

Employees' Perceptions of the  
South African Police Service's Employee Substance Abuse Prevention Programme in Port  
Elizabeth

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**In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Substance abuse is a major social issue within the South African Police Service (SAPS). To address this issue, the SAPS implement an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) as an intervention to address problems that may affect the work performance of employees. Despite the existence of this programme, substance abuse is still occurring and has a negative impact on work performance. This concern has fuelled the researcher to initiate this study.

The goal of this study is to gain an understanding of Port Elizabeth SAPS employees' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. A qualitative research methodology, with a descriptive, exploratory and contextual research design was implemented. The researcher elected to use non-probability sampling, specifically, purposive sampling for this study.

A sample of ten employees was chosen from an area demarcated for the purpose of the study, within the SAPS in Port Elizabeth. Data was collected through semi-structured, individual interviews. Interviews were continued until saturation point was reached. The interviews were analyzed according to the detailed guidelines set out by Tesch (in Creswell, 2003:192). The data was verified according to Guba's principles (in De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2002:351). The researcher also employed the services of an independent coder in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the study.

The perceptions of EAP as a substance abuse prevention programme, by employees of the SAPS in Port Elizabeth, have not been highlighted adequately within the South African context. The researcher's study will hence contribute to the existing body of knowledge of the discipline.

### **Key words:**

Substance abuse, substance dependency, Employee Assistance Programmes, South African Police Service, prevention programmes.

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# **CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Substance abuse is a major social issue within the SAPS. Statistics obtained from the Welbedacht Rehabilitation and Therapeutic Centre in Port Elizabeth (December 2011), frequently utilized by police social workers as a referral source for their substance abuse cases, revealed that at least twenty-one SAPS employees received treatment from them in the past financial year.

The inherent stressors of the job seem to contribute to employees abusing alcohol. Waller, Naidoo and Thom (2002:7) state that problems related to substance abuse might result in decreased work productivity, which is linked to low staff morale. Burke (in Ortega, Brenner & Leather, 2007:37-38) indicates that “the unique characteristics of work in the police organization affect its employees’ private lives, making it difficult for them to balance work and family responsibilities.” Due to the nature of their duties, employees are exposed to gruesome scenes, practically, on a daily basis. This is supported by Steyn (2011:103) who postulates that “exposure to trauma causes an increase in the use of tobacco and alcoholic beverages and also the uptake of more serious drugs”. Further the belief within the SAPS that ‘cowboys don’t cry’ implies that no matter how gruesome the scene is and no matter to what extent it has affected you on an emotional level, you just continue as if nothing happened. Moriarty and Field (2001:155) are of the opinion that “police officers are typically symptomatic drinkers that use alcohol for the relief of psychological strain.”

In an attempt to deal with this ever increasing problem, the SAPS offers certain programs to their employees. Preventative and intervention programmes are part of the Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) of the SAPS. The National Productivity Institute (NPI), (Xaba, 2006:95) defines an EAP as a set of policies and procedures by which organizations legitimately intervene in the workplace. EAPs can be seen as the social responsibility of the employer to assist the employee with certain problems. It also provides insight into clinical, cultural and ethical problems

experienced by the employee (Petzer & Schoeman, 2005:118).

EAPs are utilized both in the public and private sector aimed at enhancing employee well-being and productivity in the workplace (Naicker & Fouche, 2003:25; Mathlape, 2003:29). It can be applied both internally and externally, or as a combined model. The internal model relates to when the company employs the EAP practitioner where the services are rendered, whilst with the external model, services are outsourced (Pillay, 2007:42). In the combined model, some services like counselling and presentation of pro-active programmes are rendered by the internal EAP professional whilst other services such as rehabilitation and aftercare, are rendered by a contracted service provider (Pillay, 2007:42). The internal model is utilized within the SAPS as the EAPs are managed by a section called Employee Health and Wellness (EHW). This section consists of social workers, psychologists, chaplains and psychometrists. These professionals are responsible for the well-being of all SAPS employees and their families (SAPS EAP Presenter's Guide, National EAP Committee, 2003/4:7).

The National Instruction ((N/I) 3/2003:1) on Employee Assistance Programmes in the SAPS regulates the use of the EAP as an intervention to address problems that may affect the work performance of employees. Different preventative programmes feature under the EAP umbrella, such as: HIV/AIDS, disability awareness, stress management, financial management, life skills and the substance abuse prevention programmes. The last programme mentioned is of importance to this study. The content of the programme is concerned with defining the difference between substance abuse and dependence as well as the effects of the abuse on the different spheres of life; that is, the individual, his/her family, peers, school and community. It also concentrates on the phases of abuse, the stages of change as well as treatment aspects (National SAPS Self-management Programme, 2004). Despite the existence of this programme, substance abuse is still occurring and has a negative impact on work performance. Employees are attending the programme but the problem persists. This is of great concern to the researcher. In addition to the substance abuse prevention programme, employees who are challenged by substance abuse are also involved in individual counseling sessions provided by the professionals

who form part of the EHW section within the SAPS.

The substance abuse prevention programme within the SAPS is national in that it targets the whole SAPS as its population. Foxcroft (in Myers, Harper, Fakier, Kaderet & Mazok, 2008:9) states that “educational interventions aim at preventing the onset of substance abuse via raising awareness.” Any employee who experiences the need to utilize the services of EHW can feel free to do so. Employees can request the services of EHW from their own free will or they can be coerced into utilizing the services. The latter occur when employees were the subject of a disciplinary hearing. The penalty (sanction) laid down at this hearing can then be referral to EHW for intervention into the problem presented.

The concern for the researcher is that the preventative programmes do not seem to have the desired effect of decreasing the prevalence of substance abuse in the SAPS. It then logically follows that research needs to be conducted on how employees perceive different aspects of the substance abuse programme and its implementation.

## **1.2 Problem formulation and motivation for the study**

SAPS employees deal with many stressors within their work environment, which might contribute to the abuse of substances. Steyn (2011:96) indicates “that alcohol and substance abuse are often associated with those employed in the law enforcement environment.” As a means of decreasing or alleviating the abuse of alcohol in the workplace, it is important to implement interventions that will assist the employee in coping with the challenges resulting from substance abuse. An example of such a programme is the EAP substance abuse prevention programme utilized by the SAPS to address this problem. Substance abuse is, however, still occurring and negatively impacting on work performance. This poses questions as to why this substance abuse prevention programme does not make a difference in the abuse and misuse of substances by certain employees. With this in mind, this study aims to give participants an opportunity to voice their perceptions of all aspects of the programme. The motivation for the study is based on a need for further studies in this specific field of interest, focusing on a qualitative evaluation of the existing

programme in a specific context. As indicated in the literature review, previous research within the SAPS focused on substance abuse as related to work performance and the need for a holistic, needs based approach. The researcher's study will contribute to the body of knowledge of the discipline in that the perceptions of EAP as a substance abuse prevention programme by employees of the SAPS, has not significantly been highlighted within the South African context. The study can thus complement the existing evaluation methods utilized in the program and can offer recommendations for the programme based on the research findings.

The starting point for any research is to determine the research goal and objectives. These will be identified in the following section.

### **1.3 Research question**

According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011:39), qualitative research questions involve an inductive approach which focuses on describing or generating some theories or ideas about a given social phenomenon. The research question of this study conforms to the above definition as it is exploratory and descriptive in nature. A research question forms a key component of the research study in guiding the direction of the research.

The primary research question for this study is:

*What are the Port Elizabeth SAPS employees' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme?*

In order to answer the research question, it is imperative for the researcher to have a clear goal and objectives. These will be discussed in the following section.

### **1.4 Research goal and objectives**

The research goal is the overall picture whilst the objectives are the smaller steps that one needs to accomplish in order to attain the goal. Lewis, Packard & Lewis (2012:58) support this statement as they view the goal to be the broad expected outcome of what needs to be achieved. These authors are of the opinion that goals need to be measurable and provide clear direction. A research goal outlines the

purpose of the study.

Fishbach and Dhar (2005:370) regard goals as cognitive structures that can be represented in terms of movement and progress toward some abstract and desirable end state. They seek to deepen the understanding of a specific topic or issue; the clearer the goal, the more specific the objectives tend to be.

The overall goal of this study is:

*To gain an understanding of the Port Elizabeth SAPS employees' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.*

De Vos et al. (2011:94) explain that objectives are the steps that one has to take at grassroots level, within a specific time span, in order to achieve the overall goal. Lewis, Packard and Lewis (2012:59) support this definition as they state that objectives are specific and measurable statements regarding the outcomes. The implication here is that if all the objectives are reached the goal will inevitably be attained.

The objectives for this research study are:

- *To explore and describe SAPS employees' overall perceptions of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.*
- *To explore SAPS employees' perceptions of the educational value, format of the programme and its recruitment procedures.*
- *To explore and describe SAPS employees' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.*
- *To offer recommendations for an effective substance abuse prevention programme.*

## **1.5 Definition of key terms**

This section defines the concepts which form the basis of this study. There are four key concepts that will be discussed, namely: substance abuse, substance

dependency, employee assistance programmes, South African Police Service, prevention programmes.

### **1.5.1 Substance abuse**

According to Benschhoff and Janikowski (2000:18), substance abuse is a condition comprising of the distinguishing qualities of constant or continuing physical or psychological problems most likely caused or aggravated by alcohol or drugs. The DSM-IV of the American Psychiatric Association (2000:192) defines substance abuse as “the repeated use of a substance to the extent that it interferes with adequate social, vocational, or self-care functioning.” It can also be defined as the level of alcohol or drug use that typically leads to adverse physical or psychological consequences. This is inclusive of prescribed medications, as well as illegal and legal drugs such as nicotine, caffeine and alcohol (Bennett, Lehman & Reynolds, 2000:157).

### **1.5.2 Substance Dependence**

The DSM-IV (2000:192) defines substance dependence as “a maladaptive pattern of use, leading to impairment as manifested by three (or more) of the following, occurring at any time in the same 12-month period; that is tolerance, withdrawal, a continuous craving to stop drinking, substance is used in larger volumes than intended, and so forth”. Bennet, Lehman and Reynolds (2007:158) add that substance dependence is characterized by a compulsive desire to use a substance repeatedly whilst The Brown University Digest of Addiction and Theory (2001:5) concludes that it is the daily use of substances over a period of many years. The focus of the above definitions is on the repetitive use of substances.

### **1.5.3 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**

South African Police Service’s National Instruction 3 (2003:2) and Sithole (2001:80) maintain that EAPs are programmes aimed at the early detection of problems with employees’ performance as well as teaching employees how to deal with it, whether these problems are a result of personal and work related concerns, lack of training or wrong placement or to improve the productivity of the employee. They offer support



systems to employees, which provide advice on various issues including debt, stress, relationships and substance abuse. This support is based on confidentiality. Thus, some of these programmes are aimed at preventing and reducing the use of substances (Barrett, 2007:51).

#### **1.5.4 South African Police Service (SAPS)**

Adams (2010:4) defines the SAPS as an integrative, dynamic, systemic, hierarchical framework integrated into decentralized networks that are united in creating a safe and secure environment for all people in South Africa. In addition it relates to an organization responsible for creating a safe and secure environment for all people of South Africa, bound by a code of conduct which should also form a part of their employees' code of life, principles and values (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 2011:1).

The South African Police Service's Annual Performance Plan (2010/2011) maintains that the SAPS is an organization concerned with preventing anything that threatens the safety and security of any community, investigating all crime that impacts on that community, ensuring that offenders are brought to justice as well as participating in efforts that address the roots of crime.

#### **1.5.5 Prevention programmes**

Prevention programmes are achieved through the application of multiple strategies. These are ongoing processes that must relate to each emerging generation (Vermont Department of Health; 2014:1). They are designed to promote healthy behaviours and help people avoid the need for public assistance.

#### **1.6 Research design and methodology**

This section will review the research design and methodology. The research design can be seen as a plan for conducting the research (De Vos et al., 2002:137). It seeks to answer the research question and focus on the where, what and how of the study.

### **1.6.1 Research approach and research design**

The researcher of this study found that a qualitative research approach was relevant for this particular study. This holds true as the aim of the study was based on exploring and describing the perceptions of employees of the Port Elizabeth SAPS with regard to the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. The motivation for the use of this approach was also based on Patton's (2002:151) view, which indicates that "for programmes engaged in healing, transformation and prevention, the best source and form of information is clients' stories about their experiences of a programme. There is a richness here that numbers alone cannot capture".

The researcher elected to use a research design which was explorative, descriptive and contextual in nature. It also had an evaluative component. A descriptive and exploratory and contextual research design was selected to explore the experiences of SAPS employees in regards to the implementation, outcomes and impact of the EAP substance abuse programme. This was a person-centered approach that developed an understanding of people's opinions about their lives and the lives of others. Furthermore, it assisted the researcher in generating an in-depth account that presented a lively picture of the research participant's reality (Holloway, 2005:5).

### **1.6.2 Research methodology**

Henning (2004:293) describes methodology as a coherent group of methods that complement one another and have the ability to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the research purpose. The concept 'methodology' includes the research population and sampling, data collection method, data analysis method, the pilot study and data verification.

#### **1.6.2.1 Population and sampling procedure**

It is important to establish what the population for a study will be. Creswell (2003:52) is of the opinion that every single aspect of the study that the researcher wants to analyze is known as the population. The population in this research study is comprised of SAPS members in the Port Elizabeth area. A research population is,

however, too large for a researcher to interview all members so a sample is selected. The following served as the criteria for the inclusion of participants in the study:

- The participants selected attended the EAP substance abuse prevention programme within the last year so as to have recent knowledge of the programme content and its impact.
- Participants were in the permanent employment of the SAPS as this made exposure to this programme possible.
- Both males and females were selected as participants in the study so that the study was not gender biased.
- Participants had to be from SAP stations in the Mount Road and Motherwell cluster in Port Elizabeth, namely from: Humewood, Kabega Park, Kwadwesi, Motherwell, Gelvandale and Bethelsdorp so as to ensure balanced participation.
- Participants were expected to be conversant in English as all interviews were conducted in English.
- Participants were selected from each rank. The ranks from which participants were chosen were: constables, sergeants, warrant officers, lieutenants and captains.
- These participants were selected as “objective participants” and not referrals because of substance abuse issues and were not abusers of alcohol.

#### **1.6.2.2 Entry to research site**

According to De Vos et al. (2011:325), once the research problem and topic have been identified, the researcher needs to select a site to successfully execute data collection. This is impacted on by the setting and the researcher’s ability to build relationships and agreements with gatekeepers. The researcher chose to use a direct route to enter into the site as she spoke directly to the respective station commanders. For the purpose of this study, entry into the field was gained by submitting a written application to the Provincial Commissioner requesting

permission to interview SAPS members.

### **1.6.2.3 Method of data collection**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used semi-structured individual interviews as a means of data collection. Welman (2005:166) postulates that the researcher who utilizes semi-structured interviews aims to cover a broad area of themes and questions that are similar with each interview. The interviews were guided by an interview schedule, but remained flexible to allow for an interactive process that was used to describe the perceptions of SAPS employees about their substance abuse prevention programme. The interviews were recorded to ensure that the data obtained during these interviews was accurately captured. The data was then transcribed verbatim by the researcher into text so that it could be used during the data analysis process. Ten interviews were conducted at the respective, identified police stations.

### **1.6.2.4 Data analysis**

The researcher followed the detailed guidelines for the coding process as set out by Tesch (Creswell, 2003:192). In using these steps, the transcriptions are reviewed until meaning is extracted and clustered into similar topics. The topics are organized according to their importance and given abbreviated codes. These codes are then applied to the transcriptions to determine if new topics emerge. Once all possible topics have been identified, the topics are categorized and the abbreviations are developed. The data contained within each transcription is then assembled into descriptive categories. Credibility of the data analysis and research results was ensured by employing the services of an independent coder.

### **1.6.2.5 Ensuring trustworthiness**

Data verification is a means of ensuring the trustworthiness of information. Marshall and Rossman (in De Vos et al., 2002:351) indicate that all research must live up to certain standards that serve as criteria against which the credibility of the research study can be measured. Guba's criteria (in De Vos et al., 2002:351) were used for data verification in this study. The credibility, conformability and dependability of

results was ensured through peer examination whereby the research supervisor was asked to read the interview transcripts and reflect on the collected data as well as the data analysis that the researcher had completed. The services of an independent coder were also employed. An accurate description of the participants was also provided. In order to ensure transferability, the researcher compiled a comprehensive research report.

#### **1.6.2.6 Pilot study**

Denzin and Lincoln (in De Vos et al., 2005:22) state that the pilot study serves to provide clarification in areas that warrant it or to test the interview guide. A pilot study was conducted by the researcher at one of the police stations identified from the population. This assisted in establishing the relevance of the data collected from participants, in testing the interview guide and in 'sharpening' the research tools. One participant from the sample was randomly recruited for the pilot study. This allowed the researcher to test the effectiveness of the interview guide.

#### **1.7 Ethical considerations**

Hesse-Biber and Laevy (2011:59) emphasise the importance of ethics as they state that it needs to be a critical part of the substructure of the research process from the inception of your problem to the interpretation and the publication of the research findings. Various ethical issues were considered in this research study.

Firstly, related to the avoidance of harm, where the researcher thoroughly informed participants about the possibility thereof and ensured the availability of counseling services for them. The researcher also ensured that informed consent was obtained; participants in this study granted their permission to be part of the research study by means of completing and signing a written consent form. Participants were also asked to complete a form granting the researcher permission to tape record the interviews.

In order to ensure anonymity in this study, pseudonyms were used. Tape recordings of the interview will be destroyed on completion of the examination of this research document. All information generated during the data collection process was

safeguarded to ensure privacy. In an attempt to ensure respect and autonomy the researcher explained all risks to participants so as to ensure that the decision to take part in the study was an informed one. Beneficence was ensured, as the researcher explained to participants that the inputs given by them in the interviews will be used to make recommendations for an effective substance abuse prevention programme.

### **1.8 Dissemination of results**

De Vos et al. (2005:339) suggest that it is important to outline what means the researcher will use when disseminating the results. They also propose that the research report remains the primary mode for communicating the results of the research. It shows that the researcher followed a process and now reached the end of that process. The results of this research study will be disseminated in two ways. Firstly, a hard copy and an electronic copy of the research report will be made available to the library of the NMMU. Another copy will be provided to the Provincial Commissioner of the SAPS. Participants will have access to the findings should they so desire. In addition, the researcher will make a conference presentation on the findings of her study to the management of the SAPS so as to sensitize them about the occurrence of substance abuse within their organization and make recommendations with regard to possible improvements of the EAP substance abuse programme that is currently being implemented. The researcher will also write an article on the findings of her study, to be published in the SAPS Journal and distributed on a quarterly basis within the SAPS as well as the social work journals that are also distributed on a quarterly basis, so as to have greater exposure for the research findings.

### **1.9 Proposed structure of the report**

Chapter One provides the background which outlines the context of the study. The core question that guides the research is also provided herein.

Chapter Two follows with the literature review. In this chapter, the writings of various authors are consulted in order to gain wider knowledge of the research.

Chapter Three discusses the research design and methodology used in this study. It

explains how the population was identified as well as how the researcher will go about obtaining the sample and recruiting participants. Data collection methods and how the data will be analyzed are also discussed here. Ethical considerations pertinent to the study are also examined in this chapter.

In Chapter Four, the research findings are discussed together with literature control. The main themes correspond with the specific objectives of the study. The literature control, in this chapter, serves to confirm or disagree with the research findings.

Chapter Five's main focus is on offering a summary of the findings, conclusions about findings, research methodology and design. Issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations are also discussed in this chapter. Other important aspects discussed herein are the value and limitations of the study as well as recommendations for future research.

### **1.10 Conclusion**

This chapter provided an introduction to the researcher's interest in the topic of study, followed by the motivation for the study. The concepts that form the basis of the study were also defined. The aims of the study and its research methodology were also presented. The data collection and analysis method were outlined. Aspects of trustworthiness, the pilot study, ethical considerations and the dissemination of results were also touched on in this chapter. The chapter was concluded with an outline of the forthcoming chapters in this treatise. The following chapter is devoted to a discussion of the literature reviewed, as relevant to EAPs and substance abuse in the workplace.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

An important part of the literature review is to review previous research that has been conducted in the researcher's field of interest. This is done to establish where there is a gap in the field, thus indicating where the researcher can focus the study. This chapter will provide an explanation of the specific theoretical framework that underpins this study. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011:336), a literature review serves several important functions. Firstly, it serves to inform the reader that one is knowledgeable about the research problem. It furthermore shows that the researcher has a good understanding of the major theoretical and empirical research related to the research problem. It also serves as a summary of the body of work related to the research problem. Lastly, the literature review is a critical evaluation of what the researcher perceives to be the relevant issues and questions that need to be addressed in ongoing research.

It is an essential task to review existing literature so as to establish which areas in the researcher's field of interest have been explored. This chapter will pay attention to various areas related to the research topic, such as: EAPs, specifically the benefits of EAPs, as well as factors affecting their effectiveness. EAPs offered by the SAPS, including the EAP substance abuse prevention programme, will be discussed in detail.

### **2.1 Employee assistance programmes (EAPs)**

EAPs are aimed at improving the wellness of employees. In order to understand these programs, it is first important to understand the concept of wellness. Church and Robertson (1999:305) define wellness as: "being in good health, having a sound mind in a sound body and control over all bodily functions." The focus is on the employee making conscious lifestyle changes to better their own lives, hence, being pro-active in nature. A healthy, happy individual will be a more productive employee in the workplace.

The overall well-being of an individual includes wellness of the self, wellness in the family and at the workplace. Van der Merwe (in Pillay, 2007:53) asserts that with the



support of wellness professionals, individual, family and communal health will be restored. Similarly, Church and Robertson (1999:307) state that employee deterioration can be prevented, health care can be reduced, and morale and productivity can increase together with a possible change in the public's perception of the police. Van der Merwe (2007:7) refers to nutritional wellness as eating the minimum daily allowance of various types of food, keeping healthy, a strong immune system and slowing the ageing process. This is linked to nutritional literacy, which refers to the ability to read labels on food packaging and match this information to your personal needs.

Most employers have realized that it makes sense to invest in their employees through employee assistance programmes (Petzer & Schoeman, 2005:119; Church & Robertson, 1999:305). An Employee Assistance Programme can be defined as; "a programme aimed at linking employees with personal problems to appropriate resources to correct job performance" (Sithole, 2001:80). Employee Assistance Programmes can be seen as a 'tool' for addressing challenges experienced by individuals within their work environment. Courtois, Dooley, Kennish, Paul and Reddy (2005:89) list the top problems identified by EAP as depression, family, marital, child-teen issues and substance abuse. They further state that all of these problem areas impact negatively on productivity, safety and employee involvement. According to these authors, an EAP can review possible strategies to address an identified problem and develop pilot interventions accordingly. This notion is supported by the Public Service Commission (PSC), (2006:8) who extend the identified problems to including job stress, eating disorders, financial difficulties, legal needs, separation or divorce issues, grief and loss, parenting, anger concerns, communication problems and abuse in all spheres.

EAPs are set to eliminate all the hurdles preventing an individual from functioning optimally at work. The work environment determines, significantly, whether an employee will experience a sense of belonging or feel detached from fellow employees (Ganyuaza-Twalo, 2010:2).

Kapp (2003:40) states that EAPs improve the morale of employees, job satisfaction

and employee retention. EAPs also enhance the organisation's output (Chapman, 2010:10). In general, EAPs fulfill an important role in assisting employees as well as their families to find a balance between the demands of work and personal life. EAPs also act as a support net for employers' goals for improved and sustained levels of workplace productivity (Jacobson & Attridge, 2010:3).

There is the belief that wellness in the workforce contributes largely to the wellness of the organization (Chapman, 2010:6). EAPs operate on the assumption that the result of counseling ensures long-lasting changes in psychological well-being (Petzer & Schoeman, 2005: 119). When employees gain more knowledge and insight into their well-being, it empowers them to make the right choices, which ultimately leads to healthier and more fulfilling lives. Making the correct decisions implies that the individual will act in the best interests of the organization, ensuring sustained levels of high workplace productivity. Chapman (2010:6) also states that wellness has much to do with how we choose to live from a philosophical and fulfillment viewpoint. Wellness, in an organization, needs to be promoted and, in order for any intervention strategy to be successful, it should be inclusive of all levels in that organisation (Chapman, 2010:7). A holistic health and wellness and a sound well-managed programme are important for early detection and treatment (Church & Robertson, 1999:310).

### **2.1.1 Characteristics of EAPs**

In this section, the focus is on aspects related to EAPs as well as the characteristics of EAPs. Sithole (2001:83) identified six aspects of EAPs. Firstly, EAPs should identify an employee's behavioral problems based on his/her job performance. The emphasis is placed on the specific job related stressors, rather than the symptoms related to alcoholism or other problems (Sithole, 2001:83). EAPs should also make provision for expert consultation with supervisors, managers and union representatives regarding how to take the appropriate steps in utilizing employee assistance policies and procedures. The focus here is clearly on giving guidance to management. Moreover, EAPs inherently imply the availability and appropriate use of constructive confrontation. In doing this, the organization shows its positive

attitude towards helping employees. Additionally, micro linkages with counseling, treatment and other community resources are developed. The focus here is on linking the individual with the appropriate resources to address his/her specific need. EAPs also refer to the creation and maintenance of micro linkages between the work organization and counseling, treatment and other community resources. Here the emphasis is placed on service providers. In the context of alcohol abuse the final aspect deals with the centrality of the employee's alcohol problems as the program focuses on the individual with the most significant promise for producing recovery and genuine cost saving for the organization in terms of future performance and reduced benefit usage (Sithole, 2001:83). It is hoped that through the adoption and implementation of Employee Assistance Programmes the organization can effectively, successfully, and constructively address substance abuse problems. EAPs should thus be aimed at maintaining a balance amongst the above factors in order to ensure the overall well-being of an individual. This is supported by Matlhape (2003:30) who states that an EAP is "specifically designed to identify and assist employees and their families with various difficulties that impair personal and occupational functioning, as well as designed to improve employee communication and create a positive atmosphere within the work environment."

Eight **characteristics** of EAPs are listed in the International Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) (2010b:6). These characteristics are discussed here. It, firstly, provides expert consultation to supervisors, managers and union officials who aim to assist troubled employees so as to enhance the work environment and improve job performance. EAPs can point out which intervention will be most suitable for a specific employee who is faced with a specific challenge. EAPs should also be readily available to employees, their families and their work organisations. Whenever there is a need for EAP services the individual in need should know exactly where to go. It should also provide confidential and timely problem assessment services for employees with personal problems that affect their performance at work. Employees should not be afraid that their problems will be broadcast to anyone interested, but confidentiality must be secured. EAPs should also utilize constructive confrontation, motivation and short-term intervention methods to address issues that affect job performance.

EAP professionals usually establish a link between community resources and private professionals who provide related services. In addition, it provides for the referral of employees for assessment, treatment and assistance as well as monitoring and follow-up services. Employees must be referred for appropriate services and, upon return to the organization, follow-up services should not be neglected. Linked to the above, EAPs assist the organization in establishing and maintaining effective relations with treatment and other service providers and in managing provider contracts. EAPs also provide consultation to organizations to encourage the availability of employee access to health benefits, covering medical and behavioural problems including, but not limited to, alcoholism, drug abuse and mental and emotional disorders. (EAPA, 2010b:6). EAP professionals ensure the execution of the former and provide for the evaluation of the impact of EAPs on the organization and the employer, as well as its impact on the employee's job performance. An effective EAP should include these above-mentioned characteristics.

## **2.2 Benefits of EAPs**

Mathlape (2003:32) and Courtois et al. (2005:79) assert that an EAP is an asset to an organization as it sets out to increase employee morale, reduce staff turnover, increase job satisfaction, motivate employees, enhance the organisation's image amongst employees, ensure that employees make better use of their salaries and it keeps unions out of the equation. Having these types of benefits, for employees who experience problems with the above, is beneficial as it can enhance the image that the employee has of the organization. EAPs have a direct impact on employee satisfaction and, consequently, the productivity of an employee.

Petzer et al. (2005:119) assert that EAPs provide for confidential service delivery which ensures job security and that promotion chances will not be risked. A confidential service is ensured by interviewing employees in a private space, suitable for a service of this nature and not giving feedback to anyone on discussions that transpired during these sessions, except with the consent of the employee concerned. Another benefit set out in their work, is that EAPs are applied and implemented to all employees, regardless of their position in the organization.

Furthermore, Petzer et al. (2005:119) state that EAPs enhance the general well-being of employees through improvements in the workplace so as to create increased opportunities for employee well-being and enhanced work performance. Additional benefits stated in these writings are reduced absenteeism and improved morale with an ultimate emphasis on prevention.

An example of this is the EAP introduced at one of South Africa's biggest telecommunications service providers, Telkom. EAPs were introduced to provide employees and their partners with psychological assistance to enable them to cope with work-related challenges and personal issues. The core components of this programme are: offering support to employees, increasing the knowledge of the employee with regard to various potentially harmful factors, and assisting employees in eliminating any obstacles that may influence their work performance (Telkom, 2005:75).

The Vermont Department of Health in Burlington (2014:10) proposes that EAPs also allow for early intervention when employees are confronting a variety of work/life issues and encouraging employees and managers to take action as soon as possible. The Department furthermore highlights the fact that EAPs are offered at no charge to the employees and their immediate families and that it addresses personal problems that are not covered by any other benefit programme. The significance of aspects encouraging effective EAPs is linked to the above. These refer to the aspects that should be present for an EAP to be effective, which is discussed as follows.

### **2.3 Factors promoting effective EAPs**

Biehl (2004:35) mentions various factors that promote effective EAPs: it is inclusive of assessment, providing short-term counselling, referral to internal and external service providers, monitoring during treatment, aftercare, re-integration into the workplace after treatment, feedback to the referring agent, consultation with management regarding troubled employees and marketing and communication. Here assessment refers to confidential and timely assessment services for employees with concerns that may affect their job performance (Biehl, 2004:46).

Short-term counselling services are included in the use of constructive confrontation and motivating employees. During referral of employees to internal and external service providers, they are referred for diagnosis, treatment and assistance. Linked to this is the importance of establishing effective relations with treatment- and other service providers as well as monitoring progress made and providing aftercare services. After treatment has been concluded, the employer needs to accommodate the employee in an environment that is least likely to trigger his abuse as well as to prepare fellow employees for the return of their colleague. In this regard, consultation is done to enhance the work environment and improve the employee's job performance. Employers also need to encourage the availability of health benefits covering medical and behavioural problems. Marketing and communication is also vital. This refers to the active promotion of the availability of EA services to employees (Namathe, 2005:36-39).

Other factors proposed by Komane (2003:15-16) that are similar to the above are review, risk management, professional ethics, supervisory application, communication, capacity, design, consultation and position. The researcher will now elaborate on these factors. Review refers to the responsibility of management to track themes and trends in the organization and offer solutions in this regard. Risk management, refers to the process where management, with the assistance of EA practitioners, ensures the safety of practitioners. Professional ethics should always be maintained. Professionals should come up with strategies to maintain confidentiality and avoid possible lawsuits.

Supervisory application refers to the responsibility of the practitioner to guide supervisors and to inform them about any discrepancies. With regard to communication, there should be mutual interaction between the practitioners and the organization that they work for as well as amongst employees and their supervisors. Capacity refers to practitioners teaching employees about accommodating diversity at the workplace. Diversity is also inclusive of language and cultural differences. Both employees and supervisors should be empowered to accept one another. Linked to this is the consideration of disability in the workplace and treating members with respect. Design and consultation is concerned with each organization designing

an EAP that is in line with their policies. Employees need to be consulted in this process as they have valuable inputs. Lastly, positioning refers to informing managers about the trends that are being followed (Komane, 2003:15-16).

Mathlape (2003:36) suggests a number of priorities for the successful use of EAPs. He believes that South Africans should see productivity as a strategic issue. This will facilitate the use of productivity enhancing solutions, like EAPs, strategically and communicating company leadership commitment to such practices. A company's use of EAP should also be based on an informed set of expectations, which will have an impact on the strategic objectives of the company. The focus of management should therefore not only be to meet the organization's business objectives, but to achieve optimal utilization of both organizational resources as well as human beings. EAP services should also refrain from being reactionary in focus and develop a preventative and facilitative role. When the focus is on the latter, it can be used to transform the organizational culture as a whole to a more caring and supportive one. EAPs are an organizational development function and should therefore be positioned as a central ethos to all human resource management functions in an organization. EAP professionals need to be aware of the different challenges employees are faced with. This awareness will facilitate their ability to support the organization and employees in a manner that truly matters to the organization. It should also promote voluntary participation and it should be made available to all employees irrespective of their levels in an organization (Petzer & Schoeman, 2005:120-121). These authors state further that EAPs should be in tune with specific workplace environments and specific situations. Confidentiality is the cornerstone of these programmes so as to ensure employee job security and, eliminating obstacles that will result in their chances of promotion being threatened (Maquarie University EAP Handbook, 2005:6 and Barret, 2007:51).

#### **2.4 EAPs offered by SAPS**

The National Instruction ((N/I) 3/2003:1) on Employee Assistance Programmes in the SAPS regulates the use of the EAP as an intervention to address problems that may affect the work performance of employees. Different preventative programmes

feature under the EAP umbrella, such as: HIV/AIDS, disability awareness, stress management, financial management, life skills and the substance abuse prevention programmes. The last programme mentioned is of importance to this study; it will therefore be discussed in more detail in the ensuing section of this chapter.

#### **2.4.1 EAP substance abuse prevention programme offered by the SAPS**

According to McNeece and DiNitto (2005:201), prevention programmes entail education about the negative effects of substance abuse as well as problem-solving techniques for resisting abuse. They group preventative strategies into five categories, namely: public information and education, service measures, technologic measures, legislative and regulatory measures, and economic measures. They assert that the above strategies are directed at preventing and decreasing the abuse of substances whilst others focus on reducing or eliminating the harmful consequences of abuse on the individual concerned as well as the broader society. In addition, Johnson and Yanca (2010:402) describe prevention programmes as providing an ongoing service to children, teenagers and adults. According to them, the most common form of prevention provides information on the physical, mental and environmental consequences of abuse. They also support the above authors in the assertion that these programmes offer ways to resist the pressure to use drugs and alcohol. As a means of ensuring that these programmes are employed within the workplace, the Public Service Commission (PSC) (2006:12) postulates that one way of strengthening the Public Service is to implement an effective health and counseling infrastructure as well as an EAP; hence, ensuring that public servants are able to perform optimally. In support of this, Courtois et al. (2005:76) found that in the absence of a sound EAP employees' who are faced with, amongst other matters, substance abuse dependencies are inclined to be less productive in the workplace; it is thus imperative to have such a programme.

Namathe (2005:29-30) adds that EAPs are structured to provide services in the workplace and are staffed by social workers, nurses, medical officers and labour relations personnel. Namathe (2005:31) postulates that these programmes are proactive in nature and focus on assisting employees to function effectively. The content



of the programme is concerned with defining the difference between substance abuse and dependence as well as the effects of the abuse on the different spheres of life; that is, the individual, his/her family, peers, school and community. It also concentrates on the phases of abuse, the stages of change as well as treatment aspects (National SAPS Self-management Programme, 2004).

De Winnaar (2004:46) mentions the same content matter, but adds the alcohol policy and resources available to employees seeking help. Du Plooy (2004:23) adds that the outcomes of the programme are structured so as to distinguish between the myths and the facts of substance abuse; to obtain more information on the phases of abuse; to distinguish between abuse and dependence; to understand the effect of abuse on the employee as well as to become aware of the treatment and resources available to the affected employee.

Despite the existence of this programme, substance abuse still occurs and has a negative impact on work performance. Employees are attending the programme but the problem persists. This is of great concern to the researcher. In addition to the substance abuse prevention programme, employees who are challenged by substance abuse are also involved in individual counseling sessions provided by the professionals forming part of the EHW section within the SAPS.

The substance abuse prevention programme within the SAPS is national in that it targets the whole SAPS. Foxcroft (in Myers, Harper, Fakier, Kader & Mazok, 2008:9) states that “educational interventions are aimed at preventing the onset of substance abuse via raising awareness.” Any employee who experiences the need to utilize the services of the Employee Health and Wellness section can feel free to do so. Employees can request the services of EHW from their own free will or they can be coerced into utilizing the services. In order for these alcohol prevention programs to be effective, it is important to gain an awareness of why an employee may use or abuse alcohol or other substances (Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, Strom-Gottfried & Larsen, 2010:202). According to these authors, problematic alcohol use may be related to other problems at work or within the family. They further postulate that the abuse of substances may also severely impair health, create serious community

problems and is associated with high incidences of suicide, homicide, child abuse and violence. These writers also believe that dependence on a substance causes distress and disruption in the life of the person with the dependency and in the lives of members of the individual's social and support system.

#### **2.4.2 The reasons for the need for this preventative programme**

In the researcher's experience of working with SAPS employees, she identified that the inherent stressors of the job contribute to the employees abusing alcohol. Indicators like limited resources (vehicles, offices and human resources) and promotion opportunities (employees carrying the same rank for years on end without acknowledgement) frustrate and demoralize employees to the extent that they then abuse substances so as to forget about these issues. Waller et al. (2002:7) postulate that "harm associated with substance abuse might include problems such as loss of workplace production associated with low morale".

Hepworth et al. (2010:202) suggest that the symptoms of someone who is misusing alcohol include a pre-occupation with making sure that the amount of alcohol necessary for intoxication remains accessible at all times. These individuals will also affiliate with other heavy drinkers in an attempt to camouflage their drinking behavior. As the drinking binges advance, the abuser tends to hide evidence of drinking and drinks alone. Individuals dependent on alcohol may experience intense feelings of guilt and anxiety, which may lead to more drinking in an attempt to escape these negative feelings which, in turn, leads to the magnification of these negative feelings.

A further challenge for SAPS employees, that the researcher has noted, is that they are, due to the nature of their duties, exposed to gruesome scenes practically on a daily basis. Scenes of murder, rape, accidents, suicides, etc. which people in other working environments do not encounter and may deem abnormal, is a normal part of the lives of SAPS employees. This continuous exposure to trauma has various effects on the functioning of the individual like insomnia, stress, aggressiveness and nervousness. In order to deal with these effects it is also known that employees turn to alcohol to find solace. Cross and Ashley (2004:24) state that law enforcement officers face traumatic incidents daily. These events are typically unexpected,

sudden and fall beyond the bounds of normal experience; hence, they can have a profound physical, emotional and psychological impact. They further indicate that some police officials believe that substance abuse may offer the best way to cope with otherwise unbearable feelings like grief and loss.

Ghodse (2005:5) indicates that it must be acknowledged that certain working situations and conditions are associated with increased alcohol and substance use problems such that it appears that they may have a causal role. He mentions factors such as day or night shift, working in remote locations, unsatisfactory communication and job stressors which may in turn result from unequal rewards, role conflict, and excessive work load. He also mentions that law enforcement officers can be perceived as being at risk from these factors and do indeed suffer from substance abuse or misuse problems. An illustration of this fact is that visible policing employees' i.e. uniform employees, are required to work under harsh circumstances. They are expected to work twelve hour shifts which means that they are spending long hours away from their loved ones. In the process, they are missing out on important bonding time with spouses, children or significant others in their lives. This may lead to employees forming romantic relationships with their colleagues at work, seeing that most of their day is spent at work. When these affairs come to the ears of their significant others, it usually causes conflict within the relationship. Employees then, in order to deal with this conflict, turn to abusing alcohol as a means of managing these conflict situations. According to Ghodse (2005:5), the work environment of many employees drives them to take refuge in the consumption of alcohol and even drugs.

Common general indicators of substance abuse are discussed in Hepworth et al. (2010:202). They are set out as follows:

Substance abuse causes changes in attendance at work. There is also a decrease in normal capabilities, i.e. work performance and efficiency. Furthermore, individuals tend to have a poor physical appearance, negligent dress code and bad personal hygiene. Individuals also tend to wear sunglasses to conceal dilated or constricted pupils and to compensate for their inability to adjust to sunlight. In addition, there is

an unusual effort to cover arms and hide needle marks as well as an association with known drug users. Employees may also be involved in illegal or dangerous activities to secure drugs. In this regard, Jacobson and Attridge (2010:9) recognize the fact that substance abuse at work cannot be managed independently from the environment in which it occurs. In their work, they emphasize the fact that, in order to support sustained recovery in individuals who abuse substances, services need to be expanded so as to include a variety of work-life concerns that affect employees and that their families can utilize. In order to provide further support to affected employees, Bennet et al. (2000:158) also emphasize the importance of intra-group relations at work as these groups can fulfill a supportive function to the troubled employee. Once again, the importance is emphasized of not viewing substance abuse as isolated from everything else.

Courtois et al. (2005:89) and Bennet et al. (2000:157) emphasize the importance of outlining the cost of substance abuse to the workplace. They mention facts like loss in productivity, increased pressure on co-workers, increased use of sick leave and increased medical costs due to injuries or longer hospital stays. It is therefore safe to assume that it would be beneficial to employees should substance abuse prevention programmes focus on addressing the abovementioned issues. In support of this, Moriarty and Field (2001:156) highlight that practitioners need to address certain issues when dealing with substance abuse. These issues are inclusive of absenteeism and increased accident incidence at work and at home, as brought on by substance abuse. The aim is to reduce these factors and, thereby, enhance the overall productivity of the South African economy. Sithole (2001:84) also adds issues that need to be addressed when dealing with substance abuse; these issues include the strengthening of employee morale, resolving interpersonal conflict at work, improving the quality of services provided at work, encouraging emotional intelligence and reducing anger at the workplace.

Moreover, in an attempt to establish an effective EAP, Bennet et al. (2000:157) and Sithole (2001:83) emphasize the importance of addressing referrals to appropriate community based rehabilitation resources. They also emphasize the need to train supervisors, managers and trade unions on their role in this helping process. All the

literature consulted accentuates the complexity of substance abuse and the fact that it does not exist in a vacuum.

## **2.5 Preliminary review of previous research on EAP and substance abuse in the workplace**

In an attempt to establish which area, related to substance abuse in the SAPS, needs to be researched in more depth, the researcher explored what existing studies have done on related topics. In this search, the Nexus, Ebscohost and Sabinet databases were consulted as well as doing various Google scholar searches. The researcher also consulted different books on the subject. It was established that a wide variety of studies have been conducted relating to EAP in the workplace, but very little is studied on EAP as a substance abuse prevention programme within the SAPS. The identified studies will now be discussed.

A study conducted by Harwood and Reichman (2000:2) in Virginia, in the United States of America, was concerned with the economics and social costs of substance abuse. It therefore looked at the cost to employers with regard to employee substance abuse. Certain statistics that were reflected in the study portrayed that forty percent of industrial fatalities and forty seven percent of industrial injuries are linked to alcoholism and alcohol consumption. It was also indicated that, amongst full time employees, six comma two million (seven comma six percent) abuse alcohol heavily and that occupational categories in which employees were most likely to offer an EAP were protective services. The findings of Harwood and Reichman (2002:18) conclude that both employers and employees recognize the nature of the problem and that they had worked together to find common solutions to the problem. Barret (2007:51) found, in addition to the above, that EAPs are identified as a means of safeguarding an organization from stress claims. Hence, more and more organizations are interested in EAPs. These organizations are said to make use of both the internal- and external model of EAPs. The fact that employers should evaluate the experience and quality of the service is also emphasized, as poor counselling could result in legal claims.

Naicker and Fouche (2003:25) also assert that if EAPs are not properly

implemented, they are seldom a success. Evaluation to demonstrate their effectiveness is of utmost importance here. Barret (2007:53) also believes that service providers should add in more services to the programme and they should be focused on the 'right' product, as well as promoting it correctly, so that EAPs can have a dramatic impact on absence and employee well-being.

A study conducted by Barrett (2007:51), in the United Kingdom, with employees in the private sector also identifies that employees are the most valuable asset of an organization and that employers are more aware of their social responsibility towards employees.

Moriarty and Field (2001:157) conducted a research study in the Illinois Police Department. Their findings show that EAPs should be made available to new recruits as soon as they join the organization, as support for the troubled employee should receive precedence. The statistics reflected here indicate that twenty-five percent of all police officials have a serious alcohol dependency problem and that eight percent of the categories labeled "heavy drinkers" were police officials.

Moriarty and Field's study, conducted in 2000 as well as (Bennett et al, 2000:157; Petzer & Schoeman, 2005:119; Namathe, 2005:31; Xaba, 2006:105), are all in support of the idea of early and ongoing intervention as well as wellness in the workforce. According to these authors, the wellness of employees results in wellness of the organization as a whole. In order to obtain this, an individual must maintain a good state of physical, spiritual and mental well-being within their personal lives as well as at the workplace (Van der Merwe, 2007:21; Mathlape, 2003:30; Barrett, 2007:51).

The South African research conducted by Van der Merwe and Mathlape indicated that forty five percent of EAPs were located in Occupational Health sectors. All these authors are South Africans except for Bennet, Lehman and Reynolds whose study originates from Texas.

An important factor related to EAPs, as identified by Harwood and Reichman (2000:14), Namathe (2005:49) and Killian (2008:15), is that policies need to be

established at the workplace to reduce the abuse of alcohol by workers and that these policies need to be based on the assessed needs of each workplace. Statistics reflected that ninety-five comma two percent of large companies have written policies on these issues. The South African National Drug Master Plan (Killian, 2008:15) asserts that any EAP prevention programme should be structured and guided by policy with access to counseling and rehabilitation services. The importance of a mandated EAP substance abuse prevention programme is also highlighted in Moriarty and Field (2001:157-160), as well as the need for ongoing assessment of needs. These studies indicated that six to twenty percent of the workforce is likely to be drug dependent.

Losses in terms of production are one of the main issues an EAP wishes to address. Major losses in the production levels of workers, due to absenteeism as a result of alcohol abuse, are cited in the studies conducted by Namathe (2005:29), Harwood and Reichman (2000:14) and Killian (2008:15). This is supported by another South African study, conducted by September (2010:6), which identifies factors that impact negatively on work performance as well as one, by Sithole (2001:80), which focuses on eliminating all possible obstacles that may prevent an individual from functioning to his/her optimal productivity in the workplace. September indicated that ten percent of the total employee population in an average organization is troubled at any given time and that it costs the organization five percent of that employee's annual salary. Sithole, a South African author, supported this and added that five to ten percent of these employees have problems with substance abuse. Ahmadi, Maharlooy and Alishahi (2004:60) conducted a study in Iran which indicated the importance of the above as well as having preventative programmes with an educational base, when dealing with substance abuse. The need to look holistically at the life of an employee is therefore emphasized. An important control measure for substance abuse is education and raising the awareness of employees (September, 2010:21; Ahmadi et al. 2004:60; Namathe, 2005:52 and Killian, 2008:13). No statistics were reflected pertaining to the stated facts. Linked to the former is the need for supervisors or managers to be trained in EAP substance abuse prevention programmes (September, 2010:32), in order to identify the early warning signs of abuse and challenges that employees deal with (Namathe, 2005:52).

A study conducted by De Winnaar (2004:100) also relates to the role, knowledge and attitude of commanders within the SAPS regarding EAPs in the West Metropole, in the Western Cape. In these findings, she reports an awareness of the EAP programmes by employees in the organization, but not specifically referring to the substance abuse prevention programme. De Winnaar also conducted an additional study in 2008 in the same area. This study focused on the role of supervisors in the SAPS in the successful utilization of the EAP. In her findings, she indicated that supervisors (commanders) have the tendency of waiting and wanting to fulfill the role of the social worker in assessing the troubled employee in order to address the presenting problem. When employees are then eventually referred, their problems are already in an advanced state which complicates the management thereof. Her findings also indicate that supervisors do not have knowledge of the types of referrals that can be made to the programme or the necessary knowledge to describe the goals of the EAP. She further indicates that supervisors are sometimes unwilling to use the services offered by EAPs, but that the majority of the supervisors interviewed, in her study, did not hesitate to refer a troubled employee, because the well-being of employees was seen as very important to them.

Another study, also conducted in the West Metropole in the Western Cape in 2004, by Biehl, was similarly concerned with how the Helping Professions, which is a unit within the SAPS that concerns themselves with the well-being of employees, could be activated to participate in the development and integration of an effective internal EAP. The findings indicated a need for all professionals to receive in-service training on EAP, with the emphasis on counselling due to their training in different models and their different approaches. Marketing, referral of clients, respect for each other's role and open channels of communication were found to be essential when functioning from an EAP perspective. He also indicated that a uniform way of doing things needs to be established and those professionals need to accept and trust one another as equal partners in the helping relationship for EAP to be effective. In this South African study it was found that ninety one percent of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of services. This supports what this researcher seeks to achieve with the focus of this research.



The studies on substance abuse and EAP, as reviewed above, indicate that the emphasis is placed on how substance abuse impacts the employer and the employee as well as the need for implementing substance abuse prevention programmes in the workplace. The importance of working together to come up with solutions to the substance abuse problem is emphasized. Written policies should be a prerequisite and the concern that these policies are based on the needs of the different workplace environments, requires attention.

Gaps identified by the researcher are that the findings of international studies cannot be applied to the South African context as there are great differences in our economic and social systems. For example, South Africa is a developing country whilst the United States of America is a developed country; this puts South Africa at a backlog in terms of development. There is also a need for a more holistic and integrative approach when conducting studies relating to EAP substance abuse prevention programmes. The researcher further identified that there is a lack of emphasis placed on early identification and intervention in substance abuse prevention programmes in South Africa. Thus, there is a need for broader research on the topic. Although some of the studies reviewed were South African studies, with a focus on substance abuse and EAP, all of these studies were conducted outside the SAPS, except for the study conducted by Pillay (2007). The researcher therefore makes the assertion that there seems to be a lacuna in this specific field of interest. The researcher's study will significantly contribute to the body of knowledge of the discipline in that the experiences of EAP as a substance abuse prevention programme by employees of the SAPS has not yet been highlighted within the South African context.

## **2.6 Theoretical framework**

Johnson and Yanca (2010:388) identified various theories, models and methods to guide social work practice. The theoretical framework appropriate for this research study is based on social cognitive theory. As a means of understanding the research topic, the researcher is of the opinion that it is important to discuss the identified theoretical framework relevant to this study. The former offers an insightful lens for

understanding the 'issue' of substance abuse as human situations and consequently human needs are complex. It is thus important to develop a frame of reference for understanding the reasons behind behaviours (Johnson & Yanca, 2010:4). This theory will be discussed below.

### **2.6.1 Social Cognitive Learning Theory**

According to Frost and Zuckerman (2008:1), "behaviour change theories provide structures that educators may use to systematically design educational programmes and to explain how and why a programme is expected to be effective." Based on this, the researcher chose social cognitive theory as the theoretical framework on which her study is based. Pajares (2002:1) emphasizes that according to this theory cognition plays a critical role in people's ability to construct reality, self-regulate, encode information and perform behaviours. The mutual nature of the determining factors of human functioning makes it possible for interventions, like EAPs, to be directed at personal, environmental or behavioural factors. Social cognitive theory is rooted in a view of human agency in which individuals are proactively engaged in their own development and can make things happen by their actions (Pajares, 2002:3). It thus explains how people acquire and maintain certain behavioural patterns, whilst also providing the basis for intervention strategies. The author explains human behaviour in terms of a triadic, dynamic and reciprocal model in which behaviour, personal factors and environmental influences interact.

An individual's behaviour is hence uniquely determined by these interactions. The further assumption is that strategies for increasing well-being can be aimed at improving emotional, cognitive, or motivational processes, increasing behavioural competencies, or altering the social conditions under which people live and work. In the SAPS, for example, the EAP practitioners might be faced with enhancing the self-confidence of employees who experience challenges with substance abuse. Using this theory, these practitioners can then work to improve employees' emotional states and to correct their faulty self-beliefs and habits of thinking, i.e. personal factors. Practitioners can also improve employees' skills and self-regulatory practices, i.e. behaviour. Lastly, practitioners may alter structures in the workplace

that may undermine employee success; i.e. environment.

Glanz, Rimer and Lewis (2002:169) also identified these three core elements that constantly influence each other when acquiring or maintaining certain behavior patterns. They also referred to the influence they have on one another and do not see it as a linear process, but a multi-layered interactional process amongst all of the mentioned factors (Pajares, 2002:1). In the police environment, Gorta (2008:90) identified that stress at work as well as in the personal environment, resulting from lifestyle choices, are major reasons why employees abuse substances. Walter, Gerhard, Duersteler-MacFarland, Weyers, Boening and Wiesbeck (2006:100-101) add social factors related to living conditions, like staying alone and marital status, to this. They postulate that police officials have learnt to drink more in order to alleviate stress; thus indicating this interactional process mentioned by Pajares. Related to the former, Frost (2008:4) also outline the key constructs of this theory as reciprocal determination, behaviour capability, expectations, self-efficacy, modelling, observational learning and reinforcement. The first construct outlined by Frost (2008:4) is that of reciprocal determination. This construct acknowledges that behaviour is dynamic and is a consequence of the continuous interaction between the person, past events and the current environment. In support of this, Hepworth et al. (2010:206) emphasize the importance of assessing an individual's perceptions of others, themselves and events as this largely determines how they feel and respond in general, and to their problematic situations in particular. Police officials are challenged by various potential stressors like high crime levels, organizational transformation, continuous exposure to death and injury, lack of resources, inadequate salaries, negative public image of police officials and the organization as a whole. The continuous interaction between these factors can act as potential triggers for the abuse of substances by police officials. To understand and influence human behaviour, one thus needs to familiarize oneself with how people think.

The second construct, behaviour capability, refers to the fact that if a person is to perform a particular behaviour that person must have knowledge of the behaviour and the necessary skills to perform it. This notion is supported by Hepworth et al. (2010:363) who reiterate that tasks are intended to facilitate a client's sense that,

through effort, success is eventually possible. The SAPS EAP substance abuse prevention programme increases behavior competencies by teaching behavior management skills.

The third construct refers to the value a person places on a particular outcome and is closely linked to the importance of setting goals for achieving expected outcomes. The individual needs to choose goals that he/she feels personally capable of achieving. Hepworth et al. (2010:356) are in agreement with this assertion as they suggest that interventions that make sense to the concerned individual, as well as the helper, should be chosen. The SAPS EAP substance abuse prevention programme creates awareness regarding substance abuse and the negative effect it has on the individual, work and the family. In this respect, the educational component of the prevention programme will provide the employee with the necessary information to set achievable goals for him/herself. This programme enables employees to anticipate and effectively cope with challenges they may face when dealing with substance abuse issues.

Another construct, self-efficacy, refers to the confidence a person feels about performing a particular activity as well as the belief that their actions will make a difference and that the results will be beneficial. Rosenstock et al. (1988:181) assert that self-efficacy can be increased by setting short-term goals so as to obtain the desired outcome. Police officials are continuously exposed to high risk situations and, when exposed to these situations, the ideal response would be an effective coping mechanism. When an official engages in certain behaviour and it is successful, the experience will enhance the police official's self-efficacy. Should it be unsuccessful, however, the opposite holds true and it will lead to an increase in the attractiveness of substance abuse for dealing with the situation. This is especially true if the official maintains positive outcome expectancies regarding the effects of substance abuse (Chetty, 2011:20). Therefore, people who regard outcomes as personally determined, but lack the required skill, would resultantly experience low self-efficacy and view activities with a sense of pointlessness.

In linking these constructs to the researcher's study one must be mindful of the fact

that the employee who abuses substances is part of a broader environment as well as a work environment that presents many difficulties. The employee might acknowledge the need for change in his/her behaviour, but might lack the confidence and the know-how. It is here that vicarious experiences can be used to encourage the observation of positive behaviours and the positive reinforcements that accompany these; hence, changing the drinking behaviour. Behavior change is only believed to be possible if an individual believes that any action taken will make a difference and that the outcome of that action will have certain benefits. Based on the above, providing individuals with educational information ensures that they make informed decisions on planned actions. The desired behavior change can, for instance, be obtained by giving people information about the link between the self-concept and locus of control. By educating employees on the fact that those with a positive self-perception and internal locus of control will be more likely to believe that behaviour can influence outcome than those with a low self-esteem and external locus of control. They can, furthermore, be taught that individuals with a high self-esteem are also more likely to believe that they have the skill to perform the required behaviour. Should an individual have this confidence then the advantages of performing the required behaviour will outweigh the disadvantages (Rosenstock, Stretcher & Becker, 1988:178). In respect of this, SAPS employees therefore need to believe that, if they stop abusing substances, it will have a positive effect on their lives. They must also believe that their current lifestyle poses a threat to their own goals relating to health, well-being and work satisfaction, and should be equipped with the necessary skill and ability to act as well as the belief that action will result in success.

The fifth construct, modelling, simply means doing what others do and the last identified construct occurs when a person watches other people's behaviour and the reinforcements associated with those behaviours. This construct is not sufficiently covered in the programme and could possibly lead to a more effective SAPS EAP substance abuse prevention programme. Furthermore, this theory proposes that role models be used to encourage behavior change. Glanz et al. (2002:169) assert that it is the environment that provides role models; observational learning can thus occur when a person watches the actions of another person in a specific environment.

Abbott (2007:1) and Smith & Berge (2009:1) provide evidence regarding how learning occurs in a social context. This implies that we learn from our interactions with others in a specific social context. Smith and Berge (2009:3) also maintain that people also develop similar behaviours through observation of the behaviour of others. Whether these behavior patterns will be sustained is dependent on the reinforcements that the person receives for the behaviour. Moreover, Smith and Berge (2009:4) assert that the social and physical environment can either create barriers or facilitate the change process. These authors refer to the three key components of Bandura's social learning theory. These components are inclusive of observational learning, imitation and behaviour modelling. With the first component, the behaviour of others is observed in order to start the learning process. Here, the outcomes of behaviour can also be learnt by describing the consequences of behavior. It can effectively increase appropriate behaviour and decrease undesired behaviour. The second component of this theory refers to the imitation of behaviour, especially if the observational experience was positive or if it includes rewards related to the observed behaviour. Consequently, the third component follows: modelling. In this regard, it is important for the exemplary to model appropriate behaviour. According to Foster (2006), the individual should take everything positive about the observed and imitated behaviour and internalize it. In the prevention programme, the employees form part of a group for the duration of the programme; in this group, members are equipped to deal with future situations as they learn from the facilitator and other group members. This fact is not given adequate attention in the SAPS substance abuse prevention programme and should possibly be added to make the programme more effective.

In an attempt to elaborate on the above, Learning Theory assumes that alcohol or drug use results in a decrease in psychological states such as anxiety, stress and tension; thus, positively reinforcing the user (McNeece & DiNitto; 2005:27). This learned response then continues until physical dependence develops and, at this stage, the aversion of withdrawal symptoms is the prime motivator for usage. This theory is based on the premise that what has been learnt can be unlearnt. Craig (2004:20) also discusses social learning theory and how learning and conditioning plays a pivotal role in the onset of substance abuse. The environment is regarded as

an important causal factor of drinking behaviour.

The abovementioned factors are important because, when planning prevention programmes, it is imperative to know how many of the targeted population are interested in health matters, believe that they currently have a problem and believe that the threat can be reduced by some form of action on their part. It is also important to obtain information regarding the extent to which people feel confident to carry out the prescribed act, sometimes over extended periods of time. These needs can be used to strengthen programme planning and ensure that interventions are needs based. Pajares (2002:2) further maintains that strategies for increasing well-being, like prevention programmes, can be aimed at improving emotional, cognitive or motivational processes, increasing behavioural competencies, or altering the social conditions under which people live and work. He also asserts that, within a group setting, people tend to work together on shared beliefs about their capabilities and common aspirations to better their lives. They can therefore learn from one another.

The above discussion on Social Cognitive Learning Theory relates to the systems approach commonly used by Social Workers. Hepworth et al, (2010:217) emphasizes the need for Social Workers to assess clients in their environmental context. To this regard, intervention efforts may be directed at assisting people to adapt to their environments, altering environments to more adequately meet the needs of clients or a combination between the two. Johnson and Yanca (2010:392), also depict the nature of this theory. In their writings they also emphasize concepts about transactions between people and their environments, adaptation, reciprocity, mutuality, growth and development as well as stress and coping. The interaction amongst factors in the individual, the immediate family and the environment steers the individual's development. A Social Worker operating from this premise works in collaboration with the client seeking to devise appropriate action plans in an attempt to orchestrate enhanced self-esteem and positive change. This is important as the issue of substance abuse does not only adversely affect the individual who abuse it, but also the family they are a part of; the organization they work for and ultimately the community they are accountable to. Their functioning within the family and

productivity at work are there for unavoidably affected. It can be inferred from this theory that it is only possible to understand a person within a specific situation when you study all factors pertaining to it. The problem of a person abusing alcohol can hence not be understood by looking at it in a manner which is not synchronous with the situation in which it occurs.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter focused on reviewing and discussing the existing literature, as relevant to this dissertation. The literature review indicated that EAPs are important for improving the wellness of employees and their families. It was also established that EAPs ensure that employees perform optimally at work. It can therefore be assumed that EAPs are essential to organisations.

Substance abuse within the work environment was also explored and was found to be a complex phenomenon. It cannot be viewed in isolation as it impacts not only on the individual, but also the family he/she is a part of as well as the organisation he/she works for.

The identified theoretical framework that underpins this study is Social Cognitive Theory. The main assumption of this theory is that behavior change is only possible if the individual believes that any action taken will make a difference and that this action will have certain benefits. This fact is closely linked to self-concept and locus of control. This theory also emphasizes the importance of role models as change agents.

Current literature stresses the value of employees and the need for EAPs in the workplace. The strong correlation between substance abuse and industrial fatalities and industrial injuries was also identified. Furthermore, attention was drawn to the fact that EAPs should be made available to all new recruits as soon as they join the organization and it should be continued throughout an employee's work-life. Moreover, the literature reviewed emphasized the need to have a holistic view of the life of the individual. The importance of providing training to managers and supervisors, so as to sensitize them on substance abuse issues at the workplace



and ways of dealing with it, was also stressed in the literature. Attention was also drawn to the fact that these managers and supervisors should fulfill a monitoring and evaluative function when concerned with the well-being of their employees.

The literature review was discussed in this chapter. The research methodology employed in conducting this research will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE: APPLICATION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methodology followed by the researcher during the research process. It will begin with a discussion of the research question, goal and objectives of the study. In an attempt to answer the research questions or to solve the research problem, the researcher has followed the approach whereby knowing what you want to find out will unavoidably lead to the questions of how you will get to that information (Silverman, 2000:88). The research design and methodology is also outlined in this chapter. The population, sample, sampling method, data collection methods, data analysis as well as data verification, are specified herein. The researcher will also discuss how entry into the research site was gained and the ethical considerations for the study.

Polit and Hungler (2004:233) postulate that methodology decisions depend on the nature of the research question. The starting point of any research is, however, to determine the research goal and objectives. These will be identified in the following section.

### **3.2 Research question, goal and objectives**

Neuman (2006:15) emphasises the fact that the qualitative research process is seen as spiralling rather than linear in its progression. This implies that the stages of the research process are enmeshed into each other and that the researcher has to move between these stages in answering the research question. The research question is seen as a statement which informs the reader as to what the researcher wishes to investigate and can thus be seen as the most critical part of the research proposal. Holliday (2002:31) supports the latter in his statement that the research question gives guidance to what information the researcher wants to achieve within her specific field of interest.

According to De Vos et al. (2005:321), a research question is the product of vague thoughts being formulated as specific questions about the subject. The research question needs to be related to the goals and objectives of the study.

### **3.2.1 Research question**

According to Neuman (200:42), research questions refer to the relationships between a small number of variables which takes the form of wide ranging enquiries reflecting on complex situations (Fouche, 2005:11). The research question of this study conforms to the above definition as it is exploratory and descriptive in nature. A research question forms a key component of the study in guiding the direction of the research.

The primary research question for this study is:

*What are the Port Elizabeth SAPS employees' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme?*

In order to answer the research question, it is imperative for the researcher to have clear goals and objectives. These will be discussed in the following section.

### **3.2.2 Research goal and objectives**

According to Fouche (2002:107), a research goal refers more to the end product that the study sets out to achieve or the ultimate dream. The author is of the opinion that goals are the broader more abstract conception of the end towards which effort is directed. A research goal signifies the purpose of the research study.

Johnson and Yanca (2010:208) perceive goals as the overall, long-range expected outcome of the endeavor. According to these authors, a goal is usually reached after intermediate goals or objectives have been attained.

The overall goal of the research study is:

*To gain an understanding of the Port Elizabeth SAPS employees' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.*

In the opinion of Fouche (2002:107), objectives will then relate to the concrete measurable steps that need to be taken to fulfil the dream. It needs to be realistic, achievable and time-limited (Johnson & Yanca, 2010:209). It is thus helpful to specify

a general goal that is a statement of the desired outcome and then to develop specific, short-term objectives.

The objectives for this research are:

- *To explore and describe SAPS employees' overall perceptions of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.*
- *To explore SAPS employees' perceptions of the educational value, format of the programme and its recruitment procedures.*
- *To explore and describe SAPS employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.*
- *To offer recommendations for an effective substance abuse prevention programme.*

The next section will review the research design and methodology. De Vos et al. (2005:307) state that it is important that researchers select a research design that is suitable for their specific research goal. This will aid the researcher in gaining an enhanced understanding of the research phenomena.

### **3.3 Research Design and Methodology**

Punch (2005:36) states that it is advisable to identify the preferred research perspective early in the study. According to De Vos et al. (2011:75), it is important to note that various designs will differ depending on the purpose of the study, the nature of the research question as well as the skills and the resources available to the researcher. The next section of this chapter provides a discussion of the research approach that the researcher found suitable for her study.

#### **3.3.1 Research Approach**

There are two primary research approaches, namely: quantitative and qualitative. According to Holliday (2002:1), it is fairly standard to introduce qualitative research by distinguishing it from quantitative research. He argues that a major binding

feature of qualitative research is its opposition to positivism, the philosophical basis for quantitative research. Some characteristics of quantitative research outlined in Holliday (2002:6) are as follows:

- It counts occurrences over a large population.
- It uses statistics to validate generalization from survey samples and experiments.
- It attempts to reduce contaminating social variables.

Engel and Schutt (2005:16) are of the opinion that the goals of these types of research approaches differ. According to these authors, quantitative researchers aim to develop an understanding that correctly reflects what is actually happening in the real world. Qualitative researchers, however, aim to develop an “authentic” understanding of a social process or social setting. Based on the goal of this study, the researcher opted for a qualitative research approach.

De Vos et al. (2011:74) define qualitative research as “research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions”. The aim of this type of research is always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand. Qualitative research is an “umbrella phrase” covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world” (Welman, 2005:188). It is an approach that is descriptive in nature which can be successfully used in describing groups, communities and organizations.

Creswell (2003: 181-183) sets out some characteristics of this approach as follows:

- Qualitative research is interested in meaning – how people make sense of their lives, experiences and their structures of the world.
- The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data is mediated through this human instrument (i.e. the researcher conducting the interviews and doing observation), rather than through

inventories, questionnaires or machines.

- Qualitative research involves fieldwork. The researcher physically goes to the people, setting, site, or institution to observe or record behaviour in its natural setting.
- Qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning and understanding gained through words or pictures.
- The process of qualitative research is inductive in that the researcher builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses and theories from the words or narratives of the participants.

There are various advantages of qualitative research set out by Burns and Grove (2003:374). Firstly, qualitative research is a means to understanding human emotions such as rejection, pain, caring, powerlessness, anger and effort. Secondly, since human emotions are difficult to quantify, qualitative research appears to be a more effective method of investigating emotional responses. Qualitative research furthermore uses abstract thinking processes to develop research findings from which meaning and theoretical implications emerge; this research design is flexible and unique (Burns & Grove, 2003:374).

The researcher of this study was of the opinion that a qualitative research approach was relevant to this particular study. This was particularly relevant as the aim of the study was to gain an understanding of the perceptions of employees of the Port Elizabeth SAPS, with regard to the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. This approach was best suited for the study as the researcher was interested in the current status of the phenomena she wished to explore. The researcher was also able to gain insight into the perceptions that employees had regarding the substance abuse prevention programme. They were also studied in their own setting (the SAPS), which allowed for participants to be relaxed as they were interviewed in an environment familiar to them.

### **3.3.2 Research design**

The research design can be seen as a plan for conducting the research (De Vos et al., 2002:137). It seeks to answer the research question and focus on the where, what and how of the study. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001:3), a research design is used to describe the procedures for conducting a study and its purpose is to help find appropriate answers to research questions. Masson (2002:323) states that researchers need to be clear about why and how a particular design will assist in addressing research questions rather than assuming that a specific one will emphatically be enough to provide them with the information needed.

The researcher elected to use a research design which is contextual, explorative and descriptive in nature. It also has an evaluative component. This design was selected to explore the perceptions of SAPS employees with regard to the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse programme. This approach is person-centered in nature. The approach also assists in developing an understanding of people's views about their lives and the lives of others. It furthermore assists the researcher in producing a comprehensive description that will represent a holistic view of the research participant's reality (Holloway, 2005:5).

Descriptive research design refers to research studies that have, as their main objective, the accurate portrayal of the characteristics of persons, situations or groups (Mamabolo, 2006:47). The former type of design is employed as it involves observing and describing the behavior of subjects without influencing it in any way. It is a valid method for researching specific subjects and it involves the gathering of facts (Shuttleworth, 2008:1 and Engel & Schutt, 2005:11).

Some of the advantages of this method outlined by Shuttleworth (2008:1) are that it can be used as a precursor to more quantitative studies. Some subjects cannot be involved in any other manner, but this method, and the subject is observed in a completely natural environment. This type of design was suitable for this study because it gave SAPS employees the opportunity to share their perceptions of the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. They were

afforded the opportunity to tell their own story without being influenced in any manner. It also gave the researcher the opportunity to gather facts within the participant's natural environment as interviews took place at the respective police stations. It provides the researcher with the opportunity to describe their perceptions of the substance abuse program.

Burns and Grove (2003:313) define exploratory research as research conducted to gain new insights, discover new ideas and/or increase knowledge of a phenomenon. The researcher chose this design as she was of the opinion that this type of design answered the research question most truthfully. It is relevant to the study as it focuses on the exploration of SAPS employees' perceptions with regard to the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. This provides a better understanding of their views on the topic.

Contextual design is defined by Mamabola (2006:48) as having a specific focus on specific events in their natural setting. Silverman (2000:300) elaborates on this explanation by stating that contextual studies aim to understand the context through meaningful statements made by the participants in the study.

Holtzblatt (1994:1) supports this view in describing contextual design as a structured, well-defined, user-centered design process that provides methods to collect data about users in the field. The collected data then needs to be interpreted and consolidated in a structured way. The aim is to understand people and their fundamental intents, desires and drives. The latter can only be achieved by going into the field and talking to people.

This type of design was selected for this study because substance abuse is still rife within the SAPS, despite having an EAP substance abuse prevention programme. Thus, in order to understand this problem, it was studied for its immediate contextual significance. The study also has a programme evaluation component. According to Carman and Fredericks (2008:39), programme evaluation can be expected to become increasingly relevant. Lewis, Packard and Lewis (2012:209) state that programme evaluation is needed to let us know whether services have taken place as expected and whether they have accomplished what they were meant to



accomplish. Yegidis and Weinbach (2002:257) support this in that they are of the opinion that evaluation research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher aims to provide feedback on the outcomes of a specific intervention.

Patton (2008:39) defines programme evaluation as “the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and results of programmes to make judgments about the programme, improve or further develop programme effectiveness, inform decisions about future programming, and/or increase understanding”. The programme was qualitatively evaluated with the aim of supplementing quantitative evaluations and providing recommendations for possible improvements with regard to the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. Qualitative programme evaluation was thus concerned with the perceptions of those who experienced the programme.

Research design and methodology needs to be discussed in relation to each other as these are all intricate steps in the research process. The discussion about the methodology implemented in this study follows.

### **3.4 Research Methodology**

According to Polit and Hungler (2004:233), methodology refers to ways of obtaining, organizing and analyzing data. It refers to how the research was done, and it can be seen as the means of doing research. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011:38) postulate that the methodological viewpoint helps to shape what the study is and is directly tied to the type of research problem we study and how we study it. Henning (2004:293) describes methodology as a coherent group of methods that complement one another and have the ability to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the research purpose. According to Holloway (2005:293), methodology means a framework of theories and principles on which methods and procedures are based. The concept, methodology, includes the research population and sampling, data collection method, data analysis method, the pilot study and data verification.

Once the researcher has decided which research design will best complement the

study, the population and sample of the study needs to be identified. It is important to say who the population and sample will be and where they will be drawn from. It is also important to identify how the data will be collected. The following section serves as an overview of these components of the study.

#### **3.4.1. Research population and sampling**

Sarantakos (2005:152) points out that the number and types of people included in the research study forms one of the most significant issues researchers have to consider. Every single aspect of the study that the researcher wants to analyze is known as the population (Creswell, 2003:52). A research population can be defined as all the persons, events, organization units, case records or any other sampling units that the research problems are concerned with (De Vos et al., 2005:194). The population identified for this study was SAPS members in the Port Elizabeth area. A research population is, however, too large for a researcher to interview all members, so a sample is selected.

De Vos et al. (2002:199) define a sample as “a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons that together comprise the subject of our study.” This was elaborated on by Bloor and Wood (2006:153) who describe a sample as the selection of cases from wider populations. The sample is used to assist in explaining certain aspects of the population. Samples are a necessity since the complete coverage of a population is not always possible (Sarantakos, 2005:153). Samples ensure effectiveness and provide the option of addressing the survey population in a short period of time and produce equally valid results.

Sampling further provides for economy of time and labour and is more detailed in information; it is therefore accurate, because the number of units is smaller. There are two types of sampling, namely: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. The researcher of this study implemented non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling focuses on sampling techniques where the units that are investigated are based on the judgment of the researcher. Qualitative research studies often make use of a non-probability sampling technique, especially when concerned with the evaluation of programmes in an organization, as is the case in

this study.

Bloor and Wood (2006:154) state that non-probability sampling involves the selection of cases according to reasons other than mathematical probability and includes an array of sampling approaches such as quota, convenience, theoretical, snowball and purposive sampling. For the purpose of this study, non-probability sampling was used.

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011:45) state that qualitative researchers are often interested in selecting a purposive sample. Engel and Schutt (2005:120) as well as Cournoyer and Klein (2000:124) define purposive sampling as methods in which certain participants will have a greater likelihood of being selected than others because of specific criteria and purpose; in this regard, individuals are selected because there is the belief that the researcher will gain information or experiences relevant to the researcher's field of interest. This researcher used purposive sampling.

The researcher identified ten participants from the population, but data collection was continued until the point of saturation was reached. No additional participants were however required. Bloor and Wood (2006:164) define saturation as the continuation of sampling and data collection until no new conceptual insights are generated.

The following served as criteria for the inclusion of participants in the study:

- The selected participants attended the EAP substance abuse prevention programme within the last year, so as to have recent knowledge of the programme content and its impact.
- Participants were in the permanent employment of the SAPS as this made exposure to this programme possible.
- Both males and females were selected as participants in the study, so that the study was not gender biased.

- Participants had to be from SAP stations in the Mount Road and Motherwell cluster in Port Elizabeth, namely from: Humewood, Kabega Park, Kwadwesi, Motherwell, Gelvandale and Bethelsdorp.
- Participants were expected to be conversant in English, as all interviews were conducted in English.
- Participants were selected from each rank. The ranks that were chosen from were constables, sergeants, warrant officers, lieutenants and captains.
- These participants were not referrals because of substance abuse issues and were not abusers of alcohol.

Once the research population and appropriate sampling strategies were decided upon, the researcher considered how entry into the research site would be gained. The researcher's selection of a site is crucial to successfully executing the data collection method.

### **3.4.2. Entry into the research site**

According to De Vos et al. (2011:325), "successful execution of the design and data gathering is usually determined by the accessibility of the setting and the researcher's ability to build up and maintain relationships and agreements with gatekeepers and participants". De Vos et al. (2011:325) define a gatekeeper as "the individual with the formal or informal authority to provide approval for access to research groups, sites or participants." The researcher chose to use a direct route to enter the site as she spoke directly to the respective station commanders. For the purpose of this study, entry into the field was gained by submitting a written application to the Provincial Commissioner requesting permission to interview SAPS members.

This researcher relied on gatekeepers who were the Station Commanders at the respective stations. These stations in the Mount Road and Motherwell cluster in Port Elizabeth were: Humewood, Kabega Park, Kwadwesi, Motherwell, Gelvandale and Bethelsdorp. These gatekeepers were informed about the study in writing and

through a personal visit to the stations. The gatekeepers were the station commanders identified in the population who then granted permission for the interviews to be conducted during office hours.

The permission letter (Appendix 1) which contained information about what the research entailed was given to the gatekeepers. Information such as the researcher's details, research topic, the goal and objectives of the study, the research design and methodology as well as the time period required to conduct the research were laid out in the permission letter.

As soon as the above was finalized, the researcher started with the next process which was the collection of data. Data collection begins as soon as the researcher decides from whom and where data will be collected. This is the heart of the study. It is the pieces of information one uses to answer the research question. This process involves the ongoing, systematic collection and interpretation of data necessary for the design, implementation and evaluation purposes (Friedman, 2006:75).

### **3.4.3 Data collection Method**

Qualitative data collection methods include observations, the use of focus groups and interviews. These methods seek to encourage free and open responses and to capture participants' perceptions in their own words. Observation takes place in natural settings and involves the researcher taking lengthy and descriptive notes of what is happening; with this method researchers also take note of the body language of participants (Denscombe, 2003:192).

Focus groups allow for the collection of rich data and for participants to contribute and to challenge group discussions. It allows the researcher to ask questions about the ways in which attitudes and opinions are formed and changed, and it allows for participants to jointly construct meaning (Willig, 2001:29).

An interview is defined as a pre-arranged interaction between two or more people where one person is responsible for asking questions pertaining to a particular theme or topic of interest, and others are expected to respond to these questions (Lankshear & Knobel; 2004:198). The researcher chose to use interviews as her

data collection method. Burns and Grove (2003:285) and De Vos (2002:302) identify some advantages of using interviews:

- Interviewing is a flexible technique that allows the researcher to explore greater depth of meaning that cannot be obtained with other techniques,
- Interpersonal skills can be used to facilitate co-operation and elicit more information,
- There is a higher response rate to interviews than questionnaires. Leading to a complete description of the subject under study by the participants,
- Interviews allow collection of data from participants who are unable or unlikely to complete questionnaires, such as those whose ability to read, write and express themselves is marginal.

De Vos et al. (2011:347-348) distinguish between three types of face-to-face interviews. They mention the unstructured, structured as well as the semi-structured one-on-one interview. The advantages of the unstructured face-to-face interview are listed as follows:

- It enables researchers to gain an understanding of the experiences of others as well as the meaning they attach to that experience.
- It allows the researcher and the participant to explore an issue.
- It is used to determine an individual's perceptions, opinions, facts and forecasts.
- It is used to determine an individual's reactions to initial findings and potential solutions.

Some advantages of structured interviews, as suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:354-355), is that they are useful when researchers are aware of what they do not know and therefore enable them to structure questions that will add to their required knowledge. The content and procedures are also organized in

advance and the interviewer is left with little freedom to make modifications and where opportunity for making changes to the interview schedule is granted, it is also specified in advance. This type of interviewing is seen as a closed situation.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used semi-structured, face-to-face, individual interviews as a means of data collection. Some advantages of semi-structured face-to-face, individual interviews as set out in Henn, Weinstein and Foard (2006:162) are discussed as follows. This type of interview uses pre-prepared questions as a guide during the interview, but the researcher is allowed to prompt the interviewee if she is looking for more information or find what they were saying interesting. Jacobs (2008:39) supplements this by stating that the open-ended nature of the questions defines the topic under discussion and creates the opportunity for both the researcher and the participant to create a shared understanding of the research study. Welman (2005:166) postulates that the researcher who utilizes semi-structured interviews aims to cover a broad area of themes and questions that are similar with each interview. This gave the researcher an opportunity to probe deeper into questions contained in the interview guide and to add others, as guided by the interviews she conducted (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002:82). Researchers use semi-structured interviews in order to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, and perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic (De Vos et al., 2011:351).

A semi-structured interview schedule was thus used (see Appendix 4). The interview schedule was used to refer to the list of aspects or topics relevant to the specific theme of interest to the researcher. It was a useful way of getting large amounts of data quickly; and effective in obtaining in-depth data. The schedule for this research study consisted of five open-ended questions. The advantages of using open-ended questions are discussed in Johnson and Yanca (2010:166), who indicate that open-ended questions enable the person to define, discuss, or answer the question in any way they choose. They also allow for the expression of feelings and perceptions about the issue at hand.

The researcher also provided the participants with information by having individual sessions with them; in these sessions she explained the research process as well as

the important role that they play in the study. In addition, the researcher asked the participants to sign a written consent form (Appendix 2) in which they gave their permission to be used as subjects in the study. They were also given a participant's letter which included the application to the SAPS to conduct the research in the organization (see Appendix 1).

The ten interviews were conducted at the respective police stations. The identified stations in the Mount Road and Motherwell cluster in Port Elizabeth were: Humewood, Kabega Park, Kwadwesi, Motherwell, Gelvandale and Bethelsdorp. These stations were selected as the attendance registers, for the substance abuse prevention programme, obtained from the SAPS were inclusive of these stations. Participants from these stations held different ranks, as mentioned in the criteria for the inclusion of participants in the study. The researcher explained the research process to the participants as well as what was required of them by conducting an information session with them on an individual basis. Most of the interviews that were conducted lasted approximately forty minutes. Furthermore, the criteria for inclusion were explained. It was also explained that their participation is voluntary and that their privileges or rights would not be jeopardized in any way. Those who agreed to participate in the study were given a consent form (see Appendix 2) to complete and were asked to sign a permission form for the researcher to tape record the interview sessions (Appendix 4). This established the foundation between the researcher and the participants and opened communication lines between them. The researcher also maintained eye contact and paid attention to what participants were saying (De Vos et al., 2011:359). Confidentiality and anonymity were assured by making use of pseudonyms.

The interviews were tape recorded, with the permission of participants (see Appendix 3) and were later transcribed. The researcher can concentrate, listen and respond better when implementing this method. The discussion also flows better when there are no distractions and the researcher can obtain a holistic picture of what transpires in the interview. An added advantage of tape recording is that the researcher can go back over the material during analysis of the data collected (De Vos et al., 2011:359).



Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:321) assert that it cannot be said with certainty when data collection stops and analysis starts. There seems to be a gradual fading of the former, until one is left only with the latter, with the aim of transforming data into findings. Data analysis will be the focus of the next section.

#### **3.4.4 Data Analysis**

Cournoyer and Klein (200:170) are of the opinion that data analysis can be seen as the stage where the researcher's investigation reaches the point that general deductions about the meaningfulness of observations are ascribed. It can thus be seen as a process whereby all the collected data is arranged so as to emphasize the significance of the data. Burns and Grove (2003:479) supports the above definition by stating that data analysis is a mechanism for reducing and organizing data to produce findings that require interpretation by the researcher. De Vos et al. (2002:341) elaborate and state that this is a process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the masses of data collected. In this process, data is transformed and extended. The researcher followed the detailed guidelines for the coding process, as set out by Tesch (in Creswell, 2003:192). The coding process included the following:

- The researcher compiled transcripts of the tape recordings so as to have concrete, visual material to analyze. A sense of the whole was gained by reading all the manuscripts carefully and jotting down some ideas as they came to mind. What was needed to be kept in mind was that the underlying meaning of what participants shared is important. The researcher wrote her thoughts in the margin. This enabled her to thoroughly work through it so as to be able to identify emerging thoughts or statements. When this task was completed with all the participants, a list of all topics was compiled. Similar topics were clustered together. The researcher took this list and went back to the data. Topics were abbreviated as codes by the researcher; these were written next to the appropriate segments of the text.
- These topics were then formed into columns that were arranged according to specific themes, sub-themes or categories. The researcher found the most

descriptive wording for the topics and turned them into categories. She looked for ways of reducing the total list of categories by grouping topics that relate to each other. Lines were drawn between the categories to show interrelationships. This method was employed by the researcher to ensure data reduction and to highlight any patterns in the data. The researcher then assembled the data material belonging to each category in one place and performed a preliminary analysis. This analysis was confirmed by an independent coder. It was not necessary for the researcher to recode the existing data.

- The researcher made use of the services of an independent coder in order to compare the themes, sub-themes and categories identified by the researcher with those of the independent coder. The researcher then chose the most appropriate themes, sub-themes, categories and sub-categories from both versions. In so doing, it served to authenticate the data thus allowing the next step in the research process: data verification.

#### **3.4.5 Data verification**

Data verification is a means of ensuring the trustworthiness of information. Marshall and Rossman (in De Vos et al., 2002:351) indicate that all research must live up to certain standards that serve as criteria against which the credibility of the research can be measured. Guba's criteria (in De Vos et al., 2002:351) were used for data verification in this research study. These criteria are discussed below:

- The truth value of a study refers to how certain the researcher is of the truth of the findings for the subjects and the context in which the study was undertaken. Credibility is a criterion of truth value. It refers to the importance of the particular findings of the study. As suggested by Van der Riet and Durrheim (2006:91), the credibility of this specific study was established whilst the research took place. Peer examination was utilized whereby the research supervisor was asked to read the interview transcripts and reflect on the collected data as well as the data analysis that the researcher has completed. The fact that the study also employed the services of an independent coder further contributed to the credibility of the study. An accurate description of the participants was also

provided.

- Applicability is the second main aspect. This refers to the applicability of findings to another setting or group of people, which needs to be established. Transferability is the criteria of this aspect. De Vos et al. (2002:351) define transferability as the alternative to validity or generalizability, in which the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context rests with the researcher who makes the transfer rather than with the original researcher. To ensure this, the researcher compiled a comprehensive report that consequently contained an accurate description of the research process including the research methodology, and theoretical framework used in the study; in addition, detailed descriptions of the context and population selected were provided, in case another researcher should seek to duplicate elements of the research.
- Neutrality captures the traditional concept of objectivity. Lincoln and Guba (in King & Horrocks, 2010:160) emphasize that conformability asks whether the findings of a study could be confirmed by another professional. The researcher made use of peer examination and an independent coder to ensure conformability.
- Consistency is concerned with whether the findings would be the same should the study be replicated with the same subjects in a similar context. To establish consistency, the principle of dependability is used for qualitative studies (Creswell, 2003:204). The principle of dependability is integrated into qualitative studies to acknowledge the changes in the social world that may make replication of the study difficult (Denscombe, 2003:101). It is important to ensure that the findings are reflective of the participants' perceptions and experiences as well as the inquiry itself, rather than a criterion of the researcher's bias or prejudice, is imperative. The utilization of an independent coder enhanced the dependability of this study as well as peer examination by the student's supervisor.

The next section will focus on the pilot study. It is important to make use of a pilot study as conducting research can be very expensive and time consuming. Through

the pilot study, the researcher will be afforded the opportunity to conduct a preliminary interview with a small sample in order to identify any challenges there might be with the interview schedule; the researcher will therefore be able to make the necessary adjustments needed for the rest of the interviews (Van der Riet & Durrheim, 2006:94).

### **3.5 Pilot study**

Denzin and Lincoln (in De Vos et al., 2005:22) state that the pilot study serves to provide clarification in areas that warrant it or to test the interview guide. It is often used to identify possible problems with proposed research, using a small sample of participants before the main study is conducted. Sarantakos (2005:256) refers to this process as “the rehearsal of the main study”.

A pilot study was conducted by the researcher at one of the police stations identified in the sample. This assisted in establishing the relevance of the data collected from participants, in testing the interview guide and to ‘sharpen’ the research tools. One participant from the sample was randomly recruited for the pilot study. This allowed the researcher to test the effectiveness of the interview guide.

The researcher phoned the potential participant and explained that she is doing her Master’s degree at NMMU, South Campus. She also explained that research had to be done in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree. The researcher also explained the overall goal of the research and informed the participant that he qualified to be a participant in her study as he fitted the criteria for inclusion in the study. He agreed to take part in the study; we then made an appointment for the interview. Just before the interview, the participant signed the consent form agreeing to participate in the study as well as a permission form for the researcher to tape-record the interview sessions. Upon completion, the researcher found that she would include the data obtained in her pilot study as no adjustments were required to the data collection method and processes. No changes had to be made to the tool.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

Every choice made by human beings is usually inspired by a value system, whether

it is one filled with positive or negative values. These values prescribe how one behaves in different situations. These moral principles give guidance to behaviour and are called ethics. According to De Vos et al. (2005:56), “the ethical issues for researchers in social science are pervasive and complex, since data should never be obtained at the expense of human beings.” Hesse-Biber and Laevy (2011:59) also emphasise the importance of ethics as they state that it needs to be a critical part of the substructure of the research process from the inception of the problem to the interpretation and the publication of the research findings. The ethical issues that were considered in this research study are discussed below.

### **3.6.1 Avoidance of Harm**

According to Dane (in De Vos et al., 2005:58), researchers have an ethical obligation to protect participants from physical or emotional harm. Participants should be thoroughly informed beforehand about the potential impact of the investigation. The researcher consulted with the participants in order to discuss with them the purpose of the study, their role in the process, the risks the study might hold for them as well as to obtain their consent for participation. Such information offers the participants the opportunity to withdraw from the research if they so wish. The researcher also identified the participants who could possibly prove to be vulnerable during the investigation and eliminated them beforehand.

Participants in this study could have been harmed on an emotional level, as sensitive information could be disclosed as a result of their sharing their experiences. In this study, the researcher had a briefing session with the participants where they were informed about possible risks and how they would be addressed. The researcher thoroughly informed participants about this possibility and ensured the availability of counseling services for them. Adequate opportunity was afforded to participants to ask questions before the study commenced, as well as during the research.

### **3.6.2 Informed Consent**

Informed consent implies that participants’ consent to participate in the research study must be obtained before the research commences and after he/she is fully

informed about the nature of the participation. Cournoyer and Klein (2000:27) assert that the following are important issues which should be included in the consent form: participation is voluntary, participants may withdraw at any time during the study, information provided by them will be kept confidential and the risks and benefits of participation will be completely disclosed. It is necessary so that participants can make a voluntary, informed decision about possible participation in the study. Participants in this study granted their permission to be part of the research study by means of completing and signing a written consent. Participants were also asked to complete a form granting the researcher permission to tape-record the interviews.

### **3.6.3 Deception of participants**

The use of deception in research is inconsistent with the ethical requirement to inform participants about the study in which they are participating (Cournoyer & Klein, 2000:34). Deception refers to not disclosing all information or the handing out of information that is not true. Participants were not deceived in this study because there was full disclosure of all aspects of the study, in the briefing session mentioned above.

### **3.6.4 Violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality**

De Vos et al. (2005:61) explain that “the right to privacy is the individual’s right to decide when, where, to whom and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs and behaviour will be revealed.” Researchers must always keep in mind how important it is to safeguard the privacy and identity of participants as well as handling information in a confidential manner. In order to ensure anonymity, pseudonyms were used in this study. Tape recordings of the interview will be destroyed on completion of the examination of this research document. All information generated during data collection was safeguarded to ensure privacy.

### **3.6.5 Respect and autonomy**

Respect for autonomy is one of the fundamental guidelines of ethics. Therefore, transactions with people should enhance their independence and self-determination (Hepworth et al., 2010:7). Pantilat (2008:11) defines autonomy as the “personal rule

of the self that is free from both controlling interferences by others and from personal limitations that prevent meaningful choice". It simply implies that individuals are allowed to make their own decisions, hence respecting their right to self-determination as well as creating the conditions to make these choices. The researcher demonstrated respect by explaining all risks to participants so as to ensure that the decision to take part in the study was an informed one. Participants were thus allowed to make their own decision as to whether they wanted to be part of the study or not.

### **3.6.6 Beneficence**

Beneficence refers to actions that are done for the benefit of others. These actions can be taken to help prevent or remove harm or to simply improve the situation of others (Pantilat, 2008:11). The researcher explained to participants that the inputs given by them in the interviews will be used to make recommendations for an effective substance abuse prevention programme.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This chapter focussed the methodology the research process followed by the researcher. The research question, goal and objectives of the study were discussed, together with the research methodology and design, in this chapter. The population, sample, sampling method, data collection method, data analysis as well as data verification was specified in the discussion. The researcher also discussed how entry into the research site was gained, the pilot study and the ethical issues that were considered by the researcher. The subsequent chapter will focus on the research findings and literature control.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND LITERATURE CONTROL**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The researcher was prompted to undertake this study because SAPS employees deal with many stressors within their work environment which might contribute to the abuse of substances. In her experience of working with these employees, the researcher identified that there might be a relationship between the inherent stressors of the job and employees' abuse of substances. As a means of decreasing or alleviating the abuse of alcohol in the workplace, it is important to implement interventions that will assist the employee in coping with the challenges resulting from substance abuse.

As noted in previous chapters, an example of such a programme is the EAP substance abuse prevention programme utilized by the SAPS to address this problem. It is with this in mind that this study aimed to give participants an opportunity to voice their perceptions of all aspects of the programme, by the researcher making use of qualitative programme evaluation. This chapter focuses on the findings, as gained from the participants' responses, which were analysed and interpreted. These findings are supported by a literature control.

A literature control is important in a research study as it serves to confirm or disagree with the research findings. De Vos et al. (2011:302) mention several functions of literature in qualitative studies. Some of these functions are applicable here. As soon as the data analysis has been reported, combined theoretical perspectives as well as empirical literature will be used to compare and contextualize the findings of this study. This involves comparing data with existing research findings and drawing conclusions in this regard. Data was analysed according to the guidelines for the coding process, as set out by Tesch (in Creswell, 2003:192).

### **4.2 Biographical Information**

The biographical description of participants relate specifically to information obtained directly from them. The data requested here was related to participants' gender,



race, home language, age as well as the position they held in the organization. It is depicted in the following table.

Table 1: Biographical description of the participants				
Gender	Race	Language	Age	Position
Male	Coloured	Afrikaans	50-60	Sergeant
Female	White	Afrikaans	40-50	Lieutenant
Female	White	Afrikaans	50-60	Captain
Female	White	Afrikaans	40-50	Warrant Officer
Male	Coloured	Afrikaans	30-40	Constable
Female	African	isiXhosa	30-40	Constable
Female	Coloured	Afrikaans	30-40	Constable
Female	Coloured	Afrikaans	30-40	Administration Clerk
Male	African	isiXhosa	40-50	Administration Clerk
Female	Coloured	Afrikaans	40-50	Warrant Officer

### **4.3 Discussion of findings**

When the data collected from the individual interviews was analyzed, the following themes, sub-themes and categories were identified. A summary of these findings are presented in Table 2, below.

Table 2: Summary of Themes, Sub-themes and Categories

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-Themes</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Sub-Categories</b>
<b>Theme 1: Overall perceptions of EAP substance abuse programme</b>	Positive perceptions of program	Fruitful program	Increased self-awareness
		Informative and enjoyable program	Gained understanding of experiences of addicts  Substance abuse knowledge gained
		Applicable to a number of people	Substance abuse often part of their work routine – must know how to handle it  Personally applicable and relatable information  Participants were relaxed  Enjoyed the real-life stories
	Negative perceptions of program	Irrelevant information given.  Resistance to attending the program  Lack of awareness of programme	Blood-alcohol limit, not applicable to all SAPS employees
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-Theme</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Sub-Categories</b>
<b>Theme 2: Perceptions of the practical aspects of the programme</b>	Venue	Venue was suitable for presentation  Suitably situated	Nothing disturbed participants' attention
	Composition of the group and size of the group	Enabled learning  Size enhances participation	Participants all came from different areas of work, therefore enhanced learning from each other

	Length of programme	Busy, but not too full Sufficient time for the presentation	
	Presenter and method of presentation	Kept participants interested Knowledgeable In control of group Punctual Use of understandable language	
	Recruitment process	Nominated for the programme Attended out of own interest in topic	Voluntary attendance Involuntary attendance Inappropriate selection

Theme	Sub-Theme	Categories	Sub-Categories
<b>Theme 3: Perceptions of the educational value of the substance abuse prevention programme</b>	Broadened knowledge about substance abuse	Risks for addiction development Symptoms of substance abuse What are addictive substances? Dangers of substance abuse Eliminated myths that alcohol abuse cannot be overcome	
	Programme content enabled participants to support/educate others	Enhances ability to support someone with an addiction problem Increases awareness of the role of the family	

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-Themes</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Sub-Categories</b>
<b>Theme 4: Perceptions of the relevance of programme components</b>	Quiz provides understanding of addiction		
	Understandable use of definitions on substance abuse and dependence		
	Provides understanding of the importance of defense mechanisms		
	Discussion on phases of addiction	Indicators and phase of addiction discussed  Understanding that the addict has to admit the problem him/herself	
	Discussion on physical and psycho-social effects of abuse	Creates awareness about the effects on the individual	
	Increases awareness of importance of support following rehabilitation		

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-Theme</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Sub-Categories</b>
<b>Theme 5: Shortcomings of the programme</b>	Lack of in-depth discussion of answers to the questions in the quiz		
	Participants could not recall anything about a definition and stages of change		
	Infrequent presentations and no follow-up sessions	All employees should be exposed to presentations	
	Poor marketing of programme leading to employees not being aware of services	Increased awareness of programme is necessary	

Theme	Sub-Theme	Categories	Sub-Categories
<b>Theme 6: Recommendations</b>	Content changes to the programme	Increase information  Allow in-depth/personal discussion  Allow introspection time  Examples of drugs  Share real life stories	Myths of alcohol abuse  effects of alcohol on the body  new drugs  alcohol volume of different drinks  anger management
	Suggestions regarding the presenter	Presenter to be knowledgeable and sensitive to substance abusers attending  Presenters should share their experiences	
	Suggestions for changes to the recruitment process	Increased awareness training to all SAPS members  Participants to be allowed to invite another person  Programme presented at station level	
	Suggestions regarding offering the program	Repeat course regularly  Give participants a test afterwards to measure their knowledge	

This table will be discussed in more detail in the section that follows.

#### **4.3.1 Theme 1: Overall perceptions of EAP substance abuse programme**

The first theme that was identified was the participants' overall experience of the EAP substance abuse programme. The responses indicated that most of the participants had a positive experience of the programme. There were, however, a

few participants with different views. The positive perceptions of the programme will be discussed first. EAP substance abuse prevention programmes have gained significant importance as employees with substance abuse problems make use of these EAPs in a positive manner. There is also a growing understanding that substance addictions are chronic conditions that can be managed successfully. Early identification can prevent employees and organizations from incurring higher subsequent health and productivity costs. EAPs are ideal in addressing these issues (Slavit, Reagan & Finch, 2009:17). Employers have realized that employees are experiencing challenges from time to time that has a definite effect on their functioning at work. Du Plooy (2004:18) is in agreement with this as she asserts that, as a result of this tendency within the SAPS, EAPs are in line with this general tendency.

### **Sub-theme 1: Positive perceptions of program**

The following categories and sub-categories are strongly linked to the employee's positive perceptions of the programme. Categories that will be discussed here are fruitful programme, informative and enjoyable programme, as well as the fact that information is applicable to a number of people.

#### **4.3.1.1 Category 1: Fruitful programme**

Here the indication was given by participants that much was gained through the programme. Categories allied to and serving as an explanation of what participants meant with a fruitful programme, is elucidated by means of the following responses made by them.

*“About the programme itself, I cannot remember anything negative, nothing about the programme for that matter, except for the people who arrived there African time”.*  
**(Participant 2)**

*“I cannot think about negatives. I cannot think that the programme was a waste of time”.* **(Participant 2)**

*“There was nothing funny or senseless that came from the class, everything was*

*relevant". (Participant 3)*

*"I had a positive experience". (Participant 5)*

*"Anyway for that matter I can say it was fruitful to me. Many things were said on that day". (Participant 6)*

Participants' self-awareness was increased by the programme. For example, one participant said:

*"It makes you more aware about our children around us, our families, so that we can be more aware to be on the lookout for any intentions of abuse of illegal substances". (Participant 8)*

EAPs are concerned with the emotional and social well-being of employees. Throughout this study, it has been established that substance abuse is common in the workplace. An EAP substance abuse prevention programme is therefore aimed at addressing the challenges within the context in which it exists. In an effort to provide for an effective programme, Namathe (2005:35) asserts that EAPs should identify employees with personal and health problems which are interfering with their job performance. These employees then need to be motivated to seek help and the main focus of the programme should be on assisting both the employee and the employer in achieving health and productivity. Kruger (2011:79) also emphasizes the need for delivering quality services. In his opinion, the result of an effective and well-monitored EAP should be a workforce with fewer problems, a higher morale and higher productivity.

#### **4.3.1.2 Category 2: Informative and enjoyable programme**

The programme was also described as informative and enjoyable. Participants believed that they gained a better understanding of what addicts are going through. According to Stutterheim and Weyers (2002:10), informative programmes enable employees to play a more direct and active role in enhancing their own capabilities. This is especially done by means of group involvement in these capacity building programmes. Biehl (2004:58) and Freeman, Miller and Ross (2000:242) point out the

importance of occupational knowledge, the perceived authority of such knowledge and sharing this knowledge. This is verified by the following two statements:

*“It was very informative”.* **(Participant 8)**

*“I mean we were there that day to learn how to deal with those people who abuse substances and to understand what they are going through; the reasons why, more information”.* **(Participant 8)**

*“It makes you more aware about our children around us, our families, so that we can be more aware to be on the lookout for any intentions of abuse or illegal substances on their side”.* **(Participant 8)**

In this regard, Pillay (2000:78) emphasizes the need for alcohol and drug education or drug awareness sessions to understand the severity of the problem. There was also the feeling that it is important to know how to deal with substance abuse as participants often come across substances in their work life.

*“It was very relevant for me to attend this programme because we have people that abuse substances, like my colleagues”.* **(Participant 4)**

In affirmation of the above, training should be inclusive of indicators of abuse and dependence as well as knowledge on places to which affected people can be referred (National Drug Master Plan, 2006-2011:20).

*“I deal with these situations where there is substance abuse and family violence or maybe domestic violence where the children suffer”.* **(Participant 6)**

Coetzee (2005:291-292) emphasizes that drug users do not hesitate to resort to acts of crime and violence to obtain drugs and they often reject family members in the process. This gives us an indication of the impact substance abuse has not only on the individual and family, but also on society at large. The above is well summarized by Jacobs (2008:24) who states that the consequences of drug abuse are devastating, not only to the life of the abuser, but spirals onto the family and the community at large.



#### **4.3.1.3 Category 3: Applicable to a number of people**

The last identified positive perception of the programme is that it is applicable to a number of people. Participants suggested that they often come across substances in their work routine; hence, they need to be equipped to deal with it. In support of this category, Biehl (2004:63) states that education and training are pivotal in providing professional development and to assist in one's job in a more structured and disciplined manner. Namathe (2005:53) also makes an assertion in support of this as she states that employees need to be educated about issues that affect their society e.g. substance abuse, because it also affects job performance. The following statements were made in affirmation of this.

*"It was very relevant for me to attend this programme, because we have people that abuse substances, like my colleagues". (Participant 4)*

*"That day we learnt how to deal with people who abuse substances and to understand what they are going through". (Participant 8)*

Participants also felt that the information shared in the programme was personally applicable to them and that they could relate to it. A supportive statement made by Komane (2003:30), regarding this, is that individuals will view the experience as valuable if they have the perceived impression that the experience will be beneficial to them. The following statements were made in support of this.

*"Things like prescription drugs and cigarettes are part of my life, yes. So everything, that I felt was applicable to my life, stood out for me and stayed with me". (Participant 8)*

*"As a father with small kids that are growing up, I feel I need to know about this thing, substance abuse". (Participant 9)*

Participants also shared that they were very relaxed in the group and enjoyed the sharing of real-life stories. One participant remembered information that was applicable to her personally. It was found to be helpful to see how alcohol abuse affects people. As affirmation of this, Komane (2003:21) postulates that it is

important and relevant to ensure that employees are made to feel at ease in the programme. In Biehl's (2004:67) opinion, participants can be made to feel relaxed through enhancing openness in communication; this leads to a sharing of perceptions and giving and receiving of feedback. With regard to the sharing of stories, Biehl (2004:78) asserts that each individual brings their own experiences and their view of the world to a group. Sharing these experiences proves to be a valuable learning experience. In affirmation of this, Corey et al. (2010:201) state that the facilitator should allow for some form of storytelling as some individuals need to hear these facts from others whilst also sharing some of their own experiences. Statements that depicted this are:

*“Alcohol abuse stories, ja. For example how children sell their fathers empty beer bottles just to buy one beer for themselves with the money. They had the opportunity to relate their stories”. (Participant 2)*

*“He had so much experience to share in terms of people who abuse substances. Incidents he came across in his work and the community he stays in”. (Participant 5)*

*“He makes you feel at ease and part of the programme”. (Participant 8)*

*“We were all relaxed”. (Participant 9)*

## **Sub-theme 2: Negative perceptions of the programme**

Another sub-theme related to this theme is the negative perceptions that participants had regarding the programme. In this section, the focus will be on those aspects of the programme that the participants found less attractive. Categories in support of this sub-theme are irrelevant information given, resistance to attending the programme and lack of awareness of the programme.

### **4.3.1.4 Category 1: Irrelevant information given**

This sub-theme is concerned with a specific negative experience participants had of the programme. It is concerned with the content that some of the participants could recall as it is part of their daily routine. To others, however, this concept was foreign

as it does not fall within the scope of their job description. Corey et al. (2010:357) assert that if individuals can relate to the content under discussion then there is a greater chance of them understanding the discussions in the group. This is exemplified by the following statement:

*“Well like your blood-alcohol; limit should be in order to evade conviction of drunken driving. You know the 0.5 or naught point whatever. This is something that they will never know, because they do not work with it. They were there and they just had to listen; wasn’t so difficult”.* **(Participant 2)**

#### **4.3.1.5 Category 2: Resistance to attending the programme**

Some people do not attend, because they do not feel it is their problem, whilst attendance is resisted by others because they are in denial of the fact that a problem exists. McNeece and DiNitto (2005:115) identify the important fact that defense mechanisms contribute to individual resistance to initiate and maintain change efforts. The above is closely link with defense mechanisms and, more specifically, denial. One participant said the following:

*“When a person is in denial, he will especially not attend this programme”.* **(Participant 1)**

Participants were also of the opinion that those who attend the programme do not have any challenges in terms of substance abuse. They are also of the opinion that those who have this type of problem might benefit more from such a programme. Corey et al. (2010:114) emphasize the fact that, in the selection of group members, it is imperative that their needs and goals be comparative. The EAP infrastructure responds to human service needs of employees and their families and to corresponding agendas of the organization (Komane, 2003:11). In this regard, programmes should to be needs based, and should thus include participants with similarities. Corey et al. (2010:118) support this in that they state that similarities in groups can lead to a greater degree of cohesion which, in turn, allows for an open and intense exploration of life crises. Furthermore, these authors state that before individuals become part of a group they should be actively involved in the deciding

whether they want to be there or not. Hence, they need the knowledge necessary to make an informed decision. Participants' responses revealed that the general opinion was that people who attend the programme are not experiencing challenges with substance abuse. This is illustrated in the following participants' responses:

*"These programmes are not well attended. No really. You can inform people about these programmes and that they are going to be presented, but nobody wants to go. Not interested maybe? Or the fact that you feel that the issue is not affecting you?"*  
**(Participant 2)**

*"A lot of people avoid going to these courses, because they feel that they don't need it."* **(Participant 4)**

*"We had the wrong people in the group. Those who experience a problem with substance abuse should attend this programme".* **(Participant 5)**

#### **4.3.1.6 Category 3: Lack of awareness of programme**

This is concerned with the fact that increased awareness of the programme is necessary. This can be linked to the infrequent presentation of the programme and the fact that some employees were never exposed to the programme. This viewpoint is emphasized in the following statements:

*"We did not know of the existence of such a programme".* **(Participant 1)**

*"Look we did this programme that day and never again".* **(Participant 2)**

In support of this, Biehl (2004:107) states that EAPs should be marketed and that it should be a continuous process; he believes this to be important as it eradicates all ignorance regarding the EAPs. Komane (2003:56) supports this by adding that EAPs require constant marketing to be effective. This also emphasizes the need to do marketing in such a manner that employees understand the service.

The next theme will focus on how participants perceived the practical aspects of the programme. This refers to the perceptions of concrete aspects such as: the venue, presenter and so forth.

### **4.3.2 Theme 2: Perceptions of the practical aspects of the programme**

This is an outline of the participants' feelings and opinions regarding tangible facets of the programme. This will give the reader a clearer picture of the impact these aspects have on the participants' experience of this programme. These aspects can be a determining factor as to whether a participant will have a positive or negative experience of a certain programme. The identified sub-themes and categories that will be discussed here are: venue, size of the group, composition of the group, length of programme, presenter, method of the presentation and recruitment process.

#### **Sub-theme 1: Venue**

In the categories pertaining to the venue, the participants voiced different views. Some participants' attention was not disturbed by anything, whilst others felt that the venue was too small. Some also felt that noise was a distraction. According to Hepworth et al. (2010:281), the location of the group should be selected with convenience and image in mind. Image refers to the impression the members have of the specific venue. In addition, Corey et al. (2010:120) assert that the groups often do not attain their goal, because of their physical setting. They advise that the venue should not be cluttered and should be big enough to allow comfortable seating arrangements.

Participants stated the following:

*"To me the venue was a bit small. It was too small for our group even though we were a very lively group that attended that workshop."* **(Participant 8)**

*"Yes, it definitely was conducive for learning to take place. I can't think of anything that disturbed me about the venue."* **(Participant 10)**

The following identified sub-theme is concerned with the composition and size of the group. This is an important section as group members bring different experiences to the group which allow for sharing that enhances the learning experience. The size of the group is also important as a group that is too big will have a negative impact on the learning experience.

## **Sub-theme 2: Composition of the group and size of the group**

All participants were in agreement that the group was big enough to enable participation from all group members. Hepworth et al. (2010:281) and Corey et al. (2010:119) propose that groups should be small enough to allow the programme to achieve its purpose, yet large enough to ensure that members have a satisfying experience.

This can be appreciated in the following participants' responses:

*"I feel that the size of the group was sufficient. All participants could engage in the discussions. No one felt overwhelmed to participate in the programme, everyone just participated". (Participant 8)*

*"Oh we were about ten people, so we were not a big group. It was actually good, because it made it better to interact" (Participant 10)*

Learning was enabled through the fact that participants came from different sections within the SAPS. The different sections within the SAPS address different issues like child protection, social crime, legal services and many more. Working in those different sections has the inherent implication of adding to the body of knowledge of different experiences. Participant's views are expressed in the following statement:

*"Yes, definitely yes. Our group was very representative. We had cleaners, permanent members who work with children and the group who works with drug abuse. All of us are affected in one way or another." (Participant 8)*

Corey et al (2010:118) are of the opinion that even though members may share a common problem, their life experiences will differ, which brings another level of diversity into groups. Similarly, Hepworth et al. (2010:280) suggest that some diversity among members with respect to coping skills, life experience and levels of expertise fosters learning and introduces members to differing viewpoints, lifestyles, ways of communicating and problem-solving skills.

### **Sub-theme 3: Length of programme**

This sub-theme is concerned with whether the duration of the programme was sufficient to encourage learning. This is an important aspect as the main aim of the substance abuse prevention programme is to convey knowledge and to raise awareness, hence, being preventative in nature. Some participants experienced the length as comfortable (busy, but not too full); whilst other participants experienced the length as adequate for the presentation of the programme. These views are portrayed in the following participants' responses:

*"The atmosphere was not stern and rigid". (Participant 2)*

*"I think it was long enough. It was not done hurriedly. We could ask questions and many people were given the opportunity to explain what they have encountered in their work environment regarding substance abuse". (Participant 2)*

*"The time the programme was presented in was sufficient for all the information to be conveyed". (Participant 5)*

*"Yes, the programme was not too long or too short and everything was also not squashed in just to fill up the time." (Participant 10)*

Hepworth et al. (2010:282) is of the opinion that the session should be long enough to allow for cohesion and productive work, yet not so long that the group seem to drag on endlessly. Corey et al. (201:119) support this view in that they state that the sessions should be long enough to allow for intensive work, yet not so long that they become tiresome.

### **Sub-theme 4: Presenter and method of the presentation**

In this sub-theme, the presenter is described as being knowledgeable, in control of the group and punctual. Further experiences of the presenter were that he/she was very good at what they were doing and participants' had faith that they could do a presentation on any topic. The participants also experienced the presenter as having an open attitude that kept them interested; still, some others felt that the presenter made use of easy terminology in the presentation. In this regard, the National Drug

Master Plan (2006-2011:20) asserts that trainers require the right materials, extensive practical experience in the field, resources and funding as well as adequate communication skills to disseminate information.

The following statements are in support of this:

*“The presenter was very good. He can present anything at any time”.* **(Participant 1)**

*“He presents very well. He has an open attitude that made us all feel at ease in the group”.* **(Participant 2)**

*“Well presented, on a level understood by everyone”.* **(Participant 3)**

The presenter and his/her presentation style cannot be separated from one another; it is integral to whether the presenter will be able to hold the attention of his/her participants or not. As mentioned above, keeping participants interested in the topic is essential for ensuring the effectiveness of a programme. Once participants become bored and lack interest, the best structured programme would not have any effect on its participants. The findings of the categories explaining this sub-theme were mostly positive in nature.

There was a feeling that the manner of presentation kept participants interested and that the language used was understood by everyone. Moreover, members felt that their individual needs were met.

*“She was not only standing there and giving us a lecture. She also made use of videos and group exercises. That was very good. Her information was to the point and interesting. I never got the feeling of, “woman when are you going to stop”. I never thought, “ag tog, can’t we go home already.”* **(Participant 5)**

*“Very professional. Uhm, like I said you could see that the presenter had a lot of experience which made it very easy to understand him. The presentation was done professionally. It was interesting from the beginning to the end. He ensured that everyone interacted and that we felt part of the workshop”.* **(Participant 8)**

In support of the above, Corey et al. (2010:140) are of the opinion that the success



of creating a climate of trust in a group has much to do with preparing yourself well as the leader. The importance of having accredited training in presentation skills is also seen as an advantage and improves the quality of services provided (Myers et al., 2008:12).

### **Sub-theme 5: Recruitment process**

This sub-theme is concerned with participants' perceptions regarding how participants are recruited to attend the programme. Identified categories describe how participants are nominated for the EAP substance abuse programme. A concern identified by participants regarding recruitment is that those in need of this information do not always attend these programmes. Some participants reported that they nominated themselves for the programme and attended because of their own interest in the topic. Others also stated that they attended voluntarily, whilst some stated that they were nominated by somebody else. Thus, for the latter group, attendance was involuntary. The feeling is that not everybody is willing to go on call-up instruction. The following statements emphasise the voluntary nature of recruitment:

*"I wanted to go as the programme is educational". (Participant 4)*

*"It is not always the culprits who participate in these programmes, the ones that actually need it. I don't use or abuse any substances, but I deal with it a lot. It was very relevant for me". (Participant 4)*

*"Normally they send around a memo with different programmes for anyone who is available. I just felt that I am not married so I won't gain by attending the workshop on marriage counselling. In this case I felt that I have my own life. I am a smoker; hence I felt that I could gain more from the programme. I felt that I was a good candidate for the programme". (Participant 8)*

Corey et al. (2010:113-114) assert that professional issues are involved when recruiting members. It is emphasized here that the Best Practice Guidelines which are a set of general ethics and ideas that represent the most efficient course of action. These guidelines then reiterate the fact that prospective members should

have access to all relevant information about a group, preferably in writing. These written announcements can then be followed up with face-to-face contact. Namathe (2005:38) postulates that some employees will accept an EAP service because they want to avoid negative implications; this action may then either have negative or positive results. Employees may resist intervention, because they may feel that they were coerced into using it. Alternatively, the acceptance of the service may also result in improved work performance and social functioning.

Where employees are involuntarily recruited, they feel pressured to use the services provided by EAPs. The significance of EAPs is then lost on them and there is no clarity about their right to request, accept or refuse the service (Komane, 2003:19). Employees recruited in this manner will be reluctant to participate in a process in which they perceive themselves to have limited power and control (Hepworth et al., 2010:309). It is therefore essential that employees need to be involved in deciding whether or not to attend (Corey et al., 2001:28). The involuntary nature of recruitment is displayed in the ensuing statements:

*“My name was listed and I had to go. It was not voluntary.” (Participant 3)*

*“At the stage the call-up instruction for the programme came, I just started here at the station. I remember nobody else wanted to go. Someone from the station had to go”. (Participant 5)*

The subsequent theme is concerned with the educational value of the substance abuse prevention programme. This is valuable information as it is the educational component of prevention programmes that provides individuals with information that leads to empowerment.

#### **4.3.3 Theme 3: Perceptions of the educational value of the substance abuse prevention programme**

This sub-theme is concerned with what the value is in terms of the education that participants could draw from the programme. It refers to the extent to which participants were empowered through attendance of this programme. Here follows employees' different experiences regarding this theme. Sub-themes and related

categories will also be depicted. In general it seemed to have been a good learning experience for the participants. Sub-themes that will be discussed here are broadened knowledge about substance abuse and programme content which enabled participants to support/educate others.

### **Sub-theme 1: Broadened knowledge about substance abuse**

This sub-theme focuses on whether participants' knowledge base, with reference to substance abuse, was expanded upon. This will then establish whether participants gained knowledge that will enable them to deal more effectively with the challenge of substance abuse when presented with it. Related categories are that areas of risk for developing an addiction problem were identified and symptoms of substance abuse were expanded on. Participants further gained knowledge on addictive substances, the dangers of substance abuse and eliminating the myth that alcohol cannot be overcome. Participants also gained awareness of the fact that even safe substances can cause addiction. The following statements are supportive of this:

*“My overall experience is that I got to know that many people are addicted to or abusing substances of which some of these substances even we are using in our daily lives that can cause addiction.” (Participant 6)*

*“Yes I was motivated. I was not forced to attend, definitely I came from the programme with extra information even though I could not recall everything now, but there were a lot of displays that I can remember clearly. I feel that it broadened my knowledge on substance abuse” (Participant 8)*

*“We could not tell whether someone is abusing substances or not, but now since the workshop I know the names and I know the signs to look for”. (Participant 9)*

*“It was good to have the eye-opener about the negative effects of substance abuse. The effects on the individual and how the family suffers were discussed. They suffer, they really suffer and for them, they really believe that they don't have any other way out”. (Participant 10)*

Based on the above identified categories, an effective prevention programme entails

the sharing of accurate information but also includes other components that directly attempt to change the factors associated with the onset of substance abuse (Myers et al., 2008:15). In support of this, the EAP Policy of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality (2014:6) asserts that EAPs are responsible for ongoing education and personal development of individual employees and shall be responsible for ongoing preventative and educational mental health programmes. Namathe (2005:51) also emphasizes that employee education is vital to enhancing social functioning, because it entails prevention and intervention.

### **Sub-theme 2: Programme content enabled participants to support/educate others**

This sub-theme concentrates on the effect to which the content of the programme enabled participants to provide support to one another and create awareness. Categories related to this sub-theme are as follows. It was evident that participants' ability to support someone with an addiction problem was enhanced. In addition, the important role of family members in supporting recovering addicts was highlighted. This was typified in the following statements:

*“Anyway the programme, when you attend, when you go there you don't feel as if fingers are pointed at you. These are issues that affect us directly. I don't think it offended anyone by attending the course. The programme try to point out that even me as the member or my sister and the plaintiff may abuse substances. It is good to attend. I don't feel offended it helps you understand and also tells you how to approach anyone who has a problem, whether it is at you workplace or at home. So I think it is good” (Participant 6)*

Two of the goals stipulated in the National Drug Master Plan (2006-2011:13) are concerned with ensuring appropriate intervention strategies through creating awareness and promoting family and community-based intervention approaches in order to facilitate the social reintegration of abusers. It is further stipulated that awareness should be focused on educating people about the dangers of substance abuse. In support of this, Namathe (2005:53) accentuates the need to educate employees about EAP to avoid stigmatization and to provide information. The

following statement illustrates this.

*“What was effective for me was the resources that are available to assist you, to help you as well as the fact that as a family member you need to identify it. A family member must be able to identify it if there is another family member that are abusing”.* **(Participant 10)**

In support of this statement, Namathe (2005:55) asserts that employees should have a comprehensive picture of treatment within the workplace as well as outside treatment resources. Linked to treatment options is the supportive role that family plays in this equation. Broome, Simpson and Joe (2002:58) believe that “strong social support is associated with greater treatment retention, behavioural improvement during treatment and better outcomes”.

#### **4.3.4 Theme 4: Perceptions of the relevance of programme components**

This theme refers to the educational value of the content of the programme. It refers to the different aspects that form the crux of the programme; that is, the information that the programme wishes to convey. It seeks to establish whether the presented information is relevant to what the programme aims to achieve; i.e. preventing substance abuse amongst employees. Namathe (2005:52) emphasizes how vital employee education is as it enhances their social functioning because it entails prevention and intervention. The substance abuse prevention programme, for instance, is used to provide information about prevention. It is an intervention aimed at equipping the employee with coping skills and knowledge. Education on issues that affect society is imperative as it has a spill-over effect on job performance. The related sub-themes and categories identified will be discussed here; sub-themes that will be discussed here are the quiz (which is part of the programme content) about substance abuse, the use of definitions of substance abuse and dependence, understanding the importance of defence mechanisms, a discussion of phases of addiction, discussion of physical and psycho-social effects of abuse and the increase of awareness about the importance of support following rehabilitation.

### **Sub-theme 1: Quiz provides understanding of addiction**

Here participants were of the opinion that the quiz sets the platform to understanding addiction. The quiz on substance abuse is seen as important as it is a means of reaching individuals with facts regarding substance abuse, thus stimulating knowledge on the subject. According to The Good Drug Guide, a substance abuse quiz assists one in learning more about substance abuse and its effects and in determining whether a substance abuse problem exists. In an article written by Gibbs (2010:1) , it was established that good questions ensure engagement in effective learning. It is an effective strategy of turning one-way communication into dialogue which, in turn, is an effective way to make sense of material. It allows for more elaborate information. One participant stated the following:

*“It is definitely relevant and it was fruitful for the quiz to be there, because it sets the platform as to understanding as to what you are about to deal with.” (Participant 10)*

It thus creates an introduction to understanding the topic. Others felt that answers to these questions lacked in-depth discussions thereof:

*“What I can remember is that there were a good number of questions, but we could not discuss the answers to the questions in detail.” (Participant 4)*

Another identified sub-theme related to the perceptions of the relevance of the programme content is concerned with the use of definitions of substance abuse and dependence. It will be discussed in the following section.

### **Sub-theme 2: The use of definitions of substance abuse and dependence**

This sub-theme is concerned with the relevance or need to discuss definitions of substance abuse and dependence. It seeks to establish the significance of having the definitions as part of the content of the programme. Categories contained in this sub-theme relate to participants' opinions that the definition sets the stage for knowing what you are dealing with. It was understandable for participants and provided a clear distinction between the two concepts.

McNeece and DiNitto (2005:8) are of the opinion that substance abuse is one of

those odd phenomena for which every layperson have their own definition. The concern with these definitions is that it does not differentiate between dependence and abuse. As professionals working in this field, it is imperative to make these distinctions as practitioners cannot treat that which cannot be defined (McNeece & DiNitto; 2005:8).

This is supported with the following statements that were made:

*“Well I think it should remain in the programme. It is important to know”.*

**(Participant 3)**

*“The definition gives you clarity as to what you are going to deal with.”*

**(Participant 10)**

*“It gives you a broader perspective of what the whole issue entails; what it is about. You get a better understanding, because by defining something you break it up”.*

**(Participant 10)**

Participants also found the exercise where the facilitator used the group to build on a definition of substance abuse to be very helpful. Through experiential learning, learners can develop a greater awareness of themselves and a deeper understanding of their own experience which could lead to the increasing desire to grow and develop. It is deemed an effective tool to enhance development in practice and presents four categories in which learning in the workplace can occur, as follows:

- Learning through the experience of social interaction;
- Learning through the worker and the internal processes itself;
- Learning through other people’s experiences (referential knowledge); and
- Creating a personal view that entails learning through observation (Adams, 2010:53).

Learning from experience can thus be seen as a lifelong learning process. Some participants could not recall anything about a definition. One statement was made as follows:

*“I cannot remember that we did any definition.” (Participant 8)*

The third identified sub-theme provides understanding of the importance of defense mechanisms. This is an important section as it is these defense mechanisms that can block the change in many individuals abusing substances.

### **Sub-theme 3: Understanding the importance of defence mechanisms**

McNeece and DiNitto (2005:116) assert that everyone uses defense mechanisms to cope with the stresses of daily life; this can be seen as the refusal by alcoholics to recognize the effects of continuous and excessive substance abuse on themselves and their surrounding systems (Corey et al., 2010:184).

Participants felt that knowledge gained regarding defense mechanisms proved to be valuable in identifying that the continuous use thereof indicates a problem. It creates an understanding of the role these play in sustaining the abuse.

*“Yes, I believe it is necessary and useful to the programme.” (Participant 8)*

### **Sub-theme 4: Discussion on phases of addiction**

Participants viewed these phases as important indicators in the identification of substance abuse and they saw it as helpful in identifying the phases of addiction. Participants also gained understanding that the addict has to admit to the problem her/himself in order for treatment/counseling to be effective. Various participants shared the following viewpoint:

*“No, it is very relevant to the programme, because it is identification pointers. Thing you can identify with in telling you why people are experiencing these symptoms. It is very relevant. You need to know, because if you don’t know you will never know. If you can’t identify them, if you can’t identify the symptoms, no, you will be lost forever. You will lose a family member, a friend or a colleague.” (Participant 10)*



With regards to the above, McNeece and DiNitto (2005:34) branded alcoholism as a sinister disease that progresses through distinct phases. Each of these phases has related symptoms that develop in the majority of individuals in an enhanced, orderly fashion. Du Plooy (2004:26) supports this in that she describes the process of substance use and how it can develop in substance dependence. She also emphasizes the importance of knowing the factors that puts one at risk of becoming dependent on substances.

#### **Sub-theme 5: Discussion on physical and psycho-social effects of abuse**

Participants stated that the fact that information was provided both on the physical effects of substances on the body, as well as the psycho-social effects thereof, proved to be very informative. This is supported by the following statement:

*“This section is important. You need to know how alcohol affects you. It can interfere with your rational thinking. It can lead to drunken driving, for instance”.*

**(Participant 2)**

*“It must be in the programme so that people have this information. They should know what the consequences are of substance abuse”.* **(Participant 3)**

*“I think everyone should be made aware of how substance abuse affects our lives”.*

**(Participant 8)**

*“The effects of abuse are also very relevant to the programme, because there you get to see, you get to know uhm, how it affects the family. It also affects your work you know. It is very relevant to know these effects”.* **(Participant 10)**

Coetzee (2005:30) says that the abuse of drugs from an early age can slow down or even stop the psychological as well as the emotional development of the user, and adversely affect their mental development. Jarvis, Tebutt, Mattick and Shand (2005:30) complement this with their assertion that mental health problems are commonly found in people who abuse substances.

The next sub-theme is concerned with increasing the awareness of the importance

of support following rehabilitation. The general term used for this support is called aftercare; it is discussed below.

#### **Sub-theme 6: Increasing awareness of importance of support following rehabilitation**

It has become increasingly difficult to assist individuals to maintain long-term recovery (Jeewa & Kasiram, 2008:44); therefore, there is a definite need to provide aftercare services to these individuals (Chetty, 2011:27). Myers et al. (2008:64) also state that aftercare is an essential aspect of effective service delivery as it assists individuals in maintaining the progress made in treatment by providing them with support and additional skills. The supportive role of the family is also reiterated here. The National Drug Master Plan (2006-2011:8) continues in stating that the consequences of substance abuse undermine democracy and good governance, and impact negatively on the environment.

The following participants identified the importance of support after rehabilitation:

*“Yes, aftercare is very important. There must be someone who walks the difficult road with that person before that person is able to walk alone. I personally believe; normally it can take a year up to three years. You cannot say that the person will be fine within three months. You can’t say that the person will be able to stand on their own. So aftercare is very, very important. It must either be done by a rehabilitation facility or a family member or a good friend.” (Participant 10)*

#### **4.3.5 Theme 5: Shortcomings of the programme**

The responses here indicated a need for more thorough discussion on certain sections of the programme as some of the participants could not recall specific sections dealt with in the programme. Responses also indicated that the programme should be presented on a regular basis and that the marketing of the programme should be improved. There was also an indication that the selection of participants to attend the programme deserves attention. Sub-themes that will be discussed here are lack of in-depth discussion of answers to the questions in the quiz, infrequent presentation of the programme and no follow-up sessions as well as the poor

marketing of the programme. Other sub-themes relate to the fact that employees are not aware of services and the inappropriate selection of employees attending the programme.

**Sub-theme 1: Lack of in-depth discussion of answers to the questions in the quiz**

The participants felt that more time should have been allocated to discussing the answers to the quiz. There was still a lot of debate around the answers but, due to time constraints, the participants and the presenter agreed to stick to the answers contained in the memorandum. This is described by the following statement:

*“I feel that this section should be discussed more in depth when these programmes are presented”. (Participant 1)*

*“What I can remember is that there were a good number of questions, but we could not discuss the answers to the questions in detail.” (Participant 4)*

According to Hepworth et al. (2010: 138), in-depth discussion on issues are important and are best determined by asking for clarification or for further examples on a specific topic. These authors assert that focusing superficially on topics runs the risk of missing opportunities that are critical to yielding valuable information. Corey et al. (2010:160) also emphasize the importance of sharing information and reactions to experiences in a group setting for clarification purposes.

**Sub-theme 2: Participants could not recall anything about a definition and stages of change**

One participant could not recall that the definition on substance abuse and dependence was covered in the programme. All the participants could not recall the stages of change. Four statements relating to this are as follows:

*“Mmm. I’m not sure” (Participant 6)*

*“No I don’t. Not at all. I really cannot remember it.....“So maybe I was not focused on that day. It is a bit difficult to remember everything” (Participant 7)*

*“I cannot remember that we did any definition. I cannot remember being divided into groups, honestly. I cannot.” (Participant 8)*

*“As much as I don’t remember them, but I feel that they also need to be there”.*  
**(Participant 9)**

To this regard, Biehl (2004:78) states that it is preferable to use easily understood terms in speaking and writing. This is important as technical vocabulary and professional jargon can invade presentations to the extent that it results in unclear communication and misconceptions. It can sometimes even close doors on further interaction. Du Plooy (2004:43) also supports this notion as he maintains that participants are more likely to remember content if it is presented in a meaningful way. It is thus important for the facilitator to realize that it is their responsibility to influence the thinking patterns of participants and to stimulate creativity in order to guide the learning process (Olivier; 2001:143). Komane (2003:20) makes a similar assertion in proposing that when the content is perceived to be important it will be remembered and recommends that facilitators be creative in their ideas for employee education.

### **Sub-theme 3: Infrequent presentation of the programme and no follow-up sessions**

Jacobs (2008:57) asserts that programmes should be offered on an ongoing basis and should be inclusive of the latest trends in drugs; especially the dangers of abuse. The general feeling was that all employees should be exposed to presentations, which means that these need to be done on a regular basis. This will ensure the accentuation of information. According to the participants, there were no follow-up sessions or refresher courses. The Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act (2008:16) emphasizes that pro-active intervention strategies like the EAP substance abuse prevention programme should be sustainable in nature. Follow-up sessions are meant to cover updates and possible changes to content previously shared; it is thus concerned with the recall and reinforcement of acquired skills and knowledge. The Webster’s New World College Dictionary (2010) defines refresher training as “a class intended to remind you of previous training or to

update skills and knowledge”.

The following statements express this sentiment:

*“There must be more of these programmes in and outside the police”.*

**(Participant 1)**

*“Look we did this programme that day and never again. We did not have a follow up”.* **(Participant 2)**

*“I think the programme must be enforced to each and every one that is employed by the South African Police Services. It must enrich everyone in the police”.*

**(Participant 9)**

#### **Sub-theme 4: Poor marketing of the programme leading to employees not being aware of services**

The participants felt that the marketing of the programme is poor and that there is a need for increased awareness of the availability of the programme. This is exemplified in the following participant’s response:

*“I was never aware of such a programme in my twenty some odd years in the police. It is only now that I am working at detective section that I became aware of this programme. Where I worked first we did not know of the existence of the programme”* **(Participant 1)**

This is concerned with the fact that increased awareness of the programme is necessary. This viewpoint is emphasized in the following statements:

*“Yes people must just be more aware of the existence of the programme. I believe that there are a lot of people who still does not know about these programmes”* **(Participant 2)**

*“I know that there are people who don’t know about this programme and the people that don’t come and don’t know about these programmes are the ones who use*

*these substances". (Participant 9)*

Namathe (2005:36) points out the importance of developing a marketing strategy to make programmes well known in the organization. She further encourages EAP practitioners not to limit themselves when doing marketing. They are encouraged to use pamphlets, flyers and to make presentations on staff, union and management meetings (Namathe; 2005:51). Awareness can be increased by instituting a proper marketing strategy. The key components of marketing are summarized in Lewis et al. (2012:72-73) using "five Ps". They are named: publics, product, price, place and promotion. This is used to structure the development of a marketing strategy. In order for employees to be aware of services there needs to be a proper marketing strategy. In support of the above, the Public Service Commission (2006:34) asserts that EAPS which make the most impact are actively involved in effective awareness and educational programmes regarding better and healthier lifestyles. According to this Commission, EAPs should have media and literature available to employees demanding information on making the work environment more effective for those employees.

The next theme deals with recommendations made by participants regarding the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. This section is concerned with suggestions for possible improvement of the programme.

#### **4.3.6 Theme 6: Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made by participants and categories closely linked to it will be discussed in this discussion. Related sub-themes that will be discussed here are content changes to the programme, suggestions regarding the presenter, suggestions for changes to the recruitment process, suggestions regarding offering the programme as well as follow-up recommendations.

##### **Sub-theme 1: Content changes to the programme**

The need for more information in different areas was highlighted. Participants indicated that myths of alcohol abuse need to be addressed in the programme. Traditional masculine roles continue to predispose males to excessive drinking

patterns (Miller, Melnick, Farrel, Sabo & Barnes, 2006:470). McNeece & DiNitto (2005:214) support this by stating that drinking should not be associated with being macho in such a manner that drinking is seen as a requirement for proving your manhood.

One participant said the following:

*“What I would say should be brought into the programme are things like attaching being macho to drinking. You can see at all the braais you attend you will mostly see men standing around the fire, having a drink in their hand. People should understand that drinking or being drunk is not macho.” (Participant 5)*

Participants also proposed that detailed information on the effects of alcohol on the body should be presented in the programme. According to Langwith (2010:16), alcohol affects every system in the body causing a wide range of health problems. These problems are inclusive of heart rhythm disturbances, anemia, liver disease and many more. Bennet et al. (2000:159) and Du Plooy (2004:29) also refer to the physical effects that impact negatively on an individual. The following statement accentuates this viewpoint.

*“People should realize how alcohol; affects their bodies. They must understand why they have babelas, why they feel thirsty, why they have to use the toilet so much after drinking beers. People must know how their bodies work.” (Participant 4)*

Furthermore, participants identified the need for additional information on new drugs and prescription drugs, especially those that are less readily available. These statements were made in this regard:

*“There are a lot of new drugs that are abused nowadays. Like tik and rocks. Maybe this can be added to the programme as well as the side effects it has on the individual. ”. (Participant 5)*

*“There should be more material. There was not that much material. Even the drugs that were discussed; it did not include all the types of drugs that you come across in the community, like mandrax and tik. These are only a few, there are so much more.*

*There need to be more material.” (Participant 7)*

In support of this, it is stated in the National Drug Master Plan (2006-2011:17) that South African research generally addressed prescription of profitable substances whilst neglecting the impact of indigenous substances which affect far more people. It is also asserted that substances not usually considered as drugs, for example solvents and aerosols, might function as such under certain circumstances. Biehl (2004:85) also asserts that in open systems there are continuous changes; hence, individuals working in specialized fields should keep abreast of new developments.

There was also an indication that having physical examples of drugs at the programme will be a helpful visual aid as well as encouraging the sharing of real-life stories. The two participants stated:

*“Like I said maybe use practical examples. Maybe also have the type of substance there. The stuff that they use, have it available whilst presenting the programme.” (Participant 10)*

*“They must make use of real incidents, you know. I think if you can have someone who is at that point; who went through it and can tell you about the outcome. A lot of times people want to see things first before they believe it.” (Participant 10)*

They also identified the need for providing a breakdown of the alcohol volume of different drinks. This participant felt that:

*“Something that I would like to be added to the programme is a breakdown of the alcohol volumes of the different drinks. The effects of drinking are not totally clear to people that is why they continue drinking. The alcohol volume of brandy, whiskey, beers, etcetera need to be stipulated.” (Participant 4)*

Langwith (2010:56-61) mentions a number of strategies that can reduce alcohol harm. One of these strategies relates to the above mentioned quote which refers to the marketing of alcoholic beverages; he asserts that marketing should focus on the volume, placement and content of alcohol when it is advertised.

Participants also identified the need to add a section on anger management as part



of the content of the programme. The following statement was made:

*“The role of the social worker must maybe also include anger management”*  
**(Participant 5)**

This is an important point, as Langwith (2010:16) points out that alcohol causes psychological distress manifested in symptoms such as anxiety and aggression. Management of these issues would be a step in the right direction. Information obtained from the Alcohol Content Database Available at: [www.alcoholcontents.com](http://www.alcoholcontents.com). [Accessed November 2014] on alcohol use and driving indicates that it is important for people to familiarize themselves with the alcohol percentages of drinks for their own safety and for the safety of co-road users.

Participants further suggested that more time be allowed for more in-depth/personal discussion when issues arise. Linked to this they suggested that time for introspection should be allowed. These statements are as follows:

*“So that there can be more thorough discussions on the information.”* **(Participant 1)**

*“Yes. If you are a drinker you weren’t really given the opportunity to make the realization, is this really so deep? Is it really so serious? It is like you open up something, but then you just leave it there. The people didn’t really get the necessary exposure. It is not as if they can come to that realization and then decide what to do about it.”* **(Participant 4)**

Participants thus felt that they were not given the opportunity to experience the epiphany needed to facilitate change. Linked to this and as a means of achieving the desired outcome, prevention programmes need to be of a sufficient intensity and duration (National Drug Master Plan; 2006-2011:14).

## **Sub-theme 2: Suggestions regarding the presenter**

This sub-theme is concerned with the suggestions made by participants regarding the presenter. Categories listed here are inclusive of participants’ suggestions that it is essential for the presenter to have extensive knowledge and experience on the topic to be presented. It was also suggested that, since substance abuse is a

sensitive issue, the presenter should be subtle in his/her approach.

Myers et al. (2008:12) point out the importance of the fact that substance abuse prevention workers are adequately trained in substance abuse issues. This perspective was expressed in the following statements:

*“I think it is very important that the presenter presents well and have knowledge about what he presents” (Participant 3)*

*“Maybe you should be very tactful. I feel that if there is someone in the group that is an abuser of any substance then it must be taken into consideration that the experience might be negative for that person, because he might feel that he is targeted”. (Participant 8)*

The National Drug Master Plan (2006-2011:20) states that professionals need to be reminded of the role substance abuse plays in feeding clients’ problems and that professionals be able to deal with these problems in a sensitive, non-judgmental manner. Du Plooy (2004:31-32) emphasizes the importance of the presenter continuously assessing the group dynamics and implementing experiential learning methods in which individual growth can be promoted. The following statement expressed this viewpoint.

Participants, lastly, suggested that it can be helpful if presenters speak from experience. The following statement was made in support of this.

*“I would say someone who, maybe it would have been better if someone who abused substances before presented the programme”. (Participant 7)*

This is a valuable point, as Myers et al. (2008:12) draws on the South African context and prevention of workers who have a history of substance abuse, but now turned to prevention of this abuse.

### **Sub-theme 3: Suggestions for changes to the recruitment process**

Categories serving as affirmation of this sub-theme are that participants suggested that awareness training be enforced upon all SAPS members. Two participants

expressed this viewpoint:

*“I just think the programme must be presented at the station parades when members come on duty”. (Participant 2)*

*“I propose that this programme must be presented on parades at the station. You see members have to come to their workplace and when they on parade they must just listen, because they have to be there. They cannot run away”. (Participant 2)*

Moriarty & Field’s (2001:157) findings show that EAP should be made available to new recruits as soon as they join the organization, as support for the troubled employee enjoys precedence. A further statement was concerned with the effective recruitment of participants:

*“I propose to HR that those who are willing to attend these programmes should be asked to bring another colleague of their choice along.” (Participant 4)*

One way to ensure group participation is to invite people to your group. Ideally, participation in a group is voluntary, but this is not always the case; hence, much effort needs to be invested in explaining group processes to individuals (Corey et al., 2010:73). According to Greenberg (2013:23), well managed social recruitment strategies allow for individuals to attract and engage others in programmes. He mentions a few effective recruitment methods, but that which is most applicable here are the self-selection strategies. This includes inviting participants to open group events, like these programmes, as it allows the opportunity for the sharing of more information (Hepworth et al., 2010:281). It is important to involve as many people as possible, as an effective recruitment process should include enough variation to meet the unique needs of diverse individuals (Sullivan, 2008:1). In support of this, participants also indicated that programme goers be allowed to invite another person of their choice to the programme.

In addition, participants suggested that the programme be presented at station level so as to make resources readily available to employees. The following statement was made.

*“They can even bring the programme to the station level.” (Participant 3)*

In this regard, it is suggested that the dissemination of information is made accessible to everyone (National Drug Master Plan; 2006-2011:20)

The following sub-theme focuses on suggestions made by participants on the frequency at which the programme should be presented. It is summarized as follows.

#### **Sub-theme 4: Suggestions regarding offering the programme**

Myers et al. (2008:14) state that prevention programmes should not be conducted on an ad hoc basis as in this form it will not prevent the initiation of substance abuse or cause changes in the behavior of those who currently use or abuse substances. Linked to this is the fact that programmes also need to be evaluated on a regular basis so as to incorporate new information on the issue. Participants suggested that the course should be repeated regularly. The following statement was made in this regard:

*“The programme was all good and well, but I would like if it was presented more frequently so that members can be exposed to it more frequently.” (Participant 3)*

*“It must be done on a regular basis” (Participant 6)*

Participants also suggested that they be given a test after attending the programme so as to measure their knowledge. In this respect, the following statement was made:

*“The test should be after the presentation” (Participant 6)*

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The findings from the participants' responses were presented and summarized in this chapter. This is an exciting and important part of the research process. In order to gain an understanding of the sample, the distribution of biographical information of participants was also presented in this chapter. Themes were identified and themes, sub-themes, related categories and sub-categories were discussed in detail and

supplemented by quotes and related theory.

The semi-structured interviews that were conducted have shown that SAPS employees have comparable views on the Substance Abuse Prevention Programme, but they also have dissimilar views on the very same programme. In considering the findings, the majority of the participants were however in favour of the programme. This process of data collection and analysis allowed the researcher the opportunity to better understand the Port Elizabeth SAPS employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.

The next chapter constitutes a discussion of the conclusions, limitations and the value of the research based on the results of the study. Attention will also be given to trustworthiness, ethical considerations as well as recommendations regarding future research.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter examined the results of the present study. The current chapter provide a summary of various aspects related to the study and then draws conclusions from these findings, as well as conclusions regarding the research process. It starts with a summary of the research process, conclusions about the findings and conclusions about the research methodology and design. Trustworthiness, ethical considerations, the value of the research and limitations encountered by the researcher will also be dealt with here. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research that emerged from the study.

### **5.2 Summary of the study**

When discussing the conclusions of the study, it is necessary to refer to the aim of the research as a point of departure. This study aimed to gain an understanding of the Port Elizabeth SAPS employees' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. The objectives of the study were to:

- To explore and describe SAPS employees' overall perceptions of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.
- To explore SAPS employees' perceptions of the educational value, format of the programme and its recruitment procedures.
- To explore and describe SAPS employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.
- To offer recommendations for an effective substance abuse prevention programme.

The primary research question for this study was: What are the Port Elizabeth SAPS employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. The goal and objectives were in line with the research question. Based on the goal of this study, the researcher opted for a qualitative research approach as

she aimed to develop an understanding of a social process within a social setting. As noted above, the researchers' study focused on exploring and describing the experiences of employees of the Port Elizabeth SAPS with regard to the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. The researcher elected to use a research design which is contextual, explorative and descriptive in nature. It also has an evaluative component. A descriptive and exploratory and contextual research design was selected to explore the experiences of SAPS employees with regards to the implementation, outcomes and impact of the EAP substance abuse programme. The population identified for this study was SAPS members in the cluster of six police stations in the Port Elizabeth area. The identified stations in the Mount Road and Motherwell cluster in Port Elizabeth are: Humewood, Kabega Park, Kwadwesi, Motherwell, Gelvandale and Bethelsdorp. The researcher implemented non-probability sampling as her study concerns the evaluation of programmes in an organization. The researcher identified ten participants from the population, but data collection was also continued until the point of saturation was reached. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used semi-structured, face-to-face, individual interviews as a means of data collection. The results of the data that was collected and qualitatively analyzed contributed towards helping the researcher to explore and describe the participants' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. The researcher followed the detailed guidelines for the coding process, as set out by Tesch (in Creswell, 2003:192).

Chapter One provided an introduction to the researcher's interest in the topic of study, followed by the motivation for the study. The concepts that form the basis of the study were also defined in the chapter. The aims of the study and the research methodology were furthermore presented, together with an outline of the data collection and analysis methods. Aspects of trustworthiness, the pilot study, ethical considerations and the dissemination of results were also touched on in Chapter One. The chapter concluded with an outline of the forthcoming chapters in the treatise.

Chapter Two focused on reviewing the existent literature relevant to this dissertation.

The literature reviewed indicated that EAPs are important for improving the wellness of employees and their families. It was also established that EAPs ensure that employees perform optimally at work. It can therefore be assumed that EAPs are essential to organisations.

Substance abuse within the work environment was also explored and was found to be a complex phenomenon. It cannot be viewed in isolation as it impacts not only on the individual, but also the family he/she is a part of as well as the organisation he/she works for.

The identified theoretical framework that underpins this study is the Social Cognitive Theory. The main assumption of this theory is that behavior change is only possible if the individual believes that any action taken will make a difference and that this action will have certain benefits. This fact is closely linked to self-concept and locus of control. This theory also emphasizes the importance of role models as change agents.

Current literature stresses the value of employees and the need for EAPs in the workplace. The strong correlation between substance abuse and industrial fatalities and industrial injuries was also identified. Furthermore, attention was drawn to the fact that EAPs should be made available to all new recruits as soon as they join the organization and it should be continued throughout the employee's work-life. The literature reviewed also emphasized the need to have a holistic view of the life of the individual. The importance of providing training to managers and supervisors, so as to sensitize them on substance abuse issues at the workplace and ways of dealing with it, was also stressed in the literature reviewed. Attention was also drawn to the fact that these managers and supervisors should fulfill a monitoring and evaluative function when concerned with the well-being of their employees.

Chapter Three focussed on the methodology followed by the researcher during the research process. The research question, goal and objective of the study, as well as the research methodology and design were thoroughly discussed in this chapter. The population, sample, sampling method, data collection method, data analysis as well as data verification was specified in Chapter Three. The results of the data



collected and qualitatively analyzed contributed towards helping the researcher to explore and describe the participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.

Chapter Four presented and summarized the research findings. This is an exciting and important part of the research process. In order to gain an understanding of the sample, the distribution of the biographical information of participants was also presented in this chapter. Themes were identified and themes, sub-themes, related categories and sub-categories were discussed in detail and supplemented by quotes and related theory.

The semi-structured interviews that were conducted have shown that SAPS employees do indeed have comparable views on the Substance Abuse Prevention Programme, but that they also have dissimilar views on the very same programme. In considering the findings, the greater portion of the participants were in favour of the programme. This process of data collection and analysis allowed the researcher to better understand the Port Elizabeth SAPS employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.

The elements of trustworthiness that were used were data verification. It was used as a means of ensuring the trustworthiness of information. Guba's criteria (in De Vos et al., 2002:351) were used for data verification in this study. The credibility, conformability and dependability of results was ensured through peer examination whereby the research supervisor was asked to read the interview transcripts and reflect on the collected data as well as the data analysis that the researcher has completed. The services of an independent coder were also employed. An accurate description of the participants was also provided. In order to ensure transferability, the researcher compiled a comprehensive research report.

Ethics needs to be a critical part of the frame of the research process from the start of the research to the interpretation and publication of the research findings. Various ethical issues were considered in this research study. Firstly, avoidance of harm was considered; the researcher thoroughly informed participants about the possibility thereof and ensured the availability of counseling services for them. The researcher

also ensured informed consent. Participants in this study granted their permission to be part of the study by means of completing and signing a written consent. Participants were also asked to complete a form granting the researcher permission to tape record the interviews. In order to ensure anonymity, pseudonyms were used in this study. Tape recordings of the interview will be destroyed on completion of examination of this research document. All information generated during data collection was safeguarded to ensure privacy. In an attempt to ensure respect and autonomy, the researcher explained all the risks to the participants so as to ensure that the decision to take part in the study was an informed one. Beneficence was ensured as the researcher explained to participants that the input provided by them in the interviews will be used to make recommendations for an effective substance abuse prevention programme.

The present study utilized semi-structured, face-to-face, individual interviews to gain insight into perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme as well as seeking common themes that emerged with regard to their perceptions. There were numerous themes that emerged from the analysis. They are listed below, each with their related sub-themes.

### **5.3 Summary of the findings**

The first theme is concerned with the overall experience of the EAP substance abuse programme. The first related sub-theme is concerned with participants' positive perceptions of the programme. Related categories described the programme as fruitful, informative and enjoyable and participants believed that they gained a better understanding of what addicts are going through. Another category was concerned with the programme being applicable to a number of people. Here it was highlighted that employees often come across substance abuse in their work; hence, it is important to be able to deal with it. Participants also felt that the information that was shared in the group applied to them personally and they could relate to it. Participants were also relaxed and enjoyed the sharing of real-life stories in the group. The second related sub-theme is concerned with participants' negative perceptions of the programme. Related categories are inclusive of the fact that some

of the participants could recall the content as it is part of their daily routine, but others could not. Resistance to attending the programme, another category, referred to some people refraining from attending, because they do not feel it is their problem, whilst others deny the fact that a problem persists. The last identified category here were concerned with the lack of awareness of the programme.

The second identified theme addresses the participants' experience of the practical aspects of the programme. Identified sub-themes are concerned with participants' perceptions related to the venue, composition of the group and the size of the group, the length of the programme, the presenter and the method of presentation as well as the recruitment process.

The third theme focusses on participants' perceptions of the educational value of the substance abuse prevention programme. Related sub-themes are concerned with the participants' knowledge about substance abuse being expanded on and the supportive and didactic nature of the programme content.

The fourth theme focuses on the participants' perceptions of the relevance of programme components. Components are inclusive of the quiz about substance abuse. It is described as relevant as it sets the platform to understanding addiction. Other components include the use of definitions of substance abuse and dependence, understanding the importance of defence mechanisms, a discussion of phases of addiction and the physical and psycho-social effects of abuse as well as increasing awareness about the importance of support following rehabilitation.

The fifth theme refers to the shortcomings of the programme. The shortcomings identified by participants are the lack of in-depth discussion of answers to the questions discussed in the quiz, the fact that participants could not recall anything about a definition and the stages of change, the infrequent presentation of the programme and no follow-up sessions, the poor marketing of the programme and the fact that employees are not aware of services.

The last identified theme is concerned with the recommendations made by the participants on different aspects of the programme. Suggestions were made

regarding certain content changes in the programme. Further suggestions were concerned with the presenter and the changes to the recruitment process. Suggestions were also made regarding the frequency at which the programme is offered as well as the importance of follow-up sessions.

In view of the above, the next step would be to discuss the conclusions drawn by the researcher about the findings, as follows.

#### **5.4 Conclusion drawn from the findings**

In looking at the SAPS employees' overall perceptions of the programme, the researcher found that the programme is enjoyed and found to be informative and not deemed to be a waste of time. It was further established that the content of the programme is not always applicable to employees working in the different sections in the SAPS. The findings also suggested that employees are unwilling to attend due to their fear of being labelled addicts or they feel that they are being coerced into attending. It was also established that the programme is not known to all employees in the SAPS. The latter can be linked to employees not being aware of the services presented in the SAPS and the fact that it is not well marketed within the organization.

Findings related to participants' perceptions of the practical aspects of the programme took various facets of the programme into consideration. The participants had different views on their perceptions of the venue. Some found it to be suitable whilst others found it being too small and that external factors such as noise distracted them. Here it is important to keep in mind that the venue is different for each presentation as it is presented at different locations with different target groups within the SAPS. Another practical aspect is group's composition and the size of the group; here, participants indicated that the sharing of different experiences in a group contributes to its richness and adds value to the learning experience. Regarding the group size, participants were in accord that a group that is not too big allows for more profound participation. The length of the programme was deemed sufficient to allow for in-depth group discussions. Findings concerned with the presenter's and the method of presentation suggests that it is important for

the presenter to be knowledgeable about the subject matter at hand. It was also found that the presenter should have control over the group and be able to guide discussions and to set a leading example by being punctual, for instance. It was also found that the presentation style should be of such a nature that participants remain interested. The presenter should also use language and attend to individual needs where necessary. With reference to findings of the recruitment process, the indication was predominantly in favour of being voluntarily recruited. It was found that where employees are involuntarily recruited they feel pressured to use the services provided by EAPs. This, in turn, will lead to reluctance to participate in the process; they will therefore need to be involved in the decision as to whether or not to attend.

The researcher also found that findings concerned with the educational value participants could draw from the programme indicated that it was generally a good learning experience. It also indicated that their knowledge about substance abuse was broadened and that the programme content enabled participants to support/educate others.

Findings linked to participants' perceptions of the relevance of programme components lean towards it being very informative, hence, increasing awareness on the issue. The presented information was also found to be relevant to what the programme aims to achieve. All components were found to be significant to the content of the programme and the knowledge gained proved to be valuable in providing an understanding of the subject matter.

Findings linked to suggested shortcomings of the programme indicated a need for more thorough discussion on certain sections of the programme as some of the participants could not recall specific sections dealt with in the programme. Findings also indicated that the programme should be presented on a more regular basis and that marketing of the programme should be improved as there are still employees who are not aware of the presentation of these programmes in the SAPS. There was also an indication that, when selecting participants to attend the programme, they should be involved in this process.

Findings concerned with the recommendations made by participants included the need for more information in different areas. The first set of suggestions is concerned with the need for change to the content of the programme. Here, participants suggested that the myths of alcohol abuse be addressed in the programme. Participants also proposed that detailed information on the effects of alcohol on the body should be presented in the programme. The need for additional information on new drugs and prescription drugs, especially those that are less readily available was also identified. There was also a suggestion that having physical examples of drugs at the programme will be a helpful visual aid and will encourage the sharing of real life stories. Participants further suggested providing a breakdown of the alcohol volume of different drinks and some also requested a section on anger management to be included as part of the programme. In addition, the participants suggested that more time be allowed for more in-depth/personal discussion when issues arise and, in relation to this, they suggested that time for introspection should be allowed.

The second set of suggestions is concerned with the presenter. It was established that it is essential for the presenter to have extensive knowledge and experience on the topic to be presented. It was also suggested that since substance abuse is a sensitive issue, the presenter should be subtle in his/her approach. It was also suggested that it can be helpful if presenters speak from experience.

A third set of suggestions is concerned with changes to the recruitment process. Findings indicated that all SAPS employees should be made aware of the programme. The findings also indicated that programme attendees be allowed to invite another person of their choice to the programme. This suggestion was made with the consideration that a person who experiences challenges with substance abuse will be invited to attend the programme so as to share his/her experiences.

Another set of suggestions is concerned with the offering of the programme. The findings suggested that the course should be repeated regularly and it was proposed that the programme be presented at station level so as to make resources readily available to employees. Participants also proposed giving a test afterwards to

measure the knowledge gained in the programme whilst others indicated the need for follow-up sessions so as to accentuate information.

### **5.5 Conclusion regarding research methodology and design**

The choice of the researcher's methodology was dependent on the nature of her research question. The researcher chose to employ a qualitative research design that was descriptive, contextual and explorative in nature. In the researcher's opinion, this was the most suitable approach and design to obtain answers to the research question. This holds true as the researcher was concerned with the quality and texture of the experience, rather than the identification of a cause-effect relationship (Willig, 2002:9).

The design employed was, firstly, descriptive. The researcher wanted to gain insights into the current status of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. She managed to do so with this type of design as it enables the researcher to obtain a greater understanding and meaning of the participants' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the programme.

The design was also contextual in nature, which implies that participants were studied in their own setting. Interviews took place at the respective police stations which provided the participants with the opportunity to describe their perceptions of the substance abuse prevention programme.

The design was also explorative, as its aim was to explore the issue at hand so as to become aware of the basic facts, people and concerns involved. Exploration is mainly done to gather more information and to expand on knowledge by providing recommendations that will ensure a more effective EAP substance abuse prevention programme.

The findings are indicative of why the problem of substance abuse within the SAPS persists despite the EAP substance abuse programme. Related to this are the various shortcomings and recommendations indicated by participants. The most important aspect relating to this is that the programme is not necessarily attended by substance abusers. Another aspect included the fact that some participants felt

coerced into attending the programme; thus having a negative attitude towards discussions in the programme. There was also the viewpoint that in-depth discussion should be facilitated and visual aids should be employed so as to enhance learning of the programme content. It was furthermore pointed out that knowledgeable and sensitive presenters would be advantageous for an effective programme. Lastly it was identified that more frequent presentation of the programme and suitably scheduled follow-up sessions would be more effective in addressing substance abuse within the SAPS. The findings fit in terms of the Social Learning paradigm as this theory provides the structure that programme developers may use to systematically design effective educational and prevention programmes. Taking the above mentioned factors into consideration a programme can hence be developed that addresses these concerns.

## **5.6 Limitations of the study**

It is important to consider the various limitations associated with research as it will identify the potential weaknesses of the study (Creswell, 2003:148). No research project is without limitations. Punch (2000:185) describes limitations as limiting conditions or restrictive weaknesses, which are unavoidably present in the study's design. Despite limitations, every effort was made to ensure that any extraneous impact on the quality of the study was controlled to obtain high quality research results. The latter is important for follow-up research as quality research results will ensure the trustworthiness of the results. The sample of this study may have been too small to make inferences about the perceptions of the SAPS at large. A sample of forty individuals would have been more representative but, due to time constraints, the researcher could not afford a bigger sample. A follow-up study, in which the current findings are verified through further focus group discussions, is an alternative means of compensating for this limitation (King & Horrocks, 2010:65).

The semi-structured face-to-face interview in itself poses a limitation as it is subjective in nature. This type of interview provides "indirect" information filtered through the views of interviewees. This interview is based on the standpoints and opinions of interviewees and not on objective facts. It also provides information in a



designated “place” rather than a natural setting. The researcher’s presence may furthermore bias responses and people are not equally accurate and perceptive; their accounts may therefore be superficial (Creswell, 2003:186).

Gaining entry into the research field was a specifically timeous process. A written application had to be submitted to the Provincial Commissioner requesting permission to interview SAPS employees. Responses to this letter pose many challenges. It was firstly sent to the wrong office on numerous occasions, due to incorrect information obtained from that office. Upon following-up on this correspondence, the researcher was told that their office already gave feedback on the matter, but the researcher had not received anything to this regard. It was then confirmed that the research was recommended on their level, but that it needed to be approved on national level. The fact that their National office is in Pretoria posed many challenges in itself. Approval for undertaking the research study was received a year after the initial application. To enter the site, the researcher spoke directly to the respective station commanders who acted as gatekeepers. This also proved to be a timeous process as it involved travelling to the different police stations forming part of the sample as well as waiting for elongated periods to obtain appointments with these commanders.

Interviews were conducted at the respective police stations. This implies that the venue for interviewing participants were at the workplace and for most of them in their own offices. This caused a major distraction as participants answered their office telephones when it rang and colleagues walked into the interview venue whenever they needed something from the interviewee.

The recruitment of participants took longer that envisaged. The researcher had two attendance lists of employees who attended the programme in question. It was difficult to secure an interview with these individuals due to the shifts they are working. Some of them were away on training, on leave and some of them were even suspended from their duty as police officials. The researcher therefore had to wait for the remainder of the individuals on the list to be available for an interview.

A significant amount of literature cited in this study originates from international

sources. Very little South African literature concerned with substance abuse in the SAPS and EAPs was mentioned in this study.

Based on the limitations of the study, that discussed here, recommendations for future research can be made. The focus of the following section now shifts to these recommendations.

### **5.7 Value of the study**

While there is a wealth of international studies on substance abuse in law enforcing organisations, there are very limited studies focusing on the SAPS employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. It was therefore both important and necessary to gain an understanding of SAPS employees' perceptions concerning the effectiveness of the substance abuse prevention programme. As a result, the value of this research is that it contributes to knowledge about substance abuse within the SAPS; hence, within the South African context. The study also contributes to informing and improving pro-active interventions in the field of substance abuse.

### **5.8 Recommendations for future research**

Based on the goal and objectives of the study, the researcher makes the following recommendations: Firstly, it is recommended that, should the study be replicated in future, based on recommendations made in this study, a larger representative sample is used so that the results can be generalized to the SAPS at large. The bigger the sample the more opinions will be generated during the data collection process. This will then ensure a more comprehensive study, inclusive of the viewpoints of more SAPS employees. Furthermore, in an attempt to address the lack of research on SAPS employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme in Port Elizabeth, the researcher recommends that further research be done, relevant to this particular field of interest. It is also recommended that the views of the presenters of the EAP substance abuse prevention programmes be included in the study so as to obtain a more unbiased and holistic picture of the effectiveness of the programme. In doing so the views of

these presenters may depict aspects that could possibly be added to the programme to ensure an effective EAP substance abuse prevention programme. The extent to which the programme is marketed is very important as participants claimed that awareness of the programme needs attention. With reference to this the presenters of this programme should devise a sound marketing strategy. This marketing strategy should especially reach out to the abusers of substances in a sensitive manner. These are the employees that would benefit most from this type of programme, but who are normally the ones who shy away from these programmes. Linked to this is the fact that these programmes are not presented as frequently as they should be. Increasing the frequency of presentation and instituting follow-up sessions could also increase the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. Other related topics that need to be explored could be concerned with creating a programme which deals more in-depth with the issue of substance abuse and assuring that the programme keeps abreast with any new developments in this area. The focus of future research could also be placed on establishing reasons why employees are resistant to attending the programme.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

This chapter addressed the conclusions, limitations and value of the study and provided recommendations for further research. The chapter also touched on trustworthiness and ethical considerations. The study aimed to gain an understanding of the Port Elizabeth SAPS employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. This was embarked on by utilizing semi-structured interview schedules to refer to a list of aspects or topics relevant to the specific theme of interest to the researcher. The findings of the study offer valuable guidelines for an effective substance abuse programme in South Africa. It can be concluded that the research question for this study, "what are the SAPS' employees' experiences of the effectiveness of the substance abuse prevention programme", has thus been answered. On the whole, the results of this study contribute towards a growing body of research in the field of substance abuse in the workplace in South Africa.

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## **APPENDIX 1: LETTER TO GATEKEEPERS**

The Head

Attention: Colonel Salzwedel

OD and Strategic Management

Private Bag X7471

King Williams Town

Eastern Cape

5600

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Application to conduct research in the SAPS**

Topic: Employees' perceptions of the South African Police Service's Employee Substance Abuse Prevention Programme in Port Elizabeth.

1. This letter serves as an application to conduct a research study within the SAPS.
2. The applicant used to be an employee of the SAPS within the Division of Personnel Services, sub-section Employee Health and Wellness Services. She worked for the SAPS for up to ten years, but recently terminated her service with them. Currently, she is a practising social worker at the Department of Health.

3. Details required by your office are as follows:

a) Name: Janine Smith

b) Identity number: 7201080012088

c) Residential address: 35 Nicholson Street  
Fernwood Park  
PE



6059

d) Work address: Department of Health  
Livingstone Hospital  
Port Elizabeth  
6020

e) Telephone details: 041- 4052123  
0727784469

f) Academic degree: BA(SW) Hons.

g) Research experience: Previous experience was obtained during the researcher's studies.

h) Research will be undertaken in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master's degree (Social Development and Planning), in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Campus.

i) The overall goal of the research study is to describe the perceptions of employees of the Port Elizabeth SAPS with regard to the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.

**The objectives are as follows:**

- To explore and describe SAPS employees' overall perceptions of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.
- To explore SAPS employees' perceptions of the educational value, format of the programme and the recruitment procedures.

- To explore and describe SAPS employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme.
- To offer recommendations for an effective substance abuse prevention programme.

### **j) Research Design**

A qualitative research approach will be used in this research study. De Vos et al. (2005:74) define qualitative research as "research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions." The aim of this type of research is always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand.

The researcher chose evaluation research as the study seeks to qualitatively explore the experiences of SAPS employees in relation to the substance abuse prevention programme. According to Yegidis and Weinbach, evaluation research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher's aim is to provide feedback on the effectiveness of a specific intervention (2002:257). Hence, in the case of this study, the evaluation of all aspects associated with the substance abuse prevention programme will be included. The programme will be qualitatively evaluated with the aim of providing recommendations for possible improvements with regard to the programme's effectiveness. The researcher will thus make use of semi-structured interview schedules in the individual interviews, in order to collect 'rich' data from the participants.

### **Population and Sampling**

According to Cresswell (2003:52), the population consists of the total collection of all units of analysis which the researcher wants to understand more thoroughly. The population in the study will be SAPS members taken from a cluster of seven police stations in the Port Elizabeth area demarcated for the purpose of the study. The sample is used to assist in explaining certain aspects of the population. The sampling method that will be selected is non-probability sampling and, more specifically, purposive sampling. It can therefore safely be assumed that some individuals have a greater likelihood of being selected than others. In purposive sampling, each sample element is selected for a purpose. In this study, the participants are made up of police officials that share the commonality of exposure to the substance abuse prevention programme. Ten participants will be chosen from the population identified for the study.

The participants will be provided with information during an individual session with each of them, where in the research process will be explained to them, as well as the important role they will play in this study. The participants will be asked to sign a written agreement in which they give their permission to be used as participants in the study.

## **Data Collection Methods**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher will use semi-structured interviews as a means of data collection. Welman (2005:166) postulates that “in semi-structured interviews the researcher has a list of themes and questions to be covered, although these may vary from one interview to the next.” This will give the researcher the opportunity to probe deeper into questions contained in the interview guide and to add others as guided by the interviews she will be conducting. This semi-structured interview schedule will be utilized in the individual interviews that will be conducted by the researcher. It can generally be assumed that the participants will have knowledge of the topic under discussion and that they will share some characteristics with the population. One of the prerequisites for inclusion in the study is to have undergone the programme in question and to be an employee of the SAPS. The process will begin by making contact with the participants, individually at their workplace. The purpose of the visit will be to explain the research process to the participants who will be part of the study. Furthermore, the criteria for inclusion will be explained as well as the fact that their participation is voluntary and that their privileges/rights will not be jeopardized in any way. Those who agree to participate in the study will be prepared by having the contents of the consent form explained to them. On indication that they understand the contents of this letter, they will be requested to sign it, but are not obliged to. The interviews will be tape record with the permission of participants and later transcribed. According to Holloway and Wheeler (2002:86), the best form of recording interview data is by making use of a tape-recording, because tapes contain the exact words of the interviews inclusive of questions so that interviewers do not make the mistake of forgetting important areas. Researchers are also able to maintain eye contact and pay attention to what participants are saying, while the interview is recorded.

## **Pilot Study**

A pilot study will be conducted at one of the police stations identified from the population so as to establish the relevance of the data collected from participants, to test the interview guide and to ‘sharpen’ the research tools. Denzin and Lincoln (1994), in de Vos et al. (2005:22), state that “the pilot study in qualitative research allows the researcher to focus on specific areas that may have been unclear previously or to test certain questions.” One participant from the sample will be recruited for the pilot study. This will allow me to test the relevance of the interview guide. The pilot study will also set the foundation for the study. The gatekeepers of the study will be the Station Commanders of the stations identified as part of the population.

## **Methodology - Data Analysis**

Cournoyer and Klein (200:170) define data analysis as “the phase of inquiry in which we begin to abstract general meaning from collections of observations.” It can be

seen as a process whereby all the collected data is arranged so as to emphasize the significance of the selected data. The researcher will make use of the services of an independent coder in order to compare the themes, sub-themes and categories identified by the researcher with those of the independent coder. This will serve as authentication of the data.

k) Copy of interview schedule attached.

l) Recommendation from the research supervisor attached.

m) The time period necessary for the research is approximately three months.

n) A hard as well as an electronic copy of the results will be made available to the library of the NMMU. Another copy will be provided to the Provincial Commissioner of the SAPS. It goes without saying that participants will have access to the findings should they wish to. In addition, the researcher will make a conference presentation on the findings of the study to the management of the SAPS so as to sensitize them about the issue and to motivate them into taking progressive action in alleviating the incidence of substance abuse in the organization. The researcher will also write an article on the findings of the study to be published in the SAPS Journal, distributed on a quarterly basis within the SAPS as well as in the social workers' journals, which are also distributed on a quarterly basis.

o) It is envisaged that the end result of the study will add value to the implementation of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme. As previously mentioned, management can then be motivated into taking progressive action in alleviating the incidence of substance abuse in the organization.

4) Your approval of this study is eagerly awaited.

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**J SMITH**

## APPENDIX 2: CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

I, the undersigned,----- (Name of the applicant)

I.D.-----

Of----- (Home  
address)

HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:

1. I was invited to participate in a research project titled “**Employees’ perceptions of the South African Police Service’s Employee Substance Abuse Prevention Programme in Port Elizabeth**” which is being undertaken by Janine Smith as part of the requirements of the degree Masters in Social Development and Planning from the Faculty Health Sciences, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.
2. The research study aims to establish the perceptions of employees of the SAPS regarding the use of EAP as a substance abuse prevention programme. The results of the research findings may be published in professional conferences and publications.
3. I understand that I will complete the consent form and forward it to the researcher before I participate in the research.
4. My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description, or publication by the researcher.

5. My participation is voluntary and I can withdraw my participation at any time during the research, should I wish to.
  
6. Participation in this study will have no costs.
  
7. I give the researcher permission to use audio-tape recordings during focus group discussions.

**I consent voluntarily to participate in the above mentioned research study.**

Signed at ----- on-----

Signature of applicant -----

**APPENDIX 3: USE OF AUDIO RECORDINGS AND WRITTEN MATERIAL FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES – PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM.**

**Participant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Details:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone no:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of researcher:** Janine Smith

**Level of research:** MASW (Social Development and Planning)

**Brief title of research:** Employees' perceptions of the South African Police Service's employee substance abuse prevention programme in Port Elizabeth

**Supervisor:** Dr. A Luck

**Declaration**

(Please sign in the blocks next to the statements that apply)

1. The nature of the research and the nature of my participation have been explained to me verbally and in writing.	<b>Signature:</b>
2. I agree to participate in an interview and to allow audio-recordings of these to be made.	<b>Signature:</b>
3. The audio-recordings will be transcribed only by the researcher.	<b>Signature:</b>
4. Once the data has been transcribed the recordings will be destroyed.	<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Witnessed by researcher:</b>	

## **APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1. What were your overall perceptions of the EAP substance abuse prevention programme in general? (Probe with questions, e.g. what was good and what was not so good, what was effective, what could have been done differently).
2. How did you perceive the content offered for learning about substance abuse? (Probe with open-ended questions about content issues).
3. How were you recruited for the programme? (Probe about their preferences for recruitment and how recruitment influences their motivation).
4. How did you experience the way the programme was presented? (Probe with questions about the appropriateness of the venue, the composition and the size of the group, the length of the programme as well as the presenter and the method of presentation).
5. Can you make any recommendations to make the programme more suitable for substance abusers, if it is not at present?



