The impact of child sexual abuse (CSA) on the school life experiences and academic performance of adult CSA survivors

by

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Promoter: Prof. M.A.J. Olivier
This research study is dedicated to my husband, Valiant Ah Hing and to our two children, Kirsten and James.

Thank you for your unconditional love, constant support and unfailing faith in me.

What we think or what we know or what we believe is, in the end, of little consequence. The only consequence is what we do.

John Ruskin
DECLARATION

I, Antoinette Danielle Ah Hing, declare that the thesis entitled: The Impact of Child Sexual Abuse on the Academic Performance of Learners, is my own work, and has not been submitted for a degree at another university before. All the sources that have been used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Language editing of the entire document has been done by Dr P. Goldstone.

A.D. Ah Hing

January 2010
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

We hereby certify that we have language edited the treatise prepared by Antoinette Danielle Ah Hing, entitled The impact of child sexual abuse on the academic performance of learners, and that we are satisfied that, provided the changes we have made are effected to the text, the language is of an acceptable standard, fit for publication.

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"If the occurrence of rape were audible, its decibel level equal to its frequency, it would overpower our days and nights, interrupt our meals, our bedtime stories, howl behind our love-making, an insistent jackhammer of distress. We would demand an end to it. And if we failed to locate its source, we would condemn the whole structure. We would refuse to live under such conditions."

Patricia Weaver Francisco
The Silent Child

She sits alone in her room
and wipes away her tears
Hiding beneath the covers
so no one else hears ~
She wraps them tight around her
to shut out all her pain
Praying if there is a God
to make her safe again.

She snuggles deep into her bed
holding the covers tight
Cuddling her little teddy bear
she leaves on the light ~
She waits for the assurance
that all have gone to bed
Then settles into slumber
so she can dream instead.

She wakes at the sound of footsteps
walking down the hall
Then he stops outside her room
and opens up the door ~
She shivers with her childlike fear
as she starts to cry
Knowing what he has come here for
though she doesn't know why.

He tells her she is special
that she's his little girl
As he pulls back the covers
into her silent world ~
He says that it's their secret
the special game they play
For no one else would understand;
they'd just take him away.

She lay there in her silence
with her clothes on the floor
Trying not to think of it
as the tears slowly fall ~
She hears the clock ticking
as her mind drifts away
Her teddy bear beside her
where he also lay.
She wonders why he comes to her in the middle of the night
When he should be with mummy holding her so tight ~
She listens to him tell her that she will be to blame
If anyone discovers their special secret game.

She pulls up the covers as he rises from her bed
Tweaking at her little nose and kissing her forehead ~
She watches as he dresses as he tells her once again
This is their little secret; she mustn't say a thing.

She watches as he leaves her room and closes the door
And listens for his footsteps walking back down the hall ~
Then she cuddles up to teddy and cries her silent tears
Beneath her soiled covers so no one else can hear.
And as she lay in her silence with her tear-filled eyes

Each time that he comes to her a part of her dies ~
So she curls up in her bed and hugs her teddy tight
And prays that he will never come to her again at night.

© Christina
29th March, 2001
SUMMARY

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a societal problem whose origins date back to the times of the ancient Greeks and Romans. It is found in all levels of society, from the wealthiest to the poorest; and the short-term and long-term impacts it has on the lives of the victims, can be devastating. There are many reasons for the occurrence of child sexual abuse, but in all cases, the ultimate accountability rests on the shoulders of the sexual offender. The nature of child sexual victimisation varies from verbal suggestions to violent physical force. Irrespective of which type the child is being subjected to, as the weaker partner in the pedagogical relationship with the adult, s/he is never able to defend herself/himself.

The global phenomenon, and the increase in CSA, has given rise to the research question, namely: How does child sexual abuse impact on the school life experiences and academic performance of learners at school?

The purpose of this research study was to provide insight into the following issues:

- The nature and identification of the symptoms of child sexual abuse;
- The manner in which sexually abused children manifest their experiences of sexual abuse at school;
- How sexually abused children cope with their learning tasks; and
- Recommendations for educators.

The literature relating to CSA was reviewed, with the aim of establishing a solid theoretical foundation for the study. CSA has been looked at holistically, encompassing the accepted definitions, the related concepts, the nature of sexual abuse, the prevalence and incidence of CSA, the possible causes, the short-term and long-term impacts, and the suggestions by adult survivors for use by educators in their efforts to help abused learners.
In an attempt to provide acceptable answers to the research problem, a mixed-method research design was implemented. The research study was conducted in two phases:

**Stage 1** consisted of an exploration of the research problem by means of the following question put to the participants:

*In your experience as an adult survivor of child sexual abuse how did the abuse impact on your school life experiences, including your academic performance?*

A total of nineteen participants from the Eastern Cape Province shared their experiences, by means of writing their life story as a narrative. Purposive and availability sampling of adult survivors was undertaken. In order to ensure the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research methodology, Guba's model of data verification was used. Accepted ethical measures were taken into consideration and adhered to during the research. The analysed data were taken directly from the narratives that the individual participants saved onto flashdrives. Consensus by the researcher and coder was reached regarding the identification of themes, categories and subcategories.

The following four significant themes emerged, based on the results of the data analysis:

**Theme One:** *Health, sexuality* and the sexual experiences of sexual abused children and adolescents.

**Theme Two:** The *social* development of sexually abused children and adolescents.

**Theme Three:** *School-related experiences* and academic performance of sexually abused children and adolescents.

**Theme Four:** *Advice* and *suggestions* from adult survivors for young victims of CSA.
Stage 2 offered recommendations to the teachers of learners who are, or have been sexually abused, derived from the findings of Phase 1.

The conclusion was reached that CSA does have an impact on the academic performance of learners. Therefore, teachers are in need of a greater understanding and awareness of CSA, in order to help these learners.

**Key words:**

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

Perpetrator/offender

Incest

Disclosure

Academic performance

Learner

Learning

Human development

Play
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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO STUDY, PROBLEM STATEMENT, RESEARCH AIM, CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS, RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH PLAN

1.2 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Richard was fifteen or sixteen by now. "I've got a new game for us to play. Come to my room..."
A while later, my mother called me to the bathroom. "Daddy found blood on the toilet seat. Do you know anything about it?"
I burst into tears. "There was blood in my pants," I sobbed.
My mother dug my panties out of the basket and inspected them.
"Did you hurt yourself?" she asked. "Did somebody hurt you?"
"No." I wailed.
My mother took my panties and she and my father went ... to discuss it. She came out a few minutes later. "We think you must have sat on some red cooldrink at the fete."
I knew they were lying. They knew it was blood. But what Richard and I had done was so dreadful that it could not be spoken about.
It wasn't right. My parents had lied too. They could not be trusted.

(Extract from a true story: Here Be Lions by Helen Brain, 2006 – sexually abused by her elder brother)

Child sexual abuse is tantamount to loss; it is accompanied by anguish and disruption (Bezuidenhout, 2002: 61), as is depicted in the above excerpt from Helen Brain’s story of her experience. Sexually abused child experience many kinds of loss: a loss of trust in other people; the loss of childhood innocence; a loss of personal safety; a loss of the right to make decisions and the loss of the truth (Spies, 2006: 273–274).

Often the child is compelled to keep the abuse a secret and not to tell anyone. Lies therefore often become an integral part of life from childhood into adulthood. Lies are used as a means of survival, and of covering up what has
happened (Spies, 2006: 273). Coping mechanisms, such as lies, often find the child in trouble with non-offending adults.

Child sexual abuse is a global phenomenon that is regarded as one of the greatest social problems of the 21st century. It has a devastating, lifelong effect on the victims, because sexual abuse generates great anguish and disruption in the lives of these children (Laror, 2004: 439; Tang, 2002: 24). As a result of such abuse, many victims live through feelings of confusion, guilt, anger, mistrust, sadness, and emotional deprivation (Lawrence & Janse van Rensburg, 2006: 141; Spies, 2006: 53; Van As & Naidoo, 2006: 5, Brown & Latimer, 2001: 184 & 196; Drucker, 2001: 120; Harvey, 2000: 88; Kay, 1999: 2).

They experience first-hand the shocking truth that the very people, who should protect them from harm, are the people who betray their trust by violating and robbing them of their innocence:

> It is the absolute betrayal of their trust in the very people who are supposed to be their protectors and caretakers. While children suffer sexual abuse, perhaps the most severe form of their abuse is their loyalty and love for their abusers.

*(Health 24.com:2008.02.15)*

Q. How did you keep your victims from telling?
A. Well, first of all I’ve won their trust. They think I’m the greatest thing that ever lived. Their families think I’m the greatest thing that ever lived. If it came down to … ‘I have a little secret, this is our little secret’, then it would come down to that … it’s almost an unspoken understanding.

*(Salter, 2003: 43)*

The incidence of sexual violence against children is exceptionally high in South Africa. It is estimated that approximately one quarter of all children have, or will have been sexually abused prior to reaching the age of eighteen years. Very often, the perpetrator is someone familiar to the child. Someone who would normally protect the child, such as the father, brother, or another family member (Health 24.com:2008.02.15).
In September 2005, the then Minister of Safety and Security reported to the South African Parliament the shocking statistics of violence against children over the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005. During that time, 22,486 children were raped and 4,289 were indecently assaulted (Van As & Naidoo, 2006: 20-21).

These figures probably greatly underestimate the actual incidents, as many are not always reported to the police or other authorities and therefore do not make up part of the statistics (Van Niekerk, 2006: 101; Le Roux, 1994: 144). The latest figures from Statistics South Africa are not yet available, and the South African Police Service can only provide general rape and assault figures, which include adults (www.statssa.gov.za and www.saps.gov.za).

In the South African context, the widespread sexual abuse of children has reached epidemic proportions and the recent highly publicised rape of infant girls, ranging in age from 0 – 2 years must surely start to provoke alarm bells ringing in a society where sexualised violence against women and children is reaching unprecedented levels.

(earl-Taylor: 2000)

According to the National Department of Health (2004), “South Africa has one of the highest rates of rape cases reported to police in the world. There are over 20,000 cases of child rape and attempted rape reported to the police each year. One in five of all rapes cases are of children under the age of 18”. The National Department of Health also states that many victims do not report their rape, because of the shame associated with it, the fear of retribution and the expectation of being subjected to awkward experiences with the police, courts of law and the health services.

Child sexual abuse is not a recent phenomenon, but one of the oldest forms of child abuse in the history of mankind (Richter & Higson-Smith, 2007: 23; Pretorius, 1998: 362; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 137). In all cultures and ethnic backgrounds and in all its different forms, child abuse has existed and flourished throughout the ages.
There are accounts of child sexual abuse from, amongst others, the time of the early Romans and Egyptians, to Biblical accounts (Tlali & Moldan, 2005: 1). A biblical reference as example is 2 Samuel 13, which is the account of how Amnon violated his sister, Tamar. Virtually all types of incest are found in historical accounts of sexual acts involving children. Even in modern, civilized societies child sexual abuse persists, regardless of it being socially deplorable (Lawrence & Janse van Rensburg, 2006: 129).

According to history, two adult rights are at the centre of violent behaviour towards children:

- the right to possess property, and
- the right to possess children.

Historically, children were regarded as property. Parents had the liberty and total authority to do to a child whatever was thought necessary (Ferrara, 2002: 4). Typically the father, as head of the family, made all the decisions with regard to discipline and family matters (Clark & Clark, 1989). Apart from owning his child/ren in this patriarchal society, a father’s rights also included the wages and any other acquisitions accrued by adult children. English common law at the time sanctioned exclusive paternal rule over family properties, thus including wives and children (Ferrara, 2002: 5).

Throughout history, parents have exploited their children for profit. The International Labour Organization estimates that 250 million children in developing countries, between the ages of five and fourteen, are exploited to do some form of work. Approximately 120 million of these children are employed full-time. During the time of the Industrial Revolution children were often placed in apprenticeships, workhouses, orphanages, factories, farms, and mines.

In England, five-year olds worked 16-hour days in factories and workhouses, shackled in chains, while being beaten and whipped in an attempt to make them work harder. In 13th century England, the law stated: “If one beats a child until it bleeds, it will remember, but if one beats it to death, the law applies” (Ferrara, 2002: 7-8).
It is estimated that 15 million children in India are bonded labourers. This means that they work under subjection, in order to pay off family debts (Human Rights Watch, 2001). Children are often exploited in terms of being used to repay parental debts by means of sexual favours. According to Casa Alianza (2001), each year approximately one million more children around the world are introduced to commercial sexual exploitation.

Bezuidenhout (2002: 56) also points to the fact that wide-spread exploitation of children takes place for the sake of sexual favours.

The South African Constitution has recognised that children are among the most vulnerable members of society; and therefore they require special protection and care. As a result of this, children’s rights have been considered a priority; and Section 28 of the Bill of Rights is titled “Children”. Amongst other rights, the Children’s Bill states that every child has the right to:

- a) a name and a nationality from birth;
- b) family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment;
- c) basic nutrition, shelter, health care and social services;
- d) be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation;
- e) be protected from exploitive labour practices.

(Constitutional Court of South Africa, 2003)

The Supreme Court of Appeal in South Africa stipulates that when a sentence is imposed, "it is not only the objective gravity of the crime that plays a role, but also the present and future impact of the crime on the victim" (Lawrence & Janse van Rensburg, 2006: 145). Because of the extremely sensitive nature of sexual violations against children, the Bill of Rights stipulates that during a cross-examination, "the sexually abused child should be approached with:

- respect;
- due cognisance of his* or her best interests;
- in a manner that takes account of his or her age;
• with a view to challenging his or her evidence as a matter of course;
• with a view to establishing whether he/she has been repeatedly interviewed with the aim of establishing whether people have (intentionally or inadvertently) encouraged false allegations that might have become part of the child’s recollection” (Lawrence & Janse van Rensburg, 2006: 154).

(*From this point onwards, the masculine form will be used to refer to both male and female genders).

Certain legal professionals, who may have specialised in child abuse, may have to present their cases in court in order to try and get the perpetrator convicted. It is, therefore, important to note that Scheepers (2006: 151) states that because ‘lawyers are not trained in behavioural and social sciences … they should … in almost all sexual abuse cases consult with experts, such as clinical psychologists, social workers and … experts in the medical profession’.

Hayden (1982: 101) supports this statement by saying, “The saddest part of being human is the depth of our ignorance. In dealing with children it is so easy to believe one is omniscient. Unfortunately, it is not so”.

The consequences of child sexual abuse are diverse and numerous. Being sexually abused impacts upon the life-world of a child on an educational, psychological and physical health level (Mullen & Fleming, 2005: 9). Many people deny the dangers of sexual abuse and the consequences thereof. They accept common myths, such as children being quick to recover and being able to adapt and continue with life when they have experienced trauma of some nature.

Salter (2003) contradicts this by stating “Absolutely not, says reality. Children do not bounce back. They adjust, they conceal, they repress and sometimes they accept and move on, but they don’t bounce back”. Researchers, writing on the subject of child sexual abuse, emphasise the indescribable and devastating consequences of child sexual abuse in all spheres of his development, namely educational, psychological and physical.
In many cases of adult survivors, they have grown up in dysfunctional family environments. This implies that they have not had positive role models on which to base their own lives (Bezuidenhout, 2008: 60; Spies, 2006: 74). Research has indicated that survivors should be proactive in facing their abuse in order to begin the healing process. Spies (2006: 74) goes on to say that should this not happen there is then the possibility that the survivor could himself become an abuser.

It may also happen that adult survivors of child sexual abuse want to protect their child/ren from experiencing abuse and this often leads to overprotection of the child, thereby not allowing the child to develop and explore his life-world in a healthy manner (Spies, 2006: 74). Although statistics are not available, Louw, Duncan, Richter and Louw (2007: 364) indicated that parents, who had been abused as a child, do not necessarily become parents who abuse or neglect their own children.

Normal, effective child-rearing takes place in a family, where the relationships are generally built on a strong spiritual foundation, and on love and trust. Such a relationship will allow the child to experience compassion, tolerance, acceptance and understanding. Being a parent is a difficult, demanding and time-consuming job, even when the family dynamics, financial situation and home life are considered to be good.

As children grow older and mature, they reach a point where they are required by law to start attending formal schooling. In South Africa, compulsory school attendance is seven years of age (Section 39[1] of the SA Schools Act [Act 84 of 1996, as amended]). From the time that a child is enrolled at a school, the members of staff are legally considered to be in ‘loco parentis’, meaning that they have full responsibility for the safety and security of the child, while at school. In Latin “loco” means “place” and “parentis” means “parent”.

In loco parentis therefore, literally means “in the place of a parent” and acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of an individual or an institution, to
look after and care for a minor. In accordance with South African law, educators have the rights and responsibilities of *in loco parentis*.

In a country where the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children is a recurring and widespread problem, *in loco parentis* has become increasingly important in the protection of children. *In loco parentis* provides anybody who is not the parent of the child and has no legal or blood ties to a child, with a legal framework on which to base their duties to the child (Centre for Applied Legal Studies, Wits University, 2009).

By the mere nature of their job, *teachers* generally develop a trusting and caring relationship with the learners in their classes. The teacher creates an atmosphere within the classroom that is unique to his personality and the children learn to identify with the teacher, while the classroom should ideally be a safe place (Pretorius, 1998: 92-95; 99).

The school environment is neutral; and there is no danger of a perpetrator abusing the child at school, unless the teacher himself is the abuser.

However, in order for a learner to achieve optimally at school, the holistic *environment* needs to be conducive to effective learning (Friedrich, 2001: 21-22; Pretorius, 1998: 29). This implies that the conditions at home and at school should be *authentic pedagogic relationships* within an atmosphere of trust, caring, support and guidance (Freyd, DePrince & Zurbriggen, 2001; Pretorius, 1998: 22; Le Roux, 1994: 161).

Unfortunately, in many cases sound pedagogic relationships do not prevail within the home or at school, and thus the adult becomes ‘an object of distrust’ (Wickham & West, 2002: 12; Le Roux, 1994: 162; Johnson, 1990: 101). Despite this feeling of distrust, the sexually abused child generally keeps the perpetrators actions a ‘secret’, as instructed by the perpetrator (Colson, 2006: 16; Bezuidenhout, 2002: 57).
“Don’t tell Mummy,” he said. “This is our secret, Antoinette, do you hear me?”

“Yes, Daddy,” I whispered. “I won’t tell.” But I did. I felt secure in my mother’s love. I loved her and she … loved me. She would tell him to stop. She didn’t.

(Maguire, 2006: 52)

All I had to know, he said, was if people found out about the way we loved each other, Daddy would be sent to prison. He made me promise not to tell anyone else about how we loved each other. I agreed. “Good lad,” he said and ruffled my hair again. “It’s between you and me: Our little secret.”

(Fairhurst, 2007: 40)

Trust is hard to rebuild with children who have not been able to trust those who should have cared for them most. The child may develop a general distrust of adults.

(Kay, 1999: 133)

Without trust, the best we can do is compromise; without trust, we lack the credibility for open, mutual learning and communication and real creativity.

(Covey, 1992: 220)

Within many classrooms, there are one or more learners who are being sexually abused and the effects thereof could hamper their adequate academic progress (Woolfolk, A. 2010: 77; Crosson-Tower, 2000: 199; Le Roux, 1994: 163). Cloud and Townsend (1992: 233) made the following comment: “… their developmental processes have been damaged or interrupted by abuse”.

Many of these learners display symptoms such as social withdrawal or acting out, which are external signs of their inner confusion. They act out in many forms, such as sexual exploration with peers, performing acts such as masturbation at an early age and having sexual knowledge that is considered age-inappropriate (London, Bruck, Ceci & Shuman: 2005: 204; Tower, 2000: 206; Meyer & Kotzé 1994: 180).

However, there are also some learners who show very few, if any, noticeable symptoms to indicate that they are dealing with such severe problems. This complicates the process of identifying these children and providing the
necessary and appropriate help for them. Effective help is vital in order for them to work through their trauma, while at the same time being able to maintain a reasonable standard of academic performance.

1.2 FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Globally, approximately 40 million children are subjected to child abuse each year (World Health Organization, 2001). By now this figure has almost doubled. Many of these young victims are subjected specifically to sexual abuse. This is a critical problem that has serious short-term, as well as long-term consequences for these children (Dale, 2003: 158-161; Mullen & Fleming, 1998).

The educator is often unaware that the learner is experiencing such horrific emotional, psychological and physical pain. Educators expect of each learner that they deliver the best that they can in terms of academic effort. They often label children who behave differently within the classroom with generalized terminology, such as ‘lazy, withdrawn, very quiet, bossy, aggressive or a bully’. These behaviours may be, but are not always, manifestations of child sexual abuse.

In many parts of the world, children attend school for part of the day and then spend the rest of the time working for prostitution rings. Casa Alianza is an international, non-governmental organization that is dedicated to the rehabilitation and defense of street children in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Mexico. Bruce Harris from Casa Alianza presented a talk at the 24th session of the United Nations Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery in Geneva in 1999.

He made the following statement: “… in Costa Rica, if you are a tourist, you can buy sex from little girls, but often in the morning, as they have to go to primary school in the afternoon” (Barbosa, 2001: 29-30). It is not known whether the educators at the schools that these children attend are aware of this and if so, whether they do anything constructive about it, in order to protect and assist the children.
A sexually abused child may manifest the abuse at school, in terms of behavioural problems and/or inadequate academic achievement (Le Roux, 1994: 163). Teachers have an advantage in that they are in an excellent position in the classroom or on the sports field to be able to notice children who are being sexually abused (Van As & Naidoo, 2006: 73; Lewis, 1999: 20).

Sexual abuse is not easily noticed however, because of the intimate, concealed, and covert nature of the offence. Therefore, it is frequently only on the basis of a noticeable change in the behavioural patterns of the child, loss of interest in school work, and a drop in their academic performance and achievement, that suspicion is aroused (Scheepers, 2006: 152; Crosson-Tower, 2000: 206; Kay, 1999: 60): “Teachers and staff see victims of child abuse firsthand …”.

School children … brought their family confusion with them to school. The confusion was evidenced in schoolyard social difficulties or classroom-learning problems …. Family dysfunction and abuse may cause emotional disturbances and learning delays that can be horrendous.

(Pelzer, 2001: 317)

Many educators are unaware that it is a criminal offence not to disclose information regarding a suspected or definite case of child abuse (Van As & Naidoo, 2006: 13). This applies to all adults, especially professional people who work with children, such as doctors, social workers, psychologists, principals and teachers, and is in accordance with the judicial system in our country. The United Nations Convention stipulates the following with regard to the Rights of the Child [in Article 19] Davel (1999: 137) quotes: “State parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of … abuse … including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child”.

It becomes increasingly difficult for a child who is being sexually abused, to focus on and meet the academic demands made on all learners. The ability to concentrate and pay attention to the academic tasks at hand become less
important as the child attempts to develop coping skills for survival from day to day. During the course of the school day, the child is distracted by what has happened in terms of his sexual abuse. He may also be anxious about what may or may not happen at home after school (Ferrara, 2002: 74-75).

Children, through what they are taught and what they experience, hold the future in their hands and child sexual abuse places that future in jeopardy, because sexual abuse destroys the loyalty and love that a child bears for adults.

It is against this background that the primary research problem is formulated.

**Primary research question:**

*How does child sexual abuse impact on school life experiences and academic performance of learners?*

**Secondary research questions:**

- What is the nature of sexual abuse experienced by children?
- How do abused children manifest their experiences of sexual abuse at school?
- How do abused children cope with their learning tasks?
- What are the factors that have an impact on their school life and academic performance?
- Which strategies could be suggested to enable educators to help sexually abused children to achieve optimally in the classroom?

### 1.4 RESEARCH AIMS

The primary aim of the research is to investigate whether sexual abuse has an impact on the school life experiences and academic performance of such learners.

The secondary aims of the research are linked directly to the formulated research problems and are to determine:
- the nature of sexual abuse that children are exposed to;
- how sexually abused children manifest their sexual abuse in an academic environment;
- which coping mechanisms these children develop, and
- recommendations on how to deal with the abused child in a positive manner that can be used to enable educators in their educational task of helping the child to achieve optimally in the classroom.

1.4 THE DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

For the purposes of this research study, I have chosen child sexual abuse as the specific focus. Children from all socio-economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds are subjected to sexual abuse. I intend to concentrate specifically on how the abuse impacts on effective academic performance and school life experiences of the learners, as perceived by adult survivors, as well as the nature of the sexual abuse, how learners manifest this in the classroom and possible strategies to empower educators to identify and help such learners.

As a result, this study will attempt to highlight the personal experiences, obstacles and educational challenges faced by sexually abused children.

Based on this, further recommendations for the educator to become more sensitised and aware of the problem will be discussed, so that they can be of assistance to sexually abused learners in the classroom, in order for optimal learning to take place, despite the home circumstances. The findings will also be used in workshops, where possible, to create further awareness of the problem of child sexual abuse and how to enable such victims to reach their full potential.

The participants will be limited to adult survivors of child sexual abuse from the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.
1.5 THE CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following is a brief summary to clarify the key concepts relevant to this study:

1.5.1 Sexual abuse

*Sexual abuse* is an umbrella term that encompasses different forms of sexual abuse, many with their own sub-categories. However, existing definitions agree that child sexual abuse takes place when an adult engages in sexual intercourse with and/or inappropriate touching of a minor, where the sexual acts are considered to be abusive and inappropriate for children (Spies, 2006: 3-5; Ferrara, 2002: 16; Kay, 1999: 36-37).

1.5.2 Academic performance

*Academic performance* refers to the ability of learners within the classroom in terms of how they are able to master the learning material being taught to them by the teacher. Academic performance is often hampered by social, emotional and psychological problems being experienced by the learner (Lerner, 2006: 529; Dale, 2003: 6, 73-81).

1.5.4 Learner

According to the Oxford Dictionary (Hawkins, 1991: 469), a *learner* is ‘one who is learning a subject or skill’. For the purposes of this study, a learner will be identified as a child/adolescent who is attending school, for the purpose of receiving effective, formal education.
1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

1.6.1 Introduction

The specific outline that is planned to explain the procedures and techniques one intends to follow in order to study the research problem are referred to as the research design (Wisker, 2008: 279; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 57-58; Mouton, 2002: 55-57). The research design provides information on aspects such as data collection and analysis, as well as literature searches. The research design serves as the blueprint for the investigation and it ‘underpins the whole process of the thesis’ (Wisker, 2008: 373).

It is therefore used by the researcher as a plan for actualising the aim of the study.

1.6.2 Philosophical foundation

The philosophical foundation followed in this research is of an interpretive and constructivist nature, because it places the emphasis on human action, intent and communication (McFarlane, 2000: 34). McFarlane (2000: 27) further states that “the interpretive paradigm seeks to understand the world in terms of the experiences of people involved in it”. Northcutt and McCoy (2004: 342) support this statement by saying that interpretation is relative to the ability to explain why something is taking place.

The research also attempts to understand and recognise the value of the various constructions and meanings that people make of their personal life experiences and the manner in which they interpret their world. People then tend to base the construction of their world on their own unique interpretations. Goodman (1992: 119) states that people are actively involved in creating or constructing their reality, by interpreting their life world. They do not respond to external stimuli without making an attempt to understand and construe or decode them.
A phenomenological approach concentrates on what the participants have experienced and the resulting verbal expression of this lived-experience (Denscombe, 2003: 97). This research study follows a phenomenological approach, because it seeks to highlight the experiences of each participant who formed part of the sample group of the study. This means that it is grounded in the phenomenon under investigation and the experiences of the individuals.

It allows for a clearer understanding of their personal and social environments. The insight into their social realities from the perspective of the participant is therefore provided by means of empirical phenomenology (Chapoulie, 2002: 61; Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 76; Struwig & Stead, 2001: 222).

Information will be sourced from the literature study in combination with the information gained from the written accounts by adult survivors of child sexual abuse. These primary data will then be used to derive the secondary data for the quantitative findings. A literature and topic review will be undertaken to determine current research on the specific subject of the study (Potter, 2002: 118–121). This review will be an ongoing process throughout the research, and will be updated regularly as the research evolves (Kamler & Thomson, 2006: 34–35).

This process assists in establishing a solid conceptual framework for the research project.

### 1.6.3 Research paradigm

The aim of the research is to determine how the academic performance of learners at school is influenced by their having been sexually abused. The researcher will therefore conduct the research using a mixed methods approach. Qualitative research is appropriate for this study in terms of the following statement by Burns and Grové (2005: 29): "Qualitative research is a systematic, subjective approach used to describe life-experiences and give them meaning". Le Voi (Potter, 2002: 160) reinforces this with his statement, by saying that “qualitative work … entails involvement; it cannot be done in an
‘objective’, neutral, disengaged manner if it is to yield any worthwhile insight into the informant’s world”.

Using a qualitative approach will allow the researcher to gain a deeper, more meaningful understanding of the experiences, feelings and emotions of the participants.

Creswell (2003: 181) states that "qualitative research takes place in a natural setting.” It is the opinion of the researcher that, by conducting the fieldwork using narrative research, the participants will have the opportunity to work at their own pace, in their own, non-threatening environment, and they will be able to continuously update their writing as they remember incidents that may have been omitted during a previous personal interview.

Once the data from the written life stories have been gathered and analysed, the findings will be used for the secondary data analysis, namely the quantitative phase. As a result of the quantitative data being taken from the qualitative findings, the design can be described as embedded (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007: 121; Gilbert, 2006: 209; Rallis & Rossman, 2003: 496).

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The specific academic challenges that the participants have experienced at school, as a direct result of their being sexually abused, will be explored and recorded. This will be done in conjunction with an in-depth study of which strategies they have found to work the best for them when addressing these problems.

The following steps will be taken:

1.7.2 Population sample

When conducting research, the word population refers to the group of animals, people or objects from which the sample will be drawn, as well as making
reference to those whom the researcher will be writing the report about (Davies, 2007: 55). The population sample is determined, largely, by the objectives in the pre-determined research question(s).

The sample for this research study will be made up of a selection of adult survivors of child sexual abuse in the Eastern Cape Province. Every effort will be made to reflect the diverse demographical nature of the South African society in this sample group (Stringer, 2004: 50).

1.7.2 The sampling procedure

According to Davies (2007: 53), scientific research should necessarily focus on a small part or 'sample' of the greater population. In selecting participants for this study, the following factors will be taken into account (Denscombe, 2003: 15):

- The sample group must be appropriate to the objectives set.
- Sufficient participants must be recruited in the available time.
- Available participants must be drawn from a setting to which the researcher has access.
- The sample group must be as good as it can be in terms of sampling quality.

There are six choices in terms of sampling procedure, namely (Andrew & Halcomb, 2009: 1; Davies, 2007: 54; Brewer & Hunter, 1989: 111-116):

- convenience sampling;
- quota sampling;
- purposive sampling;
- simple random sample;
- stratified random sample;
- cluster sampling.

For purposes of this study, the participants will be selected by means of purposeful sampling (Davies, 2007: 57; Coolican, 2004: 42, 241; 569) and
according to their availability (Creswell, 2003: 184) for the interviews. Selection of the participants will be based on the grounds of their suitability for the purposes of this study, in accordance with certain specific criteria (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 111).

Participants will be invited to become part of the research study by means of an article concerning the proposed research, which will be placed in a previously selected newspaper supplement. Students at the local university, who are willing to become involved and who meet the selection criteria, will also be invited to participate. The selection criteria is based on the following:

Does the sample consist of:

- Adults, i.e. persons older than 21 years of age?
- Survivors of childhood sexual abuse?
- Participants who have experiences of academic problems as a result of their abuse?
- Participants from both genders?
- Participants from various language and race groups?
- Participants from all socio-economic strata?

The findings of the primary qualitative investigation will serve as the basis for the secondary quantitative investigation.

1.7.4 Data collection

Narrative enquiry has been chosen for the collection of the qualitative data. Narratives can be defined as follows:

Narratives (stories) in the human sciences should be defined … as discourses with a clear sequential order that connect events in a meaningful way … and thus offer insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it.

(Hinchman and Hinchman, 1997: xvi)

Data will therefore be collected by means of storytelling in the form of an autobiographical narrative (Burns & Grové, 2005: 544 – 546). Narratives or life
stories are considered as “... the broad term used to describe a research act that aims to obtain from the subjects detailed accounts of their lived experience” (Davies, 2007: 239).

The purpose of this method of data collection is to allow the participants to tell their life story, which will allow the researcher to understand the meaning that participants give to their lives; their experiences; their methods of adjustment; their future ideals and how they plan to reconstruct their lives. The required theoretical framework and practical evidence will be collected from the data that already exist from previous research findings and from the feedback offered by the various participants.

*The focus of our analysis is the people who tell us stories about their lives:*

*The stories themselves are a means to understand our subjects better. While stories are obviously not providing a transparent account through which we learn truths, storytelling stays closer to actual life events than methods that elicit explanations.*

(Holloway and Jefferson, 2000: 32)

Each participant will be given the opportunity to write his own life story, within a given time frame (Elliott, 2005: 3; Roberts, 2002: 173). The primary reason for conducting the research in this manner, is to prevent the research interviewer from suppressing other stories “either by training the interviewee to limit answers to short statements, or by interrupting narratives when they do occur” (Elliott, 2005: 21).

*The life story itself could vary in length and could be written at various times and revised.*

(Roberts, 2002: 34)

The researcher will be able to obtain relevant information from the participants, without the risk of placing ideas in their minds through formal, structured questions. The participants will be given guidelines (see addendum 1) as to what is required of them; and thereafter they will be given a time period in which to complete their written life story. These written accounts will be used
verbatim in the researcher’s final report on the investigation (Mouton, 2002: 118).

**Qualitative data collection**

The following open-ended question(s) will be put to the participants to gather information on the research topic:

*Tell the story of your sexual abuse and how it impacted on your life, especially your school-related activities and your academic performance during your schooling years. Please elaborate on the following:*

1. **How did you experience your abuse?**
2. **How did you express your abuse in your behaviour?**
3. **How did you cope with your school work?**

**Quantitative data collection**

For the second phase of the research, the findings of the qualitative phase will be used as the quantitative data and built upon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007: 121-125; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003: 24; Rallis & Rossman, 2003: 496). Various matrices will be drawn up to reflect the quantitative data, according to the themes and sub-themes of the qualitative results. The results from the analysis of the quantitative data will help to counterbalance the limitations of the qualitative findings (Bryman, 2006).

1.7.4.1 **The data analysis**

**Qualitative data analysis**

The data that are gathered from the narratives written by the participants will be analysed by means of *inductive* and *descriptive* analysis (Davies, 2007: 238; Hazelrigg, 2004: 69; Creswell, 2003: 199). By means of this process of analysis, any emerging themes and sub-themes will be identified by the researcher. The data will be re-coded by an independent qualitative researcher.
to determine whether the same themes emerge and can be confirmed (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 170).

The final results of the study will be reached once discussions between the researcher, the promoter and the independent re-coder have taken place.

Quantitative data analysis

Considering that this is a mixed methods study, the qualitative and quantitative data will be used in conjunction with each other to present the research findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007: 145). In this research study, both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods will be implemented. The quantitative data will be derived from the findings of the qualitative data, thus an embedded design will be used (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003: 351). Using a mixed methods approach of data analysis affords the researcher the opportunity to accomplish the five purposes of mixed methods evaluations, namely: (1) triangulation; (2) complementarity; (3) development; (4) initiation and (5) expansion (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989: 255 - 274).

1.7.4.2 Literature review

In order to form a conceptual framework for the study and thereafter to verify the achievability of the recommendations to educators, a literature study will be undertaken. Furthermore, a comparison of the results of this particular study will be done with any previous studies undertaken in this field (Denscombe, 2003: 293). The connection between information gained via research that has preceded this study, to that being discovered in the present, will be acknowledged accordingly (Murray & Moore, 2006:9; Creswell, 2003: 30-35; Rudestam & Newton, 2001: 55-60).

Oliver (2004:107) elucidates the fact that the primary objective with a literature study is to ascertain the significant research topics in the field. Creswell (2003: 27) further explains that a literature review will “help researchers limit the scope of their inquiry; and they convey the importance of studying a topic to readers”.
1.7.4.3 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an indication of the “methodological soundness and adequacy” in qualitative research (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002: 254; Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 276). Guba’s model for qualitative research will be applied to ensure trustworthiness and to confirm the authenticity of the findings (Krefting, 1991: 214-222). The four essential criteria that allow researchers to make judgements of the trustworthiness of the research are:

a) How is the credibility (truth value) of the research ensured?
b) How applicable (transferable) are the findings?
c) Is the dependability (neutrality) of the study beyond any doubt?
d) Was confirmability (dependability) established?

The written life stories and field notes will form an audit trail that will allow the research process to be checked (Rudestam & Newton, 2001:99; Struwig & Stead, 2001: 172). Through this, the trustworthiness of the research will be confirmed. This will be discussed fully in Chapter 4.

With regard to ensuring the trustworthiness of the quantitative section of the study, content validity will be used (De Vos, 1998: 84). Validity and reliability will not be applicable for the quantitative investigation by means of a statistical calculation. A qualified statistician will “quantitize” (Sandelowski, 2003) the findings.

1.7.4.4 Ethical measures

Every researcher has the responsibility to conform to a morally acceptable code of conduct when conducting a research project. This is in line with the code of conduct, as determined by the scientific community (Mouton, 2002: 238).

Researchers are obliged to adhere to the following (Le Voi, 2002: 160-163):

- Professional ethics
- Responsibility towards society
All participants will be assured of the confidential nature of the research and that they have the right to remain anonymous (Stringer, 2004: 53). According to Mouton (2002: 243), the collection of data in any form from participants should comply with the conditions of anonymity. All participating respondents will be requested to give their written informed consent for the research (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004: 207; Gregory, 2003: 60-65; Pack-Brown & Williams, 2003: 9).

Gregory (2003: 33) and Creswell (2003: 64-67) contend that ethical considerations such as equity, honesty and humane considerations, must be taken into account during the research process. In this study, these ethical measures will be adhered to as strictly as possible.

Pack-Brown and Williams (2003: 54) state that “culture controls the lives of people and defines reality”. Therefore the cultural context of each participant will be taken into consideration when the participants are chosen and the fieldwork is being conducted (Pack-Brown & Williams, 2003: 56-64). All participants will be assured of the confidential nature of the research and that they have the right to privacy and to remain anonymous (Stringer, 2004: 53). The collection of data in any format should comply with the conditions of anonymity (Mouton, 2002: 243). The researcher will also apply for ethics clearance from the Research Ethics Committee at the university.

1.7.4.5 Report of the findings and results

The results will be presented in this manuscript to provide the information required to determine the nature of the challenges experienced by learners in the classroom environment who have been sexually abused. The first-hand experiences of these participants will be reported in combination with existing theory. This will allow the researcher to develop and recommend strategies to
guide and empower educators in the difficult and sensitive task of identifying and dealing with a sexually abused learner.

Besides the above-mentioned, the researcher will write an article for publication in an accredited journal. Workshops will be arranged for educators, during which provision will be made for their input, experiences, guidance and any questions they may have. The research findings will also be presented at educational conferences.

1.8 THE RESEARCH PLAN

In Chapter One, an introduction is given to highlight the existing situation regarding the research problem. The primary and secondary research questions are stated and the research aims are explained. Following this is the clarification of the concepts relevant to the research, namely sexual abuse, academic performance and learner. This is followed by an explanation of the research design and methodology, and the research plan.

Chapter Two will present the theoretical perspective on the nature and effects of child sexual abuse.

Chapter Three will cover the various learning theories, the process of effective learning and the factors that influence academic performance.

Chapter Four will give an exposition of the chosen research design and methodology. The size, characteristics and selection of the research group will also be discussed. The procedures used to gather the data will be described. The techniques used to analyse the data will also be explained.

The findings of the qualitative fieldwork and the quantitative investigation will be presented and interpreted in Chapter Five.

Chapter Six will contain the conclusions, recommendations, implications, limitations and suggestions for further research. The conclusion of this study
will come from a blend of the findings from the literature study and the empirical study.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has given an overview of the background to the study, the problem statement, the research aims, a clarification of the concepts, the research design, the methodology and the research plan.

In Chapter 2, the nature and effects of child sexual abuse will be highlighted and discussed more fully.
CHAPTER TWO
THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Child sexual abuse is a global societal problem of gargantuan proportions, with its origin dating back to ancient times (De Witt, 2009: 331; Guma & Henda, 2007: 95; Bromberg & Johnson, 2001: 343; Fouché, 2001: 15; Smith, 1992: 130). Without exception, every child is at risk of being sexually abused. Prior to disclosure, a child becomes particularly vulnerable to further victimisation by the same or other offenders, because he has not received protection, counselling and support (Munro, 2000: 1).

In South Africa over the past twenty years, a greater awareness of child sexual abuse has taken place and this is largely as a result of the rise in disturbing and horrific incidences of babies and young children being sexually victimised. This victimisation is often very inhumane and brutal, frequently resulting in the death of, or the permanent damaging of the child (Jewkes 2007: 130; Richter, Dawes & Higson-Smith, 2007: 3 & 7; Townsend & Dawes, 2007: 55).

Meyer and Kotzé (1994: 137-139) suggest three main reasons why child sexual abuse has only recently been more exposed - over the past two decades - compared with the situation as it was previously, namely:

- The incest taboo. The act of incest has been forbidden in most cultures for centuries, but it has unfortunately also served as a prohibition to talking about sexual abuse and the disclosure thereof.
- Moralistic sexual inheritance from the Victorian era. Consideration has been given to the very strict, moralistic view of sexuality during the Victorian era and the impact this has had on non-disclosure of the sexual abuse of children.
- The intellectual-scientific point of view has also contributed to the poor judgement in assessing the impact of child sexual abuse. Freud’s theories of child sexuality played a role in the exposure of CSA. However, his emergence with the “seduction theory” (sexual molestation
being linked to childhood sexual fantasies) seriously hampered further research in this area.

Despite the growing awareness, the difficulty in identifying and defining child sexual abuse is linked directly to the diversity in cultural differences relating to child-rearing practices. As a result, there is a disparity regarding which actions are tantamount to child sexual abuse and which are not (Guma & Henda, 2007: 95).

All children have very specific human rights and these have been ratified by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). This ratification is symbolic in terms of cultivating and applying policies intended to defend the rights of children (Richter, Dawes & Higson-Smith, 2007: ix). Despite the development and ratification of these children’s rights, there are still numerous daily accounts of children who have been sexually molested.

The following three headlines appeared in newspapers from Port Elizabeth in November 2009 over a short period of two days:

Women’s “saviour” up for daughter’s abuse: “Gut feeling” led toddler’s mother to shock red-handed discovery.  

(Weekend Post, 21 November 2009)

Anger at “slap on the wrist” for man who molested step-granddaughters

(Weekend Post, 21 November 2009)

Bay rugby star held over rape of child

(The Herald, 23 November 2009)

Although these reports are only the tip of the ice-berg in terms of reported and unreported cases in Port Elizabeth, they confirm the fact that child sexual abuse, as in the past, is ongoing and continues to impact on the lives of young victims.
In September 2002, the shocking incident of the vicious and savage rape of a six-year old Johannesburg girl made headlines:

*Picture of child rape too horrific to publish*
(The Sunday Tribune: 2002)

Professor Peter Beale, a paediatric surgeon at the Johannesburg hospital, challenged The Star newspaper to publish the photographs taken of the young victim in a bid to shock South Africa into taking action against the scourge of child rape. However, the photos were described as “so graphic, and so horrific” that The Star decided not to print them.

According to the reporter, Bhule Khumalo, “the colon of the child, whom we have named Lerato, can be seen hanging out between her thin legs - like a grotesque red cauliflower. The perineum, the skin between her rectum and vagina, has been ripped away” (Khumalo, 2002).

Social problems, such as unemployment, poverty, lack of adequate care, lack of physical safety and lack of adequate health care, play a large part in the incidence of child sexual abuse (Townsend & Dawes, 2007: 70). Many children are living in a small home with several other children and adults, some of whom may not be blood relations. The lack of space forces children of both genders and adults to sleep together.

Such intimate sharing of personal space exposes these children to adult sexual activity from a very young age, which may lead to premature sexual curiosity. This places them at risk of being sexually abused and exploited.

Taking the above-mentioned factors into account, the researcher will embark on an investigation into the impact of child sexual abuse on the school-related activities of learners.

### 2.2 SEXUAL ABUSE THROUGH THE AGES

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, is not a new phenomenon and can be traced back to the beginning of time. It is a worldwide societal occurrence that has existed throughout history, irrespective of culture and ethnicity (Louw &
The practice of incest was permitted by the gods in ancient Egypt (Kriel, 1991). It is believed that this was possibly only of relevance to royalty, because the Pharaoh, who was purportedly of divine origin, had to ensure the purity of his lineage. This resulted in the Pharaoh having sexual relationships with his immediate blood relatives (Najovits, 2004: 168). It is recorded that Rameses the second married three of his own daughters and two of his biological sisters (Robins, 1983: 69). Early civilizations deserted malformed or unwanted children and some practised the ritual of sacrificing children to satisfy their gods (Pomeroy, 1983: 207-218).

2.2.1 The ancient Greeks and Romans

Sexual abuse was common in Greek and Roman societies, where children were often sold into prostitution (Herrin, 1983: 170). Typically, the father exercised this power. In ancient Rome, fathers had the authority to sell, kill, maim, sacrifice, or otherwise do with a child as they saw fit (Fletcher, 1995: xv; Hallett, 1984: 143). Historically, children were considered the property of parents, generally the father, who was considered to be the head of the home, had free reign to discipline and to do what he wished with his children (Louw & Louw, 2007[b]:3).

In ancient Greece, the use of boys for the sexual gratification of adults was a common occurrence and castrated slave boys were available for buying and selling (De Mause, 1976). This attitude varied from one culture to another, but in essence held the same message of “the male dominance of discipline and moral authority” (Hallett, 1984: 218; Stone, 1977: 7).

2.2.2 Elizabethan England

According to Renvoize (1993: 30), there has never been a time when children did not receive the sexual attention either of family members, or other members
of society. In order to control the sale of children for prostitution, regulations were brought about in terms of which it was legal for the young to have their first experience of intercourse. One such an example was in Elizabethan England, where the age was 10 for girls and was progressively raised to the present day age of 16 (Renvoize, 1993: 30).

Researchers indicate that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was a greater awareness of and involvement to restrain sexuality amongst children and adolescence (Stone, 1977: 511).

Often the law of incest was broken, because of the overcrowding in small houses. In many such instances there were adolescents living in the home, which increased the incidence of incest (Stone, 1977: 491; 520). This overcrowding and acts of incest can still be found in modern times and is generally a result of poverty and unemployment (De Witt, 2009: 309; Du Plessis & Conley, 2007; Melton & Thompson, 2002: 8-9; Le Roux & Gildenhuys, 1994: 46).

Research indicates that, historically, much of the unjustifiable abuse of children is as a result of overpopulation, in terms of parents not being able to care for the wellbeing of all the children in the family (Mitchell, 2008: 220). Parents, therefore, often tried to dispose of the child. As a result, the extensive practice of infanticide took hold in many cultures and often it was the female baby/child who suffered, because she would be the one to eventually bear more children (Louw & Louw, 2007: 3; Hobbs, et al., 1993: 9).

2.2.4 Folklore and incestuous relationships

Researchers have also found that ancient folk tales from various countries depict the stories of child sexual abuse and incestuous relationships (Malimabe-Ramagoshi, Maree, Alexander & Molepo, 2007: 433-448; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 137). Malimabe-Ramagoshi, et al., (2007) discuss the role that folk tales may play in the justification and perpetuation of child abuse in certain cultures, such as in certain Setswana folktales.
Shannon (1981: 34) states that “parents may abuse due to greed, jealousy, vanity, as well as uncontrolled anger and illness, and this is reflected in folk-literature.” The Grimm brothers wrote numerous fairy tales, many of which told the story of the life of a sexually abused child (Cech, 2006: 141). An example is the story of “All-Kinds-of-Fur” (Ashliman, 2008: 3). In this story, a beautiful queen falls ill and on her deathbed, she made the king promise not to marry another who was not as beautiful as she was.

At the time of his remarriage, he could only find one person as beautiful as his deceased wife: his daughter. The main theme in many folk tales from around the world is that of a young girl or woman who feels that her life is in jeopardy, because of the sexual advances made towards her by a male member of her family.

The oldest folktale that depicts a fathers’ incestuous desires and advances on his daughter is “The Facetious Nights”, written by Giovanni Francesco Straparola, and it was published in Venice in 1550 (Ashliman, 2008: 4). The forced secrecy surrounding the crime of incest is also found in early folktales, such as “The Girl without Hands”. The loss of her hands becomes symbolic of her not being able to control her world or protect herself, while being abused by, for example, her father: the very person whom she trusts as her protector, but who is violating her.

Considering that so many folktales from around the globe focus on the sexual abuse of children in an often subtle and underlying manner, one has to wonder whether the author(s) were aware of the reality of the problem and the nature and extent of the trauma that was experienced by these young victims.

2.3 A RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE

Besides the early books of the Bible detailing references to incest, such as in the book of Genesis 19: 29-38 and Leviticus 18: 6, they also indicate repeated
warnings against incest, by prophets, such as Ezekiel (The Bible Society of South Africa, 1988). This then implies that incest was not uncommon in Biblical times (Meyer & Kotzé, 1996: 137).

In Europe, during the Middle Ages (c.350-c.1450), unwanted, healthy children were sent to work as apprentices, or offered to the churches for the convents and monasteries. There is evidence of child sexual and other abuse taking place under the cloak of many religions; and it is considered to be an accepted part of many religions (Le Roux & Lintott, 1998: 348).

2.3.1 The Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church further fuelled the fires for infanticide, when it stated that malformed infants were a sign of evil, because they were the offspring of intercourse between women and demons, or animals. Child sexual abuse and molestation within the Roman Catholic Church has been an ongoing scourge for many decades; and yet many cases often remain unreported.

According to Cardinal Wilfred Napier (Du Preez, 2002), "there is no law in South Africa that binds one to report them, except in very limited circumstances. If the victim is older and tells us he doesn’t want the case to go to the courts, why must we expose him to a process he doesn’t want to get involved in?"

However, this attitude is not supported by the head of the South African Catholic Bishops, Archbishop Buti Tlhagale, of Bloemfontein who says, "All cases should be reported to the police and the courts, otherwise it sends a double message. We cannot say some crimes should be reported and others should be dealt with privately. It is not only a church matter; it’s also a question of human rights" (Du Preez, 2002).

We dare not underestimate, even for a moment, the sensitivity around sexual abuse, especially by men who claim to be the moral guardians of society, by men who claim to be speaking in the name of Jesus Christ.

(Du Preez, 2002)
Father Tom Doyle is a canon lawyer, who had a diplomatic career in the Vatican. His employment was terminated after his criticism of how the church approached the issue of child sexual abuse. A secret document known as “Crimen Solicitationis” is a prescriptive policy regarding the way in which the Catholic Church should deal with sexual abuse of children by priests (BBC News: 2006).

It was enforced by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger for 20 years, before he was appointed pope. The document was written in 1962 in Latin and circulated to Catholic bishops across the globe.

The imposition of an “oath of secrecy on the child victim, the priest dealing with the allegation and any witness” clearly indicates that the Catholic Church was trying to hide the scandals regarding priests involved in child sexual abuse (BBC News, 2006). Should anyone break the oath as set out, it would mean that person’s “excommunication from the Catholic Church” (Guma & Henda, 2007: 104; BBC News, 2006).

The following media headlines and extracts from articles indicate that the sexual abuse of children by the clergy is an ongoing and worldwide occurrence:

Paedophile priests’- victims slam Napier
(Mail & Guardian Online: 2006)

Defrocked priest Paul Shanley is serving a 12-to-15-year prison sentence after being convicted in 2005 of repeatedly raping and fondling a boy at a Newton parish in the 1980s.
(Grieco, 2008)

Sex crimes and the Vatican
(BBC News: 2006)

Sexual Abuse has plunged the Church into crisis
(The Star: 2003)

Church man jailed for rape
A prominent figure in the Apostolic Church community in Atteridgeville has been sentenced to 18 years’ imprisonment by the Pretoria High Court for raping an 11-year-old girl.

(The Mercury: 2003)

**A Sequel to the Case of the Pregnant 9-year Old**

The Vatican was excommunicating the family of a local girl who had been raped and impregnated with twins by her stepfather, because they had chosen to have the girl undergo an abortion. "God's laws," said the archbishop, "dictate that abortion is a sin and transgressors are no longer welcome in the Roman Catholic Church".

(Israeli, 2009)

Researchers and victims alike have repeatedly indicated the abuse of children by members of the Catholic Church and the apathy with which offending priests are dealt with (Fenton, 2008: 75; Salter, 2003: 2 & 228; Gomes-Schwartz, Horowitz & Cardarelli, 1990: 54-55). Salter (2003: 10) comments, “Catholics should not be afraid to let their children be altar boys”.

John Fenton is a 64-year-old man who was sent to St. Vincent’s school, run by Catholic Irish Brothers. Here the boys were physically and sexually tormented and abused. After his first visit home from St Vincent’s to his mother and his abusive father, his mother summed up his account of abuse at the school as follows:

… Catholic clergy and the way they behave. I knew what they were like … and how many of them have appeared in the Sunday papers for abusing young boys? … They are notorious for their cruelty. Nothing you have told me surprises me.

(Fenton, 2008: 75)

Although it has not been made as public as the abuse from within the Catholic Church, other denominations, such as the Anglican Church have also shown a passive reaction to priests who have been convicted for having sexually molested, abused and sodomised boys within the church (Perry, 2004). It is not known whether the incidence rate is less than that in the Catholic Church, but case studies of child sexual abuse from other churches have not been as readily available as a source of information for this study.
The sexual abuse of children by the clergy, irrespective of which denomination, is widely condemned and often results in a negative response to religion and Christianity in particular. In contrast to this, there are many documented cases where adult survivors of child sexual abuse have found solace, peace, forgiveness and a sense of freedom because of their faith (Donihue, 2001: 84; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 265; Bass & Davis, 1988: 52).

2.3.2 Satanism

Satanism, or devil worship, is considered as a religion that is in “direct conflict” with Christianity and there are no restrictions on members in terms of age, race or social standing. Huisamen (1990: 14) indicated that children between the ages of ten and sixteen are frequently involved. Jonker (1991: 46) and Huisamen (1990: 14) are of the opinion that Satanism concentrates on children, because of their vulnerability and the fact that they can be easily convinced to take part in sexual activities.

Ritual abuse is a form of child sexual abuse that is generally linked to Satanism and has only recently been identified. As such, it is not fully understood and is quite a contentious issue. The controversy stems from the many difficulties that arise in trying to prove such cases. There are also some professionals who have difficulty in believing in the existence of ritual abuse.

Sexual abuse is often a secondary form of victimisation in ritual abuse, with the physical and psychological abuse being more dominant. There are a multitude of characteristics that may be present in cases of ritual abuse, such as:

- The wearing of costumes and robes, such as those depicting animals, a witch, a devil; ecclesiastical robes (black, red, purple, white);
- The conducting of ceremonies, such as black masses, burials, weddings, sacrifices;
- The use of symbols: 666, inverted crosses, pentagrams, and inverted pentagrams;
• Wearing or holding different artefacts, such as crosses, athames (daggers), skulls, candles, black draping, representations of Satan;
• The use of bodily excretions and fluids, such as blood, urine, faeces and semen in the ceremonies;
• The administration and taking of drugs, medicines, injections and/or potions;
• The use of fire;
• Inclusion of chants and songs during the ceremonies;
• The use of religious sites, such as churches, graveyards, graves, altars and coffins for rituals and ceremonies; and
• Physical abuse that includes torture, being tied up, confinement and even murder.

Reports and descriptions of ritual abuse are extremely disturbing, to both those people who are recounting the abuse, as well as to those hearing of it. In South Africa two prominent Satanistic groups exist, namely The Order of Darkness and The Fraternity of Aries (Le Roux & Lintott, 1998: 333). According to Gardiner (1990: 81), Satanists in South Africa are well organized and they involve children by means of enticing them with games of the occult and by the use of narcotics.

The Child Protection Unit of the South African Police Services discovered evidence of various forms of sexual abuse and the molestation of children for satanic purposes (Le Roux & Lintott, 1998: 334 & 336). An example is that of young girls being purposefully impregnated and used as “breeders”. The babies are then sacrificed to Satan. The babies are often aborted and the foetuses are then used in various rituals (Le Roux & Lintott, 1998: 334 & 336). Children are also being sodomised and raped in some of these rituals, for example the Da Muer ritual that occurs annually on 25 April (Le Roux & Lintott, 1998: 334 & 336).

2.4 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS
2.4.1 Child

The legal definition of the term *child*, according to the South African Constitution, is any person under the age of 18 (Criminal Law Act, 32 of 2007; Louw & Louw, 2007[b]: 6).

2.4.2 Sexual abuse

Researchers state that attempting to give a definition of child sexual abuse and determining the impact thereof is a complicated undertaking (Fallon & Ackard, 2004: 117; Haugaard, 2000: 1036-1039; Beckmann, 1994: 230; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 1). This is because existing definitions of childhood sexual abuse are diverse and cover a wide range of factors. The South African Law Commission recognises sexual offences against children as either common law offences, or statutory offences (South African Law Commission, 2009).

The following quotes give a general overview of the different definitions of sexual abuse:

*Child sexual abuse is the sexual molestation of children by adults, or older children (sexual, here meaning any activity that leads to sexual arousal in the perpetrator). The abuse may range from voyeurism and exhibitionism to oral, vaginal or anal penetration. It may be perpetrated by single or multiple perpetrators, on one or more occasions and associated with other types of abuse.*

(Barker & Hodes, 2007: 35)

*... any illegal sexual act, which is committed against a child. It includes rape, fondling of the genitals or breasts, sodomy, exhibitionism, exposing the child to indecent acts and using a child in the production of pornography.*

(Louw, Duncan, Richter and Louw, 2007: 363)

*... a lack of regard for physical boundaries and extreme sexualised intrusiveness. The parent (adult) engages in sexually seductive and over-stimulating behaviour with the*
The definition of child sexual abuse given by The World Health Organization includes “coerced sex, incest, date rape, virginity testing, forced marriage, sexual harassment, and involvement in prostitution and pornography” (WHO, 2002).

The South African Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 defines sexual abuse as: “any conduct that abuses, humiliates, degrades, or otherwise violates the sexual integrity of the complainant”.

According to Meyer and Kotzé (1994:139), and Bezuidenhout (2008 [b]: 55-56), most definitions of child sexual abuse generally include the following:

- Sexual exploitation of a child by an adult.
- Such exploitation can vary in type and it is aimed specifically at the "sexual gratification of the adult".
- The child is unable to give legal consent to the sexual activities that the adult involves him in, because he is a minor and “does not fully understand” such sexual activities.
- The adult perpetrator disregards the “psychosocial level of development” of the child.
- The sexual offence contravenes “existing social norms and nurturing values” to which the child should be exposed.

For the purposes of this study the following working definition will be used:

*Child sexual abuse is the invasive, inappropriate and criminal sexual action of adults abusing innocent and immature children for their personal sexual gratification, without taking into the account the long-term physical and psychological effects thereof on the young victim.*

### 2.4.3 Academic performance
Academic performance is more than a mere reflection of a level of achievement. It refers to the manner in which learners are able to master the content taught to them in such a way that they are able to apply that knowledge effectively in other similar situations, whether this be in the classroom; on the sports field; or learning a cultural activity (Louw & Louw 2007: 221).

2.4.4 Learning

Learning is considered to be a fairly permanent modification of performance ability that occurs through experience (Radvansky, 2006: 2 & 383; Morgan, 2002: 12). This definition is supported by Hergenhahn and Olson, (2005: 3), who state that after having learned something, children are then able to do something which they were not able to do prior to the learning taking place. Social learning is the process through which living beings acquire behaviour by observing those around them in various social settings (Swart & Phasha, 2007: 214; Wink & Putney, 2001: 60; Morgan, 2002: 178).

2.4.5 Learner

A learner takes part in the act of learning and is therefore active in the learning process. Race (2005: 160) states that by means of processing the information received, learners internalise such knowledge.

2.8 PREVALENCE OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Prevalence refers to the percentage of any population that have experienced a specific phenomenon (Richter, et al., 2004: 280; Browne, Hanks, Stratton & Hamilton, 2002: 16). In the case of this study, it refers to the percentage of people in the population who have been sexually abused. According to Statistics South Africa (2000: 9), none of the studies available from which reliable statistics could be taken were designed with the specific aim of measuring the prevalence or the incidence of rape in this country. However, according to Shilumani (2004: 1), in accordance with a national survey that was conducted by the National Health Department, as many as
21 427 cases of child sexual abuse in the age range 0-17 were reported to the South African Police Services (SAPS) in the year 2000. A total of 1,5% of the women who were questioned indicated that they had been raped before the age of 15 (Shilumani, 2004: 1).

Shilumani (2004: 1) of the National Department of Health states that the definition and the data source of statistics used will define the prevalence of child sexual abuse.

Rape statistics for South Africa continue to spiral on a daily basis. Interpol has revealed that South Africa is the country with the highest rape rate in the world (www.rape.co.za 2008). According to Interpol, a woman is raped every 17 seconds in South Africa and this figure excludes child rape victims. This implies that the risk ratio for women to be exposed to the possibility of being raped is 1:2 (www.rape.co.za 2008).

In the table that follows on page 42, it indicates that, of all the selected countries, South Africa had the highest number of reported rape cases (119,5 per hundred thousand people) in 1996. The figures shown include attempted rape and the rape of children. If women 18 years and older are included, the number of reported rape cases in South Africa in 1996 was 73 per 100 000 of the population (Hirschowitz, Worku, & Orkin, 2000: 28).

Table 2.1: Rape statistics from selected countries for 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Cases of rape reported to the police</th>
<th>Volume of reported rape per 100 000 population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>50481</td>
<td>119,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>1 744</td>
<td>105,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>1 101</td>
<td>68,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>59,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>50,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>95769</td>
<td>36,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>1287</td>
<td>35,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>7150</td>
<td>21,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>2792</td>
<td>23,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1608</td>
<td>18,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>3460</td>
<td>16,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>1571</td>
<td>10,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>11,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td>4594</td>
<td>8,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>7 191</td>
<td>12,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1 139</td>
<td>2,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>9,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>1259</td>
<td>3,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>1811</td>
<td>4,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### 2.9 INCIDENCE OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

*Incidence* refers to the number of new reported child sexual abuse cases each year (Statistics South Africa, 2000: 9). Researcher, Earl-Taylor, states that South Africa is the country with the highest incidence of rape and child rape in the world (Earl-Taylor, 2002:1):

… 21,000 child rapes, and some 37,000 adult rapes, were reported in South Africa last year (2001). According to the South African Police Service, only one in 35 are actually reported. The actual incidence of rape could well be in excess of a million per year. It can only be speculated and extrapolated then that the actual incidence of child/infant rape has reached alarming and phenomenal proportions that should signal urgent intervention from the highest levels of government and also from society-at-large.

The high incidence of child rape of children in South Africa has been widely reported for many years. The annual SAPS report released in September 2005,
indicated that in 40.8% of reported rape cases during 2004/05, the victims were children (Bezuidenhout, 2008 [b]: 58). The Human Sciences Research Council and the South African Police Service worked together on “Project Elliah”.

This was a research project focusing on the pattern of crimes against children. “Project Elliah” found that in the time period July 1994 to June 1995, 18 424 child-related crimes were reported to the Child Protection Unit. Of these, 62% were crimes of a sexual nature (Van As, et al., 2001). Research indicates that most of the rape cases in South Africa occur over weekends (See Figure 2.1), with the majority of the cases being reported on Saturdays (Hirschowitz, Worku, & Orkin, 2000: 26).

According to the executive director of Solidarity Helping Hand, Danie Langner, "In 2007/08 … it was found that 45% of all rapes in the country were child rapes" (Romanian National Vanguard News Agency, 2009). Spokesperson for Solidarity Helping Hand, Mariana Kriel, stated that there are approximately 60 cases of child rape in South Africa daily; in excess of 88% of all child rapes during this period were never reported. “This means that about 530 child rapes take place every day – one rape every three minutes,” she said (Romanian National Vanguard News Agency, 2009).

Langner stated that an estimated 80% of all children under the age of two that are helped at Childline Port Elizabeth have skull fractures. He also mentioned that young boys are unashamedly abused by middle-aged men at advertised places in the Western Cape; furthermore, as many as 43% of all cases in which Childline South Africa is involved are those of sexually abused children. Langner expressed dismay at these facts by stating that such abuse of children needs to be exposed (Romanian National Vanguard News Agency, 2009).

Figure 2.1: Rape statistics – days of the week
The nature of sexual abuse has an enormous impact on the life of a victim, not only while the abuse is taking place, but research indicates the impact on adulthood (Spies, 2006: 58; Freyd, 2002: 139; Matlin, 2000: 488; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 64; Gomes-Schwartz, et al., 1990: 19 - 21). There are several factors relating to the nature of sexual abuse. These have been identified as:

- The frequency and duration of the abuse;
- The type of sexual abuse inflicted;
- The relationship between the victim and perpetrator;
- Any form of physical force associated with the abuse;
- The number of perpetrators; and
- The age of onset of abuse.

(Hirschowitz, Worku and Orkin. 2000)
Children are sexually abused in various ways and the abuse can be split into different types. The following broad categories of abuse have been identified (Bezuidenhout, 2008 [b]: 55; Dawes, Borel-Saladin & Parker 2007: 198; Johnson, 2004: 462; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 15-18):

- **Non-contact** sexual activities, such as sexual comments directed at the child, revealing sex organs to the child and voyeurism (deriving sexual pleasure by secretly watching other people engage in sexual intercourse or watching them disrobe [Collins, 2006: 1629]).
- **Sexual** contact activities, such as caressing and mutual masturbation.
- **Oral** sexual activities, such as sucking of breasts and tongue kissing.
- **Penetrative** sexual activities.

Researchers distinguish between two specific forms of sexual abuse, namely the following:

### 2.10.1 Intra-familial

Intra-familial sexual abuse (incest) takes place within the family or extended family, where the perpetrator is a family member (Ambrosino, Heffernan, Shuttlesworth & Ambrosino, 2005: 318; Nel, 2003: 7). Incest can occur between (a) “blood relations”, where both parties are descendants from the same ancestor(s); (b) two parties related by marriage, such as “a spouse and the blood relation of the other spouse”; and (c) an adopted child and his adoptive parent (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 140).

#### 2.10.1.1 Different categories of incest

Incest can be categorised according to who the perpetrator is and what the relationship is between the perpetrator and the child victim (Lawrence & Janse van Rensburg, 2006: 132; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 140). Dawes, *et al.*, (2007: 181), define incest as follows:

> ... a common law crime and could be applied to a situation of intra-familial child sexual abuse.
(i) Father-daughter

Most literature sources discuss father-daughter incest as the main form of intra-familial molestation (Tower, 1998: 169; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 161). Spies (2006: 5) stated that according to available statistics stepfathers or biological fathers are usually the offenders in 70% - 80% of the reported cases of incest. In such families, the father’s role is one of a rigid, controlling authoritarian, as the head of the family.

(ii) Father-son

Although not as widely researched and documented as father-daughter incest, father-son incest does occur. Smith (1992: 132) mentions four possible reasons for the under-reporting of the abuse of boys: (1) the male ethic of self-reliance; (2) notions of youthful male sexuality; (3) different patterns of supervision of boys within a family and (4) gender-mediated responses to the abuse. Tower (1998: 171) mentions that as a result of sodomy, the child victim generally experiences a combination of emotional and physical pain.

(iii) Mother-son

Spies (2006: 6) mentions that mother-son incest could be as much as 10% of all reported cases of incest. Apparently, it seldom occurs in families that are functioning adequately and where the family unit is intact. Very few cases of mother-son incest are reported mainly because: (1) statistically mothers do not abuse their sons as often as fathers abuse their daughters; (2) activities that the mother and son participate in together, such as the mother bathing the young son in an inappropriate manner, are used to disguise the abuse and (3) the seriousness of the taboo relating to mother-son incest, contributes to the decision by the son not to report the abuse (De Witt, 2009: 333-334; Spies, 2006: 6).
(iv) Sibling incest

When a younger sibling is enticed or bribed into taking part in sexual activities with an older brother or sister, it is also a form of the abuse of power. The abusive sibling is generally older and physically stronger than the victim. According to Spies (2006: 6), sibling incest is considered to be the most common form of incest. It is estimated that it occurs five times more often that parent-child incest.

(v) Incest by extended family members

There are various combinations of incest by extended family members, such as uncle-niece; grandfather-granddaughter and sexual abuse by first cousins. Irrespective of who the perpetrator is, if there is a direct link to the family, the trauma is significant for the victim, because of the violation of the relationship of trust (Ambrosino, et al., 2005: 318-319; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 164).

Sexual abuse may also be extra-familial, i.e. where the perpetrator is not a family member, but may be someone known to the family, such as teachers, religious ministers, social workers, doctors, or a complete stranger. When the perpetrator is a respected, well-known member of the community, it places the family in a very complicated situation, especially when it comes to reporting the abuse to the authorities and laying a criminal charge (De Witt, 2009: 331-333; Barker & Hodes, 2007: 37; Bezuidenhout, 2008 [b]: 55; Spies, 2006: 5-12; Olafson, 2002: 71; Lewis, 1999: 101-107; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 140)

2.7.1.2 Different categories of extra-familial child sexual abuse

Many types of child sexual abuse have been recognised and documented, and include, but are not limited to, sodomy, indecent exposure (exhibitionism), incest, rape, statutory rape, sexual molestation, prostitution, paedophilia, sexual sadism, masochism and pornography (Bezuidenhout, 2008 [b]: 55; Louw, et al.,

(i) **Sodomy** has been defined as two male humans engaging in anal intercourse (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 142). Such “anal-genital” physical contact between a man and a young boy is considered as “immoral assault”.

(ii) **Indecent exposure** (exhibitionism) refers to when a man displays his genitals to women, girls and boys. This act is aimed at inducing shock in the onlookers. Meyer and Kotzé (1994: 143) state that exhibitionism is “the exposure of an adult man’s genitalia to girls, boys and women.”

(iii) **Incest** is any sexual activity that takes place between relatives, even those that are not necessarily biologically related. The offender can then be a step-parent or non-related step-siblings (Lawrence & Janse van Rensburg, 2006: 132; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 140).

(iv) **Rape** is the crime committed when a person is forced to have sex, normally by means of violence, or by being threatened (Collins, 2006: 1183; Lawrence & Janse van Rensburg, 2006: 129).

(v) **Statutory rape** refers to sexual intercourse that takes place between adults and children under the age of 16 (Dawes, *et al.*, 2007: 181; Cheit & Braslow, 2006: 86; Lawrence & Janse van Rensburg, 2006: 133).

(vi) **Sexual molestation** implies the introduction of dependent and developing children to various styles of sexual stimulation that they are not yet able to cope with and that are also inappropriate for their “psychosexual development” (De Witt, 2009: 327; Barker & Hodes, 2007: 35).
(vii) **Prostitution** is the act of providing sexual favours for financial benefits, and it includes both genders. Children are often prostituted by their parents, or caregivers for the sake of the income they can bring home. Many street children prostitute themselves to earn money to provide for themselves (O’Connell Davidson, 2000: 54; Swart-Kruger & Richter, 1994: 275; Kempe & Kempe, 1984: 13).

(viii) **Paedophilia** is derived from the Latin words *paedo*, meaning child and *philia*, meaning love. A paedophile, however, does not provide a caring, nurturing love for children, but displays sexual preferences for children in pre-pubertal or post-pubertal stages of development (Van Niekerk, 2006: 105; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 141).

(ix) **Sexual sadism** refers to the sexual pleasure that is derived by the perpetrator in hurting children, through the infliction of cruelty and suffering (Corwin, 2002: 10). Salter (2003: 97) defines sexual sadism as follows: “sexual attraction to pain, suffering, terror or humiliation: simply put, sadists hurt people for the sexual thrill it gives them”.

(x) **Sexual masochism** is the tendency to derive erotic pleasure from the infliction of pain, humiliation or destruction of oneself (Penguin, 2001: 413; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 143).

(xi) **Pornography** is defined by Spies, (2006(a): 24) as: “any image of a person under the age of 18 years who is displaying his or her genitals, or who is shown as being engaged in sexual conduct, real or simulated. This involves the exploitation, or degradation of children. It involves the production, distribution and/or use of …the visual depiction of sexual images of children”.

(xi) **Child trafficking** is the recruitment of children from their homes, with the aim of taking them to work elsewhere for reasons such as: commercial sexual exploitation; exploitive labour practice; or the removal of body parts (United Nations, 2000). According to Adv.
Retha Meintjes SC, President of SAPSAC (The South African Professional Society on the Abuse of Children), in South Africa females can be sold for between R2500 and R12 000. In Port Elizabeth, trafficked children can earn anything between R1500 and R5000 per day for their traffickers (SAPSAC, 2009).

In accordance with The White Paper on a National Child Labour Action Programme (2003: 29), the children who are the most vulnerable to this exploitation are generally those who already find themselves in disadvantageous situations. Trafficking exacerbates the situation that these children find themselves in and is considered as being one of the worst types of child labour (Higson-Smith & Richter, 2007: 167-173).

2.8 THE PHASES OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse generally follows a pattern of development through various stages, although it may be found to happen once-off, should the perpetrator find that the circumstances are in his favour. Depending on the circumstances, the abuse can occur over a very short span of time, or it may take place over several years. Sexual abuse will have a different effect on each child, in terms of the psychological and physical impact the experience has on the child.

Researchers have demarcated five phases of sexual abuse (Crosson-Tower, 2005: 126-128; Spies, 2007: 46; Giardino, 2002: 12; Paine & Hanson, 2002; and Sgroi 1982: 71). These phases are:

2.8.1 Engagement phase

This is the initial stage in the perpetrators approach to the child victim. He engages the child and convinces the child that the actions and behaviour between them are acceptable. Because children do not have the knowledge or physical power to resist being abused or to protect themselves, they are often exposed to further abuse. Research
conducted by Spies (2007: 46) indicates that children react in three possible ways:

- **Flight**: the decision to run away from the abuser;
- **Fight**: the decision to face and confront the abuser, or
- **Play dead**: altering the state of consciousness to the point where the child “does not feel the pain of the experience.”

Pretorius (1998: 368) confirms that a child who is being sexually abused may attempt to break away from the situation that he finds himself in, by either (a) attempting to escape backwards (flight), i.e. *regression*; (b) attempting to escape forwards (fight), i.e. *aggression*, or (c) attempting to escape inwards (play dead), i.e. *isolation*.

### 2.8.2 Sexual interaction phase

It is during this phase that the perpetrator engages the child in “age-inappropriate sexual contact”. The abuse varies from observing or caressing the child, to actual sexual intercourse, which involves oral, vaginal or anal penetration. Should the child not disclose the abuse after the initial contact with the perpetrator, he will then become more selective with his next move in terms of the venue and time to abuse the child. The abuse gradually becomes more progressive and involved the longer the period of time for which it continues.

### 2.8.3 Secrecy phase

It is during this phase that the perpetrator begins his reign of terror over the child. His aim is now to make sure that he has access to the child when it pleases him, in order to allow the continuance of sexual contact. He will thus use his powers of persuasion to “dominate, bribe, threaten or blackmail the child emotionally into keeping the secret.” McVeigh (in Spies, 2007: 47) emphasises the fact that secrecy is the perpetrator’s key of control in sexual abuse. The victim lives in silenced terror,
because of the urgency imposed on him/her not to disclose the abuse to others.

### 2.8.4 Disclosure phase

Disclosure of sexual abuse is a very sensitive phase. There are many ways in which disclosure can occur, apart from the victim actually telling a third party. It could become apparent through the observation of another person, such as a teacher. If there are signs of physical injury or discomfort with genital injury it may be more easily noticeable. Two other ways in which sexual abuse can be disclosed are if the victim is diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease, or an unplanned pregnancy.

Occasionally a child will disclose the abuse, because of the level of maturity he has reached, where he now realises, for the first time, that the sexual advances and abuse at the hands of the perpetrator are in fact inappropriate. According to the research of Spies (2007: 48), incest may be denied by the family after disclosure, in an attempt to prevent the family dynamics from disintegration.

There are occasions where a victim changes his accusation, or retracts it altogether. Spies (2007: 48) indicated that this could be due to one or more of the following factors:

- The victim may have been threatened by the perpetrator after disclosure.
- The victim is embarrassed by having been abused.
- The victim feels he is responsible for having been abused.

Spies (2007: 48) and Lewis (1999: 117) agree that this process of disclosure is often affected by the following:

- Age of victim / child: the child may be too young to talk.
- View of the world, according to the child.
Belief and fear that the abuser’s threats will come true. The child may have been threatened with violence or even with death.

Attempting to protect the family.

Loyalty and attachment to the abuser himself.

Fear of being rejected by others: the child may have already tried to disclose the abuse and was not believed.

Overwhelming feelings of helplessness.

Total obedience to the perpetrator.

Lack of power in standing up to the perpetrator.

Uncertainty of who can be trusted to share the information with and not knowing how to do so.

2.8.5 Suppression phase

In the final phase, known as the suppression phase those closest to the victim force or encourage the child to retract the allegation, or to stop thinking about the abuse. Often this advice is given because those closest to the victim cannot comprehend and accept the nature of the crime that has been committed. There may also be the fear of scandal and stigma attached to being a family member of an abuse victim, or the fear of consequences and retribution by the perpetrator (Allaggia & Turton, 2005: 95).

It is not unusual for children to retract their explanation and disclosure, because they are afraid of their personal lack of power against the perpetrator and a possibility of their personal lack of ability to verbalise the account accurately. The victim is often undermined by adults who pressure him into making decisions regarding the abuse (Whetsell-Mitchell, 1995: 96).

2.9 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse is the product of a disturbed society, which is characterised by factors such as changes in family dynamics, isolation of children, physical neglect and substitute care (Loffell, 2007: 250-251). It has led to the development of an anti-child culture that dominates contemporary society and
has resulted in an inadequacy to protect the most vulnerable of groups, being babies, toddlers and children (Le Roux & Smit, 1994: 98-105).

Researchers have identified various specific factors that may contribute to the sexual victimization of children and these will be discussed below (De Witt, 2009: 328; Brookes & Higson-Smith, 2007: 116-117; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 149-155).

2.9.1 THE PERPETRATOR

(i) Childhood history

The perpetrator may have been raised in a home environment in which he was exposed to rejection by either one, or both of his parents. His parents may have been cold towards him and may have inflicted some form of abuse on him, resulting in affective neglect (De Witt, 2009: 329; Louw, et al., 2007: 364; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 150). It is also possible that the perpetrator was sexually abused himself as a child. Although there is a greater probability that an abused child will become an offender, it is not necessarily the norm (Townsend & Dawes, 2007: 83).

(ii) Personality defects

Literature indicates that a perpetrator is one who feels isolated, lonely and generally feels that he doesn’t belong (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 151). Rist (in Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 151) is of the opinion that it is possible to identify three personality types that have a tendency towards incestuous behaviour. These are: (i) the introverted personality, where the offender is very emotionally dependent on his family; (2) the psychopathic personality, where a promiscuous man includes sexual contact with his children as part of that education; and (3) the psychosexually immature man, who has paedophiliac tendencies and becomes sexually active with children.
2.9.2 THE FAMILY SITUATION OF THE VICTIM

(i) Incomplete families and broken homes

It has been found that children from incomplete families or broken homes are generally more vulnerable to being abused than children from more stable home environments, where both parents are present (Richter, Dawes & Higson-Smith, 2007: 457; Townsend & Dawes, 2007: 74-75; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 152). Children raised in incomplete families generally have more freedom to do as they wish, because of the lack of parental control.

Such children are at high risk of abuse, because they are vulnerable to advances made by undesirable adults. They are often also emotionally neglected and feel that the attention of the perpetrator fills a void in their lives. In homes where there is very little or no parental control and supervision, children may move to the streets and shopping malls searching for something to do.

Paedophiles lurk in areas such as video arcades, malls and discothèques, because they know that many young children and adolescents frequent such places without any supervision (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 152). Second marriages also place children at risk and many are vulnerable to advances and sexual abuse from their stepfathers. Russell (in Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 152) found that the incidence of stepfather-stepdaughter incest is far higher than between a daughter and her biological father.

(ii) Unemployment and poverty

Globally, researchers have found a strong correlation between unemployment, poverty and child sexual abuse (Louw, et al., 2007: 366; Ambosino, et al., 2005: 183; Hall, 2003: 88; Jones & Gupta, 2003: 72-74; Pretorius, 1998: 365-366). Unemployment, as a social problem, causes a certain degree of stress and anxiety in the parents, because they are unable to meet the needs of the family.
This often results in the lack of basic needs, such as adequate housing, clothing, food, running water, electricity and education. Many children who are faced with a home-life lacking in these basic necessities are vulnerable to being abused (Townsend & Dawes, 2007: 71-73). They become the “whipping-boy” for the frustrated, stressed and angry parent(s).

(iii) Social and geographic isolation

For some families, social interaction is very difficult because of being geographically isolated, such as living on farms that are situated far from towns or cities, making daily commuting impossible. It is therefore possible that some family members turn to those around them for sexual gratification. In some communities, intermarriage between family members is accepted and this results in a variety of genetic mutations in their children (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 153).

There are cases where a family is not geographically isolated, but chooses to socialise within a very limited circle of outsiders. In such cases of social isolation there is an increased risk of sexual abuse to the children. The children in such families are vulnerable, because there is very little, or no chance that an outsider can observe the abuse; and additional stress is possible in families that withdraw from society (Spies, 2006: 19; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 153).

(iv) Confusion and problems in adult role models

If parents are experiencing problems with the sexual side of their relationship, there is an increased risk of incest (Spies, 2006: 15; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 154). It is possible that there are bona fide marital problems resulting in the sexual advances of the father on his own daughter, but it is also possible that the mother is pregnant, or is ill and does not want to be sexually active. This would then make the daughter more vulnerable to the father’s abuse of her.
(v) Over-sexualised families

There are many children in South Africa who live in poverty. In such instances an entire family may be living in a house consisting of one or two rooms. The children are then exposed to adult sexual activities, because they all sleep in the same room (Townsend & Dawes, 2007: 74). The children are not able to distinguish between normal sexual development, which is age-appropriate, and adult sexuality (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 154).

If the home is overcrowded and either one or both of the parents are unemployed, this contributes to the stress and anxiety in the home and places the child at risk of being the target of abuse.

2.10 SYMPTOMS AND IDENTIFICATION OF SEXUAL ABUSE

The sensitive and emotional nature of sexual victimisation often leads to the child victim not verbally disclosing the abuse. This is often accompanied by various threats regarding secrecy made by the perpetrator. However, lack of disclosure does not mean that the abuse is not taking place. It is possible to see signs and behavioural changes in a child that would imply that sexual victimisation is, in fact, taking place. Table 2.2 gives an overview of the possible physical, psychosomatic, behavioural, social and sexual indicators that sexual abuse is taking place.

Table 2.2 An overview of possible indicators of sexual abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical indicators</th>
<th>• Bleeding or tears in external genitalia, vaginal or anal area</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Painful urination</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Repeated vaginal or urinary tract infections</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Venereal disease</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pain in the lower pelvis, genitals and anal areas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Difficulty in walking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pregnancy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Associated physical abuse, such as bruising on the body</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychosomatic indicators</td>
<td>Behavioural indicators</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recurring and constant headaches</td>
<td>• Sudden changes in behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eating disorders</td>
<td>• Sleep disturbances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Abdominal pain</td>
<td>• Excessive masturbation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encopresis (faecal incontinence)</td>
<td>• Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enuresis (involuntary passing of urine: incontinence)</td>
<td>• Intense fear of being alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Regression to infantile behaviour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Social withdrawal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Aggression, anger &amp; depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Poor school performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Delayed development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Truancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Substance abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-mutilation &amp; suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prostitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexualized play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social indicators</th>
<th>Sexual behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Concern by parent or 3rd party, sibling, relative or friend of abused child</td>
<td>• Advanced sexual knowledge that is age-inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Known or suspected offender in close contact with the child</td>
<td>• Sexual games with friends that includes an intensity more than normal exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sexual games with dolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Excessive masturbation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explicit drawings of genitalia or sexual acts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(De Witt, 2009: 333 and Mott, 2003: 100 (adapted))
2.11 MYTHS REGARDING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Dale McGregor (1999) conducted research at the University of Port Elizabeth, with the focus on what educators know and believe regarding the sexual abuse of children. The respondents were a group of primary school teachers from the Port Elizabeth area. His research findings indicated that there are many myths regarding child sexual abuse amongst these educators. “With respect to information about sexual abuse, the teachers were generally poorly informed. Many clearly believe that such accounts are to be treated as potentially dangerous myths” (McGregor, 1999: 87).

These myths that are accepted as truth by certain educators can have a serious impact on a child that may require help for them. An alarming 59% of these educators believed that children or adolescents should be able to stop the abuse themselves (McGregor, 1999: 86). In most instances, parents and educators teach children from a young age to beware of “stranger danger” (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 147). Unfortunately, the danger is often posed by a trusted loved one, to whom the child shows loyalty.


- **Myth**: Children are usually molested by strangers.
  **Truth**: Children are abused more often by people whom they know, than by strangers.
- **Myth**: Men who sexually abuse children are psychotic or retarded.
  **Truth**: Sexual predators are found amongst all categories of people and amongst all personality types, cultures, social strata, ages, genders and occupations.
- **Myth**: The act of incest only happens to girls.
  **Truth**: Children of both genders can be sexually victimised.
- **Myth**: The child always has negative feelings towards the offender.
Truth: This depends on the relationship between the child and the offender. For example, if the offender is the father, the child may still show affection towards him and may protect him by not disclosing the truth.

- **Myth:** Mothers know of the incestuous behaviour and condone it.

  **Truth:** Not all mothers are aware of the abuse taking place. There are instances where the mother is not in a situation to expose the abuse in order to receive help for the child. She may fear for her life, the life of her child and the possible disintegration of the family.

- **Myth:** Sexual abuse does not happen in "my" family or community and is limited to lower socio-economic groups.

  **Truth:** Sexual abuse of children occurs in all socio-economic groups and is committed by family members or friends of whom one would least expect it.

- **Myth:** Families in which abuse occurs show little or no love and affection.

- **Truth:** In many cases of sexual abuse, either one or both of the parents are unaware that the abuse is taking place. Parents tend to blame themselves for not protecting their child, when the abuse is eventually disclosed.

It is vitally important to create an educated and informed awareness amongst educators, in order to dispel these myths. If they are to know how to assist a child who has been sexually abused in some manner, they need to know as much as possible regarding this crime and the procedures to follow after the disclosure to them.

### 2.12 CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ACCOMMODATION SYNDROME (CSAAS) MODEL

Roland Summit, a psychiatrist, developed a model to describe, in his opinion as a clinician, how sexual abuse is disclosed by children. The model, known as *Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome* (CSASS), aimed to provide an indication as to why children may not disclose their abuse (Institute for
Psychological Therapies, 1995). There are five components to the model, namely:

1) Secrecy

When a child is being abused, he is alone with the perpetrator and his reality becomes riddled with intimidation, isolation, helplessness, shame, anger and self-blame (De Witt, 2009: 331; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 167-169). Very few children, if any, expect to be molested or abused by an adult that they love and trust (Mott, 2003: 101). As a result, their reality becomes what they experience and the one consistency is danger and fear, which have a basis in secrecy.

Threats are made by the perpetrator to ensure that the abuse is kept a secret and the child hears statements such as "This is our secret. Don't tell anybody." The child is also threatened in ways that create absolute fear, such as "Don't tell your mother: (i) she will hate you; (ii) she will hate me; (iii) she will send you away; (iv) she will send me away; or (v) it will break up the family and you'll all end up in an orphanage." Threats are often made that involve death, such as "If you tell anyone, (i) I'll kill your dog, or (ii) I'll kill you" (De Witt, 2009: 332; Spies, 2006: 47).

The secrecy aspect of the abuse indicates to the child that what is happening is bad and dangerous; and the secrecy then creates fear in the child, as well as the false assurance from the perpetrator of being safe (De Witt, 2009: 332; Richter & Higson-Smith, 2007: 30-31).

Should the child make the effort to disclose the abuse, it is often countered by the adult to whom the disclosure is being made. Many adults will respond with comments such as, "That could never happen in our family", or "Don't let me ever hear you say anything like that again!"

2) Helplessness

Adults often expect a child to be able to protect himself and they are of the opinion that a child should disclose any abuse immediately. Unfortunately,
these adults disregard the fact that in an adult-child relationship, where the adult is an authoritarian, the child is subordinate to the adult and completely helpless (Spies, 2006: 46).

Parents, teachers and other adults in the child’s life world, warn the child against “stranger danger”, without realizing that this provides the perfect cover for any sexual offender in the immediate family. This culminates in the ultimate betrayal in essential familial relationships and the destruction of the family’s safety for the child victim (Killian & Brakarsh, 2007: 371).

According to Summit (1983, 177-193), all reliable research indicates that a child is three times more likely to be sexually abused by an adult he knows and trusts, than by a complete stranger. The perpetrator is often a devoted family man, who is hard-working. He may be well-educated and appear to be a law-abiding and very religious man.

3) **Entrapment and accommodation**

Sexual abuse generally recurs because the child is in a relationship where he is dependent on the adult. Although the adult may be remorseful, he continues with the abuse, because he is able to offend relatively easily without being caught and he becomes attracted to the idea of being able to molest with such ease (Spies, 2006: 46). As a result, the offender becomes addicted to the act of sexual abuse and he continues in a compulsive manner. The molestation normally continues until the child reaches independence or until such time as the abuse is discovered by other adults and stopped.

The child finds himself trapped in the cycle of abuse and may learn to accept the situation in order to survive (Smith, 1992: 134). The child feels that there is no place to hide that would be safe from the advances of the sexual predator, so he succumbs and learns to accommodate to the reality of the continuing abuse. Many child-abuse victims learn various survival skills, such as absolute dependency, self-mutilation, and the reconstruction of their reality and the development of multiple personalities (Simeon & Favazza, 2001: 1).
4) Delayed, conflicted and unconvincing disclosures

It is documented that most sexual abuse is generally never disclosed and if it is, normally not outside of the family unit (Higson-Smith, Lamprecht & Jacklin, 2007: 347). Cases that are reported and investigated are the exception to the rule. Disclosure generally occurs by means of incidental discovery by another person, a result of overpowering family conflict, or an outreach program by protective community agencies (Fouché, 2007: 211-212).

Adults, such as teachers, doctors, investigators, prosecutors, defense attorneys and judges, need to be specifically trained and to be sensitive to the fact that a young child can tolerate repeated sexual abuse by a family member over a lengthy period of time, without any disclosure thereof necessarily taking place. The young child is faced with adult disbelief upon disclosure of the abuse and the adolescent who appears troublesome, moody and disrespectful, experiences humiliation and possible punishment (Brookes & Higson-Smith, 2007: 121).

Some adolescents adopt a pattern of accommodation that will hide any form of conflict. They become high achievers at school, become popular amongst their peers, are eager to please the teachers and are generally well-liked by most at school.

5) Retraction of disclosure

Children who have disclosed abuse are known to retract the allegation, because they feel guilty about what the disclosure will do to the family unit (Spies, 2006: 48). Sadly, after disclosure, some children find that the threats of the offender do indeed materialize. Becoming defensive, his father may abandon him and label him as a liar. His mother may not believe him and may even break down emotionally (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 149). The blame for the disintegration of the family is carried by the child victim and he is then treated differently by everyone (Bezuidenhout, 2008 [b]: 178). It is therefore common for the child to retract the complaint, unless specific support and immediate intervention occurs to stop the
abuse. It is also vital at this stage to force the father to acknowledge what he has done and to take responsibility for his actions (Bass & Davis, 1996: 298).

However, the child may withdraw the complaint and indicate that he made up the story because he was angry. Taking the blame for the abuse, the child then apologizes for all the trouble caused.

Sexual abuse accommodation syndrome emphasises the victimisation of the child and the lack of interest and an attitude of indifference from society regarding child sexual abuse. The destruction of this accommodation process will allow for the release of the emotional and psychological pain and the prevention of the abuse being continued. Acknowledgement of child sexual abuse is directly linked to the inner willingness of each individual to accept that sexual victimisation is, in fact, a reality (Bass & Davis, 1996: 90).

However, case histories indicate that such acknowledgement and acceptance of child sexual victimisation varies in accordance with the adult’s level of training and experience in the field (Scheepers, 2006: 151).

Summit (1983: 177-193) based the development of the sexual abuse accommodation syndrome on a combination of cases at numerous sexual abuse therapy centres that deal with thousands of allegations or complaints of adult sexual abuse of babies, toddlers and young children. The denial and secrecy that accompanies child sexual abuse, has a detrimental impact on the victim, the perpetrator, the family unit, the generations to follow in that family and in general society (London, et al., 2005: 195; Summit, 1983, 177-193).

2.13 REASONS FOR NON-DISCLOSURE

There are a variety of reasons why sexually abused children decide not to disclose their abuse. There are numerous reasons why children refute the abuse or lower their negative experiences, such as stating that they do not remember the entire incident, because they actually do not want to disclose the
truth, or because they do not have sufficient vocabulary and knowledge to explain their abusive experiences (Sjoberg & Lindblad, 2002).

Lydon (2002: 117) states that fear on the part of the victim is probably the most important reason for the non-disclosure of sexual abuse. The fear on the part of the victim is threefold: “fear” of “harm to themselves, harm to loved ones and harm to the perpetrator”. Child victims of sexual abuse develop a fear of the possible consequences, such as punishment for disclosing the perpetrator’s secret.

One of the greatest problems resulting from non-disclosure is not having an exact figure of how many young victims there actually are. London, Bruck, Ceci and Shuman (2005: 194) indicate that there are two main reasons for this lack of data, namely:

- The statistics provided by child protection agencies do not reflect the number of unreported cases, nor the cases that have been reported to other authorities; and
- Accurate diagnosis of child sexual abuse is often difficult, because there is either a lack of medical or physical evidence, or the evidence in many cases is inconclusive.

Childline South Africa (1983) gives the following reasons for the child not disclosing the abuse:

- Lack of awareness of the wrongfulness of the abuse;
- Secrecy;
- Being afraid of disapproval or punishment;
- Helplessness;
- Entrapment.
2.14 THE REASONS FOR DISCLOSURE

There are some instances where sexual abuse victims decide to disclose the abuse and this may be as the result of the following factors (Childline South Africa, 1983):

- An impossible home situation, where the child can no longer tolerate the abuse;
- The presence of a sensitive friend or helper, e.g. a teacher, whom the child trusts enough to disclose to;
- The victim no longer has contact with the perpetrator;
- Exposure to education strategies and awareness programmes regarding sexual abuse, and
- The fear of the consequences of the abuse, especially the fear of pregnancy amongst adolescent girls.

Hall and Lloyd (1993: 118) mention that there are three stages in the process of disclosure, namely:

i) Acknowledging to himself what has happened to him;
ii) Sharing this knowledge with someone else; and
iii) Understanding the implications of what he is remembering in terms of his reactions, survival strategies, and the effects on his childhood and adult life.

Victims may not move through this process in the order as listed above, but Hall and Lloyd (1993: 118) stressed the importance of working through each stage and completing the process to accommodate healing. In Table 2.3 Hall and Lloyd (1993: 136) discussed methods of disclosure that can be used to help victims of child sexual abuse.
Perpetrators have devised their own methods of deception to prevent disclosure and this is one of the reasons why it is so difficult to identify sexual predators (Salter, 2003: 32; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 147-149; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 164). Salter (2003: 31-33) discusses an interview she had with a young perpetrator who was a deacon in his church. He acknowledged living “a double life” and that he purposefully selected children who were emotionally disturbed, with a history of telling lies, as victims to abuse.

This young man was investigated twice before being incarcerated for molesting children; ninety-five victims were disclosed to which he had confessed and

Table 2.3 Methods of disclosure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Materials / other requirements</th>
<th>Variations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Talking face-to-face  | * person(s) the survivor trusts  
                         * safe environment  
                         * confidentiality  
                         * enough time  
                         * paper and pens          | * talking on the telephone  
                         * talking in a group  
                         * talking into a cassette recorder  
                         * using a word processor |
| Writing               | * undisturbed time to write  
                         * safe place to keep writing | * writing short stories  
                         * writing life story  
                         * sentence completion exercise  
                         * writing letters  
                         * diaries and journals  
                         * writing poems         |
| Drawing / artwork     | * Paper, pens, crayons, paint brushes, felt tip pens  
                         * undisturbed time  
                         * safe place to keep artwork | * use of artwork in design  
                         * drawing pictures for children’s books  
                         * working in other media e.g. clay  
                         * recreating pictures drawn as a child  
                         * art therapy           |
| Using childhood objects | * toys, teddies, dolls  
                          * other play material  
                          * survivor’s own childhood  
                          * memorabilia  
                          * suitable environment for play  
                          * trusted person(s) to help if necessary | * play therapy  
                          * regression  
                          * childhood photographs  
                          * use of reports of survivor (medical, school, social work) |

(Hall and Lloyd, 1993: 136)
which were confirmed as accurate by means of a polygraph test. His choice of victim was such that very few people in the church, the community and the courts, would believe the victims’ disclosure above the denials of the perpetrator.

Non-disclosure is often as a result of threats that have been made to the young victim, should he expose the actions of the perpetrator, as is illustrated by the following quotes:

*I felt defiled. He pushed his mouth up against my left ear. “If you ever mention this – I’ll …. kill you. He hit the back of my head with another forearm smash and pulled away from me, opening the door quietly. ‘Stay there until I’ve had time to get back to bed.’ … I stood there alone and trembling in the dark.*

(Fenton, 2008: 65)

*After it was all over he would give me a big lecture each time about not telling anyone what we did together. He would tell me about a little girl we knew from down the road whose daddy had gone to prison because she told stories about him.*

(Landon, 2008: 96)

*Just then he said very deliberately, enunciating every syllable, “you say anything and you, your mother and your brothers, all dead.” He drew his hand across his throat. I had heard this threat many times before and genuinely believed that by submitting to him I was keeping my family safe. I felt like I was bargaining with the devil to keep his sordid secrets safe.*

(McGovern, 2008: 59)

The table that follows represents eleven studies covering the issue of disclosure that were conducted in the time period 1994 – 2002. The various studies took place in Hong Kong; New Zealand; Israel and the United States of America. The most striking commonalities are that in the definition sexual abuse takes place before the age of sixteen or eighteen. Yet, the definitions all differ. Furthermore, it is clear that disclosure takes place some time after the abuse. However, the average age of the samples differed quite extensively.
Table 2.4  Childhood disclosures of sexual abuse: Retrospective studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Sample source</th>
<th>Definition of CSA</th>
<th>Reports abuse at survey</th>
<th>Childhood disclosure</th>
<th>Report to authorities</th>
<th>Avg. age at time of abuse (yrs)</th>
<th>Avg. age of sample (yrs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Arata (1998)</td>
<td>860 (f)</td>
<td>College sample</td>
<td>Unwanted contact before 14 yrs</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>31% (at time of abuse)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Smith, <em>et al.</em> (2000)</td>
<td>3220 (f)</td>
<td>National probability sample</td>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>34% (within 6 months of abuse)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10.90</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Roesler &amp; Wind (1994)</td>
<td>286 (f)</td>
<td>CSA hotline callers</td>
<td>Intrafamilial before 16 yrs</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Lamb &amp; Edgar-Smith (1994)</td>
<td>48 (f) 12 (m)</td>
<td>Newspaper ad</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>36% (by age 13)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>8.15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Roesler (1994)</td>
<td>168 (f) 20 (m)</td>
<td>Abuse centre</td>
<td>Genital contact before 16 yrs</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>&lt;16.00</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Tang (2002)</td>
<td>1151 (f) 887 (m)</td>
<td>Hong Kong Chinese college students</td>
<td>Unwanted sexual experiences before 18 yrs</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Finkelhor, <em>et al.</em> (1990)</td>
<td>1481 (f) 1145 (m)</td>
<td>National probability sample</td>
<td>Before 18 yrs</td>
<td>27.0% (f) 16.0% (m) (by age 17)</td>
<td>42% (within 1 yr of abuse)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>30 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Somer &amp; Szwareberg (2001)</td>
<td>41 (f)</td>
<td>Israeli abuse center</td>
<td>CSA survivors</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>45% (by age 17)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Ussher &amp; Dewberry (1995)</td>
<td>775 (f)</td>
<td>Magazine survey</td>
<td>Unwanted sexual attention</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Fergusson, <em>et al.</em> (1996)</td>
<td>1019 (m &amp; f)</td>
<td>New Zealand longitudinal study</td>
<td>Unwanted experience before 16 yrs</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Hanson, <em>et al.</em> (1999)</td>
<td>4008 (f)</td>
<td>National probability sample</td>
<td>Non-consensual penetration assaults before 18 yrs</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: CSA = child sexual abuse; Avg. = average; yrs = years; f = female; m = male. Unless noted, all studies were conducted in the United States London, Bruck, Ceci & Shuman, 2005: 194
2.15 THE IMPACT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

There is an overwhelming amount of empirical evidence to indicate that child sexual abuse has a profound impact on the lives of the victims, as a result of their experiences and their memories of these experiences (Spies, 2006: 62; Richardson, 2005: 2; Dominquez, Nelke & Perry, 2001: 3; Matlin, 2000: 485; Retief, 2000: 16-17; Fergusson & Mullen, 1999; Bass & Davis, 1998: 57-65; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 64; Gomes-Schwartz, et al., 1990: 159-162).

Much of what a child learns comes from his life experiences and personal actions. On his journey to adulthood, most of what is learnt contributes to how the child develops into a self-sufficient, independent adult. The child takes in and processes external experiences and then internalises these experiences. This then forms the basis on which the child interacts with the world.

Spies (2007: 53) states that the information taken in, processed and internalised (made his own) by an abused child, has an enormous effect on the child’s life, specifically impacting on his behavioural patterns. Freyd (2002: 162) supports this by mentioning the reality of a child remembering other external stimuli that he may have heard, felt or smelt, while the abuse was happening. This is often a means of focusing attention onto something other than what is actually taking place, i.e. the sexual violation.

2.15.1 Short-term effects

The short-term effects of child sexual abuse are manifold and are often manifested in behavioural changes. According to research, the following factors fall into the category of short-term effects:

- **Stress**: this can manifest in various symptoms, including depression;
- **Educational problems**, such as poor concentration and deterioration of academic performance;
- **Increased interest in sexual activities and knowledge**, as well as **inappropriate sexual behaviour**: this may manifest in the child’s play and general behaviour, i.e. masturbation;
- Development of a *negative self-image*;
- *Social withdrawal* and isolation;
- *Behavioural problems*, such as stealing; telling lies; bullying and truancy;
- *Avoidance of touch*;
- A sense of *loss*;
- *Emotional repression* and mood swings;
- Feelings of *guilt and shame*;
- *Self-destructive behaviour*, and/or
- *Anger, hatred and aggression*.


### 2.15.2 The long-term impact of child sexual abuse

Generally, all survivors of child sexual abuse will experience various difficulties and problems on their individual journeys of healing. The nature and severity of such difficulties and problems will vary from person to person and from one period of time in their lives to another.

(i) *Feelings of low self-esteem* appear to be fairly common amongst survivors, as they tend to feel unworthy, guilty, at-risk of more abuse and helpless. *Self-blame* often accompanies feelings that contribute to low self-esteem and this tends to influence other areas of the person’s lifeworld. It has been suggested that survivors of child sexual abuse experience feelings of *confusion* concerning the causes of the problems they experience. The feelings of confusion may have surfaced during the abuse, as a result of not fully understanding what was happening. The problems survivors encounter as adults are often childhood experiences that have continued into adulthood (Lotter, 2006: 96; Spies, 2006: 270; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 170; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 67).

(ii) Many *emotional reactions* accompany the acknowledgement of the abuse in order to reach healing. Adults who were forced to keep the sexual abuse a secret
while they were children, may develop feelings of guilt as they feel that they might themselves have been responsible for the abuse. Not being able to put a stop to the sexual advances of the perpetrator, the child may have believed that he was allowing it to actually continue. This feeling of guilt is often carried over into adulthood. Feelings and outbursts of anger and rage amongst adult survivors, is often unfocused and “displaced from the childhood experiences into adulthood” (Barker & Hodes, 2007: 39; Matlin, 2000: 485 & 489; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 168; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 69 & 190).

(iii) In her book On Death and Dying, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (1997: 51-123), mentions various stages of the grieving process. Part of the process in grieving for the loss of a loved one, concerns feelings of immense sadness. Adults, who were sexually abused as children, also move through this grieving process. Apart from grieving for the loss of their innocence, they are also grieving for the loss of normal relationships; the loss of a normal childhood; the loss of normal emotional development and a loss of trust in others. Such deep sadness and grief may result in periodic or deep depression (De Witt, 2009: 332; Matlin, 2000: 439; Lewis, 1999: 16; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 173).

(iv) Survivors may experience anxiety problems, which can be manifested in three different ways, namely: (1) physically: headaches, sleep disturbances, dizziness, sweating; (2) behaviour: avoidance of situations, restlessness, irritability; and (3) way of thinking: negative thought patterns. Panic attacks are generally experienced when the individual is highly anxious (Barker & Hodes, 2007: 39; Matlin, 2000: 442-443; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 70). Many survivors experience extreme feelings of loneliness and often would prefer to lead a fairly isolated existence, spending much time alone, even within the family context.

(v) Medical examinations and/or procedures, visits to doctors and/or admission to hospital often create additional hurdles for the adult survivor. This is particularly relevant when a woman needs to have a gynaecological check-up or procedure, as this may result in flash-backs and regression. If as a young child, the nature of the sexual abuse caused damage to the genital and rectal organs, gynaecological problems may continue into womanhood. Such medical experiences may cause
trauma in the form of a lack of control of the immediate surroundings, lack of privacy and feelings of being trapped. The results could be extreme panic or distress (Fouche & Yssel, 2006: 242; Matlin, 2000: 499; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 73).

(vi) Disturbed sleeping patterns and eating disorders, such as compulsive eating and obesity, bulimia and anorexia nervosa are common amongst survivors. Bulimia refers to the practice of secretly binging on food and then practising self-induced vomiting. This habit leads to feelings of excessive guilt (Spies, 2006: 273; Matlin, 2000: 489; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 75, 185 & 208).

(vii) Multiple personality disorder develops when the young child has been subjected to severe abuse over extended periods of time. The child might dissociate himself from the abuse as a means of coping and this can lead to a new personality of the child developing. It is possible for this to continue to the point where the child has developed several substitute personalities. These different personalities may emerge at various times, each one being a different person, with his own name, identity, memories and speaking voices. It is possible that the persons are unaware of one another and that they all live in the same body. As a means of coping, there are many sexually abused children who deny the reality of what has happened. They may dissociate themselves from the situation, or suppress the abuse either partially or completely (Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 79-80; Morris, 1988: 550).

(viii) The issue of trust is generally one that all survivors of sexual abuse find problematic, from the onset of the abuse, right into adulthood. By being sexually abused, the young child has been violated physically, emotionally, sexually and his trust has been betrayed. The difficulty for the child lies in understanding why the person supposed to protect and care for him, is the very one who is the source of the victim’s confusion and fear (De Witt, 2009: 332; Spies, 2006: 272; Matlin, 2000: 488 & 490; Lewis, 1999: 100; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 164 & 186).

(ix) Developing effective social skills is an important part of maturing into adulthood and thereby forming solid interpersonal relationships. For the person
who has been sexually abused as a child, this can be problematic, because he is not sure who to trust (Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 81-84).

(x) Abuse of self is a common trait amongst survivors, and tendencies to self-mutilate by superficial cutting of the skin or suicidal attempts, by slitting of the wrists or overdosing on drugs, are common. Suicidal attempts are often linked to substance abuse, especially if an overdose of medication is taken (Barker & Hodes, 2007: 39; Spies, 2006: 79; Matlin, 2000: 489; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 134).

(xi) Global research indicates that poor academic performance is common amongst children who are being sexually abused (Bromberg & Johnson, 2001: 346; Patel & Andrew, 2001: 265). Young victims may display very few or many signs of abuse and the vigilant, informed and interested teacher will notice this. Hall and Lloyd (1993: 89) mention the interesting fact that many survivors have strong skills for creative writing such as poetry.

When a child is being abused, his education is disrupted and it has a profound impact on the ability of the child to concentrate at school (De Witt, 2009: 248; Barker & Hodes, 2007: 39; Kapoor, 2007: 2; AACAP, 2004: 2 [fact sheet No. 9]; Louw, 2000: 24; Lewis, 1999: 173; Barnett, 1997: 147-170; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 174 & 180; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 89). However, Hall and Lloyd (1993: 92) also state that some sexually abused children become high academic achievers because they channel all their energies into focusing on their schoolwork as a coping and compensating mechanism.
The above-mentioned long-term effects of child sexual abuse don’t occur in isolation and are generally interwoven to create a “cluster of effects” relating to various feelings and emotions. Adult survivors of child sexual abuse often re-experience these various feelings and emotions when trying to deal with the impact of the abuse on their lives. Many people who were sexually abused as children reach adulthood, never having

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**Table 2.5 Overview of possible long-term effects of child sexual abuse**

- Low self-esteem
- Confusion
- Emotional reactions:
  - Guilt
  - Anger and rage
  - Sadness and grief
- Depression
- Anxiety problems: - panic attacks and phobias
- Isolation
- Adverse reaction to medical procedures
- Physical complaints
- Sleep disturbance
- Eating disorders:
  - compulsive eating and obesity
  - bulimia
  - anorexia nervosa
- Multiple personality disorder
- Dissociative problems
- Problems regarding trust
- Interpersonal relationship difficulties
- Abuse of self:
  - Self- mutilation
  - attempted suicide
- Substance abuse:
  - Drugs
  - Alcohol
- Under-achievement in education

(Adapted from: Hall and Lloyd, 1993: 67)
disclosed the abuse. As a result, they have carried their feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, anger and humiliation as a secret part of their lives, ever since their childhood.

The short and long-term impact of child sexual abuse can therefore be summed up under the following three main categories, namely: Educational consequences, psychological/emotional consequences and physical health consequences.

(a) Summary of educational consequences:

- Child maltreatment is associated with intellectual deficits and other academic problems, such as a delay in acquiring language, and problems in mathematics and reading tests (Berliner & Elliott, 2002: 55).
- Difficulties with academic performance and behaviour experienced by sexually abused children may impact negatively on future educational attempts and eventually hamper the development of the necessary life skills, including self-discipline, and the ability to "sustain effective work roles" (Mullen & Fleming, 1998:6).
- Sexual abuse has a profound effect on a "child’s ability to develop skills and abilities" and the abuse influences “every aspect of the child’s growth and development” (Kay, 1999: 124).
- The development of concentration problems. “At school the next day I couldn’t concentrate on my work. I strolled around the schoolyard like a zombie” (Louw & Louw, 2001: 364; Pelzer, 2001: 55).
- Anxiety regarding school attendance (Kearney, 2006: 167).

(b) Psychological/emotional consequences:

• Higher rates of mental health disorders among abused children, including depression, anxiety and nightmares or flashbacks (Berliner & Elliott, 2002: 59).
• Sexually abused children are less trusting of others and feel betrayed (Lotter, 2006: 88; Spies, 2006: 53; Freyd, 2002: 159).
• Sexually abused children exhibit inappropriate and unusual sexual behaviour, such as increased sexual curiosity, simulated sexual acts with siblings and friends, and premature sexual knowledge, from an early age (Spies, 2006: 57; Kay, 1999: 164).
• Feelings of guilt and a build-up of depression (Brain, 2006:101; Harvey, 2000: 88);
• Disturbances, such as panic attacks, sleeping problems (insomnia, nightmares), eating disorders ( Pretorius, 1998: 368);
• Escaping his/her situation by running away, which in turn leads to potential additional problems, such as prostitution, or stealing, in order to have money on which to live (Pelzer, 2001: 153-155);
• Problematic relationships, leading to social dysfunction (Le Roux & Smit, 1994: 96);
• Becoming an abuser him/herself (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 184).

(c) Physical health consequences:

• “People who are sexually abused, especially in childhood, are at elevated risk for physical health problems” (Kirkengen, 2002). Generally, survivors of child abuse are at an increased risk of hepatitis, strokes and are more likely to have surgery.
• Researchers generally consider these health problems to be an intricate combination of the psychological, behavioural and social harms associated with child abuse (McMenemy, 1999: 319-320).
• Sexual abuse that involves penetration can result in severe, immediate injuries, such as genital trauma and pregnancy among pubertal females (Childline, 2009).
• Ongoing effects may include genital abnormalities and sexually transmitted diseases (Kibel & Wagstaff, 2001: 520; Tricket, 1997).
• Abdominal pain and gastrointestinal disorders are common amongst women who were sexually abused as children (Leserman, J. 2005: 906).
• Contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS or gonorrhoea creates serious health risks for the victims of abuse (Kibel & Wagstaff, 2001: 521).

2.16 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE IMPACT OF SEXUAL ABUSE

The impact of child sexual abuse depends on a number of factors. Louw, et al., (2007: 364) mention that the type of abuse, the frequency of the abuse, the length of time over which the abuse takes place and the relationship between the victim and the abuser are all important aspects. Spies (2007: 49) confirmed these findings and indicated that the extent of the distress experienced by a child victim is nearly always influenced by a variety of possible factors. These are:

2.16.1 Age of the child

Many researchers agree that the age of the child will determine the degree of impact of the abuse on the child. Limited development has taken place in the nervous and cognitive systems of a younger child. However, despite this, the child is still able to understand and retain information received via the senses. The child then internalises this information and is able to recall it at a later stage (De Witt, 2009: 332; Barker & Hodes, 2007: 36; Gimpel & Holland, 2003: 149; Freyd, 2002: 154).

2.16.2 Duration of the abuse

In some cases, the abuse continues for lengthy periods of time. Long-term sexual abuse is very traumatic for the victim. Over time, the perpetrator gains so much control over the child that the child feels worthless, totally helpless, disempowered and fearful. This contributes to the non-disclosure of abuse (De Witt, 2009: 332; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 65).
2.16.3 The extent of the abuse

The nature and extent of trauma caused during sexual abuse depends on the degree of verbal aggression, physical violence and force that was used. In a family with healthy relationships, there is a greater chance of support, reassurance and relief for the victim (De Witt, 2009: 332; Bass & Davis, 1988: 41).

2.16.4 The identity of the abuser and relationship with the abuser

If the perpetrator is a person who is familiar to the child, the abuse has a far greater impact. Often if the perpetrator is known to the child, it is a significant person in the child's life and is someone who exerts great influence over the child. The child becomes confused by the mixed feelings experienced and the messages received from the abuser. The fact that the relationship of trust has been destroyed and the child's privacy violated makes the abuse worse if it has been committed by a family member or by a close friend (De Witt, 2009: 333-334; Barker & Hodes, 2007: 37; Spies, 2006: 5-10).

2.16.5 The level of threats made

Threats made to a victim of abuse are generally to prevent the victim from disclosing the incident to others (see Table 2.6). These threats instil fear, stress, anxiety and agony in the child. The child will often feel responsible for the safety of family members if the threat(s) include possible harm to any particular person. The child may feel intimidated by the nature of the threats and this will influence when disclosure finally takes place (De Witt, 2009: 332; Barker & Hodes, 2007: 36).
Table 2.6 Threats and bribes used by an abuser to maintain silence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical threats</th>
<th>Threats to split family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat to kill or injure child</td>
<td>The child will be put into a home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat to kill or injure mother</td>
<td>The child will be taken away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat to kill or injure siblings</td>
<td>The abuser will be put into prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat to kill or injure pets</td>
<td>The abuser will be taken away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual injury to child</td>
<td>The child will be sent to prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual injury to others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual injury to pets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal threats</th>
<th>Bribes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“No one will believe you.”</td>
<td>Special presents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You will be called a liar.”</td>
<td>Special treats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You are a slut.”</td>
<td>Special outings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent criticism</td>
<td>“You are my special little girl.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridicule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hall and Lloyd, 1993: 171)

2.16.6 The mental and emotional health of the child

In a family that functions effectively, there is a better chance that the needs of the child are met. Children who are raised in a family where they experience love, care, nurturing, acceptance, understanding and trust, are generally better able to cope with the destructive consequences of abuse. A child develops a sense of security within the family and this forms a strong foundation for the support needed after the traumatic experience and the disclosure of the abuse (Townsend & Dawes, 2007: 74-75; Pretorius, 1998: 39).

2.16.7 The gender of the victim and the perpetrator

Although statistics for male victims appear to be lower than those for females, it does not mean that boys are not abused. Unfortunately, boys who are sodomised and
abused do not generally disclose their experiences as often as girls do. They do, however, “experience the same feelings of anger, sadness, poor self-esteem, confusion and loss of power as sexually abused girls” (Spies, 2007: 52).

Our children are raised in a society where boys are taught to be physically and emotionally strong. As a result, boys less seldom show emotions such as crying and sadness. Perpetrators can be male or female and where a man (as a young boy) was abused by a woman, the abuse is more traumatic and impacts greatly on his decision not to disclose his experiences, generally as a result of being embarrassed and ashamed (De Witt, 2009: 333-334; Guma & Henda, 2007: 104-106).

2.16.8 Parental responses

It takes a great deal of inner strength and courage for a child to disclose having been sexually abused, particularly to non-abusive parents. The response of the parents plays a great role in the rate of recovery from the abuse. It is essential that parents believe their child and show support and understanding. The shock of the disclosure may cause many parents to over-react and demonstrate a show of great emotion. It is, however, essential for the adult to try and contain their emotions so that they are better equipped to assist and support the child in need (Lewis, 1999: 37).

There are eight stages of grief that the non-offending parents of sexually abused children move through: (1) shock; (2) denial; (3) anger; (4) guilt and self-blame; (5) inappropriate blame; (6) shame and anxiety; (7) depression and sadness and (8) healing and adjustment (Executive Defence Technology, 2006 – 2009).

These are emotions the parent has to deal with, and counselling for the family is always advised.

2.16.9 The judicial system

Prof. Herman Conradie (2009: 5) of the Department of Criminology at the University of South Africa, states that, according to the South African Law Commission, the present laws aimed at protecting children do not work. He stresses that the judicial system
causes additional trauma to the child victims and is generally hostile in its approach. Adults are generally anxious when they have to deal with the police and the court system.

We can therefore imagine how frightening such an experience would be for a child: Surrounded by men and women in uniforms and suits; listening to these people speaking about him; using words that he is unfamiliar with; having to deal with stares and many questions; recalling the violation; being re-victimised by the system (Barker & Hodes, 2007: 83; Gallinetti, 2007: 217; Kruger & Spies, 2006: 170; Salter, 2003: 50).

When a crime against a child has to be reported, it is generally done at an office of the South African Police Services (SAPS). A complaint of this serious nature should be dealt with compassionately and with patience, sensitivity and a high level of professional integrity. In 2002, The South African Law Commission were of the opinion that the procedures followed during police investigations into alleged child sexual abuse, are “insensitive to the state in which the child was when he/she made the statement” (South African Human Rights Commission, 2002: 18-20).

Unfortunately, the police officer on duty at the time of a case being reported is often not adequately trained or equipped to deal with sexual abuse in an effective and professional manner. This then adds to the trauma experienced by the child (South African Human Rights Commission, 2002: 18-20).

I was on the witness stand once against a man who had raped and murdered a nine-year-old neighbour’s child who came to his door on Halloween night. He was scheduled for release, and I was testifying that he was still dangerous and should be civilly committed, a case that was lost. He glared at me throughout my testimony as though he would take my throat out with a spoon.

(Salter, 2003: 50)

Many victims of sexual abuse have experienced unsympathetic and unsupportive responses from the authorities on reporting the abuse and similar reactions from legal council in court during cross-questioning (Gallinetti, 2007: 223).
This is intensified if the perpetrator is present and can make eye contact with the victim. The anticipation of appearing in court creates fear and anxiety in the child, because he now has to re-live the abuse in order to answer the questions (Salter, 2003: 50).

Should there be no conviction, because of factors such as a loophole in the law, or lack of sufficient evidence, the victim’s trauma is intensified. He no longer feels safe, because the perpetrator can still access him. Conradie (2009: 5) mentions the disturbing fact that “the accused perpetrator has the right to be confronted face-to-face by the alleged child victim”.

In a few instances, courts have been made more child-friendly. The first court of this nature came into being in 1993, in Wynberg, Cape Town. The following adjustments were made to minimise the direct confrontation between the alleged perpetrator and the child victim:

- In-camera proceedings;
- Confidentiality: no publication of the identity of the child;
- Use of intermediaries;
- Closed-circuit television; and
- One-way mirrors.

Most courts do not have such facilities and the child victim is therefore forced to testify in the presence of the accused. This causes further trauma and there are many cases where the family decide to withdraw the case because of the negative emotional impact the process is having on the child (Conradie, 2009: 6; South African Law Commission, 2009: 4.2.1). This is confirmed by September (2007: 320):

> Survivors of rape and other forms of sexual abuse are often made to endure lengthy court proceedings under circumstances that do not necessarily cater to their emotional needs. Justice officials are also not always appropriately trained in dealing with child witnesses, making it more difficult for such court officials to make appropriate decisions concerning the competence of child witnesses.
In many instances, rape / incest / abuse victims do not report the crime against them to the police or other authorities, because they don’t believe that it would serve any real purpose (Lawrence & Van Rensburg, 2006: 135; Matlin, 2000: 485). These victims generally have no faith in the judicial system to protect them from violent sexual abuse, nor do they trust the officials to whom they have to report the crime. The sad reality is that in many instances this belief is true and the victims have the added fear that the perpetrator may seek revenge. This is particularly true if there is no prosecution of the criminal (Matlin, 2000: 485).

In the Children’s Bill of rights, the Constitutional Court of South Africa expands on the laws pertaining to the protection of children. It confirms the fact that there are many cases of child sexual abuse that are not reported by the child for a variety of reasons (B70-2003). However, there are laws that stipulate when other members of society have a statutory obligation to report child abuse. These laws are:

- **The Child Care Amendment Act.** This law states that any member of the medical profession, be it a doctor or nurse; any member of the teaching profession or persons managing a children’s home or place of care, must report any suspicion or identified case of child abuse to the Department of Welfare.
- **According to The Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997,** legally no child under the age of 18 may be employed.
- **The Prevention of Family Violence Act** indicates that any professional person who suspects abuse after an examination or treatment of a child, or one who cares for the child, must report this to the police.
- **According to The Domestic Violence Act** any educator, health-care worker, social worker, or person who suspects that a child has been abused must report it to the police immediately.
- **Children are protected from exploitation and child pornography by The Films and Publications Act of 1996.**

According to the Children’s Bill (B70-2003), not reporting a suspected or definite case of child sexual abuse, is committing a criminal offence.
2.19 AUTHENTIC PEDAGOGIC RELATIONSHIPS

A child’s learning and development is reliant on the formation and building of adequate pedagogic relationships with those educators who form part of the lifeworld of the child. The child is normally a member of a family and a family is considered to be a social unit (De Witt, 2009: 232). The primary functions of a family are to educate the child, to teach socialisation skills, to love, nurture and protect the child and to teach the child the basis of the family’s religious views (Pretorius, 1998: 39 & 43-46).

The child becomes a person in his own right by developing his personality and character, as well as by building essential relationships. Educators within the school environment are the main source of secondary education, with the parents at home, being the primary source.

The I-you relationships that the child establishes within educational settings are the most important ones in his life. The “I” (being the self, in this case the child) is central to everything the child does and experiences. In developing such a relationship with his educators, the child experiences emotional communication, such as love and warmth; and in doing so, one of his basic needs are met.

When these essential authentic pedagogic relationships are violated by the trauma of experiencing sexual victimisation, the child becomes even more vulnerable than he already is. The violation of the relationship of trust, of authority and of understanding results in the child feeling insecure, unsafe, confused and frightened.

2.19.1 Violation of the pedagogic relationship of trust

In a relationship of trust, the child assumes that he is safe, because of the care, love and acceptance he receives from the adult. In this safety, the child is able to develop fully and perform optimally at school. The child learns to trust the adult to meet all his needs and believes that the adult will continually support him. However, when this bond of trust is broken as a result of being sexually abused, the child experiences great trauma. His trust has been betrayed and he has been violated in the most awful
manner. If the offender is a family member, the child generally feels even more obliged to keep quiet about the abuse.

The adult now becomes the one not to be trusted. The child may have been violated in his own bedroom, the bathroom, or the lounge, areas which are supposed to be his personal haven of safety. This results in the child developing a sense of insecurity within his own home (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 161-163).

Both intra-familial (incest) and extra-familial sexual abuse impact on the adult-child relationship. Parents and teachers are often unaware of the child’s sexual abuse. Once disclosed, the parents often experience feelings of guilt for not having been able to protect their child properly.

2.19.2 Violation of the pedagogic relationship of authority

It is generally accepted that adults function as role models to children and that the lifestyle and accepted values and principles of society will be observed by the child in the behaviour of the adult. Adults therefore have authority over children by virtue of their life experience, their understanding and their ability to nurture and care for the child. The sexual offender takes advantage of this unbalanced power over the child and is thereby able to sexually exploit the child (De Witt, 2009: 332). Meyer and Kotzé (1994: 164) state the possibility that sexual abuse may be as a result of the adult wanting to have power and control, rather than sexual lust being the motivation for the violation.

The child is not in a physical or emotional position to reject the advances of the adult and the perpetrator uses this to his/her advantage in continuing the abuse and ensuring the secrecy thereof. In terms of child-rearing styles, the father who commits incest is often an absolute authoritarian, who controls the entire family (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 165).
2.19.3 Violation of the pedagogic relationship of understanding

For the pedagogic relationship of understanding to be effective, adults who are involved in the lives of children, need to have a certain degree of knowledge in terms of what children need in order to become independent adults. Teachers and parents need to see, understand and accept the child as a thinking being who can act and react and as one who has perceptual abilities that need to be developed. All of these factors are pivotal in guiding the child towards independent adulthood (De Witt, 2009: 246-247).

The sexual offender has very little or no knowledge regarding children and how they develop. As a result of his actions, the entire relationship of understanding that is in place between adults and children is hampered.

Although young children are considered as sexual beings, they know very little, if anything, about sexual intimacy and have no knowledge or perception of the consequences of a sexual relationship. The sexual awareness of a child develops as the child matures. When the relationship between an adult and a child has been violated by sexual victimisation, the development of the child is further hampered (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 165).

2.20 CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter has been on the nature of child sexual abuse and the effects thereof. The chapter was divided into different sections, namely: sexual abuse through the ages; a religious perspective; clarification of concepts; the prevalence and incidence of child sexual abuse; the nature of sexual abuse; the phases of sexual abuse; the factors contributing to sexual abuse; the impact and effects; and myths regarding child sexual abuse.

Considering the nature of such abuse and the impact, both long-term and short-term, it is not surprising then that many victims take a long period of time before considering disclosure.
Chapter 3 will focus on human development, the process of effective learning, and factors that influence the academic performance of the victims of abuse.

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." ~ Frederick Douglas
CHAPTER THREE

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, LEARNING AND FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

If the children and youth of a nation are afforded the opportunity to develop their capacities to the fullest, if they are given the knowledge to understand the world and the wisdom to change it, then the prospects for the future are bright. In contrast, a society which neglects its children, however well it may function in other respects, risks eventual disorganization and demise.

(Bronfenbrenner, 1977)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Human development is a continuous process, but it can be divided into various stages, namely, prenatal; neonatal and infancy; early childhood; middle childhood; adolescence; early and middle adulthood and late adulthood (Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1999: 13). Each stage is made up of seven areas of human development. These can be distinguished from one another for clarity, but they cannot be separated, as development occurs holistically.

These developmental areas are:

- Normative
- Conative
- Emotional
- Physical
- Cognitive
- Personality
- Social

There are several determining factors that influence development, namely:

- Genetic determinants that are linked to the characteristics derived from the genes that individuals inherit from their parents.
• **Constitutional determinants** that encompass the entire nature, developmental state and condition of the organism. The organism is made up of anatomical, internal physiological and external physical characteristics, at any one stage in the total development. The constitution of a person is made up of the nervous system; his general health condition and his physique.

• **Environmental determinants** are the physical and social environments in which the human being develops; and they will determine how these environments will influence the development.

• **Personal determinants** are the factors that contribute to a human’s influence on his own development (Meyer, 1998: 9-26).

It is essential that development should take place in an environment that is conducive to healthy physical, emotional development. If, for any reason, the environment in which the child finds himself hampers his effective development, it will impact significantly on how that child will give meaning to his world and his relationships.

Certain life-experiences fit in with specific stages of development, such as being sexually active (Hamachek, 1995: 106). Knowledge and experience in this area of development, is not the norm amongst young children and adolescence; and yet many are exposed to sexual advances and sexual acts prematurely, because of their circumstances at home.

During development, children give meaning to their experiences and to the relationships they form with others in their lifeworld. The world of the sexually abused child becomes one of distrust, fear, secrecy, shame, guilt, anger and loneliness (Mott, 2003: 101). His world is characterised by these factors, because of what he has experienced as a result of the sexual violation. Often the perpetrator of the violation is one who is in a pedagogical relationship of trust with the child and the child expects this person to protect and nurture him (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 161-164).
As a result of the abuse and the level of secrecy imposed on the relationship by the perpetrator, the child becomes confused in terms of the meaning of this relationship (Fouché & Yssel, 2006: 262).

In order to determine whether sexual abuse has an impact on school life and academic performance, it is important to understand the essence of human development, the process of effective learning and the influences thereof on the child’s academic performance.

### 3.2 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

*Human development* can be defined as an active, dynamic, continuous process that can be divided into various stages. It is influenced by many different factors. Each stage has a set of generally accepted characteristics that are specific to that point in the development. These characteristics can be used to determine where a child is developmentally in comparison with his peers (Louw & Kail, 2007: 6; Mash & Wolfe, 2005: 13).

The person is at the core of human development and is influenced by a variety of factors. These factors are:

- Physiological – genes, maturation of the person, physical attributes and health.
- Environmental – interaction with others; climate and population density in living area; and changes in politics, technology and society.
- Personality characteristics, such as self-concept and attitudes.
- Metaphysical influences through religious beliefs (Van Ede & Louw, 1999: 18).

*Figure 3.1* provides a diagrammatic representation of the factors that influence human development.
Many researchers have recorded human behaviour and development in terms of milestones reached. These milestones start from birth and continue into early adulthood (See Tables 3.1 & 3.2). Researchers agree that human development is strongly linked to the surroundings and the environment, not only that in which the child finds himself, but also to his external and broader lifeworld (Landsberg, Kruger & Nel, 2007: 10; Louw & Kail, 2007: 26; Kearney, 2006: 10; Meyer & Van Ede, 1999: 88-89). That has the implication that sexual abuse can have an impact on any of the facets of the child’s human development.

Table 3.1 summarises the gross and fine motor developmental skills, which occur from birth to the age of seven.
## Table 3.1 Developmental milestones until school-going age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gross motor skills</th>
<th>Fine motor skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth – 6 mths</td>
<td>Birth: Lies in the same position in which he was placed, but can turn head. Pulls limbs up to body. 1 month: Lifts chin, holds head upright 2-months: Lifts up torso</td>
<td>Birth: Reflexive movements – strong grip 1 month: Reflexive movements 2 months: No deliberate hand skills are present. Movements are still uncoordinated Becomes aware of his hands. 3 months: Looks at fingers and moves them voluntarily. Reaches out hands. Holds rattle, but does not look at it. 4 months: Shakes rattle, stares at it. Playfully; pulls clothes over head. 5 months: Grabs everything within reach. Touches objects with the whole palm of the hand, but does not grip tightly. Strokes his bottle. 6 months: Begins to press soft objects. Holds an object in each hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months:</td>
<td>Shifts weight to elbows when he lies on his stomach. Makes movements of excitement with his body. Rolls from back to side.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 months:</td>
<td>Sits with support. Can turn from a position on his stomach to a position on his back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 months:</td>
<td>Begins to sit alone on an adult's lap. Moves arms and legs to get attention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months:</td>
<td>Sits in highchair Bends forward and uses hands for support. Rolls from back to stomach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 months:</td>
<td>Can support his weight on one hand while lying on his stomach. Stands with aid.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 months:</td>
<td>Holds bottle Grasps with the palm of his hand without using the thumb. Feeds himself with finger foods such as rusks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 months:</td>
<td>Stands by holding onto an object. Slides. Very active.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 7 – 12 months | 10 months: Begins to crawl  
11 months: Crawls well.  
Walks when held.  
Walks sideways holding on to furniture.  
12 months: Rests on his knees and pulls himself up to a standing position  
10 months: Picks up objects with thumb and index finger.  
Cannot voluntarily let go of an object, but lets it go to pick up another object. |
|---|---|
| 1 year | 13 months: Stands on his own.  
First steps.  
Begins to crawl upstairs.  
Throws a ball.  
15 months: Begins to walk unsteadily on his feet  
18 months: Walks on his own; rarely falls.  
Crawls downstairs.  
Pushes and pulls big objects.  
21 months: Walks backwards.  
More dexterous with games such as football.  
From 13 months:  
Can pick up small objects between thumb and forefinger.  
Can hold a small cup to drink out of it; begins to eat unaided.  
Voluntarily lets go of objects and throws toys out of pram.  
Can build a tower of two blocks.  
Points to objects which he wants.  
Uncontrolled scribbling on paper.  
Turns the pages of books and magazines carelessly.  
Enjoys packing objects in and out of a container. |
| 2 years | Runs, but still falls going around corners.  
Begins to climb up and down stairs, with both feet on every step.  
Sits on haunches.  
Can swing his body or arms and shake his head.  
Develops a sense of rhythm and likes to "dance".  
Can stand on a low balancing beam.  
Can master a basic forward roll  
Jumps with both feet.  
Pushes a toy with good muscle control.  
Can carry breakable items.  
Begins to play on a jungle gym.  
Builds a tower of approximately six or seven blocks.  
Can turn a knob to open a door and can loosen lids of screw-top bottles.  
Enjoys playing in water and sand; filling and emptying objects.  
Feeds himself.  
Paints with a big paintbrush.  
Turns one page at a time.  
Begins to undress himself. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 years</th>
<th>4 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jumps with both feet together from one step.</td>
<td>Can run fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stands on one leg for about six seconds.</td>
<td>Can ride a tricycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comes erect from a kneeling position without using his hands.</td>
<td>Marches in time to music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can cross both his arms and legs when sitting.</td>
<td>Walks along a white line one metre long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can tiptoe.</td>
<td>Can hop, skip and jump on one leg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walks up the stairs, one foot at a time.</td>
<td>Jumps from two steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can walk on a straight line 2 cm wide.</td>
<td>Legs are now controlled away from each other or from the rest of the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can walk short distances on a beam10 cm wide.</td>
<td>Very active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throws a ball without losing his balance.</td>
<td>Runs up and down stairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallops, jumps and walks in time to music.</td>
<td>Enjoys balancing activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Climbs trees, ladders, nets and jungle gyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can carry a container filled with liquid without spilling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Throws a ball from shoulder height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can walk on a 2.5 cm wide circular line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Draws a horizontal line from an example.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Builds a tower with ten blocks, begins to build patterns and bridges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can thread six beads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handles a pair of scissors and tries to cut with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Draws a circle (in a primitive fashion).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can copy a cross.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can hold thick pencils or crayons with his thumb and forefinger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scribbles and can fold paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Washes own hands and face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can dress a doll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can fasten big buttons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sets the table, makes the bed and puts away clothes which are lying around</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                                | Folds a square piece of paper in half from an example. |
|                                | Can thread twelve beads |
|                                | Can cut a piece of paper in half |
|                                | Can fold a piece of paper into quarters |
|                                | Can copy a drawing of a ladder |
|                                | Draws a recognizable man |
|                                | Paints freely |
|                                | Enjoys big blocks, boxes and planks and can build more complex constructions. |
|                                | Models with dough and clay. |
|                                | Uses a hammer and saw. |
### 5 years
- Can touch toes with legs straight
- Has more control of physical activities
- Begins to master different skills with ease
- Can dress and undress himself
- Control of large muscles better than fine muscles
- Enjoys climbing up fences
- Uses alternative feet when climbing steps
- Can jump with both feet over a rope 6 cm high
- Very adventurous
- Can kick a ball while running
- Catches a ball fairly well
- moving toys and games

### 6 years
- Tumbles, skips, runs and is dexterous on the jungle gym
- Can climb unaided on to a bus
- Can run up stairs.
- Active and energetic
- All physical activities are popular

### 7 years
- Walks along a narrow plank, balances on poles, uses rackets and balls skilfully
- Dances with pleasure

### 8 years
- Can copy a cross
- Can copy a circle (a good shape)
- Copies a square
- Can now handle a pencil
- Fine muscle co-ordination becomes more refined
- Draws people, houses, aeroplanes and vehicles that are recognizable
- Cuts out big pictures with ease
- Uses hands more than arms in the action of catching
- Copies a window
- Draws a house

(De Witt & Booysen, 1995)

In the age group of ten-to-twelve-year olds, children slowly start moving from their child-like opinion and view of the world, to the adult world that they are moving towards. Children are unique individuals and thus develop in their own time, at their own pace. They also develop in different ways and it is strongly recommended that parents do not compare children with one another.
Comparisons may cause anxiety and unhealthy competitiveness. Table 3.2 provides a comparison of the social/emotional; physical/sexual and cognitive development of children in the ten-to-twelve-year old age group.

Table 3.2 Child development: ten to twelve years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 – 12 years</th>
<th>Social and emotional development</th>
<th>Physical and sexual development</th>
<th>Cognitive development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-pubertal stage</td>
<td>World becomes more complex</td>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity to reason develops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships become more complicated and are changeable</td>
<td>Children show 1st signs of independence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a keener sense of humour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less open to shows of affection, specifically by mothers</td>
<td>Vital to ensure that children at this age are still supervised for their own safety</td>
<td></td>
<td>Many will be preparing to move on to high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily changes start to occur</td>
<td>Girls: small breast buds start to develop; hips take shape; menstruation commences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers input and guidance is very important</td>
<td>Boys: mature slower than girls; physical and emotional changes do not occur as rapidly as for girls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys can become very competitive in this stage</td>
<td>Success in sport or socially may play an important role in a boy’s life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 – 12 years</th>
<th>Social &amp; emotional development</th>
<th>Physical development</th>
<th>Developing understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occasional moodiness as a result of some anxiety about approaching adulthood</td>
<td>Physical changes at this stage are rapid and can be dramatic, especially in girls</td>
<td>Able to think in broader terms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to move away from the family emotionally</td>
<td>Radical maturity in facial features</td>
<td>Able to reason, differ in opinion and criticise opinions of others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drastic physical changes</td>
<td>Able to conceptualize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12 – 15 years

Tend to test the boundaries of discipline
Peer group relationships become increasingly important
Close friendships develop

for boys include facial hair, rapid growth and their voices deepen

broad issues
Able to identify abstract ideas
Change of thinking reflected in schoolwork: they are expected to take more responsibility for their own work
Realise that parents also make mistakes and experience problems


From the above it can be assumed that sexual abuse may have an influence on the child’s normal development.

3.3 DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES

3.3.1 Lee Vygotsky's Social-Cognitive Theory

Lee Vygotsky was a young Russian psychologist who, in the 1920s and 1930s, disagreed with Jean Piaget’s “immature and ego-centric” view of child development. He hypothesized that living beings are part of a dynamic social framework that links them to their surroundings and to other beings by means of interaction (Stetsenko & Arievitch, 2004: 475). Humans are therefore not only individuals, but also social beings that interact with one another and their environments. Therefore, in a school situation, each learner is part of the “educational community” in the classroom (Roth & Lee, 2007: 187).

Vygotsky emphasized the importance of social influences on the way in which a child plays, explores his world and learns from these experiences (Lindon, 2001: 31; Hamachek, 1995: 163). He was of the opinion that the initial language used by children during play is an integral part of their thinking. He therefore believed that young children are far more competent than adults reckon them to be. He stated that children have existing abilities and skills that develop further as the child grows and matures, through life experiences in his environment.
According to Vygotsky (De Witt, 2009: 129; Gallimore & Tharp, 1990: 175-205), children actively participate in their learning and are able to creatively play with objects in their environment. He maintained that a child’s development is greatly influenced by his ability to participate in imaginative and fantasy play. Such play allows children to explore their world with very few restrictions and limitations. Although he was of the opinion that play forms an essential part in the development of a child, he did not feel that it is the only form of learning.

It is important for adults not to place too much emphasis on the intellectual side of play, while ignoring the vital role played by the emotions that accompany most forms of play. The “zone of proximal development” (ZPD) was a concept he used to explicate possible assistance for a child’s learning. The zone of proximal development is described by Lindon (2001: 31) as: “the areas of possibilities that lie between what individual children can manage on their own – their level of actual development – and what they could achieve or understand with some appropriate help – their level of potential development”.

Figure 3.2 The Zone of Proximal Development

![Diagram of the Zone of Proximal Development](Gallimore & Tharp, 1990: 184)
The ZPD in Figure 3.2 can be explained as follows:

**Stage One:**

The performance of the child is aided by others that are considered as being more capable than the child. Prior to children being able to function independently, they rely on adults or peers that are more capable than themselves, to regulate their ability to perform a given task. The nature and degree of assistance the child will require from these other people will depend on the age of the child and the type of task tackled. Initially, the child has a limited comprehension of the task at hand and what needs to be achieved.

Now, the parent, other adult or more capable peer will provide instruction; and the response from the child is generally compliant or imitative. Gradually, the child begins to understand how the different parts of a task relate or link to each other. They are thus starting to understand the task holistically. This understanding will normally develop as a result of the conversation that takes place during the process of completing the task. Once this has been achieved, the child can be helped by various means to develop further cognitive organisation.

**Stage Two:**

Stage Two is when the performance is assisted by the child himself. The comments made by the child during this change indicate various patterns of activity that let the child take part in the process of problem-solving that allows him to carry out the task. The child therefore carries out the task without any help from others in Stage Two, but this does not imply that the performance has developed completely or that it has become an automatisation. The child begins to verbalise what is taking place, in the form of self-directed speech. This indicates that a significant development has taken place and an important phase has been reached in the shift of skills through the ZPD.
Stage Three:

During Stage Three, performance is developed; it becomes automatised, and fossilised. Completion of tasks has now become integrated and runs fairly smoothly. The child has now internalised the task and it has become automatic for the child. The child no longer needs assistance from others or himself. Performance is now fully developed. Vygotsky placed emphasis on this fixedness and described it as "fossilised".

Stage Four:

Stage Four is the point at which de-automatisation of performance leads to recursion through the zone of proximal development. Human beings continue to learn throughout their lives and it is this lifelong learning that is made up of the same regulated, ZPD sequences, namely: from other-assistance to self-assistance, that takes place over and over again for the development of new abilities (Gallimore & Tharp, 1990: 175-205). Play can therefore be considered as a zone of proximal development, because a child can learn from other children during play or he can learn from an adult who is engaged in the play with him.

A child may find himself in a variety of significant environments, which could include his extended family, educational programmes and health care professionals. He will probably also find himself frequenting social community learning places, such as recreational parks, libraries, museums and the beach. The various settings in which a child spends time, all contribute to the development of the child (Louw & Kail, 2007: 8). It is during these times that the child experiences development through learning. Interactions such as the following, generally take place:

- The child is taught appropriate social behaviour and manners.
- The child is taught how to speak correctly and to show respect for his elders.
- An adult or older child may be reading to the child and providing age-appropriate toys for him to play with.

In each of the above-mentioned environments where the child interacts with others, he will be vulnerable to the advances of any sexual predators and is at risk of being
abused. Sexual offenders often groom young children prior to sexually violating the child (Carstens & Fouché, 1996: 4). It is often during such interactions with the child that the grooming commences and gradually develops without the child being aware of what is actually taking place (Mott, 2003: 101; Potgieter, 2001: 37).

Once the relationship of trust has been destroyed and the offender has managed to threaten the child into secrecy, all significant relationships in which the child has been involved, will be affected. The child will remember what he has experienced while being violated and this will now become an integral part of his lifeworld and the relationships therein, with serious implication for his development.

3.3.2 Bronfenbrenner’s bio-ecological model of development

Urie Bronfenbrenner was a psychologist who built upon the work of Vygotsky (Louw & Kail, 2007: 26-27). His theory focuses on a child’s development within the framework of the structure of relationships that form his environment. Bronfenbrenner’s theory defines multifaceted “layers” of the environment and each one has an effect on the development of the child. This theory is also known as the “bio-ecological systems theory”. It emphasises the idea that a child’s own biology is a key setting for enhancing his development.

The development of the child is enhanced by the interaction between factors such as maturity, biological make-up, his immediate family/community environment, and society. Modification or discord in any one layer will cause a ripple effect throughout the other layers. Studying a child’s development implies that the researcher must consider the child, his immediate environment and the interaction of these levels with the broader society. (ile:///C:/My%20Documents/My%20Webs/Bronfnebrenner%20webquest/index.htm)

Bronfenbrenner’s bio-ecological model is therefore an example of a multi-dimensional model of human development. It suggests that there are layers of interacting systems. These result in change, growth, and development and are manifested on the following levels:
- Physical
- Biological
- Psychological
- Social
- Cultural.

Bronfenbrenner designed the model to explain the direct and indirect influences on a child’s life, by referring to the many levels of environment or contexts that influence the development of the child. Bronfenbrenner called these interactions that the child experiences with the people and objects in his world as “proximal processes” (Landsberg, et al., 2007: 11 & 13; Keamey, 2006: 9-10). The number and quality of each association between the various settings in which he spends a length of time, also has vital consequences for his holistic development. An example here is the number of times there is contact between the teacher and the parents and the quality of such contact.

Children spend time in many different environments. They may spend more time in some (home or school) than in others (church or the park). In some cases a child may be at his mother’s or father’s place of employment for short periods of time. These environments also impact on the power of the proximal processes, thereby influencing the development of children.

The process of child development occurs by means of interactions between the child as the central, active participant, and the people, objects and signs that make up his immediate life world. These interactions gradually become more intricate as time goes on, and in order to have any effect, they should occur continuously (Bronfenbrenner, 1998: 996). The child is at the core of Bronfenbrenner’s model and he recognises that a child influences and is influenced by the environment in which he spends most of his time.

The family is the most important setting for a young child. He spends most of his time with the family and the family therefore has the greatest emotional impact on him. There are other important settings that influence the child, such as the extended
family, day care, schools and medical practitioners. Within the community, there is also a diversity of possible learning settings, such as parks, libraries and museums.

The development of a child is strongly influenced by what he experiences in the settings in which he spends time. When parents teach a child proper manners and ways to behave, the child experiences a situation of learning that becomes a life skill. When the parents interact with their child by reading stories or playing games, they are creating an opportunity for the child to develop by means of his further experiences. These experiences are known as proximal processes. According to Bronfenbrenner, these processes that a child has with the people and objects in various settings are “the primary engines of human development” (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998: 996).

Human beings start their physical development at conception and it ends with death. This development is not only influenced by genetic characteristics (Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1999: 3-8), but according to Bronfenbrenner, by “a series of complex and interactive systems” (Landsberg, et al., 2007: 9-15; Louw & Louw, 2007: 27). Bronfenbrenner’s model revolves around four “interacting dimensions” to be taken into account when attempting to understand the development of a child:

(i) Personal factors, referring to behaviours that can encourage or discourage specific reactions from others;
(ii) Process factors, referring to the various types of interactive patterns that can occur within a system;
(iii) Contexts, referring to the different environments of the child, such as family, school, classroom and local community.
(iv) Time: As time moves on, changes take place within an individual (maturation) and in the environment(s) in which that person exists.

Bronfenbrenner proposed that the environment consisted of a set of ‘nested’ structures or environmental systems. These are: microsystem; mesosystem; exosystem and macrosystem. They all interact with the chronosystem (Louw & Kail, 2007: 28; Swart & Pettipher, 2007: 9-12). Each one is linked and inter-related with the
other systems and they characteristically influence each other in contributing to the holistic development of the child:

3.3.2.6 Microsystem

The microsystem (see Figure 3.3) is made up of the relationships and activity in the immediate environment in which proximal development takes place. This means that groups, such as family or peers, cater for interpersonal relations and patterns of activities and roles that take place between individuals and the specific system. Individuals closest to the child are the people that comprise this system. The influence of these relations is reciprocal, in that both the individual and the system influence one another.

3.3.2.7 Mesosystems

Mesosystems (see Figure 3.3) refer to the different relationships that develop between these different microsystems. The microsystems interact, thus influencing one another, such as the influence of the family, peers and school on the individual. As a result of these groups interacting with each other, each system is modified to a certain degree. An example of such interaction is that of a learner who may come from a dysfunctional family and a disharmonious home environment.

There is a possibility that this learner will develop barriers to effective learning as a result of his home circumstances. However, he may have a teacher who is compassionate and caring, thereby establishing a learning environment that is more positive. This in turn, may inspire the learner, by building his self-esteem and creating a feeling of security. What he experiences in the microsystem of the school, can provide a certain degree of protection from the negative impact of his home environment.

3.3.2.8 Exosystem

The exosystem (see Figure 3.3) refers to a system that the learner is not directly or actively involved in, but that nonetheless plays an influential role in development, via
the specific settings and relationships. For example, if a parent has a stressful work environment, although the learner is not directly involved in this specific system, the attitude that the parent develops as a result is likely to have an effect on the child.

Other examples of such systems are:
- The education system of that particular country
- Health services
- The media

3.3.2.9 The macrosystem

The macrosystem encompasses the various attitudes, beliefs, values and ideals of a particular culture or society, all of which are likely to be influenced by the other various systems, while simultaneously impacting and influencing one another.

3.3.2.10 The chronosystem

The chronosystem refers specifically to the timeframes which cross through and encompass all the other systems throughout the individual's development, and the significance of time on development. An example of this would be the developmental process which a family undergoes in which there might also be a child who is in the process of development (i.e. families with babies experience different interactions than families with teenagers.) This in turn, will interact with a child’s progressive stages of development (Landsberg, et al., 2007:12; Louw & Kail, 2007: 27-28; Roth & Lee, 2007: 186-232).

According to Bronfenbrenner’s theory, it is clear that child sexual abuse occurring in one of the layers may cause a ripple effect throughout the other layers, influencing the child’s relationships and interactions. That means that if sexual abuse takes place in the microsystem, it may impact on the child’s functioning in the meso-, exo-, macro- and chronosystems.
3.4 LEARNING

There are many accepted definitions for \textit{learning} and these definitions are based on how the person identifies with learning. In essence, \textit{learning} is the process whereby either attention is given, in order to acquire knowledge or skills, or the knowledge is acquired via personal discovery (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2005: 3; Hamachek, 1995: 258).
The following table lists various definitions of learning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A change in behaviour as a result of experience or practice</td>
<td>The acquisition of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The acquisition of knowledge</td>
<td>Knowledge gained through study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain knowledge, or skill, in something through study, teaching, instruction or experience</td>
<td>The process of gaining knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A process by which behaviour is changed, shaped or controlled</td>
<td>The individual process of constructing understanding, based on experience from a wide range of sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Pritchard, 2005: 2)

Hamachek, (1995: 229-258), states that learning theorists are from two schools of thought, namely: (1) stimulus-response theories (or behaviourists); and (2) cognitive theories. Theorists from both sides concur that after learning has taken place, a general change in behaviour can nearly always be observed. However, they disagree in terms of how learning actually takes place and how to create conditions that are conducive to effective learning.

Teaching and learning are not new to mankind. In the New Testament of the Bible, we can see many examples of Jesus as a devoted teacher, who used stories and examples to effectively carry across His message to those who listened to Him and followed Him. The ancient Greek philosopher, Plato (428-347BC), explicated his ideas by means of discussions. He also made use of stories and examples to explain his ideas in such a manner that his audience would vividly recall his message (Phillips & Soltis, 2004: 9).
Children start learning with their bodies, by means of what they experience in their life-world. They use their five senses to help them learn more about their surroundings. From infancy, children learn naturally and this learning can be noticed when the development of a young child is monitored, whether over a short-term or long-term period of time.

Early learning is generally not planned and takes place when the child interacts with his environment and the people therein. During this time the child develops specific skills and understanding by observing the actions of others. Thus, formative learning commences in the home. Learning is thus a natural process that takes place systematically in an often-unobserved manner (Pritchard, 2005: vii).

Watching children at play allows adults the opportunity to observe learning taking place through experience. Children learn from constantly being exposed to various external stimuli and experiences, especially when they find opportunities to apply their newly acquired skills (Braga, 1975: 1).

When children play, they are developing more than mere cognitive skills that equip them to function effectively as human beings. They are also developing vital physiological skills, such as gross-motor and fine-motor skills, and visual and auditory perceptual skills. Together these form the essential foundation for reading, writing and arithmetic.

**Figure 3.4** on page 110 provides an overview of some of the ways in which children can learn. The manner in which a child learns most effectively depends on each individual child.
Race (2005: 26) mentions five factors that are linked to successful learning. These are:

- **Wanting to learn**: Also known as “intrinsic motivation”, where success follows a powerful “want” to learn.
- **Needing to learn**: Also known as “extrinsic motivation”, where the learner takes ownership of his need/desire to learn.
- **Learning by doing**: repetition of information or practising a skill enhances learning.
- **Learning through feedback**: affirmation and confirmation by others, of what one has achieved, generally encourages further learning.
- **Making sense of things**: This is a pivotal part of the learning process. When one understands what has been taught and is able to apply the knowledge to new situations, it means that the knowledge has been internalised.
Over the years, many psychologists have based their theories on various hypotheses and the result has been three main theories regarding how children learn (Brennand, et al., 2006, 308; Meyer & Van Ede, 1999: 55-61). These three are:

(i) Social Learning Theory

(ii) Developmental Theory

(iii) Behaviourist Theory

(i) Social Learning Theory was initially developed by Albert Bandura, who believed that children will learn from observing the behaviour of other people (Hamachek, 1995: 24). Once they have observed this behaviour, they will learn to behave accordingly.

(ii) Developmental Theory is based on the hypothesis that learning is directly linked to specific developmental stages and that children move through all these stages at their own pace. Jean Piaget was the psychologist who had the greatest influence in the development of this theory (Louw, Van Ede & Ferns, 1999: 374). Piaget believed that children move through four specific phases of development, namely:

(a) Sensory motor stage: The main source of learning for children at this stage is through the senses. They are egocentric and they become aware of object permanence. They have limited language skills.

(b) Pre-operational stage: At this stage, children still learn through the senses, but hearing becomes particularly important. They begin to learn about concepts.

(d) Concrete operational stage: Children decentre during this stage and begin to view things from the perspective of others. They start developing more complex reasoning skills.
(e) **Formal operational stage**: Children can now think logically and abstractly. They are able to understand more complex concepts.

(iii) **Behaviourist Theorists** believe that learning occurs as a result of actions and experiences and that human beings tend to repeat enjoyable experiences and avoid the less pleasant ones (Brennand, *et al.*, 2006, 308). John Locke (1632-1704) referred to the human mind as being a *tabula rasa* (blank tablet) at birth (Meyer & Van Ede, 1999: 55). His point of view was that at birth, human babies are pure and free from any external influences. According to Locke (Louw & Kail, 2007: 4), sensory experience is the basis for all learning and these experiences are then linked by means of associating two or more experiences. An example of this is the association between fire and heat, because the two generally occur simultaneously.

### 3.5.1 The Theory of Behaviourism

John Watson (1878-1958) had the view that all behaviour is learnt and can be observed. He also indicated that the focus should be on *stimulus-response* relationships. Behaviourists believe that the connection between stimulus and response is vital and should form the basis for psychology. This is referred to as the *S-R theory* (stimulus-response theory). These S-R connections take place during learning; and therefore this approach is generally known as the *learning theory* (Meyer & Van Ede, 1999: 55-56; Hamachek, 1990: 23-26).

### 3.5.2 Ways of learning

According to behaviourists, there are three main ways of learning that take place during human development. These are: *classical conditioning*, *operant conditioning* and *observational learning* (Louw & Kail, 2007: 21; Hergenhahn & Olson, 2005: 169-210). Jean Piaget played an influential role in the school of thought that stresses the importance of children as active participants in their own learning process.
3.5.3 Piaget's theory of Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget was of the opinion that learning is closely linked to different developmental stages (Brennand, et al., 2006: 308; Hergenhahn & Olson, 2005: 300-302). He stated that children explore their environments and by means of experimenting with toys and other materials, have the ability to discover information (Lindon, 2001: 28). He stated that children move through the same developmental stages, but at differing rates, depending on each individual child’s mental abilities. Piaget proposed that the following stages of intellectual development take place:

1) **Sensorimotor stage** (birth to about two years)

   No language is present during this stage of development. Young children thus only deal with what they are able to see. They are egocentric and they relate to themselves as the central frame of reference in their world. They lack the necessary understanding of object permanence until late in this stage.

2) **Pre-operational stage** (about two-to-seven years)

   This stage is made up of pre-conceptual thinking and intuitive thought. Children begin to develop basic concept formation and they start to classify objects according to their common characteristics. Children tend to solve problems by means of intuition, rather than by the means of following a rule of principle. Children struggle with the idea of conservation, with conservation being defined as “the ability to realise that number, length, substance or area remain constant, even though they may be presented in … different ways” (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2005: 300-301).

3) **Concrete operational stage** (about seven-to-eleven years)

   During this stage, children develop the ability to work effectively with seriation (arranging items in descending or ascending order); with number concepts and with classification. Problem-solving can now generally only take place by means of using concrete objects.
4) *Formal operational stage* (about twelve-to-fifteen years)

Thinking processes during this stage are more abstract and logical. Children are now able to work with hypothetical situations as their problem-solving skills develop (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2005: 300-302; Lindon, 2001: 28-30).

### 3.6 INFORMATION PROCESSING

Hamachek (1990: 190) explains that the human brain receives information, which is then processed in order to derive meaning from it. This information is then stored in the memory and can be located at a later stage. If necessary, responses to this information will be generated. Information processing therefore involves three processes, namely:

(i) **Encoding**: The meaningful collection and representation of data.

(ii) **Retention**: The storage of data until needed.

(iii) **Retrieval**: The ability to recover information for application at a later stage. It is, however, not always an easy task to retrieve information that has been stored in the brain.

The information that is required by humans to survive and to function effectively is processed via input from the senses. The way in which a human being processes information, is related to the experiences that have been stored in the memory. The information received through the senses, comes from internal and external stimuli. As we take part in various activities, we use information that has been gathered by many senses simultaneously.

The merging of many senses is known as *intersensory integration* (Kranowitz, 1998: 51). Kranowitz (1998: 55) defines sensory processing as “the neurological procedure of organising the information we take in from our bodies and the world around us for use in our daily life”.
In Figure 3.5, input is received via one or more of the five senses. This input is stored and either converted into “meaningful knowledge”, or else it is not stored at all, if it has no practical value. The flow of internal processing is depicted by the arrows.

As we participate in the more essential daily activities, such as eating, we use more senses. When something in our immediate environment feels unsafe, or makes us feel uncomfortable, we sense that there is the possibility of danger and we become defensive. In contrast to this, our senses may indicate that our environment is safe and calm, and if we are satisfied, we seek out more of the same stimuli.

Human beings have two sensory systems, namely sensory systems that receive messages from outside the body and internal systems that help humans to perceive
messages from within the body. The five senses that we know are: tactile (touch), which is contact through the skin; olfactory (smell), which provides information through the nose; gustatory (taste), which provides information through the tongue; visual (sight), which provides information via the eyes and auditory (ears), which provides information via the ears.

The information received and processed by means of the senses, is stored in the memory and is retrieved at a later stage when necessary (Kranowitz, 2005: 51-55). When a child has been sexually violated, both sensory systems receive input that will be stored in the child’s memory. The messages from outside the body will be those of pain experienced as a result of the abuse and those from within will be how the child has perceived, for example, the offenders touch, smell and sight. These memories are stored in the long-term memory, which becomes unavailable, but may be retrieved as a result of something that causes this memory to return.

“The quest for knowledge, like the thirst for riches, increases ever with the acquisition thereof.” (Source unknown!)

3.7 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Children grow up in a dynamic world that is constantly changing. Each day brings new challenges, broadens horizons, builds character and contributes to growth. This is as a result of positive factors that influence the lives of children and their learning (Brennand, et al., 2006: 329). Factors from within (intrinsic) and from outside (extrinsic) the child have an influence on learning. Some of these factors have a positive influence and some have a negative impact. Abraham Maslow postulated that human beings function according to a hierarchy of needs, starting with the most basic needs and working up to self-actualization.

For one to move on to the next level, the previous needs must have been met effectively. When these needs are not met and sustained, their lack has a profound effect on learning (Prinsloo, 2007: 33; Morris, 1988: 436-437).
3.7.1 Intrinsic factors

These are factors influencing learning and development that come from within the child. There is very little that the teacher can do to alter or change these factors.

3.7.1.1 General health

The state of health that a child is in will either enhance his ability to learn, or it will become a barrier to learning. A child’s health is dependent on many factors, such as well-balanced, nutritious meals on a regular basis, regular exercise, and sufficient fresh air and sunlight (Kibel & Guthrie, 2001: 10). A child, whose general health is poor, already has a barrier to learning in that he is generally unable to establish and maintain an acceptable level of academic performance (Prinsloo, 2007: 28). Poor health hampers learning because it has a detrimental effect on the attention span, the energy levels and the conscientiousness of the child.

3.7.2.2 Sensory processing disorder ( SPD)

Kranowitz (1998: 3) defines sensory processing disorder as “the inability to use information received through the senses in order to function smoothly in daily life. It is an umbrella term used to cover a variety of neurological disabilities”. A child with SPD may experience difficulty in understanding verbal and/or non-verbal cues from his environment.
3.7.2.3 Visual perceptual problems

The primary sense used for learning is vision; and it is therefore possible for a child to experience difficulty in learning, because he has poor vision or a visual defect of some nature (Kranowitz, 2005: 155). Visual defects create many problems for a child when reading; and because reading is a skill that is required for almost every subject at school, this defect impacts negatively on the child’s ability to learn (Landsberg, 2007: 329-330).

Symptoms of eye defects are burning and red eyes during reading, headaches and fatigue. A child with poor vision cannot see the written words accurately and as a result, the child cannot transfer them from the chalkboard to his book correctly. Defective visual perception results in the child not being able to see a word in its
entirety. As a result of this, the child cannot recognise the word. Poor visual discrimination means that the child is unable to discriminate between letters that show visual similarity, such as b and d (Kranowitz, 2005: 95-96; Grové & Hauptfleisch, 1982, 41).

Regressive-eye movements can occur for many reasons, such as the child not understanding the meaning of the words read or the inability to move the eyes back to the left side of the page after having read a sentence. Some children have a tendency to read too fast and in such cases, the eye movements are too fast to allow for an accurate understanding of what has just been read.

3.7.2.4 Auditory perceptual problems

Auditory perceptual problems mean that the child cannot discriminate between sounds that are similar. This may result in the mispronunciation of certain words. A child with poor auditory perception is unable to use his sense of hearing to analyse words into letters or syllables; and consequently, he therefore cannot synthesize them via his auditory sense, to form a word. This causes the child to miss an enormous amount of work being explained in class and as a result, he is often labelled as a “daydreamer” (Storbeck, 2007: 357).

A child with auditory problems may learn to lip-read. Consequently, it takes longer for the teacher and others to identify the nature of the learning problem (Grové & Hauptfleisch, 1982: 40-42).

3.7.2.5 Spatial perceptual problems

Spatial perception is the perception of a relation between an observer and a given object. The observer will perceive the object as being behind, below, above, in front of or next to him (Landsberg, 2007: 335). A child with spatial perceptual difficulties experiences the world as distorted and his movements may be clumsy. Understanding the concepts up, in, out, behind, left or right, are very difficult for such a learner. A child with such a distorted view of letters, words, pictures, numbers and sentences will be confused and tends to reverse letters and numbers showing visual similarities
when writing. He may reverse letters such as p/q; 23 may become 32 and bed may become ded (Landsberg, 2007: 337; Grové & Hauptfleisch, 1983: 7).

3.7.2.6 Language development and speech defects

“Human beings are social beings; and ... we communicate mainly by talking and listening to one another” (Dednam, 2007: 119; Pieterse, 1999: 1). The ability to use language effectively is essential for all modes of learning. There are a number of reasons why humans acquire language. According to Pieterse (1999: 2), these are:

- To make contact with other people.
- To convey and receive meaningful information.
- To be able to learn and/or teach: we influence one another by means of communication.
- To express our emotions and thoughts in words and to react to the thoughts and feelings of others empathetically.
- To use and develop the ability to interpret a standard form of language.

The development of speech is often taken for granted; and as a result, the complex nature of speech and the acquisition of language skills become easily overlooked. Between the ages of 18 months and 3 years, language development progresses very quickly (Louw & Louw, 2007: 106-107). It is at this stage that the child may begin to manifest some form of speech delay or language problem. Speech and language development problems can be corrected successfully, especially if the problem is identified early in the child’s life (Pieterse, 1999: 121-122).

3.7.2.7 Emotional problems

According to Gimpel and Holland (2003: 2), emotional and behavioural problems in children can be divided into two broad categories, namely: externalizing and internalizing problems. Externalizing behaviours include acting-out and defiance. Internalizing behaviours include withdrawal, depression and anxiety. There are additional problems that children may experience, that do not fall into either of the above-mentioned categories. Such problems include sleeping problems and eating
disorders (Louw, Louw & Ferns, 2007: 287; Gimpel & Holland, 2003: 2; Pretorius, 1994: 44). Victims of sexual abuse can manifest their trauma through various emotional and/or behavioural problems. **Table 3.4** provides an overview of the more common emotional and behavioural problems these children may display.

### Table 3.4 Common emotional and behavioural problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Disorders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Externalizing problems</strong></td>
<td>- attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- predominantly inattentive type</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- combined type</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- oppositional defiant disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- conduct disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Internalizing problems</strong></td>
<td>- separation anxiety disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- generalized anxiety disorder</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- social phobia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- obsessive-compulsive disorder</td>
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<td>- specific phobia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- panic disorder</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- major depressive disorder</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- dysthymic disorder (a mood disorder characterised by general depression. Not used to describe depression lasting more than one year).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other problems</strong></td>
<td>- selective mutism (choosing not to speak. Classified as a childhood disorder, generally lasting only a few months. Also known as <em>elective mutism.</em>)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- enuresis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- encopresis (faecal incontinence)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- feeding disorder of infancy or early childhood</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- sleep problems</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Disorders linked to abuse and neglect</strong></td>
<td>- Posttraumatic stress disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Reactive attachment disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pervasive developmental disorders</strong></td>
<td>- Autism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Asperger's disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rett's disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Childhood disintegrative disorder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Gimpel & Holland, 2003: 2)
3.7.3 Extrinsic factors

Extrinsic factors are those factors influencing education and learning from outside the child. According to Bronfenbrenner’s model, these would be factors starting from the smaller microsystems outside the child, such as family and school, to the macrosystems in broader society (Bouwer, 2007: 10-15).

3.7.2.1 Home circumstances

The home is the primary source of learning for any child and therefore the circumstances in the home have a profound effect on the education of a child (Louw & Louw, 2007: 193). Children learn within their home and from their family because they respond to their environment. This is done by means of play and social interaction and communication with the parents, siblings and any extended family members living with the family (Swart & Phasha, 2007: 220-223).

If a child comes from a home where the language usage of the parents is faulty, where there is incorrect pronunciation of words and where vocabulary is lacking, this may result in the child developing the same defects in terms of language usage. Children learn by means of being involved in the daily routine of the household. The attitude of the parents towards learning and education also plays a vital role.

In many homes, there is a lack of toys, games and appropriate books for children. A lack of books in the home denies the child a chance of exposure to any written work. Because children do not have access to such materials from an early age, this impacts on their early learning. When parents show little interest in the child and the school and they do not encourage and motivate the child, the child loses motivation and interest in school (Prinsloo, 2007: 450-451).

Unemployment and poverty impact negatively on the learning process of a child. Besides the lack of financial stability to provide the necessary basic needs of the family, unemployment and poverty cause emotional and psychological problems. Adults may resort to abuse in any form: physical; sexual; verbal or emotional when they are in a situation beyond their control (Townsend & Dawes, 2007: 74-75).
3.7.2.2 School

As children grow and develop their learning patterns and needs become more intricate and demanding. At some point in time, the learning that takes place in the home is no longer sufficient to meet the needs of the child. For this reason, children then move towards more formal educational settings, such as playgroups, preschools and schools (Murphy & Alexander, 2006: 19), which are extensions of the family.

Within the formal learning institutions that the children enter, their learning process is enhanced and they build upon the foundations of learning that they have acquired from home. At school, children are taught, guided, encouraged and directed by the facilitators/educators. Consequently, learning at a school does not happen by chance. It is true that in the school situation, as in everyday life and at home, much incidental learning does take place (Grové & Hauptfleisch, 1982: 19).

There are instances where the school environment hampers learning in certain learners as a result of specific circumstances. Inadequate or incorrect teaching methods used may have a negative effect on some learners, because their specific needs are not considered. The learner-teacher ratio in large classes contributes to the teacher not having enough time to pay attention to the needs of each learner (Van Greunen, 1994: 97). This often results in the gap in knowledge of weaker learners becoming larger as they lag further and further behind. It also contributes to a higher level of early school-leavers (Race, 2005: 151).

A positive attitude from the teacher is vital, as is the thorough preparation of interesting, exciting and challenging lessons. Dull, routine lessons generally lead to the children losing interest in the work and this may compound any learning problems (Murphy & Alexander, 2006: 69 – 76). A teacher, who is often absent, resulting in many substitute teachers having to fill in, contributes to the child’s insecurity and a lack of continuity amongst learners (Grové & Hauptfleisch, 1982: 46; 119).

Some teachers are inexperienced and/or have little knowledge of how to identify various barriers to learning experienced by the learners in the class. This implies that
these learners have a very small chance of receiving intervention to overcome their learning problems.

3.8 LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

From infancy, children learn through play. Initial learning is experienced by means of the body and the five senses. A baby learns by means of visual stimuli in his environment, hearing sounds and voices around him, touching people and objects with his hands and feet and placing things in his mouth, thus, also learning by means of gustatory experiences (De Witt, 2009: 77-78; Brennand, et al., 2006: 307).

The physical health and psychological make-up of a child are both strongly influenced by play (Botha, Van Ede, Louw, Louw & Ferns, 1999: 301). The following are examples of how physical play can promote a healthy body:

- Climbing trees and jungle gyms develops strength in the arms, legs and shoulders. It also promotes co-ordination, balance and risk-taking ability, as well as confidence and a positive self-image.
- Running and playing chasing games contribute to the development of fitness, endurance and dexterity.
- Jumping and running help to develop bone density.
- Fantasy and imaginative play can provide children with a means of making sense of distressing or confusing situations in their life.
- Play can be a fun and comforting way of alleviating anxiety and stress.

Children play creatively in a variety of settings, because not all play requires bought, manufactured toys. Each season allows children to play with different natural raw materials in the garden (Lindon, 2001: 12). Summer provides sunny days, which are ideal for outdoor activities, such as playing with mud, building with stones and sticks, leaves, water, building sand structures, climbing trees and swimming.

Winter allows children to experience a change in appearance of their outside world. Many trees are bare; the grass is not always green and the outside temperature does not often allow for water play. In areas where it snows, children have the opportunity
to play differently; whether this means building a snowman or skiing, they learn different activities through the change in their environment (O’Connor & New, 2003: 243; Hamachek, 1990: 77).

Play is largely dependent on the home environment of the child. If a child finds himself in a home that does not provide opportunities for effective play and development, the child will be ill-prepared for optimal functioning at school (De Witt, 2009: 315). The home may be void of materials, such as books and toys that can be used to effectively stimulate the child during the learning process. The parents may set a poor example of the use of language, because of their own lack of education (Grové & Hauptfleisch, 1982: 44).

3.8.1 The role of adults in learning through play

Researchers differ in opinion regarding what the level of adult involvement should be in children’s play (Phillips & Soltis, 2005: 55; Lindon, 2001: 163). The general opinion is that there should be a healthy balance between a very high and a very low level of involvement. The problem, however, appears to be in determining exactly where this healthy balance of involvement lies. Adults can play several possible roles in becoming involved in children’s play.

Some of these roles are:

- **Adult-as-play companion**, becoming actively involved in playing with the child and forming part of the activity. This interaction allows for the child to learn from the adult in an informal manner.

- **Adult-as-admirer**: Children generally enjoy adult attention when given in a positive and pro-active manner. They love to please and share what is important in their lives with a significant adult. The learning of a child can be stimulated by an adult and this is particularly important in creative activities such as drawing, painting and story-writing (Louw & Louw, 2007: 238).

- **Adult-as-facilitator**: The adult does not take over the play or make the child passive in the activity, but contributes to shaping the play by appropriate
conversation and encouragement. As a facilitator, the adult guides the child in the discovery of learning.

- **Adult-as-model**: Children observe adult behaviour and tend to copy this in their role-play. When children participate in role-play activities, they generally follow the example they have learnt from the adult(s) in their environment. It is therefore essential for adults to set a good example in terms of the way in which they want their children to follow.

- **Adult-as-mediator**: An adult can provide fair and impartial input into the play of children when there is disagreement. This is the ideal opportunity to teach the life skill of problem-solving.

- **Adult-as-safety officer**: Adults have the responsibility to protect children, as a vulnerable group of society, from harm. Such protection needs to be balanced to allow enough of a challenge for the child to learn from his actions as he explores his world. A child who feels safe in his environment will be more willing to venture forth in order to learn new things.

- **Adult-as-observer-learner**: Observing children at play allows adults to learn more about child behaviour.

( Lindon, 2001: 163)

Children move through different stages of play. They start off with **solitary play**, where they do not engage with another person and are happy to play alone with their toys, crayons, books, etc. (Brennand, *et al*., 2006: 333). They gradually move on to **parallel play**, where they play alongside other children, but are not actively involved with each other’s play (De Witt, 2009: 137). As they grow older and their inter-personal social skills develop, they engage in more inter-active play, during which they are involved with their peers. As children’s play becomes more intricate and various rules are included that define what is and what is not allowed, the essence of play becomes more competitive in nature (De Witt, 2009: 134; Louw & Louw, 2007: 198).

### 3.8.2 Types of play

Researchers have identified different types of play and these are often linked to the

- **Rough-and-tumble play** – close-encounter play, such as touching and tickling.
- **Socio-dramatic play** – the acting out of real and possible experiences of a deep personal, social or domestic nature.
- **Social play** – play which allows the rules and norms for social responsibility and communication to be exhibited, discovered and modified.
- **Creative play** – this type of play allows children to make new connections, as they change the existing information. Creative play can take place with or without a range of given materials. Playing dress-up or baking mud pies are examples of creative play.
- **Communication play** – activities that make use of verbal or non-verbal communication, such as mime acts, reciting poetry, telling jokes, or singing.
- **Dramatic play** – here the child acts out an event in which he is not directly involved. Children may dramatise a story they have read or a television programme they have seen.
- **Symbolic play** – young children often indulge in symbolic play. This is play that allows the child to use personal control and explore a situation, for example, a small twig could symbolise an aeroplane.
- **Deep play** – such activities give children the opportunity to experience the taking of risks. This allows them to develop life skills and possibly deals with their fears. Learning to ride a bicycle is a form of deep play.
- **Exploratory play** – the child makes use of physical activity and perceptual skills to learn more about objects and their properties. They are then able to learn what specific materials feel like and how they can be used. Sensory perception plays a vital role in exploratory play.
- **Fantasy play** – Fantasy play allows the child to move away from reality and re-arrange his world. He is then able to create situations that are never likely to occur, such as having a dragon as a friend.
- **Imaginative play** – play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply.
- **Locomotor play** – any physical activity for enjoyment, not specifically for any purpose.
- **Mastery play** – play that causes a change in the environment, such as digging holes and creating a dam in a small stream.
- **Object play** – making use of physical skills and the co-ordination of senses. This is often used to create a new use for materials and objects in the environment.
- **Role play** – play that involves exploring daily activities, such as shopping, ironing and driving.
- **Competitive play** – games with rules provide an opportunity for the development of communication skills and the development of social skills, such as tolerance and acceptance.

In society today, children are exposed to a myriad of toys and games, either mechanical, technological or in the form of board-games, cards, books, and suchlike. As technology progresses, toys and games become more technical and more involved. Activities such as *playstation, television games and arcade games* are becoming more violent (Louw & Louw, 2007: 203).

Many children experience the harsh realities and pressures of life from a very young age and this robs them of their chance to play and be a child in the fullest sense of the word. Children who have lost their childhood are those who are subjected to child labour, children who are in war zones and those who are refugee children. These children are all forced to cope with extreme emotions and often traumatic losses. For many children in these circumstances, the loss of innocence as a result of child sexual abuse is enormous (Bezuidenhout, 2008: 257; Lindon, 2001: 17-18; Smith & Le Roux, 1993[a]: 37).

The loss of innocence as a result of sexual abuse has a profound effect on the development of a child because role-play begins to take on a very different meaning for him/her.
3.9 LEARNING THROUGH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

“Language and communication skills … form the basis of the process of learning” (Landsberg, et al., 2007: 91). However, communication can be verbal or non-verbal (Brennand, et al., 2006: 318). The ability to communicate and acquire language is one of the most important developmental tasks a child needs to master in his life (Louw & Louw, 2007: 106). The analysis and synthesis of sounds to form words and the organisation of these words into sentences that are grammatically correct, is a very complex and intricate cognitive task.

Researchers acknowledge that language development occurs in phases (Louw & Louw, 2007: 106; Brennand, et al., 2006: 317-318; Louw, Van Ede & Louw: 1999: 253). Brennand, et al., (2006: 317) stress the fact that communication does not only occur by means of the spoken or written (symbolic) word, but also through:

- body language;
- facial expressions;
- signs and gestures;
- tone of voice; and
- painting and drawing.

The development of language and the attainment thereof, follows a specific pattern. However, the rate at which children acquire it will vary, according to their level of development. Children generally move through two stages of language development (Brennand, et al., 2006: 317-318). These are the pre-linguistic and the linguistic stages. These are made up as follows:

**STAGE 1:** Pre-linguistic (non-verbal) communication is made up of unintentional crying, intentional crying, cooing and gurgling and babbling, leading to the formation of the child’s first words. The duration of this stage is normally from birth to one year of age. Babies mainly make use of sounds, facial expressions and body language to communicate (Brennand, et al., 2006: 318).
STAGE 2: Linguistic verbal communication is made up of first words, jargon, holophrases (single words that express different meanings, e.g. use of the word ‘on’ to request that his clothes be put on for him, or to indicate that the radio is ‘on’), telegraphic sentences and finally leading to complex sentences. The duration of this stage is normally from 12 – 15 months of age. At this stage, children make use of words that are easily identifiable for communication. They now learn to classify objects according to specific groupings, such as cap; sock; shoe; t-shirt and shorts. These are all grouped together under the classification of clothing.

3.9.1 FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

Children need to make sense of the world in which they are living and this requires complex thought process that are linked to cognitive development (Brennand, et al., 2006: 317). Cognitive development is an integral part of language and the way in which we organise our thoughts from the simple to the more complex and abstract. Language as a means of communication starts in babyhood with basic baby sounds, such as crying and gurgling. Vocabulary is strengthened by the verbal input the child receives from parents, siblings, peers and other people who make up his lifeworld.

Language has many functions such as:

Communication is the most important function of language and children make use of it to express their needs. Language is used to convey thoughts and to express their feelings in different situations.

Socialisation is an important aspect of human nature and it allows people to learn appropriate social behaviour. Language is also developed and can be enhanced by social interaction. As their language acquisition becomes more complex, children learn important social rules, such as using polite language and how to differentiate between when they are talking to their friends, in comparison to when they are talking to adults.

The establishment and maintenance of relationships is often built on conversations that take place when sharing personal experiences and emotions with others.
The skill of categorisation allows the child to define his world in terms of his perceptions and the ability to conceptualise categories. In this way, a child is able to make sense of his life world. An example of categorisation is the understanding that a rose is a flower, or that a watermelon is a fruit. This skill develops and becomes more complex as the child learns to apply the knowledge to other situations, such as in the learning of Mathematics.

Abstract and symbolic representation of the world is made possible by the use of language. When a child says a word, e.g. dolphin, he creates a visual image of the animal in his mind, while being able to use a word that is representative of a specific object, i.e. a dolphin. This enables him to communicate effectively with others, as they share the same understanding of the abstract.

Reasoning skills develop by means of language and the child gradually learns to make inferences and deductions. A typical example would be if a child saw a sheep, he would be able to infer that the sheep has wool and that it can bleat. Reasoning skills are also essential for Mathematics.

3.10 LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Life experiences are built on acquiring knowledge by learning and the memory of those experiences that one has stored (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2005: 10-12). By means of experience and learning, humans are able to adapt to the ever-changing world they live in. In order to survive, human beings need to be dynamic in terms of adjusting to their environment. Storage of knowledge that has occurred by means of practical experience creates a sturdy foundation of prior knowledge to be applied in new situations.

A typical example here is when a child accidentally puts his hand against a hot oven door. Once he has experienced by his sense of touch that the door is hot and he can be burnt, he will be wary of repeating the behaviour.

Life experiences are stored in the memory and humans are generally able to retrieve these memories and learn from them, so that they can apply the knowledge to other
situations at a later stage (Hamachek (1990: 190). When a child is being sexually abused, the traumatic experience becomes part of what he learns; it becomes part of his life and creates the possibility of having a long-term impact on his life (Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005: 1).

Sexual victimisation experiences strip the victim of his sense of worth and tend to result in a negative sense of self-esteem (Spies, 2006: 54). Many children who are being sexually abused make use of alternative forms of communication, such as behaviour and body language, in an attempt to attract the attention of someone vigilant and caring enough to ask questions (Smith, 1992: 135).

Adult survivors of child sexual abuse retain the memory of the abuse in their long-term memory that they may or may not be able to retrieve (Spies, 2006: 65; Hamachek, 1990: 191). For many abused children, the reality of the experience causes tremendous emotional anxiety and stress. This in turn, may be so distracting for the children in a classroom situation, that they may develop learning difficulties. The impact of the sexual abuse therefore creates a barrier to learning for these children (De Witt, 2009: 366).

3.11 CONCLUSION

Human development is accompanied by learning of some nature, either incidental or intentional. As a child grows and moves from one developmental stage to the next, what he learns is influenced by his personal life experiences, adult guidance, informal education and formal learning at school. He also learns certain things from his peers and this type of learning generally takes place while playing together.

When observing children at play, one can often notice an extension of what the child experiences in the home environment through their actions and choice of dialogue. This chapter has given an overview of the link between human development and learning. It has also presented a discussion on the influence of learning and development on the ability of a child to perform optimally within the school setting.

Chapter Four will give a detailed exposition of the chosen research design and the methodology. The size, characteristics and selection of the research group will be
discussed. The procedures used to gather the data will be described and the techniques used to analyse the data will also be explained.

Matthew 18:6

**Matthew 18:6**

*But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea!***
CHAPTER FOUR
A DISCUSSION OF THE SELECTED RESEARCH DESIGN, THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS AND THE METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three provided an overview of human development, learning and the factors that influence academic performance. This chapter aims to provide an explication of the research plan and how it was executed. The research design and methodology used by the researcher to illustrate the suitability of the research approach for the investigation will now be discussed. It will fully explain the investigation into how child sexual abuse impacts on the academic performance of learners.

The research design provides a framework that allows decisions to be made about the research process (Mouton, 2002: 55-57; Mc Millan & Schumacher, 1993: 157). It provides “a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer the research question(s)” (Mc Millan & Schumacher, 1993:157). In qualitative and quantitative research, the design provides guidance on the tasks to be done, such as the volume of theory that needs to be included and various ways of verifying the findings.

Gorard (2003: 11) indicates that it is important to decide on a topic for a research study, before selecting a research approach, as this will influence the research design and ultimately the outcome. The chosen design for this study is mixed methods. Hunt (2007:1) defines a mixed methods research design as follows: “… a general type of research that includes quantitative and qualitative research data, techniques and methods. A mixed method uses both deductive and inductive scientific methods, has multiple forms of data collecting and produces eclectic and pragmatic reports.”

Creswell and Tashakkori (2007: 4) confirm this definition by stating that a mixed methods approach to research means that the researcher gathers and examines the data, assimilates the information and extracts conclusions using a combination of
qualitative and quantitative methods in the same study. Creswell and Clark (2007: 5) define mixed methods research as follows:

… a research design with philosophical assumptions, as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study … Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.

Proponents of mixed methods research endeavour to use the fundamental principle of mixed methods. According to this principle, the researcher should make use of a mixture or combination of methods that has “complementary strengths and overlapping weaknesses” (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

4.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

4.2.1 Orientation and problem formulation

Child sexual abuse is a global problem and has been treated with shame, embarrassment, secrecy, lies and taboos. It is generally, therefore, a forbidden subject of discussion. The perpetrator often manages to convince the victim to keep the abuse a secret, resulting in an uneasy silence on this issue. As a result of the secrecy surrounding the abuse, it is generally very difficult for it to be detected by other people.

The victim often feels a sense of loyalty to the perpetrator and, as a child, shows concern for the safety of the perpetrator, especially if an emotional bond exists between them. This also happens because of the strong possibility of threats that may have been made to ensure that the victim remains silent (Barker & Hodes, 2007: 36-37). Many victims feel that they are responsible for the abuse in some way, either because they have been “bad/naughty” or because they believe that they have encouraged the inappropriate attention.
Abuse generally results in the victim experiencing feelings such as shame, fear, guilt, embarrassment and anxiety. These feelings are often suppressed and the child victim may start to display changes in behavioural patterns as a coping mechanism. A decline in academic performance, a sudden lack of interest in extramural activities, truancy and social withdrawal are a few of the symptoms that may indicate that the child is being abused (Barker & Hodes, 2007: 39; Louw, 2000: 24; Ballester & Pierre, 1995: 126).

Prof. Herman Conradie of the Department of Criminology at the University of South Africa (2009: 5) sums up the need for effective child protection as follows:

There is nothing missing in children. Adults are the problem. There is no price too high to pay to ensure that our children reach adulthood without being violated physically, psychologically, emotionally, sexually – or otherwise. Any society should do anything and everything to protect its children. No piecemeal solutions will be effective. True long-term commitment is needed to curb crimes against children in South Africa. If we do not do it, we will be failing to serve the best interests of the child.

This research endeavours to investigate the impact of child sexual abuse on the academic performance of learners. It also aims to make a contribution towards ensuring that our children are protected more effectively and are free to reach their full potential in school. The outcome of the investigation will be structured into guidelines for existing educators and student teachers in an effort to create a greater awareness of the impact of sexual abuse on abused learners in their classes. It will also serve to assist such professionals in possibly identifying potential abuse victims at their schools and thereby assisting in the process of disclosure, support, counselling advice and acknowledgement on their road to healing.

It is with this in mind that the following research problems were formulated:

**Primary research question:**

How does child sexual abuse impact on the school life experiences and academic performance of learners?
Secondary research questions:
- What is the nature of sexual abuse experienced by children?
- How do abused children manifest their experiences of sexual abuse at school?
- How do abused children cope with their learning tasks?
- What are the factors that have an impact on their school life and academic performance?
- Which strategies could be suggested to enable educators to help sexually abused children to achieve optimally in the classroom?

4.2.2 The purpose of the study

The primary aim of this mixed methods phenomenological study is to explore the impact of sexual abuse on the ability of abuse victims to perform optimally at school. The factors that may impact on the schooling of the child are:

- The general health of the child.
- Problems with inadequate perceptual development.
- Delayed or problematic language development and speech defects.
- Various emotional and behavioural problems.
- The home circumstances of the child.
- The school environment in which he is educated.

The secondary goal is to determine the nature and manifestation of the abuse experienced, coping mechanisms to complete learning tasks, and also to determine which strategies could be suggested to assist educators in identifying such learners in their classes and provide the necessary support and counselling.

The specific aims stemming from these goals are as follows:

- To conduct a mixed methods study to explore and explain the experiences of adult survivors of child sexual abuse in terms of how they have coped at school.
• To identify guidelines for educators in terms of:
  - creating an awareness of child sexual abuse,
  - identifying possible victims of abuse in the classroom/playground, and
  - to provide suggestions on reporting abuse, support for the learner and family where necessary, as well as recommendations for counselling the victim.

• To ensure that educators make provision for their own de-briefing in terms of dealing with personal emotions during this time.

• To make recommendations for further research.

4.3 THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003: 11), research is guided by a set of beliefs about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Guba (1990: 17-18) refers to the word “paradigm” as a fundamental philosophy that is used to guide action. It can also be considered as the delineation that flows through the epistemological and methodological foundation of the research. Thomas (2009: 72) describes paradigms as “shared ideas in a particular community of inquiry”, thus being the “thinking habits” of researchers and the “rules of procedure” for the research study.

Morgan (2007: 49) states that a paradigm influences the researcher’s decision in terms of research questions and methodology. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007: 21), all research should be based on a worldview that clarifies the study; and researchers must be aware of the interplay of such views when conducting their studies.

It is possible to make use of more than one paradigm and Guba and Lincoln (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 254) refer to the use of multiple paradigms in a single study as the “interbreeding” of the paradigms. Morgan (2007: 58) raises the issue of using these assumptions in combination in a mixed methods approach. This will, however, raise the level of intricacy of the investigation. Creswell and Tashakkori (2007: 306) indicate that, in terms of worldviews, philosophical suppositions ought not to be viewed as absolute and inflexible.
In educational research, two of the main paradigms utilized are objectivism-positivism, and constructivism (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002). The objective-positivistic paradigm seeks to examine reality from a distant, objective perspective and it considers reality as definable and quantifiable. Broido and Manning (2002) state that the goals of objectivist-positivistic research are to control and make predictions. Quantitative research is generally based on this paradigm.

In contrast, the philosophical tradition followed in this research study is more of a critical, interpretive and constructivist nature, because it places the emphasis on human action, intent and communication (McFarlane, 2000: 24). Constructivism is associated with subjectivity and it accepts the possibility of multiple realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The essence of constructivist research is making meaning, rather than the verification of measurable, objective, factual data. Meaning is constructed via engaging in the world. During the research process, meaning is co-created by means of the partnership between the researcher and the participants (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002).

4.3.4 The critical theory

The critical theory contends that facts are influenced and interpreted by humans, and as a result these facts are prone to change (Higgs & Smith, 2002: 80). Humans also have the capability to alter their identities. In contrast to this, there is the possibility that identities can be generated for people by their peers. This is done to serve a purpose for the person generating the “new” identity (Gibson, 1986: 4).

People take their own worldview and the experiences of others into their social settings. Critical theorists argue that humans are capable of improving their lifeworlds by developing their future through being pro-active and reflecting on these actions (Henning, 2004: 23). In critical theory reality is dynamic and changes are ongoing (Peca, 2000: 10-11). Considering the sensitive nature of this research study, it is imperative to consider the traumatic experiences that the participants have had and how they have managed to construct their identities, improve their world and create social relationships.
According to Peca (2000: 22), the primary aim of critical theory is to liberate society holistically, in order to progress from what exists now, towards the ultimate. The opinion of critical theorists is that the separation and often contradictory nature of the real world compared to the ideal, needs to be exposed to initiate any change in society.

In terms of this research, a change in the attitude of society towards the act of sexual victimization and the victims themselves, is desperately sought (Childline UK, 2007: 17-19). Grande (2000: 353) indicates that identity is constructed by the interpersonal relationships between people. The aim of this research study is to investigate how the victims of sexual abuse use their abilities to adapt, manage and cope with their abusive history, in order to construct a better future for themselves. This is done by means of critical reflection.

4.3.5 The constructivist theory

The social construction of reality is emphasised by constructivist theorists. They argue that the social world does not exist independently of people’s views and belief systems (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006: 164). This then implies that humans are able to construct their own reality by means of their actions and interactions. Cromby and Nightingale (1999: 4) state that reality is a social construct, brought about by communication (language).

Being constructed by people makes reality more understandable (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006: 165). Botella and Herrero (2000: 408), explain that humans lean towards understanding their world meaningfully and they play a role in constructing this reality. Survivors of CSA may therefore attempt to obtain a significant insight into who they are, why they were sexually abused, and how they can overcome this trauma to live optimally. For many victims and adult survivors, it is very difficult to work through their experience(s) of violation, guilt, fear and anger. The abuse has become a part of their reality: from the moment it started for them as a young child.

The meaning given to reality is not exclusively individual, because if a person’s actions and words are to have any meaning and impact, they need to be supplemented by
actions and words from others. Thus reality is constructed from social interaction that allows people to assert their own views and beliefs (Botella & Herrero, 2000: 409).

The participants in this study constructed their life stories and the experiences that had contributed to these narratives. Botella and Herrero (2000: 410) indicate that people consciously decide what to include and what to exclude from their narratives and this is underlying to individual identity in one’s life story.

The interpretive paradigm is appropriate for use in this research, because it allows the researcher to understand how people attempt to construct meaning in their worlds. One needs to make sense of their actions and comprehend what they say in order to explain and interpret these actions.

4.3.6 The interpretive paradigm

Creswell (2003: 182) states that qualitative research is primarily interpretive. This suggests that an interpretation of the data is made by the researcher, who studies participants in their natural environments, while attempting to understand and interpret the phenomena. This will include the development of a description of a person or a setting; the analysis of data for themes or categories; and finally, the drawing of conclusions.

The researcher explores how participants attach meaning to their personal and social environments (Smith, 2003: 51). People do not merely respond to external stimuli. McFarlane (2000: 27) mentions that people develop individual perceptions of the world; and their actions are then based on these perceptions.

The focus of this study will focus on the interpretation of what participants expressed about their experiences of being sexually abused. By analysing the many diverse contexts of the participants and narrating the meaning they attached to their situations, a deeper understanding will be acquired (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: 373).
4.3.6.1 The phenomenological approach

Researchers state that the focus of the phenomenological approach is on what humans experience and how they express their experiences, as accurately as possible, by means of language (Denscombe, 2003: 97; Rudestam & Newton, 2001: 38). Denscombe (2003: 96) mentions that this approach places the emphasis on description, interpretation and subjectivity. He also states that it concerns the way people perceive things: their attitudes, feelings, belief patterns and their emotions.

Babbie (2007: 294) states that people express their perceptions of the world as they interpret it, and not as it is in reality. The phenomenological approach in this research is used by means of the autobiographical life stories, as written by the participants. They have expressed their experiences of being sexually victimised through the written word. This provided the opportunity for them to describe and explain the essence of the phenomenon (Whisker, 2001: 118).

This was achieved by the expression of thoughts, feelings, fears, attitudes, beliefs, needs and aspirations regarding their own individual specific realities.

4.5 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Researchers explain that a research design is the plan that shows how a researcher intends to explore a research problem (Thomas, 2009: 70; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 57-58; Mouton, 2002: 55-57). The aim of the research design is to make sure that the data gathered will play a role in answering the research question(s) as accurately as possible (Mc Millan & Schumacher, 1993: 31).

4.4.1 The mixed methods approach

Mixed methods research entails the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data are collected by means of various instruments, depending on which one is best suited to the study in progress. The analysis is conducted by statistically analysing the scores as collected on the instruments used to answer the research question posed, or to test the various hypotheses (Creswell &
Plano Clark, 2007: 6). In contrast to this, the qualitative data together makes up the information that the researcher gathers by means of interviews with the participants. The participants respond and express themselves.

Qualitative data may also be collected by means of techniques, such as observation, collecting data from archived records, audio-visual materials and written life stories (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007: 6). Qualitative data are analysed by means of merging the data into various categories and sub-categories and then presenting the multiplicity of ideas collected during the data-collection process (Thomas, 2009: 198; Wilkins & Woodgate, 2008; Gilbert, 2006; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

According to researchers (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutman & Hanson 2003: 230; Brewer & Hunter, 1989: 28), using a mixed methods approach allows the researcher to develop a better understanding of the problem. This rationale is based on the following assumptions of the advantages of mixed methods research:

- A mixed methods approach presents strengths that counterbalance the weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research on their own.
- Mixed methods research presents more thorough evidence for studying a research problem than either approach can do alone.
- A mixed methods approach helps to answer the research question(s) that cannot be answered by using either a qualitative or quantitative approach on its own.
- Mixed methods tend to encourage researchers to work in partnership across the often-opposing relationship between qualitative and quantitative researchers.
- By making use of a mixed methods approach, the researcher is encouraged to make use of multiple paradigms, rather than typically associating specific worldviews for either qualitative or quantitative approaches.
- The researcher is able to make use of all methods possible to focus on a research problem and this makes mixed methods research more “practical”. Numbers and words are used in combination to solve problems and inductive
and deductive thinking are employed. (Thomas, 2009: 140-141; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007: 9-10; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003: 3).

In this study, the qualitative research will be conducted first, because it can provide an adequate exploration of the problem. However, this exploration is insufficient in this case and quantitative research is then utilised to provide a further understanding of the problem. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007: 34), the initial qualitative research can “aid in the identification of items and scales to help develop a quantitative instrument.”

Various matrices make up the quantitative representation used in this research. This information will then be used to obtain a profile of the participants and supplement the qualitative data on child sexual abuse.

There are two important research tools that are used in mixed methods research, namely: a notation system and visual diagrams (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007: 40-41). The notation system, as first used by Morse (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007: 41), makes use of plusses (+) that indicate when methods have been used simultaneously and arrows (→) that indicate when methods have been used in a specific sequence. The primary method, in this case qualitative, is written in upper case (i.e. QUAL) and the secondary method, in this case quantitative, is written in lower case (i.e. quan).

The advantages of a mixed methods approach include:

1. Improved validity (verification of results by means of various data sources)
2. Complementary data (adding together information, i.e. words to numbers and vice versa).
3. Establishing new lines of thinking by the surfacing of new perspectives and contradictions.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007: 42) provide ten guidelines for the effective drawing of visual diagrams for mixed methods studies. (See Table 4.1)
Table 4.1 Ten guidelines for the effective drawing of visual diagrams used in mixed methods research

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Give the visual diagram an appropriate title.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Decide whether to use a vertical or horizontal layout for the diagram.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Boxes need to be drawn to indicate the qualitative and quantitative stages of data collection; data analysis and the interpretation of the research results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Make use of lower and upper case letters to indicate the relative priority of the qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Single-headed arrows must be used to indicate the flow of the design process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Each stage of the qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis must be specified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Expected outcomes of each procedure in qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis must be specified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Concise language must be used when describing the procedures and outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The diagrammatic representation must be simple and easy to follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The visual diagram must be sized to fit onto a single page.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Qualitative and quantitative research both focus on the same fundamentals in the research process. In Table 4.2, the middle column indicates the major steps in a research process. The two approaches differ in terms of how the researcher will implement each stage. The differences are not to be seen as oppositional, but rather as complementary, as the differences on a continuum.

Table 4.2 Elements of quantitative and qualitative research in the research procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The elements of qualitative</th>
<th>STEPS IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS</th>
<th>The elements of quantitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• an understanding of the meaning individuals give to a phenomenon inductively</td>
<td>Intention of the research</td>
<td>• to test a theory inductively to verify or disprove it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• a minor role</td>
<td>How literature is used</td>
<td>• major role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• justification of the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td>• justification of the problem</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Table: Steps of the Mixed Research Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How the intention is focused</th>
<th>How the data are collected</th>
<th>How data are analysed</th>
<th>Role of the researcher</th>
<th>How data are validated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>determine if a mixed methods design is appropriate</td>
<td>ask open-ended questions to understand the intricacy of a single phenomenon</td>
<td>ask closed-ended questions to test specific variables that develop hypotheses or questions</td>
<td>ask closed-ended questions to understand the intricacy of a single phenomenon</td>
<td>ask open-ended questions to understand the intricacy of a single phenomenon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numbers from a large sample group at many research sites</td>
<td>words and images from a small sample group at a few sites to study participants in their personal surrounding</td>
<td>numbers from a large sample group at many research sites</td>
<td>numbers from a large sample group at many research sites</td>
<td>numbers from a large sample group at many research sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>analyzing numerical statistics rejecting hypotheses or determining effect sizes</td>
<td>analysis of text or images coded into larger themes</td>
<td>analyzing numerical statistics rejecting hypotheses or determining effect sizes</td>
<td>analyzing numerical statistics rejecting hypotheses or determining effect sizes</td>
<td>analyzing numerical statistics rejecting hypotheses or determining effect sizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remains in the background takes necessary steps to remove bias</td>
<td>remains in the background takes necessary steps to remove bias</td>
<td>remains in the background takes necessary steps to remove bias</td>
<td>remains in the background takes necessary steps to remove bias</td>
<td>remains in the background takes necessary steps to remove bias</td>
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<tr>
<td>using validity procedures based on external standards such as statistics, judges, past research</td>
<td>using validity procedures based on external standards such as statistics, judges, past research</td>
<td>using validity procedures based on external standards such as statistics, judges, past research</td>
<td>using validity procedures based on external standards such as statistics, judges, past research</td>
<td>using validity procedures based on external standards such as statistics, judges, past research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: Creswell and Plano Clark (2007: 29)

### 4.4.2 Steps of the mixed research process

There are eight steps in the mixed research process. Although these steps have been numbered, it is essential to remember that researchers may follow these steps in different orders (non-linear), in accordance with the needs and concerns that emerge from a specific research study (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

**Step One** is to determine whether or not a mixed methods design is appropriate for the research study. In trying to determine this, the researcher must ask whether or not...
a mixed design is best suited to answering the research question(s). It is also essential to ascertain whether mixed methods research will offer the best design for the volume and type of evidence that the researcher hopes to obtain as the research study progresses.

**Step Two** is determining the rationale for using a mixed methods design. According to Johnson and Christensen (2008), the five most important purposes for mixed method research are:

- **Triangulation**: seeks convergence, corroboration, and correspondence of the results from different methods.
- **Complementary**: seeks elaboration, enhancement, and clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method.
- **Development**: seeks to use the results from one method to help inform or develop the other method, where development is broadly constructed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions.
- **Initiation**: seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks.
- **Expansion**: seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989).

**Step Three** encompasses the selection of the specific mixed method research design that will best help the researcher to answer the research question(s).

**Step Four** covers the selection of the method for the collection of the data. There are six major data collection methods, namely: questionnaires, tests, interviews, observation, focus groups and existing data, such as personal documents; official documents; physical data and archived research data.

**Step Five** is the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected during the research process.

**Step Six** is validation of the data that have been collected. Data validation should take place throughout the research process. If the data are not trustworthy then the study
will not be valid. Validity strategies for both qualitative and quantitative research need to be implemented.

**Step Seven** is the interpretation of the data. Interpretation of the data commences when the researcher enters the field and collects the first set of data. Interpretation of data continues throughout the research process. It is important to remember that interpretation and validation of data work together. The researcher wants to ensure that the strategies used will provide valid data and will help to make justifiable data interpretations.

**Step Eight** is the writing of the research report. The report must relate to the qualitative and quantitative parts of the research study if it is to be a truly mixed method research. This will help to make sense of the whole study and help to derive benefit from the strengths of mixed methods research. The steps are diagrammatically represented in Figure 4.1. Steps are numbered for explanatory purposes. Researchers may move around in the circle in multiple directions.

**Figure 4.1 Important steps in a mixed methods research study**

(Johnson and Christensen, 2008)
4.4.3 Different types of mixed methods designs

The aim of this study was to determine the impact of CSA on the school life and academic performance of learners. In order to achieve this aim, a mixed methods approach was implemented. This was done to assist in the understanding of the extent and nature of the problem of CSA (Wilkins & Woodgate, 2008: 24).

Making use of multiple methods to investigate a specific phenomenon creates the opportunity for a greater understanding and wider perceptions. In this study the quantitative data support the findings of the qualitative data, thereby strengthening the point of view that CSA does indeed have an impact on the child’s ability to function effectively at school (Wilkins & Woodgate, 2008: 31).

Gilbert (2006: 205) states that the use of mixed methods approaches has become more frequent in the social sciences. By using a mixed methods approach the researcher is able to combine elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, and to gain thereby a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Punch, 2009: 358; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007: 9). The use of a mixed methods approach strengthens the outcome and enhances the adaptability of the research design (Gilbert, 2006: 205).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007: 59) differentiate between four main mixed method designs, namely: triangulation; embedded; explanatory and exploratory.

4.5.1.1 Triangulation design

In the case of a researcher implementing both quantitative and qualitative methods simultaneously, with equal weighting, this is then known as the triangulation design. Creswell, et al. (2003: 233) also refer to this design as a “concurrent triangulation design”. The information is collected from the two independent sets of data. These are then merged in one of two possible ways, either by (1) blending the data in the analysis phase or, (2) by bringing the two independent results into the interpretation of the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007: 64).
Wilkins and Woodgate (2008: 26) indicate that the significant outcome of triangulation is established on findings that are authenticated from various methods. The conclusion is then rigorous and the “concurrent validity” is consequently enhanced (Wilkins & Woodgate, 2008: 26).

4.5.1.2 Embedded design

The embedded design was used in this study. One of the two sets of data is secondary (quantitative in this study) and offers support for the primary data (qualitative in this study) in the embedded design. This is done because one of the sets of data is insufficient in answering the research question in terms of degrees (Thomas, 2009: 83; Rallis & Rossman, 2003: 496). The quantitative data were used to supplement the qualitative findings.

Creswell, et al. (2003: 215) discuss the issue of the “implementation of the data collection”. Implementation refers to the order in which the researcher collects the qualitative and quantitative data. Implementation of the data collection can either be the collection of both sets of data simultaneously, i.e. concurrently, or phasing the data in over time, i.e. sequentially, as in this study.

If the data are introduced concurrently, either the qualitative or the quantitative data are collected first. The sequence will depend on the objectives the researcher is trying to reach by means of a mixed methods study.

4.5.1.3 Explanatory design

An explanatory design includes quantitative and qualitative data, with the quantitative data being the primary data. The qualitative is used to provide further explanation or to build on the quantitative results (Gilbert, 2006: 208). Alternatively, this design is also known as the sequential explanatory design. It starts with the quantitative data collection and analysis and is then followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data; and the qualitative phase is specifically designed to correlate with the quantitative phase (Creswell, Tashakkori, Jensen & Shapley, 2003: 631).
4.5.1.4 Exploratory design

Exploratory research is normally undertaken when the researcher is attempting to study a relatively unknown field (Wisker, 2001: 119). This allows the researcher to obtain new insights into, and a better understanding of, the phenomenon to be studied (Mouton, 1996: 103). This design allows for the results of the qualitative phase to be used to assist in the development of the quantitative phase (Punch, 2009: 298; Miller, 2003: 440). This design is also referred to as the sequential exploratory design.

Two models make up the exploratory design, namely: (1) the instrument development model, and (2) the taxonomy development model. Only a few participants are involved in the instrument development model and the researcher commences with a qualitative exploration of the subject matter.

The development of a quantitative survey instrument is then guided by the qualitative findings. In the second phase of the research, this instrument is then implemented and used to validate the findings. The development of the instrument therefore connects the qualitative and quantitative methods.

When the initial qualitative stage is used to identify essential variables, to develop a classification system or to develop an emerging theory, the taxonomy development model is used. The categories that are identified are used to guide the research questions and the collection of data for the quantitative stage. The quantitative method is therefore used as a secondary method that is implemented to examine the qualitative findings in more detail.

Interpretation of data in a mixed methods approach can be embarked on by means of various techniques (Wilkins & Woodgate, 2008: 28). If the two sets of data are analyzed separately and then the results are integrated in the discussion phase, then the technique used is sequential. It is also possible for this to take place during the data analysis. One type of data is then “transformed” into the other (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007: 83).
Table 4.3 provides an overview of the different types of mixed methods designs. For this study the dominant status of QUAL + quan is applicable.

Table 4.3  An overview of mixed method designs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paradigm</th>
<th>Emphasis</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EQUAL WEIGHTING</strong></td>
<td>QUAL + QUAN</td>
<td>QUAL → QUAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>QUAN → QUAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOMINANT STATUS</strong></td>
<td>QUAL + quan</td>
<td>QUAL → quan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>QUAN + qual</td>
<td>quan → QUAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>quan → qual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>quan → QUAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Johnson and Christensen, 2008)
Figure 4.2  Diagrammatic representation of the embedded design used in this study

QUALITATIVE

Data collection
- Meeting with participants to explain research and provide guidelines for narratives
- Field notes taken and observations

Data analysis
- Coding
- Identification of themes with categories & sub-categories

Qualitative findings
- Description of the different themes, with categories and sub-categories

Quantitative
- Frequency distributions calculated from qualitative findings

Overall results and interpretation based on QUALITATIVE and quantitative results
4.5 THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

One of the main reasons for using a qualitative design as the primary design for this research study is that it is most suited to reaching the aim of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants involved (Creswell 1998: 17).

Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 4) indicate that “qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study; personal experience; … life story; interview; … that together describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives … Qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand.”

They contend that it is the principles of social construction, the personal relationship between the researcher and the phenomenon and the situational constraints that influence and mould the investigation. They also state that the principles bring together the beliefs concerning the form and the nature of reality (ontology); the type of relationship association between the knower and what can be known (epistemology); and the way in which we get to know our world by various methods of inquiry, in an effort to develop a more accurate understanding of the world (McNiff, 2005: 1; Henning, 2004: 15).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 14), qualitative research has its foundation in a “naturalistic phenomenological philosophy”, which presupposes that multiple realities exist. These realities are formed socially as a result of the meaning given to a situation either by an individual or by a combined definition. Adult survivors of CSA define their circumstances independently and collectively to assign meaning to their worlds.

During the course of this study, the researcher will attempt to determine what these definitions are and how they influence the realities that the survivors have created for themselves, in order to develop a greater understanding of how childhood sexual abuse impacts on a learner’s ability to perform at
school. This will be done by gathering information from the data collected by means of life stories written by the participants who are adult survivors of child sexual abuse. 

The manner in which life events are related varies from person to person, depending on how each one has experienced the event. As a result, many researchers are of the opinion that qualitative research should have the multi-faceted crystal as the central figure and not a triangle (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008: 7-8). Richardson and St. Pierre (2008: 473) support this view in the following terms: "There are far more than three sides by which to approach the world ... Crystals grow, change and are altered. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves." Crystals are thus being compared to human nature in terms of its complexity, dynamics, growth, change, transformation and inner reflection.

This research study will take an in-depth look at how participants have experienced their life world, before and after being sexually abused. Each one will have experienced the abuse differently. Each one will have perceived themselves differently and each one will respond differently to the research questions as they reflect on their past, thus contributing another side to the crystal.

4.7.5 Characteristics of the qualitative approach

The process of qualitative research does not rely on numbers and statistics to express the information which participants have imparted during the study, but rather on words as expressions of their experiences and views (Creswell, 1994: 1; McMillan & Schumacher, 1999: 373).

4.7.5.1 Interpretive approach

Qualitative research adopts an interpretive approach to data, because it describes multiple views of reality (Creswell, 2003: 182). It focuses on studying participants within their environment and within their personal
context, and it takes into consideration the subjective meanings that people bring into their world (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002: 17). The researcher’s point of view is but one of many and it is important for the researcher to make his role explicit (Creswell, 1994: 147).

The researcher interprets the data, studies the participants in their natural environments, while attempting to understand and interpret phenomena. This includes the development of a description of a person or a setting; analysis of data for themes or categories; and finally, the drawing of conclusions. The focus of this study will be on the interpretation of what adult survivors of CSA have expressed about their traumatic experiences and how they have impacted on their ability to perform at school. By analysing the many diverse contexts of the participants and narrating the meanings they attached to their situations, deeper understanding was acquired (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: 373).

4.7.5.2 Naturalistic and contextual nature

Participants are met in their natural environments by qualitative researchers (Wisker, 2001: 140). No formal, clinical interview is arranged, but the opportunity is created for the participants to speak for themselves in their natural setting. In the case of the study, the researcher will meet with the participants to explain the purpose of the research, to provide guidelines for the narratives to be written by the participants and for the participants to sign the letter of informed consent.

By meeting the participants in their natural environments, the researcher gains a deeper insight into their world and can therefore be more involved in the actual experiences of the participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007: 30; Creswell, 2003: 181; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992: 30). Lincoln and Guba (1985: 37) state that the researcher and participant ‘interact to influence one another; knower and known are inseparable’.
This study is of a very personal and sensitive nature and therefore the initial meeting will take place in the homes of the participants. They need to be met in a familiar place where they feel relaxed and calm, and where there are few or no elements that can cause them any form of added stress or anxiety.

Qualitative research ‘provides an answer to the challenge to learn more about how people behave in their typical surroundings (i.e. their natural settings)’ (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008: 185). From this contextual perspective, a deeper understanding of human perception works can be gained from the diversity of individuals who took part in the research study.

4.7.5.3 Descriptive nature

According to Whisker (2001: 118), social research is descriptive, because the purpose thereof, is ‘to find out more about a phenomenon and to capture it with detailed information.’

The emerging data from this research study will describe a reality as experienced by the participants. The data of phase 1 will therefore be reported in the words of the participants and not in numbers or statistics (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002: 285; Creswell, 2003: 199; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992: 30-31). Once this has been done, thorough and in-depth descriptions can be provided (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 8). One of the main aims of social research is to ‘describe situations and events’ (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 80).

4.7.5.4 The inductive approach

An inductive approach allows themes and concepts to be developed from specific information that is gathered during the research process (Creswell, 1994: 145). According to researchers (Creswell, 1994: 145; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992: 31), the qualitative researcher does not commence the work with any preconceived ideas or theories, but ideas or theories are constructed form the ground up as the research study progresses (Leedy & Ormond, 2001).
Mouton (1996: 71) indicated that a distinguishing feature of inductive reasoning is ‘drawing inferences’. This implies that the researcher makes a ‘logical jump’ from the ‘premises to the conclusions’. De Vos (1998: 242) indicated that the logic of the process involves the development of concepts, insights and perceptions derived from patterns that emerge during the data analysis.

4.7.5.5 The exploratory nature

Wisker (2001: 119) states that exploratory research is usually undertaken when attempting to study or explore a fairly unknown field. This provides the researcher with the opportunity to gain new insight into, and a better understanding of, the phenomenon to be studied. In South Africa, there is a desperate need to create a wider awareness and deeper understanding of child sexual abuse and how it impacts on the life of the child, both in the short term and in the long term.

Many schools have a policy regarding child sexual abuse and what the procedures are when faced with such a situation. However, there is still a lack of awareness of sexual abuse and the impact thereof amongst most educators, irrespective of their position in the hierarchy of the school. This implies that, although a policy may exist, it is not being effectively implemented, if at all. This research therefore aims to explore how CSA impacts on the school experiences of children, as well as the resulting impact on their school life and academic performance.

4.7.5.6 Holistic nature

Social phenomena are viewed holistically by qualitative researchers (Creswell 2003: 182). The aim of a holistic approach is to obtain data covering various aspects of the whole situation. From these data, a complete picture of the specific social situation is derived. Wisker (2001: 98) states that “holistic researchers might look at living responses, variables and the whole context”. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003: 57), “qualitative design is holistic. It
looks at the larger picture and beings with a search for the understanding of the whole”. This then means that the various parts are examined in their totality, in an effort to achieve a thorough understanding of the whole.

4.7.5.7 The interactive process

According to Burns and Grové (1997: 29), and Creswell (1994: 145), the qualitative paradigm is an interactive and systematic approach, which is implemented to describe and give meaning to a human phenomenon. The raw data are clustered and patterns then form to reveal themes that explain how the participants have experienced their inner worlds. The researcher is continuously and actively involved in the process and therefore engages with all participants as the main research instrument in qualitative research (Miller & Crabtree, 1999: 14). Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 8) describe this interactive process as, “the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied”.

As a result of being so deeply involved in the process, it is essential that the researcher should be aware of the effect that he can have on the research process and how he is, in turn, affected by this interaction (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002: 82-85; Rossman & Rallis, 1998: 6). It is therefore vital that the researcher maintain an open mind and an attitude that allows personal learning to reach higher levels, without influencing the research outcomes.

4.7.6 Phenomenological strategy of inquiry

Qualitative research is rooted in the phenomenological perspective, emphasising the subjective and opposing objectivism and positivism. It also acknowledges that description precedes explanation (Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology, 2000). Phenomenology acknowledges that there are numerous ways of interpreting experiences; and that it is the meaning of people’s experiences that forms their reality (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992: 99).
Janesick (2004) states that the qualitative researcher studies a phenomenon in an attempt to understand the experiences of the participants in their own terms. It is emphasised that understanding and knowledge are the outcomes of the dialogue between the researcher and the participants (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002). The researcher, therefore, aims to understand and describe the participants’ experiences of the phenomenon being studied.

4.8 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.8.1 Population sample and setting

Jones (2002) indicates that the sample size depends on the purpose of the study in terms of what will be useful, what has credibility and what is possible in terms of the time and resources available. The sample size is also dependent on the method of data collection. The researcher will apply availability sampling when selecting participants for the study, because of the realities of the situation. Availability sampling means that the researcher makes use of the subjects that are available and not necessarily those who could have been selected (Grinnell, 1988: 251).

For this research participants from the population selected, were *purposively* chosen from an *availability* sample, with the aim of selecting all accessible participants who can provide accurate and reliable information regarding the research problem (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 111; Grinnell, 1998: 251; McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: 378). Creswell (1998: 118) stated that purposive sampling will ensure that only those participants who can contribute meaningfully to the research will be included in the study. It is vitally important for the participants to have the opportunity to express their true feelings, beliefs or experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: 241).

Struwig and Stead (2001: 115), state that there are two disadvantages of availability or convenience sampling, namely:
• Variability and bias of estimates cannot be measured or controlled, and
• Generalising data beyond the sample group is inappropriate.

When deciding on the participants to be selected, the researcher considered the following criteria:

- Does the research population and the sample taken from it relate directly to the problem statement of the study? (Mauch & Birch, 1993: 122; Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 40).
- Is the participant an adult survivor of child sexual abuse?
- Does the sample consist of adults from both genders?
- Are the participants representative of the higher, middle and lower socio-economic levels of the population?
- Have participants from the various language groups been used in the sample?
- Does the marital status of the participants include single and married participants?

The participants had one variable in common, namely that the group consisted exclusively of adult survivors of child sexual abuse. The researcher kept in mind that participants must be approached with the above stated criteria in mind, in order to be of value to the study in giving relevant feedback and information (Mauch & Birch, 1993: 122). McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 382) indicate that the insights generated from qualitative inquiry depend more on the information-richness of the cases and the analytical capabilities of the researcher than on the sample size. An article was published in the supplement of a local newspaper, explaining the research and calling for eligible and interested participants to contact the researcher.
4.8.2 Qualitative data collection

Data refer to ‘the kinds of information researchers obtain on the subjects of their research’ (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990: 89). Examples of data are:

- demographic information, such as age, gender, religion;
- scores from standardised assessments;
- oral responses to an interview (transcripts);
- essays, life stories, etc. written by participants;
- field notes of observations.

Data collection is a vital part of any research, because the conclusions and recommendations of a study are based on the outcome of the data analysis (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990: 88). Creswell (1994: 148) stipulated three specific steps in the process of data collection, namely: (1) demarcating the boundaries of the study; (2) collection of information by means of observations, interviews, existing documentation and visual material, and (3) establishing the procedure for recording the information.

According to Robson (1993: 401), the following ‘tactics’ can be used to derive conclusions from qualitative data:

- Counting and categorizing data, and measuring the frequency of category occurrence;
- Noting of recurring themes or sub-themes;
- Clustering of any groups that present similar characteristics;
- Factoring and grouping variables into a small number of factors;
- Finding a relationship (if at all) between two or more variables;
- Developing a network chain to link variables;
- Connecting findings to broad frameworks.
4.8.2.1 The researcher as an instrument of data collection

Creswell (1994: 145) stated that the main instrument for the collection of data in qualitative research is the researcher. In this study, two researchers will participate in the process of data collection: one will be the facilitator, who will set the research question and facilitate the initial interview; and the other will be the observer. The observer will take field notes, in order to facilitate triangulation (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002: 15–17; Mouton, 2001: 100; Struwig & Stead, 2001: 145). The field notes were taken by a co-researcher with a Masters degree from the Health Sciences Faculty.

In this study the researcher will conduct the initial meeting to explain the process for data collection by visiting the “research sites and observing the behavior of individuals, in which the individual is allowed to talk openly about a topic, largely without the use of specific questions” (Creswell, 2003: 17 & 181). The reason for this is so as not to influence the thoughts of the participant by asking leading questions.

The researcher should also be a keen observer. Careful and accurate observation during the course of the meeting enhances the quality of the data collected and provides "a form of within-method triangulation" (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002: 93; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990: 90).

4.8.2.2 Data collection: narratives

Selecting a method of data collection depends on factors such as the phenomenon being investigated, the objectives of the research and the philosophical and theoretical perspectives (Jones, 2002). For this research study the narrative approach was selected for data collection.

Hunter and Brewer (2003: 588-589) describe a narrative approach as a group of factors, having “small, distinct and separate origins that over time come together … to create the conditions that produce the phenomenon being studied”. Child sexual abuse is by nature a very personal and sensitive issue
and many people prefer not to talk about it openly, if at all. As a result, for this particular research study, it was decided to make use of autobiographical life stories (narratives) as the primary source of data collection (Thomas, 2009: 31).

The participants met with the researcher and fieldworker individually, to allow the researcher to explain the reason for conducting the study, the format of the procedure, to explain the guidelines for the narrative and to obtain a signed letter of consent. Each participant was also provided with one of the following, depending on their preference: a computer flash drive, a writable computer cd or a book in which to write. They were then given a period of three weeks to write their story and save it on/in the device chosen.

The setting for these initial meetings was the natural contexts, namely, the homes of the participants. This then implies that the researcher has left the confines of a study in order to physically enter the natural setting of the participants in order to collect data for the study (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 87; Holloway & Wheeler, 2002: 34).

Field notes were integrated as part of the discussions. Mouton (2002: 98) refers to field notes as the ‘doing’ stage of the research process. All field notes were dated accurately and formed part of the audit trail. The field notes related to the narratives in the addendums have been included. Field notes can be used as a means of quality control. The researcher creates an historical record of the entire research process to which he can refer at a later stage if necessary. The following essential decisions and steps should be included in this process:

- A record of the dates when the researcher and fieldworker first accessed the field.
- The dates of the interviews conducted should be recorded.
- Monitoring the length of time taken for the initial interview.
- Accurate recording of the participants.
• Monitoring the possible factors that have a negative impact on the fieldwork, such as time delays.
• Monitoring of the number of participants who withdrew from the research, the number who participate and the reasons for their possible withdrawals from the research.

The researcher put the following open-ended questions to the participants:

Tell the story of your sexual abuse and how it impacted on your life, especially your school-related activities. Please elaborate on the following:

iv) How did you experience your abuse?
v) How did you express your abuse in your behaviour?
vi) How did you cope with your school work?

The main reason for deciding upon this specific variant of narrative was to allow the participants the freedom to write as openly and honestly as possible about their life experiences. It was felt that any form of interview, structured, semi-structured or unstructured, would place pressure on the participants to respond within a very short time frame.

4.6.2.3 Qualitative data analysis

Once all the fieldwork had been completed, the raw data needed to be analysed and interpreted (Mouton 2002: 108). Mouton states that ‘analysis involves “breaking up” the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships’. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992:124), the analysis of qualitative data requires the process of coding. Coding is done by examining the detail found in the field notes, together with the information gathered during the interview.

Coding is the method used to divide data into parts by means of a system of categorising (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: 486). When the researcher
reviews the data, there may be a repetition of information or behavioural patterns that become obvious (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992: 166). These can then form the basis for coding. In order for the research findings to be verified, an independent researcher was used to re-code the information (Creswell, 1994: 155).

So as not to influence the research findings, Ray (1994), in Holloway and Wheeler (1996: 118), stressed that “data analysis in ... descriptive phenomenology requires the researcher to make full use of bracketing (that is to suspend their past experiences, knowledge or prediction of phenomena)”. Creswell (2003: 15), states that when the researcher brackets her personal experiences, she is better able to understand the experiences conveyed during the interview with the participant. This implies that the researcher must set aside all prejudgments in an attempt to gain accurate information (Creswell, 1998: 52; Lemon & Taylor, 1997: 227).

The process of data analysis is a complex, time-consuming activity (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002: 235; Struwig & Stead, 2001: 119). For this reason, the researcher needs to allocate sufficient time for the work to be completed. Holloway and Wheeler (2002: 235-236) mention various stages through which the analysis process moves:

- Transcribing interviews and sorting field notes.
- Organizing and ordering the data.
- Listening to and reading the material collected over and over again.
- Coding and categorizing.
- Building themes.
- Describing a phenomenon.

The eight steps of Tesch, as listed (in Creswell, 1994: 155), were used for the analysis of the qualitative data in this study:
* Step 1: The researcher read through the life stories and made notes of ideas for possible themes as they emerged.

* Step 2: The narrative that was selected first was the one that appeared to be the richest in information. It was read again in an attempt to discover the underlying meanings that came to mind. Notes of these were made in the margin.

* Step 3: The previous step was repeated for the second time to make a list of all the themes. Similar themes were placed together and arranged into columns as main themes, categories and sub-categories.

* Step 4: The themes were then abbreviated as codes and written next to the linking paragraph within the text. This assisted in identifying additional categories and sub-categories.

* Step 5: The researcher made a note of what seemed to be the most descriptive categories and also grouped any related themes together.

* Step 6: Once a final decision had been made on the abbreviation for each category, the codes were placed in alphabetical order.

* Step 7: A pilot analysis was done as soon as the data material belonging to each category had been grouped in one place.

* Step 8: The data were re-coded.

An independent qualitative researcher was requested to perform an independent re-coding of the data, in order to establish if the same categories or themes and sub-categories or sub-themes became apparent and could be confirmed. The triangulation, through the use of different researchers, ensured the reliability of the process of data analysis that took place (Willig, 2001: 81; Creswell, 1998: 202; Flick, 1998: 51). A consensus meeting was held, during
which the coding was discussed with the researchers and the independent coder.

Furthermore, Borkan (in Holloway & Wheeler [2002: 238]), suggests that in the initial process of data analysis, a ‘horizontal pass’ strategy can be used. This involves the following:

- Reading the data and looking for themes, emotions and surprises, taking in the overall picture.
- Reflective and in-depth reading of the data to find supporting evidence for these themes.
- Re-reading for elements that may have been overlooked.
- Searching for possible alternative meanings.
- Attempting to link discrepancies together.

### 4.6.3 Literature control

A literature control reveals “the extent to which the study … produces the same results when the methodology is replicated in similar circumstances and conditions” (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002: 251; Bodgan & Biklen, 1992: 48). This indicates whether differences, similarities, gaps or unique contributions have emerged in the study. It also allows the researcher to acquire a wider understanding of the phenomenon being studied, when compared with other existing research (Creswell, 2002: 87).

The findings of this study, as discussed in Chapter 5, have therefore been verified against the existing literature. Following this procedure has allowed the researcher to establish whether similar views, possible discrepancies or significant contributions have been made on this particular topic.
4.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Guba (in Krefting, 1991) describes four generic criteria to evaluate trustworthiness in qualitative and quantitative research. Due to the philosophical differences between the two types of research, the criteria are interpreted differently. Table 4.4 summarizes these criteria and the way in which they are interpreted in qualitative and quantitative research traditions.

Table 4.4 Comparison of criteria for evaluating the trustworthiness in research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION IN QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truth value</td>
<td>Internal validity</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicability</td>
<td>External validity</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutrality</td>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is an indication of ‘methodological soundness and adequacy’ (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002: 254; Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 276; McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: 481). The development of four essential criteria, as discussed below, allows for researchers to make judgments on the trustworthiness of the qualitative research. This compares with the validity and reliability of quantitative research and is used to assure “approximate reality” (McMillan & Creswell, 1998: 193).

Guba’s model for qualitative research was applied to ensure trustworthiness and to confirm the authenticity of the findings (Krefting, 1991: 214-222).

4.9.1 Credibility

Credibility corresponds with the concept of ‘internal validity’ and refers to truth value (Schumacher, 1993: 157). It reflects the degree to which the results of a study are factual and is an indication of whether they truly reflect the goal of
the research and the social reality of the participants (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002: 252 & 255). The word validity means ‘the truth and correctness of a statement’ (Kvale, 2002: 302). Validity, therefore, asks if the researcher has taken the necessary time to ensure a thorough understanding of the research setting, in order to place data analysis and interpretation into their correct perspectives (Woods & Catanzaro, 1988: 453).

The following five activities, to ensure credibility and truth, are proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 301), namely:

- **Prolonged engagement** and **continued observation** assists in ensuring that the findings and interpretations are credible.
- **Peer debriefing/examination** provides external research control.
- **Referential adequacy** entails a comparison between the research findings and the raw data.
- **Member checking** refers to checking with participants whether the data gathered were accurate.
- **Triangulation** is the recording of the data in some format. A second researcher should take part in the process, in order to take field notes, which enhance the trustworthiness of the data analysis. Observation should also take place during this time.

In order to ensure the credibility of this research, the following measures were taken:

The researcher spent time with the participants when the study was explained and the biographical information was obtained, in order to develop a relationship of mutual trust and understanding. This relationship formed the basis for data collection by means of the life stories written by the participants. While waiting for the participants to complete their written life stories, continuous discussions were held with an experienced researcher about the research process.
For the purpose of triangulation, field notes were taken by the fieldworkers during each initial meeting. This enhanced the reliability of the data analysis. Observation also took place during the interviews. Examples of the transcribed material are included as addendums. All the raw data have been kept in a file and are available to compare with the findings. A consensus meeting was held to validate the coding. An in-depth literature control was also conducted.

4.9.2 Applicability

The second factor for ensuring trustworthiness is applicability. This refers to the degree to which the results of the research ‘can be applied to other events, settings or groups in the population’ (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002: 286; Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 277; Struwig & Stead, 2001: 145; Krefting, 1991: 216). It is also referred to as transferability.

According to Struwig and Stead (2001: 145), “internal generalisability” may be of more importance to the qualitative researcher, as it is used to describe people or groups with special or unique attributes. Struwig and Stead (2001: 146) voice concern regarding the accuracy of generalisability. They are of the opinion that although the data gathered may be generalisable they may not be applicable to any person in the group.

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 277), state that interpretations and observations made by the researcher are clarified by the specific contexts in which they occur. As a result, the qualitative researcher cannot state that the findings can be generalised, although they may be applied or be relevant to other similar situations (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 277; Creswell, 1994: 158).

For this specific study, the following strategies were implemented to attain applicability (Krefting, 1991: 216, 220):

- Purposive and availability sampling – this method is used to select the appropriate participants for the study. All the
participants are carefully selected according to set criteria: from an availability sample and are all adult survivors of child sexual abuse.

- Rich description of the research – the study must provide a full, detailed and accurate description of the methodology followed for the research. The participants are required to give detailed descriptions and accounts of their experiences by writing their life stories, which are to be saved onto flash drives.

4.9.3 Dependability

Dependability implies that the findings of a study are consistent and accurate (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002: 255; Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 278). A detailed description of the research context is essential. An audit trail allows for some degree of dependability and consistency. An audit trail allows readers to follow the researcher’s path, in order to see how conclusions have been reached (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 172).

The further purpose of an audit trail is to guide other researchers who may want to undertake similar research. An audit trail is also known as an ‘inquiry audit’. This allows for an independent auditor to scrutinise and examine the research documents, including all the data gathered, the findings, interpretations of the findings and the final recommendations. After this process, the confirmability of the research can be established (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 278).

During this research process, the following was done to ensure dependability:

- A lengthy period of time was spent conducting the fieldwork, which enabled the researchers to gain a thorough understanding of the circumstances and to establish a relationship of trust with the participants;
- Careful observation of each participant took place;
- Triangulation was implemented, making use of a variety of sources;
- All the raw data collected in the form of field notes and life stories, were stored, forming an audit trail, available for cross-checking;
- The detailed narratives were coded and re-coded.
  (Guba & Lincoln, 1985: 301-304)

This took place under the supervision of both the supervisor and the independent coder. In order to ensure reliability, the research process, data collection and findings, interpretations, limitations and recommendations were continually controlled by the supervisor. The chosen method was applied throughout the study.

### 4.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability, which is also referred to as neutrality, is an intricate process that supports the fact that the data must verify the research findings, recommendations and interpretations (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 124). It determines whether the research findings are unbiased and it relates to how neutral and objective the researcher is (De Vos, 1998: 350). The role of the researcher in qualitative studies is important because he/she makes up part of the research instrument. Mouton (2002: 240) states that “researchers should at all times strive to maintain objectivity (confirmability) and integrity in the conduct of their scientific research”.

According to Holloway and Wheeler (2002: 255), Struwig and Stead (2001: 124), and Mouton (2002: 106), confirmability exists when information can be traced back to the fundamental sources by the reader. Once again, an audit trail is necessary through which readers can trace the given data to their origin. The confirmability of the data, whether or not they assist in validating the general findings and determining whether they lead to the implications, remains at all times essential (De Vos, et al, 2005: 347; Miller, 2003: 448).
The conclusions of this study are based on the qualitative findings and have been verified by the quantitative research methodology. As the researcher, every effort was made to remain impartial to the responses of the participants and to put preconceived notions aside. The choice of topic for this study was based on the practical and theoretical verification that child sexual abuse does indeed have an impact on the academic performance of learners.

A thorough exploration of different theories regarding child sexual abuse, the causes and impact thereof, and has been made. Triangulation of the various sources, methods and data has also been carried out. Numerous similarities, but only a few differences, were noted when comparing the findings of this study with existing research.

The qualitative methodology and methods were clarified in Step One of this research study. What follows is an explanation of the second step of this study, namely quantitative.

4.8 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Although the main method of research for this study is qualitative, the researcher has decided that it will be beneficial to the richness of the data to include a quantitative research component, in order to further enhance an understanding of the qualitative research outcomes. The emphasis in quantitative research is based on factual evidence, with the main focus being on populations and the discovery of patterns that can be generalised amongst these populations (Golafshani, 2003: 597; Seers & Critelton, 2001: 487). The main aim of this step is to determine whether there are any general patterns that have evolved from the sample group used.

4.10.1 Quantitative sampling

Howell (2004: 6) describes a sample as a subset of the population, with the population being a compilation of the actions that interest the researcher. The aim of sampling in quantitative research is similar to that of qualitative analysis, namely to select participants that are representative of the
population, to make sure that the results can be generalised and to draw any possible inferences (Thomas, 2009: 229; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007: 112-113; Kemper, Stringfield & Teddlie, 2003: 276).

4.10.1.1 A description of the sample group

- The age distribution of the sample indicates that the participants were from a wide range of ages, between 20 and 79, which is representative of the majority of any population. Table 4.5 gives a breakdown of the age categories of the participants in the study. A total of 31.6% of the participants in the sample group were in the age category 45 – 49. This was the largest group. The spread of ages of the participants ranged from between 20 up to 79. Although it cannot be representative of the entire population, because the sample size was so small, it provides a reasonable scatter through the age groups that were eligible to participate in the study.

Table 4.5 Categories of the current age of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present age</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The gender distribution of the sample (see Table 4.6) indicates that more women than men participated. However, literature stresses that this does not mean that there are fewer males being sexually victimized. It implies that males generally do not disclose their abuse and therefore this distribution is not accurately representative of the male population.

It is a well-documented fact that more women and girls fall prey to sexual victimisation, but this is not the case with men and boys. Yet, research indicates that it is a fallacy to think that boys are not sexually abused and that men do not suffer from the long-term effects of having been abused (De Witt, 2009: 334; Spies, 2006(c): 6; Lyon, 2002: 117; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 146). It is the opinion of the researcher that the reason for this perception is because of the lack of disclosure amongst young boys and the lack of acknowledgement amongst adult men. We live in a society dominated by stereotypical masculinity, where boys are generally taught from an early age, that: “Big boys don’t cry!” (Livingwell, 2008).

Such an outlook may stunt the emotional and psychological development of the child. These young children are thus very seldom afforded the opportunity to come to terms with the abuse they have suffered; and as a result, they do not receive the necessary support and help required. One participant expressed himself as follows:

I was sent off to (school) and started boarding and was now aged 8. I remember being told not to cry, as big boys never cried and never showed their emotions. I learnt to cut off my emotions and detach from my personal feelings.

In comparison to South African statistics, international statistics show that 1 in 6 boys will have been sexually victimised before their 18th birthday (Hopper, 2002: 18). In Australia, over 30% of the confirmed reports of child sexual abuse are males (Australian Fact Sheet, 2008). Of the participants in this study, 84% were females and only 3% were males. This is by no means an
indication that boys are not abused. It may, however, confirm the assumption that men are less likely to disclose their history of childhood sexual abuse.

Finkelhor (Gomes-Schwartz, et al. 1990: 49) is of the opinion that one of the reasons that less boys report their abuse is that the average age of the onset of abuse for boys is higher than it is for girls; and as a result they do not seek assistance from adults (Gomes-Schwartz, et al. 1990: 49).

Table 4.6 Gender distribution of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although every effort was made to represent the diverse nature of the South African population, the majority of the respondents were Whites. This does not, however, mean that abuse does not occur in the other racial groups in our country. The majority of the respondents were from the white population group, making up 74% of the sample group (See table 4.7). This was followed by the group noted as “Black SA” and, because of the limited numbers in this study no attempt was made to differentiate between the various black cultures in South Africa.

It needs to be stressed that these data are not representative of the entire population. Literature confirms that child sexual abuse is found globally, in every society, at every social level.
Table 4.7 Racial group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black SA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congolese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.10.2 Quantitative data collection

Being an embedded design, the quantitative data were derived from the results of the primary qualitative study. Frequency distributions were calculated and are represented by the specifically indicated tables throughout Chapters Four and Five.

4.8.2.1 Quantitative data analysis

Researchers apply different techniques to convert data into a numerical form and analyse them statistically (Babbie, 2007:405). Once the qualitative data had been coded, the results were used to construct the various matrices needed for the collection of the quantitative data. Research indicates that it is easier to transform qualitative data into quantitative data than vice versa (Creswell & Plano Clarke, 2008: 138). The transformation of qualitative data into quantitative data involves condensing themes or categories into numeric information.

Sandelowski refers to the “quantitizing” of qualitative data (2003: 327). This process of transforming qualitative data could include counting codes and/or themes. It involves the following:

- Analysing the qualitative data for codes and themes;
• Counting the frequency of occurrences of the codes or themes;
• Entering these numbers into a spreadsheet or quantitative data analysis programme;
• Generating a matrix that portrays the results comparing the “quantitized” qualitative data with the quantitative data.

There were no sophisticated statistics required for this research study and in order to calibrate the frequency distributions, the Microsoft Excel 2007: Standard Functions software programme was used. This process was conducted by an analyst from the Department of Mathematical Statistics of the NMMU and various tables and matrices were constructed to facilitate the easier interpretation and insight into the data.

4.8.3 Validity and reliability

Validity in research refers to the truth value (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: 157). It reflects the degree to which the results of the study are factual and is an indication of whether they truly reflect the goal of the research and the social reality of the participants (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002: 252 & 255).

Kvale (2002: 302) defines validity as “the truth and correctness of a statement.” Validity therefore asks whether the researcher has taken sufficient time to ensure a thorough understanding of the research setting, in order to place data analysis and interpretation into the correct perspective (Woods & Canazaro, 1988: 453).

Reliability is defined as “the degree to which the collected data meet the standards of quality to be considered valid and reliable” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003: 706). In this study, the quantitative data, represented in the matrices and tables, could be compared with the quantitative results in other studies on the subject of Child Sexual Abuse, as indicated in the references in the discussion of the results.
Validity and reliability for the quantitative findings were not applicable for this study, because no summated scores (the average of the responses to a set of related items) were calculated. The statistics that were calculated were frequency distributions, for which statistics relating to validity and reliability are not required.

4.11 ETHICAL MEASURES

Ethics refers to the specific behaviour or manner of conduct that is regulated by an individual or a group of people/community. When conducting human research, the researcher has the responsibility to conform to a morally acceptable code of conduct, as determined by the scientific community (Mouton, 2002: 238). Most professions have a code of conduct that is followed by the members and it is the duty of a researcher to abide by these rules (Babbie, 207: 62).

For the purposes of this research study, The Declaration of Helsinki as adopted by the 18th World Medical Assembly in Helsinki, Finland, in June 1964, will be applicable (Bulletin of the World Health Association, 2008). According the Declaration of Helsinki (Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 2008), the basic principles are:

- Clinical research must conform to the moral and scientific principles that justify medical research.
- Clinical research should be conducted only by scientifically qualified persons and under the supervision of a qualified person.
- Clinical research cannot legitimately be carried out unless the importance of the objective is in proportion to the inherent risk to the subjects.
- Every clinical research project should be preceded by a careful assessment of the inherent risks in comparison with the foreseeable benefits to the subjects or to others.
Principles of non-therapeutic clinical research:

(i) In the purely scientific application of clinical research carried out on a human being, it is the duty of the researcher to remain the protector of the life and health of that person on whom clinical research is being carried out.

(ii) The nature, the purpose and the risk of clinical research must be explained to the subject by the researcher.

(iii) Clinical research on a human being cannot be undertaken without that person's consent after being informed; if the person is legally unqualified the consent of the legal guardian should be procured.

(iii) The subject of the clinical research should be in such a mental, physical and legal state as to be able to exercise fully the power of choice.

(iii) Consent should, as a rule, be obtained in writing. However, the responsibility for clinical research always remains with the researcher; it never falls on the subject, even after consent has been obtained.

(iv) The investigator must respect the rights of each individual to safeguard his/her personal integrity, especially if the subject is in a dependent relationship to the investigator.

(iv) At any time during the course of clinical research the subject or the subject's guardian should be free to withdraw permission for the research to be continued. The investigator or the investigation team should discontinue the research, if in their judgement, it may, if continued, be harmful to the individual.
According to Le Voi, (2002: 160–163), and Mauch and Birch (1993: 204-212), there are a number of ethical measures that need to be adhered to by researchers conducting human studies. These are:

4.9.1 Professional ethics: Scientific research searches for the truth. Consequently, researchers have a moral obligation to search for this truth by means of acquiring knowledge. This is known as the ‘epistemic imperative’ (Mouton: 2002: 239-24). It is essential that researchers remain impartial during the research process and that they show integrity. No data may be changed or falsified in any way to make the research outcome and findings more acceptable. The techniques used for methodology and data analysis must be explained clearly and be available for disclosure to interested groups within society.

4.9.2 Responsibility towards society: Researchers have an obligation to conduct themselves and their research procedures in a proper manner. They need to remain accountable for their actions at all times.

4.9.3 Protection of the environment: It is of the utmost importance that researchers should conduct their studies with the environment in mind. The natural state must not be polluted, harmed, or damaged during the research process. Respecting the fact that future generations have a right to enjoy the environment is essential when conducting research. No inhumane experimentation on humans or animals is acceptable.

4.9.4 Participants’ rights: Participants have legal rights that need to be taken into account, even though they may have volunteered to take part in the research. The following rights need to be respected:

➢ Privacy:

Researchers have to be very careful in terms of respecting the participants’ right to privacy. We live in a world that thrives on public media releases that invade the privacy of people. The following general rules give a more detailed indication of privacy:
• Participants have the right to refuse to answer any question asked; and
• Interviewing of participants should not take place at night; during meals or for long periods of time.

➢ **Anonymity and confidentiality:** Anonymity generally refers to the identity of the participant being kept a secret. Under no circumstances should the identity or any identifying particulars of the participants be made known, irrespective of whether this has been unequivocally promised or not. Any form of data collection, such as cameras; cassette recorders; personal interviews and participant observation, should fall within these conditions of anonymity.

Confidentiality refers to the information that is collected for data. This information must be treated as confidential by researchers and any other person involved in the research process who may have access to the information, such as research assistants and fieldworkers.

➢ **Informed consent:** All participants need to be made aware of the research aims and the researcher must ensure that the participants understand these aims. Participants should sign a letter of informed consent that allows the researcher to use the information gathered for the research purposes, but the participant also signs the letter to indicate that he understands that his identity will remain anonymous and that he may withdraw from the research at any time. It is also essential that the researcher obtain permission from the ethics committee to conduct the proposed research study.

According to Mouton (2002: 244), there are specific guidelines to follow to ensure informed consent. Amongst others, the following:

• The participant must know exactly which institution you represent;
• All participants must be told what the research is about, what the benefits of the research will be and who will benefit from the results of the research study;
• The researcher must assure all participants that they will be protected from harm of any sort, physical and psychological;
• The participants should sign a letter indicating that they give informed consent for the information they disclose, to be used as data for the research study;
➢ Offer to give them a copy of the research results when the study has been completed. It is often important for participants to know that the information they provided during the gathering of the data, has been valuable, especially when having the possibility of impacting on the lives of others in a positive manner.

4.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has given an overview of the chosen research approach used for the study. In an effort to draw informed conclusions, a diversity of relevant literature sources was consulted. During the process of conducting this research, it has become evident that the aim of qualitative research is that it should be focused on the perceptions and deeper experiences of the participants and that quantitative research is focused on viewing reality as definable and measurable. Thus the two methods can complement one another.

The natural setting of each participant was used for the introductory meeting. Here, the researcher is seen as the main instrument of data collection, and therefore also the main reporter on the findings. In support of the qualitative findings, a quantitative study was conducted, based on the qualitative findings.

Chapter 5 will summarise the report and attempt to give a correct interpretation of the qualitative and quantitative data.
CHAPTER FIVE

REPORT AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS
FROM THE
QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this study has been to explore the impact of child sexual abuse on the school life and academic performance of learners. Chapter 5 provides a combination of the qualitative and quantitative results of this exploration, with the qualitative findings providing the primary data. This chapter also interprets and validates the research findings in the light of the relevant literature.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The investigation of the narratives relied heavily on the interpretations of the participants as they made sense of their life world. They were requested to write their life story and from these stories, we extracted any information that was relevant to their school life and academic performance. This was done in an effort not to influence the thoughts of the participants in any way, or to force them to focus only on the impact that the abuse had had on their ability to perform at school.

Throughout the attempts to make sense of their experiences, they expressed their inner feelings, beliefs, hopes, perceptions and attitudes. Through the coding of the transcripts four clear themes became evident. These will now be discussed as main themes, categories and sub-categories. The experiences of adult survivors of child sexual abuse will be presented with direct quotations from their verbatim life stories, as written by the participants themselves. These direct quotations will be used to provide the information given by the participants as truthfully as possible. Therefore, no editing of the language used by these individuals will be undertaken.
Statistics (quantitative data) help to explain the extent and nature of child sexual abuse in our society. These figures can be used to determine factors such as the age of onset of abuse, the gender of the victims, the possible risk factors and the areas of impact as a result of the abuse.

In this study, the quantitative data were sourced from the findings in the qualitative data, by assessing the incidence of themes and the significance of the relationships between the themes. A summary of the themes with the highest incidence and with the most significant relationships between the themes was made. From this, descriptive, numerical and graphical statistics were produced.

The percentages shown in the tables in this chapter should be treated with the utmost caution, because the sample size in each age category is very small. They do, however, indicate a clear trend.

The division of the autobiographical life stories into main themes, categories and sub-categories was undertaken to facilitate the discussion and should not be viewed as separate entities, but rather as parts of the holistic picture. The themes and categories were also substantiated from the relevant literature. These themes were verified by the quantitative findings that were derived from the qualitative data. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003: 9) and Sandelowski (2003: 327) explain that this is done by means of “quantitizing the data”, i.e. “converting qualitative data into numerical codes that can be statistically analysed”.

The following main themes have emerged from the data:

**Theme One:** The nature of health, sexuality and sexual experiences of sexually abused children and adolescents.

**Theme Two:** The social development of sexually abused children and adolescents.

**Theme Three:** School-related experiences of sexually abused children and adolescents.
**Theme Four:** Advice to young victims by adult survivors of child sexual abuse.

These themes will now be discussed in further detail. It is suggested that the following section be read against **Table 5.1**, which provides a structured overview of the findings.

**TABLE 5.1** A summary of the identified themes, categories and sub-categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN THEMES</th>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
<th>SUB-CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>THEME 1:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5.3 The nature of health, sexuality and sexual experiences | 5.3.1 Onset and duration | 5.3.1.1 age  
5.3.1.2 awareness and exposure |
| | 5.3.2 Understanding the experience | 5.3.2.1 didn’t understand  
5.3.2.2 lack of acknowledgement of the abuse  
5.3.2.3 threats  
5.3.2.4 loss of innocence |
| | 5.3.3 Perpetrator | 5.3.3.1 family members  
5.3.3.2 friends and neighbours  
5.3.3.3 strangers |
| | 5.3.4 Types of sexual abuse | 5.3.4.1 touching  
5.3.4.2 exhibitionism  
5.3.4.3 penetration & objects |
| | 5.3.5 Traumatic experience and emotional impact | 5.3.5.1 short-term impact  
5.3.5.2 long-term impact  
5.3.5.3 emotional states |
| | 5.3.6 Personality profile of victim/survivor | 5.3.6.1 distrust  
5.3.6.2 negative self-image  
5.3.6.3 shyness  
5.3.6.4 lack of confidence |
| Theme 1: | 5.3 | The child | 5.3.6 | suicidal  
| |  | | 5.3.6.5 |  
| |  | | 5.3.6.6 | perfectionism  
| |  | | 5.3.6.7 | rebellious  
| |  | | 5.3.6.8 | escapism  
| 5.3.7 | Disclosure | 5.3.7 | reasons for disclosure  
| | | 5.3.7.1 | reasons for non-disclosure  
| 5.3.8 | Health problems | 5.3.8 | stress and anxiety  
| | | 5.3.8.1 | depression  
| | | 5.3.8.2 | eating disorders  
| | | 5.3.8.3 | self-mutilation  
| | | 5.3.8.4 | urinary-tract infection  
| 5.3.9 | Religious testimonies | 5.3.9 |  
| Theme 2: | 5.4 | Social development of the child | 5.4.1 | Parental relationships  
| | | 5.4.1.1 | Father  
| | | 5.4.1.2 | Mother  
| | | 5.4.1.3 | Parental marital relationship  
| | 5.4.2 | Relationships with others | 5.4.2.1 | grandparents  
| | | 5.4.2.2 | siblings  
| | | 5.4.2.3 | aunts and uncles  
| 5.4.3 | Parental neglect | 5.4.3.1 | child rearing style  
| | | 5.4.3.2 | lack of support  
| | | 5.4.3.3 | personal relationship of victim with spouse or partner  
| 5.4.4 | Justice system | 5.5 | School-related experiences of sexually abused children and adolescents  
| | 5.5.1 | Academic performance | 5.5.1.1 | poor performance  
| | | 5.5.1.2 | high achievers  
| | | 5.5.1.3 | extra-mural activities  
| | | 5.5.1.4 | tertiary education  

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| 5.5.2 Influence of teachers | 5.5.2.1 negative experience  
5.5.2.2 ignoring signs and a lack of interest |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5.5.3 Boarding school experiences | 5.5.3.1 difficult to adjust  
5.5.3.2 freedom from abuse |
| 5.5.4 Conduct and disposition | 5.5.4.1 secrecy and lies  
5.5.4.2 lack of trust  
5.5.4.3 guilt and self-blame  
5.5.4.4 bullying  
5.5.4.5 refusal to work  
5.5.4.6 rebelliousness  
5.5.4.7 class disruption  
5.5.4.8 nightmares  
5.5.4.9 truancy  
5.5.4.10 lack of respect |

**THEME 4:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.6 Survivor advice to young victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5.6.1 What the young victim can do  
5.6.2 How to support the child victim |

**THEME ONE: THE NATURE OF HEALTH, SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL EXPERIENCES OF SEXUALLY ABUSED CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

From the narratives written by the participants, it became clear that, as young children and adolescents, their traumatic experiences impacted significantly on their sexuality, sexual experiences and health as they grew up. Many of them mentioned the fact that they felt they had been robbed of their innocence by being introduced to sexual activities at an inappropriate age. A number of participants indicated that they had difficulty in understanding the experience. They knew that what was happening was wrong, but they were either simply too young to understand or they did not know how to stop it, because of the threats made by the offender.
In all the cases, the perpetrator had made some form of threat to ensure that the child victim remained silent on the abuse. The abusive experience and the threats appeared to be more intense and have a greater impact on the child when the child had a close emotional bond with the perpetrator. Frequently, this person was a family member, such as the father.

When it came to the perpetrator being a family friend or neighbour, the child generally decided to keep quiet because, once again, the threats made caused the child to feel a deeper sense of guilt. The betrayal of trust from a parent who was the very person supposed to protect the child, caused considerable emotional trauma. Very few of the respondents had been sexually victimised by complete strangers. This, however, did not make the abuse any easier to cope with, or to disclose.

The various types of sexual abuse experienced as children, by the participants, ranged from verbal suggestions to forced acts of an aggressive nature. This also had a profound impact on the young victims, and many of the participants could still clearly recall the trauma caused by these physical acts perpetrated against them.

From the feedback in the narratives, it was possible to create a general personality profile of the victims/survivors. The following factors made up this profile: distrust, shyness, a lack of confidence, perfectionism, rebellious behaviour, suicidal tendencies and various forms of escapism - as a means of coping. It must be stressed that not every participant experienced each of these factors. The profile has been put together from a combination of factors, stemming from each individual narrative.

The issue of disclosure and non-disclosure played a vital role in the healing process for many of the participants. The main reason for non-disclosure was fear of threats and the possible consequences. For a number of survivors, the fear of reprisal is still very real, even as an adult. Disclosure appeared to come about as a result of their being no longer able to deal with the abuse, or accidentally being discovered.
Disclosure also implies that the survivor needs to overcome the betrayal of trust experienced as a child, in order to develop a relationship in which he feels safe and comfortable enough to disclose this past. A problem experienced by many of the participants in terms of disclosure, was the response from the people to whom they disclosed the truth. This varied from utter disbelief and rejection of the allegation, to an overwhelming sense of compassion and support.

Health problems can occur either as a bona fide illness, such as urinary-tract infections or as a psychosomatic manifestation of the abuse, such as headaches. These health problems can continue into adulthood and thus the trauma also continues. This is particularly true for women when they go for gynaecological check-ups.

Many victims and survivors of CSA have found solace in their faith and have indicated that it is their faith that has brought them through their childhood of abuse, and safely into adulthood. Religious testimonies are proof that a number of participants have reached a point in their healing, built on their faith, that they are able to forgive the perpetrator.

Each facet from Theme One influences the school life experiences and the academic performance of the child who has been sexually violated. Many participants mentioned the difficulty they had experienced in trying to understand what had happened to them, and in doing so, they were distracted at school. This had a detrimental effect on their attempts to meet the scholastic demands made on them.

5.3.2 Onset and duration of sexual abuse

The participants expressed that the age at which the abuse started and the length of time that it continued had had a great impact on their lives. For all of the participants, this initial premature exposure to sexual activity, created an awareness of sexuality that they felt was age-inappropriate.
5.3.1.1 Age

Sexual abuse exposes children to an early awareness of sexual activities. This exposure often takes place prior to the child reaching the age of ten. The age of onset of abuse and the duration thereof, contribute to the short-term and long-term impacts on the young child victim (Killian & Brakarsh, 2007: 368; Gomes-Schwartz, et al., 1990: 48-59). With regard to their age when sexually abused, the participants reflected as follows:

*I think it started when I was about four, it's my first memory and it carried on for about five years.*

*The first time I was sexually abused I was about six years old.*

*I became a holder of secrets from the age of five.*

*I always thought that I was 4 or 5 years old when the abuse started but after hypnotherapy, I now know that I was three.*

*I was seven years old.*

*He abused me for about 10 years from the tender age of 4, till the last time it happened, I was 15.*

*I was six. He was eighteen.*

Van As, Withers, Du Toit, Millar and Rode (2001) from the Department of Pediatric Surgery at the University of Cape Town, conducted research titled: *Rape of children; patterns of injury, management and outcome*. They accessed the medical records of 200 children who had been sexually abused for their research. The results of their study showed that the median age for abuse was 6.3 years.

In his analysis of a number of studies, Finkelhor found that the average age of sexual abuse amongst children was between 9.3 and 10.6 years old (Gomes-
Schwartz, *et al.*, 1990: 48 – 50). The average age for the onset of abuse in a study conducted by Kempe and Kempe (1984), was between nine and ten years of age. Higson-Smith, *et al.*, (2008: 338) found that the average age of clients attending their clinic, was eight years and nine months.

As shown in Table 5.2, our study indicates that the majority, namely 63%, of the participants indicated that their abuse started between the ages of five and nine. As many as 26% of the participants fell into the preschool age category, namely 0 – 4 years old at the onset of their abuse. These findings all support the view that the general onset age of sexual abuse, is with children who are pre-pubertal.

**Table 5.2 The onset age of the sexual abuse of participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

In South Africa, in 2000, out of 52 550 reported cases of rape or attempted rape, 21 438 of the victims were under the age of 18 years old. Further to this, 7 898 of these children were under the age of 12; most were between the ages of 7 and 11 (Meel, 2008).

5.3.1.2 Sexual awareness and exposure to sexual activities

Meyer and Kotzé (1994: 166) mention that children have a natural sexual curiosity and this inquisitiveness may lead to the children experimenting sexually. What needs to be understood, however, is that the awareness,
understanding and associations that children have of sexuality are all vastly different from those of adults. The following quotations confirm this point:

I remember being very sexually aware from an early age and recall my first sexual encounter at the age of 4 with a girl of the same age, at play school behind one of the classrooms.

The sad thing is that at the age of 7 yrs (name of daughter) sexual side has been aroused and to this day she will say “Mommy is it wrong, but my (genital area) feels warm?” This has been going on for three years.

… when my mom was in hospital, I had to sleep with him in the bed.

I remember him touching and arousing me. Shortly after the sexual abuse stopped I became increasingly more sexual and this angered me.

The word seemed to spread or did I have a sticker on my forehead that said “molest me”?

It opened me up sexually and I started exploring my sexuality before the due time (puberty).

Shortly after the sexual abuse stopped, I became increasingly more sexual and this angered me. 8-year-old girls are not supposed to feel this way. Sexual development is a natural progression in human beings, but what I was feeling was something else.

5.3.3 Understanding the experience

Some sexually abused children are not always old enough to give an accurate verbal description of what they have experienced. Others simply do not understand what is happening to them. As a result, these young victims become more vulnerable to sexual predators. Many young children are re-victimized by the reaction of those to whom they disclose the abuse, especially if they are not believed.
5.3.2.1 Young victims didn’t understand the sexual experience

Research indicates that younger children are more susceptible to being influenced by others and they do not have the level of cognitive development required to understand sexual advances and behaviour (Fondacaro & Fasig, 2006: 361). According to the Sexual Offences Act 23 of 1957 (section 14[1][a]) children are also not considered legally capable of giving their consent to sexual acts if they are under the age of 16; and such an act is then referred to as statutory rape (Gallinetti, 2007: 216; Lawrence & Van Rensburg, 2006: 133; Spies, 2006: 45).

This is what makes the crime of child sexual abuse so much more heinous. In this regard the participants remarked:

I was too young at the time to realise what had happened. I think my attitude was more affected when I became more aware of what the abuse was.

I grew up with a profound fear of boys and adult men. I perceived every male apart from my father ... to be a potential threat, a danger, an intimidating reminder of a violation I was never helped to understand.

I only know that they had robbed me of what is perceived as a normal childhood.

5.3.2.2 Lack of acknowledgement of the sexual abuse by others

Many victims of abuse experience additional trauma and stress, because of the lack of acknowledgement of the abuse by those to whom they disclose the fact. This can be exacerbated by the reaction from these adults and it often results in the young victim withdrawing. It may then take many years for them to finally disclose the truth again as adults. By this time the long-term impact of the abuse has taken its toll emotionally (Matlin 2000: 489; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 65).
One participant explained:

*About 3 weeks ago I sat down with my mother and told her that my dad had sexually abused me. Her reaction was calm. I just wanted her to acknowledge that it had happened.*

(This participant indicated that her mother has still not acknowledged that the abuse actually took place.)

The lack of acknowledgement by parents is particularly painful and many of the participants of both genders mentioned this factor in their narrative. Spies (2006: 48) states: “The people towards whom the sexual abuse allegation is disclosed have a responsibility to believe the child.”

Two of the participants, in particular, are still trying to establish an adult relationship with their respective mothers, as a result of the mothers never acknowledging the abuse. In one case, the abuser was the father; and in the other it was the step-father:

*The name calling wasn’t the worst thing that ever happened to me, nor was keeping my story a secret. The worst thing has to be that mom said, “Then it wasn’t that bad,” or after my first therapy session when she said, “You are cured now,” like I had a disease and everything would clear up in a day or two.*

*When I did tell my mom, I was put out of the house, as he (stepfather) said I was telling lies.*

In almost all cases, the disclosure to parents of sexual abuse comes as a shock to the parent, especially if the perpetrator is a family member or a close family friend. Parents will react differently. Some may become angry at the perpetrator and take further action; others, however, may not believe the child. In such cases, the child generally feels re-victimised and the levels of trust diminish yet further (Fouché, 206: 209; Gomes-Schwartz, et al., 1990: 20 & 99).

Participants expressed their experiences in this regard as follows:

*… I went home to my parents and I told them and they said, “You’re lying!”*
Clearly my parents haven’t been paying attention.

There are cases where the abuse was reported to a professional, such as a social worker, a paediatrician, a lawyer, a principal, or to the police and the attitude and response from this person lacked knowledge, understanding, compassion and awareness. As a result the child who had been violated did not receive the necessary re-assurance, support and assistance (Brookes & Higson-Smith, 2007: 111; September, 2007: 313; Matlin, 2000: 475 & 484; Le Roux & Smit, 1994: 100).

The following is a participant’s account of such a case:

*I phoned Dr (paediatrician). I told him what we thought; but he said just ignore it, because sometimes children see things on TV. And if I brought my daughter in, her imagination could run wild. One thing I regret is not taking her in to Dr (paediatrician). I should have insisted.*

*[One of the narratives (See Addendum Four) was written by the mother of an 11-year-old girl who was sexually molested at a school camp in 2006. This narrative has been included because the mother explained how the abuse had impacted on the school and social life of the child, the family dynamics and the academic performance of the young girl.]

Considering the experience from the mother in the quote above, it would appear that, although being in the specialized field of paediatrics, there are some medical professionals who do not take the issue of child sexual abuse and their role in the prevention thereof, seriously enough.

Barker and Hodes, (2007: 100) emphasise the vital role that the paediatrician plays in cases where either an actual or suspected case of child abuse are
reported. The initial medical examination should be conducted by a paediatrician, whose professional opinion may be helpful to other professionals, the parents and the abused child. Further to this, is the importance of carefully documenting, by way of notes and body maps, indicating signs of abuse and diagrams, all the findings in a systematic and detailed manner. These signs will be used to assist with any possible legal investigation that may follow (Fouché, 2006: 212 – 213).

5.3.2.3 Threats

Very often questions such as: “Why didn’t you shout or make a noise? Why didn’t you tell someone?” are asked of the young victim. There is a myth that victims should have been able to say “No” or should have been able to stop the abuse in some manner. McGregor, (1999: 86) found that 59% of the teachers who took part in the survey he conducted, were of the opinion that children and adolescents should be able to stop the abuse. According to Hall and Lloyd (1993: 171), the inability of a child to stop the abuse, while it is happening, often results in guilt. This may follow through into adulthood, despite the adult survivor having some understanding that it was not her fault for being abused.

De Witt (2009: 332) supports this by stating that the threats of any nature made by the perpetrator are made with the sole purpose of ensuring secrecy. Participants confirmed this:

\[
\text{He said he would kill you mommy, if I told you. He also held is hand over my mouth, so I couldn’t scream.} \\
\text{7-year-old victim to her mother}
\]

(See explanation* on page 149 in chapter 3)

\[
\text{He had a huge knife with him all the time and I was so scared and my parents were very fond of him and that made it difficult for me to tell anyone.} \\
\text{What stands out in my mind is the fear that he would kill my parents. That was the hold he had over me.}
\]
5.3.2.4 Loss of innocence

When referring to the term “innocence” in the context of childhood, it implies traits such as purity, inexperience, gullibility and virtue that are generally linked to being a child. Children lack the necessary cognitive skills, the life experience and any understanding of what is happening while they are being abused. Once they have been exposed to sexual experiences, they lose their innocence and generally become confused about what has taken place (Barker & Hodes, 2007: 39).

They have then been exposed to a life experience that is far beyond their years and one which often has an enormous impact on their development (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 180), as the following quotes by the participants will illustrate:

*What I got was a world filled with secrets, lies, anger confusion, failure, detachment and an uncontrollable urge to die.*

*Being abused is to be made unclean, soiled, dirty, impure, tainted and can become a life message, a tutor that says you are dark and evil, somewhere deep inside you. And you deserved it.*

*Sexual development is a natural progression in human beings, but what I was feeling was something else.*

5.3.3 Who the perpetrators are

As with children who are abused, sexual predators can be found in all social circles; they come from any race group and may be of either gender. They may be well-known to the child or they may be complete strangers. In most cases, the offender is known to the child.

5.3.3.1 Family members

The relationship between the perpetrator and the child plays an important role in the impact that the abuse has. Louw, et al., (2007: 363) indicate that in 80%
of such cases, the child knows the perpetrator(s). Literature indicates that if
the child is abused by a parent, the impact is far greater than if it were with a
family friend or a stranger (Bezuidenhout, 2008: 62-63; Spies, 2006: 51;

If the perpetrator is a parent, sibling or another family member living in the
same house as the victim, the chances are that the duration of the abuse will
be longer, as the perpetrator lives in close proximity to the child (Barker &
Hodes, 2007: 40; Gomes-Schwartz, et al., 1990: 65).

According to a study conducted by Rice and Harris in 2002, 64% of incest
perpetrators were not sexually abused as children (Townsend & Dawes, 2007:
83). The same study also indicated that 79% of extra-familial perpetrators do
not have a history of sexual abuse themselves. Louw, et al., (2007: 364)
confirm these findings and mention that many mental health professionals are
in agreement concerning the fact that the majority of parents who were
sexually abused, do not abuse their own children.

The reasoning behind this is that these parents would not want their child/ren
to experience the same trauma that they have had. There are, however,
researchers who have found instances where the adult perpetrator was
himself abused as a child, and has continued this cycle of abuse in his own
family (Spies, 2006: 14). The majority of sexual abuse, approximately 80%, is
committed by parents, relatives or friends of the family (Childline, 1983). One
participant exclaimed:

Now, you have to understand, I loved uncle (name), I always
have. Obviously he loved me too, but not as a brother loves
his sister, or an uncle loves his niece. He loved me the way
mommies and daddies loves each other.

My brother-in-law started abusing me. I must have been
about five or six-years-old. I can’t really remember what
happened next, but I just remember being violated
completely. I was so scared and I just wanted it to be over as
quickly as possible.
... my swaer ... toe ek in St. 6 was ... hy het sy broek uitgetrek en aan homself begin vat. Terwyl hy masturbeer het hy gevra ek moet my klere uittrek, want dan kan hy vinniger vir my wys wat hy wil. (My brother-in-law, when I was in Std 6 (Gr 8) undressed and began touching himself. While he was masturbating, he asked me to take my clothes off because then he would be able to show me what he wants to, more quickly.)

*My mom’s sister’s husband was a paedophile. He abused me.*

*The perpetrator was my father’s uncle. I was seven.*

**5.3.3.2 Friends and neighbours**

Offenders can also be people who have access to the vulnerable child, either as a neighbour, a close family friend, or a person that is involved with the child in terms of an extramural activity, such as a sports coach or a youth leader (Crimes against Children Research Centre, 2003; Salter, 2003: 225). One participant had such an experience:

*I was sexually abused by a family friend. It happened on a regular basis, either at my family home or at his, and my parents never knew.*

**5.3.3.3 Strangers**

It is widely stated that most of the abuse that takes place is by an offender known to the child (Rudd, 2007: 397; McGregor, 1999: 76; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 147; Gomes-Schwartz, *et al.*, 1990: 64). Childline South Africa states that only about 20% of sexual abuse appears to be committed by strangers. Only two of the participants in this study mentioned that they had been abused by strangers:

*We both noticed the man strolling towards us from the opposite side of the park, but thought nothing of it, assuming he was somebody’s father. When he stopped to chat and*
produced photos from his shirt pocket, I had no idea what we were looking at. “Let me show you what you saw in the photos,” he said calmly and before I knew what was happening he closed my right hand around a warm, sticky thing protruding from his pants.

... I was being stalked by homosexuals and I didn’t know which way to turn. There was one that would stop me and get into the bus with me, when I was going home. Then one came to the school and he would follow me from the school to the bus.

5.3.5 Types of sexual abuse experienced by the participants

There are many different ways in which a child can be sexually violated and each of these can impact differently on the child. The manner in which a child will react to the abuse may vary from one child to the next, but this does not alter the fact that the experience is traumatic. Some children are violated in manifold ways and others are subjected to one way only, such as statutory rape.

5.3.4.1 Touching

There are various types of sexual abuse and often the type of abuse, together with the duration, threats and levels of violence impact seriously on the victim. Children are often groomed by the perpetrators prior to the commencement of the abuse. This “grooming” may take place over a long period of time and it may add to the confusion experienced by the child (Higson-Smith, Lamprecht & Jacklin, 2007: 347; Hodes & Barker, 2007: 41). Some of the participants recalled this as follows:

She knelt in front of me and started caressing my genital area.

He made me sit right next to him and he put his arm around me. That’s when the fondling started, of the buds I already had at that early stage.
5.3.4.2 Exhibitionism

Some perpetrators are stimulated by exposing themselves to their young victims, as this tends to trigger a response of shock and surprise (Spies, 2006: 26; Salter, 2003: 11; Lewis, 1999: 98). As also experienced by the participant in the quote below, Meyer and Kotzé (1994: 143) state that the perpetrator often masturbates, while exposing himself.

\[Ek \text{ het so geskrik, en toe ek langs me kyk staan hy daar met 'n ereksie, al weer doenig met homself. (I had such a fright and when I looked next to me, he was standing there with an erection, busy with himself again.)}\]

5.3.4.3 Penetration and the use of objects

Penetration is generally accepted to mean the insertion of the penis into either the vagina or anus of a child. However, the use of various objects by the perpetrator to penetrate the child is not uncommon. Child Welfare Information Gateway (1993) differentiates between various forms of penetration by different objects:

* Offender placing finger(s) in child's vagina or anus.
* Offender inducing child to place finger(s) in offender's vagina or anus.
* Offender placing instrument in child's vagina or anus.
* Offender inducing child to place instrument in offender's vagina or anus.

One of the participants expressed the following experience:

\[The \text{ garden forks were discovered on the lawn and my vagina was repeatedly prodded.}\]

Penile penetration can take on three forms:

- vaginal intercourse;
- anal intercourse; and
• intercourse with animals.

The participants expressed themselves as follows:

_He moved me to the side of the couch so that I could lean forward and he proceeded to penetrate me from behind. I don’t remember being in pain. I stood very still, closed my eyes and prayed it to be over._

_He then put something into me. I am not sure but now that I think back, it looked like the same as the “thing” the Dr uses when we have a pap (smear)._  

_I was 21 when I told my mother. Her reaction to this news was to ask me. “Did he force sharp instruments up your female parts?”_  

Three of the participants were exposed to forcible rape, which included either the use of bondage and verbal abuse. The degree of violence that accompanies the abuse or rape is a contributing factor to the extent of the emotional trauma experienced by the victim (Killian & Brakarsh, 2007: 368). The following quotations illustrate the participants’ experiences:

_He took a rope under the bed and tied my hands. He got on top of me, opened my legs, then he penetrated me so hard that when I wanted to scream – (but) the voice didn’t come out._

_He would make me bend over and he would try to stick his penis into me. It was so painful that I cried and he said “Just shut up and stand still”._

_He took me to a room, me a 10-year girl. He climbed on me and raped me. I would have liked to use the word penetrated me, but this was much more. The pain was excruciating and I started crying._

5.3.6 Traumatic experience and emotional impact of sexual abuse

The participants were clear about their experiences and the impact thereof in the short-term and in the long-term, as well as on their emotional state. For many of them, the abuse contributed to their lack of self-worth and feelings of guilt, anger and confusion.
Table 5.3 provides an overview of the symptoms manifested by sexually abused children of different ages. It has been adapted from Gomes-Schwartz, et al., (1990: 79), and it is based on research conducted by various clinicians over many years. The numbers in brackets next to each symptom indicate which researcher is being referred to and the year of their investigation:

(1) Adams-Tucker, 1982;
(2) Finkelhor, 1979;
(3) Lewis and Sarrel, 1969;
(4) MacVicar, 1979;
(5) Pascoe and Duterte, 1981;
(6) Peters, 1976; and

Table 5.3 An overview of the symptoms manifested by sexually abused children of different ages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-school</th>
<th>School-aged</th>
<th>Adolescent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Withdrawal (5,6)</td>
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<td>Guilt (3)</td>
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<td>Somatic complaints / appetite disturbance (3,5,6)</td>
<td>Somatic complaints (3,4)</td>
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<td>Sleep problems / nightmares (4)</td>
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<td>Conversion hysteria (5)</td>
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(Gomes-Schwartz, 1990: 79)

5.3.6.2 The short-term impact of sexual abuse

Sexual abuse leads to a violation of self that is a traumatic experience and has a lasting emotional impact on the victim's life, as is clear from scientific studies, such as those by Fergusson and Mullen (1999). They reviewed over 30 studies on child sexual abuse and they state that children who have been sexually abused are susceptible to a variety of short-term problems, such as behavioural problems, mental health disorders, anxiety, fear, depression, aggression, inappropriate sexual behaviour and learning difficulties.

Researchers indicate that the impact not only affects the victim, but also the immediate family and the larger community (Killian & Brakarsh, 2007: 367; Guma & Henda, 2007: 106-107). It is very difficult to separate the short-term impact from the long-term impact, in that they are so interlinked. The short-term impact may often be the commencement of a long-term problem that manifests in various ways. It is the researcher's opinion that the two can be distinguished from one another, but not separated. The following are some of the expressions of the participants:

*I wish someone had taken notice of what was happening to me. I used to forget my schoolbooks or sports kit at home, not to attend music lessons, fail tests and show generally bad behaviour.*
... at school I started to tell stories about the other kids. All the stories were variations of what had happened to me, but I used the other kid's names in place of my own.

I was the naughty one ... I threw complete rolls of toilet paper down the toilet.

I would have loved to play tennis but that was on a Saturday and I was afraid there would be trouble ... never knowing if my mother would pitch up at the school looking for me and causing a scene.

I was often sent out of the class because of disrupting it.

I was told that I would not return to ballet class because I was neglecting my school work.

The interesting thing about trauma is the memory lapses or flashbacks I get.

Researchers confirm the review of Fergusson and Mullen in terms of the short-term impact and they indicated that this includes difficulties with: (1) the mental processing including, distrust, deterioration in academic performance, poor concentration, traumatic flashbacks and identity confusion; (2) emotional factors such as: feelings of shame, guilt and the development of a negative self-image; (3) behavioural disturbances, such as aggression, truancy, self-injurious tendencies, withdrawal, stress and anxiety (Bezuidenhout, 2008: 176-179; Barker & Hodes, 2007: 38-40; Lewis, 1999: 99-100; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 183; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 73).

5.3.6.3 The long-term impact of sexual abuse

Research confirms the devastating long-term impact on the adult survivor of child sexual abuse. It shows that the damage is both medical and psychological in nature (Olafson, 2002: 75; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 184). Mullen and Fleming (1998) state that the long-term impact of sexual abuse can be strongly influenced by the experiences that the person has, after the abuse. One participant expressed it as follows:
My journey towards wholeness is far from complete. I am reminded of that every time I reach for a cigarette – a lingering crutch from the days of pain.

And that was the end of the abuse. But the effects were to last for the next 48 years – no, I think that they will probably last for the rest of my life.

In one brief moment in time – and in a manner many would pass off as being trivial – a perverted man in a play park set in motion a chain of events and responses that had far-reaching effects on my life.

Even though it stopped about twenty years ago, it’s by far the biggest influencing factor in my entire life.

The man’s actions and the policeman’s words in fact changed my life forever!

… the point I’m trying to make is it never goes away. It NEVER goes away … and people can tell you, you must move on or this and the other, but it doesn’t go away! And it creeps in whenever you are feeling vulnerable.

Lloyd and Hall (1993: 209) mention five factors that contribute to the long-term effects of child sexual abuse, namely: the nature and context of the abuse; the abuser and his behaviour; the mother and other significant women; the survivor’s beliefs and knowledge during childhood and adolescence, and the survivor’s knowledge, beliefs and experiences as an adult.

The abuse is intrusive into the life of the adult survivor and the memories of being abused often re-surface with experiences that can be associated with the time of the abuse. These memories can be sensory, bodily or emotional in nature, such as auditory memories in terms of music that was playing at the time of the abuse, olfactory memories such as specific odours or fragrance(s), body position whilst being abused and memories of the emotions experienced (Lloyd & Hall, 1993: 126-128). Some participants recall as follows:

I still get a sick feeling from certain smells like turpentine and certain areas like little streams (places and things that remind me of these molestations).
… the overpowering stench of sweat and cologne … suddenly I know it is beyond my control and I lurch sideways, vomiting onto the floor.

At that young age I already felt self-conscious of my body.

Some participants mentioned their anger that lasted until they were adults and the impact this has had on their daily lives, either as an individual or as a member of a family. This confirms the long-term impact of the abuse:

Not being able to live a normal life, always having to take medication, taking someone with you when going to town, because of fear for everyone. Being between millions of people and feeling alone. For that I will always hate and never be able to forgive.

I have a very bad temper and it affects my relationship with my family, my fiancé and my 2-yr old girl cos [sic] I shout at her, which is going to have adverse effects on her and it takes a little thing for me to blow the top. No one understands the source of my anger.

Many participants indicated that they felt their adult lives would have been different had they disclosed the abuse earlier and then received help as a child, instead of carrying the burden of the secret through each stage of their development:

I really think if this had all come out a long time ago people know and can deal with it and a child can get through this a lot easier. I also know now that if only I had spoken up earlier I would never have had to go through all those years of abuse and humiliation.

The only regret I have is that I haven’t taken this further and prosecuted this sick, sick man but I always say it’s never too late!

For many adults, the memories of their childhood are not happy ones as a result of having been sexually abused. Unfortunately, as stated by some of the participants in this study, these unhappy memories have become a part of their adulthood and continue to have a negative impact on their lives:
Some adults who were sexually abused as a child, experience great difficulty in dealing with their past and thus may remain trapped in the victim phase. Freyd (2002: 156) explains that if the victim is dependent on the offender, such as the child would be in a relationship with a parent, the greater the power the offender has over the child, in such a relationship of trust.

Disclosure implies that the survivor needs to overcome the betrayal of trust experienced as a child, in order to develop a relationship in which he feels safe and comfortable enough to disclose his past (Cloke, 2003: 122). To develop such a relationship, requires empathy, encouragement, support, time and guidance, without which, disclosure and ultimately healing, may well remain out of reach: “I really do not know what is the first step towards healing and/or disclosure, but I always pray to God to make me forget about the whole thing and just live a normal life as if it never happened”.

5.3.6.4 Emotional states of the victim of sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse results in a disturbance of the normal, healthy emotional state that most children experience. The emotional states mentioned by the participants included thoughts of killing the perpetrator, relief upon hearing of the death of the perpetrator, cycles of self-destruction by means of substance abuse, intense guilt, wishing that the abuse had been noticed by others, nightmares, anxiety and detachment (Spies, 2006: 8 & 11; Corwin, 2002: 13-14; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 86 & 193; Finkelhor & Browne, 1985).

As a result of the confusion that accompanies the abuse in young children, their emotional stability is affected and this influences their long-term emotional development (Fouché & Yssel, 2006: 242; Lotter, 2006: 89). They
are not sure what has or is happening to them and they are often frightened because of the threats that were made. The participants mentioned many emotions that were experienced during this time in their lives:

I have plenty of scars to show for my experiences … every once in a while, I feel sad and angry about what had happened to me. I feel a sense of loss when I look back.

I remember being very lonely. I would cry and cry and cry.

I feel myself move in and out of denial in attempting to allow myself to simply grieve: It really did happen to me. I struggle connecting with my feelings and try fooling myself that I am strong.

Participants’ expressed themselves as follows:

My brother is … dead … a year after he died the story came out that he’s been abusing his stepdaughter since she was five … he was killed by a complete freak accident at work. It was a law of the universe, because there is no doubt in my mind or that of my sister-in-law that I would have killed him.

I was around 14 at the time. I pulled away from him with all my might and told him to never touch me again or I would kill him.

The man has since died without ever facing up to his evil deeds. I was very happy when I heard how he died, because to me it was his punishment for what he did to me. He was involved in a bus accident and was only recovered after three days in the wreckage.

I was treated for a borderline personality disorder. I was treated with Valium, Luvox and Prozac. Nothing eased the pain. No-one could save me. I was trapped in my own nightmare. A huge black hole of self-despair. They were dark, lonely days, my family and friends had had enough of me after a three-year cycle of self-destruction.

The fact that I was coaxed and not overpowered made my sense of guilt intense.

I went through these periods of PTSD-like symptoms (post-traumatic stress disorder) of reliving my experiences over
and over again in my head, getting nightmares, being hyper-fearful and suffering from intense anxiety.

5.3.7 Personality profile of the victims of sexual abuse

Literature indicates that children who are sexually abused may develop certain personality characteristics as a result of the possible behavioural changes that occur after abuse (Killian & Brakarsh, 2007: 368; Louw, et al., 2007: 364; Fouché & Yssel, 2006: 241; Lewis, 1999: 100). This is often noticed in a change in behavioural patterns, either soon after the abuse begins, or gradually over a period of time. These factors often move with the child, through adolescence into adulthood. Sexual abuse thus has the potential to directly influence personality development.

5.3.6.1 Distrust

Literature has confirmed the fact that the sexual abuse of children causes them to distrust adults. They have been violated by one of the people whom they trusted to care for them, to protect and nurture them; and this often causes the child to distrust, not only the perpetrator, but non-offending adults as well. The perpetrator has destroyed their innocence and forced them to live a lie by ensuring that the abuse is kept a “secret” (De Witt, 2009: 334; Barker & Hodes, 2007: 38; Spies, 2006: 272; Lyon, 2002: 117; Lewis, 1999: 100; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 161).

The findings in this research indicated that 100% of the participants developed distrust of others. For many, this lack of trust moves with them into adulthood and affects other areas of their lives, such as their interpersonal relationships:

I cried and he told me not to be a baby, but I was crying with my frustration, because he did not listen to me. This started my distrust of adults.

My mother … I felt she could not be trusted or believed.

I did not know anyone I could trust enough to tell it to.
To this day it is very important to me that people believe me. I get hysterical if I tell something and the other person does not believe me.

5.3.6.2 Negative self-image

Hall and Lloyd (1993: 209-210) discuss how difficult it is for a woman survivor to maintain a positive body image and view of herself. Apparently this negative perception develops as a result of the guilt that is felt regarding the abuse. Some survivors feel that their bodies were attractive, thus making them vulnerable to offenders. Some survivors develop protective strategies with regard to their body image.

Examples of these strategies are:

- being overweight;
- being very thin;
- wearing clothing which gives a feeling of being protected or where the true body shape and/or size is disguised; and/or
- the development of eating disorders, such as bulimia or anorexia.

(Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 208)

A full 100% of the participants indicated that their self-image was affected to a greater or lesser degree. Spies (2006: 91 & 270) and Louw (2000: 24) indicated that a negative self-image is caused by the guilt and the nature of the messages that come from the perpetrator.

The girls didn't like me much … they said I walked funny. (name), who later became my friend, said I walked like someone who has had sex. So I tried to walk in a way that was more acceptable for an 8-year-old.

Ek het op skool gedink al die ander kinders is beter as ek, want sulke goed gebeur nie met hulle nie. Ek het gedink ek is baie sleg en sondig en dat ek nooit sal kan hemel toe gaan … nie. (At school I thought all the other children were better than me, because such things don’t happen to them. I thought I was bad and sinful and that I would never go to heaven).
My teacher took me under her wing, and was always willing to help me, so I had to prove to her that I was naughty. I needed her acceptance, and her approval, and, once I had it. I had to destroy it, because I was naughty.

5.3.6.4 Shyness

Although this is not always the case, a child who appears shy and withdrawn in the classroom, may very well be one who is being abused at home (Barker & Hodes, 2007: 39). This is one area that should be easily noticeable by the teacher, especially if there is a sudden swing in the character of the child, from outgoing to shy and withdrawn (Louw, 2000: 24). As many as 79% of the participants indicated that they experienced being shy and withdrawn at school:

*I can recall always being a very shy kid at school, and browsing through report cards and comments teachers have made over the years confirms this.*

*Ek was baie skaam en bang. (I was very shy and afraid.)*

*I was shy, but angry. I didn't want him to touch me.*

5.3.6.5 Lack of confidence

The perpetrator destroys the self-esteem of the child, thereby causing the child to lack self-confidence in everything that he does and says. This lack of confidence is broken down further by the perception that other people may know of the abuse (Finkelhor & Browne, 1985). Of the participants in the sample group, 79% stated that they lacked confidence: “*I spent most of my school years looking down at the ground in front of my feet. But this lack of self-confidence was profoundly exacerbated by the notion that if I looked anyone in the eye, they would somehow know I was hiding a secret and see my shame*”.

Many indicated that this was a very lonely and dark period of time, where their self-image and confidence deteriorated rapidly. In some cases, the child’s
confidence is destroyed completely and the child reaches a point of indifference regarding the abuse:

*Because by then my whole … uh … self-being had been so invaded and tampered with and beaten up that I couldn’t care less.*

*Blinded by a lack of self-worth, I trundled along a journey of self-destruction. It was a road littered with bad choices, messy relationships, missed opportunities and spiritual uncertainty.*

*… repetitive cycles of loneliness, lack of self-esteem and confidence.*

### 5.3.6.6 Suicidal

No statistics could be sourced to indicate exact statistics of sexual abuse victims who had attempted suicide, or those who managed to commit suicide. However, literature confirms that suicidal tendencies are common amongst victims of sexual abuse (De Witt, 2009: 333; Bezuidenhout, 2008: 177; Barker & Hodes, 2007: 39; Spies, 2006: 79; Matlin, 2000: 499; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 174; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 69; 79 &134).

Bass and Davis (1988: 436) quote a respondent from one of their interviews as saying “*As a kid I would sit and carve and just watch the blood to know I was alive. When I was twelve I realised that I could kill myself so I quit.*”

According to the feedback from the participants, thoughts and actual attempts at suicide are common amongst victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. Many of the participants felt that they had lost control of their lives. There were also a number of participants who apparently attempted suicide, because of a lack of understanding from those to whom they disclosed their secret. In total, 58% of the participants in this study had suicidal tendencies at some point in their lives.
By this time I was 10 and knew right from wrong, I had a bad attitude. I was short tempered. Shortly after this, I started having thoughts of suicide. These thoughts persisted for 13 years.

During this time there were suicide attempts, more shrinks, and more moving homes.

I … attempted suicide six times, was taken off Van Staden’s bridge and certified in The Elizabeth Donkin (a psychiatric hospital). Spent a day in a coma from an almost fatal suicide attempt.

Buckling under the full weight of my personal pain, my family’s shame and an overwhelming mountain of regret, I felt incapable of continuing the journey. Life had become like an endless game of Monopoly and I desperately wanted to quit.

I had a bad experience … and somehow it triggered all the old memories that I had stacked away over the years. That day at work I just had to get away. I contemplated suicide.

One participant had suicidal thoughts but never actually attempted suicide. Instead of attempting suicide, she started performing the act of self-injury, by cutting herself, in an attempt to distract herself from the emotional pain she was suffering: “I had thoughts of suicide and once or twice cut myself, just so I wouldn’t have to think about having seen him”.

Suicide attempts are strongly linked with depression (see 5.3.8.3) and participants mentioned various forms of treatment, from scheduled medication to electroconvulsive therapy. As a result of the depression and suicide attempts, some of the participants were admitted to psychiatric hospitals.

Nothing was ever normal again, my feeling, my thinking my rationale. I tried to commit suicide when I was older.

I found … when you had the shock treatments, it took parts of your memory away. But not the past. It took your short-term memory away.
5.3.6.7 Perfectionism

The abused child is unable to control or stop the abuse, because of the power imbalance between him and the perpetrator (Townsend & Dawes, 2007: 61; Spies, 2006: 53; Finkelhor & Browne, 1985). As a result of this, he attempts to control other areas in his life and may focus on being perfectly organised, excessively neat or obsessive about his appearance.

In my quest to be accepted, I became a bit of a perfectionist.

I wanted my life to be organised, everything to be perfect.

I desperately needed to be accepted, to prove to my parents, my siblings, friends, teachers, that I was good. That I could be perfect.

5.3.6.8 Rebellious

There are many instances where the sexually abused child becomes rebellious and rejects all forms of authority and rules (Barker & Hodes, 2007: 39; Junior, 2007: 420). Such children cannot understand the negative impact this behaviour has on the other children in the class, in terms of lesson disruptions, wasting valuable learning/teaching time and the possibility of refusing any form of help available from teachers.

Teachers who do not understand that the child may be manifesting this behaviour because of an underlying problem, may label the child as impossible or naughty, or that they are behaving this way as a result of a lack of discipline at home. As many as 26% of the participants indicated that they became rebellious and rejected authority.

Teachers had no time for my rebellious attitude.

I disrupted that class totally. I was totally rebellious. I was totally out of hand.
In an attempt to remove themselves from the pain and anguish of being abused, a number of abused children use escapism as a means of coping with daily life (Salter, 2003: 180). Escapism can take many forms. Participants mentioned various means of coping they used, such as becoming a high achiever at school, alcohol abuse, drug abuse and promiscuity. Researchers indicate that many victims of sexual abuse resort to self-destructive behaviours, such as excessive alcohol and drug use (De Witt, 2009: 333; Barker & Hodes, 2007: 39; Spies, 2006: 58).

To get A’s, be a prefect and play first-team sport was not just meant as an escape of the nightmares that haunted me, it was supposed to make those empty, dirty, damaged feelings inside of me go away.

I became very promiscuous, delved into drugs, drank very heavily and had wild parties with friends to escape all the turmoil in my life.

I wanted to escape into a world that wasn’t mine, a place I could disappear into. It is this very desire, I believe, that made drugs so attractive to me.

I was abusing alcohol, on a bad day I’d start the day with a double Scotch, straight.

Reading is a popular form of escaping from reality, and Salter indicates that some children read compulsively in an effort to protect themselves from having to interact socially (Salter, 2003: 180). One participant said, “Strangely, I developed a love for reading ... used to read ... anything where I could escape”.

In a survey by Darkness to Light (2008), it was found that between 70% and 80% of adult survivors of child sexual abuse reported their habit of excessive drug and alcohol use. More than 70% of the male survivors in the mentioned survey indicated that they had sought psychological help for issues such as substance abuse and suicidal thoughts. In addition to this, in excess of 75% of teenage prostitutes stated that they had been sexually abused.
Substance abuse was indicated as a problem for 32% of the participants in this research. Substances included alcohol and various narcotics. Some of the participants indicated that they used substances in excessive amounts in an attempt to forget the sexual abuse to which they had been subjected. This either took place as an adolescent at school, or in their adult lives.

... heavy drinking and smoking ...

_I became very promiscuous, delved into drugs, drank very heavily and had wild parties with friends to escape all the turmoil in my life._

The profile of the sexually abused participants is reflected in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4 The profile of sexually abused participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distrusting</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Self-image</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of confidence</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor academic performance</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicidal tendencies</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfectionist</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escapism</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebellious</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.7 Disclosure of sexual abuse experiences

There are many contributing factors to the disclosure or non-disclosure by child victims of the sexual abuse they have endured (Higson-Smith, Lamprecht & Jacklin, 2007: 347).

5.3.8.1 Reasons for disclosure

Children may initially disclose the less-embarrassing forms of abuse to determine how the person to whom they are disclosing their secret will react. If the reaction is one that rejects or underrates the disclosure, the probability is that the child will not volunteer to disclose any further abuse (Higson-Smith, et al., 2007: 347).

Childline South Africa (1983) stipulates five specific reasons for disclosure by victims. These are:

1) An impossible home situation that eventually forces the child to report the abuse.
2) The presence of a sensitive friend or helper, e.g. teacher, provides someone whom the victim can trust to disclose to, knowing that they will be supported emotionally.
3) No further contact with the perpetrator allows the child victim to find the courage for disclosure, because the presence of the perpetrator is threatening.
4) Education strategies, e.g. Childline, reinforce the fact that abuse is wrong and that the child is not responsible.
5) Fear of consequences, such as pregnancy. In older girls, after the abuse, this fear may cause anxiety and result in their disclosure of the truth.

Hall and Lloyd, (1993: 119) discuss circumstances when survivors should be encouraged to disclose specific memories. These include:
• Frequent nightmares or flashbacks;
• When trying to create links between past and existing problems;
• When trying to deal with self-blame and guilt;
• When the survivor commences self-injurious behaviour in an attempt to avert attention from painful memories; and
• The use of alcohol and/or drugs to prevent memories of the abuse.

One participant expressed herself as follows: “Once I was able to speak about things, did I realize that I had problems and I started to understand my inner feelings of shame, self-loathing, rage, etc.”

For a number of the participants, this specific study provided them with an opportunity to disclose their history of childhood sexual abuse. The fact that they were doing so to a complete stranger, appeared to make it easier for them to deal with. These feelings confirmed the need for trust, acknowledgement and understanding, empathy, believing in the victim and attempting to make a difference. The participants were eager to help, especially knowing that their input would make a contribution to creating a voice for the silent young victims of sexual abuse, as illustrated by the following quotes:

Everyone knows about uncle (name); nobody knows about the rest. You’re the first I’ve told – the first I’m telling.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity. I do hope that something in here is of value to you and can help in your study. Thank you for giving me a voice.

Thanks … for believing in me to do this …[you] came when I needed it the most … my father passed away this year without me speaking to him, after having an argument about my past and now at last I can lay him to rest.

… in an attempt to “get it out of my system” … I wrote my story. I just wrote the memories and thoughts as they spilled into my brain. It was never intended for anyone else to read, but merely as therapy for me. Now I’m mailing it to you. And that’s because I hope, in a very small way, it will add something to your research. I pray with my whole heart and
soul that your work will ultimately mean fewer kids will have to endure years of hell before they find healing.

5.3.8.2 Reasons for non-disclosure

If a child has attempted to disclose the abuse and the disclosure was met with disbelief and lack of acknowledgement, thereby possibly causing the child to withdraw from further disclosure, then the chances are that the child is being left in a situation of impending danger (Higson-Smith, et al., 2007: 347). Wilson (2006: 44) states that incest is one of the reasons for non-disclosure. Most children who have been sexually abused by a father or relative will not disclose the abuse, because of the nature of the relationship between them.

The feedback from the participants in this study indicates that the main reason for not disclosing to anyone whilst the abuse was happening was because of various threats having been made by the perpetrator to ensure that they would remain silent:

I can only remember that he performed oral sex on me. What stands out in my mind is the fear that he would kill my parents. That was the hold he had over me.

Every time I was told ‘Don’t tell anyone, it’s our little secret.” I remember feeling like I wanted to scream out, but just too scared in case he hurt me.

He said, “I will beat you up and cut your face so that you can’t even look at the mirror again.”

Research confirms that threats are one of the main reasons for non-disclosure (Bezuidenhout, 2008: 177; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 164). Such threats can range from the perpetrator hurting or killing a parent of the child, injury to the child himself, to the perpetrator’s own incarceration.

An enormous burden is placed on the shoulders of the young victim in terms of wanting to protect the family from knowing about the abuse. The reasons for this varied from one participant to another and ranged from fear of what
the disclosure would do to a parent with ill health, to concerns about how the family happiness and dynamics, and finally to the fear of a parent being disappointed and repulsed by the child:

I have never told anyone about it, ‘cos [sic] I don’t know how it’ll affect my family, especially my Mom who’s diabetic and has hypertension.

I kept it (the abuse) to myself, as I did not want to destroy our family. I wanted a happy family at all costs.

… there were so many times that I wanted to tell my Mom, but I think I was so convinced that she would have hated me, or just been so disappointed in me as well as herself for not realizing what was going on.

Children are also often convinced by the perpetrator that people will think they are the cause of the abuse. As a result, children feel guilty, because they believe they are at fault and they continue to withhold their secret from the caring adults around them:

I would never have confided in any teacher, pastor or friend. I felt I was the cause of the problem.

If I have to be honest with myself as to why I never told anyone … I was ashamed and embarrassed.

“Tell no-one. EVER!” With adult wisdom I understand those words were meant to protect me … but at the age of eight I understood them to mean that I had reason to be ashamed, that I was in some way guilty for what had happened, that it was a terrible secret I should carry in silence.

Hy het aangetrek en gese ek mag vir niemand sé nie, anders gaan ek in groot moeilikhed kom. Ek het gedink ons het ‘n misdaad gepleeg. Ek was toe bang vir die polisie, al het ek net staan en toekyk. (He got dressed and told me I wasn’t allowed to tell anyone, otherwise I would get into big trouble. I thought we had committed a crime. I was even afraid of the police, even though I just stood and watched).
The feelings of guilt and self-blame are common amongst children who have been sexually abused (Bezuidenhout, 2008: 62; Barker & Hodes, 2007: 39).

Prieve and Svedin (2008: 1095-1108) conducted a study with a sample of 4 339 high school students. This group was made up of 2 324 girls and 2 015 boys. The instrument was a questionnaire regarding sexual experiences and the focus was on the disclosure of sexual abuse. From this sample group, 1 505 girls (65%) and 457 boys (23%) reported experiences of sexual abuse: 81% of the girls that took part had disclosed the abuse, in comparison with only 69% of the boys. Those that had disclosed did so to a close friend of the same age.

Joan van Niekerk, National Director of Childline, indicated that to source reliable statistics is very difficult, especially from street children. Street children succumb to prostitution, because it is a means of providing for them; and it is often condoned by their parents (Van Niekerk, 2004).

Childline South Africa (1983) stated five main reasons for the non-disclosure of sexual abuse. These are:

a) *Not understanding that the abuse is wrong,* is often a problem for younger children, especially if the perpetrator is using gentle sexual acts and has convinced the victims that his actions are “normal”.

b) *Secrecy* is generally maintained as a result of various threats that have been made to the victim.

c) *Fear of disapproval or punishment* is sometimes more important for young victims, than disclosing the abuse. Despite being very unhappy and wanting the abuse to stop, they crave approval that is often provided by the perpetrator.

d) *Helplessness* is felt by most victims of sexual abuse, because they are not able to stop the abuse and protect themselves.

e) *Entrapment* as a result of the feelings of helplessness and the shroud of secrecy leads to self-blame and guilt.
Some children develop multiple personalities to help them cope with the complex and diverse feelings they have experienced. This may result in their becoming confused and not disclosing the abuse.

### 5.3.9 Health problems

Being abused as a child, may eventually begin to cause various health-related problems. These problems may arise in childhood, such as urinary tract infections, and continue into adulthood, developing into, amongst others, illnesses such as gastro-intestinal problems (National Department of Health, 2004). Researchers mention that there are many women who are adult survivors of sexual abuse, who develop various gynaecological problems later in life (Matlin, 2000: 489; Lloyd & Hall, 1993: 74).

Van As, et al., (2001) and Matlin (2000: 421-422), found that some of the short-term medical consequences of having been sexually abused included:

- HIV infection;
- Gonorrhoea (a venereal disease);
- Genital warts, and
- Trichomonas vaginalis (a form of vaginitis, characterised by itching and burning).

The long-term medical consequences include:

- Dysuria (painful urination);
- Temporary urinary incontinence;
- Perineal infection (infection of the area between the anus and the scrotum or vulva);
- Encopresis (faecal incontinence); and
- Pregnancy (possibly resulting in the termination thereof).

Expressions by participants included the following:

*Al die spanning het sy tol ge-eis. Ek het baie siek geword en was in matriek byna dood. Ek was maande lank in die hospitaal met sists op my eierstokke en allerande kompleksies daarna. Die dokter het my gevra of daar enige moontlikheid is dat ek swanger is, want ek het onssettend gebloei.* (All the stress took its toll. I became very ill and almost died in matric. I was in hospital for months with cysts on my ovaries and all types of complications thereafter. The doctor asked me if there was a possibility that I could be pregnant, because I bled so profusely).

I … started having health problems. I remember spending two weeks recovering from some illness at Port Alfred with my mother.

Research indicates that it is possible for adults to recover and be healed from their childhood experiences of sexual abuse and become survivors, rather than remaining as victims (Spies, 2006 [d]: 45; Lloyd & Hall, 1993: 5), as one of the participants also experienced: “I found inner stability, self-love, and self-forgiveness, not to mention forgiveness for my perpetrators. I was intent on making myself physically, mentally and emotionally strong. I have achieved that”.

Louise Hay, author and lecturer, (Love, 2005: 10) was brought up in poverty and experienced abuse of a physical and sexual nature. She overcame all her childhood difficulties and embarked on a journey of self-discovery, healing and the affirmation of her truth. In 1984, at the age of 58, she was diagnosed with terminal cancer. She declined to have surgery and insisted on living out her teachings in an attempt to heal herself. Her understanding of cancer was that it is a disease caused by deep resentment towards those who had violated her and this resentment had been harboured over many years.

Today, aged 83, she states that her healing is as a result of her ability to recognise the behavioural patterns that were causing her illness. This pattern of self-destruction included deep resentments, being unable to forgive, and most importantly, the level of her self-criticism and the inability to love herself for who she was. Within six months she had worked through all her emotional
and psychological difficulties and was declared cancer-free by her medical
team (Love, 2005: 10). Louise Hay has authored 27 books, which have been
translated into 25 languages.

5.3.8.1 Stress and anxiety

Stress and anxiety can manifest in many different ways in individual people.
They can be the cause of a variety of health-related conditions, such as heart
disease, stroke, anger, colon cancer and irritable bowel syndrome. Generally,
a change in lifestyle is recommended, but for a victim of sexual abuse, this is
very difficult. A total of 89% of the participants indicated that not only as a
young abuse victim, but as adults, they still suffered from stress and anxiety

I wet my bed until I was about 13 years.

I get so stressed that I get angry with ... everyone around me.

I am so terribly aware of everyone’s motives and agendas. I have become extremely paranoid.

I guess when the heart is emotionally damaged in childhood it becomes the hardest of human afflictions to cure as an adult.

5.3.9.2 Depression

Depression and mood swings are common amongst survivors of sexual
abuse. The depression is accompanied by very low levels of self-esteem, poor
body image, guilt, social withdrawal and little or no displays of emotion. It is
during these times that problems such as suicidal tendencies, poor eating
patterns and disturbed sleep are common (De Witt, 2009: 333; Hall & Lloyd,
1993: 72).

Depression is an illness that can generally be treated with medication or
electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) and many of the participants were on
various medications over a period of time. As many as 84% of the sample group indicated that they had suffered from depression at some point in time as a result of the abuse. As adults, there are still a number that are on medication. One participant was treated by means of ECT.

> I found myself in my early teens with a heavy depression moving into my life.

> With the depression came the hopelessness.

> I went into a deep depression. I was taken back into TARA. I was given shock treatment (ECT).

### 5.3.9.3 Eating disorders

Many women with eating disorders have experienced some form of sexual abuse as a child (Matlin, 2000: 489; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 75). Survivors may indulge in compulsive eating, resulting in obesity and a deterioration of their self-esteem, because of their problems with self-control. A total of 32% of the participants in this study suffered from some form of eating disorder.

> I was always teased because I was overweight. I would stop at the bakery and buy 2-4 cupcakes and eat them up before the school started.

Bulimia refers to secret binge eating and then self-induced vomiting to purge and rid the body of the food (Olivier, 1994: 120). This is generally accompanied by feelings of guilt and shame (Spies, 2006: 11). Participants had similar experiences:

> I had other issues creep up, like bulimia and just a general disinterest in everything.

> I never remember eating. I never remember having breakfast or lunch.

> I started getting overweight. I did not love my body.
5.3.9.4  Self-mutilation as a form of coping

Self-mutilation or self-injury is the deliberate act of cutting or hurting oneself and is generally linked to some form of depression. Literature confirms the link of self-mutilation in cases of child sexual abuse (Barker & Hodes, 2007: 39; Spies, 2006: 11; 57 – 58; & 272; Finkelhor & Browne, 1985). As many as 21% of the participants indicated that they had cut themselves in an attempt to focus attention on something other than the abuse or the perpetrator.

I started cutting myself … even though I’ve put the past behind me, seeing the scars on my body is a daily reminder of how difficult my life was at some stage.

Boarding school for me is a blur of emotionally laden … self-mutilation.

5.3.9.5  Sedentary lifestyle

A sedentary lifestyle is a combination of a lack of exercise and poor eating habits. It may lead to various health problems such as obesity, coronary heart disease, lethargy and type-2 diabetes. This study found that 16% of the participants led a sedentary life-style, either as adults or at some other point in their lives.

I had lost my joy to be outdoors. I remember my gran saying ‘Du kreigst ein dicken arsch’. You are going to get a fat backside.

I hated the gym and all the apparatus. I was too big, heavy and clumsy to get around, up and down things.

I did not participate in … school activities, especially if it involved my parents coming to school.

In comparison to being inactive, one participant mentioned that he enjoyed physical activity. It would appear that he may have used his love for sport and excessive exercise, in an attempt to focus on something other than his abuse.
I love physical action and used to push my body beyond what is normal.

5.3.9.6 Urinary-tract or general infection

Previous research has indicated that as a result of the nature of sexual abuse, infections such as urinary-tract or vaginal infections may occur (De Witt, 2009: 333; Barker & Hodes, 2007: 42; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 74). A total of 16% of the participants indicated that they had had some form of infection after having been sexually abused.

I had the most terrible urinary tract infection.

Around this time I was ill quite a bit too. I used to get chronic tonsillitis, associated with bad ear and eye infections.

The factors that affect the health of sexually abused participants are reflected in Table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5 Factors affecting the health of sexually abused participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress / anxiety</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>89%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating disorders</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-mutilation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedentary lifestyle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinary tract / general infection</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.10 Religious testimonies

Although some survivors, especially those who were raised in a religious home, may be further confused by the abuse, there are those who gained strength from their faith and religious beliefs (Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 265). Some
of the participants mentioned that they had managed to use their faith and religion, to overcome their experiences as a child, and in turn, had managed to help other abuse victims to do the same.

*Feeling called by God, at the age of nineteen, I founded the non-profit organization called (name), which envisions a society in which rape is no longer acceptable.*

*I marvel at how often I cross paths with other women who have walked a similar road. When that happens, I know the flood of empathy and compassion that surges up from deep inside me is God’s way of blanketing those women in a tangible sense of His love and understanding.*

*All I have been through, and all God has done in the process of healing me, redefines my perception of 2 Corinthians 1 v 4: “He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others.”*

There are participants who explain how God worked slowly but surely to make their lives whole again. They have acknowledged the strength and power God has given them to re-build their lives.

*It is impossible to describe the seasons through which God has brought me since that day, or how each one has merged with another to restore – bit by bit – the pieces of my brokenness … and discover the awesome reality of God’s sustaining strength.*

*… most important of all - ALLOWING God to re-shape that which evil hands had warped over the years … it has led me to acknowledge my human frailty.*

God’s grace had allowed some of the participants to develop a deeper relationship with Him. One participant in particular indicated that by the power of God and His love in her, she was able to forgive the perpetrator for his actions: *“Because of the love of Christ in me, I forgave him …”* Other participants commented as follows:

*Some other good things that have arisen out of my life experiences … a stronger and more intimate relationship with God the Father.*
Thank you, Jesus, for your nurturance, intimacy and protection. You are my Healer, and my Best Friend. “My Grace is sufficient for you, for my Power is made perfect in your weakness”: 2 Corinthians 12:9

All aspects related to sexual abuse as discussed above can have an influence on the child’s school life experiences and academic performance.

5.4 THEME TWO: THE INFLUENCE OF SEXUAL ABUSE ON THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD AND THE ADOLESCENT

Sexual abuse impacts on every aspect of the young child’s life, which in turn has an influence on the child’s school life and academic performance. The importance of social development should not be underestimated. Humans are social beings and if for whatever reason, the social aspect of holistic development is disturbed, it can create enormous emotional difficulties for the young person. Spies, (2006: 56) found that sexually abused children often prefer their own company and that they avoid interacting on a social level. The reason for this is that the abused child often feels uncomfortable in the company of others and may be fearful that his dark secret will be discovered.

The abused child observes the relationship between his parents and this may expose the child to additional trauma and fear. There are cases where the child assumes the role of the adult in the home, especially when the parent(s) neglect the child and themselves. The young victim generally displays love and loyalty to his parent(s), despite being neglected by them.

Abuse victims often find it difficult to develop social relationships, because they no longer trust others. Forming relationships and friendships may expose the truth behind the abuse and the child does not want this to happen. It has been found that young victims often want to protect the family from exposure to the abuse.
The long-term impact of sexual abuse often causes problems for adults in their personal relationships. The first step for the adult survivor would be to disclose their abusive past to their partner or spouse. This may cause anxiety, because the survivor has no way of knowing what the response is going to be. In the case of a long-term relationship, the couple then need to work together to overcome the problems that have resulted from the childhood abuse.

The majority of adult survivors have discovered through personal experience that the justice system fails the rape victim in terms of an arrest of the perpetrator, showing empathy and understanding to the victim, and in taking the allegation seriously.

Part of the curriculum at primary school level is teaching the children about the helping professions. One of the most important aspects of this is creating an awareness of how the police have the important task of protecting everyone, especially children. Children are taught that should they be in trouble or in need, they can phone the number 10111 for assistance and protection.

Unfortunately, many children and adolescents have discovered that their calls are not always taken seriously, and so the abuse continues. At high school level, young people are making decisions about which line of work to pursue. Bad experiences in the fields of law and justice, will impact negatively on any decision to follow a career in these areas.

### 5.4.2 Parental relationships

The family can be considered as a micro-society that is made up of a mother, a father and children (Pretorius, 1998). Although the dynamics thereof may differ from one culture to another, in essence the purpose of a family is the same, namely:

- to provide a warm, protective, loving and consistent relationship of trust and nurturing;
• to provide for the physical and material needs for the health and safety of all members;
• to fulfil the task of providing adequate guidance to the children in terms of behaviour, development of a value system and personality;
• to co-operate with the school and community when providing learning environments and experiences; and
• to provide support for children in their journey to independent adulthood and self-actualization (Pretorius, 1998: 40).

The social development of the sexually abused child and adolescent is hampered when they are violated. In some families there is an enormous amount of support and love for the survivor, after the initial shock of the disclosure has taken place.

The question that my folks kept asking over and over again – “WHY WHY WHY did you not tell us? How could this have happened right under our noses and we never knew? Why did you never say anything?”

My poor parents were desperate to help me. My parents spent their hard-earned money taking me to a psychiatrist.

However, according to the feedback in this research study, most of the participants had negative experiences in terms of disclosing their secrets within their families. This often impacted on relationships within the family.

I was brought up in a conservative Afrikaans home, my family is affluent and sexual abuse “didn’t happen” in homes like ours.

My parents never suspected a thing and were very sceptical after I finally told them … the perpetrator is twelve years older than me, so when I finally disclosed his identity to them they wrote it off as innocent “playing” amongst children. Unfortunately they never considered that when I was six, he was eighteen and very much capable of performing sexual acts on me.
There is the possibility that once the disclosure has been made, the various family members will react differently from one another. These reactions can have a profound impact on the victim, whether as a young child or an adult survivor:

… now that this is all out in the open, every reason why I never wanted this to all come out, came true. It has torn our family apart – definitely not brought us closer together.

I know our family will never be the same again.

5.4.2.1 Father

Research indicates that the perpetrator is often the father of the child and that incest causes more damage than abuse from a stranger (Spies, 2006: 5&6; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 65; Gomes-Schwartz, 1990: 62-65). Only 11% of the participants indicated that they had a positive relationship with their father. They also mentioned the importance of their father in their lives.

… my father – the gentlest man I have ever known.

My pa is dood toe ek 15 was – my anker, my lewe. Ek was versot op hom. Hy was immers ’n man wat net goed was vir my. (My dad passed away when I was 15 – my anchor, my life. I was crazy about him. He was indeed a man that was only good to me.)

A high of 42% of the participants indicated that they had had negative experiences in their relationship with their father, because of him being the perpetrator. The relationships were scarred by the sexual abuse, as well as by the accompanying physical and verbal abuse.

I had been having a rough time at home, because my father was in the habit of coming home late, when he came home, which was, should we say, three days a week.

Weekends he was out … drinking, gambling. He was a real playboy. And he used to haul me out of bed every morning at two o’clock when he came home … and … accuse me of masturbating and playing with myself …
And he turned to me and he said, “You are going to end up a nothing.”

… my dad introduced me to pornographic magazines, he would give them to me to read.

I was good at sport and so tried to get my father’s affirmation by doing very well, but he did not even come up to watch any of my matches or galas.

There were also instances where the father figure became violent after abusing alcohol and would destroy household items, besides being physically abusive: “… my father being drunk and violent … he was throwing furniture out of the door – tables, chairs, bookcases, lamps you name it”.

An important factor mentioned by one participant, was the fact that he had never had affirmation and encouragement from his father. His father did not spend much time with him, nor did he pay him any meaningful attention whilst growing up: “Without my father’s affirmation, I started to rebel against any and all forms of authority in order to get his attention”.

The perpetrators in one case study were the police friends of the young girl’s father. The abuse was eventually disclosed to him by the survivor’s husband. The result of this meeting was not what they had hoped for, as the father was derogatory towards his daughter. His words haunt the woman to this day: “He said to my husband that he should never have married me, because of me not being a virgin and that I had lied about everything: A figment of my imagination, something that was placed in my mind by my psychologist”.

5.4.2.2 Mother

Mothers generally react with shock, horror and anger at the news of their child having been sexually abused. The manner in which parents react to the disclosure of the abuse, plays a vital role in the degree of healing that will take place in the victim (Spies, 2006: 53).
In some homes, where the father is the perpetrator, the mother may have to do everything she can to maintain the household and provide food and shelter for her and the children: “My mother worked blimmen hard [sic]. You know she kept that house going. She … there was times when we didn’t have food in the house and she would go out and work as a … a waitress and come home with the scraps from the tables so we could eat …”

However, mothers are not always able to do anything about the abuse and the daughter then feels disillusioned by the mother’s reaction. The mother may be afraid of the consequences should she confront the father - if he is the perpetrator. She may feel helpless and unable to provide the support, comfort and help that the child needs (Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 177-178). There is also the possibility that the mother is totally dependant on the father for survival, especially if she does not work (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 162).

There are cases where the mother causes additional emotional stress in the life of the abused child, by her actions and re-actions to the disclosure of the abuse.

… my mother fetched me from school that evening and she got out of the car and stood there quite drunk and accused me of ignoring her and how ungrateful I was and how hurtful it was for her, etc … my mother has a violent temper, is extremely spiteful and LOVES emotional games.

It is unclear what the prevalence is, but there are many mothers of children who are abused, who were also themselves abused as children. Sometimes, these mothers are unable to assist their abused child, because they have either not disclosed their own abuse, or they have not worked through the journey of healing from their experiences: “… my mother … herself a victim of child sexual abuse, but she is unable to deal with it. Her life is a haze of lies, fabrications and illusions; she is unable to face reality, has shadowed her life with medication and imagery. Hers was possibly the harshest of betrayals”.

One participant indicated that her mother was aware of the abuse taking place, but did not intervene. This has caused enormous inter-relationship problems between them, and as an adult survivor the participant only wants
one thing from her mother: acknowledgement of the abuse: “I don’t know what is worse, losing a father to sexual abuse or losing your mother in the process … a mother should have taught me … that reading pornographic magazines was not what a young girl should be reading”.

Some children are in the situation where they were not part of the plan in the lives of the parents. This in itself creates confusing emotions within the child and this is exacerbated by verbal and sexual abuse.

… you see my mother said, “Technically, I don’t’ want you. I never did want you. You are a curse in my life”.

It was at that precise moment that I realised how little I meant to my mom. I knew I was in this all alone.

I got bitten on the penis by some geese and I remember my mother playing with me afterwards to see if it still worked!

One participant explained how she would be treated by her mother when trying to do homework. Her mother’s reaction to her struggling at school appeared to exacerbate the emotional trauma that she had suffered at the hands of her abuser: “My mom would shout and hit me frequently. Call me names. Degrade me and ask me why I couldn’t get it right”. The consequence of her mother’s additional abuse was that she withdrew from interaction. She found solace in the confines of her bedroom, where she felt safe: “My reaction was to retreat into my own world once more, a place where I could be alone and safe”.

5.4.2.3 Parental marital relationship

The nature of the parental relationship plays an important role in the lives of children. Factors such as divorce, single-parent families, arguments, domestic violence and infidelity place the family dynamics in turmoil and children become confused by what they see and hear (Bezuidenhout, 2008: 16-17). The participants also had such experiences:
Dad and mom got divorced when I was about six.

My mom would come creeping into my bed at night. She would say things like “That bloody bastard. I’m going to leave him tomorrow. We will build a new life, you and I”.

I cannot believe that my mom was busy chipping carrots with only a wall separating her and my father in bed with a teenager from the Seychelles.

It was around this time that my mom decided to leave my father. I remember my father pleading with her to stay, telling her how much he loved her, that she would be sorry if she left him.

5.4.2 Relationships with others

Relationships with other family members play a big role in the lives of abused children. These relationships can either be ones of trust, care and protection, or they can be traumatic relationships if the person happens to be the offender.

5.4.2.1 Grandparents

Not many of the participants mentioned help and support from extended family members, either before or after the disclosure. However, it would appear that support from grandparents provided a source of safety and security for some. In most instances, the grandparents were seemingly unaware of what was taking place. The participants commented as follows:

When I had nightmares, my grandparents would get to me before my mom.

I was loved by my grandparents. I was sad to leave. I was happy there and I knew I was safe.

My grandpa never abused me. It was then – for the first time – that I realised that everyone else was abnormal and I and him and my gran were normal.
5.4.2.2 Siblings

From the data gathered, it appears that those participants who had siblings, had not always had a good relationship with them when they were younger. Only one participant indicated being close to a sibling: “I have a half-sister ... we were very close. We still are”.

One of the male participants indicated that he became confused by the mixed influences he was exposed to by his brothers, who were very different from one another. One encouraged him to lead a life of Christianity, while the other encouraged him to rebel against authority, attend parties and consume alcohol: “I was also very mixed up because my one brother was influencing me to rebel and go wild and my other brother was trying to get me to live a Christian life. I … hung around my oldest brother and he started taking me to pubs from the age of 12”.

The one participant experienced a change of character in her brother. He moved from protecting her from being sexually abused by her uncle, to becoming the perpetrator himself. It appears that she loved and trusted him to protect her and he violated that trust and innocence: “My eldest brother had always been my protector, I trusted him and I loved him ... he became my abuser ... I was the initiation into manhood vessel for the boys in my family”.

Being the younger of two daughters in a family, one of the female participants had to be cared for and looked after by her elder sister, because of the family dynamics. Their parents were more focused on their own social lives than on creating a family and home setting that would be conducive to their proper childhood development. “My sister tells me stories (with much resentment) of how she had to constantly look after me, feed me, bath me and as she puts it “change my endless shitty nappies”. … She used to get onto the school bus and take me to school in a carrycot. I questioned my mom ... she just made a little noise, said nothing and changed the subject”.

In one case, the participant was abused by her brother-in-law. She disclosed this information to her sister when she was 20 years of age. The reaction she
had from her sister was as follows: “She sat in the chair opposite me. She never got up to hug me. She never suggested that I must see someone about it. She never said that we should tell my mom about it”. This experience indicates that negative reactions from siblings also have an impact on the lives of the victim/survivor, irrespective of the age at which the disclosure takes place.

### 5.4.2.3 Aunts and uncles

Not many participants discussed relationships with aunts and uncles, apart from those who had been abused by an uncle. One of the participants indicated how she had protected her sister from possible abuse by her uncle. The same woman indicated that her aunt was unaware of the abuse taking place: “I woke up in the night and he was leaning over my sister. I just said to him to stay away from her. Abuse me instead – what difference did it make? I was used to it; just don’t you dare touch her. I never once looked at my aunt and blamed her, as I knew in my heart that she had no idea what was going on.

Another participant remarked: “… being as generous as they are at times, my parents opened up our home to “Uncle B” … he moved to pull my nightdress up. He then moved my hand to stroke his penis and I felt it grow bigger”.

### 5.4.3 Parental neglect

Effective parenting is not always an easy task. It is easy to make mistakes in trying to determine what is best for the family and the child in particular. However, there are many parents who neglect their children because they simply make very little effort to meet the social, emotional, physical, spiritual and educational needs of their children. It is often found that abused children come from homes where the parents lack effective child-rearing styles and this is found in poverty-stricken and affluent areas alike.
5.4.3.1 Child-rearing style

There is a general misconception that sexual abuse and incest only take place in lower socio-economic areas and amongst the poverty-stricken sector of the population. Child sexual abuse knows no boundaries. It is found amongst all cultures, in all countries; it is inflicted by perpetrators from all levels of society and it occurs in the very poorest to the very wealthiest of families (De Witt, 2009: 327; Bezuidenhout, 2008: 167-170).

The participants in this study expressed themselves as follows in this regard:

... wealth, elegance, items of beauty, status, good breeding, class; were things that were close to my mother's heart ... my mom is a woman of particular beauty.

We were brought up being told that 'children were to be seen not heard' and being severely disciplined for any untoward behaviour.

Our manners had to be perfect.

The essential difference between sexual abuses in wealthy families in comparison with poorer families is that the abuse is less likely to be disclosed and/or noticed in the wealthy families, because of their financial resources and societal status (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 145; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 25; Gomes-Schwartz, et al., 1990: 154).

Both my parents (since I can remember) were alcoholics. On weekends I would cook/feed my parents, wash dishes, clean house, etc. I was approached by a few of my dad's drunken friends, but managed to humour my way out of those situations. I spent weekends and holidays alone with my parents, their constant fighting was hectic. I basically slid into a pattern of doing exactly as I pleased. I'd always done the cooking for the family, I ran the household.
It is, however, important to note that research has shown that there is an increased probability of the occurrence of child sexual abuse in homes where factors such as unemployment, poverty, alcohol abuse and poor living conditions exist (Bezuidenhout, 2008: 208; Loffell, 2007: 250; September 2007: 307; Townsend & Dawes, 2007: 69; Crimes Against Children Research Centre, 2003; Browde, 2002; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 155).

*My mom had raised me to taste alcohol whenever I wanted.*

*We were encouraged to run naked at home.*

Fathers often underestimate the pivotal role they play in the development of their children and as a result, remain relatively uninvolved in their lives. In the past, the father used to be considered as the head of the family and his role was clearly defined as being the breadwinner and decision-maker for the entire family. This is characteristic of the patriarchal family system that gradually changes the family into a partnership system. In this modern partnership family system, the mother, and often the children too, are included in decisions that need to be made for the family (Engelbrecht, 1994: 58-59).

Pretorius (1998: 49) refers to the *open family in an open (democratic) society.* He describes this family type as one that integrates new social demands and changes, whilst living a satisfied and optimal family life. Such a family embraces the diversity of society and the family members are affiliated to schools, churches or other associations. Both spouses play an equal role in the family and everyone shares in doing various duties around the house.

However, in many instances, the father figure is absent from involvement in the general development of the child. His focus can be on his personal goals in life or his own career or interests, which frequently do not include the children (Pretorius, 1998: 57). One of the participants mentioned that, as children, they had experienced that their father made no time to play with them, because of his busy personal schedule: *“We hardly ever saw our father,*
as he was always working, or over weekends playing tennis or golf; he hardly ever played with us or taught us to throw balls or play any type of sport”.

5.4.3.2 Lack of support

Many of the participants in the study had experienced a lack of support from those around them. It is interesting to note that this lack of support was a factor that had continued into adulthood for a number of people. One can understand that if an adult is experiencing difficulty in convincing those around him of his abuse as a child, how much more difficult it must be for a child to do so.

My trust in adults and family was further damaged and I was also very unhappy, because my parents had not even bothered to support me or assist me.

My parents never suspected a thing and were very sceptical after I told them a few years ago. Once my parents got into the whole story, it was one interrogation session for me after another. I was called to the side day after day to repeat the story, just in case I had been dreaming.

There was no support coming from those I loved.

… my mom always had lots of work to do … I could never understand why … she could never spend time with me.

5.4.3.3 Personal relationship of victim with spouse or partner

Of the participants who are married or have a partner, two discussed their positive relationship with their spouse/partner as being what had helped them through a very difficult period of time.

My husband was and still is my life-line. My best friend.

From the moment we met I felt utterly and completely unworthy of his friendship and respect, yet he refused to let go. Over a period of two years, (name) relentlessly, but gently peeled away the layers of hurt and self-loathing so tightly bound around me. He gave me the freedom to be real, to be myself. There were no secrets between us. It was
a time of healing, restoration and immense joy. No other person had loved me more.

One participant indicated that she had married the wrong man. Her husband continued the cycle of abuse in the form of marital rape and physical abuse.

Ek het met die totale verkeerde man getrou. Hy was ontrou vanaf dag 1 en na ‘n huwelik waarin ek herhaaldelik verkrag was, emosioneel en fisies, het ek na 18 jaar uitgestap. (I married the totally wrong man. He was unfaithful from day one and after a marriage in which I was repeatedly raped, emotionally and physically, I walked out after 18 years.)

An extramarital affair was admitted by one participant. He indicated that he felt the relationship was only on a physical level: "Due to the fact that (spouse’s name) and I were still not having any sexual relations … I began to have an affair with a friend of (spouse’s name) that lasted about 8 months. This relationship faded away, because it was purely sexual”.

It is often very difficult for survivors of CSA to overcome the trauma of the relationship of trust that was broken as a result of the abuse. They may carry these feelings into adult relationships, where the partner or spouse then has to come to terms with the abuse, in order to understand the actions and reactions of the survivor. The marital status of sexually abused adults in the study indicated that there was almost an equal number of single (42%) as married participants (47%). It was difficult to ascertain whether the divorced status of 11% of the participants, had any link with them having been sexually abused as children. (See Table 5.6)
Table 5.6 The marital status of the participants

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<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
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<td>Married</td>
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<td>Widowed</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

5.4.4 The Justice system

In South Africa at the present moment, there are many irregularities in the justice system that hinders the successful investigation and ultimate prosecution of rapists and child molesters (Ewing, 2007: 276; Sadan, 2007: 227). Unfortunately the inadequacies of some members of the South African Police Services result in a poor response and lack of empathy and integrity, as had been experienced by some victims, and this exacerbates the feelings of frustration, guilt, anger and re-victimization (Van Niekerk, 2007: 265; Lewis, 1999: 110 & 132).

Van As, et al., (2001) mention that so few cases of child sexual abuse are reported and even fewer are successfully prosecuted, because the present legal system is failing the children of this country.

With regard to this aspect, some of the participants expressed themselves as follows on their experiences:

They were POLICE OFFICERS after all. People that are supposed to protect you.

My whole body shook uncontrollably as I sat in the lounge waiting for the policeman to arrive. I don’t recall the questions he asked or the answers I gave, but I will never
forget his parting words: “You must never tell anyone what happened to you today. Not your friends, nor your teachers. Tell no-one. EVER!”

The doctor confirmed the rape … I went to the police station to open a case. They detained him for two days. Later they (the police) came to me and told me that … he is out on free bail, the same policeman … telling me that if I became his lover he would make sure that this guy is sent to jail for a long time. I asked the police about the case and he said I should forget about that; because that guy is a friend of the police he will never go to jail.

Our next-door neighbour moved out and … a police officer from the murder and robbery squad moved in … his house was always full of young boys and girls (my friends), so it was not strange at all to visit at his house. He took me to a room, me a 10-year-old girl and told me to lie down on a single bed behind the door facing the window. He climbed on me and raped me.

It has been documented that police officers often contribute to the present failure of the system in our country to meet the needs of those who have been sexually abused or raped. One of the ways they do this is by selling police dockets that record cases where charges of sexual victimisation have been reported (Richter, et al., 2007: 455). This no doubt has a great influence on the validity of the statistics of reported cases of child sexual abuse and rape, since many of the cases reported will then not become part of the statistical data: “Unfortunately we live in a world where justice can be bought. Abusers come in all shapes and sizes”.

Table 5.7 shows that many of the rape victims in a survey conducted by the Medical Research Council and the Department of Health, stated that they had not reported the crime to a law-enforcement agency because they feared acts of revenge or retaliation from the perpetrator, distrust in the police who would not take their allegations seriously and embarrassment about the matter. These feelings imply that society has a lack of understanding, awareness and empathy towards the victims of abuse.
Table 5.7: The rate of reporting rape to the police and reasons for not reporting (all figures are weighted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting to the police</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>155697</td>
<td>56,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>121315</td>
<td>43,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>277012</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main reasons for not reporting</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear of reprisals (retaliation)</td>
<td>40364</td>
<td>33,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25526</td>
<td>21,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>15163</td>
<td>12,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief that the police would fail to solve the crime</td>
<td>11600</td>
<td>9,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassment</td>
<td>11138</td>
<td>9,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of being blamed</td>
<td>5524</td>
<td>4,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not identify the perpetrator</td>
<td>7594</td>
<td>6,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought that the police would not take the incident seriously</td>
<td>4407</td>
<td>3,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>121316</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether the perpetrators were arrested among those who reported the crime</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80885</td>
<td>52,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>54707</td>
<td>35,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>20105</td>
<td>12,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>155697</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Medical Research Council and Department of Health (1999), South Africa demographic and health survey 1998: preliminary report

Defence attorneys, while often finding themselves in a difficult situation regarding a case where dockets have “disappeared” or have been “lost”, are often hesitant to represent high-profile clients in cases of this nature (Bird & Spurr, 2007: 49). State prosecutors need to adhere to the United Nations Guidelines on the Role of Prosecutors. This is included in the National Prosecuting Authority Act (No. 32 of 1998).

This act states that while performing their duties, prosecutors have to “protect the public interest, act with objectivity, take proper account of the position of the suspect and the victim, and pay attention to all relevant circumstances, irrespective of whether they are to the advantage or disadvantage of the suspect” (Gallinetti, 2007: 218).
While considering the important role that has to be played by state prosecutors and attorneys, it is essential to bear in mind that their training does not include the vital area of human, behavioural and social sciences. As a result of this, and when dealing with sexual abuse cases, they should consult with professionals who have expert knowledge in this area, such as psychologists, social workers and/or members of the medical profession (September, 2007: 320; Scheepers, 2006: 151).

For them to make informed decisions regarding the cases, they need to take into consideration the following:

- the behaviour of the sexually abused child;
- the possible long-term effects of sexual abuse on a child;
- the behaviour and sexual preferences of the perpetrator;
- the healing process that takes place in the child;
- the healing process of the perpetrator; and
- the alleged injuries suffered as a result of having been abused (Scheepers, 2006: 151).

All facets of the social development of the sexually abused child can have an influence on his school life and academic performance.

5.5 THEME THREE: THE SCHOOL LIFE EXPERIENCES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SEXUALLY ABUSED CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Children who are being sexually violated often lose interest in many of their daily activities, including the drive to succeed in school activities, both in the classroom and extramurally. It has been widely documented that the academic performance of a young victim of sexual abuse, generally deteriorates as time passes and the abuse continues. This is often accompanied by a refusal to attend school (Scheepers, 2006: 153; Spies, 2006: 11; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 163; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 89).
5.5.1 Academic

In this regard participants referred to factors which had influenced their academic performance. A drop in the standard of academic performance and attention fluctuations in a child are indicators that something is wrong and that the child is experiencing some form of problem or trauma (Barker & Hodes, 2007:39). Poor academic performance could be an indicator of a barrier to learning that may be of an educational nature or of an emotional/psychological nature.

If the cause is psychological in nature, there is a strong probability that the child is being abused in some way. Of the participants in this study, 63% mentioned that they had experienced severe difficulties at school after the onset of their abuse. Some of them managed to source old school reports that indicated this drop in academic standards:

*When I finished school it was a relief, as I constantly battled and never liked school, as it was depressing to feel so stupid.*
*Report cards from those years still spoke of my ‘shyness’ and ‘lack of confidence’.*

... *is capable of doing good work, but lacks confidence. As a result her work is erratic.*
*I got so anxious about everything. My school report reflects this.*

*In Std 4 (Gr 6), we had to knit a jersey and sew a cushion. Neither of mine were completed.*

They also elaborated on the role and influence of the principal and teachers in helping them. Some reflected on their boarding school experiences and their own conduct and behaviour.

The experiences that children have at school, in some way, impact on their ability to perform optimally. Just as a positive experience can encourage and motivate a child to work to his best ability and cope well, so too can a
traumatic experience hamper the ability of the child to master the content taught in the classroom. This in turn can create various barriers to learning, such as fluctuation of attention, resulting in the child not concentrating effectively.

5.5.4.1 Poor performance

Past research has found that there is undoubtedly a strong link between poor academic performances as a direct result of being exposed to child sexual abuse. The education of the child is adversely affected by the abuse and disrupted to the point where the child is unable to focus his attention in school effectively enough in order to cope with the educational demands made of him. (De Witt, 2009: 328 & 336; Bezuidenhout, 2008: 63; Louw & Louw, 2007: 221; Louw, Duncan, Richter & Louw, 2007: 364; Prinsloo, 2007: 36; Spies, 2007: 11; American Psychological Association, 2001: 1; Lewis, 1999: 67; Mullen & Fleming, 1998: 6; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 180; Lloyd & Hall, 1993: 89; AACAP, 2004 No.5).

The secret nature of sexual abuse and the accompanying threats, influence most other areas of the child’s life, including their experiences at school. One participant in particular, was under the impression that if she were to look a teacher in the eye, they would immediately know that she was being abused. What is interesting is that she also thought that she would be punished for the abuse, even though it wasn’t her fault.

Her avoidance of participating in class is further evidence of withdrawal in an attempt not to attract further attention, especially from male teachers.

*In the classroom, I never voiced a question or offered an answer. Oral presentations were a living hell. In the presence of male teachers who were domineering or vindictive by nature ... I believed if they caught my eye, they would instantly know my secret and grab any opportunity to punish me for it.*
Another participant perceived herself as not being clever, and as a result she experienced school as “no fun”. In addition to this perception, is the further damage that is done to the self-esteem of the child: *I wasn’t a very clever girl … school was definitely no fun.*

Victims of abuse seldom see themselves as being worthy of anything (Louw, *et al.*, 2007: 364). One participant indicated that whenever a teacher liked her and tried to help her by boosting her confidence in terms of good work, she would simply stop working. She had developed the perception that she was not capable of doing something commendable, and avoided drawing attention to herself through good work.

*I battled with Maths, my teacher seemed to like me, and was always helping me. She was a wonderful person, someone really special. But - she seemed to like me. So I stopped trying hard in Maths. My English teacher liked my way of writing compositions, and would read them out to the class, so I stopped striving to write acceptable work.*

A vast literature study was conducted and there is global evidence that being sexually abused as a child, has a profound effect on, not only the ability of children to perform academically, but it also impacts on their academic achievement (De Witt, 2009: 333; Killian & Brakarsh, 2007: 368; Louw, *et al.*, 2007: 364; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 174).

*I had to repeat grade eleven – I did not fail, but did so poorly that my parents and I knew that those grades would be useless for university entrance!*

*I don’t know how I passed that year but I know that grade 7 wasn’t much better … my last years at primary school, I feel like I was in a daze of sorts and … I realize how much work I didn’t do. I don’t even remember how I spent my days at school, but Lord knows, I certainly didn’t spend them doing any work.*

*… my marks dropped to 50% and so my schooling matched my moods, up and down!*
I was a mid-stream pupil and did not feature well in class. I really battled to finish anything.

Every day for nine years I wondered who knew and who didn’t, imagining all sorts of unspoken recriminations and criticism. Had I applied as much thought and emotional energy to my studies, I would no doubt have aced matric.

In high school I found it very difficult to sit and study. I used to get all edgy and uncertain of myself.

I just couldn’t study, and even in the class, I was always in trouble because I just used to disappear into a daydream... it was as if my mind wasn’t focused.

I never did well at school, but always failed. I was also never popular at school, as I think that I did not understand what was going on with myself.

I was neglecting my schoolwork. I hated school. I had poor marks.

I definitely struggled in class, because I would sit in the back and … I started falling behind.

My marks were poor to say the least. I stopped working completely and failed Std. 9 (Gr 11).

5.5.1.2 High achiever

Not every child who is sexually abused will experience academic problems at school. There are children who focus their attention on school activities, and as a result, become high achievers. Romans, Martin and Mullen (1997: 327-338) reported that a victim is less likely to experience long-term problems if he is supported by his mother, experiences positive reinforcement from his peers, and achieves success at school. They also mention that these factors can contribute greatly to building positive self-esteem. In this regard participants had the following to say:

I had good marks at school and achieved well in just about everything I attempted. I hope you also identify those terrified souls hiding behind achievements.
My grades improved drastically; so much so that I ended up receiving academic colours for matric (grade 12) and being accepted into university.

5.5.1.3 Extramural activities

Success on the sports field or in cultural activities can also play an important part in building up the self-image of a child who has experienced a constant breakdown in this developmental area. Success will imply recognition for something that the child is able to do well. This is often the only acknowledgement, recognition and positive attention that the child may receive. Some of the participants had also had such experiences:

I played netball from Std. 1 (Gr 3) to Std. 5 (Gr 7) … I was the captain every year. In Std. 5 we were in the newspaper for being unbeaten in that particular year.

I enjoyed swimming galas and performed relatively well with no training … I think of the wasted potential. All I needed at the time was for someone to show an interest in me, guidance and encouragement.

In contrast to these positive experiences, there are cases where the child withdraws from certain extramural activities, because the activity or the venue where the activity took place was a reminder of the heinous crime committed against him: “(name) was a good hockey player and played for the 2nd team and sometimes the 1st. Slowly (name) started making excuses that she didn’t feel well, eventually giving up hockey. When I (the mother) questioned her about this, all she said was that ‘This is where the camp was held and I’m never playing on this field’.

5.5.1.4 Tertiary education

One of the participants was a qualified medical doctor, who despite her academic achievements on tertiary level, was still haunted by her abusive past as a child. Another participant was a qualified teacher, but admitted that studying is made difficult as a result of her ability to remember.
I am a medical doctor in the process of becoming a specialist. Even though I should be proud of what I’ve achieved in my life, I often feel that everything has been tainted by my abusive experiences.

I managed to study and qualify as a teacher, but it was not easy, as I have a poor memory.

Tertiary institution was attempted by another participant but he was unable to focus, and this was a barrier to learning that he had experienced since childhood: “I tried to study at varsity [sic], but once again could never focus and I never finished any courses that I did”.

For some participants, the long-term impact of not having completed some form of tertiary education was a cause for regret. One mother in particular, stated that survival skills were the only thing that she was able to pass on to her children. I believe that this was because her childhood was focused on coping with and surviving the danger of sexual abuse: I felt sad that I had never studied further, as I having (nothing), no skills to teach my children, no gifts or talents to pass on to them. I can only teach them how to survive. I can only try and equip them for danger.

Another participant indicated that she felt her ability to have dealt with her abusive past was more important to her than any academic acknowledgement she may have received. Reaching a stage of peace and being comfortable with the person one has become, is an essential part in the healing process for survivors of child sexual abuse: Achievements and accolades have merely gathered dust in a drawer, while my only true success has been finding peace within my soul, learning to feel comfortable in my own skin, making friends with the skeletons in my closet.

5.5.5 The influence of teachers

There are an untold number of instances in which teachers have positively influenced the lives of the children in their classes. It would appear that the younger children are, the more important the role of the teacher is in their
world (Pretorius, 1998). A teacher with experience who shows empathy, understanding and compassion towards her learners and has their best interests at heart will generally be alert enough to detect any changes in the behavioural patterns of any of the children in the class. It is this awareness and astute observation of children that lead to the identification of children who are possibly being abused, sexually or otherwise:

In the interim, Mrs (teacher) had called me in and said that there were a few things that she needed to speak to me about. (Daughter) was not wearing school panties but shorts and would not sit crossed leg on the mat. I explained to her what had happened and that (daughter) felt that she had encouraged the person at the camp as she was wearing panties and a skirt, maybe she should have been wearing shorts. Through all this she (the teacher) picked up the obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

(Mother of abused daughter as explained on p. 149 in Chapter 3 of this study)

5.5.2.1 Negative experiences of teachers

Educators are often unaware of the impact they have on the lives of the young learners in their care. Children often experience a lack of empathy, understanding, awareness and care from teachers, as some of the participants had also experienced:

Pathetic little man (music teacher). I figure most people see him that way. But when I see him, I see a giant penis. The only difference between the others and (music teacher) is that he is a giant penis once suspended for fiddling with little boys.

I felt that the teacher … was interested but … I was never sure of the level of commitment. I think trust was the real issue at hand.

I think that if the teacher had asked me a direct question (are you being sexually abused?) it would have made it easier for me to talk to her, but I also realize that she could not ask me just in case it was not true and that would have meant trouble for her.
It was in mid-1997 when I was in grade 5 that I eventually told my class teacher the story. That's when it all started to come apart. Once I'd told the teacher, she went on to tell the guidance counsellor, who then felt obliged to tell my parents.

I also remember getting hidings for incomplete work ... We had a science and maths teacher, Mr (name) who would give us “clobber tests”, which meant if you did not get an 80% aggregate for the test you got 2 or 3 cuts, depending on his mood.

My increasing unhappiness and hopelessness eventually led me to the school counsellor who, after one session, must have decided that I was too much to handle, so sent me [sic] to the school psychologist – who broke my confidence by confessing some private conversations between her and me to my parents.

I had a teacher. A woman teacher. To my mind, when I think back, she was … emotional bully. She was sick. She knelt in front of me and started caressing my genital area.

He (teacher) would take us out to Settlers’ Dam for camping and sailing at weekends and encourage us to take our clothes off and run around and swim naked. I really hated Maths and Science, because of him!

School days were hard and long. And all the while no-one knew my secret. No-one ever asked, especially those teachers.

I have always been an overweight child. The one my teacher would call “fat ass”.

5.5.2.2 Ignoring signs and a lack of interest

McGregor (1999: 79) stated that the results of the survey he had conducted with primary school teachers in Port Elizabeth indicated that 17% were of the opinion that boys are seldom victims of sexual abuse. This belief by some teachers will sadly place the boys in their classes at high risk of not receiving the necessary help from the school, if they were to be abused. A total of 34% of the teachers in McGregor’s study indicated that they were “not very confident” in terms of knowing what to do if a pupil were to disclose sexual abuse to them.
According to a participant, the teachers didn’t show interest: “I had no motivation for most of my classes. If I was acknowledged by a teacher … I may have felt more motivated to be attentive”.

5.5.2.3 Lack of awareness

Despite the teachers being in contact with the children virtually on a daily basis, their lack of awareness and knowledge of the identifying signs was the cause of many abused children not receiving the help they needed. Children may not disclose the information verbally or in a direct manner, but there may be other subtle clues as to what is happening. An example of this is the feedback from one participant who had written an essay and included some of her experiences, but despite the teacher making an attempt to help her to talk about it, this teacher had made no further effort to provide the necessary counselling.

As a part of an Afrikaans essay exam paper, I wrote down some of my experiences. The teacher … tried for a few months to get me to talk about it. She never brought it under my parents’ attention and I believe another opportunity to get help was lost.

Children may withdraw from active participation in class because they feel that by asking or answering questions during a lesson, they are attracting even more attention to themselves. One of the participants experienced two extremes of attention from teachers. She was labelled as both a good, quiet child, and a child who did not pay attention. Already confused by the abuse and struggling with emotional turmoil, these feelings are further fuelled by the teacher’s lack of awareness and understanding.

Teachers either commended me for being a “good, quiet worker” or berated me for not paying attention, but none ever knew the torment behind my silence.

It was a real shambles. I mean for a school like (name), but to a degree I blame the teachers too. They should have noticed, but they didn’t have the insight.
Perhaps the problem is often that teachers assume that the child is experiencing one particular problem, without actually recommending the necessary assessment to determine whether this assumption is correct. It is only by process of elimination that one can accurately determine the cause of a child’s problems in class: One teacher even assumed I was hard of hearing and placed me in the front of the class, which left me feeling more vulnerable and conspicuous than ever!

5.5.6 Boarding school experiences

For some children who had attended boarding school, the experience was positive. They saw this move as an escape from the abusive home situation. For others, it was where their nightmare of abuse had begun.

5.5.3.1 Difficult to adjust

Some of the participants found that moving into a hostel as a boarder brought a whole new set of problems with which to deal. As many as 42% of the participants had experienced problems adjusting to life in a hostel environment when sent to boarding school. Not one of these participants had been happy in the hostel; and 11% of the male participants had been sexually abused for the first time while at boarding school.

I was molested when I was about 7 years old. I was in boarding school and so were the perpetrators. I had grown up without a dad, so I longed for the attention of older males.

I was in a house called (name), which had around 40 children ranging from 6 to 13, and there was lots of sexual experimenting at night. Boys would climb into each others beds and masturbate each other and I recall this happened twice with me.

For whatever reason the participants had been sent to live in a hostel, boarding school had exacerbated their already-fragile emotional and psychological state. Most of them had struggled to adapt to life in a hostel and
many of them had missed their home life. Some participants experienced separation anxiety as a result of the move away from home. This implied that they would rather have stayed in the home, possibly where the abuse was being perpetrated, than be in strange and unfamiliar surroundings (Lewis, 1999: 118).

*Boarding school for me is a blur of emotionally laden, unhealthy, lesbian relationships, self-mutilation, isolation, heavy drinking and smoking and absolutely terrible grades – I was only fourteen years old.*

*I started boarding school in 1980. I was desperately unhappy. My marks plummeted. I begged my mother to take me back home. No go.*

*I remember struggling to adapt to boarding school and hated being separated from my mother but did not know why. I had to go to boarding school, sad to say, I didn't cope well. It was traumatic for me to be away from home.*

5.5.3.2 Freedom from abuse

A minority of 11% of the participants felt that moving into the hostel and away from home, had freed them from their abusive environments. Being relieved, while being away from home - yet crying daily - implied that this participant could also have been confused by being free of the abuse, yet was clearly missing the familiarity of the home environment.

*Then I went to boarding school, free from the abuse.*

*I went to boarding school when I was ten or eleven - this was my saving grace from my brothers and my mother. Yet I cried every night for the first year.*

*I was sent to a boarding school. I was blissfully happy.*
5.5.7 Conduct and disposition

Many young victims of sexual abuse manifest their trauma in ways that portray a change in their conduct and disposition. The following factors were mentioned by the participants in this study.

5.5.4.1 Secrecy and lies

The secretive nature of sexual abuse has a negative impact on a young victim’s behaviour. They have to lie about being abused in order to keep their secret, and as a result, it often becomes easier to start lying about the other issues in life as well. Once they realise that they have the ability to keep secrets, some victims continue to tell lies, either to attract attention, or to keep them from getting into trouble.

I guess I always knew what had happened to me, but just put it out of my mind as much as I possibly could.

When my daughter turned 4-years old, so many memories came flooding back.

It … was always quick, so no one would find out and every time I was told “Don’t tell anyone, it’s our little secret”.

Secrets are just not allowed in our household, as I know just how much damage a secret can cause.

And all the while no-one knew my secret.

5.5.4.2 Lack of trust

The underhanded, deceitful nature of sexual abuse destroys the young child’s trust in others. Even if help is offered in some way, the victim often rejects it because of the deep level of distrust they have developed. This is a coping mechanism that is used to protect them from further hurt and violation.

I had one teacher … that always used to speak to me, telling me that I had the potential, that I could become a leader and
a much better student. I just could not believe him, because by that time I had lost all faith in mankind.

I never told any adults about my experiences until I was an adult myself.

Looking back … I am also beginning to realize the significant role the sexual abuse played in my insecurities and fears.

5.5.4.5 Guilt and self-blame

A very cruel deception used by the perpetrator, is to manipulate the victim into believing that the abuse is his (the victim’s) fault. The degree of self-blame experienced by victims is enormous and it is often only upon reaching adulthood, that they begin to understand and accept that they were not to blame for what had happened to them. Feelings of guilt and self-blame are common amongst both child and adult victims (Lyon, 2002: 118; Finkelhor & Browne, 1985).

Growing up my life was pretty much shrouded in fear. I always felt guilty about what I’d done and was scared that someone would find out.

I was told by him that if my parents ever found out that they would be so angry and disappointed with me.

The only one to blame for keeping such a huge secret for so long is myself!

5.5.4.6 Bullying and being bullied

In some cases, the abused child begins to display unacceptable social behaviours, such as bullying. This display of anger and lashing out is often the only way that he is able express the confusion, emotion and anger that he is trying to cope with on a daily basis. Bullying and fighting are to be found amongst both genders.
There were physical fights with other girls, instigated by me.

No-one was allowed to touch me, especially boys. I’ll get so angry when they did, I’d hit them or wish them dead.

I was the one who befriended the little girl in class who had problems, who would go to the toilet with her, who would lash out when others teased her.

5.5.4.5 Refusal to learn and work

For some abused children, the desire to achieve and learn at school has been destroyed. At such a young age, they have been exposed to so much trauma and possible violence, that focusing on school, is often their last consideration. Often they see no point in trying because they have lost faith in their own ability: I used to forget my school books or sports kit at home, not attend music lessons, fail tests and show generally bad behaviour.

5.5.4.6 Rebelliousness

Another form of poor behaviour in children that may be a manifestation of being sexually abused is becoming rebellious. They may start to reject all forms of authority and deliberately cause problems in the classroom or at home:

I rebelled to the extent that I started saying that I would rather go to boarding school...

On the one hand there was a relentless rebellion against social norms, as if to prove I didn’t need acceptance of any kind, and on the other, a desperate longing to find some sense of security and belonging.

I started to drink and smoke. I would sneak beers from the fridge.
5.5.4.7 Class disruption

Disruption of classes is one way of attracting attention. Children who are receiving incorrect attention, or not receiving any attention in their home environment, may eventually begin to disrupt their classes by their untoward behaviour. For them, any attention was better than none at all.

*I don’t know how those teachers put up with me. I disrupted the class, from the time I came in, to the time I got out.*

*I was often sent out of the class, because of disrupting it.*

5.5.4.8 Nightmares

Nightmares are defined as “frightening, anxiety-producing dreams” (Penguin, 2001: 467). A dream is defined as “imagery during sleep … related to rapid-eye-movement (REM) sleep” (Penguin, 2001: 216). When considering these two definitions, one can then deduce from this that the nightmares a victim of sexual abuse will experience, are frightening dreams that create images of the abuse and cause anxiety. Victims of abuse often experience disturbances in their sleep patterns (Lloyd & Hall, 1993: 75).

Barker and Hodes, (2007: 39) mention that children may develop complex coping mechanisms when trying to deal with their abuse. As a result of this, they may display no outward symptoms of the abuse. In this study, 26% of the participants mentioned that they had experienced nightmares as a result of their sexual abuse.

*... caused me to have the nightmares and flashbacks.*

*I would wake up in the middle of the night in tears. When I had nightmares, my grandparents would get to me ...*
5.5.4.9 Truancy

Running away from home or school, may seem to be the answer for some young abuse victims. The desperation to remove themselves from their abusive environment is so strong, that they do not consider the implications of their actions (Barker & Hodes, 2007: 39; Spies, 2006: 10). It is possible that they convince friends, who are possibly not victims of abuse, to go with them. As many as 21% of the participants indicated that they had attempted to run away or “bunk” school at some point in time during the period of their abuse.

I persuaded a friend to run away from boarding school with me. We hitch-hiked to Cape Town. Our plan was to get work there.

In Std 1 (Gr3), I persuaded a couple of friends to leave class and walk home with me. But we were spotted before we left the school grounds. In Std. 2 (Gr4), I again persuaded a couple of friends to leave school. This time we were going to the agricultural show, but were spotted at the railway station.

I was bunking out at night to visit my girlfriend, drinking and generally being troublesome.

In Std. 7 (Gr 9) I started bunking school. I get migraines [sic], started in Sub A (Gr 1) already. I would get a genuine migraine, but would then drag it on for a couple of days. I was no longer in the top 6 in class.

Deliberately missing school has implications for being able to manage during times of assessment. One participant indicated that the fear of failure was terrifying, but because of missing lessons and making little or no effort in class, the only option was to be dishonest and cheat during exams.

The bunking got worse. I wasn’t learning for exams, but was terrified of failing, so started cheating.

5.5.4.10 Lack of respect

Disrespect for teachers and adults in general, is generally not accepted in society. It is possible that this lack of respect for adults can be combined with
the lack of trust that the young victim develops over a period of time. How can one respect adults, if you can’t trust them? “I used to sit there in class mimicking and he (teacher) would call me up, flog me and I would just say “thank you” and go and sit back. You could hit me … by then I had been hit so often that you couldn’t hit me to hurt me”.

Child victims of sexual abuse may manifest the abuse in a variety of ways, apart from verbal disclosure. Careful observation of the behaviour of children may result in identifying some form of behavioural change. **Table 5.8** provides an overview of the behavioural tendencies, as discussed above.

**Table 5.8 Behavioural tendencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural Tendency</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secrecy, lies</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of trust</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt, self-blame</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying and fighting</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal to learn</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebelliousness</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive in class</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightmares</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of respect</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the factors discussed above can have an influence on the child’s school life experiences and academic performance.
5.6 THEME FOUR: ADULT SURVIVOR ADVICE TO YOUNG VICTIMS

Young victims of sexual abuse are so overwhelmed by their experiences that they simply do not know what to do about their situation. The threats made by the perpetrator make the child feel more vulnerable, guilty, afraid, confused and angry. The participants in this study volunteered advice and offered suggestions to the young victims. Many of the participants indicated that they wished they had disclosed their abuse much earlier in order to deal with it and continue with life, uninhibited by such memories.

5.6.1 Suggestions from survivors

In order to achieve optimally at school, children require effective guidance, support, encouragement and the channelling of their potential. This is often very difficult for a young abuse victim to follow, despite all good intentions from the teacher. The participants indicated some advice for the young victims to follow.

5.6.1.1 What the child victim can do

The participants are aware of the fact that child sexual abuse is rife. They expressed some suggestions to help other young victims.

The participants in this research study have suggested disclosure and stressed the importance of asking for help and speaking out at an early age. Many of them expressed their regret at not having done so themselves. They are of the opinion that had they disclosed the abuse earlier in their lives, their journey to adulthood could have been less traumatic. It is interesting to note that the general consensus was for the child to tell someone and to continue telling people, until one of them takes some form of action to protect the child against the perpetrator, irrespective of who that may be: “… no one has the right to abuse you. Ask for help, till someone stops the perpetrator”.

And furthermore:
Speak immediately; you are not at fault. Someone WILL believe you. It takes an immense amount of courage to speak up ... but what is going on is wrong, just because it is your dad, brother, uncle, family friend does not mean it is right. They are wrong.

... since children spend more time at school than at home, why not tell a teacher ... The more people they tell, the better the chance of saving a life. Chances are they're not the only ones being hurt or violated.

The good news is that there is always someone out there who can be trusted. Not all people are bad.

The participants also offered advice on practical actions in the case of sexual abuse:

Shout ‘no’ to the perpetrator. Keep shouting ‘no’. Run. Hide. If you can’t get away and bad things happen, tell. Tell anyone who will listen to you. Keep on telling until someone believes you and does something about it. Remember details if you can. Times, days, what was said, body markings, anything that will make you believable in a courtroom.

Literature supports the importance of encouraging young victims to speak out as soon as possible after having been sexually abused (Barker & Hodes, 2007: 35; Brookes & Higson-Smith, 2007: 121; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: xv).

5.6.1.2 How to support child victims

Bezuidenhout (2008: 177) discusses how difficult it is for a victim to cope after being violated if there is a lack of support from society. Acknowledgement of the incident(s), emotional and practical support and confirmation that it was not the victim’s fault, are essential factors that need to be enforced after the rape/abuse (Gomes-Schwartz, et al., 1990: 68).

Hall and Lloyd (1993: 24) mention the myth that the child is lying about having been sexually abused and that the allegation made is the result of a vivid imagination during fantasy play. The reality is that children do not have sufficient sexual knowledge or awareness of sexual activities for them to lie
about having been abused. McGregor (1999: 85) states that if a child had disclosed to a teacher who did not believe the allegation, it could be potentially dangerous for that child. There is also no reason for them to fabricate this abuse (Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 27).

The participants of this study gave their own opinions, according to their personal experiences, as to how young victims of child sexual abuse can be supported by those around them. An important factor mentioned was to believe the child when the initial disclosure is made. This helps to ease the feelings of guilt experienced by the child and there is also a lesser chance that the child will indulge in self-harm through the various stages of healing (Spies, 2006: 52).

**BELIEVE a child at all times. How far-fetched his or her story may be. Always give them the benefit of the doubt. Tell them everyday, every hour, every minute that you believe them.**

**They need to feel safe and believed at all times.**

**Teacher(s) have a unique position in their students’ lives and therefore have the awesome ability and responsibility to be powerful voices for them.**

**As for teachers, educating children ... not just about giving them lessons to do and marking exam papers. While these kids are in your care, you become the parent, whether you like it or not. Teaching them about life becomes your responsibility. Teaching them to say “NO” is vital.**

**I think teachers, family members, adults should “stick their necks out and take a chance” after all you must be seeing the signs.**

The participants also stipulated the necessity to re-assure the child that the abuse was not their fault or because of something they had done:

**... the act was wrong and that they are not wrong, and that they are loved, beautiful and precious and that there is hope for a future. And that it is theirs for the taking. You never did anything to make this happen to you. Love yourself, even when nobody else will.**
Children are generally taught to be obedient to adults, display good manners and show a degree of respect for their elders. This is often used by the perpetrator to gain the confidence of the child and to ensure the secret of his actions. It was noted that in some of the narratives that the participants had mentioned the fact that children should be taught the difference between respect and abuse – or an imbalance of power.

In doing this, children may be able to identify their own power when they are faced by a possible abusive situation (Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 164).

Children should be taught that they have the power to change their situation and that their situation is not unique, they are not alone.

You will not be a child forever, one day you will be big and adult.

It is essential to create an awareness of the importance of disclosure and the fact that some secrets are very wrong. Children should be guided to tell another adult if they are abused and should no action be taken to stop the abuse, they then need to tell someone else. It is important for children to be protected from the caregivers who betray them by the abuse of their power as adults (Matlin, 2000: 490).

Participants mentioned the pivotal role that parents, educators and religious ministers need to play in this regard. Lowenthal (1996: 21) confirms the importance of vigilance on the part of the teacher in noticing any signs of abuse.

If I could help any little boy or girl out there, I would start with parents and then educators, pastors and any ear that listens, and tell them.

5.7 Conclusion

This research study has requested a response from the participants that was very personal in nature. It has focused on the experiences, emotions and the
impact of child sexual abuse on their lives, both as children and as adult survivors. The brutal honesty and openness with which the participants have responded are reflected in the quotes from their narratives, used in this chapter. The enormous short-term and long-term impacts of child sexual abuse on the school life and academic performance of learners have been confirmed by the qualitative research findings presented in this chapter.

The themes, categories and sub-categories that emerged, have all been thoroughly discussed. These themes were then substantiated by means of reference to the relevant literature sources. Suitable verbatim quotations from the participating parents were presented according to these themes, categories and sub-categories. These findings were then converted to quantitative data and then presented in the tables and feedback throughout the chapter.

Chapter Six will provide details regarding the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of this study, as well as some suggestions for further research.

I don’t look at my past as a “cross to bear”, or a story to be ashamed of, but rather as the experiences that moulded me into the woman I am today, a proud beautiful, strong woman, free of her past and breathless for her future.

(Participant, 2009)

If it is true that a people’s wealth is in its children, then South Africa is bitterly, tragically poor. If it is true that a nation’s future is in its children we have no future and deserve none.

(Percy Qobosa, 1986)
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS,
LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to investigate, through a mixed methods research approach, the impact of child sexual abuse on the school life and academic performance of learners. From the information obtained during the study, recommendations for educators in terms of how to identify, manage and support learners in their classes, who are victims of child sexual abuse, will be formulated and offered in this chapter.

Chapter 1 covered the background to the study, the problem statement, the research aims, the clarification of concepts, the research methodology and research design. Chapter 2 detailed the nature, as well as the long-term and short-term effects of child sexual abuse. Chapter 3 provided a detailed discussion on human development, learning, and the factors that influence school life and academic performance.

Chapter 4 presented a detailed account of the chosen research design and methodology. In Chapter 5 the most important qualitative and quantitative findings of the study were presented as themes, categories and sub-categories, sustained by direct quotations and a literature control. This final chapter, Chapter 6, consists of the conclusions and recommendations to educators deduced from the research findings, as well as the limitations of the study, and some suggestions for further research.

Despite the manifold global studies on child sexual abuse, researchers “still know too little, even about the basic facts surrounding the sexual abuse of young children” (Richter, Dawes & Higson-Smith, 2007: 452). In my own way, as the primary researcher for this particular study, I have attempted to make a small contribution to the understanding of child sexual abuse and how it
impacts on the lives of these young victims. The study has many limitations and there are several avenues that can be pursued for further research on this topic.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

6.2.1 Main conclusions

This study focused on the impact of child sexual abuse on the school life experiences and academic performance of learners. All the narratives constantly presented four themes. Sexual experiences and health have an influence on health and sexuality (Theme One). Sexual abuse has an influence on the social development of the child (Theme Two). Sexual abuse has an impact on school-related experiences and academic performances (Theme three). Participants as adult survivors of CSA provided advice to young victims in terms of what to do when one has been traumatised by sexual abuse (Theme Four).

6.2.2 Detailed conclusions and implications thereof

6.3.2.1 The nature of health, sexuality and sexual experiences (Sexual experiences have an influence on health and sexuality)

It is vitally important not only to understand what child sexual abuse is, but also to be able to identify it by understanding the typical appropriate and inappropriate behaviours of sexually abused children. That highlights the nature of sexual abuse, to answer secondary-research question one.

i) Onset

The onset age of sexual abuse is an important consideration when attempting to identify abuse and when offering support and help. The younger the child is when the abuse starts, the more difficult it becomes to
elicit disclosure from the child. There are many reasons for this, such as the young child not having adequate expressive vocabulary to explain what has happened, or the child does not understand sexual activities. Children who are sexually abused have been exposed to sexuality prematurely. This deprives them of the natural progression of sexual development and brings to them an awareness of sexual experiences beyond their years.

ii) Gender

Children from both genders are vulnerable to sexual victimisation. Boys and girls alike fall prey to sexual predators. These can be of either gender. There appears to be a greater tendency amongst boys not to disclose their abuse and this is generally linked to society’s attitude that boys should be able to protect themselves. The inability of a child to protect himself from the perpetrator is directly linked to the advantage of physical strength that the perpetrator has over the child.

iii) Understanding the experience

Young children who are sexually abused do not understand what is happening to them. They have not yet reached a cognitive level or maturity where they are able to process and express what has happened. This causes a great deal of confusion and the child may withdraw from further social interaction. Depending on the age of the child, he may perceive himself to be naughty and that the abuse was his fault. This will depend on whether or not the offender has threatened the child in any way, as well as on the nature of these threats.

Disclosure of sexual abuse takes an enormous amount of courage, because the victim has no way of knowing what the response of the person to whom he discloses will be. Prior to the actual disclosure, the victim has to feel that he can trust the person. Lack of acknowledgement
from the person to whom the disclosure is made causes further emotional turmoil for the victim and he may experience feelings of re-victimization.

**Threats** made by the perpetrator in an attempt to keep the abuse a secret are often of such a nature that the young victim fears for his life and the safety of his family. Offenders also make use of belittling the victim and manipulating him into feeling that the abuse is his fault and that if he decides to tell anyone, he will not be believed. Offenders use this modus operandi to make the child feel that he will be an embarrassment to his parents if he discloses the abuse.

The sexually abused child experiences a **loss of innocence** as a direct result of his premature exposure to sexual experiences. This loss of innocence disrupts the normal emotional, psychological and physical development of the child. Such losses during childhood hamper the child’s effective development and his potential to reach full self-actualization.

iv) **The perpetrator**

**Perpetrators** come from all walks of life and there is virtually no manner of identifying them by mere observation. As a result, children are often not believed when they disclose the abuse because society has preconceived ideas as to who can and who cannot be a sexual offender. Teachers, ministers of religion, policemen, social workers, doctors and the like generally fall outside this perception.

This often hampers the process of disclosure and the journey of healing. In this research study, most of the participants indicated that they had been abused by a father, uncle, mother or a family friend. Each of these perpetrators represents people from different social standings and vocations.

The relationship that the victim has with the perpetrator prior to being sexually abused plays an important role in the way in which the young victim will react and whether or not the abuse will be disclosed. It has been
found that if the perpetrator is a family member, such as the father, the impact of the abuse is far greater than if the perpetrator were a stranger. This also appears to be the case when the perpetrator is a family friend. Often the child decides not to disclose the abuse because of concern for the relationship the family has with the offender. The reason for this is that the child has developed a relationship of trust with the perpetrator and this trust is destroyed when the child is violated. This does not by any means imply that abuse by a stranger causes any less emotional damage.

v) Types of sexual abuse

There are many different types of sexual abuse, ranging from non-contact to full penetration. The abuse may also vary from being gentle in nature, thereby appearing seemingly normal, to being physically violent and invasive. The nature of the abuse, the length of time that the abuse has continued, the identity of the perpetrator and the age of the child, all play a vital role in the impact thereof. Three of the many forms of sexual abuse found in this study are:

- Touching;
- Exhibitionism; and
- Penetration and objects.

vi) Traumatic experience and emotional impact

Rape, incest, molestation are all examples of traumatic experiences that have an emotional impact on the victim. This impact can be either short-term or long-term, but in most cases the victim experiences both. This results in the abuse impacting on the lives of victims and survivors alike - throughout childhood and well into adulthood. Various emotional states accompany the trauma that the victims live through.

vii) Personality profile of victim/survivor

The personality of a victim of sexual abuse undergo a certain degree of change as a result of the trauma and the violation. This contributes to the
attitude and perspective that the survivor will eventually develop as time moves on. The first change to take place is normally that of trust. The child’s trust has been broken by a person whom he loves and from whom he expected protection and care. The victim forms this trait of distrust not only towards the offender, but generally to other adults as well. This is particularly true if one parent is the offender and the other is non-offending. The child cannot always understand why the non-offending parent has not made an effort to protect him. He is generally unaware that the non-offending parent may not know of the abuse.

Withdrawal from social interaction and becoming shy can be considered as a coping mechanism. For some victims, not having intimate friendships and relationships implies that they do not have to risk the chance of someone discovering their terrible secret. Avoidance of eye contact is particularly noticeable amongst victims and/or survivors of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse violates every part of one’s being. Not only does it have the ability to cause emotional problems of gargantuan proportions, it also shreds every bit of positive self-esteem and body image that the victim has.

The lack of confidence is reinforced by the threats made by the perpetrator and the negative feelings the victim develops towards himself. This spills over into every part of the lifeworld and influences areas, such as cognitive development and academic performance. The victim no longer believes that he is worth anything and he certainly doesn’t believe that he is capable of achieving anything.

The world of a sexually abused child is thrown into turmoil and he is out of control of his life. He is unable to stop the abuse, because of the physical power advantage the perpetrator has over him, as well as the verbal manipulation that he endures during the abuse. Some victims turn to the only area in their lives that they can control and that is becoming a perfectionist.
Everything needs to be orderly and well-organised and one may well find high achievers amongst this group of perfectionists. Abuse is accompanied by anger in varying degrees. This anger builds up and at some point in time it needs to be vented as a stress release. Some victims of abuse become rebellious and begin to reject all forms of authority over them. This rebellious behaviour can manifest at school, at home or in a social environment.

Escapism can take on many forms and it allows one to move away from reality into a world that is safe and less threatening. It is a means of coping that victims use and it can range from compulsive reading, to alcohol and drug abuse.

Depression is often associated with sexual abuse and brings along with it, irrational thoughts. Some victims reach a stage where they cannot see a way out of their depression and therefore thoughts of suicide may develop. Some attempts at suicide are successful and there are many that are not actual suicide attempts, but rather a form of self-mutilation. When cutting themselves, some victims focus their attention on the cutting action and the blood, rather than on the impact that the abuse is having on their lives.

viii) Disclosure

Non-disclosure of sexual abuse is a common characteristic amongst abuse victims. Revealing sexual abuse to a trusted person is never an easy step for a victim to take and it implies that there is a mutual relationship of trust between the two. There are as many reasons for non-disclosure as there are for the decision to disclose.

Many victims/survivors only disclose the abuse when they reach adulthood. They find that the emotional burden is very difficult to endure. A number of the participants indicated that if they had disclosed the abuse as a child and received the necessary intervention and help, they would not
have had to endure years of shame, guilt, anxiety and fear. These factors all contribute to the way in which the child views and experiences school-related activities.

ix) Health problems

Many health problems experienced by adult survivors and child victims alike are directly linked to their abusive life. The abuse results in a certain degree of stress and anxiety, which in turn can create specific health problems, such as depression. Various forms of escapism are found amongst abused children and adult survivors. Escapism can either take on a non-violent form, such as excessive reading, or it can be life-threatening in nature, such as self-mutilation.

Problems such as eating disorders can be associated with a form of escapism and there are survivors who indulge in binge-eating and/or suffer from bulimia. For some victims and survivors alike, a sedentary lifestyle and a general lack of interest in a healthy lifestyle, creates additional physical problems, such as obesity. Urinary-tract infections are another common factor amongst victims of sexual abuse. These infections cause much discomfort; and in the young child they compound the problem of not being able to focus on school tasks.

Other health-related problems include mental instability. A problem such as multiple personality disorder can be found amongst victims/survivors of sexual abuse as they take on other personalities in an effort to cope with the stress.

x) Religious testimonies

A strong faith is often the difference between being able to cope with trauma and not. A number of the participants indicated that either their belief in God and strong faith had helped them through their abuse, or that they found God and developed a strong faith as a result of their belief.
6.2.2.2 The influence of sexual abuse on the social development of the child and the adolescent

This theme highlights secondary research question two, regarding the manifestation of sexual abuse.

i) Relationships in the family

The family unit is the primary source of education for children. The ultimate responsibility for the guidance in the establishment of adequate social relationships lies with the parents.

The father plays a pivotal role in the family and he often underestimates his influence on the family unit. Children, particularly boys, need the guidance, love and support of their father figure. The father is historically considered to be the head of the house. Today, in many homes, even if the mother is contributing to the financial income of the family, the father still plays this role.

The mother continues to play the role of home-maker and she remains the “heart” of the family. Her sympathetic and loving role of nurturing, care and support is essential to both boys and girls in the family.

The parents need to work together to develop and maintain a family unit, in which the child/ren can feel protected, safe, loved and cared for. When these parental roles are disturbed and the relationship between the parents and the children is troubled, the security of the family unit is greatly compromised.

Problems in the marital relationship of the parents create additional tension within the home. Sometimes the parents become so self-absorbed because of their problems, that they forget the impact their problems are having on the child.
ii) Neglect

Parents have the responsibility to make sure that the basic needs of their children are met. For some of the survivors, the family dynamics created many problems that hampered their development and exacerbated the abuse. The various types of child-rearing styles that the participants experienced ranged from permissive to authoritarian.

Once abuse has been disclosed, the pathway to healing is not always easy. Lack of support from those to whom the child discloses has an enormous impact on the child. The child may feel that he/she deserved the abuse and if he/she is not believed, yet another relationship of trust with an adult has been destroyed.

Ignoring the signs of abuse is tantamount to being guilty by association; and this can cause further confusion within the child. If the abuse is being carried out by a parent, the child may find the lack of support and understanding from the non-abusive parent frightening or it may even elicit feelings of anger from the child.

iii) Relationships with others

In any relationship the issue of trust is essential. When this trust is broken by the adult in a relationship between adult and child, the child generally develops an attitude of distrust of all those around him. The relationships a child has with extended family members such as grandparents, may provide solace and a place of safety amidst the confusion and insecurities of abuse. Other family members such as aunts and uncles could also provide this haven for victims, provided that they are not the offender(s).

An abused child is never sure whether siblings are being abused as well, and more often than not, he will be too afraid to ask. He will not want to disclose his own abuse by asking questions, possibly as a result of the threats made by the offender. If the child is the youngest in the family, he may also be greatly influenced by older siblings. The influence can include
music, behaviour, substance abuse, rebelliousness or additional neglect and rejection.

There are also many instances where the siblings are compassionate and understanding and their reaction to knowledge of the abuse is one of horror, shock and anger.

Friends can play an important part in the lives of abuse victims. Often the child will develop a strong bond with a peer of the same age, even though he might not disclose the abuse to the friend. On the other hand, the victim might withdraw from social interaction and reject any attempts at friendship. Developing relationships and the maintenance thereof, depends on factors such as trust and a sense of belonging.

iv) Personal adult relationship of victim with spouse or partner

Adult relationships are complex and are made up of many different facets. If an adult is a survivor of child sexual abuse, the long-term impact may hamper an intimate relationship with a spouse or partner. The partner needs to have the essence, impact and background of the abuse explained to him. It would be unfair to expect him to cope with possible difficulties in the relationship that are the result of having been sexually abused. This is particularly true if he is not even aware of it.

Some victims are either afraid or too embarrassed to share their experience - in case the spouse or partner cannot cope with the disclosure and ends the relationship. This may cause further trauma related to having been abused and can worsen an already negative self-esteem.

On the other hand, disclosure may lead to the most wonderful expression of care, love and trust from the spouse or partner. This helps the victim to continue the journey of healing in order to rebuild a life based on honesty.
v) The justice system

Besides family and friends, many victims initiate a relationship with people who work in the legal profession. This is particularly important if the victim has disclosed the abuse, an investigation is pending and there is the possibility of a prosecution. The victim may feel that he can trust a policeman, a lawyer or a detective because of the nature of their jobs. He may feel that these professionals can provide the necessary protection and safety, as well as ensure that justice is served in terms of punishment for the perpetrator.

Therefore the well-documented fact that the present justice system in South Africa does not meet the needs of child victims of sexual abuse often causes additional trauma and re-victimisation. This causes a further impact on the distrust that the victims already have.

6.2.2.3 School-related experiences and academic performance (Sexual abuse has an impact on school-related experiences)

This theme also depicts the manifestation of sexual abuse (Secondary research question two), as well as the impact on the child’s school life and academic performance (secondary question four).

v) School-related activities

The ability of a child to perform well academically depends on many factors, such as a positive level of self-esteem, confidence, motivation, encouragement, the will to succeed and good role models. If a child is being sexually abused, his ability to function normally is hampered by the emotional and psychological impact of the abuse. In some cases, the abuse will result in a drastic negative change in the behaviour, attitude and academic performance of the child.

In other cases, the abuse will cause the child to excel in an attempt to focus on something other than the trauma. The child may become a perfectionist and use schoolwork as a means of escaping from reality.
They therefore hide their anguish, fear, hurt and distrust behind a façade of accolades and achievements.

Taking part in extramural activities is generally compulsory at most schools in South Africa. These activities can be classified as either of a sporting nature or of a more cultural nature. Irrespective of which one it is that the child participates in, being in an abusive environment will have some form of impact on the performance of the child. As with academic performance, it could either decline rapidly to the point where the child is no longer taking part, or it could result in the victim using it as a means of escaping the reality of the abuse.

Many victims and survivors of child sexual abuse move on from high school to tertiary education. Once again, the pattern of either achievement or lack thereof, occurs. Should the student stop studying without completing the course, there is the added risk of experiencing guilt, remorse and a feeling of failure again.

vi) Principal and teachers

Young children and adolescents who are being sexually abused experience different attitudes from teachers after they disclose what is happening in their lives. Many have a negative experience in terms of teachers actually teasing them about some issue, without making the effort to determine whether there is a reason behind the behaviour or action on the part of the abused learner.

It appears to be a common experience that young abuse victims feel signs of abuse are being ignored by teachers at both primary and high school levels. They are of the opinion that this reaction by teachers is generally as a result of a sheer lack of interest in the children, or as a result of a lack of awareness of the symptoms and the impact of the sexual abuse.
vii) Boarding school experiences

Boarding school brings with it an abundance of new experiences for children. For some children the horror of abuse starts when moving into a hostel. For others who are being sexually abused at home, moving into a hostel may provide a welcome break from the abuse. Many children find the initial move away from home a disruption and they need a period of adjustment to the new living environment, new rules and new room mates.

For some, although they are relieved to be away from an abusive home environment, they still long for the familiarity of the house and the people they have left behind.

viii) Conduct and disposition

Experiencing extreme trauma may result in a change of attitude and behavioural patterns in a child. This can manifest in a myriad of ways and is generally noticeable in the context of the classroom. Bad conduct and poor behaviour include disruptions in the classroom, truancy, refusal to make a contribution in class or to complete tasks given, lack of respect, rebelliousness, bullying, varying degrees of violence and withdrawal from interaction with peers and teachers.

Apart from the resulting backlog in work, such children lose the respect of their peers and the teachers. It is highly likely that they will be labelled as trouble-makers or problem children, without the teacher actually trying to determine whether there is an underlying cause for the child’s change in behaviour.

6.2.2.4 What the young victim can do

This theme reflects what adult survivors had to say to children regarding coping with sexual abuse (Secondary research question three).

The overwhelming majority of the participants indicated that their advice to a young child who is being sexually victimised, would be to speak out as soon
as possible. It is suggested that the child should tell as many adults as possible until someone takes notice and investigates the allegations.

6.2.2.5 Survivor advice to young victims

Adult survivors of child sexual abuse have moved through many trials and tribulations on their path of healing and self-acceptance. They have valuable advice to give to young victims that are experiencing and enduring what they did many years ago. Reaching out to young children and adolescents who are facing each day with heartache, hurt, confusion and anger, often encourages survivors to reach higher levels of healing than they had thought possible. Their encouragement, support and advice stems from an inner strength and determination that no-one apart from another survivor will understand. By sharing their experiences and encouraging young victims to say no and speak out, they are providing a voice to the silent cries of many children.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EDUCATORS REGARDING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

This section addresses secondary research question 5 regarding strategies to educators.

Some recommendations to educators are presented below, with specific reference to the various themes that were identified in Chapter 5. These are guidelines only, and it is strongly suggested that they be used in conjunction with the structures and policies that have been put into place by the Department of Education and the Department of Social Development, regarding the protection of children against child sexual abuse.
6.3.3 Health, sexuality and sexual experiences

6.3.3.1 Onset

The age at which a child is when initially exposed to sexual experiences, plays a vital role in how the child will disclose, manage and cope with life (Spies, 2006: 58; Freyd, 2002: 139; Matlin, 2000: 488).

- It is vitally important that educators of all children in all age groups, from play school to high school level, familiarise themselves with the basic facts concerning sexual abuse, such as recognising identifying signs, procedures to follow for mandatory reporting and how to support a learner who is sexually abused.

- It is essential that educators should be made aware that children are being sexually victimised from a very young age, increasingly as babies, and the younger the child, the less chance there is of a verbal disclosure. One of the reasons for this is that the child may not have the necessary vocabulary to express what has or is happening.

6.3.3.2 Understanding the experience

In addition to the fact that the child may not have sufficient expressive vocabulary to disclose the abuse, he may also be too young to understand what is happening to him. He is already confused by the behaviour of the trusted adult towards him and often knows instinctively that what is happening is wrong, but is unable to put a stop to it. Obviously the younger the child, the less able he is from a physical perspective to put up much of a struggle against the offender.

- It is advisable never to assume that children have a certain level of knowledge, especially regarding sex and sexuality. The age of the children must be taken into consideration when deciding what to say and how to bring the message across. The younger the child, the more simple the explanation has to be. It is unnecessary to overload the
children with age-inappropriate information; this may add to their confusion or expose them to issues that they were initially unaware of.

- Teachers need to ensure that when they speak to the children in their classes about abuse and the right the children have to say “No”. And, furthermore they should make use of language that is age-appropriate.

- It is important that teachers understand the nature and impact of the threats that are made by the offenders in order to keep the abuse a secret. Once the teachers are aware of how threats create fear within the abused child, they can develop a deeper comprehension of the severity of the circumstances and become better equipped to manage the situation. This could pave the way to initial disclosure for some child victims of abuse. It is crucial that the teacher should be aware of the possibility that the child could fear for his life or the lives of family members, as he sits in the class trying to focus on the daily academic tasks. There are so many different types of threats that can be made by the perpetrator, but they all have the same motive: secrecy.

- Perhaps teachers can discuss the issue of secrets as a general topic in class and distinguish between “good” secrets and “bad” secrets. “Bad” secrets normally make a person feel uncomfortable and something in one tells one that what is happening is wrong.

Adults assume that children maintain their natural innocence and that as they grow and mature, the innocence is gradually replaced with age-appropriate knowledge of life.

- It is necessary for teachers to be aware that when a child has been sexually violated, this natural innocence is destroyed. The child has been made aware of adult needs in an adult timeframe and has little or no understanding of the experience. The child needs to be re-assured that what has happened is not their fault. This requires compassion and empathy from the teacher. It is advisable for the teacher to do some
personal research into CSA and to use that knowledge to create a relationship of trust with the child.

- Teachers can source additional information from organisations such as Childline. They have readily available information on both child and adult level. When working with the sexually abused child, the teacher should always remain aware of the fact that the child has been exposed to sexual activity, and has therefore probably also learnt additional vocabulary from the offender. Sensitivity is vital when explaining to the child that not all children have the same knowledge of sexual activities, experiences and vocabulary as he does. It is important to explain that, although disclosure is absolutely essential to receive help, other children will probably not understand what he is trying to explain.

6.3.3.3 Perpetrator

As a rule at school and at home, children are taught about “stranger danger” and what to do when approached by someone they do not know. Amongst other things relating to strangers, they are taught never to climb into cars with strangers; never to accept sweets, food or beverages from strangers and to make a fuss, shout and kick if forced to go with a stranger. However, few teachers know that less than 20% of sexual victimisation against children is perpetrated by strangers.

According to the literature, in the majority of cases, sexual abuse is committed by a family member or a close friend of the family.

- Teachers can play a vital role in educating children and making them aware of the fact that even though they are little, they have a right to say “no” and to be protected from people who intend to do harm to them.
• All educators need to understand and accept that sexual offenders come from all walks of life, from colleagues, to ministers of religion; from parents, to lawyers; from doctors to social workers. There is simply no way of identifying a sex offender by looking at his outward appearance or relying on his social standing. Teachers need to explain to the children that unfortunately there are people who are supposed to look after and protect them, but who ‘do bad things’ to children. It should be carefully explained that a person’s social standing and the work he does have nothing to do with whether he abuses children.

• No matter how shocked the teacher may be at an allegation of sexual victimisation made by a child, he needs to consider that few children, if any, will make up stories of having been sexually abused. If, at any point, a teacher is uncertain of what to do, but suspects abuse, if the child has not confirmed this by means of disclosure, it is essential for the teacher to discuss this with the principal. It is strongly recommended that together they seek guidance from the relevant authorities, such as the local Child Protection Unit. It may also be advisable in some cases, for the school to seek legal council.

6.3.3.4 Types of sexual abuse

Unfortunately, many adults assume that sexual abuse is only penile penetration and have no knowledge of the other forms of sexual abuse that occur. Inappropriate touching, exhibitionism and penetration with various objects, are some of the other forms of sexual abuse that children are exposed to. Teachers, especially those of pre-school and foundation phase stages, are inclined to touch children in re-assuring, affirming or sympathetic ways, for example, a pat on the back, rubbing of the head and most children’s favourite, a warm hug.

• Should a child’s reaction to this form of touching change, in that the child suddenly pulls away or verbally rejects the physical touch, the
teacher should immediately be aware of the possibility that something has happened to cause the child to behave in this way.

An experienced Grade 3 teacher at a local school noticed that one of the young girls in her class had suddenly started wearing shorts under her school gym. She also noticed that the little girl started insisting on sitting with her legs straight out in front of her, instead of cross-legged when on the mat. This caused a slight disturbance, because of the class size and the available space on the mat. After a meeting with the mother, it transpired that the child had been sexually molested. The little girl apparently felt that if she had been wearing shorts instead of a dress, the incident would never have taken place.

According the mother of the child, the Physical Education teacher reported to the principal that the child often made excuses not to do Phys. Ed. and if she did, would not take part in activities on the hockey field, where the alleged incident had taken place. It was also noted that the child did not want to be touched in any way, which often made group activities difficult, especially in a subject that often demands physical contact.

Such obvious changes of behavioural patterns should be taken very seriously.

- It is therefore recommended that in such a case, an urgent meeting be held with the parents, the teacher, the school social worker and the principal, to discuss the possible reasons for the changes in the child. The longer this is delayed the more impact the trauma has on the child and ultimately on the family as a unit.

- If an incident of sexual victimisation is disclosed by the child, according to South African law, there is a legal and moral obligation for this to be reported to the nearest police station for further investigation. According to Superintendent Erasmus of the Child Protection Unit in Port Elizabeth, a docket can still be opened for investigation, even if the child has not disclosed the identity of the perpetrator.
Teachers can play an important role in the lives of the children in their classes. Making the effort to know the children in your class may literally mean the difference between life and death. Behavioural changes in a child may be an indicator of many different problems, apart from abuse. Being a teacher involves so much more than merely trying to impart knowledge and organise sporting events. It requires empathy, understanding, vigilance, careful observation and open communication with the learners in the class.

- It is therefore recommended that teachers make the effort to know the children in their classes so well that any behavioural changes would be noticed immediately.
- The level of professionalism, genuine care and integrity of the teacher will then dictate to what extent he is prepared to become involved to help the child in need.

6.3.3.5 Traumatic experience and emotional impact

The invasive violation of his body and his trust are very traumatic for the victim. This can result in emotional states that have a short-term and long-term impact on the life of the victim. If the abuse is disclosed and the child victim feels further victimised by the lack of support, understanding and noticeable effort on the part of the adults to provide protection and help, the chances of the trauma moving into adulthood with the child, are very strong (Spies, 2006: 270; Meyer & Kotzé, 1994: 170; Hall & Lloyd, 1993: 67).

- If a teacher suspects a case of abuse, it is imperative that he makes notes of his observations over a period of time and shares this in confidence with the principal, who in turn may discuss the issue with the school governing body (SGB) for additional support and advice on procedures to follow. Most SGBs have some form of legal council and should be in a position to give guidance in terms of procedures to follow to help the child.
It is never an easy issue to deal with, because of the nature of the suspected crime that has been committed, but if a member of staff has reason to even suspect a case of abuse, they need to be aware of their ‘duty to report’ it in terms of mandatory reporting of their suspicions to the police. Childline South Africa (2009: 3) states that “educators have a statutory responsibility to report child abuse and the failure to do so is a crime.”

The recommendations to educators in terms of procedures for reporting child abuse are as follows:

**Step 1: Record the following information**

- Biographical details of the child, such as name, address and contact numbers.
- Name and contact details for parents or legal guardian.
- Reasons for concern. Document any possible symptoms of abuse and any behaviour, or relevant statements made by the child that led to the suspicion of abuse taking place.

**Step 2: Mandatory reporting**

- Follow the school policy regarding the sexual abuse of learners. Inform the relevant staff members of the suspicion. Reporting of abuse and neglect are mandated by law and this law supersedes school policy.
- At no stage should the school take it upon themselves to carry out any form of investigation (Childline, South Africa, 2009: Annexure 2).

In South Africa, the consequences of not reporting suspected or actual cases of abuse to the authorities are imprisonment and/or a fine (Children’s Act Amendment Bill, Section 110: 1; Criminal Law (Sexual offences and related matters) Amendment Bill 54. (1) (a & b) and (2) (a, b & c). In Canada any
person who suspects or knows of child abuse taking place has a legal obligation to report it. Failure to comply with this law can result in charges being laid, accompanied by a fine of up to $10,000 (Barriere, 2009).

A word of caution: In South Africa, if a victim is under the age of 18, he is considered a minor in terms of the law and no identifying details of the child or his family are allowed to be disclosed to parties other than those directly involved in helping the child and/or the family as a unit.

6.3.3.6 Personality profile of the victim/survivor

Victims of sexual abuse experience a change in personality to some extent. They do not trust easily; and this is to be understood, considering the trauma and violation they had endured. For most people, it is difficult to distinguish between a child who is naturally shy and a child who has become shy and withdrawn, as a result of the lack of confidence caused by him being sexually abused.

- Teachers, who make the effort to get to know the learners in their classes, will be in a position to recognise this change in personality. It is recommended that such changes be observed, confidentially recorded and monitored over a period of time.

- Should the teacher feel that he has grounds to suspect some form of abuse or neglect, further steps must be taken to identify the problem and protect the child.

The symptoms of sexual abuse may overlap with symptoms for other underlying problems the child may be experiencing, such as separation of parents or the life-threatening illness of a loved one.

- It is not advisable to assume that because a child is a perfectionist, as many victims of abuse are, he is being abused at home. Other
identifying and contributing factors need to be taken into account as well.

Teachers experience great difficulty in the classroom situation when children become rebellious. These actions undermine the teacher’s authority and cause disruption in the class. This generally impacts on the effective learning of the other children.

- If a teacher suspects that the rebellious child is experiencing some form of trauma, it is suggested that the teacher should show empathy, while remaining firm regarding the rules in the classroom. It is not always easy to try and help a learner who is disruptive and disrespectful, but the behaviour is often a manifestation of inner turmoil. Involving this child in an activity that requires responsibility and that indicates that the teacher trusts the child, may be useful in breaking down the walls of anger and distrust that the rebellious child has developed for protection. Invite the child to assist one with tasks, such as the collection of books and counting them to ensure that everyone has handed theirs in. Send the child on an errand to another teacher, or to the office to fetch something for you.

Some teachers have the difficult task of having to deal with a learner who may have attempted suicide or who has suicidal tendencies. Attempts at suicide may involve the cutting of wrists and/or a drug overdose. If the child survives the attempt, he returns to the classroom with physical scars to match the pain within.

- Establishing an atmosphere of calmness, understanding and tolerance amongst the other children in the class, is essential to prevent further emotional turmoil for the victim. Many stories are available in public libraries and over the internet that can be read to the children. It is important, however, to ensure that the materials used are age-appropriate. The playing of light classical music may create a sense of
peace and tranquillity in the class. Teachers are able to source relevant literature at various degrees of difficulty from Childline or the Department of Social Development.

- Should the victim succeed in the suicide attempt, it is recommended that the school should provide the necessary counselling for the other learners.

Some children who are sexually abused resort to various forms of escapism as a coping mechanism. For them this is the only way to deal with life on a daily basis.

If a teacher is aware of this, there is the possibility that something positive can be done about it. An example of this is if the child immerses himself in books and reads continuously. The teacher could use this as a means of enhancing the self-esteem of the child by asking him to assist a weaker reader in the class, or reading aloud to the class.

- Some forms of escapism are more difficult to deal with, such as the use of alcohol or drugs. Here it is suggested that professional help is called in, such as the school guidance counsellor. Should there be no permanent counsellor available at the school, the teacher, together with the principal, need to approach the parents (provided that they are not the offenders) and suggest some form of assistance in terms of referral to a professional in the field of human behaviour, who specialises in working with children and adolescents.

- Perhaps a team of teachers at each school could compile a list of professionals in various fields, such as psychology and psychiatry, who focus specifically on the needs of minors. These teams from different schools in the city could meet perhaps bi-annually to compare and update their lists.
• One teacher could be given the responsibility to draft a letter to professional bodies at national level, explaining what the schools are aiming to do and requesting them to provide a list of their members in an area who could be used for referral purposes. Most national bodies will be more than willing to assist and may even be in a position to provide further guidance and assistance to the teachers.

• In a similar way contact can be made with the psychology faculty at the local university, requesting the availability of assistance for such learners from their intern students.

6.3.3.7 Disclosure

Brookes and Higson-Smith (2007: 121) mention that HSRC studies have found that children experienced difficulty in disclosing abuse. For a victim of sexual abuse to trust an adult enough to disclose the abuse to that person, they found three requirements need to be met, namely:

(i) The adult needs to take the disclosure by the child seriously.
(ii) That the adult respects the child’s right to privacy.
(iii) The adult is able to be proactive in helping the child, or is perceived by the child as being able to stop the abuse and provide protection.

• Teachers can provide opportunities in the classroom for the children to disclose their experiences by means of creative writing. Whatever is written should be treated as confidential.

• Children should never be pressurised into disclosing more than they are ready to disclose at a given point in time, no matter how frustrating this becomes for the adult. There are many reasons why children do not disclose or why they take so long to disclose the abuse.
• It is suggested that should the teacher notice a piece of writing that implies some form of sexual abuse, then the teacher should speak to the child in confidence. This form of interaction is often difficult and the age of the child needs to be taken into consideration before making an effort to discuss what has been written.

• It is imperative that teachers make it clear to the child victim that it may be necessary to involve the principal in the matter, because the teacher alone does not have the jurisdiction to provide the necessary protection and help.

• Care should be taken when contacting the parents, especially if a parent is the perpetrator, or if the child has not disclosed the identity of the perpetrator, to be tactful and not judgemental.

• It is advisable for the school to seek legal help if there is any uncertainty regarding which procedures to follow.

6.3.3.8 Health problems

Eating disorders are common amongst both victims and survivors of sexual abuse. The contents of a lunchbox and the frequency of visits to the school tuck shop may hold the key to the reason for a number of serious health problems for some abuse victims.

• It should be remembered that not all children who eat poorly balanced diets or who overeat are victims of abuse. Once again, it is normally the teachers of younger children who are more aware of what they bring to school for lunch, because they sit together on the mat in the class to eat before they go out to play.

• Some victims of abuse develop eating disorders, such as binge eating or eating unhealthy foods, as a means of comfort. Being overweight or
underweight is a very sensitive issue for many people and needs to be
dealt with empathetically and without judgement.

- Guidance can be offered by teachers regarding correct eating habits
  and by discussing the advantages of eating a balanced diet, with the
  unhealthier options to be eaten in moderation only. This can be
  included in subjects such as Life Orientation, where it is discussed with
  the class in general, as opposed to focusing on the problems of the
  victim alone.

Some forms of mental instability develop as a direct result of having been
sexually abused. In some instances psychotherapy alone will suffice to help
the victim, in other cases scheduled medication is required as well.

### 6.3.3.9 Religious testimonies

The policy regarding religious instruction at schools has changed over the
past decade. The National Policy on Religion and Education was approved by
the Council of Education Ministers on 4th August 2003, during which time
Professor Kader Asmal was the minister of education. The minister’s foreword
to the publication stated the following:

We do not have a state religion. But our country is not a
secular State where there is a very strict separation between
religion and the State. In regard to the relationship between
religion and public education, we propose that the
cooperative model which combines constitutional separation
and mutual recognition should provide a framework that is
best for religion and best for education in a democratic South
Africa.

The *co-operative model*, to which he refers, affirms both the principle of legal
separation and the possibility of creative interaction. The Constitution
established independent spheres for religion and the state but indicated that
there is ample opportunity for interaction between the two. Citizens are
protected from religious bias or domination.
The co-operative model promotes a continuous channel of open communication between the various religious groups and the State in fields of mutual interest and concern. During any discussions or communication, individuals and groups of specific religions need to have the assurance of freedom from State interference. At this stage, it cannot be determined whether in fact this does take place.

The National Curriculum Statement states that Religious Education falls into the Life Orientation Learning (LO) Area of the National Curriculum Statement and it makes up one section of LO.

*Religious Education is contained within Outcome 2, in relation to Social Development, which requires that:*

*The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions.*

Although many victims of sexual abuse find guidance, peace and freedom from their past as a result of their faith, it is very difficult for a teacher to become involved in assisting a child in this regard (Hall and Lloyd, 1993: 265). If a teacher is a Christian and the abused child is also a Christian, there is ample opportunity for the teacher to assist by praying with the child, based on Christian principles (Tlali & Moldan, 2005: 7).

However, this may not be possible for the same teacher who has to assist an abused child who is from a different faith. In order to help, the teacher also needs to be aware of the degree of faith the child has.

- As a result, it is recommended that teachers be very cautious when helping a child from a religious perspective, unless the teacher is familiar with the specific religion of the child and family. However, nothing prevents the teacher from praying for the child in their private capacity as caring adults.
6.3.4 The social development of the child

6.3.4.1 Parental relationships

• Social development begins with the basic relationships that form within the family. These relationships may be problematic at times and teachers need to be vigilant enough to notice whether the child appears troubled or distressed in any way. Gentleness, empathy and understanding are vital when trying to provide comfort for a child in distress.

• If a teacher is made aware of problems in the parental relationship, it is advisable to monitor the child carefully in class. Some children may not show any outer signs of emotion or anxiety. This does not mean that they are not worried and fearful about the situation at home. Legally, teachers are considered to be in ‘loco parentis’ when children are in their care. As such, they need to make every effort to observe the behaviour of the children during class and at play. Such observations serve many purposes, such as the prevention of any bullying being administered or received by children in their care.

• Creating a class atmosphere of calmness, with a set routine, offers children some form of stability in their lives. This is particularly important for children who have been sexually abused, because their inner lives are generally in a state of turmoil and confusion.

• Initiating a meeting with the parents of the child may be helpful, depending on how responsive and involved the parents are. It is recommended that such a meeting be arranged at school, rather than in the home. Teachers also need to ensure their personal safety. This implies their physical safety, as well as protection in terms of what has been said to them and in terms of support for what they say.
Depending on the circumstances, it may be advisable to have a head of department or the principal at the meeting.

6.3.4.2 Neglect

The old saying “Never judge a book by its cover” is generally sound advice. However, there are times when by mere observation, a teacher can see signs of neglect. The type of child-rearing style the parents use impacts greatly on the child’s behaviour and development.

Father-child relationships are very different from those a child has with his mother. Traditionally, fathers have not played as big a role in the lives of their children as the mother does. It would appear that this has changed over the decades and that fathers are now more attuned to the needs of their children, because of greater involvement.

Problems in the relationship between a father and his child can be manifested in different ways, especially if the child is a boy. Boys rely on their fathers as a male role model, and in the absence of this, are easily influenced by other factors, which do not always have a positive impact on the child’s life. Teachers should be aware of the importance of the father-child relationship and how problems in this relationship can impact on the life of the child in the school context.

A child who has been sexually abused may find it difficult to develop and maintain adequate relationships with other people, be they adults or peers of the same age. The way in which a child socialises is generally an indication of the skills the child has learnt in the home. He bases his social attitudes and habits on those he has seen with his parents when they socialise. These habits may include:

- Language usage: incorrect grammar, use of obscenities, combining two languages;
- Attitude towards others: lack of respect and tolerance; boys treatment of girls; and
- General manners and conduct.

- As a general rule, it is advisable that teachers should observe children in their classes, paying specific attention to the manner in which a child is dressed, the condition of the clothing, the contents of the lunch box and the condition of their schoolbooks. Apparent problems in these areas may indicate that there are problems at home. It is also recommended that the teacher should be aware of the general wellbeing of the child.

Teachers can ask themselves basic questions such as:

- Does the child look healthy?
- Does the child bring lunch to school?
- Is the school uniform clean and what condition is the uniform in?
- Is the child well-rested in the morning, or does he look tired and lethargic?

6.3.4.3 Relationships with others

- Teachers cannot really change the circumstances and happenings in a child’s home. No matter how good the intentions are, it is advisable to work together with the principal, police and social workers, as part of a multi-disciplinary team to support and protect the child. A teacher needs to be cautious of what he does and says in order to help a child in distress and he should be aware of the legal implications of the nature of his help. However, love, acceptance, understanding and security can go a long way in developing a trust relationship. This can be achieved by asking the child to do certain tasks that require some responsibility, such as writing the homework onto the chalkboard. It is also advisable to be selective when verbally reprimanding the child for something he may have done. Rather than come across as annoyed,
irritated and angry, focus on showing understanding and acceptance in a firm and compassionate manner.

- Although it is not possible to know every aspect of the law, it is important for educators to understand their rights and the rights of the children, as set out in the South African Constitution. A new book titled *Schools, Law and Governance* (Juta’s Pocket Statutes: 2009) has been published that explains the law pertaining to educators, their rights and the rights of the child. It is advised that all school principals acquire copies of this book and regularly incorporate the contents thereof in staff development meetings and/or programmes. The emotional response to the nature of sexual abuse makes it extremely difficult not to become involved, but it is advisable for teachers never to become so emotionally involved that their personal life becomes troubled by the dismay and anger that they feel.

6.3.3 School experiences

Many young victims experience difficulties at school as a direct result of the abuse. This manifests in school-related activities that include academic performance, extra-mural activities and social relationships.

6.3.3.5 School-related activities

Although not all children who are abused show symptoms that something is amiss, for many the first indication that they are experiencing some form of trauma, is a dramatic decline in their academic performance.

- Teachers should be aware that a sudden lack of enthusiasm, an inexplicable change in academic performance and a general disinterest in school, may well indicate an underlying problem. It is advisable to take the time to speak to the child privately, in an attempt to determine the reason for the changes. Should the child not disclose any information, the teacher should continue to monitor the child; and it is
recommended that observational notes be made and stored in a safe place for future reference.

- In contrast to this, there are learners who focus their efforts completely on their schoolwork and as a result achieve very good results. This can be linked to escapism, where the schoolwork provides an opportunity for the child to focus on something other than the trauma of the abuse they have experienced. Once again, this is a very difficult symptom to identify. One cannot simply assume that every child who becomes a high achiever is doing so in order to compensate for personal problems. In such cases it may be very difficult to notice any signs of possible abuse. However, creative writing exercises may well produce some indication that there are underlying problems.

For some victims an alternative to high achievement in the classroom is high performance on the sports field. By pushing themselves beyond that which is generally expected from a scholar in terms of sporting ability, the victim now focuses his attention on reaching peak physical condition in order to compete at various levels.

- Teachers need to consider this when encouraging children to work harder at achieving sporting accolades. The child should always be educated holistically and without any undue pressure to excel in certain areas, even if he shows exceptional talent.

Such pressure adds to the stress and anxiety of the child and often focuses the attention of other teachers and children on the child. It is generally found that excessive pressure to test the limits is enforced by sports coaches, who tend to focus on the physical aspect of the child, rather than on the child in his totality (Escartí & Gutiérrez, 2001: 1-12).
6.3.3.6 Principal and teachers

Brookes and Higson-Smith (2007: 121) indicate that learners have experienced disclosure as being interpreted as a means to seek attention or as an excuse for truancy, by educators and other adults. Of concern to the learners is that educators often do not maintain confidentiality in cases or allegations of abuse. Such actions serve to confirm the learners’ distrust in adults.

As the head of the school, the principal has the ultimate responsibility for the safety and protection of the child while at school. However, this does not absolve the principal from the responsibility of noting possible problems at home that are affecting the academic performance of the child. Such problems could result in changes in conduct, such as rebellious behaviour, substance abuse or attempted suicide.

It is also important to take note of any possible physical signs that could imply sexual abuse, such as discomfort when sitting, difficulty walking or constantly requesting to be excused to go to the toilet. Should a teacher notice sudden drastic changes in the child’s behaviour and he is not sure of what to do, it is essential that the principal should become involved. The principal is in a position of authority that allows him to take decisions regarding the children at his school to higher levels for guidance and assistance.

- The principal should seek advice from professionals in various fields and organisations who work with CSA on a daily basis. Examples of these are Childline, Lifeline, Child Protection Unit (SAPS) and the Department of Social Services.

- Principals have an enormous responsibility in every aspect of the effective running of a school. Considering the changes in modern society and the disturbing influences that children are challenged with on a daily basis, it is suggested that principals select a few staff
members to form an aid team to which colleagues can go for advice regarding specific children. When delegating this responsibility, this team needs to be carefully selected, because ultimately their responses will directly impact on the lives of the learners in the school.

Such a team will take some of the pressure off the principal. A suggestion would be to arrange for a monthly meeting with the principal or school management team to update them on what has taken place. It may be necessary to arrange a special meeting before the monthly session, if there is an urgent issue to be discussed and decisions need to be made.

- If a teacher shares the information with another adult, it is imperative that it is a professional who is able to make a positive contribution to the protection and counselling of the victim. It should not be used as a means for casual conversation. Word spreads easily and a change in the essential message may take place as it moves from mouth to mouth. This may give rise to further problems that re-victimise the child, such as, the wrong person being accused as the offender and the child becoming the brunt of teasing and further unwelcome attention.

6.3.3.7 Boarding school experiences

Teachers doing duty in a hostel should be vigilant regarding the possibility of sexual experimentation amongst the boarders. This may occur at any time of the day, but appears to be particularly prevalent at night when the children are in bed.

- It is essential to realise that sometimes the perpetrators are children older than the victims; children in the same hostel; children who impose a life of fear, mistrust and anger on younger peers. Hostel teachers have a responsibility to create an awareness of the dangers of CSA. The children at a hostel are in an environment that replaces their homes for most of the term, and they need to know that this ‘home-
away-from-home' is a safe and nurturing place that will provide protection from harm. The teachers who perform hostel duties are the ones who can observe the children in a more homely environment. They can create an atmosphere of acceptance and caring by making themselves available to the children, should they need to share something that is bothering them. They should also feel free to share their joys with these teachers.

6.3.3.8 Behaviour at school

Schools are traditionally synonymous with discipline and a code of conduct that expects learners to comply with the school rules. Poor conduct and other behavioural problems at school are generally an indication that the child is trying to cope with one or other problem.

- When a learner unexpectedly begins to reject this code of conduct in such a manner that it interferes with his education, as well as the effective education of his peers, the teacher needs to consider why this change in behaviour has taken place.

- Discussions with the school counsellor regarding the change in behaviour may help to shed light on the possible reasons.

- It is very important for the teacher not to break the relationship of trust with the child; and for this reason it is recommended that the teacher should make the effort to speak to the child as well. This may well bring to light causes for this behaviour; and together they may be able to find solutions to the difficulties the child may be facing.

Teachers could look into the very real possibility that either the parents or the teachers have failed to assist the child, resulting in behavioural changes. Should the teacher find that the child is unresponsive and possibly disrespectful; and he suspects that the child is reacting this way because of unmet needs, it is advisable to seek the help of a therapist for the child.
Therapists are able to help abused victims deal with the issues they are struggling with, such as guilt, anger, sadness and a lack of self-worth.

Truancy may occur as a result of physical injury sustained during the abuse.

- If a child is regularly absent, it is suggested that the teacher should follow up on the matter. The first step should be contact with the parents, either by means of a letter, or telephonically, to arrange a personal meeting. A record of contact should be kept. The date and time of contact, as well as the person to whom the teacher spoke should be recorded for future reference.

- Another possibility is for the teacher to visit the parents at home. This will allow the teacher to observe the environment in which the child is living and develop some idea of the child-rearing style of the parents. Social problems such as neglect, poverty and family dynamics may also be observed. For various reasons, it may not always be possible to arrange a home visit. Should this be the case, the teacher should encourage the parents to meet at school.

Rebellious behaviour and refusal to commit to given tasks in the classroom can become very real problems for the teacher and the other learners in the class (Barker and Hodes, 2007: 39 Junior, 2007: 420).

- If a rebellious child is placed with other learners for a group activity, it could be disastrous for all in the group. Very often the teacher will not tolerate such behaviour, but it is very important to determine the underlying cause(s) thereof. The first action to be taken by the teacher should be to speak to the child, away from the rest of the group. This will prevent any further victimisation and will provide the child with the opportunity to speak to the teacher openly.
Some victims of abuse will deliberately cause disruptions in class, because they are then given attention; and negative attention is better than none at all. Sadly, there are children who are aware of the effects of their behaviour but their needs are not being met at home and they simply cannot help themselves. Teachers should endeavour to determine the cause of such disruptions; and the best route to take initially would be to speak directly to the child without the other children being present. The disruptive child needs to understand why his behaviour is unacceptable in school, in terms of spoiling lessons for the others and preventing them from being able to learn. In this way, the child may divulge the reasons for his poor behaviour.

Another way of trying to encourage the child to open up is creative writing, such as poetry and stories. The child may write down, what he is too afraid to verbalise. Alternatively, the use of drawing and painting may be more applicable to some children. There are many conclusions that can be drawn from looking at the nature of and colour used in children’s art.

The distrust that the child has developed of adults in general, spills over into a lack of respect. Children cannot always differentiate between adults who are empathetic and can help and those who simply do not care enough to make any worthwhile difference.

It is therefore recommended that teachers attempt to discover exactly what sparks the display of no respect from the learner. A class discussion or debate may shed light on the behaviour of some children. It may also provide an opportunity for the teacher to observe the responses of the children, by means of their body language, as well as listening to their opinions. It may well be that whatever it is, is directly linked to the experiences of being sexually victimised.
An example of this is where the teacher could be teaching a lesson on sex education. The child victim may respond with answers and ask questions that appear to be disrespectful and impudent to the teacher. Yet, the teacher is unaware of the abusive sexual experiences that the child has had. It is suggested that the teacher should notify the parents by means of a letter, authorised by the principal that this lesson is going to take place. Parents are then afforded the opportunity to either initiate this discussion with their child, or to confide in the teacher if they are aware of any abuse their child has endured. In doing so, the teacher is making an effort to protect the child emotionally.

- Teachers should also observe the learners in the class when teaching a subject related to sex and sexual activities and observe any changes in behaviour or displays of uneasy body language. An eleven-year old girl who had been sexually molested told her mother, who had to extract the information from her, that when sex education was introduced in Grade 5, she sat in class with her hands over her ears. It would appear that the teacher had not noticed that there was a child in the class who was clearly in distress. There were only 27 children in the class at the time. It is therefore suggested that teachers spend time discussing how to approach this lesson with one another before actually teaching it.

Some child victims withdraw as a result of lessons such as this, which may re-open their wounds and do very little to protect and help them.

- It is strongly recommended that all primary school educators who have to impart information regarding sex, sexual activities, menstruation and pregnancy, first inform the parents by means of a letter on the contents of the intended lesson, not the day before the lesson, but with sufficient time for the parents to respond if necessary. This allows the parents the opportunity to discuss these issues with their child before the child is exposed to them in class. It also affords the parents the opportunity
to make an appointment with the teacher to inform the teacher of any possible problems of which they may be aware that could cause distress to the child during such a lesson.

Depending on the nature of the sexual abuse, the victim may be exposed to a certain degree of physical violence. If a child is raised in a family where he has not only experienced violence personally, but sees it as a part of his daily life, there is a strong possibility that he will develop the perception that violence is the norm and is the answer to solving problems.

- In some schools, there is a greater risk of pupil violence than in others; and the teachers at such schools need to familiarise themselves with pupils who are at risk. In most schools, teachers become aware of such pupils by the history of their behaviour. These pupils could be those who are being abused and their anger is manifested in the degree of violence they inflict on others. It is recommended that teachers make a concerted effort to know the learners in their classes and read the notes made in the Ed-lab cards by the previous teachers.

- Violence is often associated with bullying and being bullied. No school should tolerate such unacceptable behaviour and a strong message of zero tolerance should be sent out to the learners. Teachers should always be on duty in the playgrounds at break. This may minimise the opportunity for violence. It is also recommended that teachers should check obscure places, like behind external buildings, for children hiding their acts of violence. Regular monitoring of the cloakroom facilities is strongly recommended. It is vital that teachers set the example here and that they remain firm, while also remaining fair.

In today’s society children are exposed to advanced technology, such as e-mail, internet, cellular phones, MiXit, Facebook, Twitter and Skype. Each one of these is associated with potential exposure to age-inappropriate material, such as pornography. Exposure to the internet also places children at risk of
being pursued by paedophiles and being exposed to other unwelcome attention from adults.

Recent media coverage has also exposed learners at high school level bullying and violating peers, and other forms of abuse being inflicted, while being recorded on the cameras of cellular phones. This footage is then often posted on the internet for others to view.

- It is strongly recommended that the Department of Education formulate a policy, which documents and prescribes to learners and their parents what will and what will not be allowed at schools in terms of cellular phones. It may be possible for the Department to put out a tender to all interested cellular phone suppliers, encompassing service providers and manufacturers, to provide a phone that cannot record video images; capture images; connect to the internet or send e-mails. The recommended phone should only have the capacity to be used for telephonic conversation or for sending short-message-services (SMSs). In doing so, the Department of Education, together with all schools, forms a united entity to protect minors at school from abuse related to cellular phone technology.

This will no doubt be met with strong opposition from many children and their parents, but perhaps it is time that as educators, we stand firm for the rights of children, and their need to be protected. Should the children want to make use of more advanced cellular phones, they can then do so under the supervision of their parents, without posing a safety risk to others at school.

- Teachers should familiarize themselves with these forms of technology and be extremely cautious when encouraging children to use technology, such as the internet for “project research” purposes. Nothing is what it appears to be, and an example of this is a Port Elizabeth mother who did not allow her child to use the internet
unsupervised, and who helped her 10-year old daughter to look up information via the internet on frogs for a school project, as advised by the teacher. To her utter horror and dismay, she discovered a child pornographic site titled: “Frogs”.

- It is recommended that teachers rather encourage the use of the school and public libraries for research purposes. More and more children tend to struggle with reading and comprehension skills, both of which are vital for research purposes. Children and adolescents need to master the pivotal life skills of accurate reading and comprehension by means of exposure to sufficient books of all categories, including reference books. Reading is learning; and it is required for all subjects at school. Many children, from primary school through to matric level, cannot read properly and this is reflected annually in their poor academic performances.

6.3.4 Survivor advice to young victims

This research study would be incomplete if it did not include some valuable guidance and information to young victims of sexual abuse. This section therefore will provide a brief overview of suggestions that teachers and other adults can pass on to the children, guiding them to understand that they have the right to say “NO” to abuse; and that help is available if they disclose their experiences. The recommendations and suggestions offered are derived from the narratives provided by the participants, together with literature sources.

6.3.4.3 What to do when being abused

The overwhelming majority of adult survivors indicated that their advice to a young child who is being sexually victimised, would be to speak out as soon as possible. It is suggested that the child tell as many adults as possible until someone takes notice and investigates the allegations.
According to the Children’s Bill of Rights, all children have a right to be protected from harm. Two questions then arise:

(1) How do children exercise this right?
(2) Are children aware of their rights?

The following recommendations are made to children who are being sexually violated: Try to convince the child of the following truths:

- *No-one has the right to hurt you in any way or to touch your private parts.* If anyone does anything to you that makes you feel uncomfortable, then tell another adult. Keep on telling other adults until someone believes you and does something to protect you. Sexual abuse usually does not stop by itself. You have to tell others when someone is doing bad things to you or hurting you. Abuse is wrong and must be stopped, whoever the violator is. Develop lessons where the use of dolls can assist in explaining the issue of privacy. Encourage discussions on why people are not allowed to touch children inappropriately.

- It is important to understand that you are not a naughty or bad person. What is happening is not your fault and you are too little to understand it. Nothing that you do or don’t do gives an older person an excuse to abuse you sexually. Adults often underestimate the ability of young children to reason and understand what is being said. Explaining that adults have also been children and they know what is right and wrong because it has been taught to them, is important. Children need the affirmation that they are inherently good and teachers can play an important role in this regard.

- It is suggested that the teacher should explain the following to the child:
- Don’t believe anything that the person who is doing things to you, hurting you or making you do things, tells you. He will tell you many things to make sure you keep quiet, because he knows that what he is doing is wrong and he could get into trouble.

- You are allowed to say NO when another person does things to you or makes you do things that you don’t like or that make you feel uneasy. Sexual abuse is harmful and the way it makes you feel about yourself is what hurts the most.

- You should not touch other children or adults on their private parts, even if they ask you to do so. Private parts are the parts of your body that your swimming costume covers.

- What happens to a sexual abuser is never your fault. Don’t be bullied by his words or feel guilty about what will happen to him if you tell someone what he is doing to you.

6.3.4.4 How to support and manage the abused learner

An important factor that emerged from the data is to believe the allegations made by a child. If an adult is unsure about the validity of the child’s claim of being sexually victimised, the child needs to be re-assured by that adult that he will make an effort to investigate the matter.

What has also emerged from the participants is how vital it is that the abuse is acknowledged by those to whom the child discloses the secret. Many adults still experience various difficulties in life as a result of the lack of understanding and acknowledgement they were faced with as a young child. Once the child victim has disclosed the abuse, he will need to be nurtured, supported, counselled, encouraged, cared for and protected. There are many ways to do this, but it needs to be understood that this process can be a
lengthy one and there is no guarantee as to how long it will take and/or the degree of success that will be achieved.

Educators have an essential role to play in helping the abused learner, because they spend so much time with these children at school. The following guidelines and recommendations have been adapted from those provided by Childline South Africa in their *Prevention and Education Manual* (1983):

- Embrace a child-centred approach in your classroom and re-assure the children that you are available to them if they would like to discuss something that is bothering them with you. Often, children know instinctively when they are in the company of others who are child-orientated and when they are in an environment that is welcoming and safe. To create such an environment, teachers should develop a positive attitude that shows love and acceptance by embracing the differences in each child within the class. Acts of tolerance and kindness are an indication to children that they are in a safe environment.

- Pay a little extra attention to the abused child in such a way that it is not obvious to the other children in the class. Engage the child in nurturing tasks, such as feeding the fish or watering the plants in the classroom. It is often the simple things that make a difference in the lives of these children, such as a special smile, or a star for effort.

- Be sensitive when communicating with the abused child. These children are generally also accustomed to verbal abuse. Using words of acceptance and kindness, in tones that are gentle and undemanding, create the assurance that the teacher is sensitive to the child.

- Work hard at developing and maintaining a relationship of trust. Speak to the child regularly and afford the child the courtesy of *not* trusting you initially. Teachers must accept that the child will not necessarily
trust you as an adult, because it is an adult who has destroyed his basic trust in the first place. It takes time to build up trust that has been damaged and developing this relationship will be demanding and often frustrating for the teacher. Perseverance is the key.

• Continuously build up the self-esteem and self-image of the child. Commend the child for any good efforts in class. These do not only have to be efforts made in terms of academic performance, but in all school-related issues. If the child shows compassion for another child, acknowledge it. If the child shows concern for the environment, acknowledge it. Affirm the child in as many ways as possible.

• Provide opportunities for creative work in class that can be used by the child to release their emotions and where the child can express their inner feelings, such as drawing, painting and creative writing.

• Withdrawal is a common characteristic amongst child abuse victims. Begin group activities, such as playing games or peer group counselling.

• Trust is a very important issue for an abused child. Never divulge information shared with you by the child, with the rest of the class or with other children.

• Without becoming too involved, make time after school for the child to come and see you in your classroom. Never take the child to your home. It is recommended that you contact an appropriate support system, such as the Child Protection Unit or Social Development (Welfare) for guidance and advice on what should be done to assist the child.

• Be aware that the abused child may suffer from nightmares which cause his sleep to be disturbed. He may therefore be tired and lethargic in class. Should a child show signs of being sleepy, do not make sarcastic comments about late nights and going to bed early.
Make an effort to speak to the child about why he is so tired, without interference from the other children.

- Abused children often develop concentration problems and their work deteriorates. This may be particularly evident after the child has disclosed the abuse, because their anxiety is heightened by the consequences of "telling". It is suggested that the teacher gently helps the child to re-focus on the task at hand if he notices that the child appears to be daydreaming.

- It is further recommended that additional help be offered to the child in terms of extra input for areas in which he appears to be struggling. This will support the child in reaching optimal levels of performance once again. Be sensitive to the needs of the child.

- Do not ignore bad behaviour from the child, because you feel "sorry" for the child. The child needs to re-establish boundaries that may have been destroyed by the abuse. When untoward behaviour is noticed, reprimand the child immediately and deal with the problem at a later stage with the child privately. Anxiety and trauma often trigger a child to test his boundaries.

- Ensure that you, as the teacher, are looking after your own health and emotional needs. Helping children who are or have been sexually abused is a harrowing and emotionally draining task. One is faced with the reality of children who have been forced to have sexual intercourse; children who have possibly been raped, beaten and threatened; children who bear the physical and the emotional scars of having been abused; children with eyes as empty as their souls which have been destroyed; children who go home to the same environment of abuse after school and about which you can do nothing. These factors can weigh heavily on the mind of a teacher (Tlali and Moldan, 2005: 6 – 7).
6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

A concerted effort has been made to conduct a well-planned and thorough investigation into the impact of child sexual abuse on the school life and academic performance. However, the following limitations should be taken into account:

- The participants all came from the Eastern Cape Province. It is essential that the results of this study be compared with a similar study from other provinces in South Africa. Therefore, the findings of this research cannot be generalised, that is, confirmed that the same or similar findings would emerge from another sample group in a different setting.

- The participants wrote their life stories in narrative format and these data provided far more information than the parameters of this study could cover. The researcher was faced with the challenge of sifting through the vast amount of rich data gathered in order to determine which information was specifically relevant to the research question. The data were narrowed down by identifying common themes in each narrative. It was impossible to discuss all the information within the parameters of this particular study.

Despite the above-mentioned factors, I do feel that we have achieved an important step in terms of how sexual abuse affects children in an educational setting and the ultimate impact it has on their school life and academic performance. As a result, I believe that the findings can provide sufficient information to create a greater awareness of the impact of sexual abuse amongst educators at all levels.
There is a sad, self-preserving irony about a world that cannot see its own cruelty with victims who can't give voice to their pain. After 125 years of discarded enlightenment, we still act as if victims are freaks and as if it is a virtue to be ignorant of sexual victimization.

(Roland Summit, 1998: 57)

Various aspects of child sexual abuse have been researched globally for many years. Research still needs to continue in many areas of this social phenomenon, because it continues to impact on the lives of the victims, their families and broader society. There is a diverse range of factors, such as the accurate identification of abused children, the exact nature of sexual abuse, reasons for sexual abuse and the efficiency of the justice system, that provide ample opportunity for continued research in this field. Richter, et al. (2007) mention that the data and information received in research projects, do not reflect a holistic picture of child sexual abuse. This is only made apparent by the fact that there are only a few specifically designed studies regarding child sexual abuse in South Africa (Levett, 2007: 429-448; Richter, et al. 2007: 464).

Children who are sexually abused do not always manifest their experiences, fears and anxieties by disclosing the abuse verbally. This creates a plethora of difficulties in identifying the child, assisting in disclosure, determining the impact and providing empathetic and educated guidance for the journey of healing. These factors all need to be continually studied in detail, to update information, create awareness and answer the manifold questions that continue to arise from this scourge in society.

The above-mentioned limitations have generated the following suggestions regarding further research in this field:

- Further research studies into this phenomenon may be useful in determining the applicability of the findings to a broader population of
adult survivors of child sexual abuse from the entire Republic of South Africa. Vital information to assist educators and guide them to effectively understand, identify and manage abused learners could emerge from such a detailed and in-depth study.

- A subsequent research study could investigate a model aimed at assisting educators in their task of working with sexually abused and other traumatised learners in classrooms. This input could be used for in-service training of educators already in the profession, as well as becoming part of the initial training educators receive at tertiary institutions.

- An additional suggestion for further research would be to create a child-friendly programme regarding sexual abuse. The programme could encompass activity books, visual aids such as posters, stickers, puppets, anatomically accurate dolls, story books and post boxes in which children can “post” letters they may have written exposing their abuse. A programme such as this could possibly be used in conjunction with the Department of Education, for the Social Sciences curriculum.

  Presenters of such a programme need to be properly trained and have sufficient knowledge and understanding of child sexual abuse. They need to exercise caution when presenting such a programme as their audiences may well include children who are currently being abused.

- A comparative study in which South African findings are compared with other international findings needs to be done.

6.6 FINAL CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the conclusions, recommendations, limitations of this study and suggestions for further research. It has also presented answers to the question: “So what about the results obtained in this research study?”
These answers were obtained by employing a mixed methods research approach. The primary qualitative findings formed the basis for the quantitative data in this embedded design. The integration of the qualitative and quantitative findings was used to formulate the implications and recommendations of this study.

Important and significant information was gathered from the narratives written by the participants. This revealed the impact that CSA can have on the academic performance of children, as well as the impact on other school-related activities. The four themes that were identified by means of the data analysis formed the basis for answering the primary research question.

Recommendations, on the basis of this information, were prescribed for educators of sexually abused children. The limitations of the study were outlined from the researcher’s perspective and recommendations were made pertaining to further research in child sexual abuse and the impact on the performance of the abused child at school.

This study is significant in providing additional information for teachers regarding the impact of CSA on the learners in their classes; how to identify these learners; how to manage them and where to find help for them. The conclusion is therefore that CSA does impact on the ability of a child to perform effectively in a learning environment and it is essential that educators at all institutions and at all levels should become more aware of the dangers of CSA.

“May our sons in their youth be like plants that grow up strong. May our daughters be like stately pillars which adorn the corners of a palace. May there be no cries of distress in our streets.”

Psalm 144: 12 & 14
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ADDENDUMS
ADDENDUM ONE

Guidelines for written life story / history (narrative research)

Doctoral Research Study of
Antoinette Ah Hing
Education Faculty – N.M.M.U.

Topic:

THE IMPACT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ON THE SCHOOL LIFE EXPERIENCES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS

Thank you for being prepared to participate in this research study.

This short initial interview is for us to meet one another, for me to explain the research process to you and to give you the necessary information regarding your input. Should you need help or have any questions please feel free to contact me on 082 4491 682.

What follows is merely a guideline in terms of what the focus of the study is, the nature of the research and questions to consider when putting your thoughts together.

Focus of the study:
After reading widely and listening to people talking, I believe that a child who has been molested or sexually abused, will manifest the abuse in some manner before actually disclosing that it has taken place. Being in the teaching profession, the focus of this study therefore, is on how sexual abuse will impact on the school life experiences and academic performance of children at school.

Nature of the research:
The sensitive and emotional nature of this study is the reason for the chosen method of data collection, namely your written life story or narrative. I believe that, for the purposes of this particular research study, structured or
semi-structured interviews will not provide adequate time for personal reflection, introspection and logical feedback.

What is narrative writing?
For a researcher, narrative writing is a way of understanding the experiences of others and can be described as follows:
‘They (narratives) are concerned with people’s stories: … case histories and … explanations’ which help researchers ‘to understand … people… and the human world’ (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 15).

I would like to give you sufficient time to reflect on the relevant experience(s) that have influenced your life. You will then have the opportunity to make a written contribution that is, to the best of your knowledge, an accurate account of what had taken place and the impact thereof on your school-related activities and academic performance.

Please feel free to add any personal information and input that is relevant during the course of your writing. There is no limit to the number of pages required. Use your own discretion in deciding the length of what you want to write. If you feel that there are times that what you have written is too emotionally draining, take a break and go back to it at a later stage.

Please type your story out and save it on the re-writable disc I am providing. This disc forms part of the audit trail that is required for the collection of data to be analysed. I will make arrangements to collect it from you on the due date.

The following questions can be considered when you write.

i) Based on your own experiences, do you feel that your school life and academic performance during your schooling years has been affected by your sexual abuse?

ii) How did you experience your abuse? Describe your feelings.
iii) Was the perpetrator known to you and/or your family? Do you/your family still have contact with the perpetrator?

iv) When and to whom did you first disclose the abuse and how did he/she react? How old were you? How did you keep the abuse from your family?

v) How did you express your abuse in your behaviour?

vi) How did you cope with your school work?

vii) Did your attitude towards school and the activities you took part in change after the abuse? If so, in what way?

viii) Were there times that you used school as a means of escape from the abuse?

Did you ever consider telling a teacher? Did you and if so, what was the outcome?

ix) How do you think a teacher is able to help a child/adolescent that is going through such personal trauma?

x) Do you still think about the abuse and how it affected your life?

xi) What advice would you give to a young child at school who is being abused?

These questions are in no order of importance and are only a few examples of what you can consider when trying to put your thoughts into logical order for writing.

The final date for your life story to be completed is Friday 26 June 2009. If you complete it before this date, please contact me and I will collect it from you.

Many thanks for taking the time to share your history so that together, we can try and help those little people whose silent cries are often never heard.

Antoinette Danielle Ah Hing
ADDENDUM TWO

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Informed written consent to full disclosure of research findings

Antoinette Danielle Ah Hing
Remedial Therapist
M.Ed. N.M.M.U.
B.Ed. (hon) U.P.E.
D.S.E. (rem.) U.P.E.
H.D.E. (snr) U.P.E.

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I, ____________________________, hereby give permission for Antoinette Danielle Ah Hing, a student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, conducting research for her Doctorate in Education, to use the information that she gathers from our interview and my written life history for her research.

I understand that this information will be used as data for her thesis entitled:

THE IMPACT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (CSA) ON THE SCHOOL LIFE EXPERIENCES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ADULT CSA SURVIVORS

I understand that no identifying information will be made known, unless agreed to in writing by myself, all information will be treated as confidential and that I will therefore remain anonymous in the research process and the final outcome. I am also aware that, should I no longer wish to participate in this research, I am free to withdraw at any stage during the process.
It has been explained to me that, because of the sensitive nature of the writing I am required to do, counselling is available to me, should I require it during the process of writing my life story. I have been given the contact numbers for Life Line and Childline in Port Elizabeth. I am also aware that, if I have been for counselling prior to taking part in this research, I can continue receiving emotional support from my chosen psychologist / counsellor.

Signed: ________________________  Dated: ________________________

Participants will be notified of the official research results as soon as they are available.
ADDENDUM THREE (A)

Narrative: example 1

To understand my story you would first have to understand my background – where I come from, who I am, who and what my parents and sibling are, were we lived, how we lived, etc. I do not know too much history about myself or my family members. To the best of my knowledge this is what I know to be true.

(1962) I was borne on in South Africa, Johannesburg, in the Mary Mount Hospital. I was born premature at seven months. I do not know why I was born premature. It snowed when I was born. The nurse came into my mom’s room, drew back the curtains, opened the window, gathered something off the window sill, went over to my mom’s bed, asked her to lift up the bed-sheets and promptly slipped a snowball under her covers. She loves to tell that story. I spent a long time in the incubator. My mom (E) says that I was a well behaved baby – undemanding – due to having spent such a long time in hospital. My sister (M) was 11½ years old when I was born. I have learnt in recent years that she too was born premature (8 months).

My sister was born in Germany. At this point I can only contemplate as to why my mom had two prem babies – perhaps she was not able to carry full term, perhaps my father’s personality had something to do with it. I just don’t know. My mom says she slipped in the snow and fell and that brought on my sister’s early labour. Mine, I don’t know.

My father (R) and my mother (E) were both East Prussian. Both went through the Second World War. I have very little knowledge and no recollection of my paternal grandparents. I have had more exposure to my maternal grandparents – my granny (L) and my grandpa (K). My grandparents lived through the first and second world wars. My maternal grandparents had three children – the eldest a daughter (D), a second daughter who is my mom (E) and a son (K.Jnr.).
The story goes that my mom was in love with my father (R). He, however, only had eyes for my aunt (D). (D), however, was disinterested in (R). So (R) chose ‘second best’ and married my mother. So I guess from the outset it was a less than perfect marriage.

East Prussia (from what I can work out) is part of Poland today. Germany invaded the area and both my parent’s families had to flee. They apparently were very wealthy before the war. They lost everything.

When I was little my mom would frequently tell me that I had ‘blue blood’ running through my veins. That I was descendent from royalty. Growing up my mom would pay particular attention to my etiquette and manner. She was very stern in that way. Feelings and emotions were never her strong point.

My mom would tell me of (how before the war) how my granny would place a book on my mom’s head – so she could develop good posture while walking and sitting. How granny would place a book under each of my mom’s armpits at the dining room table – while they ate – so she would learn to keep her elbows close to her side during eating. She would tell me how, as a teenager, she would go hunting with my grandfather and what a good marksman she was. She would tell me bits of stories of (during the war) how my grandmother would go into the woods and gather items to try to brew up a meal for the family.

Another time she told me of how my grandfather had arrived back – all wounded from the war. How granny had to find things in the forest to heal the wounds. How she nursed my grandfather back to health so that he could go off and fight again. She told me stories of the beautiful jewellery they possessed. How they had to sew the jewels into the hems of their clothing to hide it. How they bartered and traded with the jewellery to survive the war. Only a few items remain – of which I possess a few.

To sum up – wealth, elegance, items of beauty, status, good breading, class; were things that were close to my mother’s heart (and still are to a large
degree). I also need to mention here that my mom is a woman of particular beauty. She is tall and slender. She has kept her figure, skin and hair in remarkable condition all of her life. She became a beautician by trade and was skilled and enjoyed her profession (even though it was physically demanding at times). My mother, just as my granny, is a woman of strength (both physical and mental) and has boundless energy. I believe her to be ADHD (undiagnosed – of course).

Apparently, at the time of my birth – we were living on a plot in Half-Way-House, Johannesburg. My sister tells stories of her pony. My parents were keen horse riders – I think my dad had an Arab. They also were breeding Harlequin Great Dane’s at the time. There is a story of a female Great Dane (Dunya) that was very protective over me. One day when my dad was in a drunken rage – Dunya went for him to protect me. There is another story of army ants marching through the garden and getting hold of me.

My sister tells me stories (with much resentment) of how she had to constantly look after me, feed me, bath me and as she puts it ‘change my endless shitty nappies’. One day she even told me that she used to get onto the school bus and take me to school in a carry cot. She even went to swimming training with me in a carry cot. In between lengths she would check to see if I was all right. I questioned my mom about that in recent years, she just made a little noise, said nothing and changed the subject (which is the usually way things get dealt with).

From a very early age (and no-one is able to give me the exact time frame) – my sister and I were ‘shipped off’ to go and live with my maternal grandparents in Germany. Again, it is a time of bitter memories and much resentment for my sister. My sister recalls how clingy I was towards her, how I would not let her out of my sight, the endless demands that I made on her and the endless nappies she had to clean. All my life, my sister reminds me of this at every available opportunity – always sure to add ‘how much I owe her’ for her endless sacrifices. Needless to say, I adored my sister while I was growing up. She was my only source of comfort and joy. I would feel
desperately alone, insecure and afraid when she was not around me. I trusted her emphatically. I sought her opinion on many things. I trusted here judgement.

My father, mother and sister all spoke German to one another. For some reason I was, and still am, predominantly English speaking (probably because my schooling started in English). When we were shipped off to Germany, I remember the grown-up’s fussing and worrying about me not being able to speak or understand German. As a little child I remember thinking – what is all the fuss about – I can understand everyone perfectly whether they speak in English or German. My sister says it took quite a while before I trusted my granny, grandpa and my granny’s sister (TM) enough to allow them to interact with me. They all loved me and fussied over me. My grandfather was particularly fond of me. My grandparents owned the one and only cinema house in the little town / village where they lived. (TM) also helped run the business.

I assume we must have been in Germany for around two years – probably age 1 to three. In this time I do remember my mom sharing one Christmas and New Year with us.

In the mean time my father was busy making a name for himself as a documentary film producer. Africa, wild life, the Pygmy were his passion. My mom was his assistant. They travelled to various countries (Italy, Kenya, Zambia) filming, documenting and mostly selling their material to interested German parties. In later years I saw one of his documentaries on German TV.

My parents bought a plot in Lusaka and a modest home was built on it. Another huge influence rocked our lives. It came in the form of an ‘au pair’ (C) was commissioned from the Seychelles to look after me, be a playmate to my sister and assist my mom. She was of a similar age to my sister.
The memories I have of my father are these. I clearly remember my father watching TV in the evenings, drinking beer, reclining on the benches in the dining room, picking dead skin off his feet. He was a balding man, wore glasses and was overweight – not much of a catch. Slowly, as the evening progressed, he would become more vocal. Soon he would be swearing. Not long after that he would start bragging of how many women he had ‘screwed’ and which one of them was the best. His bragging was always be emphasised with one hand making a circle and the other hand’s pointing finger moving in and out of the hole. (To this day, this imagery disgusts me). More often than not his ranting and raving would follow two paths. He would either become quiet and disappear or he would start becoming violent. Violence took on two forms – people and or property.

My dad was a womaniser and would chase anything in a skirt with a fanny. All of his ‘scores’ would go down into a mental note book of who I fucked, when and what she was like. Even years later (at the age of 18) when I met my dad briefly – it took him a short while into the visit to get drunk and start ranting and raving about all the best ‘fucks’ in his life and the lousy ‘fucks’.

I can remember as clear as a bell. I must have been about 4 or 5 years old. I was sitting on the floor in front of the TV. Like all good Germans we had a lion skin on the floor – complete with head, tail and paws. The head made a perfect chair for me to sit on and watch TV. I can remember that my favourite programmes were Flipper, Lassie, and Genie. I was a very quiet child that kept mostly to myself.

On this particular occasion things were hotting up around me again. To cut a long story short – my father’s violence escalated to the extent where he removed a full length African spear and knobkerrie off the wall (mounted for decorative purposes together with the Zebra skin) and was chasing my mom around the house with it - ready to do physical harm. They were exiting the dining room door (where I was watching TV) and entering via the lounge door. In this way they were running circles in and out and through the house. Eventually my father connected my mother with one of the weapons. It
happened in the room I was in. I watched as she was flung onto the wall and slid down off it in a heap onto the floor. My father was standing over her beating away. I just shrunk into a corner of the room listening to my mother’s pathetic pleas of help that just got fainter with each blow.

We had a wonderful ‘house-boy’ (S) who interfered. He ran into the room, scooped me up, ran all the way to our next door neighbour to bring me to safety. He than ran back to attend to my mother. She was taken to hospital and came home with a cheerful attitude and stitches in her forehead.

Another incidence (or it could even be the same incidence) I can remember very clearly, is my father being drunk and violent. This time he was throwing furniture out of the door – tables, chairs, bookcases, lamps, you name it. We had a cement covered veranda that ran along the front length of the house. Both stable doors – the one in the lounge and the one in the dining room lead onto this veranda. I was in (S) arms. He was running down the driveway – taking me to safety. I remember the view over his shoulder (looking back) seeing items of heavy furniture flying out from the door and smashing on the ground on the veranda. I remember the sound of wood splitting on cement.

(S) our houseboy had run into the house. He scooped me up into his arms. I remember feeling so safe in his arms. To me he was tall and strong. He cupped his hand over my head in a protective way. He kept on saying something to me. I cannot remember what it was, but it left me feeling reassured that he was going to protect me. He ran down our long stone pebbled driveway. As we ran I could still see furniture come flying out of the house and smashing on the veranda. The further away we ran the more distance the noise and fear became. (S) was taking me to our adjacent neighbours. Their house was positioned in virtually the same location on their plot as ours was. As (S) was running up their driveway – the noise grew louder again. (S) left me there and went back. I do not know exactly who was in the house and what had sparked the outrage.
From what I can remember my normal daily routine would be as follows. My mom would open the house door early in the morning. I would dress in my one-piece, little jump suits (sewn by her) and run off into the garden. My aim each and every day was to stay there until dusk. I discovered a mango tree mangrove on the plot. My mission each day was to climb up one tree and get from tree to tree without ever touching the ground, until I was at the opposite end of the mangrove.

I never remember eating. I never remember having breakfast or lunch. I only remember supper around the build in dining room table and benches. During the day I would eat ripe mangoes off the trees. They were tasty and sticky. To this day – I love mangoes. One day my dad built a huge enclosure and kept Bush Babies in them. I loved them, but they would only be active at night. The odd few times that we went out at night, I would enjoy looking for their big eyes reflecting in the car’s headlights as we ascended our long driveway.

One day, when I was climbing in my beloved trees, I discovered where (S) lived on the plot. Fascinated I watched from the trees – how his family conducted themselves and interacted. I loved to watch them secretly – they looked so happy and everything seemed so safe. I was left with the clear impression that I was not to interact with them and stay away.

Another day I saw smoke. I then discovered a large pit where all our rubbish was burnt. I remember being scared of it. I climbed down and stood at the edge of the pit. It could easily have given way and I could have fallen in – with nobody knowing. It was (S) that gently moved me away from it.

I was a child that was alone most of the time. However, up until that point I never felt lonely. To this day I am still able to keep myself busy and occupied with little fuss. I was too busy exploring in my trees. My mom would call me to come inside. I would never come down. Only when it was getting really late, dark and cold.
One day I remember hiding behind a clump of tall grass close to the house next to a tap. My mom was calling for me and looking for me. Unfortunately for me – army ants were in that spot. I was bitten all over my body – for the second time in my life. My mom brought me inside. It was then left up to my sister and (C) to shower me and pick all the heads and feelers out of my body with tweezers. It was really painful. My father was in the house at the time, but his interaction was minimal and he was irritated with the noise I was making.

At one stage my dad bought two dogs. One Alsatian and the other a Labrador. To this day I love dogs. I remember spending endless hours playing ball and fetch with these two on the huge expansive lawn in front of our house. I was always able to trick the Alsatian into thinking that I had thrown the ball into the distance, but I could never fox the Labrador – no matter how skilled I became at pretend-throwing the ball. Today we have a Labrador (S) – she too is bright and can very seldom be tricked by a pretend-throw. My children were fascinated with (S) skills and I was happy to relate my childhood memory to them.

After a while the dogs were chained to opposite ends of the house and lost their freedom to roam the property and interact with me. I did overhear my mom and sister talking one day (this was after my mom had left my dad) and they said that my dad had killed both dogs. They both died from strangulation – he had tied them from a high place by their chains.

One day, I remember walking through the house – looking for my mom. I could not find her in each of the rooms I looked in. I was calling her name. There was only one bedroom in the house – my parents. It was in the middle of the house and you could enter it from two places – from the lounge or the dining room / TV room. I tried the one door and remember being stopped. I then walked around the house and entered the other side and flung the door open. I still have the picture of my dad in bed with (C). I had always suspected something ‘fishy’ going on, but now the exact nature of it was revealed to me. I remember my father growling at me to get out and
somebody’s arms dragging me out of the room. My mom was busy chopping carrots in the kitchen. The kitchen was adjacent to the bedroom and also opened onto the dining room. To this day I cannot believe that my mom was busy chopping carrots with only a wall separating her and my father in bed with a teenager from the Seychelles. I could not help but judge my mother on this occasion and I lost a lot of respect for her as a mother and wife. I remember not wanting her to touch me. I felt she could not be trusted or believed. I also felt she should have more integrity. I did not enjoy her weakness.

I befriended our neighbour’s daughter (P). They were a mixed marriage family. The husband was white, the mother was black. They had about 8 children – two teenage daughters (around my sister’s age) and five sons. The boys ages ranged in age from around 16 to probably 8 years old. Their last child was little (P) - a coloured girl – who was very close to me in age. Up until that point in time I did not have anyone my own age to interact with. (P) soon became someone that I wanted to spend more and more time with. Strange things always happened at her house. One day we were chatting and walking out of the house exiting by the kitchen stable door. As we flung open the bottom section a snake was curled up on the ground. Patsy ran back into the house screaming. I could not stop so landed up jumping right over the snake.

One day we all wanted to go swimming. (P) had a round reservoir on their property. One by one we all climbed up the rickety metal ladder on the outside of the reservoir and then descended an equally rickety ladder into the reservoir. I still remember seeing the water coming into the reservoir – a long metal pipe. The reservoir was probably a third to half full. I remember a very uneasy feeling coming over me – something bad was going to happen. I remember looking down at all of their faces waiting for me to descend. There seemed to be an odd grin on their faces and an air of expectancy. As I was on the last rungs of the ladder descending, the ladder broke loose off the wall. I fell back with the ladder on top of me. I remember struggling to free myself from underneath it. I managed and then wanted to place my feet on the floor
and stand up. However, the bottom of the reservoir was slippery (probably mud, silt or slime) and I was unable to push myself to the surface. The next thing that got hold of me was the circular current generated by the water being pumped into the circular reservoir. I remember trying to fight the current and trying to break to the surface to get a gasp of air. I remember having my eyes open and seeing nothing but muddy brown water. At times I would come close to someone’s legs, but then the current would slip stream me past them. I remember trying to grope at legs and not being able to do so. My lungs were aching and I was convinced that I would die. Someone eventually managed to grab a hold of me and pulled me to the surface. I was very shaken by the event. I can’t remember too much of what happened thereafter. I do remember going home and very relating to my mom that I had nearly drowned. I think I was forbidden to go there again without permission.

Another incidence that left me totally shaken also happened at (P) house. She wanted me to come over and play at her house. Her house always seemed so busy. Lots of people everywhere. I remember being indoors and then moving outdoors. They had an ‘outside room’ that was separated from the rest of the house and a little way off. It was really one large room. She invited me to come into it. It was dark inside and it took a while for my eyes to adjust from the brightness of being outdoors. Once my eyes focused I noticed numerous beds in the room – probably four or five. I enquired if this is where her brother’s slept and she said yes. There was a door and a few small windows.

A horrible threatening feeling came over me and I could see a funny look on (P) face. Things happened so quickly. I remember (P) slipping out of the room and shutting the door behind her. She must have been pulling it closed from the outside because I could not open it. Then all these boys appeared in the room – they had obviously been hiding behind or under items of furniture. The next thing I remember being on one of the beds – someone must have pushed me onto it. They ripped off my undies. The boys then started making a single line in front of me – they started undoing their buttons / zips and pulling their pants down off their hips. One by one they ran up to me and tried
to pounce on me. I remember putting up a fight for my life. I was screaming for help. None came.

As I saw each boy launch himself at me I curled up my legs underneath me and with all my might and strength tried to push them off me. I remember terrible pain in my legs from the forward thrust of them onto me and then me trying to counteract that and get them off me. As soon as I had one off the next was on top of me again. I could feel myself growing weaker with each attempt. I did not understand what they wanted, but I knew it was not good. I also knew I had to get away. The boys enjoyed the fight I put up and it only seemed to raise their attack and spur them on. I think they also were quite surprised at my strength and retaliation. For a very brief second there was a lull in the wave of their attack. In that very brief second I knew I could not escape through the door. There was a very small window that was open.

With all that was left in me I dived through that small little window – like one would dive into a pool. I was aware of someone standing outside the door – it was (P). I just remember running home. I never went over to play again after that. Nobody ever asked me why I didn’t want to play there anymore either. I think I saw (P) a few times at a distance through the fence separating our properties. I knew I could never trust her again and that the whole incidence was planned. I also believe the incidence at the reservoir was planned. I was on my own again.

In the mean time my sister was growing up into a beautiful young woman. Sleeping arrangements were rather strange in our house. My mom and dad slept in a big bed in the bedroom (that was between the lounge and dining room). I slept in a camping bed at the foot of their bed against the wall. My sister and (C) slept in the dining room. The large built in benches converted into beds at night. During the day you would lift the large lids of the benches to store all the bedding.

My sister started sneaking off at night to meet a boyfriend (F). On several occasions I would catch her as she exited the house through the window. I
would get terribly anxious and start crying uncontrollably. Each time she had to calm me down and get me to be quiet.

(1968) I must have started school at this time. I remember my sister reading with me. I remember it didn’t come easily. The one character’s name was ‘Betsy Leigh’. I always used to read it as ‘Bethly’. I remember my father storming around me one day while I was reading, pulling his (sparse) hair, shouting and screaming at me, banging his fists on the table, picking me up and yelling in my face, shaking me. I remember my sister trying to calm him and gently trying to get him away from me. I would try so hard to remember that it was ‘Betsy Leigh’, but try as I could – it would always come out as ‘Bethly’. I just could not get it right.

If I look back at the comments written in my report at that time, they were as follows:

(1968) Reading coming along well. Appears to understand what she reads. Comprehension is rather erratic. Occasionally she writes the questions instead of answering them. Writing careless.

(1969) She gets very upset when she finds work difficult and gives up trying. She has worked hard with her reading and has made good progress. She tries very hard with her number work and it is this that seems to worry her most. She has quite a good conception of number but is apprehensive at attempting anything new. She can do neat careful work when inclined at writing.

Later on in the year - good progress has been made in both reading and written comprehension. She must try to be more careful with the spelling of simple words when answering questions. Number – on the whole she has a good conception of number, but tends to be a little unsure of herself, particularly after she has been absent from school. Must try not to panic when doing her sums.
Towards the end of the year - reads and comprehends well. Her written work is usually good but often spoiled by untidy writing and bad spelling. Number – is capable of doing good work but lacks self confidence. As a result her work is very erratic. She must try to concentrate more when doing her numberwork. Writing – inclined to be too big. She must try to write smaller and form the letters properly.

(1970) Reading needs much improvement. Written work fairly good but spoilt by very weak spelling. Arithmetic – made very good progress, but must not let new work upset her. An emotional child who cries at the slightest upset, but hard working and well behaved. She is making progress and maintains the standard of the class, there is no need for her to be unduly upset.

Later on in the year - pays attention in class and works hard. She has a keen approach to her work and doesn't hesitate to ask for help. She writes imaginatively but her spelling is poor. Her reading is improving. Work is always very well presented. She is generally much more confident about her abilities and her arithmetic is of a high standard. Other subjects - always pays attention and contributes towards class discussions and group work. Very good written work. Physical education – on her own she is a bit unsure of herself, but shows enthusiasm in a group. Art & Craft – is careful and shows imagination. Homework – always satisfactorily completed. Must take care to learn her spelling though.

Going out, having fun, enjoying oneself were things that did not happen in our family. I remember my father frequently ranting and raving about his daughter going off to get fucked by someone. Not too long afterwards there was the announcement that (M) was going to get married to (F). I was to be the bride’s maid.

It was around this time that my mom decided to leave my father. I remember she had our suitcases packed. I remember my father pleading with her to stay, telling her how much he loved her, that she would be sorry if she left him. He was actually on hands and knees begging on the very same veranda
that all the furniture was smashed on. My mom just kept on walking and never looked back. We got into the car and drove off. He realised she was not going to be swayed this time and soon the verbal abuse was spewing from his mouth.

I remember my sister’s wedding. My mom was radiant – as always. My sister was a beautiful bride. I have always thought of her as a beautiful woman. I remember there being hushed talk of the possibility of my father being at the wedding. To the best of my knowledge he never came.

The next recollection I have is my sister being in a house on some large plot. Her and (F) had been on honeymoon in Italy. I had missed her terribly. She came back and had lovely clothes and possessions. She was all grown up and a woman now.

My mom had moved us into a little block of flats. She took up a position as telex machine operator at Barkley’s Bank. The flats were for Barkley’s employees. It was a small block – two flats downstairs and two upstairs.

I remember being very lonely. My mom organised a ‘boy’ to take me to school in the morning and fetch me again in the afternoon. He took me by bicycle. I remember enjoying the ride. My afternoons were very lonely. I would listen to one of the three children’s records - that I had been given by my sister - on my mom’s record player. I would cry and cry and cry. Sometimes I would go outside. The only trees I could find to climb were two small Frangipani trees in the front of the flats. I would often observe the flat garden boy and our ‘boy’ working a piece of ground at the back of the flats. I would offer to help, just to have some company. However, they always made it clear that they didn’t want me near them.

The highlight of my day was when my mom came home from work. She would ask me what I wanted for supper. My favourite was toast with tomato. I just could not get enough of that. Another favourite was spaghetti bolognaise. For some reason my mom always had lots of work to do – books to keep,
figure work to do. Always her own. I could never understand why her work was never finished and why she could never spend time with me. My mom would put me into bed. We both slept in the same bed initially. I would lie awake waiting for her to come to bed. I always wanted to cuddle up with her, but she would always turn her back on me and fall asleep straight away when she did eventually come to bed.

At one stage I grew really desperate for love and attention and I would start shouting and wailing for her to come to bed and sleep with me. I remember my mom giving me severe beatings with a wooden spoon. I remember the pain of the beatings being great, but my need for love was greater. So instead of silencing me the wailing just grew and grew – so did the beatings. My mom used to enter with a wooden spoon and beat me to submission.

It did not take long for my mom to find a boyfriend (R). Soon he was sleeping over. I did not particularly like (R). I resented the fact that she seemed to have more time, patience, love and attention for a strange man. I resented the fact that she favoured him over me – her own flesh and blood. I resented him especially at night when he had my mom all to himself. I was shipped off into my own bed in my own little bedroom adjacent to my mother’s. I remember waking up at night. I would look outside my window. If I saw (R) car parked outside – I knew he would be with her in the bedroom. Most nights I would just roll over and go back to sleep. The loneliness was unbelievable.

One night in particular sticks in my mind. Something woke me up. I looked out of my bedroom window – sure enough (R) car was there. Whatever it was that woke me really scared me. I might have called out to my mom. No response. I might have called out a few times – harder with each call. Expecting a response, but none came. I eventually decided that I needed to make a dash for it - out of my bedroom to her door – which was probably a 3 for 4 meters away. When I got there, her door was locked. I remember banging, shouting, yelling, pleading, crying, at her door. I was making a huge noise and was really terrified. I carried on for a very long time. I was getting cold. I was getting tired. Long story short – I eventually fell asleep in her door.
frame – feet against one side and back and head against the other side. I was too scared to go back to my bed. The next thing I knew it was light and morning. I heard some movement from the bedroom. (R) opened the door, glanced down at me, stepped over me, went into the bathroom to pee, came back, stepped over me, and probably closed the door behind him. It was at that precise moment that I realised how little I meant to my mom. I knew I was in this all alone. There was just something about my mom that she was/is unable give me.

I remember attending school. My recollections were probably from (1969 to 1970). In class I remember hearing the teacher’s voice giving us instructions and I would always feel unsure of myself. I was never confident. I was never sure of what was required of me. Often I would hear the teacher incorrectly and do the wrong thing or understand the wrong thing. Each time the teacher gave an instruction, I would burst into floods of tears. It was as if I could not take one more thing being demanded of me. Just when I thought everything was contained and at the end, a new thing would be presented to me. This would send me reeling into a state of panic and tears. Each time we moved onto a different activity I would burst into floods of tears. Everything frightened me.

I remember the teacher saying things and I was never quite sure did she say this or was it that. Invariably I would always land up doing the wrong thing. To this day I still often mishear words and find myself lip reading a lot of the time to make sure I have heard something correctly. Words frightened me. I could not understand what they meant. There seemed to be an endless stream of words. This endlessness frightened me too. I got so anxious about everything. My school report reflects this.

Around this time I was ill quite a bit too. I had my tonsils removed. I used to get chronic tonsillitis associated with bad ear and eye infections. The doctor told my mom that if I got one more bout I would land up being deaf or blind. I also developed a severe allergy to Mimosa Tree pollen. My eyes would puss to the extent that I could not get them apart the next morning. My mom would
have to use warm water to wash my eyes, remove all the hard pussy crust that built up during the night, before I could open them. At some point my mom stopped working at the bank. She started doing beautician work from home.

One day I was walking without shoes on the balcony floor – something my mom always warned me not to do. I slipped and knocked a pot of liquid, boiling hot wax over my head, shoulder, chest, arm. Long story short – I landed up losing a lot of skin when they removed the hardened wax. All my hair was cut off. I remember spending a very long time in a cool, darkened room. My mom would change my dressings regularly. I was lucky to be left with only one ugly scar at the top of my left arm. At some point I went to visit (M) and (F) in Italy and also stayed with my grandparents for a while. In Italy I also broke my arm. It was so badly set, that I had to have it re-broken and re-set in Germany. I lost a lot of strength in my arm and was very weak for some time. Another time I was climbing in the Frangipani tree outside the flat and the branch broke. I knocked myself unconscious in the driveway.

It was around this time that my brother-in-law (F) started abusing me. The first time it happened was at my sister’s place. It was late. I was tired and niggly. I must have been about 5 or 6 years old. Eventually my sister said to my mom that I should go and lie down in her bed and sleep. My mom told me to go. At the same time (F) announced that he was going to bed too. I can’t remember if he was in the room already or if I got there first. I remember the room being dark. I remember that their bed was made up of two (probably pine) beds pushed together to make a single big bed. There was the invitation to lie together with (F). At first it felt like absolute heaven – lying and being hugged. It was so warm and cuddly. I remember that I wished this could last forever. I felt warm and safe – something that I had hardly experienced up until that point in time.

I can’t really remember what happened next but I just remember being violated completely. I knew that this thing that was happening to me was something new and something bad. I was so scared and I just wanted it to be
over as quickly as possible. I remember not enjoying any of the noises or smells. I remember lying as stiff as a plank and thinking if I can pretend that I am dead then maybe it will stop and he will leave me alone. I remember lying on the hard wood of the bed and it digging into my body – that hurt. Then there was all the pressure coming from (F) pushing down on me. It then stopped and (F) was quiet as if nothing had happened. I knew I had to tell someone.

So I walked back to where my mom and sister were. I was absolutely shocked and dumfound. I knew that if anyone just looked at me I would burst into tears and not be able to control myself. When I got to my mom and sister, they were chatting (as they always do). Neither of them even looked at me but just politely waved me away and told me to go back to sleep. At that exact moment I realised how little I was loved, valued and appreciated in this trio. I knew I could not go back into the bedroom for fear of a repeated attack. I can’t remember what I did but I know no adult saw to me and I knew I was alone and I had to deal with this thing as best I could. Somehow in my mind I though this thing happened to me because I was so bad, so demanding, so needy, so everything that seemed to annoy and exasperate everyone around me.

The only thing that came to my mind about how to cope with what had just happened to me - was to pretend that everything was OK. I was not to ever let anyone know what happened. This is after all what everyone expected of me in any case, so I may as well get on with it and do what was required of me. The huge sense of shame combined with the loneliness also drove me to deal with this thing on my own.

Thinking back (F) must have prepared for his invasion. (M) and (F) would visit us at the flat. As usual my mom and (M) would always have lots to talk about. This would leave me and (F) at a loose end. Slowly he started playing with me. I started to look forward to the time I could spend with him. He started playing hide-and-seek with me. At times he would get my mom and (M) to look for me. He would encourage me to hide in the most bazaar and out of
reach places. One time he got me to hide in the top of an extremely tall cupboard. I can still see the look of shock and horror on (M) and my mom’s faces when they found me there and then had to proceed to try and get me out from such a high place.

I remember being at school and thinking all the time about this terrible thing that was happening to me. I knew I had to remember well so that if anyone did ask I could tell it properly. Nobody ever asked and I did not know anyone I could trust enough to tell it to. Nobody was listening to me. Not once ever did I think to tell (M). Why – I cannot say.

The abuse carried on for a while. Looking back it was amazing how brazen (F) had become. He would take his chances at every conceivable opportunity. This left me feeling more and more frightened – it was as if there was no stopping this man. I remember one occasion he told my mom and (M) that he wanted to take some photos of me outside. I had my sister’s new Alsatian with me on a leash. I felt safe with the dog. Needless to say he started his business outside – in the garden. (F) then took pictures of me. To this day and I still see the hatred towards this man in my eyes on those pictures. Nobody ever questioned me as to why I was so ‘pissed off’ in the photos. In fact nobody ever asked why I became even more introverted. Why I would hide behind my long hair all the time. Why I sat on my hands and would never have them lay freely on my lap. Why I would cry so easily – at the drop of a hat.

I must have started becoming very clumsy as well. I so wanted to please my mom and (M) and would often volunteer to do things and was only too happy to do things for them to show them how big I was getting. Invariably I would always stumble over something, or drop something, or forget something. They would laugh at me. Eventually they would say to me in German ‘Hast du scheisse in dem hende’ – have you got shit in your hands. They also called me ‘Tollpatsch’ – German for a really clumsy person.
At school I remember Maths being the only thing that made any sense to me. It became the only thing that was predictable in my life. The only thing that would add up, time and again. I soon grew to love Maths. Spelling and reading remained a mystery to me and I struggled with them.

At this time (F) also started taking pictures of my mom and (M). I remember witnessing one session where he had them both – eventually stripped down to their undies. He was lying under a tea trolley shooting upwards ‘to get a better shot’. He got them to lean down over the edge of the trolley (why they had to be so naked to do it, heavens alone knows). I remember loosing a lot of respect and trust towards my mom and sister that day. I felt so disgusted and sick and I hated having to be present. I would have preferred being anywhere else than there. I could not believe what these two women allowed themselves to be subject to.

This business of having to be around my sister continuously, lasted into my late teens. It was something that was drummed into me by my mother. I was never allowed to have my own company or do something that I wanted to do or even my mom and I going off and doing something together. It never happened. Each spare minute must be spent with my sister. This is something that continues to this day. I have become the black sheep of the family and a virtual outcast because of me asserting my independence. My sister is still very bitter about it.

My sister and (F) decided to live in Italy and my mom decided to move back to Germany (1971 to 1972) and live with her parents. I remember thinking ‘Thank God, now this thing will stop. This is my escape. This is my out. I have endured and now it will stop. I am saved.’

Before we left for Germany another incidence happened. My mom needed something from the shops. It was late and already dark. She bundled me into the car and we drove off to probably the nearest shops. All the parking spaces were taken, so my mom parked a little way off, away from all the shop lights – in a dark spot, just where the building ended. She locked the door
and told me to stay inside no matter what. In front of the car was open veld and darkness. Then I saw a figure appear in the darkness and slink along the wall of the building and peer up the passage to see who is coming. I instinctively knew my mom would be in danger.

I was so scared and perplexed at the same time. If I got out the car I would be disobeying my mom’s orders to stay in the car. I could also endanger myself as the attacker could easily overcome me. If he did nobody would know what had become of me as there were no witnesses. Then for a moment I thought he had caught sight of me in the car. In absolute terror I hid under the dashboard. Every now and again I would peep over to see what was happening. At one point I saw my mom exit the shop and head down the passage towards the car and the attacker was waiting for her at the end of the building. I was so scared. I was screaming in the car, but obviously nobody heard me. Then I witnessed this man attack my mom. He was after her bag. She put up a brave struggle, but he eventually overpowered her. Then he ran off into the veld. My mom ran after him. I was convinced that my mom would get killed and I would never see her again. I was going hysterical in the car. I was terrified. After a long time my mom returned – she had the keys in her hand. She opened the car. I told her what I had witnessed. Boy did she let me have it for being so stupid and irresponsible and not shouting out to save her and prevent the attack.

Once we were in Germany I clearly remember one night – I was having trouble sleeping. My grandpa was busy getting ready for bed. My gran still had a few chores to see to, but assured me she would be in bed soon. She told me to jump into bed with my grandpa. I remember sitting on her bed and freezing. I do not know what my body language was like or what my facial expression was, but I do remember my gran and grandpa looking at each other and then at me in a very puzzled and alarmed kind of manner. Neither of them ever said anything about this incidence. I remember crawling into bed with my grandpa – fearing the worst and being so sad that this lovely warm relationship that we had would now also be tarnished.
I thought he too would do this ugly thing to me that (F) had done. I remember thinking that perhaps I was the one that was abnormal and that perhaps this was the way the world should be and I must just get used to it, even though I didn’t like it.

My grandpa never abused me. It was then – for the first time – that I realised that everyone else was abnormal and I and him and my gran were normal. When I had nightmares my grandparents would get to me before my mom. My gran would tell me bedtime stories – I loved that and could not get enough of them. I do not recall my mom ever telling me bedtime stories or reading children’s books with me. Despite this new found happiness – I was still pretty much a recluse. I spent a great deal of time on my own in my room. I was happy there and I knew I was safe. It also seemed to make my mom happy, because then she did not have to ‘deal’ with me.

There were a few occasions where I would creep out of my bed at night, tiptoe down to my mom’s room and ask if I could climb in bed with her. Her reaction would usually be the same – there would be this frosty silent, no reaction, no acknowledgement that she had heard me, she would turn over and carry on sleeping. Often I would go back to bed. Sometimes I would try to creep into the small space on the bed and cuddle up to her back.

One time I pleaded endlessly for her to let me in. There was no space for me to climb in and she wasn’t reacting. I eventually fell asleep standing at her bed. My gran walked into the bedroom the next morning and found me icy cold on the floor. She immediately saw to me and tried to get me warm. My mom came out of that bedroom looking glamorous (as usual) as if nothing had happened. I was never aware of my grandparents confronting my mom about this incidence. Again, for me it was just a point driven home about how unloved and unwanted I was to my mom.

I could speak poor German, but I could not read or write it. I was held back and repeated grades in the hope that the workload would be familiar and then I could learn the new language simultaneously. I remember spending endless
hours each day for well over a year learning how to write and read in German. I remember being so unsure of my vowels and never knowing which one to use. Never knowing for sure how the word ends – is it a ‘t’ or ‘d’. My mom would shout and hit me frequently. Call me names. Degrade me and ask me why I couldn’t get it right, when just a few minutes ago she had explained it to me and I had gotten it right then. I remember eventually being so scared that I hardly wanted to put pen to paper or even utter a sound out of my mouth in fear that it would be the wrong one. I used to beg and plead for my mom to please let me go and play. All I wanted was freedom and out. I remember the standard of work being far superior at the German school. I could hardly believe that I was expected to know all these ‘things’. Eventually the intensity of the situation started getting less. My reaction was to retreat into my own world once more, a place where I could be alone and safe.

My mom encouraged this. She would buy me dolls and colouring-in things. I would occupy myself for hours on end and was no bother to anyone. My gran used to barge into my room and tell me to go outside and play. I never wanted to anymore – I had lost my joy to be outdoors. I remember my gran saying ‘Du kreigst ein dicken arsch’. You are going to get a fat arse / backside. Guess what – I have got a huge bum today. The only sport I enjoyed was swimming – done infrequently with lots of washing and cleaning before you even get into the indoor swimming pool. I hated the gym and all the apparatus. I was too big, heavy and clumsy to get around, up and down things. I remember one day being told to climb up the rope and touch the roof. I remember being so scared of heights and not being able to get myself very far up the rope – I was simply too big. I didn’t mind the pommel or vaulting, but was terrified of the beam. I must say here that in a short period of time I had changed from a slim, slender girl in to a hef-a-lump. My grandparents owned the cinema. They would shower me with sweets, cool-drinks and ice-creams whenever they or I wanted. To this day – food – is a big gratifier in my life.

At some point my mom disappeared again. I eventually managed to piece together that she was off doing a nursing course somewhere. She needed it
so that she could give injections to ladies requiring various beauty treatments. She also had an extended holiday with a wealthy aunt (TH) from my father’s side. I pined for her and wrote her lots of loving letters and drew pictures for her. I remember feeling hurt that she had gone off without explaining things to me properly. I also resented the fact that she was having such a good time with my aunt and didn’t want to rush home to me. I felt rejected again.

Just when life was starting to settle and get into a comfortable pattern – my mom decided to move back to South Africa (1973). It came very suddenly and unexpectedly. My mom had started buying furniture and furnishing out the ‘flat’ above my gran’s. It was so exciting. I had bedroom furniture and a room of my own. It was looking nice and cosy. The trigger was that my sister had moved to South Africa and she persuaded my mom to abandon her plans and join her. My first thoughts went to (F). I remember wondering if (F) had forgotten all the ‘stuff he did to me, or if it was going to start again’. I was happy in Germany. I was loved by my grandparents – each in their own special way. I was sad to leave.

When we arrived in South Africa – we stayed in Johannesburg / Blairgowrie – with my sister, (F) and their two boys – aged ±3 and 1. The idea was that we stay with (M) until such time as my mom could get herself established – work wise and accommodation wise. I immediately bonded with my sisters two children (V) the eldest and (F-Jnr.) the second. I enjoyed my sister’s laughter, her warm and affectionate manner, the freedom of sunshine and swimming. Initially it looked like things would be OK. Then my mom and (M) started talking again, being busy, being in each other’s faces, almost to the exclusion of others. Soon I was the skivvie – making tea, changing nappies, rubbing their aching backs (something which to this day disgusts me), bathing my nephews, feeding them. (F) was cunning beyond belief. He would find every opportunity to carry on with the abuse.

He would slip his hand into my underwear, or put my hand into his pants and make me fondle him – even with my mom and (M) in the next room. Even when I was on the floor playing with his children. When we sat at the dining
room table (no matter which seat I occupied) he would manage to stretch his leg undetected under the table and slip his toes into my underpants and up my vagina. I would often burst out crying at the table. My mom’s and (M) response would be to ask me why I was crying. I was usually too embarrassed and overcome to respond with anything coherent. Eventually they just put it down to ‘stupid girl – crying again’ and would take less and less notice of me and my outbursts.

Then they would start going shopping together, leaving me to watch the kids. Sometimes (F) would be there, sometimes he would come home. (M) had a very old nanny called (G). She would be off at one point in the afternoon. (F) would use this opportunity to abuse me. I remember one day very clearly. I decided – so much and no more. I was growing in height and weight and I was as big as (F) if not slightly bigger. He started his business again. Then he picked me up (over his shoulders) and started going down the passage towards the master bedroom. I knew I was heading for a point of no return and I put up the fight of my life. Firstly I was so shocked that this man could actually pick me up (I was not light). I was concerned about the children that were playing – I didn’t want to alarm them and upset them, but I did want to save myself.

I kept on saying NO. As he was walking down the passage I grabbed onto door frames and held on with all my might. Fighting and kicking in his arms. I could actually feel my nails starting to lift out of the nail bed I was holding on so tight. When the pain got too much in my nails and arms and hands I had to let go only to try and cling onto the next door frame. As we got closer to the bedroom I started to shout and scream. I started calling for (G) with all my might. (F) would pry me off the door frames. With the force I was catapulted against the opposite passage wall (which was rough plastered). My skin was grazed on my arms and legs and I was bleeding.

(F) eventually got me into the bedroom. I was exhausted already and did not know how much longer I could keep up the fight. He flung me onto the bed. Before I could roll off and get away – he had me pinned down. He was on top
It was almost like a switch had been flipped. He enjoyed me putting up a fight. It must have been part of his turn on (I realise that now). He stopped trying to penetrate me. He forced his penis in my mouth (as he had done so many times before). I have a small mouth and often had little tear marks on the corner’s of my mouth. Nobody ever asked me what they were. I never bothered explaining. He was forcing his penis deep into my throat. I could feel myself gagging and choking and wanting to pass out. I thought he would kill me. Then he was masturbating all over me. Trying to shove his penis up my nostrils, in my ear – any orifice he could find. By this stage I was totally shattered. I could feel his warm ejaculation all over my face, my hair, my abdomen, over the duvet cover. This warm sticky mess was everywhere.

Then my mom and sister arrived home. They parked the car right outside the bedroom we were in. (F) jumped up and told me to go and clean myself up. I can’t remember what I did. I just remember being half dead, zombie, not caring anymore what happened to me, pain all over my body, semen everywhere, (F) pushing me off and telling me to act normal. Him frantically moving behind me.

I think I went into the bathroom. I probably cried quietly into a towel (which had become another normal habit). I remember getting dressed and not having underpants. I remember the shame and guilt I felt. How would I tell my mom that I was walking around with no undies.
My mom and sister entered the house – so excited about all the new ‘bargain’ shoes they had purchased. They didn’t even notice anything was wrong. When my sister entered the bedroom – I braced myself for a reaction from her. None ever came. At one point I remember wondering if all this had even taken place. My missing undies, the scratches on my arms and my aching fingernails reminded me of the truth.

To this day I do not know how (F) managed to clean up the room so quickly. To this day I do not know what he did with that pair and other undies that he ripped off my body. To this day I do not know why my mom never noticed that my undies were disappearing. To this day I do not know why they never noticed and asked me about the scratches on my arms. I find it unbelievable – today I have children of my own and I notice things on and about them.

Just when I thought that things could not get worse – they did. (F) mother (Ma) and his step father (NC) came to visit from Italy. I don’t know if these two men shared information or what. I remember (NC) was watering the garden one day. I was inside getting ready to change to go and swim. He spotted me through a window in the passage. I saw an expression on (NC) face that left me fearful. I closed the bedroom door. The next thing I knew he was in the bedroom with that funny look on his face. I had crept under the bed to hide away, because I sensed something bad was about to happen. He managed to get hold of me and pulled me out from underneath the bed. His abuse was mostly fondling me and conducting oral sex and getting me to masturbate him and give him oral sex. I could not believe it. Now I had two that I needed to hide away from. I remember resigning myself to the fact that maybe I was the abnormal one and all the rest were normal and I just had to get used to all of this madness around me.

Over the years they came for visits from Italy and each time (NC) would carry on where he left off. I did put up more resistance with each time. The more resistance I showed the more persistent these men became. There was no escape.
(F) was a fair artist and would paint openly around the house. I have always loved drawing and as much as I detested this man I would be drawn into him painting and spend time around him. At one stage I could not contain myself anymore. I begged and pleaded with my mom to please let me go to art lessons. How stupid and naïve I was. Never in my wildest imagination did I ever think that she would send me with (F) to art lessons. I remember being so excited – buying the brushes, the oil paints, the palette, the box to keep it all in. I eventually resigned myself to the fact that everything would be OK. That he couldn’t abuse me at art class, because other people were there. In a naïve kind of way I also believed that he might ‘spare’ me from now onwards because we had something ‘in common’. How mistaken I was.

The first few lessons went OK and I believed myself to be ‘safe’ and relaxed. Then one evening (it was dark already) we went off to art lessons. On the way there he began his business again. I remember being absolutely shattered. I remember (F) trying to compose me – to no avail. He obviously could not return home with me in such a state. So believe it or not he took me to the art class. I remember the artist (an old man) and his wife coming to the car. Heaven alone knows what story (F) told them. Gently the wife coaxed me out of the car and into her kitchen. She made me tea and tried to calm me down. I remember I couldn’t even talk – I was totally incoherent. I remember the puzzled looks on the artist and his wife’s faces. Towards the end of the class I slipped in at the back and did a bit of painting. I was still heaving with sobs. I remember everyone being so engrossed in their work. I remember seeing (F) at work painting away as if nothing ever happened. I hated that man with a depth that I didn’t know existed in me.

After that I begged and pleaded with my mom to please not send me anymore to art lessons. At first she insisted, because she had bought all the stuff for me. After a while she gave in. I had lost total interest in painting and art. Nobody ever asked me why I had lost my passion and enjoyment of something that I had loved so much.
At the same time (F) was beating up (M). They would have fights. You could hear them shouting and the struggles in the bedroom. One night she ran out the bedroom down the passage. He got hold of her and was beating her outside our bedroom door. My mom and I slept together in one room. All the past fear from my father and his ranting and beatings came flooding back to me. I could not understand why these two women were not standing up to this man (especially based on past experience). My mom eventually slipped out of the bedroom to go and see to my sister. Miraculously the two little boys slept through it all.

Another night of horror happened when my mom and I were fast asleep. The bedroom door opened quietly. In an instance I knew it was (F). Every nerve in my body was alive and in fear. I could hardly breathe. I knew he was only after one thing - sex. I could not believe the audacity of this man. My mom was in a bed right next to mine. How was I going to cope with this situation. I was totally unprepared. What would happen if my mom woke up. I realised that this man had no qualms. I was definitely not prepared for what happened next. Instead of climbing onto my bed (which was the furthest away from the door) – he climbed onto my mom’s bed – slowly and deliberately. My mom kept on saying no in a soft voice. I am sure she thought I was still asleep. He kept on saying yes. The bed springs squeaking away for ages and (F) eventually exited the room as quietly as he had entered. I knew then that there was no safety anywhere. That things were hidden and kept secret in my family. Things were covered up. I was sickened to the core.

I must have been around 20 when I confided to my sister that (F) had sexually abused me. She sat in the chair opposite me. She never got up to hug me. She never suggested that I must see someone about it. She never said that we should tell my mom about it. All she did was ask me three questions. One question was that (F) had always bragged to her that he was having it off with her little sister and her mother. Did I know if the latter was true. I related the above story and said well it must have been true regarding my mom – with what I witnessed and it was certainly true of me. I asked her why she never did anything about it. She said she was just dealing with so much ‘crap’
herself that she didn’t have the time to help anyone else. Everyone had to see to their own lives so to speak. I asked her if she thought her own children both the boys and the subsequent two girls had escaped abuse from (F). She thought they had. I am not so sure.

The other question she asked was if her current husband (F2) had abused me at all. I answered negative to that.

I also remember (F) playing with his little boys. When they were naked he would frequently hold their genitals in a proud and affectionate way saying things in Italian. One day he actually picked up one of the boys over his head. Then lowered the child’s genitals into his mouth. I remember being so disgusted with this and thinking OK I’m never having kids. There was no reaction from the other adults around – it was like this was OK - normal.

When we first came back to South Africa – my mom sent me to the German School in Johannesburg (1973). At first she took me, then I got lifts with various people, then I caught the bus.

I was around 10 years old and I started to develop. My boobies started to grow and one day I got my period. It was just before school. I remember calling my mom to come and see this funny red ‘strawberry jam’ that I had ‘sat in’ and how did it get into my undies. It took me a lot of courage to call her to come and look at my undies in the first place. My undies were always covered in a creamy white paste that I could not understand where it came from. I was so scared of this. My mom very irritably told me I had started my periods. She threw a Dr White sanitary pad and Elasticised waist band into the bathroom, told me to put it on and hurry up we were late for school. I looked at this elastic belt and didn’t even know what to do with it. I put this big pad in my undies and could hardly close my legs. It felt like I had a mattress in between my legs. I was so depressed and sad. I just sat on the toilet in the bathroom and cried and cried. My sister came in and showed me how to put on the belt and how to fasten the sanitary pad to it. I felt like the end of the world had arrived and I wished I didn’t have to live any more.
Soon after I started growing hair under my arms and down below (I am very hairy). When we were changing for P.T. lessons – the other little girls would stare, point, laugh and ostracise me. I became a bit of a freak. The school was mixed (boys and girls). When it came to doing backstroke – the kids would stand at the side of the pool pointing and giggling at my hairy underarms. After a while the hair down below grew so thick that it stuck out the sides of my costume. It took my mom a long time before she found the ‘time’ to give me a bikini and underarm wax.

When I used to catch the school bus home from the German school – it would have high as well as junior school kids on it. Some boys in the high school decided to pick on me. They noticed that I was wearing a bra. They would sit in the bench behind me and pull my bra straps through my uniform or else put their hands in the short sleeves of the uniform to get to the bra. The one day they actually pulled so hard that they managed to rip the bra right off me from under the uniform. They also used to torment me on the playground as well. I used to tell my mom, but she did nothing about it and basically told me to stop making such a fuss.

As you can imagine – school and lessons were a bit of a blur. I did manage to get fairly good grades. Always good ones in maths and always mediocre to poor in the languages. I enjoyed school, the structure and the predictability. I always was left with the impression that teacher’s didn’t like me much, that I was a bit of an odd ball, that I should be ignored. When I put up my hand I would seldom be asked to answer. This left me feeling stupid, disappointed and frustrated. In the junior school I was frequently taller and heavier than many of my teacher’s.

My mom treated my marks very casually. For good marks she would reward me financially. If they were bad – nothing happened. At no point did she ever leave me with the impression that I was actually bright and with monitoring and encouragement that I could do even better. I was left with the impression that schooling and subjects were not that important and just something that needed to be done. When I was little I always wanted to be a doctor or a vet.
After a while we moved out of my sister’s house and into a flat of our own (1974). I found that so exciting. New prospects. Hopefully the end to the abuse from (F). That was when my mom bumped into (A). Someone she knew from when her and my dad were together. It didn’t take long and he was visiting, then staying the night and then he moved in.

(A) had a son (D) slightly younger than me. He was into motorbikes. After a while we moved onto a smallholding (1975). At first it was fun. (A) was a rep by trade – so he was always coming home with weird and wonderful things. I remember Swazi candles, pottery, go-carts, amongst others. (A) took great interest in me and spent time with me. (D) and I would ride bikes and go-carts. (A) encouraged my mom to send me for horse riding lessons that I loved so much. He took us out for supper at least once a week – I had never eaten out before. He bought (D) and I comics to read, sweets. He was kind. I should have known better. I have no clear collection of when the abuse with (A) started. It was almost where the one stopped the other carried on. By now I was really convinced that this is all that life had to offer. How could it be anything else. I tried really hard to succumb to it and meet his expectations, but every cell in my body hated it and was rebelling. It had this continuous internal turmoil going on.

I started attending (name) Primary School (1975 – 1976). It was a brand new school and I loved going there. Some of the teacher’s were a bit weird but others were nice. My register teacher (Miss M) for some reason really disliked me. I assume it was because I was so different from the others – a bit of an odd ball myself. When it came to doing movement rings in class I would freeze. I was far too self conscious to move and do silly things. To me it felt like abuse all over again. She really disliked me for that. We had a lovely music teacher and I took up learning the guitar and managed quite well. At one point I started doing gymnastics and surprised myself with body control and strength. I was, however, never able to do backward jumps and cartwheels on the beam – I was just too scared.
I was always well behaved and polite in class. One day my friends told me to open the lid of a jar with something preserved inside it (in the science class). Needless to say it spilt it on me and (Miss M) caught me in the act. From that day on she stared at me daggers and stern faced. I hated being called up to the blackboard to write things. I was so self conscious – I always left a wet mark on my plastic chair and often I would have a wet patch on the back of my dress. The abuse was constantly on my mind.

My periods were very irregular and I did not experience any pre-menstrual pain. Often I would start my periods, bled through my undies, onto the back of my uniform. Then I would walk around not knowing – much to the amusement of my peers. To this day I cannot believe that teacher’s actually let me walk around the whole day like that. With a blood stained dress. To this day I cannot believe that they didn’t send me to the sick bay or phone my mom. To this day I cannot believe that my mom was not more vigil and monitored my periods. To this day I cannot believe that my mom didn’t pack in a spare uniform, pads, etc so that I could at least help myself at school.

I eventually learnt to tie my jersey around my waist to try to hide the blood stain. One day in particular stands out. I realised that I had bled all over the back of my uniform. At break I went into the bathroom and was frantically trying to pull my uniform around and rinse off the blood in the basin. I was busy and girls came in and out of the bathroom. They found it very amusing what I was trying to do. The bell rang to go back into class. I decided to better head for class else I would be in trouble. I had not managed to get all the blood out so I decided that I would have to do so at second break. I went into the classroom with a sopping wet uniform at the back. I was really hoping I would not be called into the front to write something on the board. This dilemma of mine carried on into high school as well. I was a bit more prepared there and always had a tampax in my blazer pocket. One day in assembly I took out my school hymn book and by accident the tampax came out too. What an embarrassment to have it lying in close proximity and all the boys canning themselves laughing about it.
My Mom and (A) moved house regularly. He would normally find the opportunity to abuse me when my mom went to bath at night. Being a beautician she is a stickler for all the right creams, lotions and potions in the right places in the right sequence. Needless to say this takes time. So her bathing routine was lengthy. (A) would always slip into my room and into my bed.

I remember a few nights he over stayed. My mom came looking for him – opening and closing all the doors of each room as she progressed down the passage. Once he just lay in my bed still, with me tucked in front of him. My mom opened the door – I don’t know what she saw – and then closed it again. Another time, when he heard her coming and he hadn’t quite finished his business he pulled me into a walk in cupboard in my room. Again my mom opened the door – must have seen an empty bed and closed the door again. What she thought I do not know, because all the other rooms didn’t have us in them either – so how exactly she explained her missing lover and daughter to herself baffles me to this day. On each occasion I was just far too ashamed to cry out. I found it all so disgusting and humiliating that I could not cope with a face-to-face confrontation.

One day (A) tried to grab me during the day. I was around 14 at the time. I pulled away from him with all my might and told him to never touch me again or I will kill him. At that point my mom walked into the room and wanted to know what was going on. I stormed past her in a rage and told her to ask that sick bastard to please explain to her. I don’t know what ever took place between the two of them.

Thereafter the abuse carried on. We moved house again. This time I had a friend living close by and I enjoyed going to her house to play. (A) got very friendly and interested in her. One day the two of us were lying on my bed when (A) walked in. He made a pass at my friend (K). I could not believe the audacity of this man. My reaction was a combination of many things. I realised for the first time that I was not ‘special’ and the ‘only one’ he would pursue. I wondered how many other’s there were. I felt betrayed that another
person – a friend of my own age – was being exposed to his ways and that I was being exposed simultaneously – my shame (something that was so private to me).

Something that I was trying so very hard to hide all my life. I was so ashamed. What would this friend think of me know. I also reacted in a way that shames me to this day, but a part of me felt relieved that he was now picking on someone else and I was ‘free’ in a sense. I also felt that it was each to their own and I needed to do what I needed to do in order to survive and get away. She had to either fight or succumb to his ways. I could not fight for the two of us. All of this happened within a few seconds. I hit (A) as hard as I could and ran out the door. I left (K) kicking and screaming inside. After a few seconds she too emerged. She frequently remarked on how weird it was that (A) had hit on her like that. She thought it was really funny and laughed about it each time. Perhaps she didn’t understand the full intention behind his advances.

Another thing I found hard to deal with was as we approached the end of primary school and entering high school (1976 / 1977). The girls I had befriended (were mostly strong willed and tom-boyish) were starting to discuss sex and wonder what it would be like. A few were already committing themselves to boys once they entered high school. I would always feel so awkward around these conversations.

Sex held no mystery for me whatsoever and it certainly was not something that I wanted to seek out and engage in and pursue. So in a sense I became ostracised from the rest of the girls and started becoming a bit of a loner again. I have never had many friends, but I have always had a few good friends. Now these few good friends were off on a tangent that I didn’t want to be part of. A few of them started experimenting with alcohol and drugs. Well again, I was very aware of what alcohol could do to a person. My mom had raised me to taste alcohol whenever I wanted and it held no fascination for me whatsoever.
When I entered high school (1977) my mom left (A) and we moved into a flat. Initially she worked from home and then when she became more established she rented a room at the gym in the shopping centre across the road from the flats. I was happy there. I walked to school and back each day. I was independent. I had nobody to report to or bug me. I had friends that stayed in the flats. We would go swimming in the afternoons or visit at each other’s flats. Some had working parents other’s had stay at home moms. We would listen to music. I did well at school. I started playing sport and found I was not too bad at it. I did struggle to find a happy medium between work and sport and soon gave up sport because work used to be so time consuming for me.

Athletic days used to freak me out. Because of my age, I was always in the year group above my class friends. Again I felt singled out and ostracised. I could not run very well and found it embarrassing and humiliating to partake in the races that I had to run.

I enjoyed swimming galas and performed relatively well with no training. Again I think of the wasted potential. I used to come second, third and fourth against girls that trained. This information just slipped off my mom like a silk scarf. All I needed at the time was for someone to show an interest in me, guidance and encouragement.

In high school I found it very difficult to sit and study. I used to get all edgy and uncertain of myself. I would land up doing everything else except study. I would clean my room, rearrange the furniture, anything to avoid studying. If I did study I found that I could not remember what I had learnt the next day. I knew nothing about study methods. I used to rely purely on memory work from class to get me by. I would perhaps read through the work the night before, but never actually memorise lists and points. A few times I asked my mom to test me, but found that a useless exercise. We would normally land up angry and shouting at each other. I was useless at spelling.
One day my mom’s friend (L) who lived across the road decided she would test me on spelling. We were in the pool. She would ask me a word – I would swim to the other side and back and spell it for her. I thought I was doing well, but obviously was not. At one point she got so frustrated with me that she hit me through the face. I was so hurt and saddened by her action. I told my mom about it. She did nothing. I felt very strongly that if anyone was to hit me it was only to be my mom. I also felt I was too big to be hit. It was also the first time I had ever been slapped through the face. It hurt like blazes and was really humiliating.

In the mean time my sister had divorced (F) (on grounds of adultery from her side) and married her second husband (F2). She had to perform the act of adultery to divorce (F) as they were married Roman Catholic and he would not grant her a divorce. This was the only way for her. I remember at the time my mom and (M) in their normal little huddle – talking. I remember thinking that maybe my information might make a difference. For some reason I never came forward with it. They moved from Botswana to Durban. Holidays were always spent going down to Durban. At first it was fun.

As I grew older I wanted to do more of my own thing and meet boys and be with people of my own age. I was always made to feel that I was being unreasonable, that I was looking for something (sex), and that I was dirty. I wanted to have fun and laugh and be merry – in a different kind of way to what I was within the family. If I ever did go out and have fun with friends – upon my return I was always made to feel that I had done something dirty, something bad, something disgusting, something vulgar. It took me a long time to get over these guilty feelings that I was left with. Even today, I still find it hard to relax completely, especially in the company of strangers and to laugh freely and be jovial and care-free.

The pattern that was to follow in my high school years was that just as I was relaxing and feeling confident and happy within myself – either my mom or sister would pass some remark that would tell me I was not OK, not accepted and had to change. So to this day I find myself being very cautious when I am
happy and content, because that is when I am at my most vulnerable. People often tell me to relax, smile, laugh, stop being so stuck up. If they only knew from where I was coming. I am constantly trying to do a balancing act between trusting too much and too little. It is getting easier as I am getting older. Another thing I have definitely noticed is that certain people will perceive me as pretty. Because of my 'prettiness' they expect / demand more from me. They expect me to be brighter, cleverer, more interested, more, more, more. Sometimes I can live up to expectations, other times not. It is exhausting to try to please everyone around me. I am learning to please myself more these days, to say no. Both very difficult things for me.

In (1979) my mom met her future second husband (A). Literally overnight they decided to get married, we were to move into his house, my boyfriend (T) that I had at the time would have to disappear because (A) didn't like boys on bikes with leather jackets, and I would have to move to another school. I protested wildly.

All my happiness and security that I had found in the last two years was being taken away from me again. Long story short I rebelled to the extent that I started saying that I would rather go to boarding school than all of the above. Before I knew it I was whisked off to Pietermaritzburg (1980), where I completed my final years of schooling (1981). My sister was also quite instrumental in the decision, telling me it was best for me to be out of the picture and allow (A) and my mom a chance to build a relationship. (A) had never had children and was 20 years my mom's senior. He was a dry old man, that laughed at his own jokes, was totally incapable of even making himself a cup of tea.

He thought of himself as a self-made man, knowledgeable and requiring respect and admiration for the successes he had achieved in his life. He himself had absolutely no relationship to his sister – who was still alive. He was a man that was suspicious of my mother, her popularity and her independence. He was constantly accusing her of having affairs behind his back and even went so far as accusing my mom and my second brother-in-
law (F2) of having an affair. He despised my sister, her four loud children, her motor mechanic husband and soon forbade them to ever visit the house again. My mom would sneak visits to my sister in between running her chores. In the beginning she worked from home and later on she stopped working, then she joined her husband in the business – only to establish what a useless businessman he was and that the business was on the verge of collapse.

She eventually put in money to keep the business afloat and to survive a few more years, before (A) retirement. (A) I believe loved my mom but he disliked her natural ability to succeed at what she set her heart to. He was a keen golfer. Out of the generosity of his (shallow) heart he made her a member too. After receiving lessons and joining him on the golf course – she soon outshone him. She was naturally easy with all the upper crust of society, she was (and still is) a very good looking woman in good condition. Soon she was even matching and bettering his golf handicap. She became involved in the women’s golfing league, became the chairlady for several years, raised more money than previous years, won more prizes and trophies that he did.

In the early years of their marriage they fought a lot. My mom would come creeping into my bed at night. She would say things like ‘That bloody bastard. I’m going to leave him tomorrow. We will build a new life, you and I.’ I would be so happy, thinking that when I wake up tomorrow – we will leave and start afresh. Needless to say, it never happened. In the morning, it was like none of the previous day’s or evening’s things happened.

I was lonely and sad again. I cried myself to sleep almost every night. My pillow each morning would be quite wet. My mom never questioned me about my wet pillow.

I started boarding school in 1980. I was desperately unhappy. My marks plummeted. I found the girls in my class intellectual snobs and quite lacking in personality or humanity. I begged my mother to take me back home. No go. I eventually matriculated – my maths and science I had dropped to standard
grade because I just could not cope with the pressure all around any more. I remember not preparing for my finals at all. All the other girls were swatting hard. When I wrote my first few exams I must have been close on a nervous break down. I cried so much during the exams that my whole body was shaking and I was heaving for breath. I was sure that I was going to fail. I didn’t have it within me to do anything about it. I was so scared of failing, but at the same time didn’t care what happened to me anymore. Nobody asked me what was wrong. Everyone just left me to my fate. I passed (1981), not with the marks that would have been a true reflection of my ability. English C, Afrikaans C, Biology D, Geography D, Maths (SG) C, Science (SG) B.

Remarks on my report during those years:
Science – disappointing. I am sure she is capable of better. English – works well and most responsible. I feel sure that her marks will improve. Geography – a disappointing result. Capable of much higher mark. English – she must work with more confidence. Biology – she must try and not give up so easily when the work gets her down. Geography – this is a very disappointing result. Capable of improving on this result and must make every effort to learn her work thoroughly. Mathematics – this is not a reflection of her ability. She lacks confidence and is inclined to panic as a result. Science – she is making every effort to improve. She does find the work difficult. July – on these results she has not obtained a matric exemption. She is a capable pupil, and must make a concerted effort to ensure that this does not happen again.

English – has worked with steady persistence. She should (she deserves to) gain a better symbol at the end of the year. Geography – this mark is not a true reflection of her ability. With careful revision I am sure she will be able to answer questions at the end of the year and improve her marks considerably. Mathematics – is working well and her mark is encouraging. Certain sections of work do require attention. Science – a satisfactory result. Her marks will improve as she gains confidence. She is working steadily and well. I hope that she will gain confidence in the weeks of revision and preparation which lie
ahead and that she will therefore approach her examinations in a calm manner. This is essential if she is to show her real worth.

All along I was still seeing my boyfriend (T) on the sly. He was also forbidden to come to the house. Once I matriculated my mom didn’t quite know what to do with me. I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to do and had absolutely no self confidence. My mom sent me to secretarial school (1982). There I realised how bad my spelling was, how important it was for me to spell correctly (especially if I was to do secretarial work). From learning to type – I slowly improved on my spelling. Perhaps it was the eye, hand, brain co-ordination taking place. I really battled with shorthand and could not master that. I excelled in bookkeeping. I managed the course very well and managed to get First Class passes in typing and bookkeeping – elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. The headmistress of the institution acknowledged my achievements and my potential leadership skills.

In the interim friends of mine were all studying at university and getting on with their lives. I promised myself that I too would achieve something – so that I would be able to be independent and able to carve out a career for myself. I started voicing my feelings to my boyfriend (T). At one point he told me straight – if you ever earn more than me or hold a position better than mine there’s going to be trouble. The more I was trying to push for my independence the more irate he became. At one point it was so bad that if I wanted to run myself a bath he would come storming in to turn off the tap – totally indignant that I had not asked his permission to have a bath.

I realised then that I needed to get out of the relationship. I could not confide in my mom – as I was supposed to not even be seeing him. After a while he started locking me in the same room as himself. When I tried to get out he put the key in his underpants. When I made an attempt to get the key and get out he hit me. I remember lifting off the ground and flying across the room and hitting the cupboards and slowly sliding down them. My eyes were open, but I could not see a thing. Everything was black. I could hear, but not see. His parents were banging at the door demanding to know what was going on
inside. He reassured them all was fine. I could not even call out. I slowly managed to get myself together. I realised that in order to ‘escape’ I needed to do what he wanted me to do. I complied with him and his will until such time as I was home again. That was the last time I saw him.

I told him the relationship was over. That was the first and last time he would ever hit me. He begged and pleaded with me – it reminded me of my father and I knew not to go down that road. I told my sister what had happened. (T) would visit her and plead with her to get us back together again. One day I popped in to visit my sister and (T) was there. I was very distant and cold towards him. When I went to my car he followed me outside. He threatened to kill me. He was holding a brick in his hand. I just casually told him he needs to do what he needs to do and I must do what I must do, but it was over. He knew of my past and the abuse and I said I was not going to repeat history with him. He then bought a gun. He would track me down and threaten to shoot me in various places. Each time I told him to go ahead if he must. He also tracked down my next boyfriend (D) and threatened to shoot him. He reacted the same as me.

I found a part time job at the dry cleaners and that was when I met (D) – who was to become my husband eventually. He was studying at university. He and his family were keen on improving oneself and studying. They encouraged me and I was very drawn to that. I announced to my mom one day that (D) was picking me up to take me to university to spend the day with him, as I wanted to study next year. She went into an absolute spiral. How could I do this to her. I would fail – hadn’t I failed at everything in life. It was too expensive. She didn’t have the finances to pay and would not pay. I was too stupid. Why was I whoring around with this new boy in any case. I was an absolute slut. Etc.

I remember (D) coming up the long driveway in his car. My mom ran out of the house at lightning speed. Caught (D) at the bottom of the driveway. Dived into his car window – torso in the driver’s window and legs dangling out the window. She was begging and pleading with (D) not to take me to
university. That I was too dumb for varsity. That I would fail. That I was useless. Etc. I was mortified that my mom was capable of doing this to me. I went and (D) took me despite all her pleading and rantings.

I came back determined that I would further myself. I started working. Gave myself some time to decide what I wanted to do. At first I attempted a BComm through Unisa. I gave up after 6 to 9 months. I found the reading too much (I am a very slow reader). I found the vocabulary too much (I had to look up every second word to establish what it meant). Then the actual content was so foreign to me. I knew nothing of worldly matters. My mom never bought a newspaper and we hardly ever watched the news. So unfortunately I was very lacking. I was despondent but still determined. I had a taste of studying and I had learnt a few things in that time.

I then embarked on a photography course, but soon realised that I needed things like backdrops and lighting and various processing materials – which were completely out of reach to me. However, it gave me a good idea of what I wanted to do.

Eventually I decided to do a public relations diploma - part time. So I worked all day, went to lectures at night and saw (D) over the weekends (he had gone to the army in the mean time). I kept this up for a year. I then needed to write exams and all the old uncertainty and stress from matric came flooding back to me. I started experiencing problems with my depth of field and driving became a problem. I also found it difficult to walk through doorways – bumping into the walls instead. I asked my mom and sister to please help me by taking me to the exams and in that way alleviating some stress off me. They just laughed at me and told me not to waste their time. They were far too busy to deal with me and I must find my own way around. I walked into my first exam like a zombie. As they were handing out the exam papers I started crying hysterically. I went completely blank. At one point I remember holding the exam paper in front of me and not actually seeing anything. What my mom and sister were saying of me was coming true. Nevertheless, I tried to calm myself and do my best and write anything that came to mind. I also
tend to set very high goals for myself. For me a pass is 80% and not 30 or 40%. I just decided there and then to buckle down, do my best and perhaps by some miracle I could pass it. I was absolutely shaken after that first exam. I did the rest in pretty much the same manner. When my results came out I passed – not fabulously well, but a fair pass.

I was determined to go further and not give up. I paid my own way, bought my own books, (D) would help me with study methods wherever possible (but I was also proud and didn’t want him to know how weak and ‘stupid’ I really was). I had given up full time work and found part time work. So I had the morning’s to study, worked in the afternoon, attended lectures in the evenings and studied and did assignments over the weekend. All this while running a home. After 4 years of study I eventually got my diploma (1988).

(D) and I then married (1988). I worked for a while in a PR department (1984) and found it very stressful. I ten took up part time work (1985) and continued with my studies. After I graduated I took up a position at a PR Agency (1989) and thoroughly enjoyed that. I fell pregnant and we had our first son later that year (1989). (1991)(D) was transferred to Cape Town. I tried to get a similar job there – with no luck. I then resigned myself to being a full time mom and to raising our first son – who was 1 year old. I could not bring myself to putting him into a full time crèche and pleaded and begged (D) to please allow me to stay home. (1992) our second son was born.

It was one day when I was home – doing housework and listening to the radio that I heard of an institution called RAPCAN. They were inviting adults that were sexually abused to come forward and receive free group counselling. I decided to make contact. It proved to be a positive turning point in my life. I involved myself wholeheartedly in the association and after a while was put in charge of running some of the groups. They had a free library and I read everything I could lay my hands on about abuse.

I eventually found myself in a position where I could confront my mom and sister about the abuse in the form of a letter (as they were living in
Johannesburg and I was in Cape Town). My mom’s reaction was that she was so very sorry, that those bastards should rot in hell and why did I never tell her. I have never bothered to explain the latter to my mom as she would never understand that I did try several times to tell her – she just was not receptive enough and probably is still not receptive enough to listen, know and understand.

My sister proved to be a harder case to crack. She has (and to this day) held that letter against me. She refuses to accept any responsibility to what happened to me and seems to lack compassion completely. I never accused her of anything I just told her where I was coming from.

The rift that had come between my sister and myself over the years, has just widened into a huge chasm. She believes she is right and I believe myself to be right and there we stand on opposite ends. (M) is of the opinion that her entire life has been a sacrifice to me – cleaning my dirty nappies, looking after me. She believes that I have not contributed anything to the relationship. She constantly tells me how much I owe her. Each time I relate anything of my married life or mothering experiences she’s there wagging her finger and telling me in no uncertain terms that worse is waiting for me.

I have had to largely cut her out of my life. Something which she cannot understand or forgive me for. She is my sister. I loved her once. I am not so sure how I feel towards her now. She constantly wags all her woes and hardship in front of me and tells me that what I go through is nothing compared to her hardships. She gets irritated with me and finds me needy and whiny and self-righteous. I have had to love her and let her go.

My husband and children know of my abuse. I am sure they forget the horrid details, because when you lead a normal life it seems almost inconceivable that such things actually occur in the lives of others – especially your mom / wife. They also have no basis from which to understand me. They have never experienced such things in their own lives.
I have spent many years growing, reading, developing myself. Constantly trying to get myself into a stronger and healthier place. I am sure it will be something I will do for the rest of my life. My only consolation is that if I come across anyone in a similar situation to mine, I will have the skills to assist that person. I also know for a fact that if all of those things did not happen to me I would be a superficial person, lacking in depth. I actually like who I am, even though not many other people like or understand me.

I do feel that my academic performance was affected by the sexual abuse. But it was also affected by my mom’s divorce, her relationships with other men, my sister getting married, the constantly moving houses/schools/countries. The longest stretch I ever did at one school is 3 years. Not conducive to good academic stability. It was affected by my mom and sister’s close relationship with one another. By the lack of friends and social interaction with my peer group. By the lack of worldly experiences that enrich your life.

All of the perpetrators were known to me and my family. I do not have contact with the perpetrators any more. My mom told me that (NC) (A) were very ill and suffering a slow and painful death. (F) I met once at my nephew’s wedding. I could not believe how small this little man was. He immediately started telling me how beautiful I was looking. I was very abrupt with him. I could have happily physically attached him that day, but had to control myself as it was such a happy occasion for my nephew.

I disclosed the abuse to my first boyfriend (T). Then to (D) who was to be my husband. I told my sister. I told one or two close friends. One of which told me about her abuse first. Joining RAPCAN was like lifting the lid off the pressure cooker. It was so good to share stories with other’s who had been through the same experience. We all shared such similar traits and characteristics from having been abused.

The first person I disclosed to was (T). I was ±16 at the time. I realised that both of us were committed to a serious relationship from an early start. We
went out for 7 years. I knew that one day we might get intimate with one another and I was not sure how I would react when that happened. I thought it would be best for him to know from the start what he was dealing with. It only seemed to make him love me more. He was very protective over me. He wanted to know where to find these bastards so he could kill them. He was the same age as me and in no position to assert his influence anywhere. I felt at ease disclosing to (T). I trusted him and felt safe with him. At the time I did not expect anything further. I never felt that I could disclose the abuse to anyone else before that.

I just kept on pretending that everything was fine. I was living a lie. On the surface would be the neat presentable me. Underneath would be the wounded, hurt, desperately insecure other. I knew the only way I could possibly survive was to pretend everything was OK. I promised myself that I just needed to get through childhood. One day I would be an adult and make my own way in the world and then I could perhaps seek professional help and be in charge of my destiny.

My family were so busy trying to survive their own issues, they didn’t even see that I was in crisis myself. So in a sense it was very easy to keep the abuse from them. Also it seems the times they did come across a hint of it, they never investigated further – so I guess they were not interested or maybe they were scared of what they might find.

My abuse did come out when I played Barbie dolls with my friends in Germany. I would always lead the play to the point where they were getting beaten up, sleeping around, leaving home and had sexual relationships. None of my friends at the time (of which there were few) or their parents ever questioned my behaviour. In my own body language I used to hide behind my long blond hair and sit on my hands all the time. I gave people very little eye contact. Other than that I just kept on trying to think what would a normal person do and I did that. To this day I can have turmoil going on in my life and people will be unaware of what is happening under the surface.
Schoolwork – in the primary years I was very conscientious. I would sit painstakingly doing all my homework to perfection. Even in high school. When we took notes in class – I would come home, tear out my pages of ugly writing and painstakingly rewrite it neatly. I developed a huge need for order, neatness, compliance. As an adult I realise that these were the only things I was able to control when I was little. I did it to the ninth degree. I have had to slowly learn to undo this behaviour, but it is still a large part of my personality. I am also inclined to be naturally conscientious.

My abuse was always present from the time I entered school. I never felt confident to partake in extra mural activities or sport. If I did they were usually short lived. I found it too stressful to have time taken out of the day to do ‘fun’ things and not enough time to deal with all the perfect and control items. To me the control items were more important. Neat books, beautiful illustrations to accompany my work, neat room.

I always enjoyed school. I enjoyed learning new things. I enjoyed time with friends – when I had them. I was not phased (and still am not) by keeping my own company. There are times I actually prefer it. School usually meant that I was safe for a few hours. If I had a teacher making fun of me it was easy to bear, because I knew worse things were waiting for me at home. I never complained or wined about anything. Just got on with the task at hand and did what needed to be done.

I never felt at any time that I could tell a teacher. It was something that was not open in those days. I didn’t even think it was happening to other people. I was under the impression that I was the only one going through this thing.

A teacher today could do many things. Call in the parents, headmaster, police, welfare, paediatricians, organisations such as child-line, doctor. She could chat to the child if she suspected anything and try to gain the trust of the child. She could look for clues on or around the child e.g. marks on the body.
The abuse is part of who I am and what I am. I don’t wallow in it in self pity. It is part of my roots and history. My sister would obviously differ from my opinion. I believe I have been able to take the best out of the worst situation. I believe things happen for a reason. If I did not have the life I did and experience the hardship that I did I would be a completely different person today. If I was ‘weaker’ perhaps I would not have the strength to deal with my son’s ADHD and associated learning problems.

My deceased step mother-in-law told me before she died ‘The Lord never gives us a cross that we cannot bear.’ That has stayed with me for a long time. All my life I have always heard a little voice telling me what to do. Today I believe that voice to be God’s. I firmly believe that he was with me all along. Things could have been so much worse. My mom could have given me up for adoption, but she didn’t. I could have been penetrated by (F) and been infertile today, but I’m not. I could have turned out being a drug addict, a whore, a down and out kind of person, but I’m not. I could have fallen pregnant and had to endure all of that, but I was spared. So I thank the Lord for always being with me and I am thankful for what I have today.

The advice I would give to a young child today is shout no to the perpetrator. Keep shouting no. Run. Hide. If you can’t get away and bad things happen, tell. Tell anyone that will listen to you. Keep on telling until someone believes you and does something about it. Remember details if you can. Times, days, what was said, body markings, anything that will make you believable in a court room. You have to grow up very fast. You also have to realise that it is not your fault.

No matter how good or bad you are as a person – you never did anything to make this happen to you. Love yourself – even when nobody else will. You will not be a child forever, one day you will be big and adult. Make good choices. Never do unto others as what was done unto you – no matter how bad you feel. Make good choices. Don’t let what happened to you ruin you for the rest of your life. Pick yourself up and move on – as it says in the bible ‘shake the dust from your sandals and move on’. I also firmly believe that the
Lord will send the right people into your life to cross your path, just when you need them the most. This has happened to me time and again. You just need to be open and aware of the opportunities. Be bold and use them. Remember those closest to you sometimes hurt and disappoint you the most, but don’t give up because of them. Keep going despite them.
ADDENDUM FOUR

Narrative – example 2

Narrative of Mother: 11 year old daughter was molested at a school camp

What happened at the father and daughter camp in 2006 was any mother’s worst fears. I am a mother that gave up a good career so that I could look after my children properly. On this particular Saturday I dropped off my husband and daughter, making sure that there were no stops along the way i.e. bottle store.

I kissed my daughter not realizing that this day would change her life and my life forever. My family died a slow death so I felt. I assured her that if she wanted to come home at any stage I was just a phone call away.

When I picked them up the Saturday I couldn’t wait to get home to find out all about the camp. I unpacked everything but (name) wasn’t her normal self. When I tried to speak to her she said “Mommy I’m tired and want to jump on my trampoline”. I left it at that not thinking anything of it. Later in the afternoon she came and sat next to me. I tried to speak to her again and noticed there were tears in her eyes. I said to her let’s go upstairs and bath and then maybe you will be more relaxed and we can speak. I noticed at this stage that her little leg was jumping up and down quite a lot.

When my daughter bathed I always bathed with her because this was our time. This Sunday she says to me “Mommy you sit on the side of the bath, then we can talk. When she was in the bath she started to cry and said that her bum was sore. I looked at it and got quite a fright. I didn’t say anything to her but that we should go next door to Nanna (granny) and let her also take a look.

That night she was very restless and every time I went into her room she was awake. Before this (name) would sleep “dead” that if you dropped anything in her bedroom she should sleep right through it. The following morning she
went to school and I phoned (Dr name). I told him what myself and my Mom thought, but he said just ignore it because sometimes children see things on TV and if I brought her in, her imagination could run wild. I put the phone down and thought well maybe she never bathed the Saturday night so that explains the sore bum (though this has never happened before).

About a week later I noticed that (name) was not herself. She won’t run past her dad, brother and grandpa. I also noticed that we went to a birthday party and the dad was jumping on the trampoline and (name) would not jump with this dad. When I look back now all the signs were there but still didn’t realize anything.

One thing I must say is that I regret not taking (name) into (Dr name). I should have insisted. As time went by I tried to ask (name) what the matter was. I eventually asked her if I took her to a pastor’s wife that is a social worker would she then talk to her. She said yes as we had been going to their church and she liked her. After seeing the social worker for a couple of months once a week, there was still no break through. I then decided to take her to a hypnotist. We went twice to (name), but on the second visit she would not allow herself to count backwards. (name) said that she didn’t want to pressure (daughter) into anything and that I should leave it.

I then heard that there was a woman at the Atrium in Ring Road and that she had gone through a similar experience. I took (daughter) there for a couple of months. She explained to (name) about her own experience and that it would be alright to talk to her. She is a meridian therapist. Nothing came out of this so I phoned (child psychologist) and (daughter) saw her for about 1½ years. (child psychologist) did play therapy with her, but still there was no break through. I eventually took her to (a different psychologist), but that was the end, (daughter) said she was never going back to anyone because she didn’t like the women and enough was enough.

During all this time (daughter) was a good hockey player and played for the 2nd team and sometimes the 1st. Slowly she started making excuses that she
didn’t feel well, eventually giving up hockey. When I questioned her about this
all she said that “this is where the camp was held and I’m never playing on
this field again.” Eventually at some stage I can’t remember properly, the
things started coming out, like “he said he would kill you mommy, if I told you”.
“He also held his hand over my mouth so I couldn’t scream”. “He kissed my
“tits” (not that she had any). “He played with my bum”. I felt so revolted that I
wanted nothing to do with my husband. How could he have got so drunk that
when my daughter needed him, he was asleep.

When I eventually started to speak to him all he could say was I’m sorry but
someone must have spiked my drink. In the interim (class teacher) had called
me in and said that there were a few things that she needed to speak to me
about. (Daughter) was not wearing school panties but shorts and would not
sit crossed leg on the mat. I explained to her what had happened and that
(daughter) felt that she had encouraged the person at the camp as she was
wearing panties and a skirt, maybe she should have been wearing shorts.

Through all this the teacher picked up the OCD (obsessive compulsive
disorder). (Daughter) was put on medication for this and would cry when I
gave her the medication, saying that it made her feel sick. The school work
started to deteriorate and I was spending hours in the afternoon trying to do
homework. Everything that I did or said had double meanings e.g. Mommy
did you touch my titties or my bum. Every time we drove in the car and she
rode past someone she would say “He looked at me, does he want sex with
me”.

I never told my son what happened to her, but when he turned 17 years and
started taking alcohol, (daughter) would cry and say Mommy tell (brother)
what happened to me. (She hates alcohol and becomes panicky if anyone
drinks). When all this happened my husband gave up drinking.

Sometimes I get so angry that this should happen to an innocent child, that
when I see men I hate them. The sad thing is that at the age of 7 years
(daughter) sexual side had been aroused and to this day she will say “Mommy
is it wrong but my cookie feels warm”. This has been going on for 3 years. I thought time would heal (daughter) and myself, nothing as yet.

She is a child that no longer wants to go out with anyone, but with me. It took 3 years to get her back into her own bedroom. She has come to me for the past three years, not one day has passed and said “Mommy do you want to hear my bad thoughts”. All she thinks about is sex. Sometimes I get angry and say things like “(daughter) enough is enough and it only happened once”. She will then say to me as told by someone to her. “Once is like a hundred times to me”. Afterwards I feel bad and say (daughter) Mommy is sorry, but try and think about nice things. She often will get angry and the one day she hit her head on the tiled floor because she said that all these thoughts are driving her crazy. She has been doing modelling for a year. She really is enjoying it, but I had to explain to the teacher what had taken place, because (daughter) does not want to do anything sexy.

I have taken her to an acupuncturist and a reflexologist for a couple of months, but (daughter) has now said that she wants a break. She still comes to me everyday for the last three years with “Do you want to hear my bad thoughts. Sometimes I handle it better than others”. I feel so stressed that I get angry with her and everyone around me. You can imagine what it is doing to her. I wonder at this stage, will she ever be able to have one day as “normal” without any bad thoughts.
ADDENDUM FIVE

Narrative: example 3

When I volunteered my story for the purpose of this research, I didn’t realize how difficult it would be to get started. Saying it is one thing, but actually owning the story and putting it down is a whole other experience. I’ve written everything as candidly as possible and I hope it will in some way, go towards helping a child somewhere cope a lot better than I did.

The first time I was sexually abused I was about six years old and we were still living in Congo. I, naturally, didn’t think anything of it, mostly because it happened when I was half asleep and I didn’t know what to call it even if I had to tell someone. A few days after it happened, my mother used treats to get me to tell her the story. I still didn’t know what I was telling her, but I knew that I had gotten the person in trouble because the next day we had fewer people living with us.

I filed that incident into the recesses of my mind and only recalled it when I was twelve and was sent to a psychologist because I had finally told of abuse that had happened when I was eight. When the psychologist asked me to tell her the story, I had sudden flashbacks of me as a six year old and remembered that I was the reason someone was not allowed to live with us. So I didn’t tell her the story, at least not all of it.

It happened when we lived in (city); we had just moved from Pretoria and were living in a two-bedroom flat in (suburb). My parents had a friend who needed a place to stay while he got himself ready and sorted for the arrival of his family from the DRC, so being as generous as they are at times, my parents opened up our home to “Uncle B”. My sister and I shared a bunk bed and he got the bed across the room.

“Uncle B” was an engineer who had left a wife and four kids in the DRC in search of better opportunities. My sister and I enjoyed having him around, as
did my parents I’m sure, because for my mother it meant that she had someone who could get the kids up on time and off to school, and also someone to take the kids to church on Sundays; and for my dad, it meant having someone there when he couldn’t be there.

We were at home alone with him on many occasions when my parents went to functions that we could not attend. He did everything from helping us with homework to teaching us about Jesus.

One weekend, my sister and I were staying at a friend’s place and my parents came to fetch us early because they had to go to a wedding and we were to stay at home with “Uncle B”. I remember my sister and me getting shouted at by my mother because we didn’t want to go home. We were promised a sleepover until Sunday and not Saturday afternoon. Needless to say, we did not win that battle so we went home and my parents went to their party.

Because we had to get up early for church the next day, “Uncle B” sent us to bed early. I couldn’t sleep because I was still angry about the fact that our fun weekend was cut short. He came in to check on us twice. The first time he came in, I just told him I couldn’t sleep and I can’t remember what his response was. The second time he came into the room, he saw that I was still awake so he told me to go and watch TV with him, so I did.

In the lounge, he made me sit right next to him and he put his arm around me. I can’t remember what was on, but I remember it being a movie I wasn’t old enough to watch because every time a kissing scene came on, I would focus on the little triangle in the corner that tells you the age restriction.

That’s when the fondling started, of the buds I already had at that early age. It started off very light and subtle at first, and then he moved to pull my nightdress up. I didn’t move, I didn’t say a word for fear of being reprimanded. He then moved my hand to stroke his penis and I felt it grow bigger. At this stage I still didn’t know what all of this was called but I had a feeling it was wrong.
He then moved me to the side of the couch so that I could lean forward and he proceeded to penetrate me from behind. I don't remember being in pain, I stood very still, closed my eyes and prayed it to be over. After what seemed like an eternity, I felt him move away and he went to the bathroom and told me that I was not to tell anyone “our little secret” and that I had to go back to bed, and so I did and even though my mind was trying to process all that had just happened, I kept my eyes closed and pretended to be asleep because I didn’t want to have to speak to him when he came in to sleep.

The next morning all was back to normal, with everyone else anyway. I remember “Uncle B” helping us get ready for church and my parents were doing their own thing. When I walked into the kitchen I thought my mom would see right through me and know what had happened. But she didn’t notice anything different, I certainly felt as though I had become a different person overnight. I don’t know how I’d changed, I just felt as though something was different within me.

I don’t know if there was a noticeable change in my behaviour at home, but at school I started to tell stories about the other kids. All the stories were variations of what had happened to me, but I used the other kids’ names in the place of my own, and made it sound as though they had told me the stories themselves. Needless to say, I got into a lot of trouble after I told the story to a girl who, in my opinion back then, was a teacher’s pet. She then told my standard one teacher, who then told my mom. My days were not fun after that because there was so much tension every time I was around my mom, and she gave me a lecture about lying, every opportunity she got.

“Uncle B”s family soon moved to SA and he subsequently moved out and the abuse never happened again. But I never said anything. Not a word to anyone. We then moved to Germiston, but visits to and from “Uncle B” and his family were still frequent, my sister and I were good friends with his kids and we often had sleepovers, although I’d do my best to avoid these whenever possible.
It was in mid 1997 when I was in grade 5 that I eventually told my class teacher the story. That’s when it all started to come apart. Once I’d told the teacher, she went on to tell the guidance counsellor, who then felt obligated to tell my parents.

Once my parents got into the whole story, it was one interrogation session for me after another. I was called to the side day after day to repeat the story, just in case I had been dreaming or just so they could be sure of the details. I was taken to pastors just so they’d be sure that I’d repeat the same story in front of a man of God. Because it was the end of the year anyway, my parents decided that moving to PE would be best.

So at the end of 1997, we made the big move to PE. Before we started at the new school, my mom called me to the side and told me that whatever had happened in Joburg was the past and we were not to bring it up again.

The thought of living with such a story in my head any longer just didn’t do it for me. In my grade 6 class, my teacher had a pro’s and con’s box where you could write anything down anonymously and post it to her so she’d know what was going on in her class. I wrote down on a piece of paper that I had an uncle who had touched me and put this in the box, I never put my name on it, but somehow she figured out that it was me. She called me in and made a big fuss, then my parents were called in and next thing I was in a psychologist’s office.

Things at home were tense because I was told not to tell and I had. I hated every moment of school because my teacher knew, and if she knew it meant that every other teacher knew. I did horribly in school, hardly handed in work and never learnt for tests because I hated being there. So not only was I the new girl, but I was also the non-performing new girl who excelled on the athletics track and sang in the choir.

I don’t know how I passed that year but I know that grade 7 wasn’t much better. Looking back on my first two years in PE, which were my last years in
primary school, I feel like I was in a daze of sorts. I look back on all the work that was covered back then and I realize how much work I didn’t do because it was incredibly easy. I don’t even remember how I spent my days at school but Lord knows I certainly didn’t spend them doing any work.

High school was relatively ok. The first three years were pretty uneventful, I did just enough to pass, not too much effort. Towards the end of grade 10, we went to Cape Town for a visit and I saw “Uncle B”. It was the last place I expected to see him because they still lived in (city) and it freaked me out that we were visiting the same people in Cape Town at the same time.

After that things were not ok. I was in the guidance counsellor’s office just about every week but never to talk about him or anything relating to him. I had other issues creep up like bulimia and just a general disinterest in everything. I had thoughts of suicide, and once or twice cut myself, just so I wouldn’t have to think about having seen him.

Eventually my parents were told about the bulimia, in my presence, but they didn’t understand it. My mom even asked if I also threw up pizza which was my favourite food at the time. I was once again sent to a psych, but that didn’t last more than 3 sessions because I just felt bad about being there. In spite of all this, high school still ended pretty well, and I even walked away with a few pretty amazing awards.

No one was more shocked than I was when I got accepted to UCT to study Quantity surveying. Needless to say I’m obviously back in PE because being away from home meant that all the devils and dark corners I had in my mind could be released without fear. When I was at home I was too afraid to speak about anything or act like anything was wrong. At UCT no one knew my history, I could be anyone I wanted to be and so I was. I became the girl that said “yes” to just about every party. I was everyone’s best friend and favourite party girl.
The party girl obviously didn’t care to study because Quantity surveying was probably the most boring thing to do.

All in all, I think the abuse had a greater effect on me because I wasn’t allowed to talk about. It was a bad thing to talk about and I suppressed it because I felt bad even thinking about it. But all that really did was bring a lot of other things up which could have been avoided. Today, in my 3\textsuperscript{rd} year of studies, 15 years after the abuse, I find myself in a position where I have to deal with it because I cannot handle one more year of being strong for the sake of everyone else. Its killing me on the inside and my parents expect me to have dealt with it. But truth be told, I haven’t. I’ve never even told anyone the full story before. It’s only now that I’m beginning to acknowledge the fact that I have nothing to be ashamed of, nor do I have anything or anyone to fear.
ADDENDUM SIX

Narrative: example 4

Some months ago, after one of our lengthy discussions on abuse victims, I found myself re-visiting chapters of my past that were painful to think about. These were things I would not usually choose to dwell on, yet they kept nibbling at my mind. So finally, in an attempt to "get it out of my system" and put it all in perspective, I wrote my story. It was not a carefully calculated effort, I just wrote the memories and thoughts as they spilled into my brain. It was never intended for anyone else to read, but merely as therapy for me! And it worked. It was like taking a messy bundle of notes, filing them into some sort of logical system, and walking away with a sense of completion. It also helped to focus on the latter part of my journey to healing - gave me a fresh perspective. I can now leave it filed away.

Now I'm mailing it to you. And that's because I hope, in a very small way, it will add something to your research. The one aspect of sexual abuse that really bothers me is that, given the extent of appalling abuse that has become so common-place today, people generally tend to trivialise any form of abuse that doesn't have the makings of an x-rated movie. Even our courts of law fail to put abusers behind bars unless the offense is considered "serious enough". My story - and I'm sure millions of others like it - highlights how even a seemingly "trivial" violation can radically alter the victim's life pattern, her self-image and her perceptions of the world around her. This is something that needs to be understood and acknowledged, if ever we are to have a society that can truly reach out and help victims of abuse.

I haven't looked back at the story or edited it in any way, so please accept it as it is. I know I wrote quite a bit about the way my experience affected me at school, so that may be beneficial to your work. I pray with my whole heart and soul that your work will ultimately mean fewer kids will have to endure years of hell before they find healing.
It's a real privilege and a blessing to have a friend with whom I can feel comfortable sharing this.

The heat in the tiny music room is stifling, made worse by the overpowering stench of sweat and cologne seeping from the flabby body pressed up against mine on the piano chair. The man we nickname (name)i has one arm behind my back, his other hand free to slap my fingers as they falter over the keys. I forget which scale I should be playing as a familiar taste floods the back of my throat, choking me. I swallow hard, again and again. Suddenly I know it is beyond my control and I lurch sideways, vomiting onto the floor.

Twenty minutes later my mother is angrily marching me home.

“You are deliberately making yourself sick to get out of music lessons because you are too lazy to practice. How do you expect to pass matric music if you do not apply yourself?”

I explain for the umpteenth time.

“IT’s him, ma! He makes me sick. Being near him makes me vomit!”

“He’s just a pathetic little man. And he’s the only music teacher available, you have to accept that.”

I consider those words. Pathetic little man. I figure most people see him that way. But when I see him, I see a giant penis. The truth is, that’s how I see every male teacher looming over me. The only difference between the others and Fifi is that he is a giant penis once suspended for fiddling with little boys.

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On a simmering afternoon seven years earlier my friend (name) and I, both eight at the time, rode our bikes to the play park. Back in the 70s, the play park was the most popular amusement for children in our small Karoo town.
As always, it was bustling with children, most of them clinging to the Witches’ Hat and shrieking with delight as it spun around with a deafening clang.

We both noticed the man strolling towards us from the opposite side of the park, but thought nothing of it, assuming he was somebody’s father.

When he stopped to chat and produced photos from his shirt pocket, I had no idea what we were looking at.

“Have you seen this before?” he asked.

(name) said nothing. I said I hadn’t.

“Well, what do you think it is?”

I suggested it looked like a worm. He smiled. (name) tugged at my arm and urged me to join her on the slide as no-one else was using it at that moment, a rare treat indeed!

I sensed urgency in her voice, but was too naive to understand why. (name) was more streetwise than I and a fearless tomboy, an outspoken girl who could cut even the toughest bully down to size. I was the very opposite, a soft target for bullies, and felt safe with her. At that moment, I brushed aside a fleeting moment of confusion and followed her to the slide.

Very high and very steep, the slide was the one piece of apparatus that divided the wimps from the daredevils in the play park. It terrified me. I would never brave it alone. Lindsay knew the rules. She had to climb up those narrow little steps close behind me; and more importantly, she had to slide down first and wait at the bottom to catch me.

(name) was half-way down the slide when he suddenly appeared below us. The man stood there, smiling, and helped my friend to her feet. The moment I began my terrifying descent I felt the first twinge of panic, for instead of
waiting as she always did, Lindsay was sprinting towards her bike without a backward glance. I knew something was wrong.

“Do you like bunnies?” he asked as he caught me up in his arms at the bottom of the slide. “I have some bunnies just behind those bushes and I’d like to show them to you.”

I knew what was behind the bushes – a dilapidated old shed with two filthy, frightening long-drop toilets that had long been unused by any self-respecting person and served only as fodder for our ghost-stories and nightmares.

I turned to leave but he held my wrists in a vice-like grip. Fear literally burned in the back of my throat. It left a nauseating taste I had never known before. I wanted to scream but my mouth made no sound.

“Let me show you what you saw in the photos,” he said calmly and before I knew what was happening he closed my right hand around a warm, sticky thing protruding from his pants.

I had never seen a naked man before. Not even my own father ever appeared naked in our home. I was vaguely aware that men had an appendage women didn’t have, but didn’t even know what it was called.

Adrenalin pumped through my veins as I tore myself away and within seconds I was pedalling furiously past stop signs, hot tears streaming down my cheeks and throat, flinging my bike onto the lawn and screaming for my mother as I tore down the passage of our house.

Mom washed my hands, over and over again. My whole body shook uncontrollably as I sat in the lounge waiting for the policeman to arrive. I don’t recall the questions he asked or the answers I gave, but will never forget his parting words:
“YOU MUST NEVER TELL ANYONE WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU TODAY.
Not your friends, nor your teachers. Tell no-one. EVER!”

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With adult wisdom I understand those words were meant to protect me from
the malice of small-town gossip and cruel children. But at the age of eight I
understood them to mean that I had reason to be ashamed, that I was in
some way guilty for what had happened, that it was a terrible secret I should
carry in silence.

The man’s actions and the policeman’s words in fact changed my life forever!

I grew up with a profound fear of boys and adult men. I perceived every male
apart from my father – the gentlest man I have ever known – to be a potential
threat, a danger, an intimidating reminder of a violation I was never helped to
understand.

As I stumbled into my teens I felt attracted to some boys in a very distant,
vague sort of way, but the very concept of sexuality remained a mystery too
repulsive to explore or even think about. In my later school years, a close
friend took it upon herself to find me a “boyfriend”. There were two, both from
the Afrikaans school in town. These very low-key romances gave me some
sense of normality – at least I was capable of actually talking to some guys –
but inevitably their hormones began to demand more than the occasional
holding of hands, at which point I would retreat into my shell with my terrible
secret.

I spent most of my school years looking down at the ground in front of my feet.
I was, by nature, shy and ill at ease among people. But this lack of self-
confidence was profoundly exacerbated by the notion that if I looked anyone
in the eye, they would somehow guess I was hiding a secret and see my
shame. I made a determined effort to remain invisible. The less people
noticed me, the less chance there was of my secret being exposed.
In the classroom, I never voiced a question or offered an answer. Oral presentations were a living hell. In the presence of male teachers who were domineering or vindictive by nature, I escaped into a private world of daydreams with practiced ease. I imagined they were capable of doing to girls what that man did to me. I believed if they caught my eye they would instantly know my secret and grab any opportunity to punish me for it. In the presence of more moderate male teachers – few as there were – I felt so overwhelmed with guilt and undeserving of their kindness that I used the same escape tactics to stay under the radar for fear they might discover the truth.

Teachers either commended me for being a “good, quiet worker” or berated me for not paying attention, but none ever knew the torment behind my silence. One teacher even assumed I was hard of hearing and placed me in the front of the class, which left me feeling more vulnerable and conspicuous than ever!

But something else made my learning career much tougher. While I found male teachers intimidating, it was even harder sharing classrooms and corridors with the opposite sex. Today I understand the reason boys either ignored me or taunted me is because I was perceived to be either an awkward, geeky nerd or just plain stuck-up! Back then, however, I imagined they all somehow knew the truth – and those who ignored me were silenced by disgust, while those who taunted me were punishing me for it.

Every day for nine years I lived inside an invisible bubble, avoiding any contact or conversation that could possibly expose my secret. Every day for nine years I wondered who knew and who didn’t, imagining all sorts of unspoken recriminations and criticism. Had I applied as much thought and emotional energy to my studies, I would no doubt have aced matric. Had I felt the confidence and freedom to actually enjoy those years and become more involved in the process, I would have ended my school career with my head held high and chapters of happy memories stashed in my journal.
In my final school year I was befriended by a first-year teaching college student who lived nearby and shared my passion for guitar. As we spent more time together, I sensed she understood my fears and hang-ups without needing any explanation. I found comfort in her friendship and began dropping my defences. One day she made a confession that shocked me. Not only had she had an experience similar to mine, she had also, as a result, developed a sexual interest in girls. This was beyond anything I had ever heard of. It was my first introduction to the term “gay” and instinctively I knew it was something that went against the biblical principles and morals on which I was raised.

And so I learned to live with a new fear. Was I too destined to be “gay” because of what had happened? Did this mean I had even more reason to be ashamed?

My new friend’s physical advances left me in no doubt whatsoever that I had no sexual interest in girls. Once again I was nauseated. Once again I retreated. This left me even more confused! If I were incapable of intimacy with either gender, what did that make me? Like most teenagers, I desperately needed an individual identity, a sense of belonging, and defining my sexual orientation played a vital role in that. The emerging non-conformist in me was ready to challenge the norm, but the lingering child in me needed to know who she was and where she fitted in. I felt like a nomad in the wilderness, determined to carve my own path but lacking direction and finding the journey profoundly lonely.

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April 1981. I am on holiday with my college friend (name) in Cape Town, a far cry from the conservative community back home. (name) lifestyle on her home turf shocks me. I have never felt more out of place. We are at the communal digs of some surfers in Greenpoint. Several couples have disappeared into rooms around the house, among them (name) and the boyfriend of one of our college mates. I’m confused. Is this all people do for
fun in Cape Town? For days now she has grabbed every opportunity to disappear into a bedroom with this guy, leaving me feeling like a spare wheel.

Someone called (name) appears and starts chatting. Nice of him to be friendly, I think. Perhaps he feels as spare as I do. Minutes later I’m fighting his frenzied body off mine, choking on my tears, desperately willing my voice to scream but finding my throat clogged with the nauseating taste now so familiar to me.

What seems like hours later, (name) finds me hiding in the garden. I tell her what happened. She tells me to stop being a drama queen and grow up. She blames my parents for being over-protective and me for being naïve. Yet again I retreat. This time I take with me another terrible secret. I feel more ashamed and more defiled than ever; and indescribably alone!

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Over the next 10 years, I grappled with two distinctly different yearnings. On the one hand, there was a relentless rebellion against social norms, as if to prove I didn’t need acceptance of any kind, and on the other, a desperate longing to find some sense of security and belonging. Blinded by a lack of self-worth, I trundled along a journey of self-destruction. It was a road littered with bad choices, messy relationships, missed opportunities and spiritual uncertainty.

By the grace of God I made close friends whose love and support anchored me through the storms, but the men I drew close to ranged from emotionally dysfunctional to outright psychotic! I spurned many advances from decent guys, firmly believing I did not deserve them. Sooner or later, I told myself, they would discover my terrible secrets and want nothing more to do with me.

I finally succumbed to a sexual relationship, believing that if I could define my sexual orientation I would at least have some sense of normality. Little did I know that relationship would end with the loss of an unborn child, an
experience so profoundly traumatic I have yet to shape the memory of it into words.

Buckling under the full weight of my personal pain, my family’s shame and an overwhelming mountain of regret, I felt incapable of continuing the journey. Life had become like an endless game of Monopoly and I desperately wanted to quit.

Then along came (name).

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Uninvited and unexpected, the tall handsome farmer who stumbled into my path early in 1983 epitomized the term “gentle giant”. Everything about (name) was larger than life – his structure, his character, his voice, his irrepressible sense of humour and his amazing capacity to love. From the moment we met I felt utterly and completely unworthy of his friendship and respect, yet he refused to let go.

(name) was seven years older than I and a whole lot wiser. Through his years of farming he had often seen lifeless, drought-ridden land miraculously revived after long-awaited rain. Each time he spoke to me, he looked deep into my eyes the same way a farmer might look at rain-clouds rolling in over barren land. Waiting, hoping, believing. Seeing in his mind’s eye the beauty that would burst into bloom after the storm.

Over a period of two years, (name) relentlessly but gently peeled away the layers of hurt and self-loathing so tightly bound around me. He gave me the freedom to be real, to be myself. There were no secrets between us. His compassion and understanding were surpassed only by his amazing ability to make me laugh. It was a time of healing, restoration and immense joy. No other person had ever loved me more.
When the rains came and a new season emerged, I found in (name) not only a lover, but a teacher, a brother and a friend. Every male form, previously perceived as a threat, merged into one beautiful person who held my heart with a tenderness that defied description.

But his father was a different man altogether. When Mr (name) looked me in the eye, I knew he knew. He made no pretense to like me or approve of our relationship. He made it obvious that I was not good enough for his son. And eventually, when (name) hinted at marriage, he could no longer contain his loathing for me. He gave (name) a simple choice – marriage to me or his inheritance.

For (name), the choice did not even warrant second thought. He was willing to make any sacrifice for the sake of our future together. But for me, his father’s overt disapproval unearthed years of bitter regret that sent me on a downward spiral into despair. There was no way I could devote the rest of my life to a man who was estranged from his father because I was not deemed good enough.

For the very last time, I retreated. I watched that huge man sobbing like a baby as I boarded a train back to PE and I knew, no matter where my journey took me from there, no matter how many beautiful people I met along the way, I would never again be loved as (name) had loved me.

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Ten years later. I am seated at the back of (name) Anglican Church with my baby boy asleep on my lap. The message that day is simple but profound. I should not measure my self-worth through the eyes of the world, but through the eyes of God. In His eyes I am so precious that He was willing to have His only Son tortured and murdered for my sake. It’s not new to me. I grew up hearing that message over and over again.
But today it takes on a new meaning. Today I have my only son in my arms and I am suddenly struck by the sheer horror of what God had to endure for the sake of my redemption. I think of my own suffering at the hands of an abusive, violent husband. I think of my fears for the suffering any child of mine may have to endure. And neither are a patch on what God Himself had to live through.

And he did it for ME?

Today, for the very first time, my journey towards healing begins…

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It is almost impossible to describe the seasons through which God has brought me since that day, or how each one has merged with another to restore – bit by bit – the pieces of my brokenness.

From my mid-twenties through my thirties, I had immersed myself in various pursuits through which I thought I could redeem myself and find peace. From an attempt at studying further, to mission work, to church involvement, to clinching awards for journalism and copywriting, I tried in vain to re-create (herself).

Many painful lessons later, I learned that none of those pursuits could change the way the world saw me or the way I felt about myself. Self-image is critical to finding self-fulfilment – so the most important love affair I would ever embark on was with myself and the God who formed me.

Achievements and accolades have merely gathered dust in a drawer, while my only true success has been finding peace within my soul, learning to feel comfortable in my own skin, making friends with the skeletons in my closet, and most important of all – ALLOWING God to re-shape that which evil hands had warped over the years. The latter has been neither easy nor painless, but it has led me to acknowledge my human frailty and discover the awesome reality of God’s sustaining strength.
In one brief moment in time – and in a manner many would pass off as being trivial – a perverted man in a play park set in motion a chain of events and responses that had far-reaching effects on my life. And many have paid dearly for it along the way. My parents and siblings, my boyfriends and husband – all have suffered to some degree because of the baggage I carried – and not least of all my children, who for many years were bruised by a dysfunctional marriage because their mother did not believe she deserved better.

If someone had told me five years ago I would be released from that marriage and find contentment, I’d have hailed it as a possible miracle. NEVER in my wildest dreams – or most desperate prayers – did I imagine I would today have such profound peace in my heart; that the same man I wanted to be wiped off the face of the earth would today be a loving father and husband; that the two children who were once riddled with hurts and hang-ups would today be healed and happy; and that the young girl who wanted to be invisible would today be a confident woman who can look people in the eye, hold her head high and bounce through the highs and lows of life with a genuine spirit of joy.

I had underestimated the power, the grace and the magnitude of my creator. And I had definitely underestimated His promise in Jeremiah 29 v 11:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

My journey towards wholeness is far from complete. I am reminded of that every time I reach for a cigarette – a lingering crutch from the days of pain. But God promises to bring every good work to completion – and in the process will use us in all our frailty to inspire others.

As I continue to marvel at the measure of inner strength and healing provided by Him on a daily basis, so too do I marvel at how often I cross paths with other women who have walked a similar road. When that happens, I know the flood of empathy and compassion that surges up from deep inside me is
God’s way of blanketing those women in a tangible sense of His love and understanding. Having walked in their shoes, I can draw alongside them and say in all sincerity: “Let’s walk together!”

All I have been through, and all God has done in the process of healing me, redefines my perception of 2 Corinthians 1 v 4:

“He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others.”

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ADDENDUM SEVEN

PRESS RELEASE: ALGOA FM – PORT ELIZABETH

Tuesday 3 November 2009

CHILD TRAFFICKING ALIVE AND WELL IN SOUTH AFRICA

Over one million children worldwide are trafficked every year – and recent statistics reflect that South Africa is no exception. Eight hundred children are reported missing monthly, 10 000 children serve as trafficked labourers* while 30 000 children are being held in brothels throughout the country.

“Many children in South Africa are vulnerable to such crimes, particularly those living in impoverished rural areas and informal settlements, and in child-headed homes where they have lost their parents or guardians to HIV/Aids. These situations make it easy for children to be easily lured into trafficking,” says Miranda Friedmann, Executive Director at Women And Men Against Child Abuse (WMACA).

According to a 2008 US Aids Research Report by the International Organization for Migration, the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and Limpopo, are the main ‘recruitment’ areas for victims of human trafficking.

“These startling findings and statistics are very real. Children are often trafficked to perform slave-like labour, prostitution, pornography, forced marriage or recruited by gangs to sell drugs or for criminal activities. But we all need to also realise that this crime can occur anywhere and everywhere – even in up market suburbs. Therefore everyone needs to be aware of this,” says Friedmann.

WMACA’s Kidz Clinic in Waterloo, KwaZulu-Natal is actively addressing this issue. Kidz Clinic KZN presented their Human Trafficking Awareness Campaign to schools, places of worship and community groups in the province’s key areas. As a member of the Human Trafficking Task Team (HPPB Task Team), Kidz Clinic KZN has participated in its awareness campaign around this issue. The first one took place in September 2009 when the HPPB Task Team dedicated a float to human trafficking during the Celebrate Durban Parade, where information on this crime was also distributed.

WMACA has also partnered with Lovelife to train four 18-25 year olds from its Ground Breakers initiative to present Human Trafficking Awareness Campaigns in schools.
“As an organization fighting child abuse, we feel very strongly about this issue. We therefore give our full support however and wherever we can,” says Friedmann.

WMACA advises the following precautions to prevent child trafficking:

- Parents should never allow their children to travel alone unless they have the exact contact details and address of the person they are with
- Children should have emergency numbers with them at all times
- Older children need to be aware of bogus job offers promising easy money as this often is a trap

1. Women and Men Against Child Abuse was established in 1997 as a non-profit organization and manages six Kidz Clinics. These professional child-friendly facilities are located in impoverished communities and provide a range of comprehensive medical and therapeutic services to children who have been sexually, physically and emotionally abused or neglected. Support and therapy is also provided to the non-offending members of the child's family. WMACA received the 2009 Community Builder of the Year Award at the 10th Vodacom Foundation Community in October 2009. For more information visit www.wmaca.org.

2. Miranda Friedmann has always had a leading role in fighting abuse against children. In 1998 she joined WMACA as a project manager and nine years later became its executive director. Friedmann’s prominent role against child abuse has seen her involved in activist work such as the 1999 'Megan's Law' campaign, US legislation calling for a community to remove a known paedophile in their area. This is yet to be implemented in South Africa. Friedmann was also the recipient of the Top Business Achiever in the Social Entrepreneur category at the 2009 Businesswomen’s Association Award.
## ADDENDUM EIGHT: A Summary of Mandatory Reporting Provisions (Childline, South Africa)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>The Provision</th>
<th>What must be reported</th>
<th>To whom</th>
<th>Protection for “in good faith” reporting</th>
<th>Penalties</th>
<th>Who must report</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Act Amendment Bill</td>
<td>Section 110 (1) Any correctional official, dentist, homeopath, labour inspector, legal practitioner, medical practitioner, midwife, minister of religion, nurse, occupational therapist, police official, physiotherapist, psychologist, religious leader, social service professional, social worker, speech therapist, teacher, traditional health practitioner, traditional leader of member of staff or volunteer worker at a partial care facility, shelter, drop-in centre or child and youth care centre who on reasonable grounds concludes that a child has been abused in a manner causing physical injury, sexually abused, or deliberately neglected, if it is in the best interest of the child concerned, must report that conclusion to a designated child protection organization or the provincial department of social development.</td>
<td>Abuse causing physical injury, sexual abuse and deliberate neglect – who on reasonable grounds concludes... Must substantiate this belief [110 (3) (a)]</td>
<td>A designated child protection agency or a provincial Dept of Social Dev. If child considered in need of care as a result of abuse or intentional neglect – the above or a police official.</td>
<td>Yes S110 (3) (b)</td>
<td>Yes – a fine and/or imprisonment</td>
<td>Professions and occupational groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminal Law (Sexual)</td>
<td>Obligation to report commission of sexual offences against children or persons who are mentally disabled</td>
<td>Any Sexual offence against a child</td>
<td>Police official</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Any person</td>
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<td>offences and related matters)</td>
<td>Amendment Bill</td>
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<td>54. (1) (a) A person who has knowledge that a sexual offence has been committed against a child must report such knowledge immediately to a police official. (b) A person who fails to report such knowledge as contemplated in paragraph (a), is guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years or to both a fine and such imprisonment. (2) (a) A person who has knowledge, reasonable belief or suspicion that a sexual offence has been committed against a person who is mentally disabled must report such knowledge, reasonable belief or suspicion immediately to a police official. (b) A person who fails to report such knowledge, reasonable belief or suspicion as contemplated in paragraph (a), is guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years or to both a fine and such imprisonment. (c) A person who in good faith reports such reasonable belief or suspicion shall not be liable to any civil or criminal proceedings by reason of making such report.</td>
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ADDENDUM NINE:
Interview with Mrs Valmai Bubb (Deputy Director Childline Port Elizabeth) and a team of social workers.

1. Define child sexual abuse.
   The intentional involvement of a child, with or without the child’s consent, in sexual gratification of the older person.

2. From what age is there the possibility of consensual sex?
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3. Where does one take a child that has been raped or sexually abused?
   To the nearest police station, if the child is hurt, to the hospital.

4. What procedures should be followed once the child is at the place in question (3)?
   The police need to take the child’s statement and arrange for the proper medical examination.

5. Where does one report a case of child molestation/abuse (during the week and weekends)?
   The nearest police station. The Childline toll free number (0800055555) can also be phoned.

6. What does the law stipulate in terms of having knowledge of child abuse and responsibility to report? Which act/legislation?
   The Children’s Act 38 of 2005 and Child Care Act 74 of 1983 both state that abuse has to be reported to a police officer or a social worker.

7. If an adult or caregiver, teacher, principal, social worker, minister, doctor, etc are aware of a case of sexual (or other) abuse, are they legal obliged to report this and to whom?
   Yes, to a police official or a social worker.
8. How do they obtain follow-up information regarding the case they reported?
Generally no follow up information should be supplied as everything pertaining to the child should be kept strictly confidential.

9. What are the implications for the adult in a suspected/known case of abuse that they do not report?
A charge of child endangerment can be laid against them.

10. If the father is the perpetrator and he has been found guilty of a sexual offence, will he be allowed access to his and other children?
It depends on the family, but if they do want contact it will be under the supervision of a social worker, counsellor etc.

11. How many reported cases of child rape/sexual abuse are reported in the Port Elizabeth area annually?
Childline receives on average 20 to 25 reports of sexual abuse per month.
We cannot give statistics for the police or other welfare organizations.

12. What is the biggest problem with successful prosecutions of perpetrators?
The length of time that it takes for a case to be heard.

13. What responsibility do schools have regarding reporting abuse, recognizing signs in the classroom and on the sports field and creating an awareness amongst pupils of Children's Rights?
Schools can liaise with Childline to do awareness with both pupils and teachers, and the school definitely has a responsibility to report any type of abuse that they suspect or are aware of.

14. If a staff member at a school is aware of a case of abuse, what should he/she do?
Report it to the principal as well as a welfare organisation or the police.
15. What is the next step if the principal decides “not to rock the boat”?
By law a Child Protection organisation must be informed, the teacher would then have to report the case. At Childline reporters can remain anonymous.

16. What is the role of a social worker at a school?
To be available for counselling and therapy for the children, to do awareness on children’s issues, rights and responsibilities, to liaise with other role players if need be, etc.

17. What signs can a teacher look out for either in the classroom or on the sports field that may indicate a child is being abused?
Any change in behaviour from the norm, physical signs and symptoms.

18. What forms of prevention can schools take to ensure the safety of all the children at school functions?
Have adequate supervision of the children, make the children aware of the issues of abuse and what their rights are, have a culture of open and free communication in the school.

19. If there a possibility of a child having been molested on school premises, what would be the legal responsibility of the principal?
To report the abuse to the nearest police station and to inform the child’s parents.

20. What advice would you give to parents whose child has been molested or raped?
Obtain therapy for the whole family unit, but especially for the child. Support the child and make sure that he/she knows that the abuse was not their fault and the people believe them.
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