

**PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY TEACHERS TO ADOLESCENT  
LEARNERS WITH BEHAVIOURAL AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS.**

**By**

**MMAMORE REBECCA BABEDI**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

**MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS  
(INCLUSIVE EDUCATION)**

In the  
School of Education  
University of South Africa

**SUPERVISOR:**  
Dr Hermien Olivier

**PRETORIA  
2013**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- To my supervisor, Dr Hermien Olivier, thank you for being inspiring and wonderful. Thank you for being there always when I needed you most. Your patience truly motivated me.
- To my loving husband, Nic, my beautiful daughters, Refilwe and Tumi, thank you for encouraging me and always believing in me. You are the wind beneath my wings.
- To the participants in the study, thank you for your willingness to share your experiences and time during my research. You are truly amazing.

## DEDICATION

In loving memory of my dearest mom: JEANETTE SELEKANE BOOYSEN – A rose that brightened my life, a rose that defied nature and grew between the cracks of concrete.

## DECLARATION

I, Mmamore Rebecca Babedi (Student number 05801230) hereby declare that this study, titled

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY TEACHERS TO ADOLESCENT LEARNERS WITH BEHAVIOURAL AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS.

is my original work. This dissertation was not previously submitted by me for any degree at another university.

.....

**Mmamore Rebecca Babedi**

.....

**Date**

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe how teachers implement school-based psychosocial support to Grade 12 learners who have behavioural and emotional problems.

As a secondary school teacher herself, the researcher frequently interacts with Grade 12 learners who have behavioural and emotional problems. Occurrences of behavioural and emotional problems are on the increase. This inference is based on the large number of reported learner problems in the School-based Support Team (SBST) records of a secondary school. The behavioural and emotional problems reported included violent aggressive behaviour, sexual and substance dependency, teenage pregnancy, early school drop-out and truancy. Learner problems may be caused by a variety of factors emanating from unmet development needs (Mwawenda, 2003), as well as biological factors and family and /or school factors (Papalia, Olds and Feldman, 2008). Kapp (2003), on the other hand, is of the opinion that a conducive environment may reduce learner problems and enhance improved learner wellbeing.

This study forms part of the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSI) introduced to certain secondary schools in 2008. Ten teachers, who were part of the school-based team of the secondary school researched, participated in this initiative. REPSI's initial objective was to provide psychosocial support to children orphaned by HIV/Aids in South African Development Countries (SADC). The initiative focused on taking care of children's developmental needs— social, emotional, behavioural, physical and spiritual. In the case of the school researched, this study was a pilot project to use REPSI guidelines to provide psychosocial support to learners who have behavioural and emotional problems in participating schools. The study investigates how teachers implement psychosocial support based on the REPSI Initiative. The study further explores how an ecosystemic approach can be used as an alternative approach to enhance the implementation of psychosocial services provided to learners.

The study anticipates that an alternative approach will improve the school-based psychosocial initiative for adolescent learners who have behavioural and emotional problems in schools.

The researcher used a constructivist paradigm to describe the school-based psychosocial support provided to adolescent learners who have behavioural and emotional problems. A case study design with 10 teachers in the school-based support team was selected. The participant teachers were conveniently and purposefully selected from REPSSI trained teachers.

A focus group was used to facilitate semi-structured interviews. Ten participants shared their common perceptions and concerns (De Vos, Strydom Fouche' and Delport, 2006) in a fairly short period (two sessions of one and half hours duration with teachers). Observations, photographs, reflective notes and field notes were used to gather information.

A thematic content analysis of data was used to interpret data. To ensure rigour, it was verified with participants that they agreed with the results of the data analysis process. Debriefing meetings were also held with the researcher's supervisor.

The results of this study showed that teachers view need the pre and in-service training in ecosystemic approach to reduce behavioural and emotional problems of learners important. The results reveal that the use of ecosystemic approach by teachers and all role players in the adolescent learner's life may enhance the effectiveness of school-based psychosocial support.

## **KEY CONCEPTS**

Ecosystemic approach

Psychosocial support

Adolescent learner

Teacher

Behavioural and emotional problems

School- based support

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	6
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	7
1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW	7
1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS	8
1.6 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE	9
1.6.1 Meta-theoretical paradigm	9
1.6.2 Methodological paradigm	10
1.6.3 Theoretical framework	10
1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGIES	11
1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	13
1.9 QUALITY CRITERIA	14
1.10 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS	14
1.11 CONCLUSION	15
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION	16
2.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE	17
2.2.1 Psychodynamic perspective	17
2.2.2 Behaviourist perspective	17
2.2.3 Cognitive perspective	18
2.2.4 Humanistic perspective	18
2.2.5 Ecosystemic perspective	19

2.2.5.1	Ecological theory	19
		<b>PAGE</b>
2.2.5.2	Systems theory	20
<b>2.3</b>	<b>THE DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE: ADOLESCENCE</b>	23
<b>2.3.1</b>	<b>Cognitive development</b>	23
<b>2.3.2</b>	<b>Physical development</b>	24
<b>2.3.3</b>	<b>Social development</b>	25
<b>2.3.4</b>	<b>Emotional development</b>	26
<b>2.3.5</b>	<b>Moral development</b>	27
<b>2.4</b>	<b>BEHAVIOURAL AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS</b>	28
<b>2.4.1</b>	<b>Causes of behavioural and emotional problems</b>	30
2.4.1.1	Biological factors	30
2.4.1.2	Family factors	30
2.4.1.3	School factors	31
<b>2.4.2</b>	<b>Manifestation of behavioural and emotional problems in Adolescents</b>	32
2.4.2.1	Juvenile Delinquency	33
2.4.2.2	Depression and suicide	33
2.4.2.3	Social Misperceptions	34
2.4.2.4	Social Isolation	34
2.4.2.5	Obstinacy and Rebelliousness	34
2.4.2.6	Hypersensitivity	35
2.4.2.7	Truancy	35
2.4.2.8	Aggression	36
2.4.2.9	Distractibility / Hyperactivity	36
<b>2.5</b>	<b>PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT</b>	36
<b>2.5.1</b>	<b>Approaches to support</b>	38
2.5.1.1	Needs-based approach to support	38
2.5.1.2	Asset-based approach to support	38
2.5.1.3	School-based support	39
<b>2.6</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	42



## **CHAPTER 3**

<b>RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>3.1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>3.2 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE</b>	<b>43</b>
3.2.1 Meta-theoretical paradigm	43
3.2.2 Methodological paradigm	44
<b>3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>47</b>
3.4.1 Selection of case and participants	47
3.4.2 Data collection and documentation	49
3.4.2.1 Focus group interviews	49
3.4.2.2 Observations	51
3.4.2.3 Documenting the focus group discussions and interviews, member checking session and observation	51
3.4.2.4 Audio recordings and transcriptions	52
<b>3.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>3.6 QUALITY CRITERIA</b>	<b>54</b>
3.6.1 Credibility	54
3.6.2 Transferability	54
3.6.3 Dependability	55
3.6.4 Confirmability	55
3.6.5 Authenticity	55
<b>3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>56</b>
3.7.1 Informed consent	56
3.7.2 Voluntary participation and right to withdrawal	56
3.7.3 Anonymity and confidentiality	56
3.7.4 Protection from harm and deception	57
3.7.5 Debriefing	57
3.7.6 Honesty and integrity	57
<b>3.8 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>57</b>

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	
<b>RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RESULTS</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>4.1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>4.2 RESULTS OF THE STUDY</b>	
<b>4.2.1 Theme 1: causes of adolescent behavioural and emotional Problems</b>	<b>60</b>
4.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Developmental domains	60
4.2.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2: Family background	63
<b>4.2.2 Theme 2: psychosocial support</b>	<b>66</b>
4.2.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Home visits	66
4.2.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Referrals and Grants	67
4.2.2.3 Sub-theme 2.3: Adopt a learner	70
<b>4.2.3 Theme 3: barriers to support</b>	<b>73</b>
4.2.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: School management	73
4.2.3.2 Sub-theme 3: Other role players	74
<b>4.3 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5</b>	
<b>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>5.1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>5.2 OVERVIEW OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>5.3 CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>5.3.1 Secondary question 1</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>5.3.2 Secondary question 2</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>5.3.3 Secondary question 3</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>5.3.4 Secondary question 4</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>5.3.5 The primary research question guiding the study</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>5.4 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY</b>	<b>84</b>

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>85</b>
5.6.1 Recommendation for practice	85
5.6.2 Recommendation for training	85
5.6.3 Recommendation for future research	85
<b>5.7 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS</b>	<b>86</b>

<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>87</b>
-------------------	-----------

## **APPENDICES**

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	
Figure 1.1 : The REPSSI Wheel model	4
Figure 1.2 : Summary of research methodology and strategies	12
Figure 2.1 : Interaction of levels of organisation in the social context	22
Figure 4.1 : Themes and sub-themes	60

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 3.1 : Teacher participation	48
-----------------------------------	----

## **LIST OF PICTURES**

Picture 3.1 : Secondary School	46
Picture 3.2 : School garden	46
Picture 3.3 : Surrounding area	46

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Adolescent behavioural and emotional problems seem to be a global challenge, and South Africa is no exception. According to Kantomaa, Tammelin, Demakakos, Ebeling and Taanila (2010), in the United States, half of secondary learners drop out as a result of behavioural problems. He further points out that the socio-economic status of parents influence adolescents' behavioural and emotional problems (Ashdown, 2006). In South Africa, Dlomo (2013) cited some of the underlying causes of adolescent behaviour and emotional problems as academic difficulties, bullying and rejection at school, divorce of parents, unemployment/low income and relationship problems. Dlomo is of the opinion that in worst cases the problems may lead to attempted suicide and ultimately suicide in the adolescents. In schools, the trend of behavioural and emotional problems is similar to international trends explained by Kantomaa et al., (2010) above. Thuen and Bru (2009) claim that these trends have increased in recent decades. As a secondary school teacher in a suburban area, the researcher frequently witnessed learners with behavioural and emotional problems. The area was economically economically thriving in the 1980s as a consequence of mining operations there. Since the closure of the mines, socio-economic conditions in the area have deteriorated. Children in the vicinity are often involved in gangsterism, substance abuse and suffer from stress and depression. These inferences are based on the researcher's observations, reports from the Institution Level Support Team (ILST) records, as well as the local Family and Marriage Association of South Africa (FAMSA) records. The ILST in Free State schools is called School Based Support Team (SBST). It is a team that aims to put in place coordinated learner and educator support services (Draft National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support– EWP6, 2005a).

According to FAMSA records (FAMSA, 2012) the period between November 2011 and January 2012 showed an increase in serious behavioural and emotional problems occurring in schools in Thabong, Free State. The cases referred to FAMSA from schools include rape on the school premises, family problems, substance abuse, risky behaviour, pregnancies and emotional problems. The report further indicates that on average, one in every three families depends on social grants for survival. The low socio-economic conditions which parents experience make it difficult to provide basic necessities for their children. Most cases of adolescents referred from such households indicate negative behaviour (e.g. delinquency) and emotional problems such as stress and depression (FAMSA, 2012). It is thus imperative to introduce causes of behavioural and emotional problems in the next section. A detailed discussion is found in Chapter 2.

Behavioural problems are physical actions that can be observed and interpreted as culturally and socially unacceptable by the society (Vaughan, Bos & Schumm, 2007). According to Kapp (2003), the unacceptable behaviour must have manifested for a longer duration than normally expected in order to be referred to as a problem. The behavioural problems may manifest as delinquency, aggressiveness, rebelliousness and violence (Finkenauer, Engels & Baumeister, 2005). However, Sue, Sue and Sue (2010), caution that what is regarded as normal behaviour in some communities and generations might be regarded as unacceptable behaviour in others. For this reason, context in this study is of utmost importance. Emotional problems, on the other hand, are emotional responses that are inappropriate for the situation (Wan, 2012). Emotional problems manifest as absence of good emotions, anti-social behaviour, depression, stress, and low self-esteem, to mention a few (Papalia *et al.*, 2008). Behavioural problems are often a reflection of underlying emotional problems that can adversely affect judgment and evaluation in learners (Wan, 2012).

According to Papalia *et al.* (2008), behavioural and emotional problems that are faced by children, in particular adolescent learners, may be aggravated by their developmental stage. In addition, Thuen and Bru (2009) attribute behavioural and emotional problems to school, biological and family factors (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana,

2007; Papalia *et al.*, 2008). The adolescent stage and causes of behavioural and emotional problems are discussed fully in Chapter 2.

Adolescent behavioural and emotional problems in schools are a challenge to all who interact in one way or another with adolescent learners, namely parents, teachers, peers, communities and other professionals (Cheney, Flower & Templeton, 2008; Robinson, Power & Allan, 2011). In an attempt to respond to this challenge, De Witt (2007) believes that schools and teachers seem to be the most relevant places and people, respectively, to identify learner problems timeously, because teachers often spend more time with learners than parents. Teachers are also expected to meet learners' special needs in class and to initiate school-based support initiatives to promote positive development and address challenges (Sullivan, 2006).

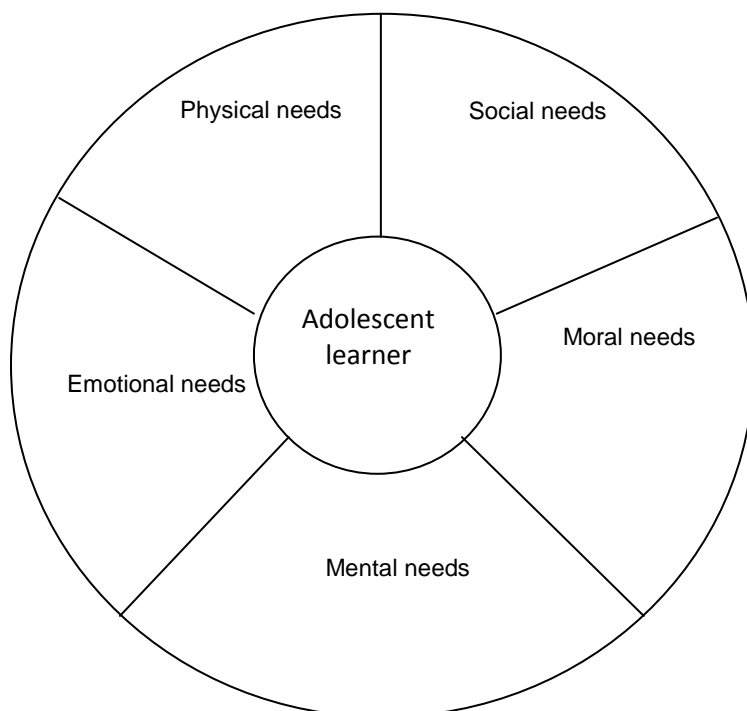
The aim in this research was to explore and describe the role of teachers in providing psychosocial support to adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems at a secondary school. Secondly, the researcher focused on the causes, manifestation and influence of adolescence's behavioural and emotional problems. The Regional Psychosocial Initiative's (REPSSI) impact on the role of the teacher in providing school-based support was also explored. Lastly, the use of an ecosystemic approach to support adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems at school was considered. This study could thus broaden the existing literature regarding use of an ecosystemic approach to provide psychosocial support for learners.

This study links to an intervention called the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI) training which I attended. The training involved certain secondary schools, with the goal of implementing psychosocial programmes in participating schools according to the REPSSI framework.

This framework used the Wheel model (Huni, 2010) to illustrate children's developmental needs which have to be satisfied if they are to be fully developed adults. These development needs are emotional, physical, cognitive, social and moral, and are illustrated in the Wheel model below (Figure 1.1).

REPSSI is a non-profit organization, introduced by the SADC countries. It is a pilot project that focuses on providing psychosocial support to orphans and vulnerable children after the war and conflict in some thirteen East and SADC countries (Huni, 2010)

**Figure 1.1: The REPSSI Wheel Model**



(Source: Huni, 2010)

Huni (2010) outlines the focus of the REPSSI by means of the wheel model as being to:

- illustrate the developmental needs of children which need to be satisfied to ensure a responsible adult;
- Involve parents, teachers and the community in order to identify learner problems and intervene with psychosocial support measures;
- equip learners to cope with difficult times;

- create an enabling environment which is conducive for learner growth and holistic development.

The main purpose of the REPSSI was to address developmental needs so as to curb the rising reported behavioural and emotional problems among secondary school learners. The REPSSI concurs with an ecosystemic approach because they both focus on the learner and the environmental systems he lives in. Teachers who were participants in the REPSSI training, introduced a number of projects as an outcome of the training. The vegetable garden, teacher visits to learner homes, as well as intensive guidance and counselling sessions, were introduced by the teachers. The vegetable garden was maintained by learners and parents, with SBST teacher supervision. Teachers also donated clothes to orphaned and needy children, as per SBST records. The teachers intensified counselling sessions held twice a week for learners. The counselling was the responsibility of teachers who had already been trained by Life-line as counsellors and had undergone the REPSSI training. Topics covered included self-esteem and identity, goal setting, motivation, study methods, relationships and resilience. The choice of topics and initiatives was guided by information in the SBST records of the school. It became more evident through types of cases handled that learners needed support in order to face and overcome their behavioural and emotional challenges.

However, teachers are faced with the difficulty of identifying learners with challenges, as well as that of implementing programmes. Teacher challenges might include overcrowding of classes, lack of resources, the nature of behavioural and emotional problems, knowledge and training (Cheney *et al.*, 2008). In an attempt to address the challenges faced by teachers in providing support, the South African Schools Act (SASA, 1996) provides several approaches to deal with learner behavioural and emotional problems. It stipulates, amongst others, the abolition of punitive measures in dealing with bad behaviour (SASA, alternatives to corporal punishment document, 2000).



Ashdown (2006) is of the opinion that potential and existing behavioural and emotional problems can be addressed by the SBST through psychosocial support in which the interdependent nature of relationships in social contexts is observed. A child has to be studied in totality within the context in which he lives, so that all influences can be studied and understood, and so that their impact can be understood. For this reason, the researcher chose the ecosystemic approach as the most suitable for this research.

An ecosystemic approach sees human-beings as social beings that are part of a greater system (Donald *et al.*, 2007). On the other hand, the individual is seen as a system made up of sub-systems, which REPSSI refers to as developmental needs (Huni, 2010) and which Erickson ( Donald *et al.*, 2007; Gentry and Campbell, 2002; Yin, 2009) refers to as developmental domains – namely, cognitive, physical, social, emotional and moral development (Donald *et al.*, 2007; Meyer, Moore and Viljoen, 2008). A change in any sub-system causes a change, directly or indirectly, in another sub-system (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). An ecosystemic approach and REPSSI are therefore appropriate in this study as they attempt to understand how the satisfaction or lack of satisfaction of needs, systems and sub-systems influence one another and how they impact on behavioural and emotional problems. Moreover, understanding of how and who can provide the necessary psychosocial support to adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems will be enhanced.

As a result of the challenges discussed in the preceding paragraphs, and an increasing number of cases referred to the SBST, the researcher became interested in investigating the support provided by teachers to adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems at a particular secondary school. The researcher also focused on challenges, as well as successes, experienced in the implementation of REPSSI, based on the ecosystemic approach, which sustained and enhanced psychosocial support intended to curb behavioural and emotional problems in adolescents.

## **1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to explore and describe psychosocial support by teachers to adolescent learners at school. Firstly, the researcher described the developmental needs of adolescent learners according to human development theories. School-based psychosocial support at school from the REPSSI point of view was then investigated. Lastly, the researcher explored how behavioural and emotional problems could be addressed by teachers in the SBST, based on the ecosystemic approach.

## **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In light of the rationale and purpose of the study discussed above, the primary research question is posed as follows:

- How do teachers in SBST provide psychosocial support to adolescent learners with behavioural and emotional problems in the secondary school?

In an attempt to generate an in-depth response to the primary research question, the following secondary research questions were explored:

- How does the adolescent stage influence behaviour and emotions in adolescent learners?
- What psychosocial support services are provided to adolescent learners with behavioural and emotional problems, in the secondary school?
- What is the role of teachers in the SBST in providing REPSSI-based psychosocial support to adolescent learners?
- Which elements of the ecosystemic approach are implemented by teachers in the provision of psychosocial support to learners?

## 1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

An in-depth literature study was conducted into behavioural and emotional problems and the developmental needs of adolescents. The researcher further explored the ecosystemic approach, as well as the implementation of existing psychosocial support initiatives at the school.

## 1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

In order to ensure clear understanding, certain concepts used in the context of this study were defined.

- Adolescence: adolescence is a developmental transition between childhood and adulthood which entails major changes in physical, cognitive, psychological, social and behavioural changes (Papalia *et al.*, 2008).
- Teacher: a teacher is a person who presents lessons at school and facilitates learning (Landsberg, 2008). In this research, a teacher refers to a teacher who is a member of the SBST, who was a participant in REPSSI and is also a participant in this research.
- Ecosystemic approach: an ecosystemic approach is a blend of ecological and systems theory which views human interactions between individuals and between different levels of social context (Donald *et al.*, 2007).
- Developmental needs: refer to physical, biological, emotional, psychological, intellectual, spiritual and creative necessities for children to survive and grow well enough to sustain normal productive lives which last throughout their entire life cycles (Huni 2010).

- Psychosocial support: it is a process of incorporating an ongoing activity of meeting the developmental needs of children (and assisting in prevention of problems) (Pollock and Whitelaw, 2005). Psychosocial services are services that influence the environment in which people live. UNESCO (2000) defines psychosocial support as facilitating the reconstruction of local social structures which may have been destroyed or weakened, so as to give much needed support to those affected.
- School-Based Support: it is an activity which is meant to identify effective approaches to prevent problem behaviours in children, whilst promoting positive youth development (Weisberg & O' Brien, 2009).
- School-Based Support Team (SBST): it is a team which operates or supports a mechanism where the primary function is to put in place and coordinate learners' and teachers' support services at school level. It is a team which supports teaching and learning by identifying and addressing learner, teacher and school needs (EWP6, 2005c).
- Parents: parents include natural, adoptive and foster parent, guardian, and/or anyone who plays a role of parent to the child (Friend, 2008).
- Peer: a peer is a person of similar developmental level with whom a person mixes (Donald *et al.*, 2007). In this study, peers refer to learners between age group 16 and 22 years.
- REPSSI- Based psychosocial support: refers to care and support to address physical, social, spiritual, psychological and emotional developmental needs of the vulnerable children (Huni, 2010; Wium & Wolt, 2009).
- Secondary school: A secondary school is an intermediate between elementary/primary school and college Secondary school usually offer general, technical, vocational or college preparatory courses. It is a school that caters for young people usually between 11 and 18 years of age (Collins Dictionary, 2003).

## **1.6 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE**

This section provides an overview of a paradigmatic perspective, namely meta-theoretical, methodological and theoretical paradigms. A paradigm is the theoretical orientation that guides the research regarding choice of data collection methods and interpretations (Babbie, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). A detailed discussion follows in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

### **1.6.1 Meta-theoretical paradigm**

The researcher relied on constructivism as meta-theory. Lee (2012) explains constructivism as an activity that allows the researcher to make meaning as he/ she experiences the environment first hand. Constructivism views humans as creating their own worlds through their interpretation (Meyer *et al.*, 2008) within their social context. The constructivists view the players (learners, parents, teachers, researchers, etc) as active agents in making sense of their lives through interactions with themselves and others in society (Donald *et al.*, 2007; Savasci & Berlin 2012).

The researcher regarded constructivism as suitable in this study because in education, the teacher and the learner are regarded as constructors of reality (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). The co-construction occurs when the researcher listens actively to the information gained from the participants. The researcher becomes an observer and a participant in the co-construction of multiple realities (Shunk, Pintrich and Meece, 2008) during the process.

### **1.6.2 Methodological paradigm**

This study required a descriptive analysis of how teachers provide psychosocial support to adolescent learners. The researcher chose to approach the study from the qualitative point of view.

Babbie (2007) defines the qualitative research approach as an approach that makes sense of social observations and interpretation of such observations. Qualitative research enhances and reveals the views, perceptions and experiences by respondents in order to gain the true nature of reality (Lee, 2012; De Vos *et al.*, 2006). The qualitative approach looks into the meaning that people attach to everyday situations and actions (Cresswell, 2009). As an observer in the research, the researcher was able to have an insider's perspective regarding narrative descriptions of participants on the provision of psychosocial support to learners. The qualitative approach assists the researcher in gaining a holistic picture of provision of support in the natural setting – the school (Cresswell, 2009).

### **1.6.3 Theoretical framework**

The researcher relied on the ecosystemic approach to explain psychosocial support and psychosocial perspectives to guide the literature review. The ecosystemic approach sees human growth and development in terms of the changes that take place in the patterns of systems and environments in which the child finds himself (Donald *et al.*, 2007; Meyer *et al.*, 2008). On the other hand, psychological perspectives are discussed to gain a comprehensive understanding of human development and their impact on behavioural and emotional development.

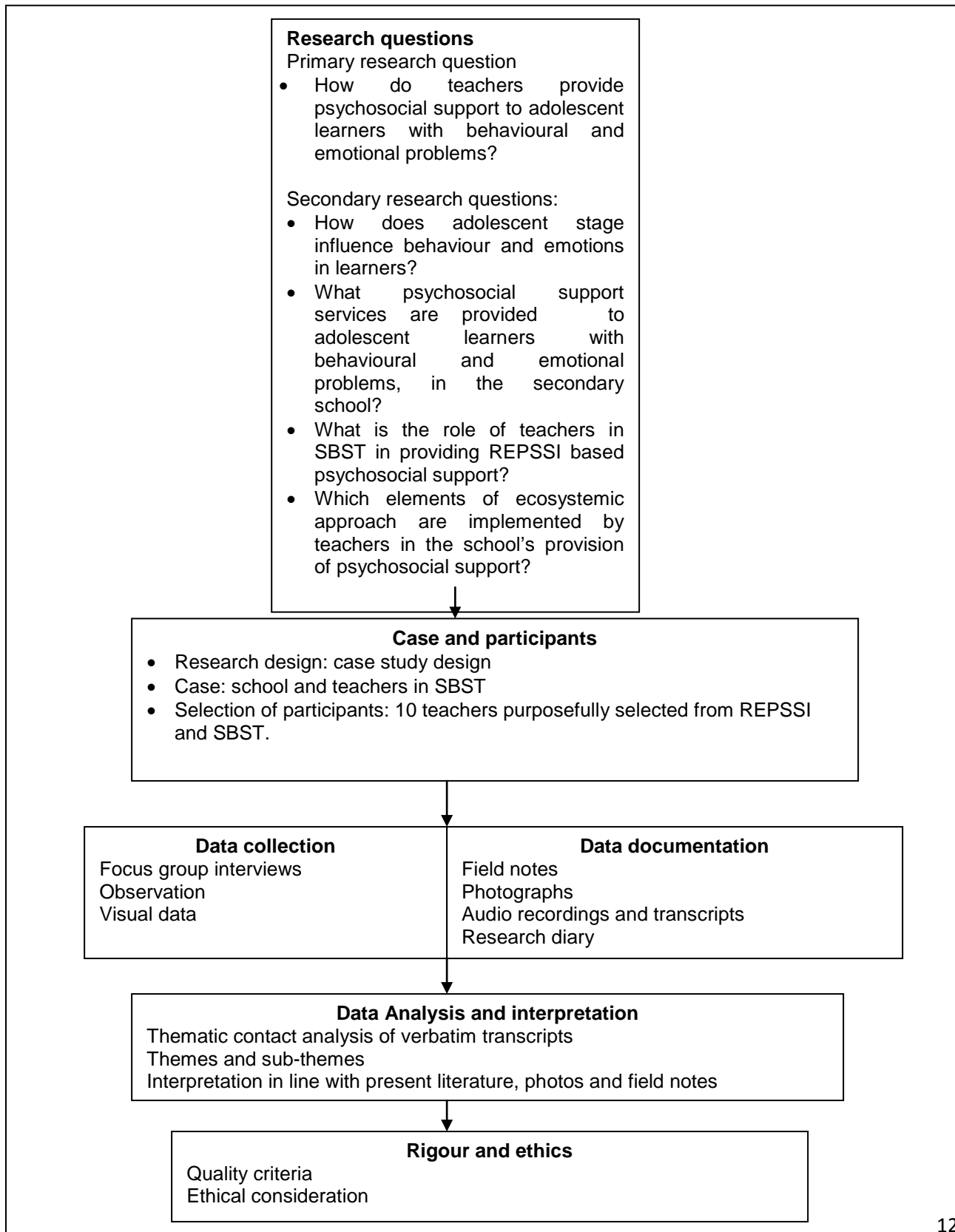
The ecosystemic approach concurs with the REPSSI program which attempts to know which changes are normal for an adolescent and how these changes affect behaviour and emotions within a particular context (Shunk *et al.*, 2008). The effect of developmental changes may be positive or negative. Negative impact may manifest as behavioural and emotional problems that call for psychosocial support (Huni, 2010).

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGIES**

A visual overview of the research methodology is presented in Figure 1.2. A detailed description of the research methodology and strategies used in this research is fully included in Chapter 3.

**Figure 1.2: Summary of research methodology and strategies**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**



The researcher chose a case study design because it allowed the acquisition of a rich narrative from participant teachers' perceptions, experiences and expectations of SBST (Bell, 2010). A secondary school in was purposefully selected (Cresswell, 2007; Yin 2009) as a research site. The participants refer to a group of ten SBST teachers who had attended the REPSSI training and provided psychosocial support at the school. Focus group discussions and observations were used to explore the role of teachers in the SBST in providing psychosocial support to adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems (Babbie, 2010; De Vos *et al.*, 2006). The researcher used thematic content analysis in order to classify and code emerging themes and sub-themes (Terre Blanche' & Durrheim, 2002). Rigorous ethical considerations and quality criteria were adhered to, in order to ensure full respect for and information from the participants.

## **1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics are defined as a set of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules for, and behavioural expectations of, the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents (Mouton, 2008). Babbie (2007) further stresses that ethical practice ensures that the participants do not feel uncomfortable in giving responses.

The researcher sought permission from the District Office, the principal, the head of Department and the SBST teachers. Participants were briefed on aims, objectives, rules and intended uses of the research before undertaking the study, as per Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) stipulations (HSRC, 2004). Participants' rights to take part, refuse or withdraw from the study at any stage were guaranteed. Participation was voluntary and any harm to subjects was guarded against (Babbie, 2007; Mouton, 2008). Confidentiality was absolute. Participants were made to feel free, safe and at ease to talk about the topic, their experiences, opinions and fears, with the assurance that their identities would not be revealed (De Vos *et al.*, 2006). The researcher adhered to the ethical guidelines as prescribed by the Ethical Committee of the UNISA College of Education.



## **1.9 QUALITY CRITERIA**

Quality criteria were used to ensure trustworthiness and avoid biased description of data in the research process. The criteria adhered to included, according to Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007), credibility, which ensured the trust value obtained from human experiences, according to the participants' perception; transferability, which assessed the applicability of qualitative data to be gathered; and dependability, which was used to evaluate consistency. A detailed discussion of quality criteria is included in Chapter 3.

## **1.10 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS**

The study is divided into five chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1 indicates the scope and methods used. It also includes an introduction and orientation, the purpose of the study and research questions.
- Chapter 2 explores the literature study.
- Chapter 3 deals with research methodology and design.
- Chapter 4 deals with data interpretation and analysis.
- Chapter 5 presents a summary of the study, a conclusion and suggestions for future study.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the researcher provided an overview of the study by discussing the purpose of the study according to research questions. Concepts related to the study were clarified. Data collection methods and documentation methods, as well as data analysis and interpretation, followed. Lastly, ethical considerations and quality criteria were discussed.

In Chapter 2, a review of related literature is presented, focusing on psychosocial perspectives. The adolescent stage, behaviour, emotions, and factors that may cause

behavioural and emotional problems are discussed. The availability and provision of psychosocial support by teachers to adolescent learners is explored. The conceptual framework, guided by the literature review and ecosystemic approach, is presented.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of Chapter 1 was to provide a rationale for the current study. Research questions which guided the study were formulated. Key concepts were clarified and a brief overview of the research design and the methodology was provided.

Chapter 2 focuses on the role of teachers in providing psychosocial support to adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems at a secondary school in the Free State. The literature study explores psychological perspectives on human development and milestones of adolescent development with emphasis on an ecosystemic perspective. The perspectives are based on theories of how children develop and how the development processes affect behavioural and emotional changes. The adolescent stage is then discussed, including how it may cause behavioural and emotional problems. The causes and manifestations of behavioural and emotional problems, with specific focus on adolescents, are discussed. Finally, psychosocial support is discussed – reference is made to the different support approaches, including school-based support initiatives, with specific focus on the role of teachers in the School-Based Support Team (SBST) in providing psychosocial support.

In order to understand adolescent behavioural and emotional problems, and possible psychosocial support, information on child development is necessary. The next section therefore discusses the different psychological perspectives, with emphasis on the ecosystemic approach as the researcher's theoretical guide.

#### **2.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Different personality theories serve as a guide to psychological perspectives which explain human development, how development impacts on behaviour, how to identify

and assess human behaviour timeously, and how to choose a suitable intervention strategy (Donald *et al.*, 2007). The following perspectives will be discussed: psychodynamic, behaviourist, cognitive, humanistic and ecosystemic (Grieve, Van Deventer & Mojapelo- Batka, 2009; Meyer *et al.*, 2008; Sue, Sue & Sue, 2010).

### **2.2.1 Psychodynamic perspective**

The psychodynamic perspective was developed from Freud's psychoanalytical theory which states that forces within the individual are responsible for how one behaves (Sue *et al.*, 2010). The psychodynamic perspective views the child's behaviour as an outward and visible (conscious) symptom of internal and invisible (unconscious) conflict (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). The experiences in the unconscious mind may be due to past traumas, anxieties, deep and painful secrets and conflicts that may be the results of early life experiences (Grieve *et al.*, 2009). The experiences may be repressed through mental defense mechanisms in an attempt to hide pain, and this might make it difficult to find out the causes of behavioural and emotional problems later in life.

The psychodynamic perspective focuses on building the learner's inner resources and sense of security. In turn, the perspective enables the learner to talk about his feelings and painful past experiences in a secure environment.

### **2.2.2 Behaviourist perspective**

Unlike the psychodynamic theorists, who believe behaviour is influenced from within, the behaviourist theorists explain behavioural changes as a response to observable and measurable experiences in the environmental stimuli impacting on the individual (Papalia *et al.*, 2008). Behaviourists like Watson, Pavlov, Skinner and Bandura believe that any behaviour can be learned, imitated or modelled through interaction with the social environment (Grieve *et al.*, 2009). Behaviourists are of the opinion that behaviour is determined or changed by a planned positive or negative reinforcement or punishment. (Sue *et al.*, 2010). This perspective aims to change behaviour through formal rewards such as praises and acknowledgements, and informal rewards such as

tokens. Negative reinforcement such as punishment is used to discourage repetition of undesired the behaviour.

### **2.2.3 Cognitive perspective**

The cognitive perspective is based on Piaget's cognitive theory. Cognitive theory looks at how thought processes and mental operations, such as reasoning, understanding and interpretation of social events, influence growth and qualitative changes from birth to adulthood (Shunk *et al.*, 2008; Papalia *et al.*, 2008). Piaget maintains that the child is not just a passive recipient of information. Instead, children are actually constructing their knowledge and seeking to adapt to the environment and understand their world (Papalia *et al.*, 2008). Behavioural and emotional problems are believed to be a product of maladaptive thinking with regard to processes of self-attribution and perceived self-efficacy. It is believed that violent individuals may use information incorrectly when making decisions. The perspective aims to change the attitude, beliefs and improve self-understanding of the learner. Accordingly, the learner would understand why he behaves that way, what triggers the behaviour, how his behaviour affects others, and how to respond in a moral way.

### **2.2.4 Humanistic perspective**

The humanistic perspective was influenced by the theories of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Humanists believe the motivation for a particular behaviour is to maximize experiences that increase positive reinforcement (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). According to Maslow, the desire to achieve self-actualization is from within. Grieve *et al.* (2009) see self-actualisation as an act of living creatively and using one's potential to the full. (Sue *et al.*, 2010). Humanists point out that, in order to achieve, one needs to belong to a social group, to think well of oneself and experience personal growth (Grieve *et al.*, 2009). Rejection by significant others may contribute to behavioural and emotional problems – in Maslow's words, the need to belong has not been adequately met at home and in school (Grieve *et al.*, 2009).

The humanistic perspective is of the view that behavioural problems may be caused by disharmony between one's potential and one's self-concept (Sue *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, humanists believe in maximizing the learner's actions, so as to increase positive reinforcements such as developing self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

### **2.2.5 Ecosystemic perspective**

According to Meyer *et al.* (2008) ecosystemic perspective emanates from the work of Bronfenbrenner, which suggests that any change no matter how small will have a ripple effect on other parts of the system. The ecosystemic perspective emphasizes the transitional and dynamic developmental processes, as well as the interaction between the child and the environment. In order to understand the ecosystemic approach, it is necessary to explore its origin, namely ecological systems theory, along with its constituent parts, ecology and systems theory. The two are discussed below.

#### **2.2.5.1 Ecological theory**

Bronfenbrenner developed ecological theory which assumes that all things in nature are related to one another in a complex but systematic way (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). The theory can be used to illustrate the growth and development of an adolescent, which is nested in five environmental systems, namely the micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono systems with which an adolescent interacts (Shunck *et al.*, 2008).

Microsystems refer to the adolescent's own biology, immediate and direct environment, which includes interactions with the family, the school, peers, the neighbourhood and religious institutions. The peer group may start to have a predominant influence that is either positive or negative. Positive adolescent development depends on mutual reciprocity between adults and adolescents. Bronfenbrenner believes that behavioural and emotional problems could be traced at this level. Mesosystems refer to the interaction of two or more microsystems; for instance, the relation between family and school. An adolescent who is rejected by parents is likely to have problems in forming relationships. For positive adolescent development, different microsystems need to be

in harmony with one another. Exosystems refer to external stimuli that indirectly influence the adolescent – the local community to which the child belongs; for example, school or neighbourhood. A further instance would be that effects from the parent's workplace may affect the adolescent. Macrosystems refer to the larger society and cultural context in which the individual lives, which includes socio-economic status, poverty, ethnicity and values. Values define what constitutes the adolescent's social and legal status. Chronosystems focus on the evolution of the four other systems in time. For example, the effects of divorce on the child are at a peak in the first year and affect the individual's growth and development; with later years, there is a greater chance of stability (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The ecological model deals with the interaction between the adolescent and the environments in which he finds himself. Any imbalance between the adolescent and the environments is believed to cause behavioural and emotional problems (Shunk *et al.*, 2008).

#### 2.2.5.2 Systems theory

Systems theory is of the view that individuals are growing and developing progressively into, and are restructuring, the settings they find themselves in (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). The theory emphasises the interaction within and between the systems and sub-systems which are, in turn, part of the bigger system.

Bronfenbrenner later developed ecological systems theory, which is the integration of ecology and systems theory: hence the ecosystemic approach (Donald *et al.*, 2007). According to Bronfenbrenner, we all exist within the context that influences who we are and how we respond to life situations (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The theory cautions that, in order to avoid limited and inaccurate judgment, people should not be understood in isolation, but in context (Meyer *et al.*, 2008).

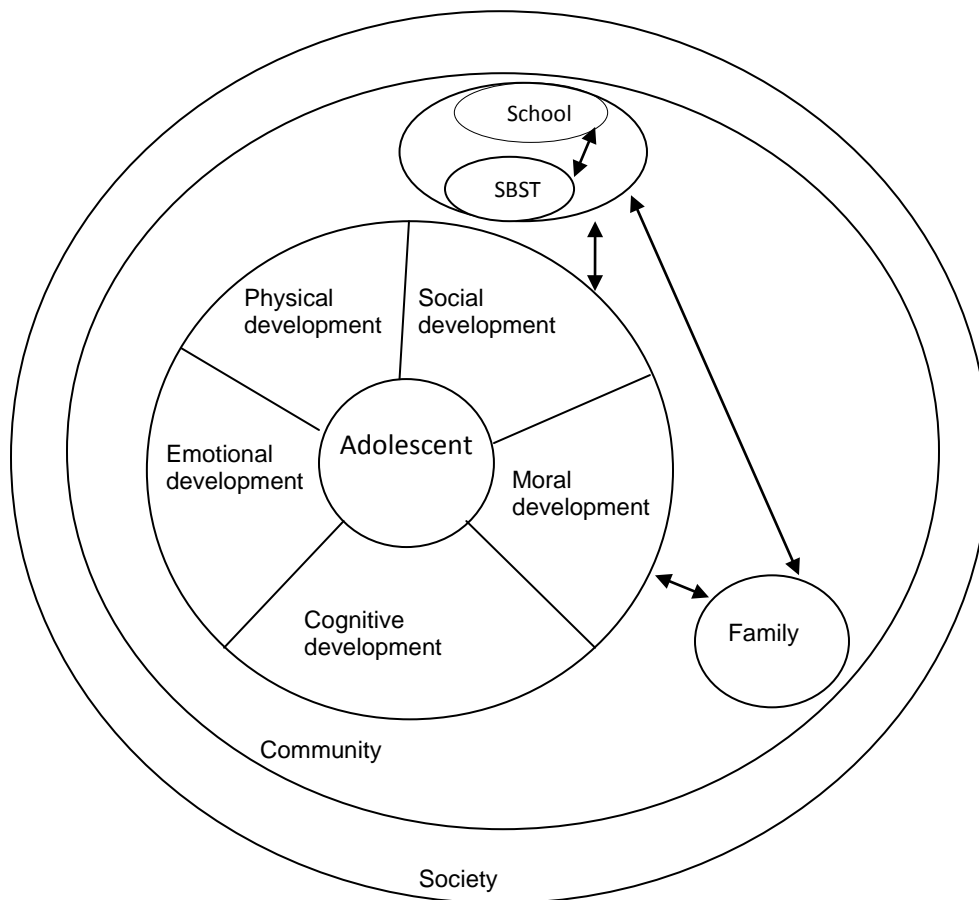
The ecosystemic approach, therefore, suggests that an individual is studied and understood in context: both the internal and external environment of the human being

are of utmost importance (Donald *et al.*, 2008; Shunk *et al.*, 2008). Van der Westhuizen (2007) explains internal factors anatomical, chemical and physiological aspects that contribute to biological and emotional aspects of behaviour. External factors include social aspects and external surroundings of an individual. In the ecosystemic approach, a human being is regarded as a system which is made up of its sub-systems, that is, physiological, intra personal, verbal, non-verbal, cognitive and spiritual dimensions (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). Gentry and Campbell (2002) offer another explanation, namely that development of an individual comprises of five interactive and interdependent domains – cognitive, physical, social, emotional and moral. The interaction necessitates understanding of the child and his systems and environment, in order to enable the teacher to know when and how to offer support (Donald *et al.*, 2007). Engelbrecht (2006) concurs with Donald *et al.* (2007) that a child cannot be understood in isolation, but as part of a larger whole – the family and society.

The interaction is depicted in Figure 2.1 below. The figure illustrates an ecosystem approach which explains that each of the different role players is influenced by and influences the others. This process has a ripple effect on internal and external factors; hence the systems are interrelated (Donald *et al.*, 2007). This interaction depicts a development of the adolescent learner. The figure is adapted to feature the five developmental domains that are continuously interacting and influencing one another as they change. The figure also illustrates that the domains are sub-systems of a larger system – the adolescent. In turn, the adolescent is a sub-system of a larger system – the family, the school and the community. Behavioural and emotional problems may be a product of negative circular interactions between the adolescent, the peers, the parents and the teachers (Donald *et al.*, 2007).



**Figure 2.1: Interactions of levels of organization in the social context**



Source: Adapted interaction of levels of organization in the social context (Donald *et al.*, 2007).

The ecosystemic approach is suitable for education and, in this study, is an alternative and/or supplement to mainstream support approaches, as it draws on what has been learnt and the successes in the field. The approach also strives to understand the adolescent in context (Donald *et al.*, 2007) and assumes that all role players in the educational context participate in the contribution of ideas in the adolescent's life (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). The role players include parents, peers, teachers and other professionals in education and government. The approach focuses on strategies which provide support based on the causes of behavioural and emotional problems (McPhee & Craig, 2009). The ecosystemic approach also emphasizes a holistic understanding of the individual's transition and milestones, and how this transition represents an opportunity

for both growth and development (Donald *et al.*, 2007). The ecosystemic perspective suggests new ways of conceptualising behavioural and emotional problems, based on the premise that human behaviour is developed and maintained through social interactional processes. The perspective suggests that behavioural and emotional problems in adolescent learners may be the negative interaction between the adolescent, teachers, peers, family and the community.

The focus of this study is the psychosocial support provided by teachers to adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems. However, for the sake of clarity, adolescence as a developmental stage and how the stage influences the behavioural and emotional problems is discussed.

## **2.3 THE DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE: ADOLESCENCE**

Adolescence is a stressful and critical transitional stage from childhood to adulthood which ranges between ages 11 and 25 years (Meyer *et al.*, 2008; Papalia *et al.*, 2008). Adolescence is regarded as a total change in quantity and quality of the child's development (Eissa, 2010; Schmied & Tully, 2009; Wan, 2012). Simons-Morton, Crump and Saylor. (2012) point out that development differs in timing and tempo and is influenced by contextual factors.

Human development, including adolescence, is generally sub-divided into the following development domains: cognitive, physical, social, emotional and moral development (Gentry & Campbell, 2002; Papalia *et al.*, 2008; Simons-Morton *et al.*, 2012). The development dimensions in adolescence are discussed in the next section.

### **2.3.1 Cognitive development**

Cognitive development is how one thinks, reasons, solves problems and understands. This developmental area involves a continuous and active process of exploration and adaptation thinking (Simons-Morton *et al.*, 2012). For an adolescent, it is a shift from

seeing and touching, to understanding even the invisible (Spelling, 2005; Papalia *et al.*, 2008), to abstract and logical thinking (Huni, 2010).

The brains of early adolescents are still developing; that is why their judgments are not accurate and matured (Papalia *et al.*, 2008). Their immature brains still lack reasoning; hence, they tend to make unwise choices, such as experimenting with risky sexual behaviours and substance abuse (Sternberg, 2009). Risky behaviours include the desire to have fun and excitement, the temptation to experiment, the wish for peer acceptance, and the modeling of unacceptable adult behaviour. If adolescents perceive their peers' standards to be unachievable, they may feel self-conscious which may negatively affect their self-esteem. Huni (2010) cautions that low self-esteem may result in loneliness, depression, suicide and other conduct disorders. The cognitive development process continues into older adolescence, in which the frontal lobe is used in the same manner as it is in adults. At this stage the adolescent displays mature planning, reasoning and impulse control (Papalia *et al.*, 2008). If for some reason there are deficiencies in development and immature thinking persists, the adolescent may be moody, irritable and lack discipline (Gentry & Campbell, 2002). If the development deficiencies are not diagnosed and understood, they may be perceived as behavioural and emotional problems which may result in conflict with parents (Papalia *et al.*, 2008).

Cognitive development has significant effects on social, emotional and moral development (Donald *et al.*, 2007). The adolescent clearly still needs adult supervision and support in order to enhance his rational decision making abilities.

### **2.3.2 Physical development**

Papalia *et al.* (2008) defines physical development as the growth of the body and brain, as well as changes in patterns in sensory capabilities, motor skills and health. Physical changes become quicker, more profound and more visible in puberty (Spelling, 2005). These changes are visible in shape and size, such as muscular strength, endurance, flexibility and body composition. Physical development of girls is generally different from boys' development. Wolfe and Mash (2006) suggest that early maturing girls are

likely to be depressed, abuse substances, and have school problems and eating disorders, such as bulimia nervosa and anorexia nervosa, if they find it difficult to deal with rapid physical changes. Boys might also be depressed, irritable, have conflict with parents and have challenges at school. Body image may aggravate depression (Papalia *et al.*, 2008).

Except in instances of poverty (malnutrition and hunger) and risky lifestyle (drugs and sexual behaviour) adolescents are generally physically healthy, have rapid growth and also reach reproductive maturity (Papalia *et al.*, 2008). Adult assurances to adolescents that physical changes are normal also increase their positive self-image and self-concept. However, a negative perception of self may lead to the behavioural and emotional problems of substance abuse, aggression, depression and isolation in the adolescent (Simons-Morton *et al.*, 2012). The physical health of the adolescent has a huge impact on the child's social, emotional and cognitive development (Donald *et al.*, 2007).

### **2.3.3 Social development**

Gentry and Campbell (2002) define social development of the adolescent as a stage in which the child searches for his identity and the value of interacting with others. Erikson refers to this stage as identity versus role confusion – the adolescent is striving to establish a coherent self and find his worth in society (Papalia *et al.*, 2008). Erikson identifies three aspects of identity: the choice of occupation, the adoption of values and the development of a satisfying sexual identity. Social development includes empathy, showing respect for oneself and others (Shunk *et al.*, 2008). Social development is important for the understanding and interpretation of cognitive tasks (Donald *et al.*, 2007). In developing socially, adolescents may be egocentric, may think of others as either imaginary or real, or may be as interested in them as they are in themselves. They have a desire to be noticed and accepted by peers and other important people in their lives as they seek autonomy and independence, identity and social status (Huni, 2010; Simons-Morton *et al.*, 2012).

Erickson's theory states that, if the search for identity is successful, the adolescent will develop a value of fidelity, with positive self-esteem, positive psychological adjustments and good inter-personal relations (Gentry & Campbell, 2002; Meyer *et al.*, 2008). On the other hand, if he does not have the sense of identity, the adolescent is unable to integrate his desires, possibilities and skills with the opportunities that society offers for growth (Meyers *et al.*, 2008). Peer isolation has been linked to negative behaviour such as delinquency, psychological problems, anger and guilt later in life (Sullivan, 2006). At this stage, they form a personal and sexual identity of their own, which is influenced by the interaction of biological, environmental and genetic factors. If adolescents engage in early sexual activity, they increase their chances of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, of unwanted pregnancy, of dropping out from school, of unemployment, of financial problems and of having their own malnourished children who are subjected to ineffective parenting (Papalia *et al.*, 2008; Stanley & Canham, 2006). It is a time when childhood trauma may surface and when adolescents may become aware of unconscious conflicts.

#### **2.3.4 Emotional development**

Emotional development involves establishing a realistic and coherent sense of identity in relation to others and experiencing a range of feelings such as anger, love, jealousy, passion, sadness and desire (Gentry & Campbell, 2002). The adolescent strives to understand who they are, and who they can become: they think far ahead and worry about their future (Spelling, 2005). In their struggle to establish an identity, adolescents can be very sensitive and confused (Gentry & Campbell, 2002): one moment they want to be treated like adults, one moment they want to be treated as children. An emotionally healthy child is able to give love and receive love, find joy in life despite the difficulties and establish the responsibility to recognise, control and cope with difficult feelings in positive ways (Gentry & Campbell, 2002). Mynhardt, Baron, Branscombe and Byrne (2010) are of the opinion that emotional neglect may lead the adolescent to have feelings of insecurity and self-blame, and he is likely to turn to the streets with the hope of relief in the company of others like himself.

Care should be taken to take note of excessive emotional changes and that such changes should not last longer than normal, as these might be signs of severe emotional problems. Adolescents are still emotionally fragile and therefore need to develop emotionally in order to grow and mature into responsible adults (Papalia *et al.*, 2008).

### **2.3.5 Moral development**

Moral development is how the adolescent chooses to live his life according to the values and beliefs he has set for himself (Campbell & Gentry, 2002). Moral development plays an important role in determining the adolescent's moral judgment and therefore how the adolescent behaves (Donald *et al.*, 2007). At this stage, the adolescent is able to include other people's points of view in solving social problems, thereby nurturing interpersonal relationships (Papalia *et al.*, 2008). Papalia *et al.* (2008) further notes that Kohlberg identifies three levels of moral development, namely:

- Pre-conventional morality (the individual obeys rules to avoid punishment; age 4-10 years).
- Conventional morality (the individual acts to please and maintain social order; most people remain in this stage).
- Post-conventional morality (at this stage the individual is able to make judgments on the basis of fairness and right principles; it is mostly reached in adolescence and adulthood, although most people never reach this stage).

At the adolescent stage, the child questions rules and standards at home and at school; that is when he starts to develop his own moral code. The questioning and possible rebelliousness diminish as the adolescent begins to establish his identity and value system (Sue *et al.*, 2010).

Moral development may be positively or negatively influenced. Modeling and caring behaviour by parents and significant people in the child's life have a profound impact on the child's behavioural development (Spelling, 2005). A warm positive relationship and

environment are essential for good moral and behavioural patterns in children (Friend, 2008). A negative relationship may result in negative behaviour such as lack of resilience, early school dropping-out, sadness, lack of coping skills, low self-esteem and confidence, lack of trust in and hope for the future, lack of parenting skills later in life, chronically traumatized adults, and increased risk factors which can lead to child abuse, sex for money and suicide (Donald *et al.*, 2007).

All the development domains have an interactive impact on one another and have an influence on how the adolescent behaves. The interactions and changes in all developmental domains have to be in balance with the environment and systems in the adolescent's life, as an imbalance is deemed to be one of the causes of behavioural and emotional problems (UNESCO, 2000). Huni (2010) refers to the imbalance as the result of unmet psychosocial needs of children. It is, however, comforting to note that according to Erikson, the deficiencies and imbalances that can later manifest as behavioural and emotional problems can be resolved in the later development of the learner.

However, it is disturbing to note that, according to Thuen and Bru (2009), behavioural and emotional problems in adolescence have increased in recent decades. In the next section, the characteristics of adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems, and the causes and manifestations of behavioural and emotional problems that face adolescent learners will be discussed.

## **2.4 BEHAVIOURAL AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS**

In this section, the characteristics of adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems, and the causes of behavioural and emotional problems will be discussed. Secondly, how the behavioural and emotional problems manifest in adolescents will be explored.

Behaviour is the way an individual behaves or acts towards other people, objects or society (Sue *et al.*, 2010). Sue *et al.* (2010) further state that according to societal

norms and values, behaviour can be regarded as good (acceptable) or bad (unacceptable). Society therefore strives for what they perceive as good. Individual adolescents are unique and tend to behave differently from their peers. The individual differences are attributed to causes such as individual differences, differences in family patterns, impairments, environmental factors and psychological factors.

Behavioural problems are actions that are considered unacceptable according to social and cultural expectations (Papalia *et al.*, 2008). They display behaviour that is said to result from poor or incorrect learning that is said sometimes to be slightly different from the usual behaviour, although it may also be extreme behaviour (Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 2008). Kapp (2003) defines behavioural problems as behaviour that is more intense and of a longer duration than that expected of a child of that age. Finkenauer *et al.* (2005) believe that behavioural problems are any actions that show delinquency and aggression on the part of the individual adolescent learner.

Most often, a child who displays disruptive behaviour may probably also show signs of underlying emotional problems (Gibson & Bladford, 2005; Smith *et al.*, 2008). According to Grieve *et al.* (2009), emotions are a combination of physiological arousal, cognitive processes and behavioural expression. Emotions may be experienced as positive and pleasant, or negative and unpleasant. Grieve *et al.* (2009) state that, if unpleasant emotions are unresolved, they may be a problem. Smith *et al.* (2008) define emotional problems as a condition that may show unexplained inability to maintain healthy and lasting relationships. Emotional problems may manifest as inappropriate behaviour of children in relation to themselves and the environment (Gibson & Bladford, 2005). Due to the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of behavioural and emotional problems (Baron, Branscombe & Byrne, 2009), this study will focus on both. For a child to be said to have behavioural and emotional problems, these have to have prevailed over a long period of time and cannot be a once off experience (Baron *et al.*, 2009).

Behavioural and emotional problems are caused by, amongst others, unmet developmental needs emanating from various factors (Murove, 2010), imbalance in the changes in the adolescent's development domains and the interaction with the



environment and the systems in which the adolescent finds himself (Donald *et al.*, 2007).

Factors that influence behavioural and emotional problems in adolescents are discussed in the next section.

### **2.4.1 Causes of behavioural and emotional problems**

The causes of behavioural and emotional problems can be intrinsic or extrinsic factors (Donald *et al.*, 2007). The intrinsic factors refer to the biological factors of the individual himself. The extrinsic factors comprise the family, peers, class, school, community and society. These causes are broadly grouped as biological, family and school.

#### **2.4.1.1 Biological factors**

Biological factors are factors from within the child. The factors within indicate the child's personality make-up. The factors may be genetic, nutritional, neurological, biochemical, or developmental (UNESCO 2000). Any malfunction or imbalance of these factors may contribute to behavioural and emotional problems, such as aggressiveness and quarrelsomeness. A child born with a difficult temperament may have inherited a difficult nervous composition which could result in restlessness, tension, tearfulness, negative moods and temper (Kapp, 2003). Ill-health is a further biological factor that may cause behavioural and emotional problems. A sick child may be hindered from participating in various activities, thus possibly causing the child to be stressed, depressed, isolated, irritable or attention-seeking (Kapp, 2003).

#### **2.4.1.2 Family factors**

Family composition and socio-economic standing determines the environment in which the child develops. A warm, nurturing and welcoming home tends to produce balanced children who also have positive personality development (Donald *et al.*, 2007). On the other hand, an unwelcoming home environment characterized by poverty, low socio-

economic status, a lack of services and resources, and malnutrition may result in negativity, unhealthy relations and state of health, stress, and diseases in children (EWP6a, 2005). The hopelessness caused by a low socio-economic environment may influence behavioural and emotional problems (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). Lack of good nutrition may even retard cognitive development (Vaughn *et al.*, 2007)- the brain may not fully develop. A direct effect of this may be academic under-achievement and other related negative outcomes such as low self- esteem and feelings of guilt (Smith *et al.*, 2008).

A poor parent-child relationship may lead to rejection and neglect of the child. The child who never knew empathy is likely to be unable to be empathetic and have healthy and lasting relationships with others. Papalia *et al.* (2008) maintain that the child will be socially isolated and misperceived because it was never taught norms and how to comply with them. Inner conflict may be another result of an unhealthy parent-child relationship. The child may develop deviant behaviour as a result of being a member of a dysfunctional family or even disruptive parenting patterns (De Witt, 2007). Children from such families need support to cope with and survive home conditions that are not conducive. Research indicates that not all children from poor families have behaviour problems; on the contrary, some develop resilience (Donald *et al.*, 2007).

#### 2.4.1.3 School factors

Cheney *et al.* (2008) reveal from their research that 50% of teaching time is spent on the 1% to 6% of learners who have behavioural and emotional problems. As a result, a majority of learners at a school may suffer because they lose important opportunities for learning. The chances are great that a child who enters such a school will be negatively impacted and, if he already has problems, these are likely to be aggravated. This indicates that a school can be a cause of behavioural and emotional problems for children if it promotes negative factors such as lack of resources, inadequate measures to ensure discipline, inappropriate curriculum, lack of skills on the part of the teacher and an atmosphere that is not conducive to learning (Donald *et al.*, 2007). Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Sticher and Morgan. (2008) are of the opinion that outcomes such as

teachers despairing, leaving the school or contemplating leaving all directly emanate from these factors. If the teacher does not leave, he may suffer depression later if conditions do not improve (De Witt, 2007; Rogers, 2004). Sutherland *et al.* (2008) assert that a depressed teacher produces a depressed learner.

Learners in such environments are likely to become frustrated and may be tempted to stay away from school due to support that is expected, but does eventuate. There are other factors that may influence the learner's behaviour and emotions that the teacher has no control over. These include, amongst others, dysfunctional families, substance abuse, poverty, unemployment and the media (Rogers, 2004). Poverty may make matters worse, especially if the parent cannot cope with the financial demands of the school, such as payment of school fees or obtaining school requirements (Shunk *et al.*, 2008). The child may then feel ashamed and embarrassed, and thus resort to truancy, developing school phobia or ultimately dropping out of school (Huni, 2010).

The causes of behavioural and emotional problems discussed are difficult to isolate as the single source of the problem, because they are constantly interacting with one another. Despite the above-mentioned challenges, and since teachers are the representatives of a child's parents at school, their role is regarded as crucial in the adolescent's development (De Witt, 2007). Teachers could therefore be more effective, if they were able to identify the adolescent's developmental and other needs correctly.

Behavioural and emotional problems manifest in different degrees in different learners at different developmental stages. In the next section, manifestation of behavioural and emotional problems in adolescence is discussed.

#### **2.4.2 Manifestation of behavioural and emotional problems in adolescents**

Behavioural and emotional problems in adolescence are mostly school-related (Kapp, 2003). Some common problems include, amongst others, juvenile delinquency, depression, social isolation, social misperceptions, obstinacy and rebelliousness, hypersensitivity, truancy, aggression and distractibility.

#### 2.4.2.1 Juvenile Delinquency

Kapp (2003) defines juvenile delinquency as the infringement of law by a minor between ages 7 – 21 years. Delinquency tends to manifest in activities such as stealing, recklessness, aggression, vandalism and irresponsible sexual behaviour (Sullivan, 2006).

Kamphaus, Thorpe, Winscor, Kroncke and Dowdy (2007) quote different studies which indicate that there is a strong relationship between behavioural and emotional problems and delinquency and substance abuse – this relationship can be traced from anti-social and emotional problems in early childhood. Kamphaus *et al.* (2007) associate behavioural problems with inappropriate child-rearing by dysfunctional families which yields indirect effects on delinquent behaviour. For instance, a child who experiences inconsistent discipline or lack of care and supervision may seek company with deviant peers who are involved in substance abuse and other deviant activities. Kamphaus *et al.* (2007) take the argument further, stating that, on the contrary, good parenting can help children to be resilient to behavioural and emotional problems. The unavailability of someone to talk to, to confide in, together with negative influences of peers and teachers, can increase the adolescent's low self-esteem and lack of confidence.

#### 2.4.2.2 Depression and suicide

Hallahan and Kauffman (2007) believe that depression is one of the serious problems in adolescence. Depression may be noted by disturbances in moods, inability to concentrate, pessimism, lack of motivation, despair and feelings of hopelessness (Windle & Mason, 2004). These feelings may affect the child's self-concept negatively, leading to sleep and eating disorders or even suicide, in severe cases (Windle & Mason, 2004). Windle and Mason (2004) attribute depression to factors such as: traumatic life experiences, for example, the loss of a parent, hormonal imbalances, excessive pressure from parents and peers, negative self-evaluation and living with a depressed person (Sue *et al.*, 2010).

### 2.4.2.3 Social Misperceptions

An adolescent with social misperceptions cannot understand and interpret social situations properly. Such a child might be where he does not belong, or might show inappropriate emotions because of an inability to read cues for social behaviour properly (Kapp, 2003) – the adolescent may talk too much, stand too close, and show inappropriate emotions. An adolescent who shows signs of social misperceptions may be demonstrating effects of lack of parental supervision and guidance in his childhood years. These could also be caused by defective neurological development and might later even influence his relationships (Sue *et al.*, 2010).

### 2.4.2.4 Social Isolation

Like social misperceptions, social isolation might be traced back to the early years of the adolescent. Unsupportive and aloof parents, with inappropriate child rearing practices and certain personality traits, may influence the child's anti-social behaviour (Kamphaus *et al.*, 2007). Grieve *et al.* (2009) suggest that a socially isolated child cannot form healthy relationships with peers; he is lonely, insecure, unhappy, lacks self-confidence and has a low self-esteem. These attributes make it difficult for the child to share and cooperate with others – the child simply lacks adequate social skills.

### 2.4.2.5 Obstinance and Rebelliousness

An obstinate adolescent is excessively rigid and stubborn. Such an adolescent resents, rebels and opposes any authority (Rogers, 2010). This behaviour characterizes the adolescent stage of conflict versus role identity, as explained by Erikson's theory (Kapp, 2003). In his attempt to know his identity the adolescent may want things done his way, he may question values and norms and may tend to rebel even against people he respects and loves. Kapp (2003) refers to this behaviour as negativism.

#### 2.4.2.6 Hypersensitivity

The hypersensitive adolescent is very emotional and has a tendency to take any remark as a personal attack or insult. He has a high temperament and is quick to anger; he may make quick and impulsive decisions based on immediate feelings and reactions (Kamphaus *et al.*, 2007). The child's intense preoccupation with himself disturbs his personal and interpersonal relations. An adolescent is very self-conscious and seems always to be guarding against attack from everybody. Hypersensitivity may be caused by brain damage, personality disorder or overprotection (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2007).

#### 2.4.2.7 Truancy

Kapp (2003) describes a truant learner as a learner who has secretly taken a decision to absent himself from school without his parents' knowledge. This tendency is rife in secondary schools and learners may be seen aimlessly wandering outside their schools. Truancy may be a result of peer pressure, intellectual abilities, juvenile delinquency and dissatisfaction with the school program (Windle & Mason, 2004; Papalia *et al.*, 2008).

Truancy is frequently confused with school phobia. In school phobia, unlike truancy, the learner is not secretive about the intention not to attend school, but is outspoken about it. Papalia *et al.*, (2008) attribute school phobia to family conflicts, school environment or sheer delinquency. An adolescent may feel the need to stay home to protect the vulnerable parent, if the cause of phobia is a family problem. On the other hand, school factors that may influence phobia include unloving and unsympathetic teachers, bullying, excessive pressure, work overload and/or low self-esteem, continuous criticism and conflict in the family.

Both truancy and school phobia may ultimately result in school drop-out. Kibel, Lake, Pendlebury and Smith. (2010) point out statistics indicating that 40 000 children dropped out of school in the year 2000. Amongst factors that influenced this drop-out, these researchers emphasise poverty and HIV/AIDS.

#### 2.4.2.8 Aggression

Baron *et al.* (2009) define aggression as actions intentionally meant to inflict harm on others. Baron *et al.* (2009) further indicate that aggression may be caused by genetic factors, such as the malfunctioning of the thyroid gland, or by contextual factors. It may be a result of frustration when the learner fails academically or realises over time that his work compared to his peers is far behind, or he might have negative relations with teachers (Sutherland *et al.*, 2008). An aggressive learner may show signs of resistance, hostility, and being quarrelsome, cheeky, arrogant and disrespectful.

#### 2.4.2.9 Distractibility / Hyperactivity

Hyperactivity is the restlessness, fidgetiness and restlessness of an adolescent. It is the inability to refrain from reacting to intrinsic stimuli and simply means to be easily distracted (Van der Westhuizen, 2007). Papalia *et al.* (2008) refer to this behaviour as being very active at the wrong places and wrong times. The hyperactive learner tends to be easily distracted and his attention either fluctuates or has a short lifespan. Papalia *et al.* (2008) clarify that being hyperactive does not necessarily mean immaturity, for the two normally co-exist. Distractibility may be caused by brain damage and the child's emotional life which would usually be stressful.

The next section focuses on the need to support adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems.

## 2.5 PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

The previous section dealt with an explanation and the manifestation of behavioural and emotional problems specific to adolescents. The South African Schools Act (Government Gazette, 1998) Education Department provides guidelines and policies to deal with behavioural and emotional problems of learners.

Since 1996, the South African education system has undergone several changes: amendments in the Constitution and curriculum, new additional policies and the role of teachers in an inclusive classroom. Inclusive Education Policy emphasizes that curriculum, assessment and learning support must be available where and when needed (EWP6, 2005b; Friend, 2008). According to UNESCO (1994), inclusion refers to a system where all learners with different conditions (physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic and other conditions) are accommodated in schools. It goes further to say, it includes all children – disabled, gifted, street children, working children, children from remote areas, children of all ethnic groups, all economic standards and the historically disadvantaged children (Beyers & Hay, 2007; Friend, 2008; Kortein, 2008; Vaughan *et al.*, 2007).

It is evident from the challenges posed to teachers by adolescent behavioural and emotional problems, as well as expectations of Inclusive Education Policy, that teachers are facing an enormous task in terms of the support to be provided to learners.

Support is defined as all activities which increase the school's capacity to respond to diversity through identifying and addressing barriers to learning (EWP6, 2005a). The supportive help includes help from within schools, as well as to schools, and from other community resources (Donald *et al.*, 2007; EWP6, 2005c).

In assisting teachers in their supportive role, some questions need to be addressed. Questions such as what is needed for adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems to grow into responsible and mature adults? How can teachers ensure that appropriate identification and support is offered?

However, informal teacher observations and records of identification provide a useful description of the adolescent's behavioural and emotional problems. The teacher observations have been fairly reliable in this regard. This may be due to the amount of time the teacher spends with the learner (Hoadley, 2007; UNICEF, 2005). It is however always crucial for the teacher to verify the learner's behaviour and challenges with other teachers, with peers and parents (EWP6, 2005a). In this way, the child's background



information may guide the support needed by the adolescent. The next section focuses on the various approaches to support that can be used in dealing with behavioural and emotional problems of adolescents in the school.

## **2.5.1 Approaches to support**

Learner barriers necessitate supportive structures to be implemented to deal with adolescent behavioural and emotional problems. Literature identifies needs-based, asset-based, community-based approaches and school-based support, as support structures that are used in education (EWP6, 2005c; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2007).

### **2.5.1.1 Needs-based approach to support**

Needs-based support is based on needs analysis. It starts by asking what is wrong with the community (the school) and tries to give support from outside sources (Ebersohn & Eloff, 2006). Ebersohn and Eloff (2006) caution that the success of this approach may be limited by negative judgments and wrong perceptions from the school unless, the school is assured that the activities are aimed at empowerment.

### **2.5.1.2 Asset-based approach to support**

Unlike a needs-based approach which focuses on what is wrong and tries to fix it, the asset-based approach bases support on God-given resources and talents that the school can use to ensure that support is provided to the learner (Ebersohn & Eloff, 2006). The asset-based approach advocates for collaboration and active participation of all stakeholders and resources – learners, teachers, parents, community members, therapists, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, buildings and equipment (EWP6, 2005c). The availability and understanding of assets, resources and environment by the insiders may enhance a positive perception that may lead to a positive solution to challenges (Ebersohn & Eloff, 2006). The asset-based approach concurs, therefore, with the constructivist view, in that it acknowledges the assets,

strengths and realities that exist, and then suggests to teachers the alternative solutions in an attempt to create a new world (Meyer *et al.*, 2008).

### 2.5.1.3 School-based support

The focus of this research is on the role of teachers in providing school-based psychosocial support to adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems in secondary schools. School-based psychosocial support as well as the ecosystemic approach tend to draw structure and focus from the approaches discussed above. Severity of needs is determined first, then the resources available are utilised to provide support which aims to contribute to a positive solution to learner problems. It is for this reason that the literature indicates that the approaches complement one another in any attempt to provide support (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2007). Teachers seem to be the most suitable resource to assist learners, because they spend more time with learners than parents (Bennel, 2006). The teacher's roles as identified in the norms and standards for Educators Policy (Government Gazette, 2000) include interpreter, leader, administrator, researcher, life-long learner, assessor and pastoral care-giver. On the other hand, Rogers (2004) refers to the teacher's role in support as a mediator, mentor, moral steward, philosopher, facilitator, wiper of tears, inquirer, bridge and change-maker. However, according to the EWP6 (2005a) document, teacher's roles and responsibilities in providing support comprise the following steps:

- consider the individual past experiences, learning styles and preferences;
- develop questions and activities that are aimed at different levels of ability;
- modify expectations for some learners, including adapted objectives or outcomes;
- provide opportunities for a variety of participation levels such as individual and pairs;
- give learners choices in determining which methods suit them best;
- accept that the individual methods are of equal value; and
- evaluate learners based on individual objectives and progress.

Teachers may approach this task as a team so that together they complement one another in providing support as needed (Landsberg, 2005; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2007). The EWP6 (2005a) gives the team guidelines and credibility to operate as a school-based support team (SBST).

The SBST is generally made up of Life Orientation teachers with relevant expertise, the principal, parents/ guardians, teachers and learners as well as community experts and other professionals (EWP6, 2005c) states that the primary function of the SBST is to put in place properly coordinated learner and teacher support services.

The document further clarifies the core duties of the SBST, namely, coordinating all learner, teacher, curriculum and institutional development support in the school; collectively identifying school needs, especially barriers to learner, teacher, and curriculum at the school level; drawing the resources needed, from within and outside of the school; addressing these challenges; and mentoring and evaluating the work of the team within an action reflection framework.

The SBST has to meet regularly to identify and discuss challenges, problems and needs of learners and teachers referred to them in a school. The team establishes ideas that intervene to support learners who are in the SBST records (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2007; Weissberg & O'Brien, 2009). The SBST also addresses general developments and preventative measures, as well as curative measures, where challenges already exist (Donald *et al.*, 2007) and refers them when all endeavours have failed (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2007). All initiatives to support the learner, as well as ultimate referral, are recorded in the Inclusive Education Confidential Referral Form. The District Based-support Team will take over the advanced and appropriate support. The team work evident here illustrates collaboration, in which team members voluntarily share their unique experiences to address the learner problems (EWP6, 2005c; Friend, 2008; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2005). Collaboration refers to working together as a team and identifying what the team can and needs to do together to assist (EWP6, 2005c). This collaboration represents psychosocial support as provided by the SBST.

Psychosocial support can be defined as a scale of continuous care and support aimed at meeting the adolescent's developmental needs in a holistic manner, in the social and environmental context he is embedded in (Richter, 2006 ; WHO, 2001). Psychosocial support can also be explained from the REPSSI point of view as an initiative that influenced this research.

According to the REPSSI (Huni, 2010; Murove, 2010), psychosocial support is defined as the care and support to address the physical, social, spiritual, psychological and emotional developmental needs of vulnerable children. The initiative strives to provide needs, but also creates an enabling environment to improve the adolescent learner's resilience. This is achieved by focusing on three areas: skills and knowledge, emotional well-being and social well-being.

- Skills and knowledge focus on the services planned for adolescents, such as education and knowledge for development needs, life skills courses, support for healthy relationships, etc.
- Emotional well-being refers to services such as trauma counseling, opportunity to develop self-esteem, self-awareness and appreciation for others, moral and spiritual guidance.
- Social well-being focuses on establishment of social and community clubs, age and gender specific sports and recreation activities.

Huni (2010) states that failure to meet the adolescent's psychosocial needs may cause or aggravate behavioural and emotional problems. The proponents of the initiative maintain that a successful implementation of REPSSI ensures a conducive and safe platform that allows adolescents to express their feelings freely in the presence of trained teachers, and uses resources that enhance resilience in adolescents through life-skills training and giving positive feedback on the adolescent's performance.

It is important to note that the REPSSI, like the ecosystemic approach and the SBST, emphasises the importance of active involvement of all sectors and stakeholders in

providing support to adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems (Meyer *et al.*, 2008).

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

Various psychological perspectives were discussed in order to understand what is normal development and what is not, using the REPSSI Wheel Model to illustrate the five domains. The ecosystemic approach was selected as the preferred theoretical framework, based on the comparison of the different psychological perspectives. Adolescence was also explored, as were causes of behavioural and emotional problems and their manifestations. The SBST and relevant approaches to support were explained. The possible influence of the REPSSI and the ecosystemic approach and their suitability in providing school-based psychosocial support by teachers in SBST was discussed. The chapter was concluded with a representation of the integrated conceptual framework employed.

The following chapter outlines the methodology used in the research. The research paradigm and its relevance are discussed, followed by the research design and how it relates to the research questions and the purpose of the study. Lastly, data collection, analysis and interpretation of data are explained in detail.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 2 explored the existing literature regarding behavioural and emotional problems in adolescent learners, the causes of such problems, and current support approaches to these problems. A theoretical framework for the study was provided.

In this chapter, the paradigmatic assumptions and research design within the parameters of the research will be discussed. A detailed account of the data collection methods, data analysis and interpretation procedures followed will be provided. Finally, the quality criteria and ethical considerations adhered to within the current study will be discussed.

#### **3.2 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE**

A paradigm is a set of beliefs that guide action (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Babbie (2010) explains a research paradigm as a fundamental model or frame of reference employed as a means of organising observations and ways of reasoning. This section discusses in depth, the paradigmatic perspectives, namely, meta-theoretical and methodological paradigms, that will be used to carry out the research.

##### **3.2.1 Meta-theoretical paradigm**

Constructivism was chosen as an appropriate meta-theoretical paradigm. Constructivism provides a rich description and an in-depth guide of trends, and enables participants to construct their own reality (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Stake (2010) sees the constructivist view as the continuous construction of knowledge by different people's perceptions. In this research, the participants interpret their situations

in the school and construct their reality in context. It is important that teachers draw a joint meaning from the situation despite their individual perceptions, experiences and expectations about the case (Donald *et al.*, 2007; Meyer *et al.*, 2008).

However, findings of a qualitative constructivist study cannot be generalized from one setting to the other (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Niewenhuis, 2007) because the findings are understood within a particular context of investigation.

### **3.2.2 Methodological paradigm**

The qualitative study was undertaken in a suburban secondary school, in the Free State, in order to explore and explain (Mertens, 2010) the ecosystemic school-based psychosocial support provided by teachers.

A qualitative methodological approach was followed because the study is aligned with the goals of qualitative research. A qualitative approach implies a process of inquiry and understanding in which the researcher attempts to develop a complex and holistic picture (Gibbs, 2005). The approach analyses words, reports and detailed views of informants and conducts a study in its natural setting (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Qualitative approach explores the research setting extensively, in order to obtain a rich, in-depth understanding of the way things are influencing one another (Babbie, 2007) in a sensitive and ethical manner, as well as in how participants perceive reality (De Vos, 2005; Gibbs, 2005; Iphofen, 2011; Mertens, 2010). To achieve this, data was collected through in-depth research from teachers in the SBST to enable the researcher to uncover subtle insights that could not be gained directly as a researcher. The qualitative approach assisted the researcher to capture data in the form of behaviours and attitudes through interaction with participants at school (that is, in context). Hence, the qualitative approach was identified as the most suitable tool for this research.

According to Neuman (2006) qualitative research describes events through words and pictures, without the use of numerical data. Neuman (2006) further proposes that it remains open to the possibility of changing the direction of research and may even

allow for the initial research questions to be abandoned in the middle of the project. It is thus more responsive and open to its subjects than quantitative research.

Despite the usefulness and benefits of qualitative research, there are certain limitations that need to be attended to. Qualitative research tends to be contextual and subjective in nature, and may compromise the analysis and interpretation of data (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; De Vos, 2005). In order to ensure the rigour and dependability of the research, reflexivity was employed to confirm the research findings by means of member checking (Stake, 2010). Debriefing sessions with the researcher's supervisor were also used to the same end.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design is a strategic framework (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002), or a basic plan, that serves as a bridge between research questions and the implementation of the research (Cresswell, 2007; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Yin (2009) explains research design as a logical plan for getting from the initial questions to be answered to a set of conclusions about these questions.

A case study was selected for this research. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection. It can also be described as a specific instance that is frequently used to illustrate a more general principle (Cresswell, 2007). The case study enabled the researcher to focus on a group of ten SBST teachers who were part of the REPSSI training in a flexible manner in a natural environment. Focus was on participant teachers' experiences, perceptions and roles in providing support to adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems (Mertens, 2010). The case study was a school and teachers in the SBST. Picture 3.1 shows the secondary school and the school garden (Picture 3.2) which were influenced by the REPSSI. The school is relatively new compared to other schools in the vicinity. The surrounding houses (Picture 3.3) are dilapidated and old. Because many are unemployed, the residents tend to vandalize the school and steal from the school garden.



**Picture 3.1 : Secondary School**



**Picture: 3.2: School garden**



**Picture: 3.3 Surrounding area**



Two school visits were conducted (13 June 2013 and 2 August 2013). Data was collected through focus group interviews of 1½ hours in length. The case study design allowed the researcher to focus specifically on SBST member teachers who attended REPSSI training. These teachers highlighted unique features and new ideas regarding their case, which might have otherwise been lost if the sample was larger (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). The time was sufficient to establish rapport and explore beliefs, feelings, and insights on the implementation of school-based psychosocial support provided to learners. Focus group interviews are useful, but evidence from such discussions may not be used in a conclusive manner because it is highly dependent upon the experiences and perception of the researcher and other observers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This has the potential of subjectivity and bias (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). The use of a reflective diary and constant discussion with the researcher's supervisor tended to reduce this possibility of bias and subjectivity.

### **3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this section, the case-study design will be discussed, as well as the selection of the case and participants and the data collection methods used, in an attempt to answer the research questions.

#### **3.4.1 Selection of case and participants**

The case, school and teachers in the SBST in a secondary school in the Free State Province, was purposefully selected for this study. The school's SBST teachers were selected because they were part of the REPSSI training. The REPSSI is the programme that provides psychosocial support to children with problems. This initiative was introduced to this particular school in 2008.

Purposeful sampling is a process of handpicking information-rich respondents who address issues that are central to the purpose of inquiry (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Forrester (2010) elaborates, stating that purposeful sampling gathers information until no further new information is provided. The SBST teachers in this school were assumed to have

information on psychosocial support initiatives, problems that learners have and common experiences, and were assumed to have attended the REPSSI training.

**Table 3.1: Teacher participation.**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Ages</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Grades being taught</b>
A	52	B Com	Gr 8
B	42	Senior Education Diploma (SED)	Gr 10 – 12
C	50	Higher Education Diploma (HED - Post grad)	Gr 10 – 12
D	46	SED	Gr 11
E	35	Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	Gr 11
F	40	SED	Gr 8 + 9
G	47	Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD)	Gr 8 + 9
H	33	PGCE	Gr 12
I	41	HED - Post grad	Gr 9 + 10
J	39	STD	Gr 8

### 3.4.2 Data collection and documentation

Personal observations and different qualitative methods were used to document the data collected. Terreblanche and Durrheim (2002) call the use of multiple sources triangulation. The participants shared their experiences and what they meant to them (Cohen *et al.*, 2007) during focus group discussions, and this was supported by interviews and observations (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Regarding reflective notes, the researcher's field notes and research diary (Cresswell, 2007; Roulston, 2010) were used. Audio recordings of the SBST meetings were relied on, and these were transcribed to record information shared by the members. As documentation, photographs were taken after permission from participants had been obtained during the discussion regarding the consent form. Notes written by participants during the meetings were used. Reference should be made to Appendix C1 and C2 for transcription of focus group discussions and Appendix C for photographs.

#### 3.4.2.1 Focus group interviews

Babbie (2010) defines a focus group as a group of subjects interviewed together, prompting a discussion on a specific topic (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Forrester (2010) advises that, in order to get optimum benefit from using focus groups, the researcher must define the purpose of the research clearly, in everyday language, be flexible and take care of group dynamics. The researcher conducted two field visits to the school. The first field visit was conducted on 13 June 2013. The group consisted of the SBST teachers who attended the REPSSI training, so that they could share experiences of providing psychosocial support. The focus group interview proved suitable because time was limited (1½ hours per session). Participants also felt it would be more informative and less intimidating if they were in a group (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Interviews were designed to enable the respondents to answer interview questions in the researcher's presence which revolved around a few central research questions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Stake, 2010). The researcher was also enabled to ask follow-up questions which sought clarity to responses (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2007).

Probing questions in an interview provided the researcher with information that the written word would have concealed (Bell, 2010).

The second field visit was conducted on 2 August 2013. It aimed at verifying the correctness of transcription known as the member checking session. Member checking enabled the researcher to capture data which might not have been captured.

Ethical issues to protect the participants were adhered to. This was achieved by gaining informed consent from the participants, as well as permission to take photos, giving an explanation and the purpose of the study, assuring them of confidentiality, anonymity and protection from any harm, as well as possible ways that the research might be of value to the school (Bell, 2010; Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

#### 3.5.2.2 Observations

Observations in qualitative research are intentionally unstructured – they allow flexibility on the part of the researcher (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This means that the researcher can take advantage of unforeseen data sources as they appear and can even shift focus from one thing to another. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) point out certain challenges regarding observations that the researcher should guard against. These are: that time may be wasted on trivialities, whilst central entities to the research question may be overlooked; that the researcher's presence may influence people to change what they say and do and how significant events unfold; that recorded and written notes are often insufficient to capture the richness of what one is observing; that audiotapes may not be dependable due to background noise that may make recordings inaudible; and that recordings may make participants uncomfortable.

The researcher observed teachers providing psychosocial support to a few adolescents who were referred to the SBST. This observation was guided by the specific research questions.

### 3.5.2.3 Documenting the focus group discussions and interviews, member checking session and observation

The researcher's role as an observer entailed listening and documenting data through field notes, visual data and audio recordings during the focus group discussions and interviews and member checking sessions (Creswell, 2005). Before conducting focus group interviews, the researcher experimented with a dictaphone as a way of overcoming recording challenges on the set date.

The researcher's ideas about the study and reflections on methodological phenomena, as well as what had been learnt from the REPSSI workshop, were recorded as field notes in the research diary (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Cohen *et al.* (2007) define field notes as accounts of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks about both during and after interaction with participants. The researcher's field notes consisted of recordings of observations, guided by the constructivist approach that realities or interpretations may be different because of different presumptions of different people (Stake, 2010).

Visual data was captured by means of photographs, which enabled the researcher to document data in the context of the school community. Photographs also enabled the researcher to provide visual evidence of the psychosocial support services provided by the school. The use of photographs assisted in enhancing the rigour of the study (Yin, 2009).

### 3.4.2.4 Audio recordings and transcriptions

During the first visit, the focus group interviews on 13 June 2013, a dictaphone was used to record teacher's verbatim responses. Audio recordings enabled the researcher to reflect repeatedly on the original data long after the data had been collected (Stake, 2010). After listening to the audio recordings, verbatim responses from the participants were transcribed, thus giving the researcher a clear picture of the psychosocial services

offered at the school. The second visit, on 2 August 2013, was intended for member checking.

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Data analysis is an on-going process of studying and breaking down the data over and over in order to make conclusions from research findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Terre Blanche & Durrham, 2002).

The aim of data analysis and interpretation was to make meaning out of the information derived from searching all data sources in an attempt to answer the research questions (Stake, 2010). In order to make sense of the data, the researcher had to classify, order, manipulate, and summarise data, as Cohen *et al.* (2007) has explained.

Thematic content analysis of group data was conducted (Terre Blanche & Durrham, 2002). Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data analysis steps, as outlined by Terre Blanche and Durrham (2002), are familiarization, inducing potential themes, coding, elaboration and interpretation and checking.

In familiarising herself with the content of the data, the researcher gained an understanding of what type of interpretation to expect. The data was transcribed from the focus group discussions and interviews and the follow-up member checking session (Forrester, 2010). The researcher repeatedly read the transcripts, field notes and the research diary, as well as reviewed the photographs in order to be immersed in the data. The information and reflections from the research diary were analysed and tabulated. In this way, a better understanding and ability to differentiate the collected data was gained.

The second step in data analysis entails identifying potential emerging themes. The participants' verbatim responses were used, while at the same time bias was guarded

against (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). During this process patterns had to be determined which would identify common themes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

The third step, coding, is used for interpretation and storage of data (Gibbs, 2005). Stake (2010) points out that coding entails sorting all data sets according to topics, themes and issues, important to the study. Each theme was coded with different colours in order to identify different clusters.

The fourth step is elaboration. Elaboration is required to link together various parts of obtained data, followed by grouping related data together in a tabular form, thus allowing the identification of data into themes and sub-themes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

The fifth, and the last, step is called interpretation and checking of data in accordance to the themes and sub-themes. It involves the written account of the interpretations and findings of the data obtained (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **3.6 QUALITY CRITERIA**

To ensure the rigour and trustworthiness of the study, the researcher strove to adhere to quality criteria as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2005).

#### **3.6.1 Credibility**

Credibility refers to the accuracy or truthfulness – it is the soundness of the research findings (De Vos *et al.*, 2006). In order to ensure credibility of all conclusions, Mertens (2010) advises that sufficient time be spent in the field to become familiarised with the project, in this case the SBST.

Quality control can be ensured through accurate record keeping of the main decisions and events which have occurred during the research process (Mouton, 2008). Important aspects in record keeping are dates, information gained, and participants' contextual factors (Mouton, 2008).



A reflective journal to clarify assumptions and theoretical orientation was kept which was brought to the study throughout the data gathering, analysis and interpretation process.

Debriefing sessions were conducted with the researcher's supervisor, by means of a reflective journal and by documenting the researcher's own thoughts and reflections. Visiting the research site to verify understanding of participants became an important activity for the researcher.

### **3.6.2 Transferability**

Transferability is the ability of the research to produce rich, detailed descriptions of the context so that understanding can be transferred to other studies. It is then, the ability to generalise from the findings to larger populations (Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

Constructivist studies aim to provide rich descriptions of the perceptions of selected participants, but, concerning this study, the aim was not to necessarily generalise the findings of the study (Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

### **3.6.3 Dependability**

Dependability is the extent to which findings would be consistent if the inquiry was replicated on the same subjects or in similar contexts. Dependable findings convince the reader that the findings are reliable and are as the researcher says they are (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

To ensure dependability and trustworthiness, the researcher's reflections were recorded and the necessary changes in the researcher's diary were made. Debriefing sessions with the researcher's supervisor were continuous.

### **3.6.4 Confirmability**

Babbie (2007); De Vos *et al.* (2006) and Mouton (2008) define confirmability as the extent to which the researcher is free of bias during the process of the research and interpretation of the results. Confirmability or neutrality is achieved when credibility and transferability are established. In this study only credibility could be established.

To ensure confirmability, objectivity was maintained by not allowing the researcher's personal values to influence the research findings (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Discussions with the researcher's supervisor helped to verify and confirm findings and to reduce bias.

### **3.6.5 Authenticity**

Authenticity refers to fairness. It is the representation of different realities (Mertens, 2010). Authenticity of research refers to research that empowers participants to share their different views freely and openly. Verbatim translations from the participants' responses were used to ensure the authenticity of the findings regarding views on school-based psychosocial support.

## **3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics has to do with the application of a system of moral principles to prevent harming or wrong-doing to others, to promote the good, to be respectable and fair (Forrester, 2010). In conducting this study, the researcher adhered to the ethical guidelines as presented by the Ethics Committee of the University of South Africa.

### **3.7.1 Informed consent**

Prior to the interviews, the researcher made contact with member teachers in the SBST in the school and the school principal to brief them about the research project and further ask for permission to work at their school. The intention was to get an informed

consent. An informed consent means that the participants in the study are aware of the research purpose, what the research hopes to achieve, what is required of them and whether there is in any potential harm if they participate (Forrester, 2010; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The consent forms were signed by all relevant parties.

### **3.7.2 Voluntary participation and right to withdrawal**

The researcher emphasised to participants that participation in this research project was voluntary and that the participants could withdraw from the project at any time if they no longer felt comfortable with the questions asked (Cohen *et al.*, 2007) without any subsequent consequences for them (Forrester, 2010).

### **3.7.3 Anonymity and confidentiality**

The researcher assured the respondents that their opinions would be respected, irrespective of whether they were controversial or not. The researcher also guaranteed confidentiality, anonymity and respect to privacy, because some information might have been personal and sensitive (Forrester, 2010; Stake, 2010). Bell (2010) emphasises the necessity of ensuring, if confidentiality has been promised, that participants should under no circumstance ever be identified. This was achieved through assigning a code number to participants during the data collection process.

### **3.7.4 Protection from harm and deception**

The participants were assured of the absence of any form of deception or potential harm (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). It was thus stated that the research would not cause any physical or emotional harm to participants (Babbie, 2005).

### **3.7.5 Debriefing**

Participants were given a full account of the purpose of the project and how information would be disseminated (Forrester, 2010).

### **3.7.6 Honesty and integrity**

The researcher had to demonstrate honesty and integrity in dealing with respondents. Forrester (2010) outlines the requirements to ensure honesty and integrity as declaring potential conflicts of interest and how these can be avoided, avoiding dishonesty through fabrication of data, presentations and findings, and full acknowledgment of the contribution of all who were involved in the research.

## **3.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the research followed was discussed, as well as the reasons for using the constructivist paradigm and qualitative research. Then, the research design and case study, as well as the reasons why the site and participants in the case study were selected, were chosen. Under the data collection process, focus groups with participants, observation, field notes and photographs were discussed. Further explanation of the data analysis was provided through thematic content analysis. Lastly, adherence to quality criteria and ethical considerations within the study were discussed.

In Chapter 4, the results of the study are presented by describing the data generating context and discussing themes and sub-themes that emerged subsequent to the thematic data analysis process.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RESULTS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

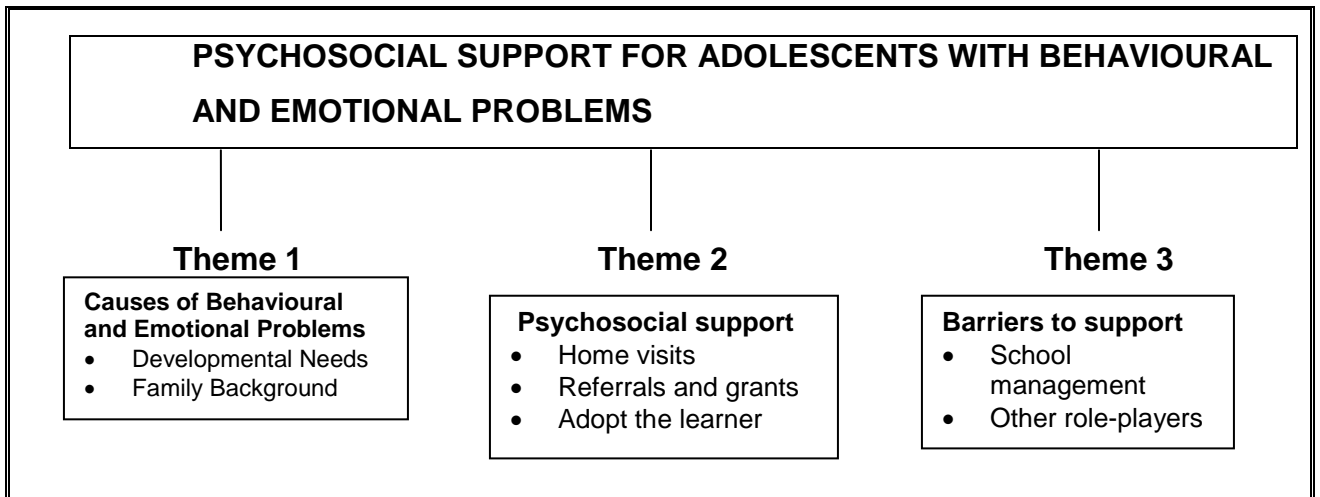
In the previous chapter the research process that guided this study was discussed. Choice of research design and the data collection methods used to conduct this study were presented. Finally, stance as a researcher and description of ethical considerations and the quality criteria adhered to were discussed.

In this chapter, an overview of the research process and its context is presented. Research results are presented in terms of the themes and sub-themes that emerged subsequent to analysis of the data obtained from focus group discussions. The teachers' verbatim quotations, field notes and photographs are used to support the identified themes.

#### **4.2 RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

In the next section, themes and sub-themes of the study identified through thematic analysis of the data are discussed, as depicted in the diagrammatic representation, Figure 4.1 on the next page.

**Figure 4.1: Themes and Sub-Themes**



#### **4.2.1 Theme 1: causes of adolescent behavioural and emotional problems**

The participants used the mind-map technique to brainstorm behavioural and emotional problems that manifest in adolescent learners in the school. The possible causes were identified as developmental domains and family background.

##### **4.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Developmental domains**

According to Erikson, the child has developmental domains which change as the child grows and develops (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). The developmental areas are physical, emotional, moral, social, spiritual, psychological and cognitive. If any one of the domains lags behind or fails to develop, this may cause imbalances that manifest as behavioural and emotional problems (Huni, 2010). The discussion revealed that mainly adolescent learners in the school manifest imbalances in physical, moral and psychosocial domains. The following extract indicates the physical imbalance:

**“This reminds me, last week I look at the boy, he looks thirteen , when you ask his age, he is 17- it means malnourishment. The granny they stay with depends on pension money for food, they live in a shack that is not well maintained” (P4, line 134 ).**

Another domain that the teachers noted is that of social development. A socially developed learner relates well with himself and others. One teacher commented:

**“ the adolescent at this stage is that they try to know themselves. They do not really know who they are and they become rebellious” (P1, line 3).**

In their attempts to know themselves, they seek social groups to identify with and be recognised in. Teachers in the study believed that adolescents seem to be pressured to be part of the groups, through peer pressure or by being bullied. The other teacher supported this statement:

**“ the smoking is a problem, like girls who are smoking dagga, they are 14 and from primary, they are bullied by older ones, even into gangs. They call themselves BTK – born to kill. They smoke because they are experiencing. When you ask them, why are you doing this? They say others are doing it-‘I am experiencing’. There is also Satanism. We don’t know where it manifests from. But our kids are in this evil spirit, we don’t know how to handle it (P3, line 31).**

**“They feel vulnerable and unsafe, they are socially unstable,...they behave emotionally at school” (P2, line 14-15)**

**“I agree they don’t come to school, they don’t respect anybody because of this spirit, it attacks adolescents mostly” (P1, line 33-34).**

Reflection in the researcher’s diary: The learners seem to join gangs and occult groups because they want to belong; they search for identity.13 June 2013.

Molapo and Van der Merwe (2003) attribute joining occult groups to low self-esteem, where they are promised that Satan will provide for their unmet needs. The facts from the data also indicate that those who do not want to join groups have some resistance, and act aggressively. The following statement supports this:

**“In our school some are aggressive. Most of the times they want to fight to one another, being stubborn”** (P2, line 9).

Family background seems to be another factor that may affect social development negatively. This was evident when one teacher narrated a sad story of a boy who lived with a diabetic grandmother – the boy was compelled to scratch the grandmother’s suppurating sores. The teacher believed that the boy was physically and emotionally abused, which may later in life translate into hatred for women. The following extract supports this sentiment:

**“... the boy is going to be a serial killer, hating women because he was physically and emotionally abused by a woman”** (P4, line 170).

It was also evident that the learners’ moral development was not sufficiently well developed to ensure responsible adulthood. Teachers attributed this to the absence of role models or adults whose acceptable behaviour could be emulated. The teachers as immediate role models do not seem to be helpful. One teacher supported the statement:

**“Teachers do not have morals; they fall in love with the school girls and make them pregnant. These girls become stubborn, I’ve realised, maybe it’s defence mechanism”** (P3, line 17).

Based on the data above, it is evident that teachers in this school agree that adolescents manifest behaviours and emotions indicating imbalance in the development of physical, social, emotional and moral domains. Some of the terms and/or phrases which support the teachers’ observations include malnourishment, being socially



unstable, being physically and emotionally abused. According to Baron *et al.* (2009), the development domains are interconnected and interrelated – a change in one domain has a ripple effect on other domains. For instance, an adolescent who does not appreciate his physical features tends to feel less confident and has a low self-esteem. This may hamper his social development, especially if he is rejected by peers; he may feel depressed, aloof and withdrawn (Donald *et al.*, 2007; Simons-Morton *et al.*, 2012). Rejection by peers may, in turn, make him angry and resentful, thus adversely affecting his emotional stability (Sullivan, 2007). Gibson and Bladford (2005) and Smith *et al.* (2008) state that, normally, childhood traumas resurface during the adolescent stage and tend to manifest as behavioural and emotional problems. It therefore becomes imperative for teachers to be careful not to perceive an imbalance in the development domains as behavioural and emotional problems. Correct identification and appropriate intervention by skilled teachers is important.

The teachers in the present study provide psychosocial support to address development imbalances through organising food and clothing grants from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as the House of Hope. The Department of Education addresses the challenge through its feeding scheme, which solves hunger. In addition, food donations and the feeding scheme have a positive impact on cognitive development. Good nutrition is beneficial to good health, cognitive development, improved school attendance and learner performance (Vaughan *et al.*, 2007). Teachers further assist by facilitating referrals and placements of learners to foster homes through the Social Development Department.

#### 4.2.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2: Family background

Family background in this study refers to the environment at home that is determined by parental involvement, atmosphere and socio-economic situation (Papalia *et al.*, 2008).

The teachers seem to place emphasis on the lack of parental involvement in the child's life. The participants believed that parents' presence or involvement in the child's life determines his growth and development. This is indicated by the following statements:

**“Because some of them they have emotional problems because they come from poor family, some of them are child-headed, both parents were died, that’s why they behave like this emotionally at school, they practise this at school - fighting, stubbornness, aggression”** (P2, line 12-15).

**“40% of our children are parentless, when I say parentless I mean that they don’t have both parents, this 40% learners are the child-headed families, the older child takes care of the siblings”** (P5, line 130-131).

The notion of family as an important foundation for the child’s holistic and balanced development is supported by the teachers. The following extracts show the importance teachers place on family background:

**“Family background ...background of families is so crucial”** (P5, line 51).

**“Discipline from home is key, the police cannot be held responsible for our children’s behaviour”** (P1, line 128).

**“I agree that the community is sick, parents are not doing their bit”** (P5, line 176).

Participants emphasised moral and spiritual development based on Christian beliefs:

**“...but I think the most important thing is the family background. If families were structured, were based on the foundation of Christianity”** (P5, line 51-53).

Teachers identified the socio-economic status of families as another negative factor of family background that may influence the adolescent’s behaviour and emotions to become unacceptable. The following comments support this:

**“They have emotional problems because they come from poor families that are unsettled”** (P2, line 13).

Even where the parents are present, according to the participants, they are not shouldering responsibility as parents should.

**“I was invited to a school to talk to 13/14 year old boys who are already active in sex. One boy claims to sleep with the cousin every day but wonders whether is it normal that the girl always bleeds whenever they sleep together. I agree the community is sick. Parents are not doing their bit. I talked to the boys only on that day, what will happen to the boys afterwards?”** (P5, line 178).

Literature indicates that a stable family with no serious problems is likely to produce a stable child, while an unstable and disrupted family is likely to produce a child with problems (Papalia *et al.*, 2008). This statement illustrates the importance of family background in the child's growth and development.

However, data in the present study indicates that almost 40% of the learners come from unstable families. The families are either child-headed families or headed by elderly and sickly guardians. The families are characterised by poverty and low socio-economic status. Low socio-economic status in families refers to families who are child-headed, or with unemployed parents, living in a shack and depending on a welfare grant (EWP6, 2005a,b). According to Donald *et al.* (2007), if the family background is not stable, the child tends to have internal conflict that might be due to past traumatic experiences such as divorces or loss of a parent or both parents. In an attempt to hide the pain, the child may be withdrawn and depressed (Grieve *et al.*, 2009). A life defined by pain, instability and lack of basic parental warmth may influence the onset of behavioural and emotional problems in adolescent learners (De Witt, 2007; McNiff & Whitehead, 2005; Meyer *et al.*, 2008).

Other research shows that it is not all children who are adversely affected by unstable family conditions. If a parent is strong and resilient, he may influence the child to be strong and stable despite the negative family environment (REPSSI, 2008). In the case where the adolescent has behavioural and emotional problems, the intervention to assist is thus provided. The assistance is the psychosocial support.

## 4.2.2 Theme 2: psychosocial support

Psychosocial support refers to continuous and holistic interventions to provide support in order to satisfy the development needs of vulnerable children (Huni, 2010). In the present study psychosocial support is based on the REPSSI, focusing on adolescent learners with behavioural and emotional problems. From the data, the sub-themes that emerged are home visits, referrals and grants, and adopt-a-learner.

### 4.2.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Home visits

The teachers put emphasis on the importance of knowing the learner's family background, so as to know why the child behaves in a particular manner. The visits reveal factors such as needs of the family, why the child is late, unhealthy or depressed. The research narrated a story that reveals the importance of home visits:

**“I ask the boy; why are you late for exams? There was silence, that’s where I suspected something is not right! The boy stays with his siblings and diabetic grandmother. The children scratch the grandma until 11/12. I arranged with the teacher to allow the boy to write and instructed him that he comes to me after writing. After writing I accompanied the boy home, it is at an informal settlement in a mokhukhu (shack). It is bad, ke hore you can imagine, ho dikatse mono (there are many cats), it is dark, and there is a bucket full of urine! You understand it is filthy, imagine the infection”** (P4, line178).

Reflection in my research diary, 13 June 2013: Without the teacher's home visits it could still be unknown why the boy was late for school, why the boy is sleepy in class or why the boy was emotionally unstable.

In corroboration of my reflection, one teacher said:

**“When you see a change in the child, be quick to act, the notion that when you see any child misbehaving or acting funny, it is not good. It takes a village to raise a child”** (P1, line 127).

The discussion reveals that the child may be in need of support to either improve conditions at home or to be removed from home. The teachers in the study take it as a priority to visit learner's homes. In this way the teachers report that they get first hand information on home background. Teachers are then able to identify the needs of the learner and then determine the required support needed (EWP6, 2005a). In the present study, a home visit revealed that the learner who is always sleepy in class and late for school needed to be assisted with grants.

In extreme cases, the teachers resort to other measures in order to alleviate the challenges that may accentuate the onset of behavioural and emotional problems in adolescents. Other support services that the teachers can facilitate include referrals and grants.

#### 4.2.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Referrals and Grants

Data reflects that the learners are often in need of support so that they can have access to basics, such as food and shelter or a home. The teacher's comment supports this observation:

**"They want somebody to take care of them for money, at times for shelter"** (P3, line 18-19).

Teachers realise that, for their support to be meaningful, they have to involve other stakeholders with different expertise. For instance, in a case where alternative accommodation is needed for either the parent/guardian or even the child, the teachers facilitate the process. The following is an example where referrals have to be made:

**"I started arranging with the nurse at the hospice to visit the home... we tried to figure out the boy and his siblings can be removed...they stay in a mkhukhu (a shack)...you can imagine - it's dark, many cats you understand it's filthy!"** (P4, line 49).

On arrival the nurse was amazed – she said: **“I salute teachers, we just judge you by the value of your face, but get into the teacher’s shoes, the teachers are overburdened!”**

This statement indicates an awareness of the support teachers need from other role-players. The following extract provides an example:

**“The grandma depends on her pension for food, I then involved the social worker to arrange for food parcels, whilst waiting for the application for the boys to be removed to foster care, (the teacher continued): there’s an NGO (House of hope) that delivers food parcels and blankets for our needy learners every Tuesday, I am guided by the list from the SBST records”** (P4, line 149).

Another teacher added to that:

**“We have a good relationship with the local uniform shop (ATLAS), they donate full uniform as per request, the practice has been going on since 2005 till today”** (P4, line 115).

The teachers take it upon themselves to make things happen; their caring natures are captured in the following extracts:

**“Because we are committed, because of age and experience, you can’t sleep!”** (P4, line 181).

**“If we can work together, I think we can improve caring for one another and caring for learners”** (P1, line 184).

Reflection – The Department of Education’s ( DoE) feeding scheme somehow reduces the hunger and shame many learners face (of begging). The food and uniform grants boost the children’s self-esteem because one cannot readily differentiate between the poor and the rich ( 13 June 2013)

**In our school, we have implemented an approach called - adopt a child, in the Grade 12 classes, with the aim of improving and enhancing the way children relate to us. They confide and feel free to say their concerns to their ‘mothers and fathers’,** one teacher explained (P5, line 117). This action must be reducing the burden that the affected children are facing, where –

**In child-headed families, the learner has to wake up in the morning to prepare siblings for school, and walk long distance - its not normal seriously as teachers we have to be parents!**(P3, line 182).

In corroboration of this, one teacher said: **“We take it as our responsibility to arrange with social welfare department to place such children with foster parents”** (P2, line).

Reflection in my diary: The teachers do not wait for the social workers to take action; they do what they can to ease the challenge – 13 June 2013.

The following statement concurs with my observation:

**“Because we are committed, because of age and experience, u can’t even sleep”,** commented one teacher sadly (P4, line 181).

Another teacher said: **“If we can work together, I think we can improve caring for one another and caring for the learners”** (P1, line 184).

The teachers in this research reported that they involved other stakeholders – for example, the hospice nurse to accompany them to the learner’s home. The nurse, together with the teacher, facilitated the removal of children from an uncondusive environment to a home, whilst waiting for a response from the Social Development Department. The teacher’s actions are in line with the stipulations of the Department of Education and REPSSI guidelines, that other experts be involved in providing support to

the learner (EWP6, 2005a; Huni, 2010; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2007). From their comments the teachers seem to appreciate and are making use of relevant role-players in providing psychosocial support to learners.

#### 4.2.2.3 Sub-theme 2.3: Adopt a learner

The participant teachers talked at length about how adolescent learners are still searching for their identity.

**“the adolescent at this stage is that they try to know themselves... they tend to be sensitive and emotional”** (P1, line 3).

The teachers associated the learner’s behaviour with a need to belong. In an attempt to address this desire to belong to a social group and identify with a role model, teachers introduced a concept called –‘adopt a learner.’ One teacher explained:

**“In our school, we have implemented an initiative called adopt-a-learner in Grade 12 classes. The aim of this initiative is to improve and enhance the way children relate to us. They confide and feel free to say their concerns to their ‘mothers and fathers’** (P5, line 117).

Another teacher elaborated further:

**“The teacher is assigned a learner from the SBST records. The teacher has to create an enabling environment for the adopted learner to feel free to confide in the ‘parent’. The ‘parent’ supports the learner in various aspects, like spiritual support and learning support and refer where necessary”** (P3, line 120).



- Counselling and talks

In line with the basics of REPSSI, the teachers started counselling sessions for adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems. The adolescents have an opportunity to talk freely and openly with the teachers or youth workers about their challenges. Participant 5 said:

**“The child is made to understand where the pain comes from and how it impacts on others. We try together to make a plan how to act in future not to hurt others. The talks we organise are guided by the behavioural and emotional problems we see in these children”** (P5, line 114-117).

Reflection: The learner is involved in addressing his problem! ( My reflection, 13 June 2013).

- Spiritual support

Participants believe the child’s spirituality and moral development depends on a structural and solid foundation from parents’ values. Most participants emphasised Christianity, as indicated by the extracts below:

**“Parents and teachers must be serious with Christianity. The parents who claim to be religious are not serious, they are just praying for the sake of praying and going to church. Satanists are very serious, they even fast for days for these things to go to children. I have an example of a mother who’s daughter was involved in Satanism but because the mother is a praying woman, that child was unable to continue with the occultic practices. Teachers must guide their children. Hence in our school, the youth worker is also a pastor”**(P5, line 57-63).

**“If DoE can bring back religious subjects, but I think inviting pastors is playing an important role in feeding our children spiritual food and teaching them morals”** (P3, line 47-48).

- Learning support

One of the teacher's roles in support is learning support, where the source of the learning problems may be detected. Teachers agreed with these statements:

**“The teacher in the classroom can identify the behavioural and emotional problems in time, where the performance of the learner is measured”** (P2, line 67).

**“and refer to the SBST when all she/ he tried fails,”** one teacher added (P5, line 72).

**“The teacher can also identify the emotional trauma of the learner timeously but often times are unable to differentiate between sheer silliness and serious behavioural problems the learner has. We even engage in afternoon classes and supervise studies because in most cases the conditions at home do not allow them to do school work”** (P4, line 67).

Reflection: The teachers are eager to assist despite being overburdened! (My reflection, 13 June 2013).

**“You understand colleagues how difficult it is for these children, we should get into their shoes (be empathetic) - now you see, community again!”** One teacher commented (P4, line 14).

The teachers seemed to agree that adolescents in the school are rebellious. They attribute the rebelliousness to adolescents' attempts to identify themselves because at this stage they still search for their identity (Donald *et al.*, 2007). The teachers reported that they introduced 'adopt-a-learner' to enable the learners to have someone to identify with, who will guide and model acceptable behaviour and emotions. Adopt-a-learner also enhances a balanced sense of identity with oneself and others. The REPSSI influenced counselling, and talks allow learners to open up, get support from different presenters which discuss various issues.

The REPSSI has been empirically proven to have a small, but effective, influence on the school's psychosocial support. Counselling and talks are still operational in the adopt-a-learner initiative. The REPSSI, like the SBST, insists on involving all role players in the child's life, with the aim of influence the child's behaviour and emotions positively (EWP6, 2005a; REPSSI, 2008). Unfortunately, the initiative has been abandoned at the school. The teachers cite reasons for failure which include lack of eagerness of the school management to embrace the initiative due to alleged time and money constraints.

### **4.2.3 Theme 3: barriers to support**

A barrier in this section can be anything that hampers the provision of psychosocial support to adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems. For instance, lack of communication and ability to listen, or lack of commitment in some of the role-players.

#### **4.2.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: School management**

The school management comprises the school leadership that has to guide and encourage the teachers to do their work efficiently. However, the following statements provide an indication that the management is a barrier to enabling teachers to provide support to adolescents. The statements are:

**“The deputy principal, he heads the SBST, haai! He invites you to join the meeting when he sees you... the principal, ha a tsebe ntho tse (he does not know these things) (P3, line 76).**

**“But the principal does not understand SBST” (P 4, line 92).**

**“The management must not treat SBST as a dumping site” (P5, line 116).**

**“The support from the management is not enough” (P2, line 184).**

#### 4.2.3.2 Sub-theme 3: Other role players

From the data, it appears that involvement by colleagues and other role players is another barrier to providing support to learners. The statements below show that participants agree that they (participants) do not get the necessary support from significant others in the child's life:

**“Some teachers in the SBST are not bringing out their best; they are not fully involved, not giving our all”** (P5, line 72).

**“Teachers do not go an extra mile; they work only 7 hours, just as unions influence them”** (P3, line 189).

**“Teachers take every problem to the inclusive teacher in SBST”** (P4, line 93).

**“Training the teachers in SBST is not adequate”** (P2, line 184).

**“All stakeholders, not just teachers in SBST, the church, members of the community...so what is the community doing? It just pushes the burden to school and teachers only cannot solve the behavioural and emotional problems alone”** (P5, line 118).

In our discussion, the participants suggested that the school management has an integral part in ensuring and enhancing effective provision of psychosocial support through the SBST. However, the management is not as supportive as it should be. As one teacher said: **“I feel confident at times and at times I don't because of lack of management support.”** **“The management treats the LO Department and SBST as a dumping site. Any useless teacher is allocated to the two”**, lamented another teacher. (P5, line 116).

The teachers appeared and sounded frustrated. **“We are overburdened as the teachers in the SBST and do not have adequate training to deal with low morals of teachers who even fall in love with girls”** (P2, Line 186). They, however, still felt obliged to assist. (P4, line 182).

Reflection: The empathy and responsibility in teachers can be felt, despite the negative influences they are facing. They still have hope that positive impact on the school management will go a long way to help teachers' efforts.

Teachers believe that they need to be given more time to focus on the behavioural and emotional problems of adolescent learners. The participants emphasise that, when more time is allocated to LO teachers (who are in the SBST), life skills lessons may lay the solid foundation which could help to alleviate the behavioural and emotional problems the learners manifest. One teacher (P1, 189) suggested the school can benefit from a resident social worker. Participant 1, further suggested that the DoE must recall retired or resigned teachers who are experienced experts in teaching to act as mentors to young inexperienced teachers.

The teacher discussions on how they use the services of other people and professionals in providing psychosocial support made it easy for the researcher to find out what the teachers know about systems theory. The researcher gave a short presentation clarifying that the essence of systems theory is to explain family interactions. The levels in the theory were explained, their interactions and possible results and influences. It became clear how the child's development, growth and learning are influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and various systemic interactions.

The ecosystemic approach was explained and how it relates to the principles of REPSSI and SBST. After discussions, the participants concluded that an ecosystemic approach appropriately identified adolescent behavioural and emotional problems, their possible causes and the provision of psychosocial support. Such an approach is also effective and necessary for all stakeholders in the child's life to understand the

adolescent learner holistically. In this way, the necessary psychosocial support by teachers and all stakeholders can be adequately provided.

### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the results of the study relating to the themes and sub-themes that emerged from an analysis of the data were presented. The study results were supported by providing verbatim quotations from participant teachers. The researcher aimed to integrate correlations between known literature and empirical research.

In Chapter 5, final conclusions based on the research findings are presented. The researcher's conclusions are based on the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The researcher also suggests possible recommendations for training and future research.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 1, the results of the study, subsequent to the thematic data analysis, were presented. The researcher then interpreted and discussed the themes and sub-themes in relation to the current literature as presented in Chapter 2.

In this chapter, final conclusions are presented. First, an overview of the previous chapters is presented. Then, the research questions formulated in Chapter 1 are addressed. Then, the potential contributions of the study, as well as the limitations faced, are reflected on. The researcher concludes with recommendations for further research, practice and training.

#### **5.2 OVERVIEW OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS**

Chapter 1 presented a broad outline of the study and discussed the rationale for the study. The purpose of the current study was described, namely to explore ecosystemic school-based psychosocial support to address behavioural and emotional problems in adolescent learners. The study forms part of the REPSSI pilot project in SADC countries for the implementation of psychosocial support in Economic Strengthening Programmes. The paradigmatic perspective, research methodology and data collection strategies were briefly introduced. The chapter concluded by briefly referring to the ethical guidelines and quality criteria the researcher strove to adhere to.

Chapter 2 started by discussing the adolescent development stage and how changes in the stage may influence behaviour and emotions negatively and manifest as problems. Various support approaches were then discussed. Links between behavioural and emotional support, the REPSSI and the ecosystemic approach were discussed. These inform the understanding of adolescent development needs, psychosocial support and

the role of the teacher in psychosocial support interventions. The conceptual framework of this study was presented by exploring current literature on the teacher's role in providing support to adolescent learners with behavioural and emotional problems.

Chapter 3 discussed constructivism as the selected epistemology and the qualitative approach as the methodological paradigm. The case study research design and the selection of participants were presented. Data-collecting and documentation strategies were described – namely focus group interviews, observation, field-notes, research diary and visual data. The thematic data analysis process was then explained, as was the interpretation employed. Ethical guidelines and the quality criteria which ensure the rigour of the study were explained.

Chapter 4 presented the results of the study that emerged from analysis of the data. The themes that emerged related to adolescent developmental needs, psychosocial support and barriers to support. The findings of this study in relation to the existing literature presented in Chapter 2 were discussed.

### **5.3 CONCLUSIONS**

In this section, conclusions are presented in accordance with the secondary questions that guided the study. This section is concluded by reflecting on the primary research questions formulated in Chapter 1.

#### **5.3.1 Secondary question 1**

How does the adolescent stage influence behavioural and emotional problems?

Data from the present research reveals how the adolescent stage may influence the onset of behavioural and emotional problems. UNESCO (2002) attributes behavioural and emotional problems to the imbalance in the development domains within the systems and environment in which the adolescent lives.



Physical development in adolescence can cause behavioural and emotional problems. Wolfe and Mash (2006) argue that early maturing girls may show unacceptable behaviour if they do not appreciate their bodies. The girls may show signs of depression, may abuse substances or develop eating disorders. As for the early maturing boys who are not happy with their physical appearance, they may be depressed, irritable and aggressive towards parents (Papalia *et al.*, 2008). Donald *et al.* (2007) agree that negative perceptions about their bodies may lead adolescents to engage in risky lifestyles, one of the behavioural problems in adolescence.

Learners are trying to search for their identity and in the process tend to rebel against teachers and adults alike, as they challenge the status quo. The search for identity is an endeavour by the adolescent to come to know who they are, which is often characterised by challenging the status quo. At this stage, the adolescent has a desire to be recognised and accepted by peers in a social group. If not accepted by peers the adolescent may resort to joining any group (Simons-Morton *et al.*, 2012). Stanley and Canham (2006) indicate that rejection influences adolescents to develop delinquent behaviour such as engaging in early sexual activities which often result in diseases and teenage pregnancies. This indication is verified by the data of the present study.

The adolescent stage requires feelings of warmth, nurturing, security and emotional stability so that a coherent sense of identity can be developed (Spelling, 2005). However, if for some reason there is emotional neglect, the adolescent may feel insecure. He may seek security outside of the home (Mynhardt *et al.*, 2010). The company he is likely to seek is similar to the ones named in the present study – violent gangs, like Born To Kill (BTK) and occult groups which practise Satanism.

Moral development entails choice of values, beliefs and how one wants to live (Donald *et al.*, 2007). At the adolescent stage, children question and compare the rules and regulations of parents and authorities. In the process, there may be conflict and rebelliousness towards parents (Sue *et al.*, 2010), an issue which was revealed in the data of the present study.

The discussion reveals that imbalance in developmental needs, especially physiological, moral, social and emotional domains, manifests later in life as behavioural and emotional problems identified by teachers in this study. The imbalances in the development domains in this study influenced behavioural and emotional problems such as aggression, stubbornness, lack of respect, sexual activities in exchange for money, teenage pregnancies, fights, bullying and Satanism. Teachers are of the opinion that structured families with Christian values as a solid foundation are crucial in assisting learners at school.

### **5.3.2 Secondary question 2**

What psychological support services are provided at the school?

Teachers work in accordance with the SBST guidelines. They meet twice a quarter, or more often if there are urgent matters to attend to. Meetings focus on identifying learner and teacher needs. Learner needs are identified through home visits and teacher observations at school. Emanating from the home visits, information dictates the type of support needed, based on first-hand information regarding home background and learner needs. According to the present research, teachers are reportedly facilitating food and blanket donations from an NGO, House of Hope. The school has also established a good relationship with a local school uniform outlet which donates school uniforms to needy adolescent learners.

Teachers provide moral support to learners in cases of traumatic experiences. For instance, teachers acted promptly regarding a case where a girl was raped. The girl was accompanied by a teacher to the police station to open a case, while other teachers organising donated clothes for the girl, upon realising that she was from a poor family.

The SBST managed to acquire an inclusive teacher for the school. The inclusive teacher's main responsibility is to support learners with behavioural and emotional

problems at the school. The teacher has the appropriate training and qualifications to deal with learner needs.

It is reported and evident in SBST minutes that teachers organise talks on specific topics so as to address particular unacceptable behaviour in learners at the school. Experts on the specific topics are invited to address the learners.

### **5.3.3 Secondary question 3**

What is the role of teachers in the SBST in providing psychosocial support based on the REPSSI project?

Participants stated that the role of teachers in the SBST includes giving support, pastoral care, learning support, psychosocial support, and mother care. The SBST is regarded as the backbone of the school.

The REPSSI makes a small, but important, contribution to how the school's teachers provide psychosocial support to adolescent learners with behavioural and emotional problems. The initiatives focus firstly on providing care and support to address the development needs of learners. The teachers in this research strive to support learner development needs through grants, thereby addressing physiological needs. The facilitation of applications for placement in foster homes and pastoral services by a resident youth worker addresses psychosocial and moral development needs of learners.

Secondly, the REPSSI aims at creating an environment that can improve learner resilience. This is achieved through imparting skills and knowledge to the learners. In this regard, life orientation is a subject that teaches life skills, and the organised talks for learners focus on issues like healthy relationships. The school garden that was started by teachers was one of the REPSSI influenced projects. Unfortunately, due to theft and lack of proper maintenance (as illustrated in Picture 3.2), it was not successful.

Thirdly, the REPSSI aims at improving emotional well-being in adolescent learners. The teachers in the school achieved this by implementing the adopt-a-learner project. The learners are able to express their traumatic experiences and feelings freely in a safe and conducive environment to a teacher who has adopted him. The project is reported to have improved learner self-esteem and confidence. The ripple effects of improved self-esteem are improved school performance and reduced behavioural and emotional problems in adolescents at the school.

#### **5.3.4 Secondary question 4**

Which elements of the ecosystemic approach are present in the school's psychosocial support?

The school's psychological support has several elements of an ecosystemic approach. The teachers regard knowing the learner's home background as important, so that one understands why the learner behaves in a certain way. Data indicates that teachers believe the emotional state of the learner will be fully understood if the learner is afforded a safe environment in which to confide in a trained teacher. The facts mentioned refer to an ecosystemic approach element, which states that the approach strives to understand the child holistically and in context.

Teachers in the study strive to engage all stakeholders and role-players in a child's education. Data indicates that teachers are not satisfied with parental and school management involvement – they wish for more active involvement. An ecosystemic approach, like the school's psychosocial support, emphasises active participation of all role-players in the educational context.

The ecosystemic approach advocates for strategies that provide support based on behavioural and emotional problems. The school has developed counselling sessions twice a week to address specific aspects based on SBST referrals. Teachers also strive to create an enabling environment in which learners can address behavioural and emotional problems, thereby enhancing resilience in the learners.

The suggestions and discussions clearly indicate that teachers believe that they can be more effective if the learner, the family, and the community are actively involved. This factor is in line with the essence of the ecosystemic approach.

### **5.3.5 The primary research question guiding the study**

This study was guided by the following primary research question: How do teachers provide psychosocial support to adolescent learners with behavioural and emotional problems?

According to the current study, teachers in the SBST implement psychosocial support services. The SBST proved to be a vehicle for identifying behavioural problems in adolescent learners, possible causes and interventions to address the problems. The teacher's role in providing support is as strong as that of the SBST.

The researcher concludes that teachers are able to offer psychosocial support by following the ecosystemic approach. In order to answer the primary question, the conceptual framework in chapter 2 was revisited, in the light of the findings obtained by the study.

Teachers in the SBST involved other role-players and professionals, such as guardians, learners and community members. In this way, the teachers established effective relationships with the learners, the South African Social Services Agency (SASSA), the South African Police Services (SAPS), churches and (Non- governmental organisation) NGO'S. This is in accordance with the stipulations of EWP6 (2005abc), and in line with the ecosystemic approach.

It is clear that participants understood learners in a holistic manner. Teachers showed that they understood how the interaction of internal factors, for instance, temperament and external factors such as socio-economic factors, can manifest as behavioural and emotional problems later in life. They also understood the importance of a team effort in

effectively assisting the adolescent learner with behavioural and emotional problems. Teachers are thus of the opinion that using the ecosystemic approach to provide psychosocial support can be effective, provided all who are in the child's educational life are involved.

#### **5.4 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study adds to an existing body of knowledge on the potential role of teachers in providing psychosocial support to learners with behavioural and emotional problems, according to the ecosystemic approach.

The findings indicated a success in providing support, despite the reality of certain challenges. The challenges included scarcity of resources and lack of training and management support for teachers. The initiatives by teachers regarding support inform the entire school community of the potential impact of using an ecosystemic approach in the school. The ecosystemic approach, unlike conventional psychosocial support techniques, yields valuable information about the child, family history and the relationship with the child. The approach takes into cognisance the impact of the context- past and present. In this way, the adolescent's behavioural and emotional problems are understood not only as the child's responsibility alone, but of all people in the child's educational life. The study also emphasises, and concurs with, teachers' views that involving all role players can enhance support to adolescent learners.

#### **5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Use of a focus group, in which the number of participants is small, does not enable the results of the study to be generalised. Modern technology failed the researcher, despite the fact that days were spent rehearsing before the interviews were conducted. Therefore, some data was not captured. When recordings could finally be made, the audio quality was poor, which may have affected the researcher's ability to capture what the participants were saying with accuracy. However, attempts were made to 'fill in the gaps' during the member checking session.

## **5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.6.1 Recommendation for practice**

According to the literature, the number of adolescents with behavioural and emotional problems is increasing tremendously. There is therefore a need to use an alternative approach. The findings of this study indicate that teachers involve many stakeholders in providing psychosocial support. In essence, teachers are using an ecosystemic approach. It can therefore be recommended that using an ecosystemic approach has the potential to enhance psychosocial support.

### **5.6.2 Recommendation for training**

This study reveals that the teachers are able to provide psychosocial support basing their efforts on ecosystemic support. In order to ensure that teachers understand the ecosystemic approach, the department could implement training for student teachers, as well as qualified teachers. In addition, the training could be more beneficial if it included parents/guardians and other stakeholders.

### **5.6.3 Recommendation for future research**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations for future research are made:

- a further study to establish the effectiveness of the ecosystemic approach in providing support to learners with behavioural and emotional problems;
- a study to establish the feasibility of training all role-players in the ecosystemic approach in providing psychosocial support;
- a study investigating the potential support of school management to positively influence the teacher's role in providing psychosocial support;

- an investigation of the potential of the REPSSI project to implement its basic psychosocial support focus, since this project is in line with an ecosystemic approach;
- an investigation of the implementation of skills training in the curriculum and counselling techniques, such as memory books, to address learner problems.

## **5.7 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS**

The aim of this study was to explore and describe the psychosocial support provided by teachers at a local secondary school, by using the ecosystemic approach. The researcher investigated the influence and impact of the support initiatives of the REPSSI which was introduced in the school in 2008. The REPSSI is based on the same principles as the ecosystemic approach, as well as the principles of the SBST. The three approaches focus on a holistic approach to satisfy the development needs of children. In this way, it is ensured that development and growth is balanced to avoid the imbalance that may manifest as behavioural and emotional problems.

Teachers managed to establish relations with local shops, NGO's, churches and different government departments. These findings show that teachers focused their psychosocial support on the involvement of different role-players or, in other words, the different systems in which the child finds himself. This support by teachers is essentially making use of the ecosystemic approach (which is a team effort on different but interdependent and interacting systems) to address learner barriers. Based on the findings, the researcher therefore proposes that the ecosystemic approach be used to intensify the already implemented psychosocial support in secondary schools through SBSTs and the REPSSI, thereby assisting learners with behavioural and emotional problems.

The research revealed that teachers need in-depth training and information on how to use the ecosystemic approach more effectively, so as to enhance school-based psychosocial support and, in turn, improve assistance to learners.



## REFERENCES

ASHDOWN, D.A. 2006. Dancing with change: Evaluating an ecosystemic substance abuse intervention program for youth. Unisa: Unpublished research

BABBIE, E. 2005. The basics of social research. 3<sup>rd</sup>ed. Cape Town: Oxford.

BABBIE, E. 2007. The practice of social research. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Australia: Thomson Learning Inc.

BABBIE, E. R. 2010. The practice of social sciences.12<sup>th</sup> ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth.

BARON, R.A., BRANSCOMBE, N. R. and BYRNE, D. 2009. Social Psychology. 12<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Pearson.

BELL, J. 2010. Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education, health and social sciences. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. England: Mcgraw-Hill.

BEYERS, C. and HAY, J. 2007. Can inclusive education in Southern Africa survive the HIV and AIDS pandemic? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. 11 (4): 387-399.

BLESS C., HIGSON-SMITH, C. and KAGEE, A. 2007. Fundamentals of social research methods - An African perspective. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Cape Town: Juta and Co.

BRAUN, V. and CLARKE, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology - *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

BRONFENBRENNER, U. 1979. The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

BRYMAN, A. and BELL, E. 2007. Business research methods. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

BUZAN, T., 2006. Speed reading. England: Educational publishers.

CHENEY, D., FLOWER, A. and TEMPLETON, T. 2008. Applying response to interaction metrics in the social domain for students at risk of developing emotional and behavioural disorders. *The journal of special education*, 42, (2): 108.

COHEN, L., MANION, L. and MORRISON, K. 2007. Research methods in education. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Routledge Falmer.

CRESSWELL, J. W. 2005. Educational research. Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Pearson Education International.

CRESSWELL, J.W. 2007. Qualitative inquiry and research design. London: Sage Publications.

CRESSWELL, J.W. 2009. Research design. Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Los Angeles: Sage.

DE VOS, A.S 2005. Qualitative data analysis and interpretation. In De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B and Delpont, C,S.L. (Eds). *Research at grass roots*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Pretoria:Van Schaik Publishers.

DE VOS, A.S., STRYDOM, H., FOUCHÉ, C.B. and DELPORT, C.S.L. 2006. Research at grassroots: for the social sciences and human science professions. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

DE WITT, M.M. 2007. African orphan crisis- is it the teacher's concern? *Journal of child and adolescent mental health*. 19 (1): 75-82.

DENZIN, M.K. and LINCOLN, Y.S. 2005. The Sage handbook of qualitative research. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. California: Sage.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 1997. Quality Education for all: report of the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCSNET/NCESS).

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 2000. Government Gazette, vol 415, no 20844, 4 February 2000.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 2001. White Paper 6 on Special needs education: Building on Inclusive Education. Pretoria: Government printers.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 2005a. Education White Paper 6: Draft National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support. Pretoria: Government printers.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 2005b. Education White Paper 6: Guidelines of inclusive programmes. Pretoria: Government printers.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 2005c. Education White Paper 6: Conceptual and operational guidelines for district-based support teams.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 2005d. Education White Paper 6: Conceptual and operational guidelines for special schools as resource centres. Pretoria: Government Printers.

DLOMO, K. 2007. Destiny. Johannesburg: Ndalo Media.

DODGE, P.R. 2011. Managing school behaviour: a qualitative case study. Iowa:Iowa State University.

DONAHUE, J. 2005. Strengthening households and communities. In: Forrester, G., Levine, C., Williamson, J. (Eds). *A generation at risk. The global impact of HIV/Aids on orphans and vulnerable children*. New York: Cambridge.

DONALD, D., LAZARUS, S. and LOLWANA, P. 2007. Educational psychology in social context 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

EBERSOHN, L. and ELOFF, I. 2006. Identifying asset-based trends: programmes which support vulnerable children, *South African Journal of education*, 26 (3):457-473.

EISSA, M. 2010. Behavioural and emotional problems with dyslexia in adolescence. *Current psychiatry. African Journal of paediatric Surgery*, 17 (1): 39-47.

ENGELBRECHT, P. 2006. The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa after ten years of democracy. *European Journal of Psychology*, XX1 (3); 253-264).

FAMSA, 2012, 36<sup>th</sup> Annual report. Bloemfontein: Oranje Drukkers..

FINKENAUER, C., ENGEL, R.C. and BAUMEISTER, B.F. 2005. Parenting behaviour and adolescent behavioural and emotional problems: The role of self-control. *International Journal of behaviour development*, 29 (1): 58-69.

FORRESTER, M.A. 2010. Doing qualitative research: a practice Guide. USA: Sage.

FOUCHÉ, C. B. 2005. Qualitative research designs. In: De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H,

FOUCHÉ, C. B. and DELPORT, C.S.L. (Eds). *Research at grassroots*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

FRIEND, M. 2008. *Special Education. Contemporary perspectives for school professionals*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston; Pearson.

GENTRY, J. H. and CAMPBELL, M. 2002. Developing adolescents: A reference for professionals. Washington: American Psychological Association.

GIBBS, R. 2005. Qualitative data analysis- explorations with Nvivo. New York: Graham Gibbs.

GIBSON, S. and BLADFORD, S. 2005. Managing special educational needs- A practical guide for primary and secondary schools. London: Paul Chapman.

GOVERNMENT GAZZETTE. 1998. South Afrinan Schools Act 84 of 1996.Number 17597. Pretoria: Government Printers.

GREENBERG, J. S., SELTER, M.M., BAKER, J.K., SMITH, L.E., WARREN, S.F., BRADY, H. and HONG, J, 2012. Family, environment and behaviour problems in children adolescents, and adults with fragile X syndrome. *American journal on intellectual and developmental disabilities*, 117 (4): 331-346.

GRIEVE, K., VAN DEVENTER, V. and MOJAPELO-BATKA, M. 2009. A student's A-Z of psychology. Lansdowne:Juta.

HALLAHAN, D. and KAUFFMAN J, M. 2007. Exceptional learners- an introduction to special education. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Pearson.

HAY, J. and BEYERS, C. 2011. Analysis of the South Africa's model of inclusive education with regard to social justice. *African Education Review*, 8 (2): 234-246.

HOADLEY, U. 2007. The boundaries of care: Education policy interventions for vulnerable children. In: Maile, (Ed.). Education and poverty reduction strategies: Issues of policy coherence. Pretoria: HSRC Press.

Human Science Research Council (HSRC). 2004. Refresher course on social work.

HUNI, N.M. 2010. REPSSI: Annual Report 2010. Johannesburg: REPSSI Org.

IPHOFEN, R. 2011. Ethical decision-making in qualitative research- a practical guide, 11 (4): 443-446.

KAMPHAUS, R.W., THORPE, J.S., WINSOR, A.P., KRONCKE, A.P and DOWDY, E.T. 2007. Development and predictive validity of a teacher screener for child behavioural and emotional problems at school. Journal of psycho-educational assessment, 67 (2): 352-356.

KANTOOMA, M.T.2010. Physical activity, emotional and behavioural problems, maternal education and self-reported educational performance of adolescents, 25 (2): 368-379.25(2).

KAPP, J.A. 2003. Children with problems, an orthopedagogical perspective. Pretoria: Van Schaik

KARTEIN, T.J. 2008. Inclusion strategies that work. California: Corwin press.

KIBEL, M., LAKE, L., PENDLEBURY, S. and SMITH, C. (Eds). 2010. South African child gauge 2009/2010. Cape Town: Children's Institute.

LANDSBERG, E. 2008. Addressing barriers to learning: A South African perspective. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

LEE C. G. 2012. Reconsidering constructivism in qualitative research. Educational Philosophy and theory, 44 (4): 403-412.

LEEDY, P.D and ORMROD, J. E. 2005. Practical Research. New Jersey: Pearson.

LOREMAN, T., DEPPELER, J.and HARVEY, D. 2005. Inclusive Education- a practical guide to supporting diversity in the classroom. New York: Pen University Press.

MAREE, K. and VAN DER WESTHUIZEN, C. 2007. Planning a research proposal. In K Maree (Ed). *First steps in research (24-46)*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

McNIFF, J. and WHITEHEAD, J. 2005. Action Research- Principles and practice. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Routledge.

MCPHEE, A. and CRAIG, F. 2009. Disruptive behaviour within the classroom: an ecosystemic view of pupil behaviour. Scotland: University of Glasgow.

MERTENS, D.D. 2010. Research evaluation in education and psychology. Intergrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method. 3rd ed. Carlfonta:Sage.

MEYER, W.F., MOORE, C. and VILJOEN, H.G. 2008. Personology from individual to ecosystem. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Cape Town: Heinemann Publishers.

MOLAPO, D and VAN DER MERWE, M. 2003. I can counsel: practical guide for teachers, parents, caregivers and young people. Johannesburg: I can foundation.

MOUTON, J. 2008. How to succeed in your master's and doctoral studies. A South African guide and research book. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

MUROVE, T. 2010. Psychosocial support tools and program model on community care and support for children affected by HIV and Aids. Johannesburg: REPSSI.

MYNHARDT, J.C., BARON, R.A., BRANCOMBE, D. and BYRNE, D. 2010. South African Supplement to Social Psychology. Cape Town: Pearson.

NEUMAN, W.L. 2006. Research methods- qualitative and quantitative approaches. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Pearson.

NIEWENHUIS, J. 2007. Introducing qualitative research. In K. Maree (Ed). First steps in research (pp 47-69). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

PAPALIA, D. E., OLDS, S. W. and FELDMAN, R.D. 2008. A child's world – Infancy through adolescence. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

POLLOCK, R.M and WHITELAW, C. S. 2005. Community-based monitoring in support of local sustainability. *Local Environment*, 10 (10): 211-228.

PRICE, K. M. and NELSON, K L. 2007. Planning effective instruction- adversity methods and management. Washington: Thompson.

REPSSI. 2010. Mainstreaming Psychosocial Care and Support with Paediatric HIV and AIDs Treatment. REPSSI: Johannesburg.

RICHTER, L. 2006. Strengthening systems to support children's healthy development in communities affected by HIV/Aids: A review. Switzerland: WHO.

ROBERTS, B. 2007. Getting the most out of the research experience- what every researcher needs to know. California: Sage.

ROBINSON, E., POWER. L. and ALLAN. D. 2011. What works with adolescents? Family connections and involvement in the interventions for adolescent problem behaviours. *Family matters. Alfs Journal*, 88: 57-64.

ROGERS, A. 2010. The need for practical workshops, 42 (1): 127-131.

ROGERS, B. 2004. How to manage children's challenging behaviour. London: Paul Chapman.

ROULSTON, K. 2010. Considering qualitative and quantitative interviewing, 10 (2): 199-228. *doi: 10.1177/14268794109356739*.



SAVASCI, F. and BERLIN, D. F. 2012. Science teacher beliefs and classroom practice related to constructivism in different school settings. *Journal for Science Teacher Education*, 23 (1): 65-86.

SCHMIED, V. and TULLY, L. 2009. Effective strategies and interventions for adolescents in NWS. New South Wales:

SHENK, K.D. 2009. Community interventions providing care and support to orphans and vulnerable children: A review of evaluation, evidence, *Aids care*, 21 (7): 918-942. *doi*. 10. 1080/09540120802537831.

SHIRTCLIFF, E.A., DAHL, R. E. and POLLAK, S.D. 2009. Pubertal development: correspondences between hormonal and physical development. *The Journal of early adolescence*, 80 (2): 327-337.

SHUNK, D. H., PINTRICH, P. R. and MEECE, J. L. 2008. *Motivation in education, theory, research and applications*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New Jersey: Pearson.

SIMONS-MORTON, B.G., CRUMP, A.D., HAYNIE, D.L. and SAYLOR, K.E. 2012. Student, school bonding and adolescent problem behaviour, 14 (1999): 99-107.

SMITH, T.E.C., POLLOWAY, E.A., PATTON, J.R. and DOWDY, C.A. 2008. *Teaching students with special needs in inclusive settings*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Pearson.

SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL ACT- Alternatives to corporal punishment document. 2000.

SPELLING, M. 2005. *Helping your child through early adolescence*. Washington: Education Publication.

STAKE, R.E. 2010. *Qualitative research in practice: Studying how things work*. New York: Gulliford Press.

STANLEY, M.J. and CANHAM, D.L. 2006. Assessing prevalence of emotional and behaviour problems in suspended middle school students. *Journal of school of nursing*, 22 (1): 40.

STERNBERG, R.J. 2009. *Cognitive Psychology*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Canada:Wadsworth.

SUE, D., SUE, D.W. and SUE, S. 2010. *Understanding abnormal behaviour*. 9th ed. Australia:Wadsworth.

SULDO, M. 2009. Teacher support and adolescent's subjective well-being. An investigation. *School of psychology review*, 38 (1): 67-85.

SULLIVAN, C.J. 2006. Early adolescent delinquency: assessing the role of childhood problems, family, environment and peer pressure. *Youth violence and juvenile justice*. Sage Journals, 4 (4): 291-313.

SUTHERLAND, K.S., LEWIS-PALMER, T., STICHER, J. and MORGAN, P.L. 2008. Examining the influence of teacher behaviour and classroom context on the behavioural or behavioural disorders. *Journal of special education*, 41 (1): 223-233.

TERRE BLANCHE, M and KELLY K. 2002. Interpretive methods. In: Terre Blanche, M and Durrheim, K. 2002. *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

TERRE BLANCHE, M. and DURRHEIM, K. 2002. *Research in practice. Applied methods for the social sciences*. Cape Town: UCT Press.

THUEN, E. and BRU, E. A. 2009. Are changes in student's perceptions of the learning environment related to changes in emotional and behavioural problems. *School Psychology International*, 30 (2): 115.

UNESCO, 1994. Salamanca Statement and framework on special needs education. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO, 2000. Human Resource Development in Support of Inclusive Education. Sub- regional workshop. Central and Eastern Europe, Report.

UNICEF, 2005. Progress for children, a report card on gender and primary education, number 2. In UN Secretariat. Department of economic and social affairs.

VAN DER WESTHUIZEN, B. 2007. An ecosystemic approach to addressing attentional difficulties in heightened motor activity. Unisa: Unpublished Thesis.

VAN WYK, N. and LEMMER, E. 2007. Redefining home, school, community partnership in South Africa in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. *South African Journal of education*, 27(2): 300-318.

VAUGHAN, S., BOS, C. S. and SCHUMM, J. S. 2007. Teaching students who are exceptional, diverse and at risk- in general education. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Pearson.

WAN, Y.Y.T. 2012. Cognitive and emotional determinants of delinquent behaviour- *Discovery- student e-Journal*, 1: 42-59.

WEISBERG, R. P. and O'BRIEN, M. 2009. What works in school-based social and emotional learning programmes for positive youth development. *The Annals of the American Academy of political science*, 591(1): 86.

WIIUM, N. and WOLD, B. 2009. An ecosystemic system approach to adolescent smoking behaviour. *J Youth adolescence*, 38: 1351-1363.

WINDLE, M. and MASON, A. 2004. General and specific predictors of behavioural and emotional problems among adolescents. *Journal of emotional and behavioural disorders*, 12 (1): 49-61.

WHO, 2001. International classification of functioning disabilities and health (ICF). Geneva.

WOLFE, D.A. and MASH, E.J. 2006. Behavioural and emotional disorders in adolescents. Nature, Assessments and Treatment. New York: Guilford Press.

Yin, R. K. 2009. Case study research: design and methods. 4<sup>th</sup> ed Carlifonia: Sage.

## APPENDIX A

### Ethical Clearance



## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

### APPLICATION FOR ETHICS REVIEW AND CLEARANCE

#### PLEASE STUDY THE FOLLOWING BEFORE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

- **Study** the UNISA Research ethics policy before completing this application. See [http://cm.unisa.ac.za/contents/departments/res\\_policies/docs/ResearchEthicsPolicy\\_apprvCounc\\_21Sept07.pdf](http://cm.unisa.ac.za/contents/departments/res_policies/docs/ResearchEthicsPolicy_apprvCounc_21Sept07.pdf)
- **This template [© 2012] is the official CEDU application form that must be used to apply for ethical clearance.** Applications made on previous versions of the template cannot be accepted and will be returned.
- Complete **all** sections of the form **in full**. **Refer to the policy if you are uncertain of what is required** and avoid 'not applicable' unless the item indeed does not apply to your study.
- All relevant documents (letters requesting permission to conduct the study, consent forms AND the research instruments like interview schedules, questionnaires, observations protocols) must be appended. **Ensure that these documents have been language edited.**
- It is suggested that students apply for ethical clearance after the literature review has been completed and the research design is being finalised. It is at this stage that the student will be considering the procedure to negotiate consent to conduct the research and will be designing the research instruments to be used in the research. Primarily these are the documents which must be reviewed and cleared by the Research Ethics Committee (REC).
- A **checklist** of what should be included in an **informed consent letter** and a **child assent form** is appended to this application form. Please use the checklists to ensure that you have covered all the important aspects.
- **Sign and date** the ethical compliance agreement, section D21. Submit a scanned copy of this page if you do not have an electronic signature.
- Submit the completed application to your **supervisor** who will submit the application to the CEDURECacting Chairperson: Prof Cheryl S Le Roux [lrouxcs@unisa.ac.za](mailto:lrouxcs@unisa.ac.za). Applications **will not be accepted from students**. It is the **supervisor's responsibility** to ensure that the application is complete and meets the requirements. Incomplete applications will be **returned without comment**.
- **Supervisors should submit a memo/letter to the chairperson of the REC** when submitting the student's application indicating that the application meets all the requirements and **that they support the student's application**.

- Applications must be submitted **electronically** to the chairperson **before or on the last WEDNESDAY of the month** for tabling at the following month's meeting. **No late submissions can be accepted.** Late submissions will stand over till the next REC review meeting.
- The REC will evaluate the methodological, technical and ethical soundness of the application.
- The **ethical clearance certificate must be included in the final copy of the dissertation or thesis which is submitted for examination.**
- **Academics** requesting ethical clearance for research follow the same procedures as above, but submit their applications directly to the REC chairperson. Certain sections of the template will not apply. Please use your discretion or contact the chairperson or one of the committee members for advice if required.

## A RESEARCHER'S DETAILS

### A1 FULL NAME

MMAMORE REBECCA BABEDI
------------------------

### A2 STUDENT NUMBER

(ATTACH THE LETTER OF REGISTRATION CONFIRMATION FROM UNISA)

05801230
----------

### A3 ADDRESS

<p style="text-align: center;">P O BOX 3339 WELKOM 9460</p>
---

### A4 CONTACT DETAILS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TELEPHONE</li> <li>• CELL PHONE</li> <li>• EMAIL ADDRESS</li> </ul>	<p>057 3971672 0824604378 rebeccababedi@yahoo.com</p>
--	---

### A5 ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACADEMIC</li> <li>• PROFESSIONAL</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">B COM, B ED HED- POST GRADUATE</p>
--	--

**B DETAILS OF PROPOSED RESEARCH**

**B1 TITLE OF DISSERTATION/THESIS**

**PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY TEACHERS TO GRADE 12 LEARNERS WITH BEHAVIOURAL AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS**

**B2 PROGRAMME DETAILS**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DEGREE</li><li>• AREA OF SPECIALISATION</li><li>• PROGRAMME CODE</li><li>• DIS98ID</li></ul>	<b>M ED INCLUSIVE EDUCATION</b>
--	-------------------------------------

**B3 NAME OF SUPERVISOR OR PROMOTOR AND CONTACT DETAILS**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TITLE, INITIALS, SURNAME</li><li>• DEPARTMENT</li><li>• TELEPHONE</li><li>• EMAIL</li></ul>	<b>DR HERMIEN OLIVIER EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY 0827275622 Olivih@unisa.ac.za</b>
---	--

**B4 NAME OF CO-SUPERVISOR (IF APPLICABLE)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TITLE, INITIALS, SURNAME</li><li>• DEPARTMENT</li><li>• TELEPHONE</li><li>• EMAIL</li></ul>	<b>N/A</b>
---	------------

**B5 ORGANISATIONS OR INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY (IF APPLICABLE)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NAME</li><li>• ADDRESS</li><li>• CONTACT DETAILS</li></ul>	<b>N/A</b>
--	------------

**B6 SPONSORS OR FUNDERS (IF APPLICABLE)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NAME</li><li>• ADDRESS</li><li>• CONTACT DETAILS</li></ul>	<b>N/A</b>
--	------------

**B7 OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION SUCH AS CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

**NONE**

## CPROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

### C1 LIST OF KEY TERMS, ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Behavioural and emotional problems, adolescent, developmental stages, ecosystemic approach, grade 12 learner, school-based support team, psychosocial support

### C2 PROPOSAL ABSTRACT

The proposal which is submitted for ethics review must be the same as that submitted for scientific or technical review (eg to the supervisor or promotor of the study) and should cover ALL the following aspects:

- a. *Introduction, background and purpose(include at least 3 references to recent literature)*
- b. *Problem statement and anticipated outcomes*
- c. *Population; sample & sampling technique; inclusion or exclusion criteria (if applicable); withdrawal or discontinuation criteria (if applicable)*
- d. *Research design, activity timeline, research instrument (self/adapted/existing); data collection processes; data analysis method; ethical concerns with reference to respondents, institution as person, researcher, specific to study field. Procedures followed to protect participants from physical and or emotional harm (if applicable)*

a] Background

b] Problem statement and outcomes

c] Population and sampling procedures

d] Research design and method

## D PROPOSAL RELATED INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS

(ATTACH RELEVANT DOCUMENTS TO THE PROPOSAL. INDICATE THE RELEVANT APPENDIX IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW THE QUESTION)

### D1 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION (IF APPLICABLE ATTACH AS AN APPENDIX)

Appendix L

### D2 WHAT IS THE AGE RANGE OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THIS STUDY?

33-52 years

### D3 HOW SHOULD THIS STUDY BE CHARACTERISED? (Please tick all appropriate boxes.)

Personal and social information collected directly from participants	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Participants to undergo psychometric testing*	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Identifiable information to be collected about people from available records (e.g. medical records, staff records, student records, etc.)	Yes✓	No
---	------	----

**\*Please add details on copyright issues related to standardised psychometric tests and registration at the HPSCA of test administrator if test administration is in South Africa or of an equivalent board if administration is outside South Africa.**

**D4 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS OF OBTAINING INFORMED CONSENT**

I made an appointment with the school principal to brief him, the management and SBST members. I briefed them on the purpose of research, conditions and assured them of confidentiality and anonymity. After responding to their questions, I requested them to sign an informed consent form.

**IF THE PROPOSED PARTICIPANTS ARE 18 YEARS AND OLDER, IS THE INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS ATTACHED?**

Yes	No	Not applicable✓
-----	----	-----------------

**IF THE PROPOSED PARTICIPANTS ARE YOUNGER THAN 18 YEARS, ARE CONSENT AND ASSENT FORMS ATTACHED?** (In order for minors (individuals younger than 18 years of age) to participate in a research study, parental or guardian permission must be obtained. For minors themselves, a youth assent form is required.)

Yes	No	Not applicable✓
-----	----	-----------------

**D5 INFORMED CONSENT FORM IN ENGLISH AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE ENVISAGED PARTICIPANTS (ATTACH AS AN APPENDIX IF APPLICABLE)**

Appendix B ,English

**D6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS SUCH AS QUESTIONNAIRES, INTERVIEW GUIDES AND SIMILAR DOCUMENTS (ATTACH AS AN APPENDIX IF APPLICABLE)**

Interview guide, Appendix E

**D7 MEMO TO INSTITUTION REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY (ATTACH AS AN APPENDIX IF APPLICABLE)**

Appendix B

**D8 LETTERS OF PERMISSION FROM RELEVANT BODIES (ATTACH AS AN APPENDIX IF APPLICABLE)**

Appendix B

**D9 DESCRIPTION OF THE RISKS OF THE PROCEDURES WHICH PARTICIPANTS MAY OR WILL SUFFER AS WELL AS THE LEVEL OF RISK**

(Please refer to part 2 of the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics (ix) Risk minimisation and section 3.6 bulleted point 'Right to get help'. Please indicate any participant discomfort, pain/physical or

psychological problems/side-effects, persecution, stigmatisation or negative labelling that could arise during the course or as an outcome of the research undertaken.)

Participants are assured that I have made efforts to identify any possible physical and emotional injury, none are foreseen. In case there is harm, the debriefing will address the issue.

**D10 DESCRIPTION OF STEPS TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN CASE OF ADVERSE EVENT OR WHEN INJURY OR HARM IS EXPERIENCED BY THE PARTICIPANTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY**

(Please study the research ethics policy document in this regard.)

In this research, harm or injury are not foreseeable.

**D11 DESCRIPTION OF HOW PARTICIPANTS WILL BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS OR RESULTS AND CONSULTED ON POTENTIAL OR ACTUAL BENEFITS OF SUCH FINDINGS OR RESULTS TO THEM OR OTHERS**

The copy of research will be donated to the school and the Free State Education Department

**D12 DESCRIPTION AND/OR AMOUNTS OF COMPENSATION INCLUDING REIMBURSEMENTS, GIFTS OR SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO PARTICIPANTS (IF APPLICABLE) (Will participants receive any incentives to encourage them to participate in the study?)**

No compensation is promised.

**D13 DESCRIPTION FOR ARRANGEMENT FOR INDEMNITY (IF APPLICABLE)**

None

**D14 DESCRIPTION OF ANY FINANCIAL COSTS TO PARTICIPANTS (IF APPLICABLE)**

None

**D15 DESCRIPTION OF PROVISION OF INSURANCE TO PARTICIPANTS (IF APPLICABLE)**

None

**D16 DISCLOSURE OF PREVIOUS ETHICS REVIEW ACTION BY OTHER ETHICS REVIEW BODIES (IF APPLICABLE)**

None

**D17 DESCRIPTION OF REPORTING TO ETHICS RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

Prepared and sent letters of request to Letsete Secondary and Free State Education Department. Submitted the ethics form from the University and the required appendices.

**D18 PROJECT AGREEMENT EG MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (IF APPLICABLE ATTACH AS AN APPENDIX)**

None

**D19 CVs OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS**

(Required only if the researcher is not a UNISA staff member or is a UNISA staff member but not a masters' or doctoral student registered with UNISA.)

N/A

**D20 LETTERS OF PERMISSION FROM RELEVANT BODIES**

(If the research involves collaborative, multi-institutional or multi-country research this must be explained in detail. In this regard consult paragraph 6 of the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.)

N/A

**D21 STATEMENT AGREEING TO COMPLY WITH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES SET OUT IN UNISA POLICY ON RESEARCH ETHICS**

I, ....., declare that I have read the Policy for Research Ethics of UNISA and the contents of this document are a true and accurate reflection of the methodological and ethical implications of my proposed study. I undertake to work in close collaboration with my promoter (s)/ supervisor (s) and shall notify them in writing immediately if any changes to the study are proposed. I further undertake to inform the Higher Degrees Committee of the College of Education of any adverse events that occur arising from the injury or harm experienced by the participants in the study. I shall conduct the study according to the approved proposal and in strict compliance with the ethics policy of UNISA. I shall also maintain the confidentiality of all data collected from or about the research participants, and impose strict controls in the maintenance of privacy. I shall record all data captured during interviews in accordance with ethical guidelines outlined in my proposal. Paragraph 5 of the Policy for Research Ethics places huge emphasis on the integrity of the research and I shall ensure that I conduct the research with the highest integrity taking into account UNISA's Policy for Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism.

..... (Signature)  
.....(Date)

**E ETHICS COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

**E1 IS THE APPLICATION OF AN ACCEPTABLE STANDARD**

YES  NO, IT SHOULD BE REFERRED BACK TO THE CANDIDATE

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**E2 ARE ALL REASONABLE GUARANTEES AND SAFEGUARDS FOR THE ETHICS OF THIS STUDY COVERED?**

YES  NO, IT SHOULD BE REFERRED BACK TO THE RESEARCHER

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We have reviewed this application and are satisfied that it meets the methodological, technical and ethical standards as set in the College of Education and that it is in compliance with the UNISA policy on research ethics.

Name	
Signed	
Date	

### Informed consent prompt sheet

Please ensure that the following aspects are included in the informed consent form:

<b>Include information about the following in a reader friendly style</b>	<b>✓</b>
Who is the researcher and purpose and procedures of research; duration of study	✓
Risks or discomforts to participants	✓
Guarantee of anonymity/confidentiality	✓
Voluntary participation and termination without penalty	✓
Selection of participants and numbers involved	✓
What does participation involve?	✓
Benefits/compensation	✓
Summary of findings/debriefing	✓
Institution that guides/gave ethical approval	✓
Contact details of researcher	✓

### Child assent prompt sheet

Please ensure that the following aspects are included in the child assent form:

<b>Include information about the following on a level that the child will understand</b>	<b>✓</b>
A statement of the purpose of the research or study	N/A
A description of the procedure to be applied to the minor	N/A
A statement that the minor's identity will not be revealed	N/A
A description of the potential risks or discomforts associated with the research	N/A
A description of any direct benefits to the minor	N/A
A description that the minor is not compelled to participate	N/A
A statement that the minor is free to withdraw at any time	N/A
A statement that the minor should discuss participation with the parents prior to signing the form	N/A
A statement that the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the minor will be asked for permission on behalf of the minor	N/A
A statement that the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the minor will receive a copy of the signed form	N/A
Invitation to ask questions	N/A
Contact details of researcher	N/A
<b>Note that only the minor and the researcher obtaining assent should sign the child assent form. A copy of the child assent form should be given to the parent or legal guardian.</b>	

(continued, signed pages)

**D13 DESCRIPTION FOR ARRANGEMENT FOR INDEMNITY (IF APPLICABLE)**

None

**D14 DESCRIPTION OF ANY FINANCIAL COSTS TO PARTICIPANTS (IF APPLICABLE)**

None

**D15 DESCRIPTION OF PROVISION OF INSURANCE TO PARTICIPANTS (IF APPLICABLE)**

None

**D16 DISCLOSURE OF PREVIOUS ETHICS REVIEW ACTION BY OTHER ETHICS REVIEW BODIES (IF APPLICABLE)**

None

**D17 DESCRIPTION OF REPORTING TO ETHICS RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**D18 PROJECT AGREEMENT EG MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (IF APPLICABLE ATTACH AS AN APPENDIX)**

None

**D19 CVs OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS**  
(Required only if the researcher is not a UNISA staff member or is a UNISA staff member but not a masters' or doctoral student registered with UNISA.)

N/A

**D20 LETTERS OF PERMISSION FROM RELEVANT BODIES**  
(If the research involves collaborative, multi-institutional or multi-country research this must be explained in detail. In this regard consult paragraph 6 of the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.)

**D21 STATEMENT AGREEING TO COMPLY WITH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES SET OUT IN UNISA POLICY ON RESEARCH ETHICS**

I, Mmanake R. DABEN, declare that I have read the Policy for Research Ethics of UNISA and the contents of this document are a true and accurate reflection of the methodological and ethical implications of my proposed study. I undertake to work in close collaboration with my promoter (s)/ supervisor (s) and shall notify them in writing immediately if any changes to the study are proposed. I further undertake to inform the Higher Degrees Committee of the College of Education of any adverse events that occur arising from the injury or harm experienced by the participants in the study. I shall conduct the study according to the approved proposal and in strict compliance with the ethics policy of UNISA. I shall also maintain the confidentiality of all data collected from or about the research participants, and impose strict controls in the maintenance of privacy. I shall record all data captured during interviews in accordance with ethical guidelines

© 2012 COLLEGE OF EDUCATION UNISA  
All rights reserved

outlined in my proposal. Paragraph 5 of the Policy for Research Ethics places huge emphasis on the integrity of the research and I shall ensure that I conduct the research with the highest integrity taking into account UNISA's Policy for Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism.

*Babal*  
.....  
(Signature)

*7 Dec 2012*.....(Date)

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Documentation for consent and participation**

.

---

---



## Request for permission from school

Enquiries: M. R. Babedi

Tel :057 3971672

Cell :0824604378

Email :rebeccababedi@yahoo.com

P.O. Box 3339

Welkom

9460

03 October 2012

*The Principal*

*Letsete Secondary School*

*Welkom*

*9460*

*Dear Sir*

### *REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH*

*I hereby request permission to conduct research for masters studies in education.*

*The title of my dissertation is Psychosocial support provided by teachers to Grade 12 learners with behavioural problems at Letsete Secondary School, Free State Province.*

*I am registered with the University of South Africa.*

*My proposed fieldwork plan is as follows:*

- *An interview will be conducted with a sample of 10 SBST teachers of Letsete Secondary.*
- *A member checking session will be conducted after a week*

*The research will be conducted during the 15 and 29 of January 2013.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Mmamore Rebecca Babedi*

## Request for permission from department

Enquiries: M. R. Babedi

Tel :057 3971672

Cell :0824604378

Email :rebeccababedi@yahoo.com

P.O. Box 3339

Welkom

9460

03 October 2012

The Director

Lejweleputswa Education Department

Welkom

9460

Dear Sir

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

*I hereby request permission to conduct research for masters studies in education.*

*The title of my dissertation is Psychosocial support provided by teachers to Grade 12 learners with behavioural problems at Letsete Secondary School, Free State Province.*

*I am registered with the University of South Africa.*

*My proposed fieldwork plan is as follows:*

- *An interview will be conducted with a sample of 10 SBST teachers of Letsete Secondary.*
- *A member checking session will be conducted after a week*

*The research will be conducted during the 15 and 29 of January 2013.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Mmamore Rebecca Babedi*

Permission from Letsete Secondary School



# LETSETE SECONDARY SCHOOL

P.O. BOX 3177  
WELKOM  
9460

TEL. (057) 382-2580  
FAX. (057) 382-2580

Enquiries: Khauee F.K  
Telephone: 057 3822580

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

Sir/ Madam

The bearer, Babedi M.R, has been given permission by Letsete Management to conduct research at Letsete Secondary School. The research topic is :Psychosocial services provided by teachers to Grade 12 learners at Letsete Secondary School, Free State.

The Management requests teachers to cooperate with the researcher when research activities are conducted.

It is envisaged that the research will assist the school in improving the psychosocial services provided in our school.

Thank you

  
School Principal

LETSETE SECONDARY SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 3177, WELKOM 9460
TEL: 057 382 2580
DATE: 15 NOV 2012
PRINCIPAL



education

Department of  
Education  
FREE STATE PROVINCE

Enquiries: LV Alexander  
Reference no. : 16/4/1/40-2012

Tel: 051 404 9287  
Fax: 086 725 7855  
Email: research@edu.fs.gov.za

**2012 – 11 - 14**

**TO: DISTRICT DIRECTOR**

The Director: Lejweleputswa Education District

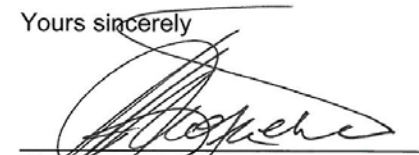
Dear Director

**NOTIFICATION OF A RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR DISTRICT**

Please find attached copy of the letter giving **Mrs MR Babedi** permission to conduct research in sampled schools in the Province.

Mrs MR Babedi is a full time student studying for Masters degree in Education with the University of South Africa.

Yours sincerely

---

**M. J. MOTHEBE**  
**DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING, POLICY AND RESEARCH**

**UNISA**

**Babedi M. R.**

**Department of Education; Contact no.: 0824604378**

**CONSENT FORM**

**PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY TEACHERS TO ADOLESCENT  
LEARNERS WITH BEHAVIOURAL AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS.**

**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE**

You are being asked to participate in this research study because .....

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research is to .....

**PROCEDURES**

As a participant, you will be enrolled in the study.

**RISKS**

Some of the questions on the questionnaires you will be completing may touch on sensitive areas. However, every effort will be made by the researchers to minimise your discomfort. You are encouraged to discuss with the research staff and/or coordinator any negative or difficult feelings or experiences you have as a result of participating in this research project. It at any time you feel you would like to stop your participation in the research study; you will be free to do so.

## **COSTS AND FINANCIAL RISKS**

There are no financial costs directly associated with participation in this project. Services from support staff are provided at no cost to you.

## **BENEFITS**

There is no guarantee that you will benefit from the study. However, the investigators believe that it is likely that participants may benefit from attending the group interventions.

## **COMPENSATION**

You will not receive any compensation for participating in this study.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to participate.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Every attempt will be made by the investigators to keep all information collected in this study strictly confidential, except as may be required by court order or by law. If any publication results from this research, you will not be identified by name.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you are free to refuse participation. You may discontinue your participation at any time without prejudice or without jeopardising the future care either of yourself or your family members. If you discontinue participation in the project, you may request that we not use the information already given us. You are encouraged to ask questions concerning the study at any

time as they occur to you during the programme. Any significant new findings developed during the course of the study that may relate to your willing to continue participation will be provided to you.

### **DISCLAIMER/WITHDRAWAL**

You agree that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and that you may withdraw at any time without prejudicing you standing within DBE.

### **SUBJECT RIGHTS**

If you have any questions pertaining to you participation in this research study, you may contact the researcher (Babedi M. R. ), by telephone (082 460 4378)

### **CONCLUSION**

By signing below, you are indicating that you have read and understood the consent form and that you agree to participate in this research study.

---

Subject's signature

---

Date

---

Interviewer's signature

---

Date

---

Witness's signature

---

Date

## APPENDIX C

### VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTIONS

1. What kind of behavioural and emotional problems are adolescents in the school manifesting?

Participant 1: The adolescent at this stage is that they try to know themselves. They don't really know who they are, they are rebellious. They are trying to know who they are and tend to be very sensitive and emotional.

2. Me: In your experience, how does the adolescent stage and environment contribute to behavioural and emotional problems?

Participant 2: In our school some are so aggressive I think it is because of the surrounding area they live in. Most of them they want to fight to one another, they belong to gangster groups that are violent, they are very stubborn. They feel strong because they belong to those who people are afraid of. Some they do not pay respect to educators they just say what they want to say. Because some of them they have emotional problems because they come from poor families, some of them are child-headed, both parents were died, they feel vulnerable and unsafe, they are socially unstable, that's why they behave this emotionally, at school.

Participant 3: Mentally, physically because many children especially girls are falling pregnant in Grade 12, so they become stubborn because of pregnancy, that's what I've realized. Some get pregnant because they want somebody to take care of them, for money at times even shelter.

Participant 4: The smoking is also a problem like there are girls who are smoking dagga and when we check age, we find that they are fourteen and some of them are from primary school growing so it is their first time to be in high school, they are being bullied by older ones, even into gangs. They call themselves – born to kill (BTK). They smoke because they are experiencing. You ask them: why are you smoking this? They say others are doing it, "I am experiencing and others are doing it". So adolescence is a turmoil stage and you find them failing especially in Grade 9, because most of the Grade 9 are writing ANA- Annual National Assessment by the Department of Education. They are really failing. Why? They experience high school, at the same time they are being bullied into smoking. At the same time, they are growing, some of them they haven't menstruated so they see this first time in high school. So high school is where they see many things for the first time. There is also this Satanism. We don't know how to handle it. That is where we usually involve the pastor in SBST.

Participant 1: I agree, they don't come to school, they don't respect anybody because of this spirit, it attacks adolescents mostly.

(Another participant arrives; she is welcomed and was given a brief explanation about the discussion.



Participant 5: Thank you very much, I would like to apologise for being late, I had a problem at home with my grandson, but it is sorted.

Me: you are welcome, mme! Back to our discussion, we were listening to Pastor, Pastor, over to you.

Participant 1: Concerning Satanism, I think the root cause is that in schools we do not allow the teachings of religious education. The kids therefore grab anything that comes as a result they can't even identify, when somebody is attacked by evil spirits they think it is normal until when it is very late or get worse. At times they want to identify themselves with occultic practices and that's where this satanic spirit comes from.

Participant 2: If DoE can bring back religious subjects that can help because even in the assemblies no such anymore. There was a child who was confessing that one of the teachers was possessed by the evil spirits, so is you can't say teachers be in total control, but I think inviting pastors can play an important role.

Participant 5: I do agree with you, but I think the most important thing is the family background. If the families were structured, were based on the foundation of Christianity, but because of the background of families that is so crucial.

Participant 4: I want to add, when children get religious education- but even pastors in Thabong, in the morning it's a normal church but in the evening there's another different church. I am not sure about it.

Participant 5: When I say religious parents I mean parents who are serious with Christianity. I have an example of a mother whose daughter was involved in Satanism but because she is a praying woman, that child was unable to continue with the occultic practices. The parents who claim to be religious are not serious, they are just praying for the sake of praying and going to church. Satanists are very serious, they even fast for days for those things to go n unlike Christians who just go to church for fun.

### 3. What is the role of SBST?

Participant 4: The role of the SBST is to support, to give pastoral care, learning support, psychosocial support, mother care, actually the SBST is the backbone of the school whereby the performance of the learner is measured. We even engage in afternoon classes to supervise studies because sometimes at home conditions do not allow. The teacher in the class can identify the behavioural and emotional and refer to SBST when all the teacher tried fails. The teacher can identify emotional trauma of the learner. The SBST is really the backbone of the school. There is no school that can function well without the SBST.

Participant5: When all else fails, the teacher refers to SBST. Weakness that I can quote is that some of the teachers in the SBST are not bringing out their best, they are not fully involved, not giving our all.

Participant 3: To be honest, since last year SBST, but this year, it's peaking up. Some of us withdraw, no one has interest, o tla bua o itlose, the deputy principal heads the committee, hai! He invites you to join the meeting if he sees you, the principal, ha a tsebe ntho tse! (he does not know these things). We don't want to contribute maybe because of the new HOD, they didn't trust her or is she qualified. But this year it is no longer dysfunctional. For instance, this year one learner was raped and teachers donated food and clothes because that learner comes from a poor family. One of the educators take this learner to lay charges to that person.

Me- or maybe they doubted her competency, simply because she is new in their environment.

Participant 2: They did not have trust in the new HOD, so I was really struggling to convince them that I am qualified and competent, so at least this year it's better but last year I was really struggling. New post, environment, but now this year it's much better.

My reflection- there seems to be more weaknesses than strengths.

Participant 4: As a school we managed to have an inclusive post because we referred many cases. In a way SBST improved because she is solely responsible for SBST, she is concerned about learners with behavioural and emotional problems mainly. But the principal does not understand the SBST, and teachers take every problem to the lady, which is a bit too much for the poor lady, but she tries.

5. Do you hold regular meetings?

Participant 4: We do have regular meetings, which are pre-planned, once a quarter, but there are emergencies whereby we cannot wait for the meeting, an emergency such as the one mme (the lady) has mentioned, we can't wait for the meeting. We jump and assist, so we do have year planned and quarterly meetings.

6. What you think your role is, in assisting adolescent learners with behavioural and emotional problems in the school?

Participant 3: I personally believe my role is to enhance teacher's ability and skill in identifying and dealing with behavioural and emotional problems timeously. In this way we can be proactive.

Participant 2: Support and mentoring are important to allow learners to feel free to confide in me, knowing that the cry for help is in caring and empathetic hands. Many of our children live in child-headed family background, they need all the support that they can get, and as teachers we are the closest help they see.

Participant 4: Most don't have descent uniform and food, I approached the local school and sport shop, it has been 8 years now, that they donate uniform to our kids. You see how big they smile on that day! Our vegetable garden is not very helpful, thanks to the Department's initiative with lunch, something that brings them to school, to some it is the only meal- ho thata bathong (it is tough people). But it takes their minds off mischief.

There is an NGO (house of hope) that delivers food parcels and blankets for our needy learners every Tuesday.

Participant 3: We have a good relationship with the local uniform shop (ATLAS), they donate full school uniform as per request, the practice has been going on since 2005.

7. What can the school do to improve psychosocial support?

Participant 5: The staff must be interested in the children's welfare and the management must not treat the SBST as a dumping site without any thought and resources. I think the school must involve all stakeholders, not just teachers in SBST, the church, members of the school community. So what is the community doing? It just pushes the burden to school and teachers only cannot solve the behavioural and emotional problems alone.

Participant 4: The stakeholders in our school include the SAPS, the pastor, the social worker. We need to include the School Governing Body (SGB), which represents parents, but they are reluctant and not supportive to SBST. They still think if ngwana (the child) goes to school –bye bye. The school management could help by insisting the parent component of the SGB must be actively involved.

Participant 1: When you see a change in the child be quick to act. The notion that when you see a child misbehaving you ignore, it is not good. A child is raised by the community. Discipline from home is key, the police cannot be held responsible for our children's behaviour.

Participant 4: I did a statistics that out of 1400 learners I found that 40% of our learners are parentless, when I say parentless, I mean they don't have both parents, they are child headed families. They walk 10km from home to school, for an adolescent to wake up prepare for siblings for school is not normal, seriously. Last week Monday I look at a boy, he looks 13, when I ask his age, he is 17- it means malnourishment. Ok, now why are you late for school, it is exam time! That's where I suspected something is not right. He says he stays with his grandmother, and siblings the mother has died. The grandpa works at the mine. The grandmother has blisters on the legs, they are oozing, the siblings, 7 and 10 years, they scratch grandma and she oozes puss, bohloko bo a loma ( it is very painfull and itchy). They scratch grandma until 11/12 midnight, then they sleep. When he wakes up it is late, you understand colleagues how difficult it is for these kids, as mme said we should get into the children's shoes (be empathetic) – community again.

I started arranging with the nurse at the hospice to visit the home and tried to figure out how the boy and siblings can be removed. Me and the nurse visited the home, they stay in an informal settlement in a mokhukhu (shack). Grandma is very big suffers from diabetes. She put her feet on whatever and the puss was just oozing. Ke hore u can imagine, ho dikatse mono (there are many cats), it is dark, there is a bucket full of urine, you understand, it's filthy! Sister Kgothule from hospice said "I salute teachers, the community judge you by the value of your face but get into the teachers shoes, the teachers are over-burdend. Imagine the boy scratching the granny, imagine the

infection, let alone the infection, this boy is going to be a serial killer, hating women because he was abused physically and emotionally by a woman. Le a bona batho ba Morena hore (can you see good people that) the community from which these children come is sick!

Participant 5: I was called to counsel teenage boys. They are 13-15 years and active in sex. One boy wanted to know why the cousin sister bleeds every time they have sex, they sleep together daily and parents are not aware. I agree that the community is sick, parents are not doing their bit. I talked to the boys only on that day, what will happen to the boys afterwards? Teachers are extremely over-burdened.

7. Do you feel confident in supporting learners with behavioural and emotional problems?

Participant 4: Yes and no. Yes, because we are committed, because of age and experience, you cannot sleep at night because we take the position of the parents. No because some colleagues are not as committed.

Participant 2: training the teachers in SBST is not adequate, and the support from management and other staff members is lacking, male teachers even have no morals, they fall in love with girls, poor girls think it is status to fall in love with a teacher.

Participant 3: The unions have a negative influence on SBST, because the teachers do not go an extra mile, they work only 7 hours. The amount of work given to Life Orientation teachers, who happen to be SBST members, is too much. As a result these teachers fail to concentrate on challenges.

Participant 5: Passionate, responsible and empathetic teachers are quitting the department of education, it is a vicious cycle. Young teachers on the other hand are not willing to go an extra mile.

Participant 1: I wish the DoE could recall resigned and retired teachers. They could act as mentors to the young teachers who seem to be too loyal to unions.

## APPENDIX D

### Visual data- photographs



Picture: 3.2: School garden

Picture: 3.3 Surrounding area



## APPENDIX E

### Interview schedule

#### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SBST TEACHERS

- 1 .Do you have policy for Psychosocial support for Grade 12 learners with behavioural and emotional problems? YES/ NO
2. If yes, what psychosocial services are available?
3. Who are the role players in providing psychosocial support in the school?
4. How do behavioural and emotional problems manifest in Grade 12 learners?
5. In your experience, are the key contributing factors to behaviour and emotional problems in Grade 12 learners?
- 6 What is the role of SBST in the provision of psychosocial support services?
- 7 What are the strengths of SBST of your school?
- 8 What are the main weaknesses of your school in terms of SBST?
- 9 How do you measure success/ weaknesses of psychosocial support?
- 10 Are regular meetings held so that the identified gaps and suggestions can be discussed with other educators?
- 11 Suggest ways of improving the provision of psychosocial support to Grade 12 learners with behavioural and emotional problems.
- 12 Do you feel confident in providing psychosocial support?

13 *Do you have any other comments on the psychosocial support services in your school?*

*THANK YOU!*

## **APPENDIX F**

### **Identified themes**

#### **IDENTIFIED THEMES**

##### **IDENTITY**

- P1, line 3- they try to know themselves
- P1, line 4- trying to know who they are
- P2, line 10- belong to gangsters
- P 2, line 11- they belong to those who people are afraid of
- P4, line 25- others are doing it.... adolescence is a turmoil stage
- P4, line 31- satanism, they don't respect anybody..
- P1, line 45- want to identify with occultic practices

##### **FAMILY BACKGROUND**

- P2, line 9- so aggressive, I think it is the surrounding area
- P2, line 13- poor families
- P2, line 14- child-headed families, both parents dead
- P5, line 51- most important thing is family background
- P5, line 53- background of families is so crucial
- P1, line 128- discipline from home is key
- P 4, line 130- out of 1400 learners, I found that 40% of our learners are parentless..., I mean they don't have parents
- P4, line 140- they scratch a diabetic grandma until 11/12 midnight, then they sleep, the community again
- P4, line 172- the community from which these children come from is sick

##### **TEACHER'S ROLE- SUPPORT**

- P4, line 65- support, give pastoral care learning support psychosocial support, mother care
- P4, line 67- SBST is the backbone of the school, teachers can identify behavioural and emotional problems and refer
- P4, line 98- we jump and assist
- P3, line 101- enhance teacher's ability and skill in identifying and dealing with behavioural and emotional problems
- P4, line 109- approached local shop for uniform ( basic needs: clothing)
- P5, line 113- organize talks



- P2, line 2- support and mentoring learners... teachers are the closest help they can see

#### TEACHERS NEED SUPPORT-BARRIERS

- P3, line 101- personally believe my role (as HOD) is to enhance teacher's ability and skill in identifying and dealing with behavioural and emotional problems
- P5, line 117- teachers need support from management, fellow teachers parents
- P4, line 124- the school management could help by insisting the parent component of the SGB must be actively involved
- P2, line 184- training is not adequate... support from management and staff is lacking
- P3, line 190- life orientation teachers who happen to be members of SBST, are overburdened

## APPENDIX I

*Enquiries: M. R. Babedi*

*Tel :057 3971672*

*Cell : 0824604378*

*Email : rebeccababedi@yahoo.com*

*P.O. Box 3339*

*Welkom*

*9460*

*03 October 2012*

*The Principal*

*Letsete Secondary School*

*Welkom*

*9460*

*Dear Sir*

### *REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH*

*I hereby request permission to conduct research for masters studies in education.*

*The title of my dissertation is Psychosocial support provided by teachers to Grade 12 learners with behavioural problems at Letsete Secondary School, Free State Province.*

*I am registered with the University of South Africa.*

*My proposed fieldwork plan is as follows:*

- An interview will be conducted with a sample of 10 SBST teachers of Letsete Secondary.*
- A member checking session will be conducted after a week*

*The research will be conducted during the 15 and 29 of January2013.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Mmamore Rebecca Babedi*

## APPENDIX J

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SBST TEACHERS

- 1 .Do you have policy for Psychosocial support for Grade 12 learners with behavioural and emotional problems? YES/ NO
2. If yes, what psychosocial services are available?
3. Who are the role players in providing psychosocial support in the school?
4. How do behavioural and emotional problems manifest in Grade 12 learners?
5. In your experience, what are the key contributing factors to behaviour and emotional problems in Grade 12 learners?
- 6 What is the role of SBST in the provision of psychosocial support services?
- 7 What are the strengths of SBST of your school?
- 8 What are the main weaknesses of your school in terms of SBST?
- 9 How do you measure success/ weaknesses of psychosocial support?
- 10 Are regular meetings held so that the identified gaps and suggestions can be discussed with other educators?
- 11 Suggest ways of improving the provision of psychosocial support to Grade 12 learners with behavioural and emotional problems.
- 12 Do you feel confident in providing psychosocial support?
- 13 Do you have any other comments on the psychosocial support services in your school?

THANK YOU!

## APPENDIX K

*Enquiries: Khauoe F.K*

*Telephone: 057 3822580*

### **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

Sir/ Madam

The bearer, Babedi M.R, has been given permission by Letsete Management to conduct research at Letsete Secondary School. The research topic is: Psychosocial services provided by teachers to Grade 12 learners at Letsete Secondary School, Free State.

The Management requests teachers to cooperate with the researcher when research activities are conducted.

It is envisaged that the research will assist the school in improving the psychosocial services provided in our school.

Thank you

-----  
School Principal

-----  
Date