



**Social support provided to care leavers by the
residential care facility during their transition to
independent living**

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DECLARATION OF THE RESEARCHER

I, Lydia Mokgoko, hereby declare that the manuscript with the title, “Social support provided to care leavers by the residential care facility during their transition to independent living” is my own work. All references used or quoted were acknowledged by citing in text and also in referencing in the bibliography. I further declare that I have not previously in its entirety, or in part, submitted the said manuscript at any other university to obtain a degree.

Name: Lydia Mokgoko

Date: 31 May 2020

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PREFACE

This dissertation is presented in a full format for a Master's degree as stipulated in the North-West University postgraduate faculty manual (2016).

This dissertation consists of four chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction and orientation to the research study
- Chapter 2: Literature study
- Chapter 3: Research findings
- Chapter 4: Summary, conclusions and recommendations of the research study.

These chapters are followed by a complete reference list and annexures. North-West University's Harvard referencing style (2020) has been used in this document.

ABSTRACT

Certain factors, according to the Children's Act (38 of 2005), stipulate the need for children to be put in care, which includes being placed at Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs). However, these children are compelled to leave care and make the transition to independent living between the ages of 18 and 21 years. During the pre-transition phase, the care leavers are being prepared for independent living. Yet, it seems that a need exists for continued contact and social support by the residential care facility during the transition phase to independent living. This study explored the social support of the residential care facility to care leavers during the transition phase to independent living as perceived by the social workers as well as the care leavers.

Methodologically, the study followed a qualitative descriptive research design to guide this study and to offer the researcher more insight into such an event in everyday terms. This design also allowed the researcher to stay closer to the data and to adequately carry the data over to the reader. Participants were sampled through purposive sampling from two different population groups, namely care leavers and social workers. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews with the care leavers as well as the social workers were used as the data collection method in order to gain a detailed picture of the participants' views on the social support that is being provided to care leavers in preparation for independent living. Content analysis was used to analyse the data.

Five main themes emerged from the data, namely the different levels and forms of residential support, social and structural support systems within residential care, the role of residential support after leaving residential care, residential care and emotional support networks, and the challenges of independent living.

This study makes a meaningful contribution to the theory of care leaving, and contributes to the local care leaving knowledge base by describing a qualitative account of the residential social support of care leavers transitioning to independent living.

Key words:

Care leavers, Child and youth care centre, Independent living, Social support, Transitioning

OPSOMMING

Volgens die Kinderwet (Nr. 38 van 2005) is daar sekere faktore wat bepaal wanneer kinders in alternatiewe sorg soos Kinder-en-Jeugsorgsentrums geplaas moet word. Hierdie kinders word egter verplig om die alternatiewe sorg tussen die ouderdom van 18 en 21 jaar te verlaat en na onafhanklikheid oor te gaan. Hierdie jong volwassenes word tydens die voor-oorgangsfase vir hierdie onafhanklikheid voorberei. Dit blyk egter dat hulle wel 'n behoefte het aan voortgesette kontak en sosiale ondersteuning deur die residensiële sorgfasiliteit tydens die oorgangsfase na onafhanklikheid. Hierdie studie het derhalwe die ondersteuning ondersoek wat die residensiële versorgingsfasiliteit tydens die oorgangsfase na onafhanklikheid aan jong volwassenes bied, soos beskryf deur die maatskaplike werkers sowel as die sorgverlaters.

Metodologies het die studie 'n kwalitatiewe beskrywende navorsingsontwerp gebruik om struktuur aan die ondersoek te gee en om dieper insig in só 'n gebeurtenis in alledaagse terme aan die navorser te bied. Hierdie ontwerp het die navorser ook in staat gestel om nader aan die gegewens te bly en die data voldoende aan die leser oor te dra. Deelnemers is geselekteer deur middel van doelgerigte steekproefneming in twee verskillende bevolkingsgroepe, naamlik jong volwassenes en maatskaplike werkers. Semi-gestruktureerde een-tot-een-onderhoude met die jong volwassenes sowel as die maatskaplike werkers is as die data-insamelingsmetode by gebruik om 'n volledige beeld te kry van die siening van die deelnemers oor die ondersteuning wat verskaf word. Inhoudsanalise is gebruik om die data te ontleed.

Die volgende vyf hoofteemas het uit die gegewens na vore gekom: die verskillende vlakke en vorme van residensiële ondersteuning; sosiale en strukturele ondersteuningstelsels in residensiële versorging; die rol van residensiële ondersteuning nadat die residensiële versorgingsentrum verlaat is; residensiële versorgings- en emosionele ondersteuningsnetwerke; en die uitdagings van 'n onafhanklike lewe.

Hierdie studie lewer 'n sinvolle bydrae tot die teorie van sorgverlating, en dra by tot die plaaslike kennisbasis van sorgverlating deur 'n kwalitatiewe ondersoek van die residensiële sosiale ondersteuning van sorgverlaters wat die oorgang na 'n onafhanklike lewe maak.

Kernwoorden: Sorgverlaters, Kinder-en-Jeugsorgsentrums, Onafhanlikheid,
Ondersteuning, Oorgang

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF THE RESEARCHER	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
PREFACE	IV
ABSTRACT	V
OPSOMMING	VI
CHAPTER 1 ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 CONTEXTUALISATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT	1
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY	5
1.4 CONCEPT DEFINITIONS	6
1.4.1 Care leavers	6
1.4.2 Social support.....	6
1.4.3 Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs)	6
1.4.4 Independent living	7
1.4.5 Transition.....	7
1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	7
1.5.1 Research approach	8
1.5.2 Research design.....	8
1.5.3 Context of the study.....	8
1.5.4 Population and sampling	9
1.5.4.1 Population	9

1.5.4.2	Sampling method.....	10
1.5.4.3	Inclusion and exclusion criteria.....	10
1.5.4.4	Sample size	11
1.5.4.5	Sample recruitment of social workers.....	11
1.5.4.6	Sample recruitment of care leavers	12
1.5.4.7	Obtaining informed consent from participant group 1 (social workers)	12
1.5.4.8	Obtaining informed consent from group 2 (care leavers).....	13
1.5.5	Data collection	14
1.5.5.1	Method of data collection.....	14
1.5.6	Data analysis	15
1.6	ETHICS	16
1.6.1	Legal authorisation	16
1.6.2	Protecting participants from harm.....	16
1.6.3	Informed consent.....	17
1.6.4	Confidentiality, Anonymity and Privacy.....	18
1.6.5	Voluntary participation	19
1.6.6	Privacy.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.6.7	Incentives/reimbursement	19
1.6.8	Storage and archiving of data.....	19
1.7	TRUSTWORTHINESS	20
1.7.1	Credibility.....	20

1.7.2	Transferability.....	20
1.7.3	Dependability.....	21
1.7.4	Confirmability.....	21
1.8	RISK OF THE STUDY.....	22
1.9	POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER	23
1.10	CONCLUSION	23
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY		24
2.1	INTRODUCTION	24
2.2	POLICIES AND REGULATIONS RELEVANT TO THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN.....	24
2.3	CHILD CARE IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	25
2.3.1	Residential care in South Africa	26
2.3.1.1	Factors that result in different care placements.....	27
2.3.1.2	Children in residential care	27
2.3.1.3	The duties of social workers in a CYCC	28
2.3.1.4	Duties of child and youth care workers in a CYCC	28
2.4	CARE LEAVING	29
2.4.1	Care leavers	29
2.4.2	Transitioning.....	30
2.4.3	Independent living	30
2.4.4	Supportive independent living programmes	31

2.4.5	Experiences of care leavers during their transition to independent living	32
2.4.6	Residential social support of care leavers transitioning to independent living.....	33
2.4.7	Supportive relationships	33
2.4.8	Family relationships.....	34
2.5	SUPPORTIVE THEORIES	35
2.5.1	Ecological systems theory	35
2.5.2	Microsystem	35
2.5.3	Mesosystem	36
2.5.4	Exosystem.....	36
2.5.5	Macrosystem.....	36
2.5.6	The Circle of Courage	37
2.6	CONCLUSION	38
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH FINDINGS		39
3.1	INTRODUCTION	39
3.2	BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS.....	39
3.2.1	Biographic information of the social work participants	39
3.2.2	Biographic information of the care leaver participants	40
3.3	DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	40
3.3.1.1	Theme 1: Different levels and forms of residential social support	41
3.3.1.2	Subtheme 1.1: Residential independent living programmes.....	42

3.3.2	Subtheme 1.2: Residential social support and resilience	45
3.3.3	Subtheme 1.3: Residential support and the psychological support needs of care leavers	46
3.3.4	Subtheme 1.4: Preparing care leavers for disengagement.....	48
3.3.5	Theme 2: Social and structural support systems within residential care	49
3.3.6	Subtheme 2.1: Support systems within the CYCC	49
3.3.6.1	Subtheme 2.3: Support with regard to housing	51
3.3.6.2	Subtheme 2.4: Family support.....	52
3.3.6.3	Subtheme 2.5: Support networks	54
3.3.6.4	Theme 3: The role of residential support towards leaving residential care	56
3.3.6.5	Subtheme 3.1: The role of residential support in the social integration of care leavers towards independent living.....	56
3.3.6.6	Subtheme 3.2: Social networks outside residential care	57
3.3.7	Subtheme 3.3: The need for continued psychosocial support from residential care	59
3.3.8	Theme 4: Residential care and emotional support networks	60
3.3.9	Subtheme 4.1 Supportive relationships within the care facility	60
3.3.10	Subtheme 4.2: Maintaining supporting relationships after leaving care ...	61
3.3.11	Theme 5: The challenges of independent living	62
3.3.12	Subtheme 5.1: Sudden detachment from care	63
3.3.13	Subtheme 5.2: Care leavers' feelings of leaving care and independent living.....	64

3.3.14	Subtheme 5.3: Social support from peers	66
3.3.15	Subtheme 5.4: Longing to live independently	66
3.4	CONCLUSION	67
CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY, EVALUATION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY		69
4.1	INTRODUCTION	69
4.2	SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES.....	69
4.2.1	Research question.....	69
4.2.2	Aim and objectives	69
4.3	SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS	71
4.3.1	Theme: 1 Different levels and forms of residential social support	71
4.3.2	Theme 2: Social structure and structural support systems within residential care	72
4.3.3	Theme 3: The role of residential support after leaving residential care ...	73
4.3.4	Theme 4: Residential care and emotional support network.....	73
4.3.5	Theme 5: The challenges of independent living	74
4.4	RECOMMENDATIONS	75
4.4.1	Recommendations for policy and procedures	75
4.4.2	Recommendations for practice	76
4.4.3	Recommendations pertaining to further research.....	77
4.5	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	78

4.6	CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY	78
4.7	CONCLUSION	79
	REFERENCE LIST	80
ANNEXURE A:	ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY	96
ANNEXURE B:	AUTHORISATION FROM THE DEPARTEMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	98
ANNEXURE C:	PERMISSION LETTER FROM JAKARANDA CHILDREN'S HOME	99
ANNEXURE D:	PERMISSION LETTER FROM BETHESDA OUTREACH CHILDREN'S HOME	100
ANNEXURE E:	PERMISSION LETTER FROM DESMOND TUTU CYCC	101
ANNEXURE F:	CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL WORKERS	102
ANNEXURE G:	CONSENT FORM FOR CARE LEAVERS IN ENGLISH	108
ANNEXURE H:	CONSENT FORM FOR CARE LEAVERS IN SETSWANA.....	114
ANNEXURE I:	INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SOCIAL WORKERS	121
ANNEXURE J:	INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CARE LEAVERS	122
ANNEXURE K:	REFLECTIVE NOTES	123
ANNEXURE L:	TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW	124
ANNEXURE M:	LETTER TO THE PARTICIPANTS.....	136
ANNEXURE N:	TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW	137
ANNEXURE O:	THEMES WITH CODES	143
ANNEXURE P:	DEFINED THEMES	145
ANNEXURE Q:	DECLARATION OF TEXT EDITOR	146
ANNEXURE R:	PERMISSION TO SUBMIT	147

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3-1:	Overview of social worker participants	39
Table 3-2:	Overview of care leaver participants	40
Table 3-3:	Overview of themes and subthemes	41

CHAPTER 1 ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 serves as an orientation to the study and provides details of the context of the study as well as the problem statement. It furthermore provides a discussion of the research methodology that was followed. It also explains how this study addressed ethical issues such as privacy, confidentiality, voluntary participation, informed consent and avoidance of harm. In addition, the proposed structure of the entire study is provided.

1.2 CONTEXTUALISATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The confirmed statistics on children in institutional care in South Africa are not complete, but it is estimated that during 2015/2016 the court found almost 58 485 children to be in need of care (Department of Justice, 2016:37). According to Proudlock (2014:216), South Africa has approximately 355 registered Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs), holding 21 000 minors, and an additional unregistered 115 CYCCs taking care of 2 000 children. These facilities meet the requirements of being a CYCC, a provision of the Children's Act (38 of 2005), in order to form a system of dedicated alternative childcare programmes with appropriate standards and governance structures (RSA, 2005). The Children's Act (38 of 2005) however states that a child becomes a major upon reaching the age of 18 years. Section 176 of the Act makes provision that a child may be allowed to remain in the care of the care facility till the end of the year in which they turn 21 years of age on condition that the residential care facility is still prepared and capable to maintain the child concerned, and the sustained stay is essential to allow the child to complete their studies or educational requirements. After the allocated period, the court order lapses and the person is compelled to exit the care to take up independent living (RSA, 2005). The Children's Act further stipulates that CYCCs are responsible to assist children with the adjustment and reintegration into the community once they reach the age of 18 years or have achieved their educational objectives, and are obligated to exit the care system (RSA, 2005).

According to Mendes, Johnson and Moslehuddin (2011:14), "care leavers are seen as a very vulnerable group of youth in transition in terms of education, crime, substance abuse, mental health, employment, and finances. Care leavers are also described as one of the most vulnerable and deprived groups in society". In addition, care leavers typically lack

self-regulation skills in terms of occupation, financial management, academic achievement, law abidance and drug avoidance than youth who were not placed in care. According to Foster and Gifford (cited by Van Breda, 2015:323), over and above having to cope with the above challenges, care leavers also often have to cope with learning disabilities, emotional and behavioural problems, poor academic achievement and limited life skills, which makes their transition from an environment that is extremely structured to a complex world even more challenging. Blaustein and Kinniburgh (2010:24) stated that “children in care often have damaged perceptions of relationships, people and their environments, due to the beliefs that they have formed early in life through their experienced trauma”.

The transition of care leavers in South Africa to independent living is complicated by conditions such as unemployment. Although the country's unemployment rate was standing at 27,6% in the first quarter of 2019, the unemployment rate among the youth aged 15 to 24 years was even higher at 55,2% (StatsSA). According to Hayes (2002:18), it is likely that a percentage of these care leavers will not find employment, struggle mental health problems, become homeless, end up in prison or become teenage parents. Even though other care leavers are in situations that provide stability to them, the transition to independent living – which includes studying and securing a job – remains challenging.

Van Breda (2015:165) cited Dickens who found that the research on care leavers in South Africa indicated less than ideal outcomes at one year after they have left the care facility. Based on these studies, a quarter (25%) of the participants had one change of home during that year, while a third (31%) moved home two or more times. It was furthermore found that a third (35%) of the participants were not employed or in education or training. This was regardless of the fact that all care leavers had a plan to either further their education or to find a job at the time they were leaving the care facilities. Dickens (cited by Van Breda, 2015:165) further mentioned that three-quarters (75%) of care leavers did not complete grade 12 when leaving care, and a year after leaving care 69% of the care leavers were not studying. With regard to salaries, Dickens (cited by Van Breda, 2015:165) found that three-quarters (79%) of the participants were earning below the minimum monthly wage of R1600. Although the majority of the participants (87%) were not abusing drugs or alcohol at the time of data collection, 23% participated in some sort of illegal actions or crimes during the past year.

Research conducted by Oelofsen (2015:3) on care leavers in South Africa found that, during the three different phases, pre-transition, transition and post-transition, the care leavers experienced several challenges. It was found that, during the transition phase, care leavers felt that they were forced to become independent and that they experienced loneliness and feelings of isolation due to not receiving emotional support from their residential care facility. Oelofsen (2015:194) mentioned that the care leavers felt that they needed continued contact as well as social support from their residential care facilities. As a result, Oelofsen (2015:194) suggested that residential care facilities should have procedures and systems in place which can encourage stability and continuity of the care, and which may offer these children the prospects of extended interpersonal relationships and social support. Oelofsen (2015:194-195) furthermore encouraged ongoing support from housemothers. Biehal *et al.* (1995) and Broad (2005), as cited by Oelofsen (2015:195), found that care leavers who received support from a trusting adult throughout their stay in a CYCC will be more resilient than those who did not receive such support. Oelofsen (2015:195) further stated that stability in care can translate into higher levels of resilience for the care leavers. This is the outcome of the opportunity for care leavers to develop trusting relationships with carers in stable circumstances (Rutter, Giller & Hagell as cited by Oelofsen 2015:195).

Ajayi and Quigley (2006) and Jackson (2002) as cited by Oelofsen (2015:41) stated that this may add to positive outcomes with regards to their educations and careers. In support of this, Drapeau, Saint-Jacques, Lépine, Bégin and Bernard (2007:986) pointed out that, based on recent studies, children in care who had only one positive and meaningful relationship will be likely to cope better as a young adult.

Gilligan (2006) as cited by Oelofsen (2015:195) stated that during adulthood care leavers have a constant need for secure and supportive relationships. It should therefore be encouraged that, if possible, this secure and supportive relationship continue after placement. For Cohen (2004) as cited by Oelofsen (2014:195), social support comprises the psychological and material resources that are delivered by a person's social network, which can strengthen a person's ability to cope with stress. Arnett (2000:469-480) emphasised the need for social support during emerging adulthood as this period is typically characterised by an identity crisis, exploration, instability, self-focus and possibilities. Thoits (2011:149) indicated that social support has different functions, which

include emotional, instrumental or practical support, and also information and guidance support.

Frimpong-Manso (2017:197-198) distinguished between formal and informal social support. Formal support in this context would include support from formal sources such as the care facility. According to Melkman and Benbenishty (2018:178), various studies focusing on care leavers have recorded the direct effect of social support on outcomes, indicating that good support was associated with improved employment, financial outcomes, education and housing. Häggman-Laitila, Saloekilä and Karki (2018:254) emphasised the significance of social support to safeguard the negative outcomes during the transition from care to emerging adulthood as well as to encourage the pursuit of future goals.

A number of South African studies explored the challenges that youth face when in transition from care to independent living. This includes the research of Oelofsen (2015) who investigated young adults' experiences of their transitioning from family care to independent living, and that of Maposa and Louw-Potgieter (2012) who, in Mamelani Projects, reviewed the programme outcomes of young people transitioning out of a children's home. Muller, Van Rensburg and Makobe (2003) recounted the narratives of a handful of young people transitioning out of an SOS Children's Village into young adulthood; Mmusi (2013) evaluated care leavers' application of social skills in independent living; and Meyer (2008) explored the experience of a late adolescent state care leaver. Other studies have looked at young women's care leaving journeys toward independent living (Hlungwani, 2017), and young people leaving Girls & Boys Town's care and transitioning towards young adulthood and independent/interdependent living (Van Breda, 2018). While most of the mentioned studies focused on the transition process from residential care, they did not examine the social support that the care leavers received during this period. Therefore, this study wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the social support the care leavers received from the residential facility during this phase.

In summary, the research problem entails that care leavers encounter various challenges on their journey towards independent living, in particular during the transition phase where care leavers are compelled to start living independently while feeling lonely and isolated because of the absence of emotional support from the CYCC. Care leavers felt a

continued need to have contact with their residential care facility as well as receive social support from them. Ongoing support from residential care facilities is therefore encouraged in order to help strengthen the resilience of these care leavers (Oelofsen, 2015:224).

Overall, it is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the social support that the residential care facilities can provide to youth during their transition from residential care to independent living. Hence, this study focused on informing practice and policy frameworks in order to strengthen support for this population group.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The research question for this study is the following: What social support is provided to care leavers during their transition to independent living, and how is this perceived by these care leavers?

The aim of this study was to use a qualitative descriptive design and individual semi-structured interviews to explore the social support of residential care facilities to care leavers during these young adults' transition towards independent living. To achieve the above stated aim, the following research objectives were formulated:

- To conduct a literature study on social support to care leavers during their transition from residential care to independent living in order to develop a conceptual framework for this study;
- To explore and describe the nature of social support provided by the residential care facilities to care leavers during their transition into independent living as perceived by social workers;
- To explore and describe the nature of social support that the care leavers receive from the residential care facilities during their transition into independent living as experienced by care leavers;
- To report the findings, draw conclusions and make recommendations for further research, policy or practice, in relation to the social support provided to care leavers.

1.4 CONCEPT DEFINITIONS

The main concepts referred to in this dissertation will be defined in the next section.

1.4.1 Care leavers

The Care Leavers' Association defines a care leaver as: "Any adult who lives independently after spending time in care as a child (i.e. under the age of 18). Such care could be in foster care, residential care (mainly children's homes), or other arrangements outside the immediate or extended family" (Care Leavers' Association, 2013). The Council of Europe (2009:38) described care leavers as "youth who depart from care because they have reached the age when they are no longer entitled to special protection and assistance within the care system". Duncalf (2010:3) described care leavers as young people who previously stayed in a care facility and are presently living independently, which means they have "left care". For the purpose of this study, care leavers will be referred to as young people who transitioned from a CYCC to independent living.

1.4.2 Social support

Gotlieb (2000:195-220) described social support as the "process of interaction in relationships which improves coping, esteem, belonging and competence through actual or perceived exchanges of physical or psychosocial resource". Social support can also be described as "the perception and actuality that one is cared for and has assistance available from other people, and that one is part of a supportive social network" ('Social support', 2020). These supportive resources can be emotional, informational or companionship, and it can be tangible or intangible ('Social support', 2020). For the purpose of this study social support will refer to the care and assistance care leavers receive from other people and being part of a supportive social network.

1.4.3 Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs)

A Child and Youth Care Centre refers to a residential facility that provides for the care of more than six children outside their home environment (RSA, 2005).

The criteria for including a CYCC in the study included registration with the Department of Social Development (DSD) as a child and youth care centre and offering care to no fewer than six children separated from their families, as specified in the Children's

Amendment Act (RSA, 2007). For the purpose of this study a CYCC will be seen as an alternative placement centre which provides care and protection to children and youth separated from their families through court proceedings. It includes children of varying ages to create an environment that signifies a family setting.

1.4.4 Independent living

Independent living is the ability to make informed decisions and direct one's own life without relying on others, being as self-sufficient as possible (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2010). For the purpose of this study independent living will refer to the capability of care leavers to make informed decisions and direct their own life without depending on other.

1.4.5 Transition

The transition of youth from a CYCC to independent living is referred to as care leaving (Van Breda, Marx & Kader, 2012:1). According to Hart as cited by Stein (2005:18) 'transition' refers to a process where youth are provided with an opportunity to 'space out' of child and youth care centers, and are being offered a chance to explore, network and discover their place in the community. For the purpose of this study, transition will refer to the process whereby youth, who have been in a care facility, move into independent living.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides a summary of the research process and the methodology that was applied. It starts with a discussion of the research approach and design, and its significance in terms of this study. It includes a discussion on the population and sampling methods, and the methods utilised for data collection and data analysis. It also outlines the measures that were taken to guarantee the trustworthiness of the study, and it explains the ethical matters that were considered.

1.5.1 Research approach

In this study, a qualitative research approach was followed. According to Creswell (2014:4), qualitative research can be regarded as “an approach to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a human or social problem”. Bryman (2012:379) explained that the qualitative research approach is grounded in the need to understand human and social interaction from the viewpoint of insiders and participants in the interaction. According to Nicholls (2009:528), the qualitative approach is considered to be ideal when a phenomenon needs to be explored through the participants’ versions of that particular phenomenon in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of that phenomenon. A qualitative research approach was also regarded as appropriate for this study since the researcher aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the support available to care leavers as they transition out of care to independent living, which is seen as the phenomenon. The study therefore concentrated on the care leavers’ and social workers’ descriptions of their experiences, and the social workers’ efforts to support the care leavers. Mouton (2005:270) asserted that “the primary goal of studies using the qualitative approach is to describe and understand, rather than explain, human behaviour.’

1.5.2 Research design

A qualitative descriptive research design was used to guide the study as it offered the researcher a “summary of an event in everyday terms” (Sandelowski, 2000:275). This design seemed applicable to this study as it allowed the researcher to explore and describe the social support that care facilities provide to care leavers during their transition to independent living.

1.5.3 Context of the study

The natural context of the study is important and therefore, the next section will describe the context of the study.

The participants in this study were social workers and care leavers from CYCCs situated in the Tshwane region in Gauteng Province, South Africa. These CYCCs provided care to no fewer than six children, as specified in the Children’s Amendment Act (RSA, 2007), and they were registered as CYCCs with the Department of Social Development. Four

CYCCs that met the inclusion criteria of the study were selected from a list of 36 CYCCs in Tshwane and invited to participate in the study. Only three CYCCs agreed to participate in the study. They were Bethesda Outreach Children's Home in Hammanskraal Plot 13, Jakaranda Children's Home in Derdepoort, and Desmond Tutu CYCC in Pretoria North. Bethesda Outreach Children's Home is one of the largest CYCCs in the Tshwane region. This non-profit organisation has been registered with the Department of Social Development since 2010. This CYCC has an on-site Christian Academy where children and youth who are residents of the centre attend school. The school is situated on a separate site but on the same stand as the organisation. The CYCC consists of separate households, each with its own house mother.

These selected CYCCs comprise of social workers, childcare workers and house parents. They are also Christian-based and are registered with and funded by the Department of Social Development.

All of these CYCCs are in the Tshwane region. The reasons for choosing the Tshwane region as a locality for the extraction of the samples is the significant number of registered CYCCs in the area, as well as the large population of social workers and care leavers. The selected CYCCs are all large CYCCs. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:146) stated that it may be expected that populations, where variables are clearly distinguishable, may show a great degree of similarity. In this study, the population has similarities with social workers and care leavers in other regions/provinces, and their perceptions may be typical across CYCCs outside the Tshwane region. Hence, the locality of these CYCCs did not influence the findings of the study.

1.5.4 Population and sampling

Population is seen by Strydom (2011:222) as people who share the same specific characteristics that the researcher is concerned about. According to Strydom (2011:222), sampling is defined as "a group of persons carefully chosen from a population and is deliberated to be a representative of the whole population to be researched".

1.5.4.1 Population

Two population groups were involved in this study:

Population 1: Social workers

This population included all social workers from Bethesda Outreach Children's Home CYCC, Desmond Tutu Child and Youth Care Centre, and Jakaranda Children's Home. These social workers are responsible to monitor the needs of each child and provide personal, social as well as emotional support. They also offer therapeutic interventions aimed at supporting children to work through trauma or personal issues. Bethesda Outreach CYCC has two social workers, Jakaranda Children's Home has six social workers, and Desmond Tutu CYCC has six social workers.

Population 2: Care leavers

The population for this study included care leavers, irrespective of their gender, race and culture, from Bethesda Outreach CYCC, Desmond Tutu CYCC as well as Jakaranda Children's Home.

1.5.4.2 Sampling method

It is not always possible to include the entire population when carrying out research, hence the use of a sample. The sampling method will ensure scientific results and trustworthiness to infer about the population in the study (Creswell, 2009:193). The concept sample refers to "a subset of individuals which is drawn from the entire population to form part of a study" (Nicholls, 2009:590). The sample should, however, consist of those individuals who possess similar characteristics to that of the population (Picardi & Masick, 2014:154). Strydom and Delport (2011:392) stated that in purposive sampling, the proposed sample complies with certain criteria that are set up beforehand. Therefore, the participants were selected on the basis that they fit the inclusion criteria. Participants were obtained through purposive sampling.

1.5.4.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The specific inclusion criteria for the participants in this study were the following:

Participant group 1: Social workers

- Registered social workers who are currently employed by the specified CYCCs;
- Social workers with more than three years of experience in working at CYCCs. It is deemed that after three years of working as a CYCC social worker such persons should be able to provide insightful information about the support of care leavers;

- Social workers who are English or Setswana speaking.

Participant group 2: Care leavers

- Care leavers who lived in one of the specified CYCCs;
- Care leavers who had left the specified CYCCs and are currently living in the Tshwane region;
- Care leavers who have left the CYCC's care within the past two months to two years. The participants may only start to experience the lack of support after a while. After two years, the care leavers might have adjusted to their new environment and circumstances. Hence, the focus is on the transition phase.
- Care leavers who are English or Setswana speaking.

Specific exclusion criteria for the participants.

- Care leavers who never lived in one of the specified CYCCs.
- Care leavers who had left the specified CYCCs and are currently living outside the Tshwane region.
- Care leavers not conversant in English or Setswana.

1.5.4.4 Sample size

A sample of 12 participants were selected from each population using purposive sampling and applying the inclusion criteria discussed above. Data saturation was reached at 12. Qualitative research, unlike quantitative research, makes use of smaller numbers of participants as the emphasis is on obtaining in-depth information about the participants. According to Bryman (2012:426), studies have shown that saturation of observed themes was reached after 12 interviews where the interview sample is a homogeneous one.

1.5.4.5 Sample recruitment of social workers

After legal authorisation from the Department of Social Development ([Annexure B](#)) and ethical clearance from the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at North-West University (NWU) had been obtained ([Annexure A](#)), the manager of each institution was

requested to act as gatekeeper for the study in order to facilitate access to the social work participants. The researcher contacted the managers of the specified CYCCs telephonically to set an appointment with them. This was followed up by an email with the information on the proposed study. The sample criterion was also included to assist the gatekeepers in terms of recruiting the prospective participants. The manager of each institution (gatekeeper) was requested to identify the social work supervisors at each CYCC who would act as mediators in the study. The researcher discussed the envisaged study with the mediators and provided them with a letter describing the study and what would be expected of the participants. Consent forms were also attached ([Annexure F](#)). The mediators were then requested to send the letter with the consent forms to all the social workers at their offices. Social workers who were interested in taking part in the study were requested to inform the mediator of their willingness to participate.

1.5.4.6 Sample recruitment of care leavers

The population of care leavers is seen as vulnerable. Although they are seen as adults and can provide informed consent they might still be seen as vulnerable as they had just left the residential care facility and were still in the process of adapting to independent living. The head of each CYCC was requested to act as gatekeeper to facilitate access to the participants and to appoint a social worker as mediator for the participants. The gatekeeper as well as the mediators received letters describing the aim and purpose of the study and what would be expected of the participants (see [Annexure M](#)). The researcher discussed the intended research with the mediators and presented them with a letter describing the study and what would be expected of the participants. They also received consent forms. The social workers were requested to trace the contact details of the care leavers, and to e-mail the letter with the consent form to all the care leavers (if the care leavers had email addresses and access to the internet) or to hand-deliver the letter to those care leavers living close to the CYCCs. The care leavers that were interested to participate were asked to inform the mediator of their willingness to participate by sending the mediator a “please call me”. The mediator called the willing participants and arranged to have the informed consent forms signed.

1.5.4.7 Obtaining informed consent from participant group 1 (social workers)

All the social workers received a consent form together with the information document. The informed consent form comprised of details regarding the nature of voluntary

participation, the discomfort that they might have when partaking in the study, and how the participants would benefit from this study. The informed consent form also outlined the aim of the research, the information that was sought, the selection of the participants, the risks to the participants, confidentiality and the names of contact persons. The informed consent form was available in English ([Annexure F](#)) as all the social workers can speak and understand English. The mediator was also available to the participants in case of any questions with regard to the study. The willing participants were given five working days and were asked to sign the informed consent form in the presence of an independent person, which for this population was the administrative person at each CCYC. This was done in a private room at the CYCC. The participants each received a duplicate of the signed consent form. The names and contact details of willing participants as well as the completed and signed consent forms were handed to the researcher. Next, the researcher contacted the willing participants telephonically to arrange an appointment for the interview.

1.5.4.8 Obtaining informed consent from group 2 (care leavers)

The care leavers received an informed consent form together with the information document from the mediators. The informed consent form comprised of information about the voluntary nature of their participation, the discomfort that they might have when partaking in the study, and how they will benefit from this study. The form also contained information about the aim of the study, the information that was sought, how the participants were selected, the risks to the participants, confidentiality and the names of contact persons. The informed consent form was available in English ([Annexure G](#)) and Setswana ([Annexure H](#)). The mediator was also available to the participants in case of any questions they had about the study. The willing participants were requested to visit the CYCC within five working days where they were asked to put their signatures on the informed consent form in the presence of an independent person, which was the administrative person at the CYCC. A private room at the CYCC was used for the signing of the consent forms. Each participant was given a photocopy of the signed consent form. The mediator gave the researcher the names and contact details of the prospective participants of the study, as well as with the completed and signed consent forms. The researcher then contacted the willing participants telephonically to make arrangements for an interview appointment.

1.5.5 Data collection

The aim of qualitative interviews as data collection method is to see the world through the eyes of a participant. It offers an opportunity to acquire rich descriptive data that can assist the researcher to understand the participants' social reality and how they construct their knowledge (Ebersohn *et al.*, 2016:93).

1.5.5.1 Method of data collection

Semi-structured one-on-one interviews (Greeff, 2011:3476) with the care leavers as well as the social workers were used as data collection method to obtain a detailed image of the participants' views on the social support that is provided to care leavers by the residential care facilities during their transition from residential care to independent living. This allowed the researcher and participants to be flexible. As there might have been a power differential between the researcher and the participants, the researcher aimed to create an environment which is welcoming and non-threatening and where the participants were willing to share their experiences as well as their beliefs (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009:280).

The interviews were conducted in the social work offices at the CYCCs taking part in the study. For the care leavers, the board room of the CYCC closest to them was used. These offices and board rooms provided privacy. The interviews were no longer than an hour each, with a body break after 15 minutes.

An interview schedule was applied to guide the individual semi-structured interviews. According to Forrester (2010:88), an interview schedule is seen "as a list of organized questions that the researcher awaits using during an interview." The interview schedule comprised questions that were aimed at eliciting information from the study participants on the phenomenon being studied. It also allows for proximity between the researcher and the participants. In addition, it provides the researcher with an opportunity to follow up on certain replies from the participants. The semi-structured questions in the interview schedule allowed for a flexible flow of the conversation (Daniel, 2012:101-103), and for the collection of comprehensive data. The research question and the aim of the study guided the formulation of the questions for the interview schedule. The interview schedule was piloted during the first two interviews and adjusted accordingly. The interview

schedule for Participant Group 1 is attached as [Annexure I](#) and the interview schedule for Participant Group 2 is attached as [Annexure J](#).

To gather rich data, communication tactics such as facial expression, listening and other interviewing skills (Daniel, 2012:103) were used by the researcher during the interviews. A conducive space was created for the participants to allow them to feel free to share their experiences and perceptions. This was done by providing them with an opportunity, before the interviews commenced, to raise any concerns or questions they might have about the research study. They were again ensured about confidentiality, privacy and their right to withdraw from the research at any time. The discussion points were explored and then summarised. The researcher audio-recorded each interview in order to transcribe them later for analysis. During the interviews the researcher made field notes of any non-verbal reactions of participants that may aid in the interpretation of the data as this cannot be captured by the audio-recordings. Refreshments and coffee/tea were available for the participants during the interviews.

The researcher also made use of reflexive notes as a method of bracketing to increase awareness and to reduce bias (See Annexure K). These notes were made after each interview. Regular reflexive discussions with the research supervisor were also done (Sorsa, Kiikkala & Astedt-Kurki, 2015:12).

1.5.6 Data analysis

According to Bryman (2012:89), qualitative content analysis is the most established approach in qualitative analysis. It involves the "searching out" of underlying themes in the documents that are being analysed to allow categories of themes to emerge from the data, in this case the narratives provided by the participants. During this process of analysis, it is essential to understand the meaning of the context in which an item is being analysed. Drisko and Maschi (2016:86) explained that in content analysis the researcher focuses on narratively describing the meaning of communication within a specific context.

As there were two data sets (one data set obtained from the social workers and one data set obtained from the care leavers), these sets were analysed together, using content analysis. The data was then compared to the literature review on the topic. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008:149), analysis encompasses coding which involves taking raw data and raising it to a conceptual level. A linear, hierarchical process with six

interconnected steps, which are not necessarily in a specific order, was followed, as stipulated by Creswell (2014:196-200). These steps are outlined below: Firstly, the researcher organised and prepared the datasets for analysis by transcribing the interviews. The researcher then read through all the transcribed interviews to get a general sense of the information and possibly its overall meaning. Next, the researcher started with the manual coding of the data by arranging the data into portions of facts and marking them with a term that symbolises a group (see Annexure O). The researcher provided a detailed description of the setting and the categories or themes for analysis. The themes were reviewed, and data was evaluated with regard to the main themes and objectives of the study (see Annexure P). The findings of the analysis were then presented. The data was compared to existing literature to see whether the themes link to information that is already available. The research question was also considered during this entire process. A report was produced to share the findings so that it can convince the person who reads the report of the merit and validity of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006:23).

1.6 ETHICS

1.6.1 Legal authorisation

Legal authorisation to perform the research was granted by the Department of Social Development ([Annexure B](#)). The Department of Social Development is the umbrella body of all social work-related organisations. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at North-West University (NWU) ([Annexure A](#)). Goodwill permission was obtained from the heads of all three CYCCs involved in the study, namely Bethesda Outreach Children's Home ([Annexure D](#)), Desmond Tutu CYCC ([Annexure E](#)) and Jakaranda Children's Home ([Annexure C](#)).

1.6.2 Avoidance of harm

Strydom (2011:115), state that avoidance of harm to the participants is a fundamental ethical rule in research. It is the accountability of the researcher to safeguard participants within all possible reasonable limits from any physical or emotional discomfort that may arise from the research. As there is a possibility that research may cause some degree of harm to participants, a risk-benefit ratio analysis was done before the study commenced. Precautions were put in place in order to reduce the risks and protect the

participants from possible harm. Potential harm to the *social workers included physiological harm (emotional discomfort) when discussing a topic. Hence, before the onset of the interviews, the social workers were informed that they may discontinue or end the interview at any time.

Although the care leavers were adults and could provide informed consent, they should still be seen as vulnerable as they have left the residential care facilities within the recent past. In order to reduce physiological harm (emotional discomfort or emotional distress) the care leavers were informed before the onset of the interview that they may leave the interview at any time if they feel so. If there was a need for counselling the care leavers would be referred to a qualified counsellor who was prearranged and readily available. She provided this service at no cost for the participants.

To help reduce the power dynamics between the social workers and their supervisors, and between the social workers and the care leavers that could have existed during the recruitment of the participants, participants were again informed prior to the interviews that as they agreed to voluntarily participate in the study that they could withdraw from the research at any time.

1.6.3 Informed consent

According to Babbie (2008:69), informed consent is an ethical consideration based on the grounds that researchers should permit the participants to make free individual choices about participating in the research project; they should not be compelled or deceived, and their autonomy should be respected. According to Gregory (2003:35), informed consent should create the foundation of research projects that include human participants. Participants should freely take part in research projects, being fully aware of the extent of their participation, the risks involved, the type and intention of the research, and also how the outcomes will be disseminated (Babbie, 2008:78).

The researcher informed the participants that the recording of the interviews and data would specifically be utilised for this study only. Information about the aim of the research, the potential risks, the procedures and the possible benefits was thoroughly explained to the participants so that they could make an informed decision about their participation in the research. The participants were allowed an opportunity to ask questions and get clarity before accepting or rejecting their consent, as specified by Gregory (2003:49).

Next, the participants were asked to sign the consent forms (see attached [Annexure F: Letter of Consent](#)).

1.6.4 Confidentiality, Anonymity and Privacy

Before consent can be obtained from participants, confidentiality needs to be ensured (Gregory, 2003:35). In this study confidentiality was discussed with the participants before informed consent was obtained and again before the interviews commenced. They were reassured that whatever is shared during the interview would stay confidential. Safeguarding confidentiality is an indication that the researcher respects the participant. Babbie (2008:71) indicated that confidentiality may encourage persons to partake in research, and to do so authentically during the course of the conversation. Furthermore, the participants were seen individually in a secured venue to ensure that they were comfortable and felt free to speak openly to the researcher.

The participants were assured that none of their names would appear in the final dissertation. Gregory (2003:49) recommended the application of pseudonyms to replace real names in order to safeguard confidentiality. Only the researcher and the mediator had access to the details and particulars provided by the participants. The identifying details of the participants – such as their real names – were excluded in the interview transcripts and will not be published. Pseudonyms will therefore be used in the final report. The information that was collected during interviews was securely kept on a password-secured computer and on the researcher's Google drive. This data will be wiped out as soon as it is no longer necessary.

Scott (2005:243) stipulates that social science research is only seen as anonymous when no identifying information is specified by the participant. The latter further states that anonymity is further encouraged by the degree to which the identity of a message source is unknown and unspecified, the less information there is about the source the more difficult it is to be precise about the source. In order to ensure anonymity and to protect the identity of the study participants, the study participants were provided with pseudonyms which were used in the transcribed interviews and final report. When providing the different offices with feedback on the findings, no identified information of the participants will be included.

According to Strydom *et al.* (2011:62), the right to privacy implies that a person has the choice to make a decision about when, where and to whom their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours may be exposed. The interviews with the social workers were conducted at the social workers' offices, and the interviews with the care leavers at the board rooms of the CYCCs in order to ensure privacy. During the interviews, the office door was closed to provide the necessary privacy. Social workers and care leavers were seen individually to help ensure privacy.

1.6.5 Voluntary participation

Hammersley and Traianou (2012:7) explained that voluntary participation is an ethical consideration intended to guarantee that persons are freely and willingly taking part in a research project and that participation is not enforced. The researcher clarified that the participants' participation was voluntary and that they knew they would not receive any payment for their participation. The participants had the right to decline consent or pull out from the study at any time and for whatever reason (Gregory, 2003:41; Pilot, 2001:6).

1.6.6 Incentives/reimbursement

The participants were not compensated for participating in the study. Coffee and snacks were made available during the interviews. The interviews were conducted at the specified CYCCs and transport refunds were given to the participants for the use of public transport. Participants were also given a token of appreciation in the form of a R100 gift voucher after the interviews were conducted to compensate for the sacrifices and time dedicated to the research.

1.6.7 Storage and archiving of data.

During the research process, all data as well as the transcribed interviews were saved on the researcher's private laptop in a password-protected folder. The audio-recordings were removed from the audio-recorder following the interviews and were transferred to a password-protected laptop, after which the recordings were removed from the recording device. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim. Hard copies of the transcribed interviews were locked in a cabinet at the researcher's home. Only the researcher and her study leader have access to the data. Once the research project has been completed,

the hard copies will be sent to the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies at NWU, where it will be safely stored for five years, after which it will be destroyed.

1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Creswell (2009:244) stated that trustworthiness includes the strategies that are used during the course of the research to safeguard the authenticity and accuracy of the study's findings. Lincoln and Guba (cited in D'Cruz & Jones, 2004:73) argued that every researcher is obliged to consider the enquiries that underpin trustworthiness and recommended that researchers pay attention to the real worth of the findings (i.e., credibility), the applicability to other contexts (transferability), the consistency of the findings (dependability), and neutrality in demonstrating the views of the participants.

1.7.1 Credibility

Nieuwenhuis (2016:123) referred to credibility as how consistent the findings are with reality. To ensure credibility in this study the researcher gave a detailed description of the data collection methods as well as purposive sampling. All of the transcripts were checked against the audio-recordings to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts.

All of the interviews were audio-recorded after which these recordings were transcribed verbatim to explore and identify similarities, differences and relationships between the responses of the participants. Regular discussions with the research supervisor permitted an objective review of the analyses and decisions concluded by the researcher, which may increase the credibility of the research study. In order to increase the credibility of the study, a social worker who holds a Master's degree in Social Work was used as a co-coder to assist with the coding.

The student is trained in coding and skilled in doing coding. Using a co-coder provided a safety net as the coding was also verified by the co-coder.

1.7.2 Transferability

According to Shenton (2004:69), transferability speaks to the comprehensive manner in which the conclusions of the study can be useful to other related sites. The in-depth description of the study setting, the selection of participants and the findings determine the capability of others to evaluate whether the findings can be transferred. Therefore, in this study, a thorough description of the study context, the sampling of the participants

and the findings was provided. The researcher also motivated the selection of the research approach, design, population and sampling, data collection methods and data analysis.

1.7.3 Dependability

According to Thomas and Magilvy (2011:153), dependability happens once another researcher can follow the way in which decisions were made by the researcher in terms of the aim of the study, the motivation for selecting the particular population, the data collection and analysis methods, the interpretation as well as the dissemination of the research results. To increase the dependability in this study, a thorough description of the research process was provided. In addition, the research approach and research methodology used in the study were unpacked, and supplemented by supporting documents such as extracts from the interview transcripts ([Annexure N](#)), an example of the process of data analysis (themes with codes) ([Annexure O](#)), the defining themes ([Annexure P](#)), and coded transcripts ([Annexure L](#)).

Thomas and Magilvy (2011:154) explained that neutrality is achieved when the research process is underpinned by credibility, dependability and transferability. Neutrality can also be achieved through the researcher being mindful and journaling feelings, views and prejudices throughout the research. This permits researchers to detach their personal perceptions from the data that emerged through the data collection process and to retain their position of impartiality. In this study, the researcher made reflective notes during the course of the study in order to promote neutrality in the study. An example of a reflective note is attached as [Annexure K](#).

1.7.4 Confirmability

According to Thomas and Magilvy (2011:154), confirmability refers to the degree to which the results can be confirmed by others. For this study, the researcher kept a thorough audit trail of the analysis. All the transcribed interviews as well as notes on the data analysis process are available and examples of these documents are attached to this study. The audit trail – which permits any reader to track the research progress stage by stage through the decisions made and procedures described – is critical for the process of confirmability (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:125). It should be evidently proven that the researcher did not allow her individual principles and own academic orientation to guide

or impact the outcomes of the study in any way whatsoever. In order to prevent this from happening, all the interviews were transcribed verbatim and all the copies of these documents as well as the data analysis documents are kept and are available for confirmability.

1.8 RISK OF THE STUDY

The risk with regard to the participation of the social workers in this study was minimal, since they are professionals with a specific field of expertise and could make informed decisions about their participation in the study. Although they are seen as professionals, taking part in this study might still cause some degree of physiological harm (emotional discomfort). As many of these social workers have worked intensively with care leavers, they may be vulnerable to the feelings of hopelessness or powerlessness to bring about change or to meaningfully support care leavers as it is often difficult for the social workers to let the care leavers go, knowing that the odds are heavily stacked against these young people. These social workers may also, due to the lack of resources and how this impacts service provision, experience frustration and feelings of hopelessness. In order to reduce these risks, precautions were put in place, such as free counselling services from FAMSA, the contact details of a psychologist, and the Department of Social Development's employee wellness services which are freely available should this be required.

The risk level of the proposed study for the care leavers was medium. Although the participants are adults and provided informed consent they might still be seen as vulnerable as they have left the residential care facility in the recent past. Precautions to reduce the risks were put in place.

In order to reduce physiological harm (emotional discomfort/emotional distress), the care leavers were informed before the onset of the interview that they may leave the interview at any time if they feel so. If there was a need for counselling the care leavers were referred to a qualified counsellor who was prearranged and readily available. Free counselling services were also available at FAMSA and at the Department of Social Development to provide them with counselling in case they felt distressed or uncomfortable talking to the resident social worker. Each participant was informed about these available services.

1.9 POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER

The researcher is currently employed as a social worker by the Department of Social Development and is based at a service point at Soshanguve Township. Her core duties are to render statutory services to children in need of care and protection by monitoring their court orders, and also to track the available families of the children placed in alternative care while they are still in the care of unrelated persons and to reunify them.

She does not have any relationship with any of the selected CYCCs, social workers at the CYCCs or the care leavers. She has never interacted with the population of this research before. Since she started working as a social worker, she became aware of the challenges associated with the facilitation of family reunification since majority of the care residents are homeless, with the absence of families further complicating matters.

1.10 CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter was to provide a description of the design, approach, population and sampling techniques pertaining to this study. This chapter also focused on the data collection methods and analysis of the data. The ethical considerations and the strategies utilised to ensure trustworthiness were also discussed. The next chapter will focus on literature related to this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a literature study aimed at providing context for this research. First, the policies and regulations with regard to childcare and protection in residential care facilities in South Africa will be discoursed. Care leaving will also be emphasised. The ecological theory will be presented as theoretical lens for this study. The Circle of Courage will also be explained as this approach is applied in the South African statutory system to build the resilience of care residents.

2.2 POLICIES AND REGULATIONS RELEVANT TO THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Various international laws are aimed at protecting children. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child are the most prominent. According to Article 7 (1) of the UNCRC (1989), nations ought to make sure that the children's right to acknowledge and receive care from their biological mothers and fathers is protected. Article 8 (1) specifies that states must make sure that the children's right to identity ought to be appreciated. The said rights include the child's right to nationality and name from birth. Furthermore, Article 9 (1) obligates governments to ensure that the removal of children and placing them in substitute care is done merely in cases where all other options in the child's best interest have been exhausted. Section 20, conversely, recognises that other conditions may result in the child being removed from his or her household and be placed in the care of unrelated persons. The United Nations (2010) established guidelines for alternative care, which specifically mention that detaching a minor from his/her household should only be considered as the last choice.

The South African framework corresponds with international law in this regard. All policies in South Africa regarding minors are guided by the UNCRC (Boezaart, 2009:313). The adoption of Section 28 of the Bill of Rights is the most straightforward example of the influence of the UNCRC in South African legislation, since it is based on the values of the UNCRC. Section 28 provides children with the right to a name, citizenship and some form of care. It also highlights that minors should be safeguarded from abuse, neglect and degradation, besides needing food and shelter (RSA, 1996).

The White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997) recognises the impossibility to always protect the life of a family, hence the provisioning for substitute care. Based on the framework of international and national legislation, the Children's Act 38 of 2005 (RSA, 2005) and the Children's Amendment Act 41 of 2007 (RSA, 2007) were established. According to these acts, the best interest of the child is used as the guiding criterion in every verdict relating to minors. The key preference is the right of a child to stay within their biological family. Preference was also given to intervention and prevention services. However, Van Breda and Dickens (2016:350) have noted that in South African legislation and policy nothing in particular refers to the provision of transitional support to care residents and care leavers, and that this seems to be ignored by academics, researchers, policy makers and service providers.

2.3 CHILD CARE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Placing children in a residential care facility is considered as the last option both in South Africa and internationally. The logic behind retaining children in their households and considering residential placement as the last choice is to keep families together (UNCRC, 1989). In agreement with this, section 158 of the Children's Act (RSA, 2005) specifies that placing children in a CYCC should only be done when no other options are appropriate. This is supported by the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997), the Minimum Norms and Standards for Secure Care Facilities (RSA, 2010), and the Children's Act (35 of 2008).

Meintjes, Moses, Berry and Mampane (2007:45) explained that South African communities are no longer able to absorb vulnerable children into their structures in order to provide them with safety and security as these communities have changed. Placing children in residential care may not be the best solution but it is necessary for those children who do not have any other options available to them.

Meintjes *et al.* (2007:14) specified that residential care is often discouraged due to the negative impact it has on minors. Blaustein and Kinniburgh (2010:24) explained that, due to being exposed to trauma while still very young, youth in care often have impaired views of relationships, other people as well as their environments. According to Tarullo and Gunnar (2005:1), challenges may emanate from social and physical withdrawal, insufficient cognitive and motor stimulation, as well as the absence of a constantly available carer. Despite criticism against residential care for children, this type of

placement is still being used by many countries throughout the world for children in need of alternative care (Browne *et al.*, 2006:485-487; Makuyana & Kangethe, 2014:117-124).

Scholars such as Knorth, Harder, Zandberg and Kendrick (2008:125) embraced an optimistic view of residential care programmes and regard residential care as proficient support to assist children in need of alternative care. Knorth and his co-researchers (2008:125) presented several systems of community care, together with residential care, to provide children and youths with an opportunity to progress in an affirmative direction. The residential care programmes produced improved outcomes compared to children from similar circumstances who were placed in foster care. As a result, in Western countries, residential care is seen as a significant and functioning intervention and not as a last resort anymore (Knorth *et al.*, 2008:124). Yorke (2015:8) indicated that a CYCC is responsible for providing minors with secured shelter, love, safety and a nurturing atmosphere, helping them to pull through from their previous distressing experiences.

2.3.1 Residential care in South Africa

Residential care is described by Smith, Fulcher and Doran (2013:1) as “a physical setting in which children and youth are offered care, including physical nurturing, social learning opportunities, the promotion of health and wellbeing, and specialised behaviour training”. The Children’s Act (38 of 2005) and the Children’s Amendment Act (41 of 2007) include a well-articulated and regulatory arrangement for care centres in South Africa. In this country, residential care is acknowledged as Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs). According to Section 158 of the Children’s Act (38 of 2005) the residential programme that is most appropriate for the child should be considered prior to placing a child in residential care. As a result, the child must be put in a CYCC that provides residential care programmes suitable for the individual child (RSA, 2005).

According to the Children’s Act (38 of 2005) (RSA, 2005) and the Children’s Amendment Act (41 of 2007) (RSA, 2007), placing a child in a CYCC is considered a last recourse, as well as an intervention approach that could go beyond basically addressing the physical needs of children. Anglin and Knorth (2008:142) highlighted that residential care should not be viewed as a last choice for children in need, but should rather be observed as an essential supply approach to support children in need who are without any accessible means of care. The services provided by the residential care facility should be aligned with the needs of the child on all levels (physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual).

These facilities must be capable to accept, maintain and mature children, as well as managing children with psychiatric conditions (RSA, 2007).

According to the Children's Act (38 of 2005) (RSA, 2005) as well as the Children's Amendment Act (41 of 2007) (RSA, 2007), the facilities of the CYCCs are in line with the renewed model of social services since they assimilate residential, developmental, therapeutic and preventative programmes for children.

2.3.1.1 Factors that result in different care placements

Section 150 of the Children's Act (RSA, 2005) specifies in which circumstances a child may be considered in need of care and protection. These circumstances include minors who are abandoned, parentless, mistreated, uncontrollable, abused or addicted to substances, minors who are subjected to child labour or exploitation, as well as children in child-headed families. According to the Children's Act (RSA, 2005), children who have been deserted, maltreated, unkempt or bereaved between birth and the age of 18 are placed in Child and Youth Care Centres by designated social workers. The Children's Act requires a court order as an approval from the children's court to remove a child from the household and to place the child in alternative care. It is the court's responsibility to decide whether a child is in need of care and protection (RSA, 2005). The Children's Act promotes prevention and early intervention programmes before children are removed from their families.

2.3.1.2 Children in residential care

The adverse impact that institutionalisation has on the development and wellbeing of children is widely recognised. Worldwide during 2018-2019, an estimated 2.7 million children were staying or placed in CYCCs (UNICEF, 2020). Proudlock (2014:6) estimated that in South Africa there are 355 registered CYCCs which accommodate 21,000 children and a further estimated 115 unregistered CYCCs looking after 2,000 children. Tshwane region currently has 36 registered CYCCs, which include the three CCYCs selected for the study: Bethesda Outreach Children's Home CYCC in Hammanskraal, Jakaranda Children's Home in Derdepoort, and Desmond Tutu CYCC in Pretoria North. These selected CYCCs, which are some of the largest in the area, comprise of social workers, children in need of care, childcare workers and house parents.

2.3.1.3 The duties of social workers in a CYCC

The Children's Act (RSA, 2005) assigns social workers as specialists to conduct investigations in order to decide whether a child is in need of care and protection, as well as to provide the children's court with reports (Jamieson, 2013:5). Social workers have a mandate to, without a court order, perform emergency removals. A social worker will manage the child's case as soon as they are placed in alternative care.

Social workers play a key role in CYCCs. Yorke (2015:1) explained that social workers' duties include seeing that the children's basic needs – such as nutrition, clothes and accommodation – are met, and other multifaceted and relational essentials such as the children's emotional, societal and advanced needs. Baylin and Hughes (2016:64) indicated that social workers need to be the community shields whose presence represents security to the child.

2.3.1.4 Duties of child and youth care workers in a CYCC

Zerach (2013:73) referred to people who are employed by a CYCC to look after the children as "front-line staff". These staff members are expected to handle care residents' crises, manage their challenging behaviour and listen to their traumatic life stories, with often insufficient training and low levels of appreciation. Sulimani-Aidan (2017:867) emphasised the important role played by care workers in the lives of residential care residents. According to Jamieson (2013:5), child and youth care workers (CYCWs) work hand in hand with social workers. Once a CYCW or an auxiliary social worker realises that a minor has been maltreated or is in need of other serious child protection services, they will report this to the social worker. Jamieson (2013:3) stated that child care workers help children and youth with both special developmental and normal needs to function optimally. This includes providing therapeutic sessions to enhance the child's social competency and healthy development, rendering reunion services to both the child and the available household, and monitoring and supervising the child's academic progress and general development. They create a constant and stable atmosphere for the children through being warm, accessible and welcoming. Purvis *et al.*, as cited by Yorke (2015:8), indicated that the CYCWs' roles and responsibilities are about empowerment, connection and correction. According to Jamieson (2013:28), offering a constant and reliable relationship helps to provide an atmosphere where children can develop trusting relationships, and learn to address problematic thoughts and behaviour freely.

2.4 CARE LEAVING

According to Van Breda (2015:323), the transitioning of young people from residential care to independent living is understood as care leaving. Broad (2005:371) pointed out that, internationally, the presentation of the Children Leaving Care Act 2000 in the United Kingdom (UK) has caused enhancements in British policy and legislation, comprising the setting of particular objectives to increase the involvement of care leavers in employment, education and training.

According to Bond (2015) as cited by Van Breda (2016:7), South Africa, in comparison to the UK, United States of America (USA) and Australia, has a scarcity of legislation and policy to aid effective transitioning to independence living. The Children's Act offers values to defend the rights of minors and youths, and to safeguard that the services are carried out in a manner that maintain minors and their households (RSA, 2005).

Oelofsen (2015:195) suggested that "residential care facilities should have systems and procedures in place that inspire stability and continuity in care since this could provide care residents with opportunities for an extended range of interpersonal relationships, social support and networks". Lee and Perales (2007:9) emphasised the importance of planning care leavers' exit and safeguarding the development of their capabilities and a healthy self-esteem.

2.4.1 Care leavers

The Care Leavers' Association (2013) described care leavers as young people who grew up in a residential care facility until they exit care. According to the Centre for Social Justice (2014:13), care leaver refers to someone who has exited care. When minors reach the age of 18, they become majors which means they have to exit the care to start living independently. The Children's Act (38 of 2005) states that a child, irrespective of gender, upon reaching the age of 18 years, is regarded as a major. Section 176 of the Children's Act provides that children may continue living in the existing care facility until the end of the year in which they turn 21 years on condition that the present care facility is prepared and able to care for them and that the continued stay is a need to allow them to complete their academic studies. After the allocated period, the court order lapses, and these young adults are compelled to exit the care and to start living independently (RSA, 2005).

2.4.2 Transitioning

Transitioning is frequently described in terms of the care leaver's capability to obtain an academic qualification or expertise to help them to become employed and find stable accommodation. Oelofsen (2015:192-193) divided the process of transition into three phases, namely the pre-transition phase (in-care experiences), transition phase (the transition itself) and post-transition phase (independent living). Stein (2006:22) identified three pathways trailed by youth on their journey to independent living. These can be described as youths "moving on", youths "getting by" and youths "going under". For many care leavers, exiting the CYCC towards adult life is an intimidating and difficult experience. Stein (2008:39) referred to this experience as a "compressed and accelerated" shift to majority. According to Stein (2006:25), these shifts are "expectations of instant adulthood". Oelofsen (2015:224) found in her research that during the transition phase care leavers felt that they were forced to be self-dependent while feeling lonely and secluded because of the absence of emotional support from the CYCCs.

2.4.3 Independent living

Independent living means surviving without the care and safeguard of a CYCC (CSJ, 2014:18). The positive results that many care leavers attain is mainly due to a network of individual and informal support and resources. Aldgate (1994:259-261) and Wilson (1997:91) stated that care leavers often lack a practical social support network on which they can depend throughout transitioning from a CYCC towards independent living. The majority of care leavers face independent living by themselves and lack a safety net. Mamelani Projects (2013:17) postulated that "CYCCs are liable for making sure that care leaves are equipped with the knowledge and emotional capability in terms of independent and interdependent living". According to Van Breda and Dickens (2016:359), "'interdependence' is a Western term for the African notion of *Ubuntu*, which means that people become social through relationships with other people". "They argue that this reliance on networks of informal community and extended-family supports is both cultural and necessary, given the lack of care-leaving services provided by the state".

According to Tanur (2010:330), the "focus needs to shift away from a completely independent living model to one that enables interdependent living". Mamelani Projects' study about youth leaving care referred to the importance of independent living skills for

youths, saying that “inspiring interdependence for care leavers at transitioning stage is considerably significant” (Tanur, 2010:331).

2.4.4 Supportive independent living programmes

Montgomery, Donkoh and Underhill (2006:1437) defined independent living programmes as “supervised living spaces in which young people can practice their acquired skills”. Montgomery *et al.* (2006:1437) explained that arrangements aimed at such programmes include public centres, self-governing occupations and administered training appointments.

Meintjes *et al.* (2007:9) specified that the majority of residential care facilities usually fail to convey essential life expertise to young people in care, subsequently inhibiting them from effectively managing themselves throughout adulthood. Tanur (2012:329) noted that in South Africa there are only a few well-established programmes for independent living, and that residential care facilities do not focus sufficiently on arrangements for care leaving.

Independent living programmes and continuous care throughout the care leavers’ transitioning to independent living are regarded as best practice. Bond (2017:2000) questioned the feasibility of independent living programmes in the South African framework as CYCCs are insufficiently subsidised and under-resourced.

Greeson, Garcia and Courtney (2015:351) observed that most independent living programmes are presented as group-based lessons where life skills are presented in a tutorial room. Practical scenarios are included, showing care leavers how to handle real-world situations, such as making financial arrangements and decisions, banking and finding accommodation (Ringle *et al.*, 2007:235). Maclean (2004) indicated that the necessary skills ought to be part of practical knowledge, such as part-time or casual employment, as this will assist the care leavers to acquire financial skills, experience the world of work, start building a CV, build social capital and grow resilience. The life skills programme includes networking and helpful interactions with others. These connections and relationships can help care leavers on their journey towards independent living (Munson & Scott, 2008:88). Mendes *et al.* (2011:91) highlighted the importance of merging real-world life skills with personal skills, as well as the importance of exposure to role models and coaches. Munson and Scott (2008:81), and Greeson *et al.* (2015:349)

believed that independent living programmes on their own are insufficient to assist care leavers in their transition from a care facility to independent living.

2.4.5 Experiences of care leavers during their transition to independent living

Care leaving is perceived as a personal journey for each care leaver. Van Breda *et al.* (2012:2) described this transition from a care facility to independent living as an unimpressive period for care leavers. Ward *et al.* (2009) noted that transitioning is essential for care leavers, and that their experience and perceptions of the residential social support has a predictable effect on the outcome of their independent living.

Van Breda *et al.* (2012:2) referred to care leavers' experiences of transitioning from a CYCC to self-contained and independent living as "intense". Stein (2005:7; 2006) observed that care leavers may experience various difficulties, such as the abrupt termination of care, lack of personal ability to live independently as well as lack of financial as well as emotional support. South African care leavers is faced with unemployment as a major challenge; this is most likely due to the care leavers' poor education and the country's high unemployment rate (Stein, 2005:16). Foster and Gifford (cited by Van Breda, 2015:323) indicated that insufficient academic qualifications, learning incapacities and further complications in terms of their emotional and social wellbeing can aggravate care leavers' transition experiences. Mendes (2006:121) found that most care leavers seem to be socially excluded due to being deprived of a chance to partake in normal social situations. According to Courtney and Hughes-Huerling (2005:79-90), various South African and international studies on care leavers' adjustment to independent living established that this group has a significant probability of facing complications during their transition from being a helpless adolescent to a self-regulating adult. According to Dixon (2008:207-217), the first transitioning experience can influence care leavers' ability to manage their independent living at a later stage.

Care leavers in South Africa are experiencing the same transition difficulties as other care leavers worldwide, referring to accommodation, employment and psychological wellbeing. However, in South Africa, care leavers also need to face additional challenges as a result of the country's high unemployment rate (Tanur, 2012:337). Stein (2005:18) argued that care leavers' transitioning to independent status also deprives them of the opportunity to focus on their identity development.

There are also care leavers who have experienced a positive transition to independent living. For example, Stein (2006:22) referred to a group of “survivors” (ex care residents) who, irrespective of obstacles, “moved on” and achieved success later in their lives.

Gilligan (2001:1) indicated that most care leavers demonstrate significant resilience in conquering life’s challenges. This resilience is underpinned by safe attachments, a positive experience of studying at an academic institution, ongoing formal and informal support in terms of lifestyle and professional strategies, helpful relationships and social interaction skills.

2.4.6 Residential social support of care leavers transitioning to independent living

Gotlieb (2000:28) described social support as the “process of interaction in relationships which improves coping, esteem, belonging and competence through actual or perceived exchanges of physical or psychosocial resource”. Social support affords tangible as well non-tangible resources that may assist people to deal with various bases of tension. Pinkerton and Dolan (2007:55) stated that social support comprises several dimensions, for instance emotional support which can include compassion and understanding, instrumental support which can include funds and time as well as informal support which may include guidance and advice.

Various studies have confirmed that social support forecast improved results (Daining & DePanfilis, 2007) and feelings of satisfaction subsequent to exiting care. According to Stein (2002:3), in-care support for independent living should be based on proper legislation as well as feedback from programmes for youth exiting care. Arrangements must include a substantial transitioning phase consisting of self-regulating skills programmes, knowledge of care exiting, and the support of an appropriate tutor. It is also important to take on board feedback from youth on how they have experienced the transition from care leaving to independent living. Research confirms that care leavers whose transitioning was planned and care leavers who exited care at a more matured stage coped better with the change.

2.4.7 Supportive relationships

Van Breda *et al.* (2012:21) noted that care leavers often form problematic relationships because of their exposure to mistreatment and violence in the past. Subsequently, youth

transitioning to independent living often have a need for stable relationships. Yet, they often demonstrate incongruity in their conduct and will often walk away from stable relationships because of mistrust and fear of being abandoned.

As care leavers often distrust the intentions of others who attempt to support them, they experience tension between dependence and self-regulation, and therefore prefer to depend on themselves. Hence, they often distance themselves from people who may have supported them during their transitioning from the care facility to independent living. Stein and Morris (2010:27) noted that care leavers who successfully transitioned from care to independent living were able to establish strong connections with relatives, spouses and foster parents. Strong relationships with care workers also resulted in positive results for young care leavers. According to Carriere and Richardson (2009:3-4), youngsters may seem well connected to a family and yet be determined to disengage and search for new integrations.

2.4.8 Family relationships

Collins (2001:271-291) and Wade (2008:39-54) identified that in most cases care leavers have inadequate or no parental support, unlike the majority of youngsters who can depend on the support of their parents when leaving their homes. The care leavers' relationship with their biological families typically consists of feelings of denial, abandonment or mistreatment. Although it is believed that care residents do not regularly have reliable and expressive relationships with their relatives, Vaughn, Shook and McMillen (2008) cited in Sulimani-Aidan (2014:40) found that they do sustain contact with their families once they exit care. Stein (2010:34) suggested that informal support from families, former support systems and friends can benefit care leavers. It is important for care leavers to have a 'sense of family', even when they acknowledge that their families are the ones who failed them and deprived them of family relationships and prevented them from returning home.

Dixon and Stein (2005:191) found that being isolated from their families negatively impacted care residents. They also revealed that care residents felt that they were detached or separated from their families against their will and found it difficult to deal with. Children often disregard the reasons why they were separated from their families, although it was entirely in their best interest to separate them from their families. Proudlock (2014:177) indicated that in South Africa, children have the right to interact with

their relatives and to recognise the particulars of their households. The Children's Act stresses the importance of maintaining connections among children and their relatives, as well as the need for uplifting and reunion processes (Proudlock, 2014; RSA, 2010).

2.5 SUPPORTIVE THEORIES

Two theories, ecological systems theory and the Circle of Courage, were found to be relevant in terms of this study since they provide additional explanations and insight into issues and themes that have emerged during this research. According to ecological systems theory, the participants' background as well as their unique understanding of their background greatly contribute to shaping them. The second supporting theory, namely the Circle of Courage, is based on four aspects that influence a person's growth, namely a person's sense of belonging, mastery, generosity and independence (Lee & Perales, 2007:2).

2.5.1 Ecological systems theory

Ecological systems theory was developed by psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner and clarifies the way in which different types of environmental systems influence human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1999). The environment is understood to have many layers. Bronfenbrenner's classic ecological systems theory encompasses four interconnected environmental systems, namely the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystems. These systems range from smaller settings to bigger settings that indirectly influence development (Andrea & Joseph, 2017:239-241).

2.5.2 Microsystem

Microsystem is the proximal ecological level, which comprises the settings whereby persons interact directly. Planned out-of-school events signify a single microsystem, comprising of a variety of events, like sporting, educational clubs and faith-based teenager groups. Generally, young people who partake in some events demonstrate further optimistic social, emotional, psychological, and physical results than their nonparticipating equals (Andrea & Joseph, 2017:239-241).

2.5.3 Mesosystem

Bronfenbrenner's *mesosystem* comprises processes that take place between the multiple microsystems in which two or more individuals interact. Various microsystems network with activities to enable growth. Whatever happens in one of the microsystem will affect what happens in one of the other microsystems. Families and schools are seen as the major microsystems interrelating with out-of-school activities. Mothers and fathers are most expected to support and inspire their offspring once the objectives and rules of the activity correspond with the household's objectives. It is crucial to nurture connection on this level (Andrea & Joseph, 2017:239-241).

2.5.4 Exosystem

The *exosystem* consists of various microsystems. The exosystem encourages improvement via the person who is involved in the wellbeing of the next person (Andrea & Joseph, 2017: 239-241).

The development of care leavers is not seen in isolation, but in the context of relationships as well as environmental and social settings. As a result, various external factors – such as family relationships – have an impact on care leavers. Family relationships provide a child's first construction of meaning. It includes the interactions and attachments they have formed with their care givers, causing the care leavers to internalise expectations, patterns of behaviour and constructs about themselves. Other relationships and development contexts can include friends, the school, teachers, and the community. As adulthood emerges, young people become increasingly independent, accept bigger responsibilities, and take on an active role in their own development (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006:15).

2.5.5 Macrosystem

According to Andrea and Joseph (2017:239-241) the *macrosystem* is described as the external system which include the typical main beliefs, values, and norms, as established in the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic association of the society. Not only does the macrosystem functions as a filter or lens through which a person can construct their future experience but also encourages the improvement inside as well as between other systems. Social class and culture are two important macrosystems that have an influence

on out-of-school events. However social class has received more attention than culture. Social class refers to the economic and education positions that individuals or families occupy in the larger, hierarchical society. Culture on the other hand is defined as the “set of values, practices and beliefs that characterize a specific ethnic group”. It is suggested that young people from lower social-class families are less probable to take part in activities than wealthier families, due to the fact that they have less financial resources and more family responsibilities. Research on the role that culture plays has indicated that fit-in activities, predominantly concerning teenagers, are aligned with their cultural background (Andrea & Joseph, 2017: 239-241).

2.5.6 The Circle of Courage

According to Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern (cited in Lee & Perales, 2007:2), the Circle of Courage supports resilience in care residents. This youth empowerment model has its origins in Native American culture. It supports four beliefs, namely belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.

The Circle of Courage encourages the value of mastery (Lee & Perales, 2007:2). Mastery is achieved by testing and making mistakes in a supportive and nurturing environment. This supports a strong self-esteem and feelings of success (Lee & Perales, 2007:5). The value of independence is closely related to mastery. The Circle of Courage emphasises the importance of free will, independence and self-regulation in order to become an effective human being and to ultimately enhance the community at large (Lee & Perales, 2007:11).

Lee and Perales (2007:9) argued that care residents who understand belonging, mastery, independence and generosity will improve their chances of achieving success during and after care. According to Lee and Perales (2007:4) and Jackson (2014:9-13), the Circle of Courage provides a positive progress framework for children and youth, based on the exploration of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. Reid and Ross (2005:164-168) indicated that the Circle of Courage may possibly create an affirmative base that could encourage intellectual, physical, social and spiritual competency in youth, assisting them to build a strong sense of self-esteem. The Circle of Courage incorporates traditional beliefs of child rearing and modern methods that emphasise young people's strong points, which supports the value of respect (Jackson 2014:9-13). According to Garfat and Van Bockern (2010:37), the Circle of Courage encourages youth to acquire

resilience and strength to face life's adversities. According to Jackson (2014:9-13), the Circle of Courage incorporates ecological, sociological, psychodynamic and behavioural methodologies to help young people achieve success in life.

2.6 CONCLUSION

As demonstrated by the literature study, the residential social support rendered to care leavers transitioning to independent living can significantly influence the outcomes of their transitioning. Social support is therefore perceived as essential to facilitate better transitioning to independent living. Light was also shed on the two theories – Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and the Circle of Courage theory – that provide insight into care leavers' path going forward. The discussion of the research findings will be provided in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the main findings of the study will be discussed. The findings will be presented based on the themes extracted from the data. The perceptions of the social workers as well as the care leavers regarding the nature of residential social support during the transitioning phases to independent living will also be highlighted. The findings will be illustrated with responses from the participants.

3.2 BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

As indicated in Chapter 1, the social workers and care leavers were from three CYCCs in Gauteng, namely Bethesda Outreach Children's Home, Desmond Tutu CYCC and Jakaranda Children's Home. This section will provide a better understanding of the social workers and care leavers that participated in the study.

3.2.1 Biographic information of the social work participants

As outlined in Table 3.1 below, 12 social work participants from the three different CYCCs participated in the research study. All the participants have formal social work qualifications. They are also registered with the South African Council for Social Services Professions. Three of the participants are supervisors. Ten of the 12 social workers were female while two of the social workers were male. Their work experience ranged from six to 21 years.

Table 3-1: Overview of social worker participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	CYCC	Years of experience
PSW4	Male	37 years	Jakaranda	09
PSW6	Female	39 years	Desmond Tutu	11
PSW3	Female	41 years	Desmond Tutu	12
PSW12	Female	31 years	Bethesda	06
PSW1	Male	33 years	Desmond Tutu	10
PSW2	Female	46 years	Bethesda	15
PSW5	Female	29 years	Jakaranda	09

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	CYCC	Years of experience
PSW11	Female	52 years	Jakaranda	21
PSW8	Female	32 years	Jakaranda	06
PSW9	Female	46 years	Jakaranda	18
PSW10	Female	52 years	Jakaranda	11
PSW7	Female	38 years	Jakaranda	17

3.2.2 Biographic information of the care leaver participants

In total, 12 care leavers who grew up in three different registered CYCCs in Tshwane region were willing to participate in the study. Their ages ranged from 18 to 21 years. Their years of residential stay ranged from seven to 18 years.

Table 3-2: Overview of care leaver participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Years in care	CYCC	Period of independent living
PCL4	Male	21 years	12 years	Jakaranda	1 year 9 months
PCL1	Female	20 years	19 years	Desmond Tutu	1 year 1 month
PCL2	Female	21 years	09 years	Jakaranda	3 year 2 months
PCL3	Male	18 years	08 years	Jakaranda	8 months
PCL6	Female	19 years	16 years	Jakaranda	11 months
PCL5	Female	20 years	07 years	Jakaranda	2 years 1month
PCL8	Female	20 years	18 years	Bethesda	1 year 6 months
PCL9	Female	19 years	14 years	Bethesda	8 months
PCL11	Male	19 years	16 years	Bethesda	1 year 1 month
PCL12	Male	20 years	11 years	Bethesda	1 year 11 months
PCL10	Female	18 years	18 years	Desmond Tutu	1 year 6 months
PCL7	Male	21 years	20 years	Desmond Tutu	2 years 0 months

3.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Five themes emerged from this study: (1) Different levels and forms of residential social support, (2) social and structural support systems within residential care, (3) the role of residential support after leaving residential care, (4) residential care and emotional

support networks, and (5) the challenges of independent living. Relevant literature in accordance with the research findings will be discussed. Table 3.3 below provides a visual overview of the themes and subthemes.

Table 3.3 Overview of themes and subthemes

THEMES	SUBTHEMES
Theme 1: Different levels and forms of residential social support	Subtheme 1.1: Residential independent living programmes Subtheme 1.2: Residential social support and resilience Subtheme 1.3: Residential support and the psychological support needs of care leavers. Subtheme 1.4: Preparing care leavers for disengagement
Theme 2: Social and structural support systems within residential care	Subtheme 2.1: Support systems within the CYCC Subtheme 2.2: Support with regard to housing Subtheme 2.3: Family support Subtheme 2.4: Support networks
Theme 3: The role of residential support after leaving residential care	Subtheme 3.1: The role of residential support in the social integration of care leavers towards independent living Subtheme 3.2: Social networks outside residential care Subtheme 3.3: The need for continued psychosocial support from residential care
Theme 4: Residential care and emotional support networks	Subtheme 4.1: Supportive relationships within the care facility Subtheme 4.2: Maintaining supporting relationships after leaving care
Theme 5: The challenges of independent living	Subtheme 5.1: Sudden detachment from care Subtheme 5.2: Care leavers' feelings of leaving care and independent living. Subtheme 5.3: Peer social support Subtheme 5.4: Longing for independent living

3.3.1 Theme 1: Different levels and forms of residential social support

Gotlieb (2000:28) defined social support as the “process of interaction in relationships which improves coping, esteem, belonging and competence through actual or perceived

exchanges of physical or psychosocial resource”. Theme 1 is discussed based on the four subthemes that developed from the data. These subthemes are residential independent living programmes, residential social support and resilience, residential support and the physiological support needs of care leavers and preparing care leavers for disengagement.

3.3.2 Subtheme 1.1: Residential independent living programmes

Most social worker participants emphasised that, as part of social support, they provide residential programmes to the care leavers to help prepare them for independent living. Different programmes are presented aimed at the care leavers’ future living. This was how the social workers expressed it:

“We have programmes that are directed to these young people leaving care. There is main two programmes. The first one is the Preschool leavers programme and the second one school leavers’ programme. These residential programmes are aimed to prepare the care leavers to independent living. It is whereby the care leavers are being prepared for future planning.” (PSW2)

These programmes are flexible to accommodate all the care leavers, as stated by this participant:

“Leaving care programmes need to be flexible and broad enough to cater for our care residents with special needs such as the disabled.” (PSW6)

The programmes have a strong emphasis on career guidance:

“We assist them with communication skills, how to complete the forms. The institution invites the future planning specialists in career guidance. It’s extremely important career guidance.” (PSW2)

“Reality check sessions are also considered as very powerful weapons to face independent living. The care leavers are guided on how to attend an interview and how to compile a CV. There are role plays whereby they dress formally and being interviewed by external people in order to prepare them to the real world.” (PSW2)

The programmes also focused on life skills:

“Life skills programmes such as (Cleaning and Littering Programme), money management (Consumer Awareness Programme) are self-sustaining skills that assist the care leavers to sustain independent living.” (PSW2)

“Oh ... yes, both male and female care leavers are being educated in terms of the importance of family and family planning. Those are very significant aspects to consider in terms of the residential social support to successful independent living.” (PSW3)

“They are taught ordinary social skills you know such as cooking. We give them permission to experiment in the kitchen individually of course under supervision. Most of the times we offer them jobs to do and give them sort of stipends as well and this is to teach them on how to earn some money as well as to budget” (PSW4)

The value of these programmes was confirmed by the care leaver participants:

“The programmes also focused on investing in basic life skills to independence living. We were taught skills such as food gardening, dress making, cooking and baking.” (PCL4).

“They are the ones who taught us basic things such as washing dishes and house cleaning our rooms, like the basic house chores. I was very proud to be chosen as the one who washes the car of my house mother. It was actually such an honor for me. At the moment I don’t need a helper I can now do anything for myself based on what I learned and another thing is that starting from Grade 10 we start practicing to use public transport like taxis and buses to and from the school.” (PCL9)

The care leavers were also exposed to community projects:

“After the long journey, these people will be part of the community, so we help and encourage them to do more community work, group works such as camps and campaigns to promote community intervention. This programme is also run by the experts in community projects.” (PSW3)

This was positively experienced by the care leavers:

“I enjoyed working with Hammanskraal people. They made me feel at home, and they never discriminated against me. I was a real community member.” (PCL 8)

“Personally, community projects is my favourite programme because I was able to explore so much and being in the company of the community gave me a sense of belonging. It also uplifted my self-esteem.” (PCL 8)

As indicated by the participants, residential programmes are presented to the participants as part of social support and to prepare them for independent living. There are various programmes such as Mamelani Projects who works with The Homestead, a shelter for street kids. They offer a transitional support programme via Project Lungisela (meaning ‘prepare’ in Xhosa). The programme consists of three main parts: psychosocial and emotional support; job training; and backup in housing. This programme starts to engage with young people a year before they exit care and has proven to deliver results for care leavers.

The programmes also focus on life skills, as supported by Mmusi and Van Breda (2017:2) who stated that care leavers often apply the social skills they have cultured in residential care in diverse social contexts. Mamelani Projects (2013), Tanur (2012) and Massinga and Pecora (2004) as cited in Oelofson (2015:33) believe that children in care are often not given the chance to acquire foundation skills such as doing their own washing, cooking meals and managing finances. This is due to the firm instructions that need to be followed for the everyday home operation to work. The programmes are seen as valuable as the participants acquire certain skills that are also empowering to them. This links to mastery (Circle of Courage), which includes opportunities that enable the minors to become knowledgeable, to grow their skills and talents, and to obtain information, mostly while engaging with experts (Brendtro, Brockenleg and Van Bockern (2014) as cited in Dykes, 2019:267).

The programmes provided the participants with exposure to communities. This links with generosity in the Circle of Courage as their involvement in communities provided them with an opportunity to do something for someone else. Generosity suggests mastery as well as a sense of belonging (Dykes, 2019:269). Through the ecosystem theory, social workers are provided with a theoretical understanding which explains how people are interrelated and connected with, and dependent on external systems in the social environment. Hence, they notice the impact of such relationships in the social functioning of people (Mbedzi, 2019:91-93).

3.3.3 Subtheme 1.2: Residential social support and resilience

Pinkerton and Dolan (2007:55) indicated that social support delivers concrete as well as nontangible resources that can assist people to handle different sources of stress. Social support includes different types of support which may be support on an emotional level (love and empathy), instrumental support (money and time), and informal support (guidance and advice). Most care leavers displayed substantial resilience in overcoming distress.

From the data it was apparent that although the same residential support was provided to the care leavers, some coped better with multiple stressors than others, as evident from these quotes:

“It’s painful to see a youngster who you once took efforts trying to help him or her to decorate his or her life being a street kid.” (PSW10)

“You end up wondering how other kids are surviving when others are dismally failing.” (PSW 5)

“We travelled the same journey in a CYCC, attended the same programmes but they choose to fail. I mean, we were raised by the same house parent in the same home.” (PCL 7)

These participants showed resilience:

“I was taught self-discipline. That foundation made me who I am today. I found myself, I am now working and ready to become a responsible husband and a father in future.” (PCL 1)

“I was admitted in a CYCC when I was only four years old. My younger sister was two and the other one was a year old after the passing away of our mother. I have spent almost 16 years in an institution. I am a qualified teacher. I managed to take my younger sister from the residential care, and I am currently staying with her at my place.” (PCL 2)

The study on care leavers showed that regardless of challenges that might potentially lead to negative results, some care leavers managed to achieve independence (Masten, 2007:921; Stein, 2006). According to Garfat and Van Bockern (2010:37), the Circle of

Courage encourages youth to acquire resilience and the strength to face life's adversities. In addition to this, Jackson (2014:9-13) stated that, based on the Circle of Courage, resilience is important in terms of the development of young people resilience. Resilience studies suggest that "social support while in care plays an important role in the lives of young persons in care" (Wade, 2008:52). This study found that, despite the different circumstances of care leavers who grew up in CYCCs, the majority of the care leavers managed to bounce back from adversity. They cope well with life's inevitable setbacks and transition to independent living.

3.3.4 Subtheme 1.3: Residential support and the psychological support needs of care leavers

All 12 social workers revealed that meeting the care leavers' psychological needs is crucial for their wellbeing. CYCCs are intended to "provide therapeutic and developmental interventions to stabilize the child, reconnect the child with their family, and eventually prepare them to become self-reliant as they disengage from the facility" (Mamelani Projects, 2013:15). This is evident from the words of these participants:

"Professional curiosity – I always wanted to work closely with the children placed in CYCC. I am passionate about helping these youngsters to shape their individual future. I know it's challenging but also interesting. It demands a certain special personality. Not every person can be able to work with children in need – unless you have love, passion, understanding, patience and perseverance, because these young people, they are unique individuals. Each of them has his own different characteristics, behavior and personality." (PSW 1)

"We assist them to start supporting each other to form the relationships. We also encourage them to form support groups in terms of supporting each other and maintaining the relationships they are having amongst themselves as a family. My relationship with the children in the residential care was supposed to be professional, but I found myself assuming the role of a father to them. I have a very personal relationship with each child in the institution. We are like a family. I know their background and their history they also know my family. Expressing their love for residential care residents is important in attainment of their love and trust as well as for the development of their self-esteem. I also encourage them to relate to each as siblings."(PSW1)

“In such cases we support them by motivating for their studies so that they receive accommodations in various academic institutions, food and travelling allowances. To be honest, they always have our back. Whenever they face hiccups on their journey to transitioning, they know they can always look back. They often come for emotional and support whenever they face challenges. In case a care leaver decides to go back to his or her family, for the first few months we offer him or her support in terms of adjustment to the family environment.” (PSW 2)

The importance of meeting their psychological needs was echoed by these care leaver participants:

“Like a parent, the CYCC has always been there for us. I was only five years and my brother was two when we were placed in this CYCC ... I mean we were raised under the wing of this CYCC. Our house mother used to bath us until we were taught how to bath ourselves here. We do not know the taste of parental love except for the love we receive from the CYCC. When we talk about family we refer to this CYCC and its residents.” (PCL4)

“I was so attached to my caregivers, my house parents. I called them mama and papa from the bottom of my heart. I appreciated each and every drop of love that I received from them. They really supported me throughout my life.” (PCL1)

Most of the social workers indicated that being able to meet the needs of the children is essential in terms of their self-esteem. As one participant indicated:

“Expressing their love for residential care residents is important in attainment of their love and trust as well as for the development of their self-esteem.” (PSW1)

This subtheme emphasises the significance of meeting the children’s psychological needs.

Children who sense that they are being loved, start to realise the worthiness of their lives. These children experience a sense of belonging. Belonging, as an aspect of the Circle of Courage, is essential for individuals; hindering it has an impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of people (Brendtro, Brockenleg & Van Bockern (2014) as cited in Dykes, 2019:267). From a South African perspective, belonging may be detected in the African value of *ubuntu*, a Nguni term that is interpreted to mean “I am because we are”. It refers

to the belief that no person exists in isolation. Every person is responsible to help maintain the wellbeing of young people in his or her community (Coughlan & Welsh-Breetzke (2002) and Martin and Mlambo (2011) as cited in Dykes (2019:269). It also resonates with the saying that “it takes a village to raise a child”. As shown in the Circle of Courage, to facilitate belonging, children need constant bonding as well as attachment with loving carers (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern 2014 as cited by Dykes, 2019:267).

3.3.5 Subtheme 1.4: Preparing care leavers for disengagement

The participants indicated that preparing care leavers for disengagement from the care facility was a critical part of their journey, considering their circumstances and level of maturity. Care leavers are expected to shift straight from childhood to independent living. The participants’ voices are reflected in the following quotes:

“Facing independent living is not a child’s play. These people struggle to stand on their feet. Remember their damaged self-esteems, they are emotionally and psychologically affected. They need extensive social support in preparation to cope facing independent living.” (PSW2)

“The residents of the CYCC must start practising independent living at an early stage of life. The care leavers must be allowed an opportunity to make mistakes and learn from their mistakes like any other normal teenagers to take responsibility and suffer the consequences of their actions.” (PSW1)

Other resources, such as motivational speakers, are also utilised to assist with the preparation of the care leavers, as echoed by these participants:

“There were functions at the institutions whereby different motivational speakers from different backgrounds especially the care leavers would come and encourage and motivate us in preparation to independent living.” (PCL 7)

“Motivational speakers are also invited to motivate these care leavers in preparation to independent living.” (PSW2)

The following was recommended by a participant:

“The CYCC should form the support group for parents, especially for care leavers who is in their last year in the orphanage so that they can be assisted in terms of the challenges they can face after leaving care.” (PCL9)

It is evident that the preparation of the care leavers for disengagement is significant. Stein (2002:32) indicated that youths whose transitioning from care was strategically planned and those who exited care at a later stage were better positioned to achieve success. Van Breda *et al.* (2012:2-3) emphasised the significance of appropriate preparation for care leaving to avoid the possibility of relapsing psychologically. A well-planned disengagement process can therefore assist to build resilience as well as prepare the care residents for independent living. Any change to one part of an ecosystem has an impact on the whole ecosystem as all the parts are interconnected. As a result, social workers who function from the ecosystem perspective concentrate on promoting and encouraging relationships between the care leavers and society (Mbedzi, 2019:87). The transitioning of care leavers from care to independence affects their entire system.

3.3.6 Theme 2: Social and structural support systems within residential care

This theme appeared frequently in the information gathered, with 17 of the 24 participants highlighting the importance of social and structural support. The theme is discussed in terms of the four subthemes that arose from the data, namely support systems within the CYCC, support with regard to housing, family support and support groups. In this context, social structure refers to the collective properties exhibited by social entities. It is also defined as the internally established relationships constructed by individuals, particularly in connection with the hierarchical organisation, or the guidelines and values regulating conduct. It is broadly considered to be one of the most significant concepts in the social sciences model (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2020).

3.3.7 Subtheme 2.1: Support systems within the CYCC

Sulimani-Aidan (2014:39) indicated that the provision of social support is essential to assist youth exiting care to deal with the various stresses they face while they are attempting to survive independently.

The support from the care facility was narrated by the participants in their statements:

“The CYCC provided me with the start in life, like a mother. They taught me how to budget. The house mother will sometimes give you money and allow you the responsibility to do groceries and your toiletries. I learnt how to use money responsible and sparingly.” (PCL2)

The participants acknowledged the support systems within the CYCC:

“Yes, I remember the residential care programmes. Each individual was attended by multi-disciplinary team in the CYCC. They considered our backgrounds and the different circumstances that ended us up placed in the CYCC. As for me as an orphan the focus was on my emotional wellbeing.” (PCL4).

I went through therapeutic sessions that helped me so much towards dealing with bereavement.” (PCL 4)

Residential social support is provided in different forms, as stated by this participant:

“Trauma debriefing and counselling, stress and anger management sessions often help them to deal with lot of behavioral challenges.” (PSW 1)

Another participant revealed the following:

“I was able to see myself in a different way. That’s where I started to value the support that I have.” (PCL4)

It was evident from these findings that the participants received social support, which included empowering them to work with their own money. Mastery involves prospects to explore, acquire, and develop capabilities and talents. It is also about gaining knowledge, competency, independence and self-strengthening as well as the ability to resolve problems. Mastery closely relates to belonging since persons learn in association with others (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2014:12). Pettit *et al.* (2011:482) advocated that social capital is particularly important during transitioning, especially due to the loss of “institutional structure”. According to Pettit *et al.* (2011:487), the *depth* of relationships (caring, helpful, reliable and strong interactions) is more valuable than the number of people with whom one has relationships. Pettit *et al.* (2011:487) emphasised the close link between social capital and belonging. Meaningful or deeper relationships was found to improve educational achievement and reduce challenging behaviour, drug abuse and

corruption. This study also revealed that support systems play an important part in assisting the care leavers to switch to independent living.

3.3.8 Subtheme 2.3: Support with regard to housing

According to the majority of the participants, shelter is a basic need that takes precedence over other needs after leaving care. Care leavers have to leave the care of the CYCCs after completing grade 12. The following excerpts show that the participants were indeed alarmed about the potential failure to secure stable accommodation:

“Just after completing matric the care leavers are being exposed to independence living.” (PSW1)

“Reasonable housing is an essential need, we all know that, especially for care leavers who have been living in care centres for a very long time.” (PSW4)

The care leavers struggled to find accommodation, as stated by these participants:

“The majority of the care leavers are homeless. When they reach majority age and have to leave care, they become challenged since they struggle to integrate back to the society because they have no shelters.” (PSW1)

“They suffer a lot most of them give up and end up in streets, since they have obviously nowhere to go. Once they fail to sustain themselves, unable to pay their rental and accommodation bills, eish it become heavier for them. You know we also worry about them as if they are our children.” (PSW4)

This challenge is also echoed by this care leaver:

“Yes, we really appreciate the care for so many years, but what’s the use of transitioning to independent living when you don’t even have anywhere to call home? No shelter, no future. Where is independent living going to take place? Is it going to happen on streets?” (PCL8)

The CYCCs assist with this transition as temporarily housing is made available to the care leavers:

“In such cases it is our duty as social workers to refer these young people to places such as Echo house where they will provide them with a shelter, however they still have to live independently in those shelters.” (PSW4)

“Our CYCC support these people by arranging places such as Echo House where homeless people can stay.” (PSW3)

The participants identified housing as a sensitive issue, since the lack of secure, decent and reasonably priced accommodation can set back the entire developmental task of independent living. Harder, Varda, Oterholm and Refael (2020) emphasize that Bronfenbrenner’s framework (1977) provides youth exiting care with “protective resources in different levels/systems can help them to overcome their adversities”. Stein (2008:59) furthermore discovered in his research that most participants lived in accommodation in underprivileged neighbourhoods during the post-transition phase. In that case, the partakers experienced dissatisfaction regarding their sheltering and hoped to find better housing.

3.3.9 Subtheme 2.4: Family support

Most participants see the household as a source of strength for care leavers facing independent living. However, families were mostly not present in the lives of these participants. The participants missed having parental support:

“Can you imagine if you know that in two months’ time I will be 18 and have to leave care, eish ya neh! (He scratches his head.) There’s where the challenge begins, just the thought of being on your own. It’s so frustrating. You find yourself wishing and missing that parental support.” (PCL1)

“Eish by the time I lost my mother I was still very young to understand the loss but hey when the transitioning time arrives it was really a hard blow. Remember she was the only parent that I had.” (PCL9)

Although this participant missed family support, he realised that he is supported by the CYCC:

“I was longing to meet my relatives, but they were not available. Nobody ever came to visit me and my brother at the orphanage and that made me realise that the only family that I have was the CYCC residents. They were my only hope.” (PCL4)

The research findings revealed that most care leavers were from family circumstances where the mothers and fathers neglected their parental duties regarding the wellbeing of their children, or where the parents were incapable or even reluctant to support their children because of challenges such as substance abuse, divorce, unemployment, poverty or the death of a parent. According to the ecological perspective, people have layers of relationships with the systems in their social environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:13). According to Stein and Morris (2010:27), youth who successfully exit care to independent living develop durable attachment contacts with relatives, associates or care givers on a basic level. In addition, care workers also play a role in enabling optimistic results for the care leavers.

The majority of the participants did not manage to attain relationships of trust and belonging. Most of them struggled to create and sustain these relationships. This was made difficult by the absence of trust, their fear of rejection and abuse (Van Breda, Marx & Kader 2012:21). Therefore, they opted to depend on themselves, eventually distancing people who could possibly have assisted them in the course of exiting care. Van Breda (2012:21) indicated that care leavers frequently present uncertainty in their behaviour. They would move towards and then leave secure relationships due to doubt and their fear of being abandoned. Their efforts to form relationships are therefore often defied as a result of mistrust, fear of abandonment, abuse and violence. Relationships offer youth the prospect to improve significant social skills, outline their values, form further relationships and get a sense of being in the right place, which Van Breda (2015:21) described as the “driving force” or urge to keep on improving. Every single aspect of the ecological

environment influences youth exiting care and enhances the individual's readiness to leave care.

3.3.10 Subtheme 2.5: Support networks

As shown in this study, support groups play a significant part in terms of social support to care leavers transitioning to independent living. The majority of the participants perceived network support as vital to care leavers transitioning to independent living. However, some of the participants refrained from interacting with support groups due to fear of being stigmatised. This was echoed in the following statements:

"It was difficult for us to make friends with others, especially at school, because once a person finds out that you are from the orphanage then the whole school will label you as a child in need. Hence, we used to form friends amongst ourselves in the facility and it's good because our transport to and from the school was only for us. We did not share with other children from outside the residential care, so we get used to isolation." (PCL6)

"People see us as beggars. They look at us as if we are desperate and want more than friendship from them. Our peers take us for granted because we are not from proper family structures like them. We are being judged." (PCL3)

"We love to interact with other people but the stigma attached to residential care is sometimes the barrier to making relationship with people from outside the CYCC, especially our peers." (PCL 6)

The importance of support groups was highlighted. One participant stated that:

"We also encourage them to form support groups in terms of supporting each other and maintaining the relationship they are having amongst themselves as a family ... It takes effort for a care leaver to get out the shell and fit in with her or his peers." (PSW1)

These participants acknowledged their ability to maintain relationships outside the care facility:

“I was able to maintain the relationships with other people and interact with my peers and the society as large.” (PCL5)

“From the start I was reluctant to making friends in and outside the CYCC but later I realised that friendship is very important. Look, I was connected to get a job through a friend.” (PCL3)

“As an adolescent you need someone of your age group whom you can share your secrets with. You know, just a person whom you can trust and gossip with as for us girls. Sometimes you need a second opinion on personal things such as dating issues. You cannot confront your social worker about such issues, you need a girlfriend though it is hard to find one.” (PCL7)

A study by Olsson, Bond, Burns, Vella-Brodrick and Sawyer (2003:8) showed that the different support systems play a significant role in the care leavers' capability to deal with challenges. In accordance the findings of this research, support groups play an important role in terms of social support to care leavers transitioning to independent living. The majority of the participants perceived network support as vital to care leavers transitioning to independent living. Care leavers realised that connecting to more support networks increased their likelihood of receiving assistance in various situations. Although various researchers have pointed out that care leavers have access to restricted proper support systems, Ibrahim and Howe (2011:2474) indicated that “care leavers are dynamic representatives of their social lives; they also have the ability to develop relationships that might assist them to accomplish their objectives”. This is also supported by the ecological systems theory. According to the ecosystem theory, the challenges that people are facing relate to the imbalance in the interconnections or relationships between people and their social environment (Mbedzi, 2019:98). According to the ecosystem theory, the inability to create and sustain good relationships with the environment can cause challenges (Mbedzi, 2019:100). Social workers are provided with a theoretical understanding of the interrelatedness, interconnection as well as interdependence of external systems in the social environment. Therefore, they are able to observe the effects of these relationships in the social functioning of people (Mbedzi, 2019:98).

Van Breda (2015:330) indicated that the skills acquired during the care leavers' time in residential care stimulated responsive and supportive replies from other people. Once the care leavers became aware that these skills could increase their probability of getting help from other people, it inspired them to replicate the same capabilities in other contexts. The Circle of Courage also values capability and knowledge, calling it mastery (Lee & Perales, 2007:2).

Mamelani Projects (2013:25) helps youth to acquire the skills needed to live independently, as well as to improve and sustain support networks in their societies. Tanur (2012:329), Frimpong-Manso (2012) and Stein (2008:41) pointed out that access to social support from relatives, contacts, associates and other social groups plays a major role in upholding resilience.

3.3.11 Theme 3: The role of residential support towards leaving residential care

The care leavers found the accessibility of social support and helpful figures in their lives to be more significant during the changing over to self-regulation. Social support provided the care leavers with knowledge and a sense of fitting in. This theme will be discussed based on the following the subthemes that emerged from the data: the role of residential support in social integration towards independent living, external social support networks, and the need for continued psychosocial support from the residential care facility. Mamelani Projects (2013:17) stated that "CYCCs are responsible for making sure that the care leavers exit care with the knowledge and emotional capability to live independently and interdependently".

3.3.12 Subtheme 3.1: The role of residential support in the social integration of care leavers towards independent living

The transition towards independent life forces the care leavers to rapidly take responsibility for their own survival whereas other youths may have more time on their side to mature while enjoying the support of their parents. Keyes (2007:103) indicated that social integration includes the evaluation of the quality of an individual's relationships with society. Based on the data obtained from the participants it is evident that residential care played a key role in their ability to integrate in the community and in society:

“Here am now. I have been in a healthy relationship with my fiancée for more than three years now. I still have a good relationship with my house parents, my biological family and the friend whom I got way back in the institution, because I was taught to love. I was taught self-discipline. My foundation made me who I am today. I found myself, I am now working and ready to become a responsible husband and a father in future.” (PCL1)

“I took my two siblings out of care last year. I am currently staying with them in a rented house in Hammanskraal. They regard me as their mother. However, the CYCC is still part of us. I sometimes leave my siblings with my previous house parents if I have to go somewhere, such as attending funerals.” (PCL2)

Sulimani-Aidan (2014:45) stated that the personal resilience process of optimism or hopefulness of youth in care has an impact on accommodation, family relationships, well-being and financial security, since it positively contributes to the care leavers' future prospects. In addition, care leavers who are resilient and optimistic are more likely to be effective problem solvers who can find work and a place to stay. The findings revealed that, despite the unfavourable circumstances that initially led to the placement of the care leavers in a CYCC, most care leavers managed to bounce back from adversity. They cope well with life's inevitable impediments, allowing them to make progress towards prosperous independent living. According to Dykes (2019:265-266), adversities in the environment of a child or youth are likely to have negative impacts which will be apparent in the four quadrants of the Circle of Courage. Trying to reverse the damage caused by trauma or difficult situations and enabling resilience are significant responsibilities. The Circle of Courage offers a chance to reclaim identities, unlearn suppressed domination, and throw off supremacy (Dykes, 2019:265-266).

3.3.13 Subtheme 3.2: Social networks outside residential care

In order to provide more support to care leavers, it is important for the care leavers to establish relationships with certain organisations outside the residential care. The participants reflected on their perception of social networks to support independent living. This was echoed in the following quotes:

“We link these youth with organizations such as NYDA to get the support to independent living however these organisations are very few hey. They also make use of the skills that

they were provided by the time they were still in care. These skills will include things like to budget or to help them to survive independent living.” (PSW4)

“So it will be much better if they are connected with the Housing Department in terms of being placed in a data base whereby they would be able to be provided with houses just for a start in life.” (PSW5)

Frimpong-Manso (2012), Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker (2000:549), Stein (2008:36) and Sulimani-Aidan (2014:44) stated that liberation is generally recognised in care leaving, and that having a strong social network increases youths' chances of attaining success on their mission towards liberation. According to Ibrahim and Howe (2011:2473), the presence of support networks can distinguish successful care leavers from care leavers who are unsuccessful. This was also evident from the findings of this study, with some of the care leavers acknowledging that social networking provided them with the strength to face challenging times.

Brendtro, Mitchell and Jackson (2014:12) explained that connection with others is an essential human need. Care leavers who are well connected are probably healthier, with more resources and support available to them. They also feel secure to engage with their communities. Petersen and Taylor (2009) as cited in Dykes (2019:276) presented two proposals for school involvement that the social workers and care workers might consider as valuable: constructing a concerned community and empowering citizens for democracy. Constructing a helpful community is a suitable method of adopting all four components of the Circle of Courage. Care residents agreed that involvement in other projects improved their abilities in line with the Circle of Courage. These abilities included bravery, persistence and selflessness.

Tanur (2012:328) mentioned that preparation prior to care leaving should also focus on providing youth with interdependent capabilities that might help them to improve support networks in order to meet their various needs within their communities. Drapeau *et al.* (2007:993) indicated that care leavers regard the residential programmes as potential functional opportunities after leaving care.

3.3.14 Subtheme 3.3: The need for continued psychosocial support from residential care

Psychosocial support can, according to Biehal and Wade (2000:40), be altered in particular circumstances to respond to the psychological and physical needs of people by helping them to accept the circumstances and cope with it.

The participants in this study acknowledged the need for continued psychosocial support from the residential care facility:

“Well, eish, the CYCC has supported me in so many ways, financially, emotionally and socially. They guided us. Helped us with the application for jobs and university bursaries applications. The most important thing that we learned in an institution was to pray. Through praying I managed to overcome many challenges in life, especially to independent living.” (PCL2)

“For instance, the emotional intelligence helped me to overcome many obstacles on my path to independence living. There was a time when I saw darkness in front of me but because of the support of my social worker on my back, I was able to face such situation and conquered the trials.” (PLC4)

Although the care leavers indicated that they did receive support, they still needed the ongoing support of the care facility:

“You know, sometimes it is very difficult to face life alone suddenly. Like other youngsters we need an ongoing support. A shoulder to fall back on when life becomes tougher. Hence myself, like now, I am independent, but I still regard my previous house parents as parents in my life. I still seek advises from them, discusses my challenges with them.” (PCL2)

Mamelani Projects (2013) discovered that youth, in preparation for care leaving, often acquire typical feelings such as ambiguity and nervousness. Care leavers are frequently concerned about the outcome of their future in terms of independent living. They also become doubtful about getting emotional and practical backing from persons around them. Ibrahim and Howe (2011) mentioned that most care leavers received informal support from friends, property owners and colleagues throughout their transition to

independent living. Van Breda (2015) indicated that the applied assistance and guidance that is commonly presented by parents and associates of the social network is unavailable for majority of the care leavers. This study found that care leavers have a need for ongoing psychosocial support from the residential care facility.

3.3.11 Theme 4: Residential care and emotional support networks

Many care leavers do not have the support of parents. However, positive relationships may take on many different forms. As shown in the literature review undertaken for this study, social support can incorporate variety of support systems from the various networks in the surroundings of a youth. This includes emotional support. This theme will be discussed using the subthemes that emerged from the data: residential supportive and caring relationships, establishing positive relationships within the CYCC, and maintaining the relationships after leaving care.

3.3.12 Subtheme 4:1 Supportive relationships within the care facility

The majority of the care leavers come from households where parents are absent, incapable or reluctant to provide the support they need. These care leavers need to establish relationships within the CYCC in order to have support during their stay in the care facility and also throughout their transition to independent living. Shonkoff and Garner (2012:237) pointed out that sustainable support networks throughout care are very important. Constant and helpful relationships, and optimistic pressure replies, can promote development and offer significant learning chances that encourage growth. Dykes (2019:265) pointed out the importance of role models in nurturing positive behaviour.

The strong emotional support from the personnel at the residential care facilities was evident from the participants' responses:

“My relationship with the children in the residential care was supposed to be professional, but I found myself assuming the role of a father to them. I have a very personal relationship with each child in the institution. We are like a family. I know their background and their history. They also know my family.” (PSW1)

“We were a big family, although the caregivers were not enough, we shared the little that we have. I was so attached to my caregivers, my house parents. I called them mama and

papa from the bottom of my heart. I appreciated each and every drop of love that I received from them.” (PCL1)

It is clear that the care leavers are encouraged to support each other. This was described in the following excerpts:

“I also encourage them to relate to each as siblings.” (PSW1)

“I still have a good relationship with my house parents, my biological family and the friend whom I got way back in the institution, because I was taught to love.” (PCL1)

Becker-Weidman (2009:153) indicated that relationships can assist youths to assimilate their past and current experiences into a clear autobiographical story in order to strengthen their self-esteem. He emphasised that it is the responsibility of the care givers to ensure that their relationship with the care residents remain subtle, cooperative, warmly empathic and liable, as this connection forms the foundation of healing. Stein (2005:2) stated that when care residents have a stable relationship with reliable adults, this can help them develop a sense of belonging as well as attachment. It is therefore recommended that house parents must stay the same. Zarrett and Eccles (2006:21) indicated that children frequently form strong relationships with educators, tutors, programme coordinators and church elders, who might function as mentors to them and safeguard them from the effect of deprived connections with parents.

The participants discussed how their interactions with others (especially in the CYCC) can have a significant impact on their development. Hence, care leavers perceived the ongoing support from the care facility as their source of strength to face independent living. It is evident from this study that care leavers do not function effectively in isolation; they depend on the supportive relationships from the care facility to make their way to independent living. Establishing positive relationships within the care facility supports optimistic outcomes in terms of the transitioning journey.

3.3.13 Subtheme 4.2: Maintaining supporting relationships after leaving care

Most care leavers realise that they feel desperate after leaving care. The importance of maintaining ongoing supporting relationships was voiced by the participants. The continued supporting relationship with the social workers empowered this participant:

“There was a time when I saw darkness in front of me but because of the support of my social worker on my back, I was able to face such situation and conquered the trials.”
(PLC4)

This participant emphasised the need for continued supporting relationships:

“You know, sometimes it is very difficult to face life alone suddenly. Like other youngsters, we need an ongoing support. A shoulder to fall back on when life becomes tougher. Hence myself, like now, I am independent, but I still regard my previous house parents as parents in my life. I still seek advises from them, discusses my challenges with them.”
(PCL2)

Pinkerton and Rooney (2014:3) indicated that accessible support throughout the transitioning period increased the care leavers' chances of better outcomes. Broad (2005: 371-384) and Stein (2005:91) explained that alternative provision – such as connecting youth leaving care with individual advisers, mentors and caregivers who can offer them emotional and practical support during the transitioning phase – should be made in case continued relationships are impossible. The data also confirmed the importance of accessible and ongoing support.

3.3.14 Theme 5: The challenges of independent living

It is evident from the data that the majority of the participants feel that they have endured a personal transitioning towards independent living. The subthemes representing the participants' perceptions of social support and adjusting to independent living included the following: sudden detachment from care, prospects to independent living, peer social support and longing for independent living.

The abrupt loss of the protective structure during transitioning from care can be overwhelming and distressing. Anghel (2011:2526-2531) indicated that the process of preparing care leavers often begins when a young person experiences feelings such as rage and ambiguity due to the loss of stability amidst the individual transitioning. They might experience a sense of loss in terms of their connection with the CYCC family and the residential support. It is therefore vital that youth be given an opportunity to improve their sense of control and the chance to discover and acknowledge these emotions.

3.3.15 Subtheme 5.1: Sudden detachment from care

According to the Centre for Social Justice (2014:18), leaving care refers to exiting the protective setting to take up independent living. Unlike youth who are not in care, care leavers do not have the option to stay in the protective shelter of the care facility when they turn 18. Stein (2004:109) explained that youth exiting care do not have the opportunity to explore, feel free, take risks, reflect and search for their identity during the transition phase as they need to become instant adults. During this phase of transition towards independent living, the care leavers struggle to shape their identity as they experienced this time as being confusing, uncertain, and filled with anxiety and ambiguity (Oelofsen, 2015:14).

Sudden detachment from residential care can create certain feelings, as described by the participants:

“Can you imagine being in a shell for so many years, suddenly comes the time for a change? Facing the sun and the rain by yourself. I mean, the rough weather outside. Learning to open an umbrella that you have been given years ago.” (PCL2)

“The feeling of sadness, frustration and emptiness.” (PCL4)

“The feeling of sudden detachment strengthens my emotional intelligence. The feeling of sudden detachment strengthen my emotional intelligence. Through establishing the social networks, support groups and developing relationships I was able to maintain the relationships with other people and interact with my peers and the society as large.” (PCL4)

“The unknown environment, future and reality now. Just to be on your own is not an easy thing to challenge.” (PCL3)

Geenen and Powers (2007:1086) highlighted that most of the care residents are inevitably detached from the care arrangement once the age of 18 is reached. This does not mean that they suddenly turn into adults. Van Breda *et al.* (2012:2) postulated that care leavers typically experience a mixture of anger, loneliness, confusion, excitement, fear and uncertainty after leaving the care facility to transition from residential care to independent living.

It was found in this study that being discharged from care is mostly based on age and seldom on developmental maturity and readiness. This causes the care leavers to quit the care arrangement irrespective of their developmental readiness. Individual variances and how life experiences can impact transitioning to independent living are not taken into consideration. The feelings of the care leavers are also not taken into account. Most of the participants expressed their displeasure with the system.

3.3.16 Subtheme 5.2: Care leavers' feelings of leaving care and independent living

The participants experienced different feelings about leaving care, as indicated by these participants:

"Come the time to leave care, I actually faked sickness. I delayed the process just to avoid facing life on my own." (PCL1)

"Yaa, independent living, it sound easy and especially if you are still in your early adolescent stage like thirteen years and you feel, you wish to become independent but when that time come, you feel like turning back the hands of time to delay your stay in care." (PCL8)

A strong feeling that emerged was that of fear:

"Because of issues such as dependency and emotional attachment, transitioning becomes a nightmare." (PCL2)

"Can you imagine if you know that in two months' time I will be eighteen and have to leave care, eish ya neh! (He scratches his head.) There's where the challenge begin just the thought of being on your own, it's so frustrating." (PCL1)

Fear of the unknown and uncertainty repeatedly emerged during the interviews, as stated by the social work participants:

"They are uncertain about what the world holds for them and how to confront the real world. They become worried about the future; they look scared. When they are still in the residential care, they will challenge the authority, want the freedom but when the time for freedom arrives, it threatens their selves." (PSW1)

“They do not have guarantee about their future and are not sure if they will be able to regulate themselves. These young people become frustrated; they fear the unknown.” (PSW1)

“I can say irrespective of the residential social support that we were armed with; you still fear to face the unknown. The unknown new environment, future and reality now. Just to be on your own is not an easy thing to challenge. This future is unpredictable, so together with the CYCC we do not know what each person will face in her or his journey.” (PCL3)

Van Breda *et al.* (2012:2) stated that transitioning to independent living may be a distressing experience for youth journeying out of care, since they are expected to transition from care to liberation with the least amount of social support. This frequently leaves them feeling empty, devastated, terrified and at risk since they struggle to manage society's expectations. Based on the descriptions of the participants in the study by Van Breda *et al.* (2012:35), the care leavers were encouraged by those who managed to succeed despite the adversity and despite their feelings of sadness, frustration and emptiness.

In this study it was discovered that the development of interventions in social support services may assist the care leavers to shift from the support of the residential care to independent living. The ecosystem theory is mostly useful in decolonial practice, drawing the social workers' attention to aspects of the social environment as well as to structural factors in the social environment that facilitate or obstruct psychosocial wellbeing and affluence. The experiences of youth exiting care are within their social environment. Attention to the social environment through the ecosystem conceptual tool can support the process of transitioning to independent living by recognising the social forces that interact with the individual's psychosocial wellbeing and functioning (Mbedzi, 2019:101). Ecosystem theory can create an awareness of the issues around transitioning and the nature and timing of youth's journeying out of care. Individuals are influenced by the values of self-determination, self-actualisation, and their personal experiences to determine the meaning and purpose in their lives. Assisting youth to create “a positive sense of identity, including their self-knowledge, their self-esteem and self-efficacy may also promote their resilience” (Newman, 2004; Newman & Blackburn, 2002; Rutter *et al.*, 1998).

3.3.17 Subtheme 5.3: Social support from peers

One of the themes that emerged from this study was the increasing peer social support and relationships emanating from the time that the care leavers have spent with peers. It is reflected in the following quotes:

“Thanks to a friend who was there for me in times of need, just when I thought I was drowning, he holds my hand and pulled me out. My friend offered me a free accommodation for six months until I was able to stand on my feet again. I really don’t know what I could have been if he was not there.” (PCL7)

“From the start I was reluctant to making friend in and outside the CYCC but later I realised that friendship is very important. Look, I was connected to get a job through a friend.” (PCL3)

Newman *et al.* (2007), cited in Sulimani-Aidan (2017:715), believed that peer support can serve as a significant source of affection, intimacy, and reciprocal assistance, particularly in residential care, since care residents share most of their time with their peers as well as their space. Bronfenbrenner (1979) said that, according to the ecological theory, individuals have mutual connections with several systems around them. Social support is essential to assist youth to negotiate the changes in their lives as well as to handle adversity. Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that social support from peers is seen as both positive and negative. However, most of the participants regarded this as an essential social support system. It is evident that the care leavers value the interaction with their peers. However, they are easily influenced by peer pressure due to lack of self-confidence, which puts them at great risk of losing themselves. The majority of the care leavers associate support with the positive development of relationship skills. They also interpret success in terms of academic success. Based on the ecological theory, support from peers could be seen as part of the social network support.

3.3.18 Subtheme 5.4: Longing to live independently.

In most of the cases, the views of care leavers about their transition from residential care to independent living were both positive and negative. The participants indicated that their freedom to do as they pleased eventually frightened them. The desire to start building a different life was offset by the desire to return to care. In terms of the ecological theory,

the care facility represents the family and background of the care residents (Grobler, Schenk & Du Toit, 2003; Meyer *et al.*, 2003). The principle of self-determination, the theory of self-actualisation, as well as the Circle of Courage are aligned with the ecological theory. Human beings are influenced by the principles of self-determination and self-actualisation, and their individual experiences to determine the meaning and purpose of their lives.

The following excerpts show that the participants are longing to be free while they still value the support of the CYCC:

“So, you are being denied the opportunity of being yourself, fear to experience life. There must be a way to create a little bit of freedom in preparation to independent living.” (PCL7)

“Care leavers must be allowed an opportunity to make mistakes and learn from their mistakes like any other normal teenagers to take responsibility and suffer the consequences of their actions.” (PSW1)

“They must be allowed to associate with their peers outside the CYCC. They must also be allowed to study at boarding schools and attend churches in the community with other community members not in isolation.” (PSW1)

Reid and Ross (2005:166) stated that for young people to grow a durable sense of liberation, they should be permitted a substantial amount of freedom and control over their lives in order to learn to think critically and take decisions for themselves. Although this is important, Mamelani (2013:6) noted that CYCCs tend to create dependency, since they “construct an environment whereby everything is prepared for the care residents rather than involving them, which leads to dependency and a lack of responsibility”. Zarrett and Eccles (2006:18) pointed out that students at tertiary level typically realise new-found freedom because the tertiary setting allows them the freedom, away from their parents, to form their own lifestyle. This happens in a safe environment where many adult responsibilities are delayed.

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a summary of the research findings that materialised from the data. The profiles of the participants, verbatim quotes of their experiences, and perceptions of

residential social support were also provided. The care leavers' transitioning experiences were included to provide a contextual understanding of their experiences of residential social support. The data sets obtained from the social workers and from the care leavers were analysed together, then presented and contrasted against the literature review. Residential social support was considered as critically important in the transitioning journeys of the care leavers.

CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY, EVALUATION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a summary of the completed study in the context of the research question. The chapter also includes an evaluation, conclusions and recommendations with regard to residential social support for care leavers transitioning to independent living, and how this is perceived by care leavers and social workers.

The outcomes will be discussed with reference to the objectives of this research. The study will also provide proposals and strategies for residential social support for independent living. The limitations of the study will be discussed. Recommendations in terms of practice, policy and procedure as well as recommendations for further research will also be presented.

4.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This section will be presented with reference to the research question as well as the aim and objectives of the study.

4.2.1 Research question

The research question for this study was the following: What social support is provided to care leavers during their transition to independent living, and how is this perceived by care leavers? The research question was formulated based on the research problem and answered by achieving the research aim and objectives.

4.2.2 Aim and objectives

The aim of the study was to explore the social support provided by residential care facilities to care leavers during their transition into independent living, using a qualitative descriptive design and individual semi-structured interviews. The qualitative descriptive design allowed the researcher to explore the social support that residential care facilities provide to care leavers during their transition to independent living. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 social workers and 12 care leavers. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed using content analysis. The themes were

presented and supported by literature. The aim was therefore reached through this research process.

The objectives of the study were:

- To conduct a literature study on social support to care leavers during their transition into independent living in order to develop a conceptual framework for this study.
- To explore and describe the nature of social support provided by the residential care facilities to care leavers during their transition into independent living as perceived by social workers.
- To explore and describe the nature of social support that the care leavers receive from the residential care facilities during their transition into independent living as experienced by care leavers.
- To report the findings, draw conclusions and make recommendations for further research, policy or practice, in relation to the social support provided to care leavers.

The *first objective* was achieved by conducting a literature study. This literature study included literature relating to the policies and regulations pertaining to the protection of children in the residential care facility context in South Africa. It furthermore included literature on the care of children and care leaving as well as literature on the two theoretical lenses that guided the study, namely the ecological theory and the Circle of Courage theory.

The focus of the *second objective* was to explore and describe the nature of social support provided by the residential care facilities to care leavers during their transition into independent living as perceived by social workers. This objective was achieved by conducting semi-structured interviews with 12 social workers from three different CYCCs. During these interviews the social workers described the different types of social support that are provided by the residential care facilities to the care leavers. This included residential programmes, community projects, and preparing care leavers for disengagement from the care facilities.

The *third objective* was reached through semi-structured interviews with the care leavers. A total of 12 care leavers participated in the study. The interviews were conducted at the

CYCC closest to them. During these interviews the participants revealed that the programmes that are presented provided them with certain skills. The care leavers also emphasised the importance of their psychological needs being met. They furthermore expressed their concerns about obtaining stable accommodation. Family support as well as social support were found to be a crucial source of strength to them as most of them lacked this support. The care leavers acknowledged the important role of residential care support in their ability to integrate in society and in the community and emphasised their need for continued residential social support.

The *fourth objective* was achieved by describing the five main themes and the subthemes that emerged during the data analysis. These themes were presented as findings in Chapter 3. Literature was used to support these findings.

The *fifth objective* was achieved by reporting the findings, drawing conclusions and making recommendations for further research, policy or practice in relation to the social support provided to care leavers.

4.3 SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

4.3.1 Theme: 1 Different levels and forms of residential social support

The majority of the social workers emphasised that the social support provided to care leavers included residential programmes that prepare these care leavers for independent living. The value of these programmes was confirmed by the participants. The programmes were found to focus on basic life skills such as food gardening, dress making, cooking and baking, and how to wash dishes and clean the house. These skills were perceived as very important by the participants. Other resources, such as motivational speakers, also helped to prepare the care leavers for independent living. Exposing the care leavers to community projects was found to be a crucial form of support as the care leavers will eventually form part of the community. Through this initiative they were encouraged to do more community work, group work as well as camps and campaigns to promote community intervention. Being exposed to relationships within the community promoted their sense of belonging. It also enhanced their self-esteem.

Studies on care leaving has shown that care leavers can overcome obstacles on their journey to independent living. It was also found in this study that, despite unfavourable

circumstances that led to the initial placement of the care leavers in a CYCC, most care leavers managed to bounce back from adversity. They cope well with life's inevitable impediments and they have transitioned to independent living.

The care leaver participants also highlighted the importance of meeting their psychological needs. Most of the care leavers acknowledged and appreciated the love and support they received from their house parents, and said they ended up bonding with them. Most of the social workers specified that meeting the needs of the care residents is essential in order to boost their self-esteem.

It was also evident that the care leavers, once they have experienced love, began to realise their own value and to recognise their worth. It was also discovered that most of the care leavers managed to harness the bravery to confront life's obstacles.

From the social work participants' point of view, preparing care leavers for disengagement from the care facility emerged as a crucial part of the care leavers' journey toward independent living. The care leavers' circumstances and level of maturity had to be considered. It is evident that the preparation of the care leavers for disengagement is important.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Social structure and structural support systems within residential care

The findings revealed that shelter is a basic need that takes precedence over other needs after leaving care. The participants were indeed alarmed about their inability to secure stable accommodation. Most of the care leavers struggled to integrate into society and had no shelter. Most of them ended up on the streets as they did not have homes to return to. They failed to sustain themselves and failed to pay rent. The CYCCs assisted with the transition by making temporary housing available to them.

According to most of the participants, family support was found to be a crucial source of strength for care leavers facing independent living. Unfortunately, in most instances, families were not present in the lives of these participants. It was also discovered that the care leavers often missed having parental support. They regarded the support given by their caregivers as a substitute for parental love and care. It was also evident that in most cases the care residents were being supported by the CYCCs' caregivers with whom they had established strong relationships.

Although youth leaving care have a need for steady relationships, they frequently presented uncertainty in their conduct. They often avoided stable relationships as a result of distrust and a fear of being stigmatised as “orphans”.

Based on the findings of this research, support groups play an essential role in terms of social support to care leavers shifting to self-governance. The majority of the participants perceived network support as vital to care leavers transitioning to independent living. However, a small number of participants did shy away from interacting with support groups due to fear of being stigmatised.

The study showed that care leavers relied on continuous social support. This form of social support plays a crucial role in their stress and anger management.

The study showed that most of the care leavers lacked a functional social support network on which to depend during their transitioning journeys to self-governance. The formation of support groups was therefore recommended to provide them with the necessary support. Based on the findings of this research, support groups play an essential role in terms of social support to care leavers transitioning to independent living. The support networks also helped the care leavers to establish friendships.

4.3.3 Theme 3: The role of residential support after leaving residential care

Although the care leavers were filled with feelings of sadness, frustration and emptiness, they were encouraged by those care leavers who had achieved success despite adversity. The study showed that residential care played a key role in their ability to integrate in society and in the community. The importance of care leavers establishing relationships with certain organisations outside the residential care system became evident.

The participants in this study emphasised their need for continued residential social support. The availability of social networks and people who support them in the lives of the care leavers were found to be significant in terms of their adjustment to independent living. Receiving social support provided them with a sense of belonging.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Residential care and emotional support network

Most of the care leavers found themselves feeling desperate after leaving care. The participants emphasised the significance of ongoing support provided by caring

relationships with family, friends, social workers and/or professionals such as their teachers and psychologists. This speaks to the need for supportive relationships as well as access to additional support and resources. The participants shared how their connections with their significant others, especially attachment figures and role models, impacted their overall development. Most of the care leavers perceived the ongoing residential social support as their source of strength to face independent living.

The majority of the care leavers come from family circumstances where the parents were not available or were incapable or reluctant to offer support to their children. These care leavers have a need to establish relationships within the CYCC. They need support during their stay in the care facility and also during the journey of transition to independent living. Ongoing supportive relationships with social workers, caregivers and house parents empowered these care leavers.

The research findings emphasised the value of durable support networks. Strong emotional support was provided by the personnel at the residential care facilities. It was noted that, like in a family, the caregivers maintained the responsibility to ensure that their relationship with the care residents remained sensitive, collaborative, emotionally empathic and reliable.

4.3.5 Theme 5: The challenges of independent living

The participants indicated that they experienced different emotions regarding care leaving. The study findings revealed that release from care is rarely based on progressive development and adulthood; instead, it is mostly based on age. The focus on majority age implies that care leavers are obliged to exit the safety of the care system irrespective of their developmental readiness. Individual variances and the impact of contextual life experiences on transitioning to independent living are not considered at all. The feelings and view of the care leavers are also not taken into account. Most of the participants expressed their displeasure with the system. Sudden detachment from the residential care system had a negative impact on the participants.

Youth encountered both optimistic and adverse experiences as they started to live on their own. It was also revealed that the care leavers' freedom to do anything they desired frightened them. Their yearning to create a new way of life contradicted their desire to return to care. The research findings showed that care leavers often have no option but

to exit care abruptly when they turn 18, irrespective of their circumstances at the time. The sudden detachment from the residential care created negative feelings among some of the participants. The study also found that individual variances and contextual life experiences have a significant impact on transitioning to independent living. The feelings of the care leavers are often ignored during decision making and policy making. Most of the participants expressed their displeasure with the system.

In most cases it was discovered that the participants wished to prolong or delay their stay in the CYCC to avoid independent living. Care leavers resorted to faking sickness to try and avoid leaving care.

A strong feeling that emerged was that of fear. Fear of the unknown and uncertainty repeatedly emerged in data. The care leavers became anxious about the future since they were uncertain about what the world holds for them and how to confront the real world.

Based on the findings of this study, it was revealed that peer social support has both a positive and negative influence on optimistic transitioning to independent living. However, it was recommended by most of the participants as one of the essential social support systems. It is evident that the care leavers value the interaction with their peers. However, they are easily influenced by peer pressure due to lack of self-confidence, which puts them at great risk. Most of the care leavers associate support with the positive development of relationship skills. For them, success refers mostly to academic achievement.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations based on the research findings are aimed at improving the social support from the residential care system. In addition, the findings may also serve as a basis for future research on care leavers to help fill a gap in this field of knowledge.

4.4.1 Recommendations for policy and procedures

- The care residents should start practising independent living at an early stage of life. The care leavers must be allowed an opportunity to make mistakes and learn from their mistakes like any other ordinary teenager. In this way, care leavers will learn to take responsibility and suffer the consequences of their actions. Resources and

networks such as peers, motivational speakers and outreach programmes should also be utilised to assist with the residential social support needed to prepare the care leavers for independent living.

- A well-organised disconnection plan will help the youth to build resilience and prepare for life once they have left the care facility. Since care leavers are expected to shift straight from childhood dependence to adult self-reliance, it is recommended that the care leavers form support groups to provide each other with the necessary support. The continuity of relationships was found to be an advantage to care leavers.
- The views of the care leavers should also be considered when amending the policies and guidelines that impact their lives and wellbeing. A programme that specifically focuses on supporting the care leavers while still in care to make the shift towards independent living should be implemented as a policy in each CYCC.
- Placing care residents in an appropriate programme is one of the key responsibilities of the social workers.
- Early assessments by a qualified psychologist prior to placement can be beneficial in this regard. A programme that specifically focuses on supporting the care leavers while they are still care residents and that helps them to transition towards independent living should be implemented as a policy in each CYCC.
- A family reunification programme that specifically focuses on supporting the care leavers transitioning to independent living should be implemented as a policy in each CYCC. This will contribute to the body of knowledge about care leaving in South Africa.
- A policy guideline that regulates designated housing programmes for care leavers should be implemented by the Department of Social Development since lack of shelter is a major concern for care leavers.

4.4.2 Recommendations for practice

The findings of this research can meaningfully enhance social work practice. Based on the findings of this research, the following is recommended:

- Pay more attention to care leavers' needs on a basic level while they are still in care.
- Support the continuation of connections made by the care leavers within the CYCC. Given that most of the care leavers were abandoned or orphaned at a young age, the connections that they have formed during their placement play a significant role in terms of their sense of belonging. Losing this may negatively impact their sense of belonging and consequently their view of interaction with society.
- Form a parents' support group with the available families of the care leavers during the final period of care. The residential care facility should help the support group to understand the common challenges that the care leavers will potentially face once they have exited the care facility to live independently.
- The CYCC programme has a duty to promote regular interaction with successful previous care populations. This will serve to motivate current care residents. These collaborations will offer care residents a chance to be visible to those they admire.
- The programmes should include, or at least take into consideration, the needs of residents with disabilities.
- Outreach programmes aimed at eliminating discrimination against care leavers by communities should be emphasised.
- More shelters such as the Echo House for homeless people should be established to accommodate homeless care leavers and support them towards independent living.

4.4.3 Recommendations pertaining to further research

- Identify the resilient factors from the care leavers' point of view that will enable them to develop strategies to face independent living, bearing in mind the home-based principles, legislation as well as typical aspects of the South African residential care system.
- Study the procedures and measures that may possibly be applied to deal with persistent challenges in policies. A follow-up study with this group of care leavers might provide useful data for policy and service provision.

4.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- This study used a qualitative research approach and conducted semi-structured interviews with care leavers and social workers. The information obtained could be limited as various additional role players in CYCCs, for instance the child care workers and the house parents, could also provide information to enhance the quality and impact of the residential social support programme.
- The care leavers interviewed for this study exited residential care in Gauteng Province. South Africa's nine provinces differ significantly in terms of access to resources, lifestyle, and norms and values. Yet, only one province was represented in this study.

4.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

- This study was intended to contribute to the body of knowledge about care leaving in South Africa by providing a qualitative account of the residential social support of care leavers transitioning to independent living. The findings can be applied to a broader context, since residential social support to care leavers shifting to independent living is still overlooked globally.
- This study promotes published theory by recognising important social support networks during the social progression that enables effective transitioning.
- The information obtained from the outcomes of this research may be used to amend practice and to create awareness among social workers, house parents and child and youth care workers of the resilience-promoting aspects that may be adopted for care leavers.
- These finding may provide CYCCs with new insight to develop and expand their independent living programmes and to mobilise these programmes for social support as well as the improvement of independent living results for care leavers. The findings can also suggest ways in which the professionals involved at children's homes – for instance social workers, mentors, therapists, care workers and psychologists – could provide social support through all the transition stages of the care-leaving process aimed at independent living.

4.7 CONCLUSION

Most of the research on care leavers in child and youth care centres focus on care residents and their journey of transitioning towards independent living. Slight consideration is paid to the nature of the residential social support aimed at transitioning towards independent living. This study showed that ongoing residential social support and motivation are of paramount importance to shape the transitioning of the care leavers toward independent living.

The interviewed participants presented a deep knowledge of residential social support. This demonstrated a sound theoretical understanding of support. It was also discovered that the care leavers often attempt to develop strong ties with other people and networks, which help them to access the resources they need for goal attainment. It became evident that they endeavour to apply both theoretical knowledge and practical skills to their advantage. The care leavers recognised that it would not be easy for them to accomplish their goals without the assistance and backing of people close to them. Hence, they appeared to appreciate the significant part played by the group networks. Care leavers mostly preferred to stick with their existing relationships as it provided them with a sense of belonging and strengthened their self-esteem.

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ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520
Tel: 086 016 9698
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za/>

North-West University Health Research Ethics
Committee (NWU-HREC)

Tel: 018 299-1206
Email: Ethics-HRECAppl@nwu.ac.za (for human studies)

19 September 2019

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the North-West University Health Research Ethics Committee (NWU-HREC) on 19/09/2019, the NWU-HREC hereby approves your study as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-HREC grants its permission that, provided the general and specific conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Social support provided to care leavers by the residential care facility during their transition to independent living														
Principal Investigator/Study Supervisor/Researcher: Dr L Wilson														
Student: L Mokgoko-27667634														
Ethics number:														
N	W	U	-	0	0	4	4	0	-	1	9	-	A	1
Institution			Study Number					Year		Status				
Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation														
Application Type: Single study														
Commencement date: 19/09/2019														
Expiry date: 30/09/2020														
Risk: Medium														
Approval of the study is provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of a six-monthly monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation. Monitoring reports are due at the end of March and September annually until completion.														

General conditions: <i>While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:</i> - The principal investigator/study supervisor/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-HREC: - Six-monthly on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided annually, and upon completion of the study; and - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study. - The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the principal investigator/study supervisor/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the NWU-HREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited. - Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for active monitoring. - The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.
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- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-HREC reserves the right to:*
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
 - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the NWU-HREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - submission of the six-monthly monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and/or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- NWU-HREC can be contacted for further information via Ethics-HRECApply@nwu.ac.za or 018 299 1206

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

- Please provide the NWU-HREC with the goodwill permission letter from the directors of the Bethesda Outreach Children's home CYCC, Desmond Tutu CYCC as well as Father Smangaliso Mkhathswa CYCC.

As the study progresses the aforementioned conditions should be submitted to Ethics-HRECProcess@nwu.ac.za with a cover letter with a specific subject title indicating "Outstanding documents for approval: NWU-XXXXX-XX-XX." The letter should include the title of the approved study, the names of the researchers involved, that the documents are being submitted as part of the conditions of the approval set by the NWU-HREC, the nature of the document i.e. which condition is being fulfilled and any further explanation to clarify the submission.

The e-mail, to which you attach the documents that you send, should have a *specific subject line* indicating the nature of the submission e.g. "Outstanding documents for approval: NWU-XXXXX-XX-XX". The e-mail should indicate the nature of the document being sent. This submission will be handled via the expedited process.

The NWU-HREC would like to remain at your service and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the NWU-HREC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Digitally signed by Wayne Towers
Date: 2019.09.19
21:27:14 +02'00'

Prof Wayne Towers
Chairperson NWU-HREC



Digitally signed by Prof Minrie Greeff
Date: 2019.09.29
14:23:46 +02'00'

Prof Minrie Greeff
Head of the Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Office

Current details:\23239522\ G:\My Drive\9. Research and Postgraduate Education\9.1.5.4 Templates\9.1.5.4.2_NWU-HREC_EAL.docm
20 August 2019

File Reference: 9.1.5.4.2

ANNEXURE B: AUTHORISATION FROM THE DEPARTEMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Enquiries: Dr. Sello Mokoena
Tel: 082 331 0786
File no: 02/08/19

Dear L. Mokgoko

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Thank you for your application to conduct research within the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

Your application on the research on *"Social Support Provided to Care Leavers by the Residential Care Facility During their Transition to Independent Living"* has been considered and approved for support by the Department as it was found to be beneficial to the Department's vision and mission. The approval is subject to the Department's terms and conditions as endorsed on the 28th August 2019.

You have permission to interview departmental officials, conduct observations and access relevant documents where necessary.

May I take this opportunity to wish you well on the journey you are about to embark on.

We look forward to a value adding research and a fruitful co-operation.

With thanks

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Hartmann".

Ms Amanda Hartmann
Deputy Director General: Support Services
Date: 11/9/2019

ANNEXURE C: PERMISSION LETTER FROM JAKARANDA CHILDREN'S HOME



tel | (012) 800 4700
fax | (012) 800 1440
www.jakarandachildren.co.za
Tolithe Kunit Street, East Lynne, Pretoria
NPC Reg: 180-619 NPC

5/3/2020

To whom it may concern;

Re: Research:

I hereby confirm that Lydia Mokgoko has permission to do her research at Jakaranda and Louis Botha Children's Homes.

Any further information, please feel free to contact me (082 498 5824)

Kind regards,

Charlene Grobler
Head: Childrens Affairs and MDDC

Bank Besonderhede/Bank Details: ABSA – Derdepoort **Tak kode/Branch Code :** 335245 **Rek. No./Account No. :** 1430140724
Beheerliggaam: Voorstitter: Adv Fanie Visser, Mnr GL Botha, Mnr O Truter, Ds GH van Rensburg, Dr R Opperman, Mnr JJ Rossouw, Uitvoerende Hoof: Mnr M Erwee

ANNEXURE D: PERMISSION LETTER FROM BETHESDA OUTREACH CHILDREN'S HOME



Plot 13 Klipdrift
PO Box 7643
Hammanaskraal 0400
Tel: 012 711 0087
Email: bethesda-temba@boi.org

www.bethesdaoutreach.org

Enquiries: Natasja Retief
20 February 2020

FOR ATTENTION: Ms Lydia Mkgoko

Faculty Health Science
North-West University

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE FOLLOWING RESEARCH PROJECT:

"Social support provided to care leavers by the residential care facility during their transition to independent living"

Bethesda Outreach Children's Village hereby grants Ms Lydia Mkgoko permission to interview our care leavers for her research project that forms part of her Master's study at the North-West University.

We appreciate that the information obtained from this study will be treated confidentially and we look forward to receive feedback on the research findings. We believe this will also benefit us with regard to providing support to our care leavers.

Yours sincerely

Natasja Retief
Child Care Manager

Gospel Focused

Family Centred

Church Driven

Registration No: 2000/026338/08 NPO No: 023-577 NPO PBO No: 18/11/13/4806
Directors: Don Whipple, Ronald Kalfungwa, Josh Reasoner, Charles de Kiewit, Ian Stuart, Janet Cooper

ANNEXURE E: PERMISSION LETTER FROM DESMOND TUTU CYCC



Desmond Child and Youth Care Centre
162 Tolbos Street
Flaurana

Private Bag X06
Pretoria North
0116

Tel (012) 546-0640
Fax (012) 565-4754

Enquiries: Ms. SM Skhosana
Email: Maureen.skhosana@gauten.gov.za
Cell : 082 4690375

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: LETTER OF GOODWILL I.R.O. Ms. LYDIA MOKGOKO

Dear Sir/Madam

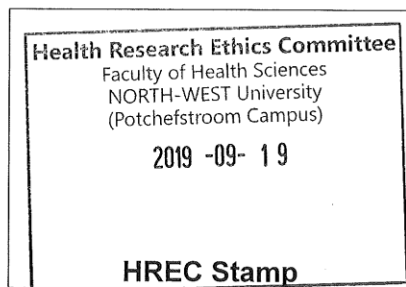
This letter serves to confirm that Ms. Lydia Mokgoko the Gauteng Department of Social Development has approved the afore mentioned to conduct her research project at Desmond Tutu Child and Youth Care Centre.

Yours sincerely
Ms. SM Skhosana
Head of Institution

ANNEXURE F: CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL WORKERS



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520
Tel: +2718 299-1111/2222
Fax: +2718 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>



INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: Social support provided to care leavers by the residential care facility during their transition to independent living

ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS: NWU-00440-19-S1

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Lizane Wilson

POST GRADUATE STUDENT: Lydia Mokgoko

ADDRESS: 366 Pholoso street
Soshanguve
0152

CONTACT NUMBER: 082 400 4096

You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of a master's study. Take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary**, and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in

any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the **Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (NWU-00440-19-S1)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

What is this research study all about?

- In this study we want to explore the social support of residential care facilities to care leavers during their transition into independent living. Therefore the researcher would like to interview you to hear how you see the social support that the residential care facility provide to care leavers. The researcher will ask you the following questions:

How is the CYCC supporting care leavers during their transition towards independent living?

How do you think the social support of the CYCC towards the care leavers impacts on their transition to independent living?

Are there any recommendations in terms of the residential care social support and by whom?

- This study will be conducted at different CYCCs and the interviews will be done in the social workers offices at the CYCC. A trained social worker will conduct the interview. A minimum of 12 participants will be included in the study.
- You have been invited to be part of this research as you are a registered social worker currently employed by a specific CYCC, have more than three years' experience in working as a social worker at the CYCC and English or Setswana speaking. The study will be conducted in English as it is a medium of instruction. However, if you do not know how to speak in English you are welcome to communicate in your mother-tongue. A transcriber will ensure that the information is translated to English.

What will be expected of you?

- You will be expected to take part in a semi-structured individual interview. You will be alone with the interviewer during this time. This interview will not be longer than an hour. There will be a break in between. During this interview you will be asked questions about the social support of residential care facilities to care leavers during their transition into independent living. These questions you will receive before the interview. You can choose to not answer a question if you don't feel you want to. The interviews will be audio recorded.
- You can ask questions during this interview where you seem to be unclear or unsure of something.

Will you gain anything from taking part in this research?

- There will be no direct gain for you in the study but sharing your experiences will assist in identifying the current gaps in the residential care support and assist in improving the programs, support system and services offered to the care leavers.

Are there risks involved in you taking part in this research and what will be done to prevent them?

- The risks in this study is minimal.
- There might be a possibility that you may be affected by the discussions of the topic and may experience some stress. You will not be forced to answer any questions and you will have the option to not answer a question if you feel not to or feel uncomfortable.
- A counsellor will also be available if you feel the need to talk to somebody after the interview.

How will we protect your confidentiality and who will see your findings?

- The information you share with the researcher during the interview will be kept confidential. Only the researcher and the project leader will have access to this information.
- Pseudonyms will be used in the final report in order to ensure anonymity.
- The interviews will also be in a private room where only you and the researcher will be.
- All the documents with information will be safely locked in the researcher's office and only she will have access to it and on her password protected private computer.

What will happen with the findings or samples?

- The information that you share will only be used for this study and no other studies.

How will you know about the results of this research?

- We will give you the results of the study when the study is completed. All the participants will each receive a summary of the research study once the study is complete. This will be emailed to you.
- You will be informed of any new relevant findings by vial telephone or emails.
- The results of the study will also be shared with both the provincial Department of Social Development and the CCYFs involved in the study. This will be in anonymised format.

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?

- You will not receive any reimbursement to participate in this study. Coffee and refreshments will be available during the interviews. The interviews will be conducted at your CYCCF and therefore you will not have any expenses. You will

also receive a token of appreciation in a form of a R100 gift voucher after the interview to compensate for the sacrifices and time dedicated to the research.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Mrs Lydia Mokgoko at 082 4004096 if you have any further questions or have any problems.
- You can also contact the Health Research Ethics Committee via Mrs Carolien van Zyl at 018 299 1206 or carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own purposes.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in the research study titled: Social support provided to care leavers by the residential care facility during their transition to independent living.

I declare that:

- I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research was clearly explained to me.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if I do so.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in the best interest, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.
- I give permission that the interview may be audio recorded.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

Declaration by person obtaining consent

I (name) declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to
.....
- I did/did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (place) on (date) 20....

Signature of person obtaining consent

Declaration by researcher

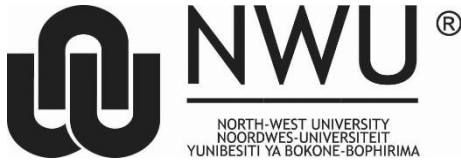
I (*name*) declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
or I had it explained by who I trained for this purpose.
- I did/did not use an interpreter
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them
or I was available should he/she want to ask any further questions.
- The informed consent was obtained by an independent person.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.
- I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

Signature of researcher

ANNEXURE G: CONSENT FORM FOR CARE LEAVERS IN ENGLISH



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: +2718 299-1111/2222

Fax: +2718 299-4910

Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

HREC Stamp **INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR CARE LEAVERS**

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: Social support provided to care leavers by the residential care facility during their transition to independent living

ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS: NWU-00440-19-S1

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Lizane Wilson

POST GRADUATE STUDENT: Lydia Mokgoko

ADDRESS: 366 Pholoso Street

Soshanguve

0152

CONTACT NUMBER: 082 400 4096

You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of a master's study. Take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary**, and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way

whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the **Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (NWU-00440-19-S1)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

What is this research study all about?

- In this study we want to explore the social support of residential care facilities to care leavers during their transition into independent living. Therefore the researcher would like to interview you to hear how you experienced the social support that you received just after you left the care facilities. The researcher will ask you the following questions:

How is the CYCC supporting care leavers during their transition towards independent living?

How do you think the social support of the CYCC towards the care leavers impacts on their transition to independent living?

Are there any recommendations in terms of the residential care social support and by whom?

- This study will be conducted at different CYCCs and the interviews will be done in the social workers offices at the CYCC. A trained social worker will conduct the interview. A minimum of 12 participants will be included in the study.
- You have been invited to be part of this research as you are a care leaver who lived in one of the specified CYCC's and are currently living in the Tshwane municipality. It has also been between 2 months and a year after you have left the care of the CYCC. Care leavers who lived in one of the specified CYCC's;
- If you are English or Setswana speaking. This study will be conducted in English as it is a medium of instruction. However, if you do not know how to speak in English you are welcome to communicate in your own language. The transcriber will ensure that the information is translated to English.

What will be expected of you?

- You will be expected to take part in an interview. You will be alone with the interviewer during this time. This interview will not be longer than an hour. There will be a break in between. During this interview you will be asked questions about the social support you received from the CYCC during your transition into independent living. These questions you will receive before the interview. You can choose to not answer a question if you don't feel you want to. The interviews will be audio recorded.
- You can ask questions during this interview where you seem to be unclear or unsure of something.

Will you gain anything from taking part in this research?

- There will be no direct gain for you in the study but sharing your experiences will assist in identifying the current gaps in the residential care support and assist in improving the programs, support system and services offered to the care leavers.

Are there risks involved in you taking part in this research and what will be done to prevent them?

- The risks in this study is minimum.
- You might experience some emotional discomfort or distress to talk about negative experiences. You will not be forced to answer any questions and you will have the option to not answer a question if you feel not to or feel uncomfortable.
- A counsellor will also be available if you feel the need to talk to somebody after the interview.

How will we protect your confidentiality and who will see your findings?

- What you tell the social worker during the interview will be kept confidential. Only the researcher and the project leader will have access to this information.
- The information that you share will be put in a report without your name. Nobody will know that you have said that.
- The interviews will also be in a private room where only you and the researcher will be.
- All the documents with information will be safely locked in the researcher's office and only he will have access to it.

What will happen with the findings or samples?

- The information that you share will only be used for this study and no other studies.

How will you know about the results of this research?

- We will give you the results of the study when the study is completed. All the participants will each receive a summary of the research study once the study is complete. This will be handed to you.
- You will be informed of any new relevant findings by vial telephone or emails.
- The results of the study will also be shared with both the provincial Department of Social Development and the CCYFs involved in the study. Your name will not be mentioned in this report.

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?

- You will not receive any money to take part in the study. As you have to travel to the CYCC for the interview, your transport cost will be paid to you. You will, however, be given a token of appreciation in the form of a R100 gift voucher, after the interview, to say thank you for you participation. Coffee and refreshments will be served during the interview.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Mrs Lydia Mokgoko at 082 4004096 if you have any further questions or have any problems.
- You can also contact the Health Research Ethics Committee via Mrs Carolien van Zyl at 018 299 1206 or carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own purposes.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in the research study titled: Social support provided to care leavers by the residential care facility during their transition to independent living.

I declare that:

- I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research was clearly explained to me.

- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if I do so.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in the best interest, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.
- I give permission that the interview may be audio recorded.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

Declaration by person obtaining consent

I (*name*) declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to
.....
- I did/did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

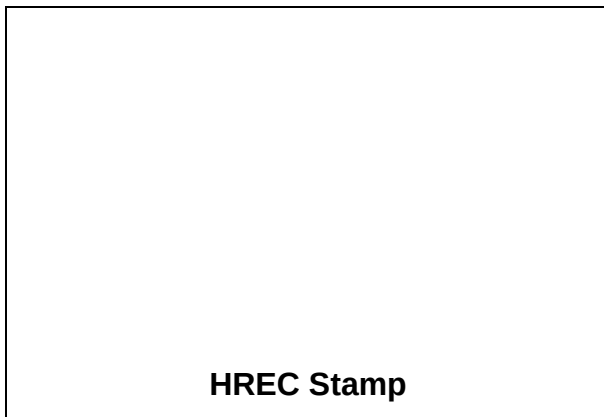
Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

Signature of person obtaining consent

ANNEXURE H: CONSENT FORM FOR CARE LEAVERS IN SETSWANA



Private Bag X1290,
Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520
Tel: +2718 299-1111/2222
Fax: +2718 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>



Yunibesiti ya Bokone Bophirima

Tumelelo e e tlhalositsweng ya batswa tlhokomelong ya bodiredi leago.

SETLHOGO SA PATLISISO: Tshegetso ya bodiredi leago e e newang batswa tshireletsong mo nakong ya go boela gape mo setshabeng le kemonosing ya bona

Ethics Reference numbers: NWU-00440-19-S1

Mmatlisisi mogolo: Mrs L Wilson

Morutwa: Mrs L Mokgoko

Aterese: 366 Pholoso street

Soshanguve

0152

Nomoro ya mogala: 082 400 4096

O lalediwa go tsaya karolo mo dipatlisisong tse di tla nnang karolo ya dirutwa tsa dikiri ya Masters. Tsaya nako go buisa tshedimosetso e e tla go nayang diteng tsa dipatlisiso e. O ka botsa Mmatlisisi kgotsa Morutwana ka dikarolo tse o sa di tthaloganyeng sentle. Go bothokwa gore o tthaloganye boikemisetso ba patlisiso e, le gore e tla go ama jang

Botsaya karolo bagago mo patlisisong e gabo patelediwe, gape o ka se otlhaiwe ga o sa tseye karolo gotlhelele. Gape o kgona go tswa mo patlisisong e ka nako nngwe le nngwe.

Patlisiso e e dumeletswe ke **Komiti ya Dipatlisiso mo lefapheng la Pholo mo Yunibesiting ya bokone Bophirima**. E tla tsamaisiwa go ya ka motheo le melao ya lefapha la tsa boitekanelo Go na le kgonagalo ya gore bangwe ba tsa lefapha ba tlhathlobe patlisiso e le diteng tsa yone.

Patlisiso e keya eng ?

Mo patlisisong e, re leka go batlisisa botshegetsu ba bodiredi setshaba mo bathong ba ba tlogang mo tshireletsong mme ba boela ko setshabeng le botshelo jo bo sa ikaegang ka bodiredi leago. Ka jalo, mmatlisisi o tla go botsa dipotso ka tshegetso e o e boneng morago fela ga go tswa mo tshireletsong ya tsa leago.

Mmatlisisi o tla go go botsa dipotso tse di latelang :

- Bodulo ba tshireletso bo go tshegeditse jang mo nakong ya pelo ya gago mo setshabeng ka kakaretso le boikemedi jwa gago?
- O nagana gore tshegetso ya bodiredi leago bo tlhotlheletsa jang pelo ya gago mo setshabeng.?
- O na le dikakanyo tse di ka dirisiwang go tthabololang kgotsa go fetola bodiredi leago le bodulo ba basirelediwa, ga go le jalo di phetogo di ka diragadiwa ke mang ?

Patlisiso e e tla diragadiwa ko maagelong a a farologaneng le kwa diofising tsa badiredi leago. Modiredi leago yo o katisitsweng o tla dira dipatlisiso tse. Batsayakarolo ba le some le bobedi batla botswa dipotso mo dipatlisisong tse.

O lalediwa go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong e, ka fa o le mongwe wa ba ba tlogileng mo tshireletsong ya katleloloago mme o nna mo karolong ya mmasepala wa Tshwane, gape

o le magareng a kgwedi tse pedi le gwaga o le mongwe o tlogile mo tshireletsong ya bodiredi leago.

Patlisiso e e tla diriwa ka sekgoa. Ga o na le lebaka kgotsa o sa tlhaloganye sekgoa, o tla letlelelwa go tsaya karolo ka puo e o itlhophetseng yona , mme mmatlisisi o tla e fetolela mo sekgoweng.

Go tlhokega eng mo go wena?

- O tlhoka go tsaya karolo mo puisanong , o tla be o le mongwe le mmatlisisi mo nakong eo.
- Puisano e e ka se fete nako ya ura e le esi.
- Go tla nna le nako ya go kgwa mowa.
- O tla botswa dipotso ka tshegetso e o e amogetseng mo bodiredi leago morago ga fa o tloga mo tshireletsong mme o ya kwa setshabeng le kemonosing ya gago

Dipotso tse, o tla di neiwa pele ga puisano.

O ka tlhopha go se arabe potso fa o sa lokologa go ka dira jalo.

Puisano e e tla gatisiwa ka segatisa mantswe. Botsa dipotso fa o sa tlhaloganyeng kgotsa o sa utlwisise sengwe.

A o tla duelwa go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong e?

Nyaa, ga go na tuelo, maikemisetso ke go neelana ka maitemogelo a gago mo ditheong tsa rona le gore re ka thusa go tlhabolola ditirelo tsa rona jang, go thusa baba di tlhokang le go ba tshegetsa ge ba tloga mo ditirelong tsa leago.

A go kotsi go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong e, fa go le jalo a go sengwe se se ka diriwang go thibela se?

- Kotsi ya go tsaya karolo e nnye thata
- Go kgonagalo ya gore o ka itemogela maikutlo a a sa ritibalang , o ka se patelediwe go araba dipotso tse o sa ikaelelang go di araba
Motshegetsi wa maikutlo o tla nna teng, ge o rata go bua le mongwe morago ga puisano

Diteng tsa puisano ya gago ditla sirelediwa jang?

Puisano ya gago le modiredi leago e tla nna ya sephiri, Mmatlisisi le Moeteledipele ke bona bat la nnang le tetla ya puisano e.

Leina la gago ga le kitla le dirisiwa mo puisanong e, gape ga go o pe yo o tla itseng diteng tsa puisano ya gago.

Puisano e tla tshwarelwa mo ofising e e sireletsegileng, e le wena le Mmatlisisi.

Ditlankana tsotlhe tsa puisano di tla notlelelwa mo ofising ya Mmatlisisi.

Go tla diragala eng ka diphitlhelelo tse?

- Mmatlisisi o tla go naya diphitlhelelo tsa patlisisong e, ga e weditsewe.
- O tla itsiwise ka diphitlhelelo tse diNtsha ka mogala kgotsa ka e-mail
- Diphitlhelelo di tla neelwa kwa botsamaising ba ditheo tsa tshireletso le lefapha la boatlela leago leina la gago le ka se dirisiwe mo motlhaeletsanong e.

A o tla duelwa kgotsa o tla duela go nna motsaya karolo mo patlisisong e?

Ga o kitla o duelwa mme ka gore o tla bo o dirisa dipalangwa go tla go tsaya karolo, madi a dipalangwa go tla go tsayakarolo, a tla lefiwa gape o tla neiwa setlankana sa R100 jaaka mpho go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong e.

Dino tsa boitapoloso di tla fitlhelega.

A go na le sengwe se o batlang go se itse kgotsa go se dira?

O ka ikamagana le Mrs Lydia Mokgoko mo mogaleng o o latelang – 082 400 4096 gongwe mokgatlo wa dipatlisiso ka Mrs Carolien Van Zyl mo mogaleng o o latelang 018 299 1206 kgotsa mo carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za ga o na le go sa kgotsofale kgotsa ngongorego ka dipatlisiso tse.

O tla neelwa ditsebe tsa patlisiso e, le tsebe e e tlhokang tumelelo kgotsa tetla ya gago ya go tsaya karolo mo dipatlisisong tse.

Maikano ka motsayakarolo

Go saena ga me _____ ke supa tumelano ya go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong ya setlhogo :Tshegetso e e neelwang ba tswa tlhokomelong ya leago le go boela mo botshelong jwa boikemelo mo setshabeng.

Ke dumela gore:

- Ke buisistse diteng tsa patlisiso le gore ke tlhaloseditswe ke motho yo o tshepagalang gape ka puo e ke e tlhaloganyang.
- Patlisiso e tlhalositswe sentle.
- Ke nnile le nako ya go botsa dipotso mo mothong yo ke moneileleng tumelano ya me le mmatlisisi gape dipotso tsa me di arabilwe.
- Ke tlhaloganya gore ga ke a gapelediwa go tsaya karolo gape ke tsaya karolo ka thato ya me.
- Ke kgona go tlogela patlisiso ka nako e ke e tlhophang gape ga ke ka ke ka bonwa phoso.
- Nka kopiwa go tlogela patlisiso ka nako e Mmatlisisi a bonang gore ke mo dikgatlhegelong tsa patlisiso.
- Ke naya tetla ya gore puisano e, ka gatiswa ka segatisa mantswe

Lefelo la tshaeno _____ Letlha
_____2019

Tshaeno ya motsayakarolo _____Tshaeno ya
paki_____

Maikano ka moamogedi wa tumelano

Nna _____ ke dumela gore :

- Ke tthalositse ka botlalo diteng tsa patlisio e go _____
- Ke / ga kea dirisa toloki.
- Kemo tlhotlheletse gore a botse dipotso ka tsaya nako go di araba.
- Ke kgotsofetse gore o tthaloganya diteng tsotlhe tsa patlisiso jaaka e tthalositswe.
- Ke mo neile nako go buisana le bangwe ga a ne a tlhoka go dira jalo.

Lefelo la tshaeno _____ Letlha _____ 2019

Tshaeno ya Motsayatumelano _____

Maikano ka mmatlisisi

Nna _____ ke ikana gore:

- Ke tthalositse diteng tsa patlisiso e go _____ kgotsa e tthalositswe ke _____yo ke mo tthatlheletseng go dira jalo
- Ke dirisitse / ga ke a dirisa toloki
- Ke mo tlhothleletse go botsa dipotso ka tsaya nako ya go araba e e lekaneng.
- Ke a tla fitlhelega ga a na le dipotso tse dingwe.

- Tumelano ya go tsaya karolo mo patlisisisong e fitlheletswe ke mongwe o a senang karolo mo patlisisong.
- Ke kgotsofetse gore motsaya karolo o tthaloganya diteng le mabaka otlhe a patlisiso.
- Gape ke kgotsofetse gore motsaya karolo o fitlhetse nako e e lekaneng ya go ka buisana le babangwe fa a eletsa go dira jalo

Lefelo la tshaeno _____ letlha _____ 2019

Tshaeno ya Mmatlisisi _____

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ANNEXURE I: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

TITLE OF STUDY: Social support provided to care leavers by the residential care facility during their transition to independent living

Student: Lydia Mokgoko

The questions that were used during the interviews with the social workers were as follows:

- How is the CYCC supporting care leavers during their transition towards independent living?
- How do you think the social support of the CYCC towards the care leavers impacts on their transition to independent living?
- Are there any recommendations in terms of the residential care social support and by whom?

ANNEXURE J: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CARE LEAVERS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

TITLE OF STUDY: Social support provided to care leavers by the residential care facility during their transition to independent living

Student: Lydia Mokgoko

The questions that were used during the interviews with the care leavers were as follows:

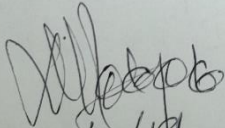
- How is the CYCC supporting care leavers during their transition towards independent living?
- How do you think the social support of the CYCC towards the care leavers impacts on their transition to independent living?
- Are there any recommendations in terms of the residential care social support and by whom?

ANNEXURE K: REFLECTIVE NOTES

Reflective notes
Care leaver

ANNEXURE K

The participant was willing to share. At the beginning of the interview she seems shy but as the interview goes on she became comfortable. ~~She was~~ I noticed that the participant is a sensitive person. I was able to attend to her non verbal communication. The participant frequently suggested from the focus of this research which is the resident social support to transitioning to independent living. She talks a lot about her experience in a residential care. I was afraid to lose her but I managed to bring her back to the main focus of


22/10/19

ANNEXURE L: TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW

Interview 3:

Date: 06th November 2019

Work Experience: 10 years

Preferred pseudo name: PSW 1.

I have explained to PSW 1 the consent letter, its purpose and all its contents and he has agreed and signed a copy that I retained. I have also explained to him the contents of the letter to prospective respondent and he has indicated that he has understood its contents and he was willing to participate on the research. He also gave me his consent to use a professional voice recorder to record this interview.

Researcher (Lydia)	Line Number	PSW 1	Coded
Thank you very much for being here today. I understand you have a busy life and a busy job. I appreciate your time. Can you tell me about yourself.	1	I am 33 years old married, and have a three years old son of my own. My. I have actually worked in a children's home for about 10 years now. I worked for 2 years at another orphanage home before I came to work here from 2011. I love working with children.	Period of working experience
That's interesting; can you tell me a little bit more about yourself.	2	My home language is Shona. I am originally from Zimbabwe. I associate with African cultures. I obtained my degree in 2010 at the university of Fort_hare and my masters in clinical social work at the University of Johannesburg in 2016.	Introduction

In your previous work experience, was it the same setting as here?	3	Yes, It was also dormitory setting, just like here. The only difference is that this institution is bigger and more cultured.	House setting
That's interesting, thank you	4		
I am going to ask you three questions. Let's start with the first question, can you briefly tell me how is the CYCC supporting the care leavers transitioning towards independent living?	5 6 7 8	Okay first of all, we introduce the care leavers to the organizations that are offering them jobs and to other government department such as department of social development whereby they are given preference in terms of bursaries, internships and funding for their skills development projects. The department of agriculture often provide the care leaves with funding their agricultural projects. These youngsters are often referred for professional assistance such as to the psychologists, psychotherapist and psychiatrists for assessment and further assistance We also encourages them to form support groups in terms of supporting each other and maintaining the relationship they are having amongst themselves as a family. It takes efforts	Means of social support, links and network sources of stability in life and long term functioning. Asset based community development Psychological and emotional support. Relationships formation and maintenance Feeling of despair, feeling of

	9	for a care leaver to get out of the shell and fit with his or her peers.	Immediate
	10	These young people become frustrated, they fear the unknown. They are used to support and being spoon fed. They are now suddenly expected to feed themselves. Face the real world by themselves empty handed. There are uncertain about what the worlds holds for them and how to confront the world. They become worried about the future. They look scared. When there are still in the residential care, they will challenge the authority, want the freedom but when the time for freedom arrives, it threatens their selves.	detaching from care to independent living. A feeling of hopelessness' Disruption of the attachment. Threat to their sense of belonging Uncertainty, low self esteem, doubts about the future. The need for family support Lack of identity
	11	They do not have guarantee about their future and are not sure if they will be able to regulate themselves. Those who have families do not have hope about the change in the family situation that ended up gotten them placed in a CYCC. Majority are homeless. When they reach majority age and have to leave care, they become challenged, since they struggle to intergrate back to the society because they do not have shelters. They do not know any other home except the CYCC. They do not	Adversities faced by the care leavers Disorganised patterns of lifestyles. Professional support and assistance to the care leavers to emotional well

	12	know the taste of being a family member. This young people faces a lot of challenges throughout their journey to independent living, Being independent means being able to take decisions on your own. It comes with responsibility. First of all they will come with big heads, thinking that they are grown-ups, only to find that they are still small to face the real world. They become eager to explore everything in a very short space of time. They want to learn how the world works, they struggle to interact with their peers. They also want to experiment with sex and freedom such as drinking beer and smoking. Most of the time their burn their fingers. Trauma debriefing and counselling, stress and anger management sessions often help them to deal with lot of behavioral challenges.	being. A need of belonging The influence from the environment and Peer pressure
Okay you mentioned a few aspects regarding the social support can we talk about that	13	We assist them to start supporting each other to form the relationships. We also encourage them to form support groups in terms of supporting each other and maintaining the relationships they are having amongst themselves as a family. My relationship with the children in the	Socialisation with each other. The relationship with self and family. Attachment theory

	14	residential care was supposed to be professional, but I found myself assuming the role of a father to them. I have a very personal relationship with each child in the institution. We are like a family. I know their background and their history they also know my family. Expressing their love for residential care residents is important in attainment of their love and trust as well as for the development of their self-esteem. I also encourage them to relate to each as siblings. They are more than forty but I know each of them by name. They each have a special place in my heart. Being around these young people, provokes a smile in their faces. Professional curiosity, I always wanted to work closely with the children placed in CYCC. I am passionate about helping these youngsters to shape their individual future. I know it's challenging but also interesting. It demands a certain special personality. Not every person can be able to work with children in need, unless you have love, passion, understanding, patience and perseverance, because these young people they are unique individuals,	Verbalising his love for the care residents. Developed attachment. The strong bond between the caregivers and the care residents. Generosity attachment theory
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		each of them has his own different characteristics, behavior and personality.	
That's interesting. Now, how do you think the social support of the CYCC towards the care leavers' impacts on their transition to independent living?	7	The change in behavior is noticed after a certain period of time. Some will show remorse and refrain from immoral behavior, others do not show the willingness to change, and it all depends on an individual personality. It is very difficult to deal with teenagers behavioral problems, especially taking into consideration their different situation and backgrounds.	The behavioural change. Individual insight of each care leaver. Behavioural problems due to dissimilar past circumstances
I see	8	In our institution, fortunately we have a youth living Centre where we keep the care leavers in preparation to transitioning. They being taught to do the house chores. They are allowed to do piece jobs in the center while they are still looking for a proper jobs. They are getting paid by the center and expected to pay rent. They are also allowed to date. This is permitted to try to give a grounding in budget management and interaction with the society.	Ecological perspective view people as existing within layers of relationships with systems in their social environment
	9	Our center have a youth living centre whereby these youngsters are being prepared for disengagement in a sense that they trained to face independent living by being held	Social support.(mastery) independence mastery

And?	10	responsible to pay for their own rent. Doing their own laundry and other house chores. They are also allowed to practice their time management and self-discipline by not being restricted with time for coming in and out the center, they are no longer restricted about time to sleep and they buy their own groceries and toiletries.	social support
	11	The use of Christian values that are part of the policy of this center also plays a role in molding the behavior in future.	mastery
I hear what you say	12	I would give you an example of being socially stereotype (living in a cage) One day one of the care leavers a boy dated a girl in the community. He went to the girls home found that the girl was not at home he was so drunk, he entered through a with a window, in the house it was only the mother to his girlfriend, fortunately as soon as he entered the house, he fell asleep and a case was opened against him again the center has to intervene because although he is a care leaver and living independently but he is still our family member.	The consequences of living under rules and conditions, protection and care.
How come?		Can you imagine what these boy was going through, he didn't know how to handle a relationship and now he	Family support Inability to independent functioning such as handling relationships and controlling self-emotions. Lack of social skills such as problem solving skills.

		found himself in an affair at 20yrs. He was now aggressive, bitter and very angry he even had suicidal thought because of shame, and humiliation he felt embarrassed. He became reserved and withdraw herself from other people in the center especially girls. Because knew nothing about conflict solutions he just found himself in conflict with the law.	
If it's okay with you, what can you recommend in terms of the residential care social support and by whom I am not clear with that can you please elaborate	13 14	The residential care needs to introduce the care leavers to the real world as early as possible. They must be equipped with life skills in order to sustain themselves. State dependency must be limited at a certain age. The care leavers must be prepared for care leaving as early as twelve years. They must learn to interact with the society at large. The government should come with a strategy to bring the care leavers to the attention of the local business persons so that they can interact with the CYCC and give the care leaver social support, such as trainings, guidance and sustainable financial support for independence living. Care leavers' struggles with employment and housing because majority of them	Implementation of specific programs and strategies for youth leaving care. Challenges faced by the care leavers. The need of courage and support to start Housing and employment challenges

	15	do not have homes. they do not have anywhere to go after residential care. They struggle to start life, they also need support like any other teenager who has parents. Can you imagine just after completing matric the care leavers are being exposed to independence living. The life skills training need to be applied. The residents of the CYCC must start practicing independent living at an early stage of life. Care leavers must be allowed an opportunity to make mistakes and learn from their mistakes like any other normal teenagers to take responsibility and suffer the consequences of their actions. They must be allowed to associate with their peers outside the CYCC. They must also be allowed to study at boarding schools and attend churches in the community with other community members not in isolation. Like for instance in our center there is a church and everybody in the center is expected to attend on Sundays. The policies of the CYCC should be revised taking into consideration the ever changing modern lifestyle. These youngsters have been kept in a cage for most of their years, living	The need for application of practical of more effective independent living skills. The allowance to learn from own mistakes in order to become self-discipline. The need to be allowed freedom of movement and to make informed decisions about their lifestyles. The expression of a need to be set free. The concern about the values, norms and moral imposed to the children in care. The impact of constant strict supervision of the care facility in
	16		

		by themselves. They cannot kick the ball for themselves because they are used to dependency. They do not have any ideas to confront the world outside the CYCC. They are easily influenced by peer pressure due to lack of self-confidence that put them at great risk of losing themselves. They really need to be equipped with practical skills to resist the challenges to independent living.	
Thank you once more for your participation.	19	You are welcome	

Reflective notes

The participant seems to have more experience and knowledge about the interview. He was more relaxed to be honest he even created a conducive space for me. There were some of the answers that the respondent gave me and I could have probed more but I failed. The interview took 58 min and I was becoming tired I did not have an idea on how to ask the participant to pause so that we take a body break. I hoped he will be the one who request a body break but he actually seemed energetic. Although I was a bit tired I maintained the posture and facial expression to make sure that he become aware that I have given him attention and interested on what he is narrating. The participant had lot of information about the topic. He was very talkative I refrain from confronting, interfering, interrupting or disturbing him while he was sharing his experiences I used the minimal encourager to encourage him to give more information.

The overall idea is that the care leavers are from backgrounds of loss, dysfunctional, abandonment and mistreatment they have faced adversity emanating from distinct circumstances, as a outcome of such circumstances their attachment structure and self-esteem has been interrupted and a lot of psycho emotional complications resulted. Social support and belonging is critical to social, psychological and emotional development of young people, hence the South African Welfare system needs the circle of courage in

CYCCs. Social workers realise that residential social support promotes stability, resilience and growth. Care leavers have a habit of relying and depending on the care system. They feel threatened to face independent living. Ultimately some of them become resilient and manage to overcome their challenges while others succumb to the adversities. Family support was emphasised by the majority of participants

Bright green- Incapability to cope independently a need for constant support and empowerment

Teal – Varied experiences, emotions and feelings

Red- Empowerment/ Basic living skills and practical skills/ sustaining skills/ ecological viewpoint

Yellow - sense of belonging Low self-esteem boost the self esteem

Bright blue- a need for capital resources

Violet - exposure and societal links to networks

Turquoise - a need family support for the care leavers/ Psychological and emotional support.

Grey- motivation and encouragement relationship building /social support/mastery

Pink – integrating with the society and a need for liberty and decision making skills

ANNEXURE M: LETTER TO THE PARTICIPANTS

Dear Prospective Participant

I am a social worker employed by the department of social development at Soshanguve service point. I am currently enrolled for Master Degree in Social Work at the University of North West. I am required to complete a research project as part of the requirements to obtain the qualification. My research project is titled Social support provided to care leavers by the residential care facility during their transition to independent living. Kindly note that I already obtained the permission to conduct the researcher in CYCCs from the department of social department. (See the attached permission letter from DSD).

The study is aimed to explore the social support provided by the residential care facilities to care leavers during their transition into independent living. I am particularly interested in the nature of social support that the residential care facilities provide to care leavers during their transition to independent living as perceived by social workers and description the nature of social support that the care leavers receive from the residential care facilities during their transition to independent living as perceived by care leavers.

This can be achievable only if I manage to get participants who are willing to share their experiences. To accomplish this, I would need to conduct one semi-structured interview of approximately an hour with you. The day, time and location of the interview can be arranged to suit you. The interview would be recorded; however confidentiality and anonymity would be ensured at all times. The data gathered during interviews would be safely stored either in a locked cabinet or password protected on the computer. This data will be destroyed when it is no longer needed for the research. I will also enter into confidentiality agreements with each individual interviewed and I will conform to the ethical guidelines and requirements of the University of North West.

My research supervisor is Dr Lizane Wilson and she can be contacted at lizane.wilson@nwu.ac.za/ 082 730 8396

Thank you. I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Lydia (Researcher)

ANNEXURE N: TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW

Interview 3:

Date: 11th November 2019

Preferred pseudo name: PCL 1.

I have explained to PCL 1 the consent letter, its purpose and all its contents and he has agreed and signed a copy that I retained. I have also explained to him the contents of the letter to prospective respondent and he has indicated that he has understood its contents and he was willing to participate on the research. He also gave me his consent to use a voice recorder to record this interview. I also clarified the issue of confidentiality and explained to the client that he is free to stop or pull out of the interview anytime.

Researcher (Lydia)	PCL 1
Thank you very much for really being prepared to take part in the research today. How are you, today?	Enkosi (You are welcome)
My name is Lydia, I understand you have a busy life and a busy job. I appreciate your time. It's now half past eleven probably we will be done before one o'clock.	Thank you
The purpose of the interview is to explore the social support provided to care leavers by the residential care facility during their transition to independent living.	Okay

This is a voice recorder, for recording the interview for the purpose of transcriptions. . It is extremely important for me to take important notes during this interview.	Okay
Is there anything you like to know before we proceed?	No thanks
Please note that if you feel tired or overwhelmed at any time during the interview, we may pause and you gather yourself and then proceed. Its two o'clock probably we will be before half past three	Alright (he nods his head)
I am actually going to ask you three questions, you are a care leaver right?	Yes
That's interesting. Thank you, can you tell me a little bit about yourself	Okay, I am currently employed as an engineer in one of the biggest companies. The boss of that company is a friend to the manager of the CYCC where I was staying. He is the one who sponsored my education. I studied at UNISA. I am originally from somewhere in Soutpan
Where are you currently residing?	I am currently staying in my flat with my spouse
Are you married?	Not yet

Have you started your own a family?	Not yet
What's your home language?	Tsonga but speak Setswana since is the common language around.
You are welcome to use your own language where possible. I am going to ask you three questions. Let's start with the first question, can you briefly tell me how is the CYCC supporting the care leavers transitioning towards independent living?	<i>I can say the CYCC is the best home in the world. I am who I am today because of a CYCC, believe you me. I received the best care any child can get. By the time I was introduced to my family when I was six years old, I love them but I rejected them because I was scared that they would take me away from a CYCC to their care. Though I did not experienced their care but I was very content and comfortable where I was. I felt at home. I remember when the social worker granted me a leave of absence to my family during Easter holidays, I cried all night at my own home yearning for my CYCC home. I felt at home at the CYCC. I even thought of committing suicide if I was to be reunited with my biological parents. I was so attached to my care givers my house parents. I called them mama and papa from the bottom of my heart. I appreciated each and every drop of love that I received from them. They really supported me throughout my life.</i> <i>Come the time to leave care, I actually faked sickness. I delayed the process just to avoid facing life on my own The journey of transitioning without their support will be a hell. Can you imagine if you know that in two months' time I will be 18 and have to leave care, eish ya neh! (He scratches his head.) There's where the challenge begins, just the thought of being on your own. It's so frustrating. You find yourself wishing and missing that parental support.</i>

Oh really that's so interesting. I'd love to know more about that support.	We were a big family, and the care givers were not enough, we shared the little that we have. Each house parent had up to eight children. I remember we used to attend programs, especially during school holidays where we were taught about how to use money wisely. Motivational speakers from different back grounds especially those who were once care residents. They would come to encourage and motivate us in preparation to independent living. Forming support groups helps a lot. We need each other during transitioning to independent living.
How do you understand this support?	Yes, they provided us with the support and skills but unfortunately our journeys are different. You might find that the skills that I was provided with is not relevant to my journey, one man's poison is another man's meat so you can provide me with the support but only to find that it is irrelevant for my journey. Right now I know how to spend money wisely but what's the use if I am not working and do not have money? Is the skill still relevant?
Okay, I hear you.	Social support I don't want to lie, the institution tried their best. The challenge is that life is not predictable. It does not require only what you have meaning your tool might become useless when life takes its own direction. Just like any other youth, although majority of us did not have families, we had the family support from the institution and we were taught about the importance of relationships.
Now, how do you think the social support of the CYCC towards the care leavers' impacts on their transition to independent living?	It has an impact; it just depends on the recipient. Here am now I have been in a healthy relationship with my fiancée for more than three years now. I still have a good relationship with my house parents, my biological family and the friend whom I got way back in the institution, because I was taught to love. I was thought self-discipline. That foundation made me who I am today. I found myself, I am now working and ready to become a responsible husband and a father in future. I also have friends in the community.
Okay	Can I have water please? You know my history makes me feel sad and happy at the same time.

I see	So you see the importance of the residential social support now? I was taught how to behave responsibly. Connecting us with the church pastors and the councillor was very important to me because we got an access to the community and we were acknowledged as well. I learnt so many things most of all I learned to pray Ha ha ha (he giggles) they only forgot to teach me how to drink responsibly. That one I managed to teach myself because of the tool they gave me, I mean (responsibility).
If it's okay with you, what can you recommend in terms of the residential care social support if its and by whom?	Yooh, you know the challenge with residential care is that a person end up being stereotyped. It is very difficult for a care leaver to get out the safe space and fit in with her or his peers. Remember at the institution we live by the book. Laws, policies, regulations and orders. So you are being denied the opportunity of being yourself, fear to experience life. There must be a way to create a little bit of freedom in preparation to independent living. You see now the reason why care leavers tend to things such as substance abuse is that we try to make it easy to fit in. we want to fit in because we are also normal human beings. We go through developmental stages just like any other youth out there. You only become yourself once you are out of care, but still need the support. The good thing is that our social workers are a phone call away. Our pastors are always on our back whenever we meet the devil on our way out of care.
I see, I wonder if you can give me an example	Imagine being an adolescent and being treated like a seven years old. Rules such as six o'clock gates are locked no loud music allowed, no partying, no night clubs, no smoking no drinking, worst part no dating hee when are we expected to learn to do all these activities relevant to our age and stage. Obvious when we leave care. So it means real life start after care. On our journey to transitioning that is where we use all the support that we are offered by the CYCC while we were still in care. We use the connections, the advises of our social workers is always a call away. Pastors knows us and the community

	members help us they often include us for piece jobs. The support of the family becomes more important that's were you realize the importance of the reunification services because you are now alone however you still have that support.
Okay, I understand, is there anything else that you can recommend?	Ya the law must be realistic. We are also human with natural needs just like any other children we go through different developmental stages. Institutions policies should be realistic. Rules should also be revised to meet our modern lifestyle.
In your opinion who is the relevant person to implement these recommendations	Our residential social workers should inform the policy makers about our needs such as housing and I will be grateful. Residential care programs should be revised to meet the ever-changing challenges and needs of the care leavers transitioning to independence leaving. The contact with the CYCC should be continuous.
Thank you once more for sharing.	Thank you

ANNEXURE O: THEMES WITH CODES

THEME1	Levels and forms of residential social support		
Psychological support needs of care leavers	Pseudonyms	LINE NUMBER	Data extracts
	PSW 1	33-38	I know their back ground and their history they also knows my family. I encourage them to relate to each as siblings. They are more than fourty but I know each of them by name. They each have a special place in my heart. Professional curiosity, I always wanted to work closely with the children placed in CYCC. Being around these young people, provokes a smile in their faces. I am passionate about helping these youngsters to shape their individual future, I know it's challenging but also interesting. It demands a certain special personality. Not every person can be able to work with children in need. Unless you have love, passion, understanding, patience and perseverance, because these young people they are unique individuals, each of them has his own different characteristics, behavior and personality.
	PCL 4	50-51	I went through therapeutic sessions that helped me so much towards dealing with bereavement. I was able to see myself in a different way. I began to value what I have.
Independent living programmes social support and resilience	PCL4	35	The programs also focused on investing on basic life skills to independence living. We were taught skills such as food gardening, dress making, cooking and baking.
	PSW 1	44-45	They being taught to do the house chores. They are allowed to do piece jobs in the center while they are still looking for a

	PCL 1	20-23	proper jobs. They are getting paid by the center and expected to pay rent. Motivational speakers from different back grounds especially those who were once care residents. They would come to encourage and motivate us in preparation to independent living.
Strong emotional support within the CYCC	PCL 1	27	I cried all night at my own home yearning for my CYCC home. I felt at home at the CYCC;
	PSW1	13	I found myself assuming the role of a father to them. I have a very personal relationship with each child in the institution. We are like a family.
	PCL4	12	I mean we were raised under the wing of this CYCC. We were taught how to bath ourselves here. We do not know the taste of parental love except for the love we receive from the CYCC. When we talk about family we refer to this CYCC and its residents.

ANNEXURE P: DEFINED THEMES

THEMES	THEME	SUBTHEMES	CATEGORY
Different levels and forms of residential social support	1	Independent living programmes social support and resilience Psychological support needs of care leavers Preparing care leavers for disengagement	Means of social support: how the CYC supporting the care leave transitioning independent living. Basic sustaining skills
Social and structural support systems within residential care	2	Strong emotional support within the CYCC Connecting with capitals and resources A need for family support Connection with the support networks in the community	Promoting the sense of belonging
The role of residential support after leaving residential care	3	social integration of care leavers towards independent living Social networks outside residential care The need for continued psychosocial support from residential care	Creating stability and promoting resiliency: The social support towards the journey of leaving care Social support
Residential care and emotional support networks	4	Strong attachment between the care leavers and the CYCC in terms of the coc Strong supportive relationships within the care facility Maintaining supporting relationships after leaving care	
The challenges faced by care leavers to independent living	5	Sudden detachment from care Care leavers' feelings of loneliness Peer social support Longing to independent living Lack of housing	The impact of leaving on care leavers

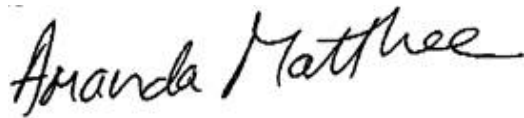
ANNEXURE Q: DECLARATION OF TEXT EDITOR

Declaration of Text Editor

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Language editing

I hereby confirm that I have edited Lydia Mokgoko's dissertation titled *Social support provided to care leavers by the residential care facility during their transition to independent living*. Harvard editing standards and referencing have been applied.



Teksskrywer, vertaler en taalversorger
Text writer, translator and editor
MA, BA Hons, PGDip Translation, PGDip Leadership (Stell)
Certificate Course in Editing Academic Texts (Stell)

ANNEXURE R: PERMISSION TO SUBMIT

Letter of permission

Permission to subject this dissertation for examination purposes

I, the supervisor, hereby declare that the input and effort of Ms L Mokgoko in writing this manuscript reflect research done by her on the topic. I hereby grant permission that she may submit this dissertation for examination in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister in Social Work.



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Dr L.Wilson

Supervisor