakeholders at those

schools. These schools need desperate help to fight the battle against violence.

- School violence is not a phenomenon that will disappear by itself or overnight. This is a very complex problem and we should not expect someone else to solve this problem for us. Educators and the education community and all stakeholders in education are responsible for resolving this issue as soon as possible.
- Children leaving school as a result of sexual violence or any other contributing factor is a complex issue. The Education Department and education community's aim is to provide a basic education for all. Every country's future depends on the educated population and children leaving school at a young age are denied the opportunity to contribute to the educational growth of the nation.
- Schools need to adopt policies and plans to counter-act those factors which contribute to the violence in schools. These policies and plans need to be implemented and monitored as well.
- At all three groups of schools, two main categories of violence were identified. Category A was identified as physical violence and category B as psychological violence.
- The two main categories were divided into sub-categories. The sub-categories under physical violence (cat. A) were identified as (i) physically fighting, (ii) harassment and (iii) sexual abuse. Psychological violence (cat. B) embraced (i) Verbal abuse, (ii) Emotional violence, (iii) Intimidation and (iv) Victimization as the sub-categories.
- Schools need to adopt policies and plans to counter-act the physical- and psychological factors which lead to violence in schools. These policies and plans need to be monitored as well.
- It is clear from the research done that physical violence plays a much more prominent role. Factors such as gangs, gambling and alcohol and drug abuse

which were identified as some of the main causes of violence, support the fact that physical violence is rife in the West Rand.

- Not all learners are involved or are perpetrators of violence in schools. They are usually the victims. The fact remains that most of the learners are very concerned about violence at school as it directly affects their education. Most learners are serious students – concerned about their future and concerned that an issue such as violence should not jeopardize their futures.
- The non-professional conduct of some educators is of great concern. Educators who contribute to the violence – in particular sexual violence has a very negative effect on the education system, not to mention the professional image of all educators in this country. These educators do not contribute to the achievement of the nation's educational goal.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

- The implementation of a national policy and plan of action for the prevention of violence in schools.
- Prevention of overcrowding of schools and upgrading facilities.
- Conflict resolution as a point of departure for the prevention of school violence.
- Encouraging health promotion and Health Promoting Schools as a pressing priority and a counter measure to school violence.
- National drug and alcohol prevention programmes in schools supported by the security services (SAPS) and other concerned parties.
- Enhancing and supporting present research into sexual violence and the fact that learners are leaving school at a very young age.
- Research into the non-professional conduct of educators who contribute to violence in schools.
- Resist the culture of violence and replace it with a culture of health and well-being.

- In depth research into the issue of poverty and the effect thereof on learners in and out of school.
- Inform principals and school governing bodies of the increasing problem of school violence and the threat to every school's well-being.

### **5.5 Close**

Violence undoubtedly creates havoc at South African schools and without tools or weapons to contend this onslaught; a losing battle is being fought. Of major concern is the fact that the contributing factors – alcohol, drugs and poverty have such a devastating effect on the people involved as well as the victims of abuse. Violence has been identified as a health issue. Creating Health Promoting Schools gives us at least the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the struggle against violence in school and other social handicaps.

For millions of people the present economic situation is very difficult and poverty is of major concern to all. We will have to work hard at eradicating the problem of violence in our schools and the support of a national plan of action will only strengthen our hand to do so. Educators must realize that they are key figures in this struggle and their dedication will ensure that we will succeed in our endeavors.

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# APPENDIXES

## **APPENDIX A**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**INTERVIEW schedule**

**1. Introduction:**

Thank you for agreeing to talk to me today! I am in the process of studying what Effect school violence has on the education community, i.e. the teachers, learners, parents Etc. We need to find solutions to this major problem and create a healthier environment for the school Community. I will use the information you give me to find and improve solutions to this rapid expanding problem.

**2. Course/body**

1. Have any of you been exposed to some kind of violence or another?
2. From the conversation we have in the introduction, we centralize our attention to the school environment where we shall then Focus on the following:
  - a) Discuss the term "school violence" with the learners. (5 Min.)
  - b) What forms of violence have you experienced at school? (10 Min.)
  - c) What recommendations would you advise for this problem? (2-3 Min.)

**3. Conclusion**

1. Once again emphasise the fact that all information will be strictly confidential.
2. If you should think of anything else that might contribute to the success of this study, please feel free to contact Your guidance teacher or principal.
3. I look forward to hearing from you – Thank you very much for your patience.
4. Closure: Be sensitive to learners emotions and feelings.

**4. Itinerary**

Date	School	Remarks
20/4/2004	H/s Carletonville	
22/4/2004	Carleton Jones High School	
25/4/2004	H/s Westonaria	
14/10/2004	Badirile Secondary	
13/10/2004	Randfontein High School	
8/10/2004	AB Phokompe Secondary	
6/10/2004	Townview High School	
7/10/2004	Kagiso Secondary	

#### Details of proposed research to be undertaken

The aims and objectives of the proposed research are to establish the following:

1. What forms of violence occur in schools in the D2 region?
2. Which factors contribute to violence and violent behavior in secondary schools in this region?
3. To establish guidelines from a health promoting school's perspective to address the factors that contribute to the violence in the schools in this region.

#### Research methodology

The focus area is the Westrand D2 district which includes the following towns and cities:

1. Carletonville
2. Westonaria
3. Randfontein
4. Krugersdorp

The following schools have been randomly selected to participate in the research:

Principal	School name	Address	Tel no:
Mr. I.C. Pienaar	1. H/S Carletonville	P.O. Box 54 Carletonville 2499	(018) 788 2306
Mr. J. van Vuuren	2. Carletonville Jones High School	Private Bag X2034 Carletonville 2499	(018) 788 3239
Mr. G. Babupi	3. Badirile Secondary School	P.O. Box 554 Carletonville 2499	(018) 783 1564
Mr. B. Fischer	4. Westonaria High School	Private Bag X18 Westonaria 1780	(011) 753 1168
Me. M. Henning	5. Randfontein High School	Private Bag X030 Randfontein 1760	(011) 693 5220
Ms. E. Masibi	6. AB Phokompe Secondary	P.O. Box 1 Mohlakeng 1759	(011) 414 0002
Mr. N. du Preez	7. Townview High School	Private Bag X2036 Krugersdorp 1740	(011) 953 3770
Mr. C. Mandlazi	8. Kagiso Secondary	P.O. Box 48 Kagiso 1744	(011) 410 1306

The method of research will be conducted in the following way:

1. The method of research will be in the form of interviews.
2. The target group will be the grade 9 learners from the selected schools
3. Six boys and six girls from each register class will randomly be selected to participate in interviews.
4. Each register class will form a focus group.
5. The learners from each focus group will be interviewed together.
6. The duration of each interview should not exceed 30 minutes

## **APPENDIX B**

### **LETTER TO PRINCIPAL**

*ALAN G. MEYER*

*ADDRESS: 1 Simon Street Oberholzer 2500*

*Tel: (018) 788 6452 (H) Cell: 0828510819 Tel: (018) 788 2306 (W)  
Fax: (018) 787 4447*

## THE PRINCIPAL

**Re: Interviews with Gr.9 learners**

I am a registered Masters degree (M.Ed.) student at North-West University and am presently involved in the completion of my thesis.

I would, however, like to approach your school for research on the topic of the thesis: "School violence in Secondary schools: Guidelines for the establishment of health promoting schools" Schools have randomly been selected for the research and your school has been identified for the research.


Violent behavior has never made any positive contributions to education and learning at any school. The development and implementation of preventative measures or programs re: violence at schools will definitely have a positive effect on the education community. At some schools violent behavior has become a bigger problem than at others, but everybody will benefit from a more healthy learning and teaching environment.

The research will be conducted in the form of interviews with your grade 9 learners. Six learners from each register class will be selected randomly and the interviews will be conducted in the groups. No learner will be exposed to an individual interview. I include my interview schedule, the questionnaire and a copy of the letter of consent from the Gauteng Department of Education.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at the telephone numbers above.

Thank you very much for your attention and support.

Yours sincerely

  
A.G. Meyer

## **APPENDIX C**

### **LETTER TO GOVERNING BODY**

**ALAN G. MEYER**

**ADDRESS: 1 Simon Street Oberholzer 2500**

**Tel: (018) 788 6452 (H) Cell: 0828510819 Tel: (018) 788 2306 (W)  
Fax: (018) 787 4447**

20 March 2004

**THE CHAIRMAN: SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY**

**Re: Interviews with Gr.9 learners**

I am a registered Masters degree (M.Ed.) student at North-West University and am presently involved in the completion of my thesis.

I would, however, like to approach your school for research on the topic of the thesis: "School violence in Secondary schools: Guidelines for the establishment of health promoting schools" Schools have randomly been selected for the research and your school has been identified for the research.

Violent behavior has never made any positive contributions to education and learning at any school. The development and implementation of preventative measures or programs re: violence at schools will definitely have a positive effect on the education community. At some schools violent behavior has become a bigger problem than at others, but everybody will benefit from a more healthy learning and teaching environment.

The research will be conducted in the form of interviews with your grade 9 learners. Six learners from each register class will be selected randomly and the interviews will be conducted in the groups. No learner will be exposed to an individual interview. I include my interview schedule and a copy of the letter of consent from the Gauteng Department of Education.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at the telephone numbers above.

Thank you very much for your attention and support.

Yours sincerely

  
A. G. Meyer

## **APPENDIX D**

### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN D2 GAUTENG WEST REGION**

Attention : The District Director  
D2 Gauteng West  
Krugersdorp 1740

1 Simon Street  
Oberholzer  
2500  
5 March 2004

The Research Coordinator  
111 Commissioner Street  
Johannesburg  
2000

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Research process within the D2 Gauteng West District

I am at present a student at the North West University and in my final M.ed year. I, however, need to do research in the D2 Gauteng West District with regard to the topic as set out in my research proposal which is included in this package.

I am of the opinion that the Education department would benefit from the research to be done, seeing that the topic is quite controversial and has a detrimental influence on all stakeholders within the education system at schools.

I, therefore, request permission to do the research within the D2 District. I have included all necessary documentation and information where and when the research will be conducted.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely



A.G. Meyer  
Student no: 10395288

Work address: Hoërskool Carletonville  
P.O.Box 54  
Carletonville  
2499

## **APPENDIX E**

### **APPROVAL OF REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**



Date:	13 September 2004
Name of Researcher:	Meyer Alan
Address of Researcher:	1 Simon Street
	Oberholzer
	2500
Telephone Number:	(018) 7882306
Fax Number:	(018) 7874447
Research Topic:	School Violence in Secondary Schools: Guidelines for the Establishment of Health Promoting Schools
Number and type of schools:	10 Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Gauteng West

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

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

Permission has been granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met, and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted:

- 1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
- 2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
- 3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*

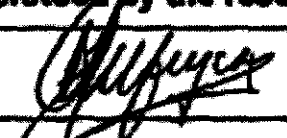
4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Senior Manager (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, fares and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organizations.
12. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Senior Manager: Strategic Policy Development, Management & Research Coordination with one Hard Cover bound and one Ring bound copy of the final, approved research report. The researcher would also provide the said manager with an electronic copy of the research abstract/summary and/or annotation.
13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Senior Manager concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

pp. Nomvula Ubisi

ALBERT CHANEE  
ACTING DIVISIONAL MANAGER: OFSTED

The contents of this letter has been read and understood by the researcher.	
Signature of Researcher:	
Date:	14.09.2004

## **APPENDIX F**

### **RESULTS: MAIN CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES**

## Group 1

### DUAL MEDIUM SCHOOLS

These schools are both double medium schools, i.e. Afrikaans and English as medium of communication (also known as the ex-model C schools). Eight learners from five register classes were randomly selected to participate in the interviews. A total of 40 boys and girls were selected from each school for this purpose. A total of 80 learners were interviewed at both schools. 40 Girls (5 Focus groups) and 40 boys (5 Focus groups) were randomly selected.

The results revealed that two categories of violence were identified at these schools:

- A: Physical violence
- B: Psychological violence.

After studying these two categories carefully, I came to the following conclusion:

There are three major factors that contribute to the **PHYSICAL VIOLENCE** which occur at these schools. These are:

- Alcohol/drug use or abuse
- Gangs
- Intolerance

Three sub-categories were identified under physical violence:

Evidence from the interviews reveal that boys are usually the ones involved in (i) **physically**. All the focus groups agreed that boys turn to physically fighting in order to resolve their differences and that they carry some form of weapon or another with them to and/or at school. Physically fighting includes actions such as slapping, stabbing, pushing, hitting someone else with a stick and pulling hair. Evidence of violence and violent behavior was obtained from learners during the interviews and responses to the questions were as follow:

C: "I have seen some of them have knives."

C: "Some use pens and pencils as their weapons, especially these hockey sticks."

W: "Like last year this boy came with a baseball bat and pangas when they were fighting."

W: "I had a fight with guys, a guy tried to stab me in the back."

There is evidence of **alcohol / drug use** at these schools. Learner's reactions were the following:

W: "Some kids jump the fence to go and get drugs and alcohol, they bunk school for that."

W: "When there are sports at school like it is a fun day, some of them go to the bottle stores and buy, sir then they drink and when they get drunk they come back so that we can see that they are drunk."

C: "Like last year, there was another boy so he was drunk after school so the there was another boy called M so they wanted to hit that boy."

There is evidence of **gangs** at these schools. The learners had the following reaction to the question? Are there any gangs at your school?

W: "Yes, there are gangs, sir., like let's say one fight with another boy then they will Come together and hit him."

W: "Yes, sir. One of the gangs they call themselves BOC (boys of corruption) were fighting at they ended up taking out pangas, knives wanting to stab each other."

C: "Yes, there are a few, but I'm not sure of their names."

C: "We are not really a gang, just a group of friends."

C: "I don't think it is all about gangs, it is image, who is the strongest."

Confrontation between teachers and learners do occur. These confrontations vary from verbal attacks to physically attacking someone.

C: "Mr. W use to throw the kids with a tennis ball."

C: "Mrs. V slapped J through the face. He talked to the girl next to him."

C: "Mrs. R threw L with a board duster."

W: "Our science teacher got so upset with our class that he took a cricket bat and wacked his table and he was screaming at the class."

W: "The teacher grabbed me by the tie, pulled me over the desk and took me to the office."

Evidence of **(ii) harassment** became quite clear as well. The girls and the boys both are guilty parties.

W: "She was touching this guys private part."

W: "It is not only the boys fault, it is both boys and girls fault because girls also provoke The boys."

**(iii) Sexual abuse** is not ruled out. No evidence of rape or any similar incidents had been reported.

W: "This guy came and they were ripping her clothes off."

**PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE** can be divided into four sub-categories:

(i) **Verbal abuse** is the most common form of violence in these schools. Verbal abuse among the learners and from the teachers to the learners as well. Verbal abuse is linked to racist remarks as well.

“ You have no manners, why don't you go to the black schools.” Racist remarks from the learners includes remarks such as:

“There was this other big boys sir, this boy came to me and said: “little kaffertjie wat soek jy hier.”

The forms of verbal abuse that is most common are:

**Swearing:**

W: “There is also a teacher that swears at us. She used to call us “black basterts.”

W: “The boys swear at each other and call each other names.”

C: “There are some of the teachers like Mrs. V that will swear at you.”

**Arguing:**

W: “Sometimes they fight and hurt each other for stupid reasons like arguing about a pen.”

C: “...it is the boys that start it and it turns into swearing and it turns into a big argument.

**Name calling:**

W: “Here at school the whites always call people names but when it happens to the they don't like it.

C: ‘ The girls with their name calling is a natural thing if you start fighting with someone.”

**Insults:**

W: “The girls fight and insult one another.”

C: “ They swear at them and tell them they look like animals and call them rude names.”

**Shouting:**

W “And verbally, sir they also swear at one another and scream and shout and end up fighting.”

(ii) **Emotional abuse:** refers to humiliation, provocation and jealousy.

W: “In this school emotional abuse is quite common. Remarks by other children , humiliation and insults”

Teachers also engage in the act of humiliating learners.

C: ' Mr. W always carried on about how we looked at always tried to humiliate us in front of the others.' Girls admit that they provoke the boys sexually.

W: "it is not only the boys fault, it is both boys and girls fault because we (girls) also provoke them."

**(iii) Intimidation** occurs quite frequently in these schools.

W: "Here at school we have this one big boy his name is K. When he is at the tuck shop we will be a bunch of people waiting to buy something. He will come and push us and we will go like why did you do that for. He will look at you and say "kaffer" or push you away."

Referring to one girl in grade 9, learners will say things to her like:

C: "You stink and they will stand back when she passes. They usually say bad things to her."

**(iv) Victimization** refers to the act of treating someone unfairly especially because you dislike their beliefs or way of doing things.

W: "In the first soccer team we had white boys training with us, so they just disappeared. The white guys took them away they must play rugby not soccer."

W: " Every time you are pointing and laughing at me. What is wrong with you. And she says no nothing is wrong..."

W: "Like when the class are talking they will always say it is me, the kids and the teachers."

## Group 2

### ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS

These schools are all English medium schools, i.e. English as medium of communication (also known as the ex-model C schools). Eight learners from five register classes were randomly selected to participate in the interviews. A total of 40 boys and girls were selected from each school for this purpose. A total of 120 learners were interviewed at these schools. 40 Girls (5 Focus groups) and 40 boys (5 Focus groups) from each school.

The results revealed that two categories of violence were identified at these schools:

- A: Physical violence
- B: Psychological violence.

After studying these two categories carefully, I came to the following conclusion:

There are four major factors that contribute to the **PHYSICAL VIOLENCE** which occur at these schools. These are:

- Alcohol/drug use or abuse
- Gangs
- Intolerance
- Intimidation

Three sub-categories were identified under physical violence.

Evidence from the interviews reveal that boys are usually the ones involved in (i) **physically fighting**. All the focus groups agreed that boys turn to physically fighting in order to resolve their differences and that they carry some form of weapon or another with them to and/or at school. Physically fighting includes actions such as slapping, stabbing, fighting with weapons, bullying, scratching, pointing, pushing, shootings, manhandling, hitting someone else with a stick and pulling hair. Evidence of violence and violent behavior was obtained from learners during the interviews and responses to the questions were as follow:

T: "You cannot come and talk to the teachers. After school they will get you and they will fight you and bring knives."

T: "Last year there was this guy. He brought a gun to school. He had an argument with the teacher so he took out the gun and shot the teacher."

C: "They were fighting with scissors, they stabbed him on top of the head."

C: "First fighting was slapping, then punching, now it is knives. Next time it will be guns."

R: "Sometimes, mostly on Fridays when they come to school when they gamble, they know there is going to be a lot of money. So if anybody wins a lot of money and it is a small boy they will mug him."

R: "Every time people gamble on the field at a certain point the people have to fight."

There is evidence of **alcohol / drug use** at these schools. The use of these substances has in some cases developed in a problem. It seems like especially alcohol use is evident on special occasions such as sports days, end of the term and then usually on Fridays.

Learner's reactions were the following:

R: "Yes, if you gamble and you win, the you are going to buy drugs with your winnings."

R: "When the school was closing this term, a lot of the boys and girls brought alcohol in the school and like this one Gr 10 guy was vomiting early in the morning..."

C: "They smoke dagga a lot, because dagga is the cheapest."

C: "There is this boy he is in Gr.8 he carries drugs every day. He is selling his drugs to everyone."

T: "Some boys smoke dagga on the fields and in the toilets and they mix them with pills (mandrax) and stuff."

T: "They smoke dagga and then they get high. Some of them bring alcohol to school."

There is clear evidence of **gangs** at these schools. The learners had the following reaction to the question? Are there any gangs at your school?

T: "There are gangs. They have guns, knives, sticks. Especially when they talk about action, they talk about guns. They threaten you with by talking about guns and knives. They want you to feel scared."

T: "Sometimes they just swear at us, I remember this once at the tuck shop, this one just pushes us out of the way. You become a victim. You must get out of the way, they are going to hit us."

C: "They had a fight, the one was beaten up and he had to go to hospital. When they fight they use weapons."

C: "There are some nice gangs that just are friends and then there are groups of bully gangs.:"

R: "These gangs they use like knives and stuff, they call other gangs from Mohlakeng to come and help them to fight a specific gang at school. Some of them used chains to hit one another."

R: "This other time there was this other incident where there was a fight here at school and these called the guy from Mohlakeng and this other guy actually had a gun. We all tried hiding and this guy was pointing the gun in the air."

Confrontation between teachers and learners do occur. These confrontations vary from verbal attacks to physically attacking someone.

R: 'We had this one teacher , he use to beat us up, he actually didn't like blacks cause actually swear, hit you for no reason. I don't know why he is like that.'

R: 'We are taught in very few classes because there is always a riot and there was an incident where a learner tried to beat a teacher up.'

C: 'They do violence, the teachers. Verbally like sometimes when the class makes such a noise that the teacher goes crazy, swearing and they don't realize that.'

C; 'This one teacher uses a plank and the way he hits the boys it is painful.'

T: When their temper is high they will grab you out of your chair and chase you out.'

T: 'We came late for a class, the teacher started swearing at us, calling us names and all that.'

Evidence of **(ii) harassment** became quite clear as well. The boys are predominantly the guilty parties. Some of the girls are quite offended, but others not.

T: 'Some of the teachers are like- naughty or something. Sometimes you will just see your teacher go into your shirt and say: "Fine breasts." Sometimes they say come here here's a chair sit next to me and hit you on the bum and all that.'

T: "The boys come to you and touches you, and sometimes you feel really uncomfortable. If you want to report them, they become angry and start calling us bitches and he goes around the school telling that this girl – don't touch her, she's going to tell the principal."

R: "Some of them do harass us, they touch our butts, it is not nice, it is uncomfortable."

**(iii) Sexual abuse** is not ruled out. An incident of rape had been reported.

T: "One of my class mates was raped by the caretaker. After that the teachers and learners treated her like she was nothing.

W: "This guy came and they were ripping her clothes off."

**PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE** can be divided into four sub-categories:

(i) **Verbal abuse** is also a common form of violence in these schools. Verbal abuse among the learners and from the teachers to the learners as well. Verbal abuse is linked to racist behavior. R: “

The forms of verbal abuse that is most common are:

**Swearing :**

R: “There are people that fight at school, physically and swear at each other.

C: ‘Verbally like, sometimes when the class makes such a noise that the teacher goes crazy, swearing and they don’t realize that when they swear at us they make even more noise.’”

T: “Mr. M likes swearing at us – because we’re black and he is black.”

**Arguing:**

R: “Yes sir I have seen it I think maybe last term there was an argument over something and they wanted to fight.”

C: “Sometimes we (boys) fight physically or arguing and swearing at each other.

T: “Ok, girls do fight a lot. Sometimes they argue like me and P. She knows that I am afraid of her and she will come and beat me up.”

**Name calling:**

R: “Many boys call each other names and bullying each other.”

C: ‘Yes, the girls swear at each other, calling each other names.

**Insults:**

R: “I think mainly the girls try to insult each other or break each other down more than cause physical damage.”

C: “Our English teacher tells you bad things about yourself, she insults you.”

**Screaming and**

**Shouting:**

T: “Ja, the teachers they pull your hair and shout at us.”

R: “No, but there is one thing I hate about some of the teachers screaming at you. They just yell at you for nothing.”

C: "The girls when they fight they start by being ugly to each Other. They scream at each other, then they start hitting each Other."

**Threats:**

C: "...he was expelled because he was smoking dagga and Mandrax, he was in a gang he had a gun, knife he threatened His mother and grandmother with it for money."

**(ii) Intimidation** occurs frequently in these schools. Intimidation is one of the factors that contribute to the violent behaviour at these schools.

T: They came to school everyday to scare us. We use to stay after school because we were scared to go because they had weapons – bricks, knives, guns .....

T: "The "9A Times" was in the form of a magazine and they would stick pictures – like a hair product and they would write: Y this is good for you. And they would stick underwear and say your underwear is too small. They would say N is so ugly. They would change their handwriting too."

On a question directed at the learners: How do you know that someone or a group is trying to intimidate you? The reaction was: C: "The boys you can see in their faces you don't mess with them, you can see it in their walk and talk.

C: "You don't feel comfortable if someone say they are going to hit you then you feel scared to come to school the next day."

R: "I feel that some children especially those that come from homes that are poor they come to school to learn and then other people they just come and bully them.

R: "There is this other group. They irritate the other learners, the learners are afraid to speak up because of how these people look like and how physically can abuse you.

#### **(iv) Victimization**

R: “there are classes, especially in Afrikaans there is this other group that sits at the back- the rest is like there. There is this other guy they call him “Dog” they always hold him with his pants, they always mess him around. They like teasing him.”

C: “There is peer pressure. If someone do something to you and it is around girls or somebody you feel embarrassed, so you don’t want to be proven wrong so you take care of that person in a violent way.”

T: “This one boy – his name is D. they took him by his family – it is poor and all that. They don’t care. People don’t feel free to come to school. What are people going to say.” (Because of this boys socio-economic status and home circumstances, he was singled out as a victim.)

T: “Like me once some boys at the toilet said to me give me money and all that kind of stuff and I said no, I don’t want to. They said that they are going to flush me in the toilet. I told them that I will go to the principal and they let me go.”

## Group 3

### TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

These are traditionally township schools. Eight learners from five register classes were randomly selected to participate in the interviews. A total of 40 boys and girls were selected for this purpose. A total of 120 learners were interviewed at these schools. 40 Girls (5 Focus groups) and 40 Boys (5 Focus groups) from these schools participated in the interviews.

The results revealed that two categories of violence were identified at this school.

A: Physical violence

B: Psychological violence

There are five major factors that contribute to the extensive **PHYSICAL VIOLENCE** which occur at this school. These are:

- Alcohol use/abuse
- Drug use /abuse
- Gangs
- Gambling
- Teachers

Three sub-categories were then identified under physical violence.

Evidence of violence and violent behavior was obtained from learners during the interviews and responses to the questions were as follow:

A: "They bring knives and screwdrivers...."

A: "They were fighting and the one stabbed the other."

B: "one time two boys were in the gate and they started shooting. They have groups they call them CMF (Crazy Mother Fuckers) they started shooting each other."

B: "Some of them carry guns, some of them carry sort of a iron which they beat each other with.

K: "There was this one boy that came to our class and he had a gun and I think he was fighting with someone."

K: "Others carries knives that is all or scissors."

**Gambling** play a significant role in the everyday lives of these learners. One of the questions during the interview was: Do you think that gambling is a problem at this school?

Learners reactions were:

A: "It is a problem because after playing they fight for the money and somebody gets hurt."

A: "I think, yes. When they are gambling, they are fighting.

A: "Most of these people are drug users and want to get money for the drugs."

B: "They gamble to get some cigarettes."

B: "I think gambling is a problem, because learners do not attend periods because they gamble."

**Drugs** seems to cause serious problems for learners and teachers at these schools. Dagga (marijuana) is the most commonly used drug among the learners. Mandrax is mixed with the dagga and cocaine has been mentioned as well.

Question: What kind of drug do learners use?

A: "Dagga – and this pill they mix it with dagga – the mandrax, and sometimes it is glue and benzene too."

K: "They use bottle kops, dagga then they just smoke..."

K: "Yes, some boys are smoking drugs during break and others are fighting about drugs."

B: "They smoke the cocaine and mandrax. They mix it with the dagga..."

B: "Some of them uses dagga, the most of them uses dagga."

**Alcohol** also plays a significant role especially on special occasions like a sports day, a trip and most popularly – Fridays.

A: "They bring alcohol and drink here at school. Their friends will borrow them T-shirts and they drink and smoke with their friends and then they start fighting.

B: "Yes, they do use alcohol at school. They come drunk and then they will take advantage. They will call you names and beat you at your bum..."

B: "Especially those gangsters, they like using alcohol. When we are going out on school trips guys are using alcohol, maybe they are saying they are happy to be at another town."

There are a number of **gangs** at these schools as well.

A: "Yes, this one boy had a cash loan at school and he has his own workers and he is the boss. The one boy didn't want to pay him, so he started to fight and he hit that one boy. That one boy went to his gang and told them what happened. They came and beat him up."

B: "These boys, the gangsters, and when there is conflict here at school they will say we meet after school."

B: "Most of the girls here in school are involved with gangsters so whenever they are crossing each other. Especially girls of the guys that are in gangsters they will just tell you that they will call up their backups like their boyfriends are some kind of gangster so even the girls at school we are afraid to beat another gang."

K: "Even maybe one of the gang is been beaten by someone the whole gang is coming to fight with that particular person."

K: "The teachers are scared of some learners. The gangsters of learners are not respecting some of the teachers so when the teacher is talking he is scared when that particular person is talking."

The knife is most definitely the choice of weapon among the boys with the result that stabbings do occur at school

A: Yes, I myself, I was a victim and I was stabbed in the hand. I didn't do it on purpose, actually I just, it was in a crowd, then I pushed one guy, and he pulled his knife and tried to stab me, but I blocked. He nearly cut off four of my fingers.

A: Yes, when the school closed the one learner was stabbed with a spear."

A: "They take the knives when they want to fight. If you know that you are going to fight today, you bring a knife with. The boys fight with knives, stones..."

B: "They sometimes even stab each other..."

Confrontation between teachers and learners cannot be ruled out. The confrontations usually involve a male teacher and a male student.

A: Like in my class, one of the boys was fighting with the teacher. The teacher told us to sit detention after school and he locked us in the class and they were making a noise. The teacher came in and took the lid of the dustbin and beat the one boy with it. That boy started fighting with the teacher.

K: "Yes, there was some teacher who got into a fight with a boy in our class..."

B: "The teachers are too violent. They beat this boy and he was alone, they were three teachers with their hands beating up on this boy. He was having blood on his hair."

Evidence of (ii) **harassment** became quite clear as well. Girls are mainly subjected to sexual harassment from the boys and male teachers.

A: "They would touch our bums and breasts."

A: "Yes, they will make as if they play, but you know when something is not right. They do touch and when you tell them to stop, they start to swear."

B: "When we are passing we are attending a second period the boys hit you and others will squeeze your thighs and when we ask them what is wrong, they just say you are sexy and fat."

B: "They will touch your bums."

K: "Another guy like to touch our buttocks, his name is N."

K: "Yes, they touch you on the buttocks. They also touch your breasts and on their private parts. When you want to tell they will beat you up."

**(iii) Sexual abuse** is a reality in our schools.

A: "My former class mate last year was raped. She is not coming to school, she is pregnant and she has a child now."

B: "This teacher, I was new in school and he will come and say what is your name. I said that I was here to do gr.10 . He said that if you are struggling in some subject you can come to me and I will help you but when you can sit and say you know the teacher say he will help me so I think I must go and take this chance so when you arrive there the teacher say I will help you but in return for me to help you, you must at least sleep with me or agree to be my girlfriend and if you don't agree he will fail you."

**(iv) Teachers:** unfortunately contribute to the violent situation at these schools. We find that there are teachers that physically and sexually abuse learners. Teachers who are not in their classes when they are suppose to create opportunities for learners to commit acts of violence. Some teachers are intimidated by gangsters at school and therefore loose the respect of the learners.

Examples:

B: "The teachers are too violent. They beat this boy and he was alone, they were three teachers with their hands beating up on this boy. He was having blood on his hair."

K: "The teachers are never in their classes. The boys play dice in the class and they fight. Why is the teacher never there?"

B: "When you arrive there the teacher say I will help you but in return for me to help you, you must at least sleep with me or agree to be my girlfriend and if you don't agree he will fail me."

B: "I think the learners use alcohol with teachers, because some teachers use alcohol in the school trips, so the children see it for them. Like other teachers when we were in Mpumalanga they said to us you can drink whenever you drink. He was in that tavern when we were there.

A: "And other teachers are buying cigarettes from the kids here at school."

A: "If you have a child with me it will be better because I am working and I can support your child."

**PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE** can also be divided into three sub-categories:

(i) **Verbal abuse** is a very common form of violence, especially among the female learners. They will engage in verbal confrontation and use the following methods to attack or defend themselves:

**Swearing:**

Quite common among boys and girls..

B: "When the girls fight they swear at each other."

K: "They (girls) fight and there are those who smoke drugs too. They then swear at each other."

K: "Yes some of the learners do fight with the teachers. They swear at them."

A: "Our teachers will sometimes swear at the boys and say ugly things and insult them."

**Shouting:**

B: "Our teacher is always distressed and she is taking that stress out on us."

K: "Most of the time here at school boys are fighting with boys even in class boys are shouting at others. There is a lot of violence."

K: "Yes, sometimes they (teachers) shout at us and they beat us."

**Insult:**

K: "Some learners are scared because of the teacher that break down their character. They insult us."

**Arguments:** B: "We like arguing in class. (This causes violent behavior in class).  
K: "The boys fight and argue."  
K: "The girls will shout and swear at each other when they fight."

**Threats** B: "The boys say they we are going to kill you and then they are going to fight after school."

**Name calling:** B: "Sometimes the girls fight physically and they call each other names."

**(ii) Intimidation:**

A: "I use to have a problem with a teacher. He always says why don't we girls wear long dresses, the boys are looking at us and we must not ask them because they cannot tell the truth. When we tell our class teacher, she is afraid and she says we must just leave it as it is."

B: "Some of the girls are scared to come to school because they criticize each other. If the one girl doesn't wear shoes (Socio-economic status) they criticize (tease) her."

K: "Sometimes when they don't have money they are waiting for other students in the toilets, those gangsters want the children to pay protection fee. So if you don't pay, you will be beaten."

**(iii) Victimization:**

A: "Yes, I was once violated by a teacher. Once he asked me what my mother does for a living and so I told him that she was a chef. One day he came to school and it seemed like he was sick. Then the class was laughing and he just looked at me and said that I must go and laugh at my chef mother. That made me sad and I had to go out of class. I didn't even do anything."

K: "The teacher swears to us, sometimes they will say "You idiot".

A: "Because I do well in my subjects, the teacher accused me of cheating. He said that I thought that I was perfect and he started hating me because I was at the top of the class all the time."

## **APPENDIX G**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## **Question 1**

Have you ever experienced or witnessed any form of violence at your school?

## **Vraag 1**

Het jy al enigsins enige vorm van geweld beleef of gesien by jou skool?

## **Question 2**

How do the boys solve their problems at school?

## **Vraag 2**

Hoe hanteer die seuns die probleme wat hulle ervaar by die skool?

## **Question 3**

Do the boys carry weapons with them at school? If yes, what kind?

## **Vraag 3**

Dra die seuns enige vorm van wapen met hulle by die skool? Indien ja, watter tipe?

## **Question 4**

Do the boys form gangs at school?

## **Vraag 4**

Vorm die seuns bendes by die skool?

## **Question 5**

Are you aware of any drug use or abuse at school?

## **Vraag 5**

Is jy bewus van enige dwelm gebruik by die skool?

## **Question 6**

Which form of drug is the most popular?

## **Vraag 6**

Watter tipe dwelm is die gewildste by leerders?

**Question 7**

How do the girls solve their problems at school?

**Vraag 7**

Hoe hanteer die meisies die probleme wat hulle ervaar by die skool?

**Question 8**

Are the educators aggressive towards the learners?

**Vraag 8**

Is die onderwysers aggressief teenoor die leerders?

**Question 9**

Do the learners abuse their educators as well?

**Vraag 9**

Misbruik die leerders die onderwysers ook?

**Question 10**

Do the learners gamble at your school? If yes, why?

**Vraag 10**

Dobbel die leerders by julle skool ook? Indien ja, waarom?

**Question 11**

Does gambling influence the learners behaviour at school?

**Vraag 11**

Beïnvloed dobbel die leerders se gedrag by die skool?

**Question 12**

Do the boys harass the girls at school?

**Vraag 12**

Teister die seuns die meisies fisies by die skool?

**Question 13**

Do the educators harass the learners?