PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS ON THE PROBLEM
OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN A SQUATTER CAMP

by

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DECLARATION

I, Lindelwa E. Bashman, declare that this dissertation entitled:

Perspectives of Teachers on the Problem of Child Sexual Abuse in a Squatter Camp

as submitted by me in partial fulfilment for the degree Magister Educationis in the Faculty of Education at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at any other university. All sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of references. Language editing was done by a professional editor.

L. BASHMAN

JANUARY 2008
Childhood should be viewed as “the social space in which to lay the foundation for the best that human development has to offer”

All children should “be shielded from the direct demands of adult, economic, political, and sexual forces”

Children have a right to be protected from poverty. They have a right to be protected from excessive consumerism and commercial advertising that preys upon their immaturity. They have a right to be protected by laws against situations deemed harmful

(Garbarino, 1995:8-12)
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To my children, who are my friends, my life, “This is how I want you to remember me, Mandisa, Cebisa, Luncedo and Kinalma.”

And how can I forget my grandson Loza? – “Sorry for not having enough time to spend with you.”

All praise to the Almighty who gave me strength and made it possible for me to fulfil my dream. “With Him, everything is possible.”
SUMMARY

Child sexual abuse is a worldwide phenomenon that takes a major toll in squatter camps in South Africa. The conditions under which the squatters live promote and aggravate the abuse. Sadly, the victims hit hardest by the abuse are the children. The negative effects caused by the abuse lead to problems in the educational tasks of these children. This study proposes that teachers can play a significant role in assisting them to overcome their problem.

The aim of this study was to:

- investigate the perceptions of teachers of the problem of the sexual abuse of children coming from squatter camps;
- empower teachers with strategies that will help to alleviate the problem; and
- formulate some recommendations on dealing with the situation in the classroom.

The literature was reviewed with the aim of substantiating a compact theoretical basis for the study. Various aspects were discussed, such as

- the different definitions of child sexual abuse;
- short- and long-term effects of the abuse; and
- contributory factors of child sexual abuse.

This study followed a qualitative design, which is interpretive, naturalistic, descriptive, holistic and exploratory in nature.

The participants, chosen purposefully for this study, were ten teachers, teaching children coming from a squatter camp in the Motherwell Township of Nelson Mandela Bay.

Themes that emerged from the transcripts of the interviews were:

- Sexual abuse has a negative effect on children and causes them to develop problems.
- Teachers can play a significant role in assisting learners who are sexually
• There are various reasons why sexual abuse is prevalent in squatter camps.

The recommendations made are based on the findings of this study and propose to empower teachers so that they will be able to make a difference in the lives of their abused learners.

**Key words:**
Empowering teachers
Primary school learners
Sexual abuse
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CHAPTER 1

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

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Sexual abuse can be viewed as a form of physical and emotional cruelty and is part of the larger child abuse problem. Child abuse is a relatively new area of research; the term “battered child” is said to have been first used by Henry Kempe in 1961, in his address to the American Academy of Pediatrius. Kempe’s paper, entitled the “Battered Child Syndrome” was given much prominence and provided the platform against which many later efforts were to be measured (Olafson, Corwin & Summit, 1993).

Since the publication of Kempe’s article, researchers and clinicians have come to acknowledge child abuse as a serious problem, which encompasses more than simply physical abuse, but also psychological abuse, neglect, battering and sexual abuse. In 1966, following Kempe’s article, all 50 American states passed laws relating to child abuse. In addition, researchers published the results of a number of prominent studies (Gomes-Schwartz, Horowitz & Cardarelli, 1990:14).

Interest in child abuse continues to grow together with the realisation that the abuse of children, both physical and sexual, is a significant problem. In the 1970s, clinicians and researchers played a significant role in bringing child sexual abuse to the attention of society at large and of policymakers in particular (Gomes-Schwartz, et al., 1990:13). Legislation focusing on the sexual abuse of children soon followed. By the late 1970s, child sexual abuse had been identified as a prevalent social problem that required urgent attention. Researchers and policymakers, especially in the United States and Britain, began to develop interventions and treatment
programmes. Their views were shared by Gomes-Schwartz, et al. (1990:14) and Sgroi (1982:1). Some brave female authors also began publishing in the 1970s, alerting society to the real nature of the problem of the sexual abuse of children (Bagley & King, 1990:2). In fact, the sexual abuse of children has been a prominent public issue since the late 1980s. Although reports in the media may create such an impression (Hooper, 1992:1), child sexual abuse is not a new phenomenon. This phenomenon is as old as mankind itself, mentioned in the Bible (incestuous story of Lot and his daughter in the book of Genesis, Chapter 19 (Le Roux, 1992:137)) and also in ancient folktales.

Most sexually abused children may initially not recognise what is being done to them as abuse or, if they do, they may be afraid to speak out. Of those who do speak out, not all are believed (Steel & Kidd, 2001:201). Children respond easily to adults who are interested in them and spend time with them. Often, in child sexual abuse, the very people that children trust most, are the ones who hurt and use them.

The adult abusers use their authority to enforce secrecy, to hide the abuse, and even facilitate its repetition (La Fontaine, 1990:208). Adults seldom have to use physical force to coerce children to engage in sexual acts, because children are dependent on and look up to those older than them. In most societies, children are taught never to question authority; they assume that adults are always right and they therefore are told, do as they say, even keeping the sexual abuse secret (Petty & Spies, 2005:83).

Families in which paternal incest occurs, are characterised by a power imbalance; the father wields absolute authority over a relatively powerless wife and children. He asks no-one’s permission or approval for anything he does. He takes what he wants, expecting others to accommodate him. Often, he exercises his power in abusive, violent ways (Blume, 1990:34).

Le Roux (1993:29) maintains that it is common knowledge that a very large proportion of the South African population is affected by poverty. Approximately one out of every six South Africans lives in informal dwellings. Pretorius (2000:305)
refers to those informal dwellings as the milieu of a deprived neighbourhood, which is often a neglected, unattractive residential environment, characterised by poverty, overcrowding and dilapidated structures. However, poverty is not the only cause of sexual abuse; when occurring in association with other factors, such as unemployment and overcrowding, the incidence of sexual abuse increases.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher will refer to informal dwellings as *squatter camps*. Squatting suggests illegality of occupation. Squatters therefore do not wait for formal allocation; they simply take over any vacant land (Minnaar, 1992:13). In South Africa, squatting dates back to the 1980s, when white land owners increasingly found that commercial farming had become more profitable than renting their land to blacks. The evicted blacks moved to towns and found themselves faced with the difficulty of trying to obtain access to the limited amount of official housing available. Most turned to squatting (Minnaar, 1992:13). Another cause of squatting is the migration of rural black families to urban areas in search of employment and the opportunities available in cities. The political violence of the 1970s and 1980s was another contributory factor; many South Africans were displaced and resorted to shack dwelling.

The relocation of people has severely fractured black *families*. Steyn (1993:57) surmises that the apparent breakdown of family life in South Africa has been implicated in such social problems as child sexual abuse, family violence, substance abuse, neglect and crime. Shacks are generally not well built. Some are built from old corrugated iron sheets and cardboard, and even plastic sheeting.

In many of these squatter camps, children witness when the constant bickering and arguing between parents and other family members erupt into physical violence. Sometimes they become the victims of their parents’ physical aggression and are caught up in circles of violence. Their deprived milieu has a pervasive influence on every aspect of their lives, to the extent that they sometimes participate in physical assault, neighbourhood quarrels and family fights themselves (Pretorius, 2000:306).

*Squatter camps are characterised by overcrowding.* Most shacks are very small, and many squatters live in one-roomed shacks, in which all family members live,
sleep and eat. Dawes (2002:29) notes that overcrowding is a pertinent structural feature of poverty, cautioning that it significantly raises the risk of child sexual abuse.

For some children, the liquor abuse of their parents and family members makes life in the squatter camps a living nightmare. Most squatter camps have disproportionately high numbers of drunks and vagrants. Brews such as “Mtshovalale” are cheap and easy to obtain and take a high toll in these areas. Men and women become so intoxicated that they cannot find their way home and are found lying down in the streets like lifeless corpses. Their children are left home unprotected; many such children will suffer serious damage in their emotional and social development (Pretorius, 2000:307).

Finkelhor (in Gomes-Schwartz, et al., 1990:29) warns that parents that are battling with serious difficulties of their own may not be able to protect their children before sexual abuse occurs, or even after it is disclosed. Children who are left alone at home in the evening are particularly easy targets for sexual abuse.

According to Van Greunen (1993:86), the natural quality of life and the environment in which a child grows up is of vital importance to his/her development. He further contends that children are often abused in the environment in which they grow up. The author also highlights the difficulties that confront parents and the teachers of children from deprived areas who want to protect the children, cautioning that the actual chances that these children will succeed are severely restricted.

Richter, Dawes and Higson-Smith (2004:76) maintain that against a background of job losses, continuing unemployment and rampant poverty (in South Africa), child sexual abuse seems to be on the increase, possibly as an outlet for pent-up frustration and anger.

The researcher acknowledges that some interesting and valuable research has already been undertaken on child sexual abuse in squatter camps, but feels that limited research is available on teachers’ perceptions of how sexually abused children from squatter camps are coping at school. The researcher has worked in a
deprived environment for the past 20 years and has witnessed that the scars left by sexual abuse are deep and often last a lifetime, although they may not be visible on the surface. Anderson, Martin, Mullen, Romans and Herbison (1993:911) contend that child sexual abuse remains an important problem with serious long-term effects that could last throughout the victim’s life and affect all his/her interpersonal relationships. The researcher has worked with many cases of child sexual abuse in her teaching career. The ages of these children have ranged from 7 to 15 years. Her broad experience has been obtained because cases of sexual abuse, HIV/AIDS, vulnerable children and children with learning problems are among her other duties as Head of Department in her school. As a remedial teacher, she often refers such children for professional help.

The school at which the researcher is employed, services a squatter camp. A major disadvantage identified by the researcher is the lack of knowledge of the phenomenon of child sexual abuse among both teachers and parents. The researcher has also experienced that social workers tend not to involve teachers in intervention programmes, despite the very valuable role that teachers could play, based on their daily contact and interaction with sexually abused children in their classrooms. Teachers could readily notice unusual behaviour, which may point to the possibility of sexual abuse.

This study proposes to investigate teachers’ perceptions of how sexually abused children cope in school. In the final chapter, recommendations will be made regarding how current practices and approaches in the identification and treatment of these children may be amended to make a positive difference in the lives of these children.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the context of the above discussion, which highlighted the problem of sexual abuse facing children living in squatter camps, teachers themselves are also facing major challenges regarding the issue of child sexual abuse. These challenges go beyond the normal requirements made of teachers. For example, coping with the
challenges and demands of educating sexually abused children can be problematic, because of their unique experiences. Teachers of sexually abused children should be provided with practical guidelines that will empower and equip them to assist and support the children in their educational task.

The following research problems have been formulated, based on the above discussions:

**Primary research problem**

- What are the perceptions of the teachers of sexually abused children from a squatter camp on how these learners are coping at school?

**Secondary research problem**

- Which practical guidelines could be designed to assist the teachers of sexually abused children, to support and guide them in their educational task?

**1.2.1 Aim of research**

The primary objectives of the research are linked to the formulated research problems and will therefore be to:-

- explore and describe the perceptions of teachers of sexually abused children from squatter camps, on how they are coping at school; and
- construct practical guidelines for the teachers of sexually abused children living in a squatter camp to support them in their educational task.

**1.2.2 Clarification of concepts**

A short description of concepts relevant to this research study will be presented as follows:
1.2.2.1 Child sexual abuse

Knight (1997:19) defines child sexual abuse as

“Sexual contact between a child and an individual in a position of power or authority. This term does not restrict the abuse to the family as does ‘incest’, but it encompasses the full range of sexual activities that survivors may have been forced to participate in, including, but not limited to, vaginal and anal intercourse, oral sex, fondling, masturbation and exposure to or participating in pornography”.

1.2.2.2 Milieu deprivation

The concept milieu deprivation refers to a divergent variety of socio-economic and cultural factors impeding the milieu-deprived individual’s freedom of choice and his/her right to the optimal use of his/her opportunities. It is difficult for the child to achieve according to his/her potential in such a deprived and disadvantaged environment. The child finds himself/herself in a social environment characterised by:

- geographical-physical inadequacies, particularly in terms of the physical environment, the neighbourhood, housing, material goods and cultural goods;
- inadequate interpersonal communication, which does not enable the child to actualise his personal potential, especially his socio-communicative potential, in full; and

1.2.2.3 Incest

Incest refers to any sexual act imposed on a young person or child by another person who is taking advantage of his/her position of power and trust within the family. ‘Family’ can mean natural parents, step-parents, grandfathers, uncles, brothers and so on (Durrant & White, 1992:10).
1.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a plan that stipulates how research will be conducted (Huysamen, 2001:10; Mouton, 2001:55).

The focus of this study will be on the perceptions of teachers of the problem of child sexual abuse in a squatter camp. The study will follow a qualitative naturalistic, interpretive explorative, descriptive and holistic design (Creswell, 2003:182).

1.3.1 Philosophical foundation

During the planning of a study, one has to select a paradigm. The researcher has followed an interpretive paradigm for this study, which is a constructionist, naturalistic and interpretive approach.

Constructivism is a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own experiences. We construct our own understanding of the world we live in. For the qualitative researcher, the only relevant reality is the one constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation. A constructivist researcher therefore addresses the processes of interaction among individuals and also focuses on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants (Creswell, 2003:8).

Another element of enquiry is the critical theory perspective, which is concerned with empowering human beings to enable them to transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class and gender. This form is emancipatory, in that it helps unshackle people from the constraints of irrational and unjust structures that limit self-development and self-determination. The researcher can discuss how the enquiry may create opportunities for empowerment (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:33).
1.3.2 Research approach

In order to answer the research questions, a research approach will be employed. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998:10), qualitative research means any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical or other means of qualification. It can refer to research about people’s lives, lived experiences, emotions and feelings, as well as interaction between people.

According to Creswell (2003:181), some of the characteristics of a qualitative approach are as follows:

- Qualitative research takes place in the natural setting. This means that the researcher often goes to the site (home, office, school) of the participant to conduct the research. This enables the researcher to acquire more detailed information about the individual or place and to involve him-/herself more in actual experiences of the participants.
- The qualitative researcher views social phenomena holistically. This means that he/she considers the larger picture and seeks an understanding of the whole, which is more than the sum of its parts.
- Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive. This means that the researcher interprets the data; this includes developing a description of an individual or setting, analysing the data to identify potential themes or categories, and drawing conclusions. This research will focus on the interpretation of the perceptions of teachers and their experiences of teaching sexually abused children. An analysis of their comments and inputs during interviews will also be conducted.

Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning, that is, how people make sense of their structures of the world. The researcher in this study focuses on teachers’ perceptions of how sexually abused children from a squatter camp are coping at school.

Qualitative research is descriptive, in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning and understanding gained through words or pictures. Struwig and Stead
(2001:8) note that descriptive research is an effort to offer a precise description of a situation.

With reference to the aforementioned characteristics inherent to qualitative approach, the researcher concluded that this approach was suitable for realising the goal of this study.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.4.1 Population sample

According to Marlow (1998:134), population is the sum of all possible cases that the researcher is ultimately interested in studying. The population sample for this study will consist of teachers who are teaching children living in squatter camps in Port Elizabeth.

1.4.2 Sampling of participants

From the population, a sample will be selected for inclusion in the study (Yegidis & Weinbach, 1996:115). Sampling procedures for qualitative research differ from those employed in quantitative research. Qualitative research focuses primarily on the depth or richness of the data, and qualitative researchers therefore generally select individuals and cases purposefully (Struwig & Stead, 2001:121). The researcher in this study plans to employ the purposive sampling technique. This implies that the individuals selected for data gathering will be those who have first-hand knowledge and experience about the problem of child sexual abuse. Participants will be from diverse societies to determine diverse perspectives on the sexual abuse of children. The researcher will not commit herself to a sample size, as this may change as the study progresses.

1.4.3 Data collection

Various data collection methods may be employed (Struwig & Stead, 2001:98). For the purpose of this study, in-depth or unstructured individual interviews will be used. A
set schedule of questions is not utilised during unstructured interviews. During the interviews, the researcher will establish and build rapport with the participants and ask questions that are related to the study only (Creswell, 2003:187).

The following open-ended question will be put to the participants:

*What are your perceptions of how abused children from the squatter camp are coping in school?*

The role of the researcher will be that of moderator, as she will be facilitating the interviews. The researcher will conduct face-to-face individual interviews. The second researcher (the observer) will be taking field notes on the behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site (Creswell, 2003:185-188).

The interviews will be audio taped, then transcribed, and subsequently translated from isiXhosa into English. According to Holloway and Wheeler (2002:86), the best form of recording interviewed data is tape recording, because tapes contain the exact words of the interview, inclusive of questions.

### 1.4.3.1 Data analysis

According to Mouton (2001:108), data analysis involves “breaking up” the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships. It requires that the researcher be comfortable with developing categories, making comparisons, and determining contrasts.

The tape-recorded interviews will be transcribed and then analysed by means of the descriptive analysis of Tesch (Creswell, 1994:155). An independent qualitative researcher will be requested to perform data recoding in order to determine whether the themes identified by the researcher can be confirmed. A consensus discussion will then be held between the researcher, supervisor and the independent recoder to determine the final results of the research (Creswell, 1994:70).
1.4.3.2 Literature review

The researcher will undertake a literature study to design a conceptual framework to serve as a basis for this study and to compare the results of this research study with previous studies. Creswell (2003:30-35) contends that the connection between information gained through previous research to that being discovered presently, will be acknowledged accordingly.

A literature control study will also be undertaken to affirm the feasibility of implementing the suggested guidelines. These guidelines will be discussed with the participants as well as professionals working in the field of child sexual abuse.

1.4.4 Measures to ensure trustworthiness

Guba’s model (in Poggenpoel, 1998:348) will be applied to ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative data. The four aspects that are to ensure trustworthiness are truth-value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. The researcher will provide a comprehensive explanation of these criteria in Chapter 3.

1.4.4.1 Ethical measures

The ethical measures that will be adhered to in this study will include obtaining the informed consent of participating respondents (Mouton, 2001:244). The researcher will also ensure confidentiality and the anonymity of all participants. According to Mouton (2001:243), the collection of data in any form, such as tape recordings or photographs of participants, should comply with the conditions of anonymity. These measures will secure the safety and rights of all participants. Finally, the researcher will provide the participants with feedback on the outcome of the study.

1.5 RESEARCH PLAN

Chapter 1: The background and rationale of the study, problem statement and aim, research design, method and research plan are presented in this chapter.
Chapter 2: A theoretical perspective on child sexual abuse within the context of a squatter camp is given, highlighting the following:

- Definitions, different forms of child sexual abuse, stages of sexual abuse, incidence and prevalence of child sexual abuse, and myths, results and facts about sexual abuse.
- Contributing factors, indicators and symptoms, and both short- and long-term consequences.
- Reasons why child sexual abuse is usually concealed, factors determining the severity of the impact of sexual abuse, and the transgression of the most important educational relationships.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3 focuses on the research design and methodology.

- Problem statement
- An exposition of the research design
- Methodology and the measures to ensure the trustworthiness of the research and ethical measures.

Chapter 4: The main research findings are presented in Chapter 4, together with an analysis and interpretation of the research results.

Chapter 5: The conclusions of the study, as well as recommendations and guidelines for the teachers of sexually abused children and the limitations of the study are given in the final chapter of the study.

1.6 CONCLUSIONS

This study focuses on the problem of child sexual abuse in squatter camps. It will highlight the perspectives of teachers on how sexually abused children are coping at school.

In this chapter, the historical background of the study was discussed, as well as the problem statement and the objectives and aim of the research. Concepts were
clarified, and the research design, methodology, measures to ensure trustworthiness and the ethical measures and research plan were presented.

The next chapter will present theoretical perspectives on child sexual abuse, within the context of a squatter camp.
CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CHILD
SEXUAL ABUSE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Child sexual abuse is a social problem that is extremely prevalent in contemporary society, and particularly so in South Africa (Tlali & Malan, 2005). It is not a new phenomenon, nor is it peculiar to any particular country or culture; historical accounts have been found of childhood molestation, including incest, among ancient Greek and Romans, in accounts of life in the Renaissance, and during the Victorian era (Richter, et al., 2004:23).

The only reason why the sexual abuse of children seems to be a new phenomenon, is that people traditionally never discussed it. Several historians of childhood and sexual abuse of children have pointed out that many forms of child sexual abuse tended to be ignored or covered up (Dowd, Singer & Wilson, 2006:44; Richter, et al., 2004:23).

Most sexual crimes against children are committed within the family or immediate neighbourhood. Family members of the child may even block access to the criminal justice system. Some families, especially those who live in poverty, may be persuaded or motivated to accept damages from the perpetrator as some kind of compensation for the sexual assault.

Poverty and inequality have a devastating impact on the lives of children in South Africa. It is one of the threats to the realisation of children’s rights worldwide. In South Africa, a staggering 66% of children live in severe poverty (Du Plessis & Conley, 2007).

Overcrowding is major problem, which undermines the need for privacy. Children in crowded households may struggle to negotiate space for their own activities. Overcrowding also places children at greater risk of sexual abuse, especially where
boys and girls have to share beds or children have to sleep with adults (De la Rey, Duncan, Shefer & Van Niekerk, 1997:165).

Against this background, the researcher will undertake a theoretical investigation into child sexual abuse, within the context of a squatter camp.

2.2 DEFINITIONS

Different studies use different definitions for child sexual abuse, and there is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes sexual abuse (Mayes, Currie, Macleod, Gillies & Warden, 1992:55).

Child sexual abuse involves any sexual activity, from sexual touching to full intercourse by an adult or adolescent with a child who developmentally is not able to understand fully or give consent to the activity. Most commonly, sexual abuse occurs within the family – perpetrated by parents, stepparents, or temporary partners, grandparents, older sibling, uncles or aunts (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006:239).

Child sexual abuse is any form of sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact that is accomplished by force, or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual contact between an adult and a child, regardless of whether or not there is deception or whether or not the child understood the sexual nature of the activity. Sexual contact between an older and younger child can be abusive if there is a significant disparity in age, development or size, rendering the younger child incapable of giving informed consent (Myers, Berliner, Briese, Hendrix, Jenny & Reid, 2002:55).

Berliner and Elliot (1996:55); Browne, Hanks, Stratton and Hamilton (2002:7) and Munro (2002:53) maintain that child sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not that child is aware of what is happening. Activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as coercing children into looking at or taking part in the production of
pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Gomes-Schwartz, et al. (1990:36) define child sexual abuse as contact and interaction between a child and an adult in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person. Sexual abuse may also be committed by a person under the age of 18 years; when that person is either significantly older than the victim or is in a position of power or control over the victim.

Different issues are highlighted in the different definitions. For example, there seems to be a consensus on issues such as the nature of sexual contact, age of the victim against the age of the perpetrator, and whether or not consent was involved. Some definitions highlight forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities and the use of pornographic material. Richter, et al. (2004:58) note that although the issue of child sexual abuse receives increasing attention from professionals, there is still a lack of agreement on definitions. This raises the question how child sexual abuse may be defined.

Based on the various definitions studied, a working definition that will be used for the purpose of this study is the following: child sexual abuse is a forceful engagement of children by adults in behaviours that are inappropriate, which leaves them with confusing and overwhelming feelings about themselves and their world.

2.3 FORMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse can be divided into two main categories, namely intra-familial and extra-familial abuse (Petty & Spies, 2005:89; Bagley & King, 1990:6).

2.3.1 Intra-familial sexual abuse

Intra-familial child sexual abuse takes place within the family, not necessarily involving a blood relation. Relations by marriage, such as step-parents, as well as common law marriage relationships, are included (Donald, et al., 2006:239;
2.3.1.1 Types of intrafamilial molestation

**Father-son**

Whetsell-Mitchell (1995:67) notes that research has placed much emphasis on females who were molested as children by adult males. Father-son incest is rarely reported, perhaps because it violates *two* moral codes: the taboo against incest and the taboo against homosexuality. Male children are culturally indoctrinated at a young age to be “strong”; they may not cry or express feelings that could reveal a vulnerable side. They are taught that they can and should be able to look after themselves.

Literature shows that male children are also abused, but have difficulties in admitting this, because of cultural indoctrination. Tower (1998:171) states that since this type of abuse often includes sodomy, the victim experiences physical, as well as emotional pain. Tower (1998) further notes that father-son incest emerges from pathology in the perpetrator, and that this pathology stems from a childhood disturbed by reactions to feelings of inadequacy, an overbearing mother, or doubts about his own sexuality.

**Father-daughter**

Father-daughter incest is the most widely published form of intrafamilial molestation. A recent article (in the *City Press*, 2007:2) with the headline: *Father ‘rapes’ daughter*, argues that incest is a family tradition. However, fathers are expected to be protective of their children and respect their personal boundaries. Engaging children in sexual contact is a form of trespassing intergenerational boundaries. The child becomes trapped between a deep need for the love, protection and affection of the father and a sense that the sexual activities with him are terribly wrong (Petty & Spies, 2005:91; Whetsell-Mitchell, 1995:64). In some instances, the daughter may derive great pleasure from her father’s attention and special treats. Feeling ‘special’ makes it easier for her to accept his sexual advances. The daughter thus confuses sexuality with affection (Tower, 1998:169).
**Sibling incest**

Sibling sexual abuse is an abuse of power and occurs when a more powerful sibling, who may be older or stronger, bribes or threatens a weaker sibling into sexual activity. The abuser usually first wins the trust of the victim, and then violates that trust. The victim and the sexual abuser are related by birth, remarriage (as in stepfamilies), or foster placement (Petty & Spies, 2005:92; Whetsell-Mitchell, 1995:75).

**Mother-son**

Mother-son sexual abuse is a rare type of intrafamilial sexual abuse (Whetsell-Mitchell, 1995:70). This form of sexual abuse is usually more prevalent when there has been a loss of a father figure in the family. The mother seduces the son to fulfil her needs. The boy’s sexual curiosity is satisfied by sexual contact with his mother. He becomes sexually dependent on his mother and is less likely to be fulfilled in other relationships (Sandler & Sepel, 1990:91).

**Grandparent-grandchild incest**

A small segment of the grandparent population has been identified as sexually abusive. Some researchers have suggested that the sexual offences perpetrated by grandparents are generally less harmful and less violent than the offences committed by other adults (Whetsell-Mitchell, 1995:80-81). However, a contrary finding was reached in a study of 14 children who reported being physically overpowered or threatened by grandfathers who then sexually abused them. These boys were all victimised while sleeping.

Sandler and Sepel (1990:92) cite a study by Gordon, who found that many grandfathers investigated in the study, had themselves been sexually abused and then abused their daughters and later also their granddaughters. Wade (2000:92) asserts that grandparents who abuse their grandchildren have been paedophiliac most of their lives.
2.3.2 Extra-familial sexual abuse

Incidents where non-family members are perpetrators are also common. Family friends, school peers, teachers, members of the clergy and, less commonly, strangers may be involved. Perpetrators of child sexual abuse may even be well-respected members of the community, which places the parents in a particularly difficult position (Le Roux, 1992:140).

Sexual abuse may manifest itself in the following forms:

2.3.2.1 Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation takes many forms, including prostitution, pornography and the trafficking or “selling” of children for sexual purposes. Poverty, hunger, desperation and fear may drive girls to exchange sex for food, shelter and identification papers to ensure a safe passage or other necessities for themselves and their families (Machel, 2001:57; Goldstein, 1999:34). Most sexually exploited children are molested by people they know: neighbours, teachers, relatives or friends of the family. Offenders who are only interested in “chance” encounters are generally found at any place where children are to be found (Goldstein, 1999:121).

2.3.2.2 Child pornography

Davis and Snyman (2005:181), Faller (2003:26) and Lanning (in Whetsell-Mitchell, 1995:199) define child pornography as any visual or print matter depicting sexually explicit conduct involving a child. Children are used to produce sexually explicit material in the form of graphics, photographs, films, magazines and books. Dowd, et al. (2006:79) note that more research on child pornography is urgently required, especially regarding the causal relationship between exposure to pornography and child sexual victimisation, but support Russell’s theory that exposure to child pornography could create a sexual interest in children in some males who previously had no such interest (Dowd, et al., 2006:80).
2.3.2.3 Child prostitution

The concept of child prostitution inadequately describes the nature of a great deal of child sexual exploitation that is taking place in South Africa today. In addition to children who are exploited for commercial gain and who prostitute themselves independently as a means of making a living, there are many children whose daily survival is secured through submission to acts of sexual abuse and violence (Cowling & Reynolds, 2004:129; Goldstein, 1999:34; Davidson & Taylor, 1996).

2.3.2.4 Child trafficking

Children are trafficked for a variety of reasons, including prostitution, illegal marriage, illegal adoption, and child labour. The scanty information available suggests that children in South Africa are trafficked for bonded labour and prostitution, which means that children are trafficked and kept in bondage as sex slaves. Children from Mozambique and Zimbabwe have been found working on farms in Mpumalanga in slave-like conditions, and also in the mining and taxi industries in Gauteng (Davis & Snyman, 2005:180; Richter, et al., 2004:169).

2.3.2.5 Paedophilia

Paedophilia as a mental disorder is normally, but not exclusively, found in males. It refers to a long-standing sexual interest in and pre-occupation with pre-pubertal children of both genders, but predominantly girls, from age ranges 13 years down to the main victim target area of between 8 and 11 years. By definition, paedophiles do not target infants for sexual abuse (Earl-Taylor, 2002; Le Roux, 1992:141).

2.3.2.6 Rape

The legal definition of rape in South Africa is “intentional, unlawful sexual intercourse with a woman or a child without his/her consent. This includes rape within marriage as well as the rape of a woman by the man she is going out with” (Hesselink-Louw & Schoeman, 2003:161; Black Sash, 1999).

The Rwandan Tribunals (Machel, 2001:62) articulate that “rape is used for such
purposes as intimidation, degradation, humiliation, discrimination, punishment, control or destruction of a person”. Like torture, rape is a violation of personal dignity.

Le Roux (1993:17) defines rape as forcible or fraudulent and intentional sexual intercourse by a man with a woman without her consent.

Tragically, child rape is an everyday occurrence in South Africa. A report in Ilizwi (18-24 April 2007) under the headline: Shocking details of abused children, states that a child is raped every 24 minutes in South Africa, and one is molested every eight minutes.

2.3.2.7 Statutory rape

Statutory rape is another important category of abuse. In South Africa, anyone who has intercourse with a child under the age of 16 years is guilty of statutory rape.

The law states that a child under that age is not mature enough to make responsible decisions regard whether or not to have intercourse. This law is rarely applied; nowadays, many South African children under 16 years are sexually active. However, if they so wished, the parents or the child him- or herself could lay charges of statutory rape (Richter, et al., 2004:16).

On 10 July 2007, SABC2 News broadcasted that a man known to family members and to the child herself, had abducted a five-year old in Cape Town and then raped her. It was later confirmed that the man had been arrested and would be charged for statutory rape.

2.3.2.8 Incest

Incest is the imposition of sexually inappropriate acts or acts with sexual overtones on a minor, to meet the sexual and/or emotional needs of one or more persons who derive authority through ongoing emotional bonding with that child. If children are sexually abused by a caretaker with whom there was an emotional bond, then what transpires, is incest (Blume, 1990:14).
According to Whetsell-Mitchell (1995:3), this is a much broader definition of incest than which previously applied. Incest could now include anyone with whom the child has established an emotional relationship. Child sexual abuse and incest are not rare and the perpetrators are generally not strangers, but known and trusted adults (Conte, 2002:75).

2.4 STAGES OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Sgroi (1982:71) states that there are five different phases of sexual abuse, namely:

- Engagement phase
- Sexual interaction phase
- Secrecy phase
- Disclosure phase
- Suppression phase

Each phase has its own characteristics.

2.4.1.1 Engagement phase

The adult uses his authority and power over the child to initiate sexual activities with him or her.

2.4.1.2 Sexual intervention phase

The perpetrator usually penetrates the child orally, vaginally or anally.

2.4.1.3 Secrecy phase

The offender manipulates or coerces the child to keep the sexual activities a secret. He may use force, threats, blame, anger or any means that he believes will be effective in coercing the child into keeping the truth a secret. This makes it possible for the abuse to continue, as the perpetrator uses his power to dominate, bribe, emotionally blackmail or threaten the child into keeping the secret.
2.4.1.4 Disclosure phase

This phase is entered on the discovery of the sexual activity by a third party, pregnancy, or if the child divulges the truth to someone else in a moment of anger. Such disclosure usually creates a crisis in the family, especially if the perpetrator is a family member.

2.4.1.5 Suppression phase

Following disclosure, parents and other family members often make every effort to negate, deny, minimise and suppress the terrible truth that the child has revealed (Whetsell-Mitchell, 1995:96).

2.5 INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The incidence of child sexual abuse refers to the number of cases occurring in a defined population of children within a specified period (for example, under the age of 18 years and within a specified period of one year) (Richter, et al., 2004:263; Browne, Hanks, Stratton & Hamilton, 2002:6). Prevalence refers to the proportion of a population that has experienced child sexual abuse (normally expressed as cases per 1000 or 100 000) (Richter, et al., 2004:180; Browne, et al., 2002:16; Gillham, 1991:7).

Researchers and clinicians agree that the exact incidence and prevalence of child sexual abuse in the general population is not known precisely, due to the fact that most cases are not reported when they occur. Also, prevalence surveys indicate considerable variability as a result of differences in research methodology (Myers, et al., 2002:84; Steel & Kidd, 2001:207; De La Rey, et al., 1997:159).

Le Roux (1993:227) supports the above statement when he argues that no accurate statistics on the magnitude of child sexual abuse exist, and that one may safely assume that what is reported, represents only the tip of the iceberg.

The following factors cause the prevalence and incidence of child sexual abuse to remain unknown:
• The majority of sexual crimes against children are committed within the family, and family members may block access to the criminal justice system.
• Families who live in poverty may be persuaded to accept damages from the perpetrator (Richer, et al., 2004:264).
• Many children may refuse to disclose the sexual abuse or assault, because of feelings of shame, guilt, loyalty to the family and financial pressures (Hall & Lloyd, 1993:9).
• Under-reporting – many acts of sexual abuse are never reported to the South African Police. The following stages may prevent a case of sexual abuse being reported to the Police.

2.6 REASONS WHY CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IS USUALLY CONCEALED

In 1993, Dr Roland Summit presented a “syndrome”, called the Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome (CSAAS), through which he intended to provide insight into what the sexually abused child had experienced or was experiencing, so that misconception about child sexual abuse could be avoided. The syndrome Summit described is indicative of what happens to the child. The child accepts or submits to the abuse, learning to live with it, because he/she is made to feel that there is no
other choice and no hope of escape (Petty & Spies, 2005:67; Goldstein, 1999:64-65; Whetsell-Mitchell 1995:97). Summit suggested five categories in the syndrome that explain why child sexual abuse is usually concealed by children:

- Secrecy;
- Helplessness;
- Accommodation;
- Delayed unconvincing disclosure; and
- Retraction.

2.6.1 Secrecy

Secrecy is an inherent symptom of child sexual abuse. The imbalance of power between the adult offender and the child contributes to the abuse happening (Petty & Spies, 2005:68). Incest perpetrators are widely reported to threaten their victims regarding the consequences of any disclosure of abuse, sometimes including threats of violence and commonly involving the threat that the child will be separated from one or both parents. Other strategies are also employed to enforce secrecy (Petty & Spies, 2005:68; Omer, 2004:56; Bancroft & Silverman, 2002:90).

2.6.2 Helplessness

The child is powerless to stop the abuse and has few resources to free himself/herself from the situation, because of his/her small physique and total dependence on adult care and approval. The child is easily intimidated by an adult who wishes to introduce a sexual secret. The child learns to adapt to survive, psychologically, emotionally and, in some instances, even physically (Petty & Spies, 2005:65; Goldstein, 1999:65). These efforts to survive are what Summit (1983) refers to as entrapment and accommodation.

2.6.3 Accommodation

Because the child often feels that he/she has no other option but to submit to the acts of abuse; he/she must find some way to make the acts bearable. The most common
way is to play along with it. The ways children normally adapt to survive in an abusive situation often create psychological and behavioural problems that may persist for life, and make it increasingly harder for the child to escape or to be believed. For instance, the child may become sexually aggressive or suicidal, run away or become involved in drugs or alcohol abuse (Petty & Spies, 2005:68; Goldstein, 1999:65).

2.6.4 Delayed unconvincing disclosure

Dowd, et al. (2006:43), Myers, et al. (2002:58) and Goldstein (1999:66) state that the abuse is often not revealed for a long time, if ever, and when it is, the disclosure may be greeted with great suspicion or total disbelief. Not only because the disclosure has been delayed, but also the manner or time of disclosure contributes to the suspicion or disbelief. The most common response the child receives on disclosure is that the adult world discounts his/her allegations.

2.6.5 Retraction

After the child has divulged the secret, he/she often does not receive support from his/her parents and child protection services. The offender may be arrested and sent to jail; the parents are upset; and the child is removed from the home. The child feels that he/she has also been arrested; he/she loses his/her friends and becomes a virtual outcast. He/She begins to feel guilty about what has happened and, as a result, may retract the allegations, saying that the acts of abuse never happened or that they did not happen in the way originally described (Dowd, et al., 2006:3; Myers, et al., 2002:59; Goldstein, 1999:66).

Apart from the syndrome identified by Summit, there are other reasons why children usually conceal child sexual abuse, and these are:

- The incest taboo
- The Victorian era
- Freud’s contribution
2.6.5.1 The incest taboo

The taboo against incest is universal. However, it is not always possible to define inappropriate sexual behaviour between adults and children within families (Petty & Spies, 2005:64).

The incest taboo refers to the cultural prohibition on sexual activity or marriage between persons defined as “close” relatives. Even the Bible prohibits marriage and sexual relations among immediate blood relatives. Leviticus (18:6) cites that “none of you shall approach anyone of his close relatives … to uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother, she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness …” (Crosson-Tower, 1999:192).

2.6.5.2 The Victorian era

During the Victorian era, incestuous abuse either remained a secret or was dealt with through unofficial community sanctions. The child victim, once in court, received little or no support from doctors who, exhibiting class as well as gender prejudices, were reluctant to recognise and diagnose sexual abuse (Le Roux, 1992:138).

An abused child, especially a girl victim, found herself enveloped in “the paradox of innocence”. If the child was innocent, she was expected to be ignorant of the language and meaning of sexuality and therefore would be unable to describe abuse. If the abused child was able to paint a picture of the event, this signalled her depravity and, therefore, she was untrustworthy (Jackson, 2000). This shows how both age and gender identities could be called upon to demean the female child and how child sexual abuse was prevented to become a public issue during the Victorian era.

2.6.5.3 Freud's contribution

Sigmund Freud, a trained physician, formulated a seduction theory that was published in 1896. He believed that all hysteria was traceable to sexual seduction
and abuse. Freud later modified and replaced this theory with the psychoanalytic alternative. Researchers believe that Freud may have misinterpreted real memories of sexual abuse as imaginary and that he was biased in interpreting certain types of incest allegations as fantasies. Earlier, Freud pressured patients into believing that they were victims of abuse, while he later regarded certain types of incest allegations as unreal (Powell & Boer, 1995; Greig & Taylor, 1991:18).

2.7 SEXUAL ABUSE: MYTHS, RESULTS AND FACTS

Hall and Lloyd (1993:25-27) and Le Roux (1992:145-147) present the following account of a few misconceptions, results and facts around child sexual abuse.

TABLE 2.1: Sexual abuse – myths, results and facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myths</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mothers never know about the abuse.</td>
<td>The child is unable to face the reality of her mother's knowledge of the abuse.</td>
<td>Some mothers do know about the abuse and do nothing about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse does not do the child any harm.</td>
<td>Accounts of sexual abuse are dismissed by helper.</td>
<td>Short- and long-term consequences of child sexual abuse are now recognised to be considerable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survivors are told they were ‘too young’ for it to matter.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child fantasises about the event and fabricates sexual abuse.</td>
<td>The abused child is not believed.</td>
<td>Unless they have been abused, children do not have the sexual knowledge to have sexual fantasies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helpers attempt to ‘correct’ fantasy and do not deal with the reality.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse is condoned in the Bible.</td>
<td>This belief provides an excuse for the abuse.</td>
<td>The Bible demands that children be protected and condemns immoral acts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually abused children lie about sexual abuse.</td>
<td>Professionals take no notice of the child and adult survivors.</td>
<td>Children do not have any or sufficient knowledge of sexual abuse to lie about such abuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are abused by strangers.</td>
<td>This belief denies the reality of child sexual abuse.</td>
<td>Research shows that in approximately 85 per cent of cases, the abuser is known to and trusted by the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are sexually provocative.</td>
<td>Children are blamed for the abuse.</td>
<td>Adults are responsible for interpreting a child’s behaviour as provocative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.7.1 Contributory factors to child sexual abuse

Children are sexually abused by adults for many reasons.

Goldstein (1999:54) articulates that child molestation has been called the “perfect crime”, because children are singularly vulnerable, are easily persuaded to cooperate, and are ashamed to talk about the abuse with others. Quite often, children are seduced through the satisfaction of unfulfilled needs. With more than 40 million children living in poverty in the world, there is a ready source of victims for the offender.

Child sexual abuse also involves a degree of morality (of labelling something as wrong or bad), and if we are to control the abuse, we need to know exactly what it is and why it happens before we can legislate correctly against it (Steel & Kidd, 2001:207).

2.7.1.1 Unemployment

Work is an important part of any person’s life. Lack of opportunity to acquire skills for employment reduces the chances of securing meaningful employment. South Africa’s unemployment rate is extremely high, especially amongst the youth. Not being able to find suitable employment generates feelings of anger and powerlessness (Petty & Spies, 2005:222; De la Rey, et al., 1997:165).

Most of the people living in squatter camps are unemployed. That makes the lives of children very difficult, as they are depending on their unemployed parents. The youth in the squatter camps idly roam around the streets, having ample time on their hands. Their constant idleness and lack of prospects seduce them to make wrong decisions regarding how they spend their time and money. Unemployment therefore creates a greater opportunity for abusers to approach and abuse their victims (Richter, et al., 2004:71).

Gulatta, Adams and Markstrom (2000:221) maintain that without a job or some other legitimate means of support, people have no way to acquire food, clothing and shelter.
Often, they resort to illegal activities to obtain money. The unemployed youth is at particular risk of becoming engaged in illegal activities for money.

2.7.1.2 Deprivation and poverty

South Africa is characterised by structural unemployment, structural deprivation and underdevelopment in certain sectors. Although poverty, hunger and unemployment do not automatically lead to violence, they contribute to increased levels of crime in combination with other factors. Bad living conditions in squatter camps make people feel powerless. Some resort to violence to restore their sense of power or self-esteem (Petty & Spies, 2005:222).

Poverty contributes enormously to the sexual vulnerability of children. Children over the age of seven years do not receive a child support grant, which makes life more difficult for those families who live without an income and in poverty. Many children support their families, pay their school fees and purchase uniforms and books through the payment they receive for sexual favours (Richter, et al., 2004:268).

2.7.1.3 Overcrowding

De la Rey, et al. (1997:165) note that in South Africa, the legacy of more than 300 years of colonialism and apartheid has created a unique burden for most families, who have had to struggle with both economic and political oppression, resulting in an endless cycle of unemployment, poor housing, overcrowding and inadequate community services. These conditions forced many families to seek shelter in squatter camps. Also noted by De la Rey, et al. (1997) is the fact that in South Africa, circumstances that prevail in squatter camps and townships may create high risk conditions for Black children.

Richter, et al. (2004:71) articulate that pertinent structural features of poverty environments, such as overcrowding, raises the risk of child sexual abuse. They suggest that overcrowding limits the possibility of separation between adults or teenagers and children. They further note that in such situations, co-sleeping is
often inevitable and may provide additional opportunities for sexual abuse.

2.7.1.4 Alcohol and drug abuse

Some people use substances in an attempt to escape the stress they feel because of financial or relationship difficulties. Alcohol and drugs may temporarily make the person feel better. They also make it easier for the person to express and act out feelings such as anger. South Africa is struggling to deal with the alarmingly high incidence of substance dependence amongst its youth (Petty & Spies, 2005:223).

As was stated in Chapter 1, squatters take out their frustrations at their unemployment by taking illicit drugs such as “Tap” and “Umtshovalale”, which are cheap and easy to obtain, because they are sold cheap. Drugs such as marijuana are smuggled through the school fences and sold at affordable prices. In the squatter camp, parents are often alcohol dependent.

Gulatta, et al. (2000:360) maintain that the family appears to exert a major influence on adolescents’ drinking habits. Studies suggest that alcohol-dependent young people often come from a stained home environment in which parents display similar drinking habits.

Myers, et al. (2002:107) note that substance abusing parents are at increased risk for abusing and neglecting their children. In many cases where parents are alcohol abusers, children regularly witness sexual activities between them and may want to experience or act out what they have seen.

2.7.1.5 The myth of the virgin cure

The myth of the virgin cure has a rich and culturally diverse history, stretching back to the 16th and 17th centuries. It is a widespread belief that sexual intercourse with a virgin is a cure for sexually transmitted diseases. In the Eastern Cape of South Africa, when an outbreak of STDs was spread by troops returning from overseas after World War II, the virgin cure was widely sought among the population (Earl-Taylor, 2002; Davidson, 2001:62).
Nearly 60 children are raped every day in South Africa. Experts have agreed to disagree as to the cause or whether the pervasive belief that the so-called “virgin cure” prevents or cures HIV/AIDS is responsible for this deeply disturbing phenomenon. Earl-Taylor (2002) suggests that it could well be a contributing factor.

2.7.1.6 Survival sex

There are numerous reports of teenage schoolgirls frequenting the shebeens where local men and migrant workers drink, in order to prostitute themselves for small sums of money. Girls aged between 14 and 18 years become “taxi queens”, which involves being “adopted” by a taxi driver who then both prostitutes the child and sexually abuses her. Gang involvement in the prostitution of children is widely reported (Davidson & Taylor, 1996).

2.7.1.7 Power imbalance perspective

This theory contends that child sexual abuse takes place within the context of an imbalance of power. Blume (1990:3) articulates that what distinguishes abuse is an imbalance of power; such an imbalance may exist even between two children of the same age. For example, one, usually the male, could be physically larger or have more status or power in the eyes of the victim.

The dominance of the father over his wife and a child is also an important factor in the imbalance of power. The power differences between the father or adult and the child often makes it difficult if not impossible for the child to say no or to avoid an abusive situation. De la Rey, *et al.* (1997:165) contend that male dominance is one of the superior factors that have received most attention as promoting sexual abuse.

2.7.1.8 Lack of monitoring and supervision

The lack of monitoring and supervision of children makes some children vulnerable to sexual abuse. Children may be left alone for long periods, due to the need for their parents to secure some income for the family, usually away from home. In
some homes, conditions are very difficult and children spend as much time away as possible. Both these conditions reduce the caregiver’s ability to monitor the child’s whereabouts and render the child vulnerable to sexual abuse in the neighbourhood (Dawes, 2002:6).

2.8 INDICATORS AND SYMPTOMS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Children often will not talk directly about sexual abuse, but that does not mean that it does not occur. Frequently they do not tell, because they were threatened or made to feel that the abuse was their fault.

One of the objectives of this study is to construct practical guidelines for the teachers of sexually abused children. In order for the teachers to be effective, they have to be knowledgeable about sexual abuse, alert to its symptoms, and prepared to report suspected cases (Mayes, et al., 1992:76). Whilst the presence of the following symptoms and indicators may be related to other causes, they are mostly indicators of sexual abuse, that teachers and parents should follow up with immediate action.

TABLE 2.2: General indicators of child sexual abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical indicators</th>
<th>Behavioural indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Unusual odours around genital area.</td>
<td>Reluctance on the part of the child to go home after school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Torn, stained or bloody underclothing.</td>
<td>Statements indicating that he/she has been sexually assaulted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Difficulty in walking or sitting.</td>
<td>Poor peer relationships; the child often prefers to be alone or with an adult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Complaints of pain or itching in the genital or urinary area.</td>
<td>Withdrawn, infantile behaviour, preoccupation with fantasy world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sexually transmitted disease, especially in young children.</td>
<td>Unexplained regression in development milestones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Complaints about somatic symptoms, with no obvious organic causes.</td>
<td>Increase in physical complaints, e.g. headaches and miscellaneous illnesses of a psychomatic nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Pregnancy, especially in early adolescence.</td>
<td>Manifestations through the child’s schoolwork, art, poems and stories of unusual sexual behaviours or themes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2.3: Non-specific behavioural symptoms in school-aged children and adolescents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School-aged children</th>
<th>Adolescents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Inability to concentrate, difficulty at school, absenteeism.</td>
<td>2. Frequent depressions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unwillingness to engage in recreational activities.</td>
<td>3. Suicide attempts or self-punishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Withdrawal, not wanting to talk, makes friends, be in crowds or society.</td>
<td>5. Drug or alcohol abuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Phobic states.</td>
<td>6. Physical abuse: Self-inflicted or inflicted by parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Conversion of hysterical symptoms.</td>
<td>7. Psychosomatic preoccupation or complaints.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.9 EFFECTS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Many researchers and clinicians indicate that childhood sexual abuse is a significant risk factor for a variety of problems, both in the short-term and in terms of later adult functioning (Myers, et al., 2002:59).

Short-term consequences refer to the emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physical symptoms that follow immediately after the abuse or during childhood, while long-term effects refer to the effects that emerge in childhood and continue throughout adulthood (Le Roux, 1992:167-184).

The child’s age and developmental level will govern how much he comprehends about the abuse and therefore how much it affects him. If the child is too young to understand what has happened to him, the effects will be minimised, because he has no comprehension of the consequences (Goldstein, 1999:69; Bosman-Swanepoel & Wessels, 1995:135).
Petty and Spies (2005:116) offer hope that while the effects of sexual abuse may be traumatic, they do not have to be permanent. An adult survivor explained that the abuse could be turned around to become a meaningful opportunity for growth:

*Deciding to heal, making your own growth and recovery a priority, sets in motion a healing force that will bring to your life a richness and depth you never dreamed possible.*

(Bass & Davis, 1988:60)

2.10 SHORT-TERM CONSEQUENCES

2.10.1 Emotional consequences

2.10.1.1 Feelings of shame


2.10.1.2 Feelings of guilt

The abused child carries the burden of sexual abuse alone. He or she experiences intense feelings of guilt about the experience (Le Roux, 1992:167; Bloem, 1990:124).

2.10.1.3 Bed-wetting

Bedwetting is another sudden change or regression in behaviour. The child will have already passed through the ‘nominal’ age for such a problem and then suddenly begin to bed-wet during the night (Goldstein, 1999:83).

2.10.1.4 Phobias

A phobia is an overwhelming irrational fear of something. The child may have fear of enclosed spaces, fear of elevators, or fear of riding in cars (Le Roux, 1992:175; Blume, 1990:128).
2.10.1.5 Low self-esteem

Rape survivors may feel guilty or dirtied because of an event in their adult life; incest survivors grow up with sexual abuse as part of their development, and it becomes part of their view of themselves. They grow up feeling as if something inside is putrid and disgusting (Petty & Spies, 2005:121; Blume, 1990:113).

2.10.2 Cognitive consequences

2.10.2.1 Confusion about sexual identity

Boys who have been sexually abused feel confused and concerned about their sexual identity. This confusion can be ascribed to the following factors:

- Concern about the fact that they were chosen as victims;
- Questions may arise in the victim. ‘Why me?’ ‘What is it about me that attracted the man sexually?’
- Concern about the fact that he offered insufficient resistance to the sexual abuse: ‘Why did I allow it?’ ‘Did I not secretly enjoy it?’ (Le Roux, 1992:180).

2.10.2.2 Lack of trust

Often the victim of deceit, the sexually abused child learns that it is unwise to trust others. In many cases, the child will expect betrayal and rejection from anyone who displays kindness and caring feelings to him (Goldstein, 1999:81; Blume, 1990:188).

2.10.2.3 Drop in achievement

As a result of the child’s inability to concentrate, his/her performance, particularly his/her academic achievement, may deteriorate drastically (Petty & Spies, 2005:97; Le Roux, 1992:180).
2.10.2.4 Lack of concentration

Because of the emotions or bad feelings that come from the abuse, the child is afraid of the consequences of his/her actions at home, wracked by guilt and afraid of what will happen to him/her next. The sexually abused child therefore has great difficulty in paying attention to what is going on in school (Goldstein, 1999:82).

2.10.2.5 Reliving the trauma

Some writers report that victims relive the trauma as a result of repeated or current thoughts of the event which cannot be banished from their memories. A feeling of helplessness and anxiety is created in the sexually abused child (Petty & Spies, 2005:121; Le Roux, 1992:179).

2.10.3 Behavioural consequences

2.10.3.1 Self-destructive behaviour

Sexually abused children often turn to alcohol or drugs as an escape mechanism. It is not uncommon to find that these children become criminally delinquent, hoping to get caught as a means of punishing themselves for allowing their abuse to happen, or as with prostitution. Head banging and cutting or pulling hair may be signs of self-punishment (Petty & Spies, 2005:92; Goldstein, 1999:82).

2.10.3.2 Aggressive behaviour

Some sexually abused children display aggressive and anti-social behaviour. This behaviour is often accompanied by fighting, bullying younger children, chronic disobedience, lying and other anti-social forms of behaviour, such as cruelty to animals, vandalism and sexual molestation of peer-group members and younger children (Le Roux, 1992:183).

2.10.3.3 Runaway behaviour

When runaways are driven out of their homes by abuse, they are driven into instant
adulthood. These children sometimes literally run away to save their lives. Some children say there is less abuse in the streets than in their homes (Le Roux, 1992:183; Blume, 1990:180).

In whatever sexual relationships the child may subsequently enter as an adult, the sexual activity in itself could produce flashbacks to the childhood sexual abuse, in the form of images or a vivid memory, which could be highly disturbing (Hall & Lloyd, 1993:84).

2.10.3.4 Anxiety

Anxiety is a common emotional reaction to sexual abuse. The sexually abused child cannot distinguish past from present, reality from unreality. She feels yesterday’s fears as if it were today’s, and is overpowered by her feelings as if she were still a helpless six-year old, with no awareness of her adult powers (Hall & Lloyd, 1993:79; Le Roux, 1992:175).

2.10.3.5 Isolation

The child starts avoiding the company of others, withdrawing from friends and family members, often in a hostile manner. Parents and other concerned carers perceive the child to be non-communicative and sad. By leading an isolated life, the child manages to keep the secret of the sexual abuse unbroken (Petty & Spies, 2005:97; Hall & Lloyd, 1993:73).

2.10.4 Long-term consequences

2.10.4.1 Suicidal feelings

Often, the child feels that she has no escape but death. The child may attempt to kill herself by drinking paraffin or ratex or swallowing too many tablets. These attempts occur when the pain of what happened to him/her becomes too much for the sexually abused child and he/she loses control over the present life experience (Goldstein, 1999:83; Hall & Lloyd, 1993:88).
2.10.4.2 Drug and alcohol abuse

Alcohol and drug abuse may at first seem as a form of self-medication for symptoms of trauma, but ultimately they create their own set of financial, interpersonal and social problems. Hall and Lloyd (1993:89) note that the use of tranquillisers may help the survivor with anxiety problems and block out the memories of childhood experiences. However, these children may later become drug addicts or alcoholics (Petty & Spies, 2005:131; Le Roux, 1992:184).

2.10.4.3 Sexual problems

Sexual problems are almost universal among survivors and take a number of forms. It is very often the occurrence of sexual problems that encourages a woman to seek help and to disclose childhood sexual abuse.

2.10.4.4 Self-blame

Sexually abused children as a group tend to perceive themselves as different from their peers and display heightened self-blame for negative events and reduced interpersonal trust. A minority do not blame themselves for what has happened, but rather hold offenders responsible for the abuse (Petty & Spies, 2005:153; Myers, et al., 2002:61).

2.10.4.5 Child describes abuse in drawings and play

Sexually abused children will frequently re-enact or describe the circumstances of their abuse in play, drawings or in conversation with others, where no questioning or inquiry is made of them (Goldstein, 1999:76).

2.10.5 Physical consequences

Because sexual abuse does not necessarily entail penetration and is often non-violent, it is sometimes difficult to identify signs of abuse. However, the following signs are generally indicated as signs of sexual abuse:
• Skin irritations around the genital areas;
• Infections and vaginal discharge;
• Swelling, bleeding and injuries to the genitals and abdomen;

2.11 FACTORS THAT IMPACT ON SEVERITY OF CHILD’S RESPONSE TO ABUSE

2.11.1 Age of the survivor

This refers to the particular age of the child at the time of abuse. The younger and more dependent the child, the greater the damage is likely to be, particularly when the abuser is a parent or primary carer (Petty & Spies, 2005:87; Walker, 2004:29; Goldstein, 1999:69).

2.11.2 Duration of the abuse

The longer and more frequent the abusive episodes are, the more intense the effects of the abuse are likely to be. For example, if the child was touched only once by the perpetrator, the psychological consequences will be less severe than if the child was subject to multiple touching over a period of time (Petty & Spies, 2005:88; Goldstein, 1999:70; Hall & Lloyd, 1993:4).

2.11.3 Relationship with perpetrator

Abuse by a father or stepfather generally causes greater trauma than abuse committed by abusers who are unrelated to the child (Petty & Spies, 2005:35; Goldstein, 1999:70).

2.11.4 Reactions of parents and those close to child

When the child who discloses the abuse is not handled with supreme sensitivity, he or she may be re-traumatised. This form of trauma is referred to as secondary trauma and occurs when the disclosing child does not feel as though he/she is
believed by parents or by others, or when the child is blamed or punished for the abuse.

Negative responses intensify the trauma, while positive responses bring relief to the child (Petty & Spies, 2005:89; Goldstein, 1999:90; Le Roux, 1992:185).

2.11.5 Number of abusers involved

The effect of abuse is generally more severe if the child is abused by more than one person. It is important to note that when children are abused within their families, they are more prone to being victimised by others and their risk of further sexual abuse is increased (Walker, 2004:91; Hall & Lloyd, 1993:4).

2.11.6 Method of entrapment

The method that perpetrators use to get a child in their power, impacts on the way the child experiences the abuse. Threats of physical harm and emotional blackmail all worsen the child’s sense of powerlessness, fear and guilt. Sexual abuse involving violence predictably results in more serious outcomes for the abused child. Emotional blackmail, such as threats that the child will be held responsible for the disintegration of the family if he/she discloses the secret of abuse, also generates a high level of stress for the child, which compounds his/her reaction to the trauma (Petty & Spies, 2005:88; Goldstein, 1999:70).

2.11.7 Resources available to child

If the child has a close relationship with his parents or has friends in whom he/she can confide and with whom he/she can share experiences and problems, the impact will be less than if no such resources were available to him/her. The support that these resources provide, will reduce the degree of ill-effect the child suffers (Goldstein, 1999:70).
2.11.8 Nature and type of sexual acts

The nature of the acts performed with or on the child will also have an effect on the way he/she reacts to the abuse. If, for example, the acts involve touching the child’s body over clothing, the effects will be less severe than if the child was involved in full intercourse (Goldstein, 1999:71; Le Roux, 1992:185).

2.12 TRANSGRESSIONS OF MOST IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Child sexual abuse often involves violent coercion or threats, tricks or bribes. Perpetrators take advantage of their status or the child’s trust and need for love and affection. The perpetrator capitalises on the child’s lack of knowledge or understanding of sexual matters, in carrying out the act for his/her own gratification (Petty & Spies, 2005:79; Lewis, 1999:99).

In education, the aspects of interpersonal communication are actualised in the form of the pedagogical relationships of authority, understanding and trust. These aspects influence the learning and social involvement of the child and his self-actualisation (Pretorius, 2000:221).

2.12.1 Educational relationship of authority

When love is lacking, there is no educational authority. In the lesson situation, the teacher must exercise consistent, sympathetic educational authority for the sake of classroom discipline and provide positive direction under which teaching and learning must take place. Authority is a necessary requirement for education, as it gives the child certainty, stability and security (Pretorius, 2000:221-222).

Child sexual abuse entails the abuse of power; the misuse of one’s authority, especially as an adult or a parent, as well as one’s responsibility, in terms of status and age. The power difference between adults and children often makes it difficult, if not impossible, for some children to say no to adults, or to avoid or escape from abusive situations. This power differential increases when the abuse is coming
from the parent, particularly a father figure (Goldstein, 1999:161).

In families with a strong patriarchal structure, the child often perceives the father's power to be unquestionable. This power is sometimes maintained by threats or acts of violence. In child sexual abuse, perpetrators abuse their power as adults as well as the child’s natural trust, affection and obedience. Their coercion and manipulation takes away the child’s rights to decide what is good for him/her (Petty & Spies, 2005:86).

Poling (1991:27) contends that the power that God intended for everyone who lives, is often used to destroy relationships in exchange for control. Rather than live in security, some persons choose to create structures that dominate and control others, for personal gratification and a false sense of security. For example, some parents choose to destroy their children by sexually abusing them, rather than facing their own failure and disappointment in life.

2.12.2 Educational relationship of trust

The teacher is a significant other person in the school life and social sensitisation of the child. The child is encouraged to believe that he/she can trust the adults in his/her life and is taught that he/she should do what adults demand. However, some adults exploit this trust to abuse the child sexually (Udall, 2003:20).

The child’s trust is violated by sexual abuse, especially if he/she has been abused by a family member. Family members are supposed to protect and be there for each other. In a sexually abusive home, this is not the case. A child who is a victim of sexual abuse in the home learns that he/she cannot trust his/her own family, and therefore cannot really trust anyone (Whetsell-Mitchell, 1995:26; Hall & Lloyd, 1993:80).

Abuse by a father, stepfather or any member of the family causes greater trauma than abuse committed by abusers who are unrelated to the child. The major factors that determine the effects of abuse by a close relative are: the level of trust that the child has placed in the abuser; the significance of this relationship; the quality of the
child’s relationship with others, excluding the abuse; the level of betrayal that the child experiences in this abusive relationship; and the nature of the threats that substantiate this fear (Petty & Spies, 2005:88).

Following this betrayal of trust, the emotional development of the child is likely to be disrupted especially, if the sexual abuse remains hidden, ignored or condoned by other significant adults (Hall & Lloyd, 1993:81).

2.12.3 The educational relationship of understanding

The child needs the teacher’s understanding for his/her encounter with the adult world and for the long, difficult transformation from a childlike attitude to the adult world with its demands. The lack of understanding of the perpetrator leads to unfulfillable demands being made on the child. This discourages, frustrates and confuses the child, and gives rise to feelings of guilt and conflict (Pretorius, 2000:224).

Children are vulnerable to adult abuse of power because they lack understanding and resources for self-protection. Some children are physically overpowered and raped by men who have no concern for their wellbeing. Some are sexually exploited and then intimidated into silence by being made to fear for their own safety or the safety of their family (Poling, 1991:23).

Pretorius (2000:220) notes that adult perpetrators approach the child from their adult world, without any real understanding of the child’s world. They make sexual demands and force the child to do what they want, hence Donald, et al. (2006:239) contend that the child developmentally is not able to understand fully or give consent to the sexual activities imposed on them by adults.

2.13 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, child sexual abuse has been described and discussed by means of a literature study, from which information will be drawn for the development of this study. A broad introduction of the study was given, as well as definitions of child
sexual abuse in terms of different theories. Forms of sexual abuse were also discussed, followed by types of intrafamilial molestation, stages of sexual abuse, and the incidence and prevalence of child sexual abuse. The myths, consequences and facts, contributory factors of child sexual abuse, indicators – symptoms, effects of child sexual abuse and, lastly, the transgressions of the most important education relationships were also included in this chapter.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The introduction to and rationale of the study were presented in Chapter 1, while a theoretical perspective on child sexual abuse within the context of a squatter camp was introduced in Chapter 2.

In this chapter, the researcher will provide a comprehensive discussion on the research design and methodology chosen for this research, in order to provide answers to the research problem and aims. The research approach to be followed will be discussed.

3.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

3.2.1 Formulation of problem

Literature has revealed that while the sexual abuse of children is an escalating problem in all communities, it is especially prevalent in squatter camps. However, irrespective of the community in which it occurs, the sexual abuse of children always has devastating short- and long-term consequences (Myers, et al., 2002:59). In many instances, no one at home notices or responds to the child's pain, or the child is not believed, or the abuse is deliberately concealed, especially if it is intrafamilial (Le Roux, 1992:162).

As an adult who spends a lot of time with the child, the teacher will notice a sudden decline in his or her performance in class that cannot be ascribed to any specific cause. The child is not concentrating, or is not obeying authority, or is developing patterns of truancy (Petty & Spies, 2005:97). All these conditions leave the teacher with challenges that go beyond his/her normal requirements. Coping with these challenges and the demands of educating such a child can be problematic.
The following research problems have been formulated, based on the above background.

3.2.2 Primary research problem

What are the perceptions of the teachers of sexually abused children from a squatter camp on how they cope in school?

3.2.3 Secondary research problem

Which practical guidelines could be designed to assist the teacher of sexually abused children in supporting and guiding them in their educational task as teachers of these learners?

3.3 AIM OF RESEARCH

The research aim of this study is linked to the formulated research problems and will therefore be to:

- explore and describe the perceptions of teachers of sexually abused children coming from a squatter camp of how these learners are coping at school;
- construct practical guidelines that will help and support the teachers of sexually abused children coming from a squatter camp in their educational task.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is the plan according to which data are to be collected to investigate the research question (Huysamen, 2001:10). The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained, will enable the initial question to be answered as unambiguously as possible (De Vaus, 2001:9).

This study will follow a qualitative design, which is interpretive, naturalistic,
descriptive, holistic and exploratory (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:2; Creswell, 2003:181-182). The qualitative design will serve as a foundation to understand the participants' worlds and the meaning of shared experiences between the researcher and the participants in a given social context (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:38).

3.4.1 Philosophical foundation

Creswell (2003:6) states that researchers start a project with certain assumptions about how and what they will learn during the inquiry. These assumptions are called paradigms. The researcher in this study has followed the interpretive paradigm.

Holloway and Wheeler (2002:12) maintain that the interpretive paradigm has its roots in philosophy and centres on the interpretation and creation of meaning by human beings and their subjective reality. The interpretive paradigm is also naturalistic and constructivist in nature.

In constructivism, meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. For example, researchers use open-ended questions so that participants have the opportunity to freely and openly express their views (Creswell, 2003:9). Constructivist researchers tend to use research methods such as interviews and observations, which allow them to acquire multiple perspectives (Robson, 2002:27). Interviews were used in this study, in order to acquire the perspectives of teachers on the problem of child sexual abuse in a squatter camp. Marshall and Rossman (2006:12) and Robson (2002:14) also see people as conscious purposive actors, who have ideas about their world and attach meaning to what is going on around them, and whose behaviour depends on these ideas and meanings.

Another element of this inquiry is critical theory, which is commonly referred to as the emancipatory paradigm. According to Robson (2002:28), this approach has the following features:
• It focuses on the lives and experiences of diverse groups that were traditionally marginalised.
• It analyses how and why resulting inequities are reflected in asymmetric power relationships.
• It examines how the results of social inquiry into inequities are linked to political and social action.
• It uses an emancipatory theory to develop the research approach.

Marshall and Rossman (2006:5) note that critical theory assumes that knowledge is subjective, but view society as essentially conflictual and oppressive. They further note that assumptions behind research questions must be questioned and sometimes dismantled in order to contribute to radical change or emancipation from oppressive social structures. The researcher hopes to empower teachers who are teaching sexually abused children from a squatter camp, by giving them information that will assist them in helping the victims recognise and acknowledge their problems and disclose the abuse by taking positive social action.

3.4.2 Qualitative research

Holloway and Wheeler (2002:55) maintain that qualitative research is based on the belief that knowledge is socially constructed and that qualitative methods focus on the everyday life of people. They state that qualitative research is also known as interpretive research, or naturalistic inquiry. Thomson (1997:156) describes qualitative research as documenting and interpreting as fully as possible the totality of whatever is being studied in a particular context, from the people’s viewpoint. This includes the identification, study and analysis of subjective and objective data, in order to understand people’s worlds.

According to Marshall and Rossman (2006:2), qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, grounded in the lived experiences of people and has five characteristics:

• It takes place naturally;
• It uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic;
• It focuses on context;
• It is emergent, rather than tightly prefigured; and
• It is fundamentally interpretive.

The aforementioned authors state that qualitative researchers who practice qualitative research display the following characteristics:

• They view social phenomena holistically;
• They systematically reflect on who they are in the inquiry;
• They are sensitive to their personal biography and how it shapes the study;
• They use complex reasoning that is multi-faceted and iterative.

3.4.3 Exploratory research

Many qualitative studies are exploratory; they build rich descriptions of complex circumstances that are unexplained in the literature (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:33). Explorative research is aimed at establishing or investigating the nature of a phenomenon, that is, the manner in which it is manifested.

Wisker (2001:119) states that exploratory research is undertaken when the researcher proposes to study an unknown field in an attempt to gain new insight in and a better understanding of a phenomenon. In this study, the researcher used interviews to gain more understanding and new insight in the perceptions of teachers who are teaching sexually abused children from a squatter camp.

3.4.4 Holistic research

Robson (2002:182) and De Vaus (2001:220) define a holistic study as a study where the concern remains at a single, global level. Marshall and Rossman (2006:3) maintain that a qualitative researcher views social phenomena holistically. Robson (2002:182) explains holistic research as remaining at the level of the whole, rather than seeking to look at and analyse the different functioning of separate parts. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003:57), qualitative research has a holistic picture or design. De Vaus (2001:221) explains this concept by stating:
“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts”.

### 3.4.5 Interpretive research

Interpretive research centres on interpretation and the creation of meaning by human beings, and their subjective reality (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002:98). The researcher filters the data through a personal lens that is situated in a specific socio-political and historical moment (Creswell, 2003:182).

When the researcher interprets the data, that will include developing a description of an individual or setting, analysing data for themes, and finally making an interpretation about its meaning, both personally and theoretically (Creswell, 2003:182).

### 3.4.6 Descriptive research

Marshall and Rossman (2006:33) and De Vaus (2001:225) note that many qualitative studies are descriptive and that they build rich descriptions of complex circumstances that are fairly uninvestigated in the literature. The purpose of such studies is to document and describe the phenomenon of interest to provide accurate accounts of the characteristics of particular individuals, situations and groups. It also provides a picture of a situation as it naturally occurs.

### 3.4.7 Naturalistic and contextual research

Qualitative research takes place in the natural world. Qualitative researchers are intrigued by the complexity of social interactions expressed in daily life and by the meanings that the participants themselves attribute to these interactions. These interests take qualitative researchers into natural settings, rather than laboratories (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:2-3). Hence, the researcher in this study visited all the participants in their natural settings, namely homes or schools, to conduct the interviews. Interviewing participants in their natural settings allows the researcher deeper insight into the world of the participants and to be much more involved in their actual experiences (Creswell, 2003:181).
3.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.5.1 Sampling of participants

The researcher in this study chose *purposive* sampling to guide her selection of participants. The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question (Creswell, 2003:185; Huysamen, 2001:44). This approach allowed the selection of a sample of people who “represent” the phenomenon in question so that findings can include as much of the phenomenon as possible (Thomson, 1997:164). Hence the researcher used her knowledge about the population to handpick the participants (Polit & Hungler, 1993:29).

Purposeful sampling is not concerned so much with random sampling as it is with providing a sample of information-rich participants. That means that the participants must show certain characteristics in which the researcher is interested (Struwig & Stead, 2001:122). In this study, the researcher drew a purposive sample from teachers who are teaching children from a squatter camp in the Motherwell Township, Nelson Mandela Bay.

It is difficult to pre-specify the number of interviews in a qualitative design study; the basic notion is that the researcher must continue until a point of saturation is reached, that is, when further data collection appears to add little or nothing to what is already learnt (Robson, 2002:199).

An important step in the process is to find people or places to study and to gain access and establish rapport, so that participants will provide good data. Gaining access to the site or individuals also involves several steps. For instance, submitting a research proposal that details the procedures of the study and giving out consent forms to participants.

The researcher will consider the following criteria in choosing her participants:

- Will the researcher be able to find enough teachers to select from?
Will the teachers be willing to participate in the study?
Will the female teachers be available after working hours?
Will the observer be available at all times?
Are the participants representing children from a squatter camp?

The interviewing of participants followed after the researcher had invited the participants and had issued them with the consent forms. The participants chosen were all female Foundation Phase teachers teaching children from the squatter camps, at three different schools in the Motherwell Township. The children’s ages ranged from 7 to 15 years, and the ten participants’ ages ranged from 35 to 47 years.

The participants were all known to the researcher, and were all dealing with children that were sexually abused, vulnerable, orphaned, heading their own households and displaying learning problems at school. Creswell (1994:119) cites that a researcher works well when all the individuals studied, have experienced the relevant phenomenon. The researcher in this study investigated the perceptions of teachers teaching sexually abused children coming from squatter camps on how they were coping in schools; so they had ample experience of teaching sexually abused children.

3.5.1.1 Data collection

Researchers collect their data through interviewing, observing or through documentary search, once they have decided on a research question. The most common method of data gathering is interviewing (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:97; Holloway & Wheeler, 2002:99). The researcher made use of unstructured open-ended and in-depth interviews, namely face-to-face individual interviews. Holloway and Wheeler (2002:84) and Robson (2002:272) articulate that face-to-face interviews offer the possibility of modifying one’s line of inquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives in a way that postal and other self-administered questionnaires cannot. In a qualitative approach, the researcher is the major research tool.

The researcher used an audiotape recorder, and field notes were taken by the second
researcher, the observer, who was taking notes of the non-verbal responses of the participants. Robson (2002:273) states that non-verbal cues may divulge messages that help in understanding the verbal responses. Eight interviews took place at the participants’ homes, and two in the researcher’s office at school. The setting was the choice of the participants, and was free from distractions. Holloway and Wheeler (2002:134) maintain that in their natural context, participants tend to be more relaxed.

3.5.1.2 Role of researcher

In qualitative research, it is recognised that the researcher and his/her co-worker are the measuring instruments. The interview process relies on the questioning and listening capabilities of the researcher. The researcher and the participant are both part of the research process, and are influencing each other during the study (Struwig & Stead, 2001:125).

The researcher, as the primary data collection instrument, necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the onset of the study (Creswell 2003:200). The researcher should possess superb listening skills and be skilful at personal interaction, question framing and gentle probing for elaboration. The researcher should convey the attitude that the participants’ views are valuable and useful.

The role that the researcher played in this research was that of moderator, as she was facilitating the interviews, while her co-researcher was the observer who took field notes of non-verbal cues and gave feedback on the moderator’s performance (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002:16; Robson, 2002:287). Gaining entry to a research site and ethical issues that might arise are also elements of the researcher’s role (Creswell, 2003:184). The researcher, in this study, gained entry to the site by asking permission to conduct the interviews from the research committee and from the participants.

3.5.1.3 Interviews

Patton (2002:342-347) divides interviews into three categories, namely:
• The informal, conversational interview;
• The general interview guide approach; and
• The standardised open-ended interview.

The interviews undertaken in this study were open-ended interviews. Qualitative interviews are more like conversations than formal interviews. The interviewer interacts with the interviewees in one-to-one or face-to-face individual interviews.

Interviews involve personal interaction, and cooperation is also essential (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:102). The interviewee and the interviewer interact with each other during the discussion process. The interviewer asks questions and uses prompts and probes, when necessary, remaining careful not to plant ideas in the mind of the participant.

Robson (2002:272) maintains that face-to-face interviews offer the possibility of modifying one’s line of inquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives. Interviews are time consuming, and one cannot be certain of the exact time or length of the interview. Anything exceeding one hour could become monotonous and could be construed as making unreasonable demands on the interviewee, thereby reducing the number of participants. Robson (2002) further states that interviews require careful preparation, including making arrangements to visit, securing permission, writing up notes, tape recording and transcribing tapes.

### 3.5.1.4 Data analysis

Marshall and Rossman (2006:155) define data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the mass of data collected. In qualitative studies, data collection and analysis go hand in hand to build a coherent interpretation. Creswell (2003:190) cites the process of data analysis as making sense out of text and image data.

Once the data collected becomes repetitive and a point of saturation is reached, the process of data collection is concluded. The tape-recorded interviews are now
transcribed; hence Creswell (1994:153) acknowledges that the data analysis is conducted simultaneously with data collection, data interpretation, and narrative report writing.

The process of qualitative analysis will be based on data “reduction” and “interpretation”, meaning that the researcher takes an amount of information and reduces it to certain patterns, categories or themes and then interprets this information by following the eight steps as proposed by Tesch (in Creswell, 1994:155) to analyse the data. In this study, the data was analysed as follows:

- The researcher read all the transcripts, writing down ideas that emerged. This was done in order to obtain a sense of the overall picture. The researcher jotted some ideas in the page margins.
- The researcher picked one interview or document that was the most interesting and rich in information, and jotted thoughts in the page margins.
- This process was repeated until a list of all topics was assembled. These topics were then clustered together into baskets that were labelled as “major topics”, “unique topics” and “leftovers”.
- The researcher revisited the data with the list at hand. An abbreviation was made for each topic in the form of codes and written next to the appropriate segments of the text. This exercise was used to see if new categories and codes emerged.
- An effort was made to reduce the list of categories by grouping together topics that were related to each other. The researcher then divided the themes into categories and sub-categories. The researcher worked with an independent re-coder to confirm triangulation and the reliability of the process of data analysis.
- The researcher then made a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetised these codes.
- The data material was assembled in one place; the independent coder and the researcher worked independently and then discussed the themes until they reached consensus.
- The results were then confirmed by literature control.
3.5.1.5 Literature control

A literature control is performed once the data analysis is completed to compare the research findings with the available data. Holloway and Wheeler (2002:251) and Creswell (1994:159) maintain that when the literature verifies the findings, the reliability of the research is enhanced. The differences, gaps, similarities and unique contributions could be determined to verify the findings and the feasibility of the guidelines derived from the findings (Creswell, 1994:21).

3.6 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

To ensure trustworthiness in this study, Lincoln and Guba’s model was utilised (Poggenpoel, 1998:348; Krefting, 1991:215). Holloway and Wheeler (2002:254) maintain that trustworthiness is an indication of methodological soundness and adequacy.

Many theories of qualitative design avoid the terms “reliability” and “validity” used in a qualitative design and prefer to use the terms credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Robson, 2002:170). These principles provide the foundation for demonstrating trustworthiness and the decision trail in the research approach.

3.6.1 Credibility

Holloway and Wheeler (2002:263), Robson (2002:109) and Krefting (1991:215) cite that the strategy to establish truth-value is credibility, which is concerned with the fact whether the findings of the study are a true reflection of the experiences of the study participants. Msutwana (2004:65) supports this view by articulating that the truth-value or trustworthiness asks whether the researcher has established confidence in the truth of the findings for the participants, and the context in which the study was undertaken. The researcher in this study used the following three activities to ensure credibility from those proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985:301), namely:
3.6.1.1 Peer examination

This will be done through the help of the experienced independent coder, who will be the supervisor. The independent coder will identify themes independently of the researcher and will then reach consensus together on the identified themes. Robson (2002:175), Holloway and Wheeler (1996:165), note that peer examination is concerned with presenting data analysis and conclusions for peer evaluation.

3.6.1.2 Member checks

This involves returning to those who participated in the research to check whether the data gathered was accurate. This can be a valuable means of guarding against researcher bias. It will also demonstrate to the participants that the researcher values their perceptions and contributions (Creswell, 2003:196; Robson, 2002:145; Holloway & Wheeler, 1996:165).

3.6.1.3 Triangulation

Creswell (2003:217), Robson (2002:175) and Krefting (1991:196) maintain that triangulation can help to counter all threats to validity. In this study, field notes were taken by the observer during the interviews, whilst the researcher was facilitating the interviews, which allowed the researcher ample time to experience the challenges encountered by participants.

An audiotape recorder was used during the interview, and the tapes were later transcribed verbatim. The data was analysed by both the independent coder and the researcher. The researcher will include a sample of transcribed data as an annexure to the study.

3.6.2 Transferability

Transferability ensures the trustworthiness of a study. It is established through the strategy of applicability. Transferability refers to the degree in which the findings of a specific piece of research can be transferred to another context or carried over to other respondents. There is concern about the internal generalisability in qualitative
research, as it is commonly used to describe people with distinctive features (Msutwana, 2004:66; Struwig & Stead, 2001:146).

The researcher purposefully selected participants from teachers who were teaching children coming from squatter camps in the Motherwell Township. The interviews conducted, were audio-taped and transcribed, to obtain transferability. Another measure taken to achieve transferability was that a dense and accurate description was provided of the methodology employed for the research. The participants also provided comprehensive descriptions and narratives of their experiences (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:277; Krefting, 1991:216).

3.6.3 Dependability

In achieving dependability, one must consider the consistency of data, that is, whether the findings would be consistent if the inquiry was to be replicated with the same participants. Dependability is established through consistency; in this study, it will be achieved by using an independent coder. The researcher and the independent coder independently coded the data and held consensus discussions on themes, sub-themes and categories presented as research findings (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:278; Struwig & Stead, 2001:172; Krefting, 1991:216).

3.6.4 Confirmability

The fourth criterion is confirmability, which is also known as neutrality. It refers to the extent to which the study findings are free from bias. Qualitative research should consider the neutrality of the data rather than that of the research, which suggests neutrality as the strategy to achieve confirmability, which will be established through the criterion of triangulation (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002:255; Struwig & Stead, 2001:124).

To ensure neutrality, the researcher will adopt an unbiased approach during the interviews and not let her personal opinions or perceptions influence the research process. If information could be traced back to the original sources, then confirmability has been achieved (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002:255). Researchers
should always attempt to uphold confirmability and honesty in their research (Mouton, 2002:240).

The table below summarises the strategies utilised in this study to ensure trustworthiness.

**TABLE 3.1: Strategies to ensure trustworthiness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credibility (Truth value)</td>
<td>Peer examination</td>
<td>An experienced independent coder identified themes independent from the researcher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Member checks</td>
<td>The researcher returned to the participants to check whether the data obtained was correct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>• During the interviews, field notes were taken and information was captured through the use of an audio-tape recorder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The data was later transcribed verbatim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• An experienced independent coder was used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferability (Applicability)</td>
<td>Purposive sampling</td>
<td>Participants were selected on the basis that they would be able to supply rich information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dense description</td>
<td>• Detailed descriptions and quotes from the participants were highlighted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participants were Foundation Phase teachers, teaching children coming from squatter camps who had been sexually abused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability (Consistency)</td>
<td>Code-recode</td>
<td>The unstructured interviews were coded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>• The information derived from the tapes was subjected to a literature control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The independent coder and the researcher independently coded the data and held consensus discussions on the themes, sub-themes and categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmability (Neutrality)</td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>The information gathered from the interviews and field notes was verified through literature control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scientific distance</td>
<td>The researcher kept an appropriate distance, in order not to influence the participants.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3.7 ETHICAL MEASURES

Creswell (2003:64) notes that, as researchers anticipate data collection, they need to respect the participants and the sites for research, as many ethical issues arise during this stage of the research. Ethical issues arise from interaction with other people, and moral rules of behaviour must apply (Mouton, 2001:238-239). For the purpose of this study, the researcher considered the following ethical measures:

3.7.1 Confidentiality

The researcher took measures to ensure the privacy of the information shared by the participants. The participants were assured that whatever information they shared, their identity would not be revealed, because they had the right to remain anonymous. This also applied to the collation of data by means of tape recorders as well as to data collected in face-to-face interviews. To ensure confidentiality, the interviews were conducted where there would be no interruptions. The taped information will remain in the safekeeping of the researcher (Mouton, 2001:243; Burns & Grove, 1993:163).

3.7.2 Informed consent

Informed consent forms were distributed to participants to sign before they engaged in the research. This form undertook to protect participants’ rights during data collection. This consent form stated the following:

- The right to participate voluntarily and the right to withdraw at any time;
- The purpose of the study, so that individuals will understand the nature of the research and its likely impact on them;
- The procedure of the study, so that individuals will reasonably expect what to anticipate in the research; and
- The signatures of both the participant and the researcher agreeing to these provisions (Creswell, 2003:65; Struwig & Stead, 2001:67-68).
3.7.3 Responsibility to society

Researchers are required to conduct themselves and their research procedures in a responsible manner and be accountable at all times.

The researchers should be honest about their qualifications, capabilities and aims (Mouton, 2001:238).

3.7.4 Right to privacy

The researchers have to be watchful in respecting subjects’ right to privacy. Sidumo (2005:48) cites that an individual has the right to determine the time, extent and general circumstances under which private information is shared with or withheld from others. Mouton (2001:243) contends that the right to privacy is expressed more concretely in the following “rules”:

- People have the right to refuse to be interviewed;
- People have the right to refuse to answer any question;
- People should not be interviewed at mealtimes; and
- People should not be interviewed for long periods.

3.7.5 Professional ethics

The goal of scientific research is to search for the truth. Researchers have a moral commitment to search for the truth and knowledge; this is referred to as the “epistemic imperative”. The idea of an imperative implies that a kind of moral contract has been entered into, which contract is intrinsic to all scientific inquiry (Mouton, 2001:239).

3.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the research design and the research methodology were explored and discussed. This was an attempt to ensure informed conclusions. It was explained that data would be collected through in-depth unstructured interviews,
which would be conducted in the natural setting of the participants.

In Chapter 4, the researcher will focus on the discussion of identified themes and literature control, and the findings will be supported by quotations from the participants and the literature.
CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND LITERATURE CONTROL

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 presented the chosen research design and methodology. From the interviews conducted with the participants to establish their perceptions of how sexually abused children coming from the squatter camps were coping at school, various eminent themes emerged. This chapter will focus on these themes, substantiated with verbatim quotations of the participants and validated against relevant scientific literature.

It should be noted that because the themes are so interwoven and related, some overlaps between the themes will be inevitable.

Detailed identified themes, sub-themes and categories are presented in Table 4.1 below.

**TABLE 4.1: Themes, sub-themes and categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>SUB-THEMES</th>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Sexual abuse has a <strong>negative</strong> effect on children and they consequently develop problems.</td>
<td>4.1.1 Academic work</td>
<td>4.1.1.1 Absenteeism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>4.1.1.2 Underachievers</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4.1.1.3 Divided attention</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1.1.4 Handwriting deteriorates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1.1.5 They cannot think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.1.2 Behavioural problems</td>
<td>4.1.2.1 Aggressive behaviour</td>
</tr>
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The results of the findings are presented below:

4.2 THEME ONE: SEXUAL ABUSE HAS A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON CHILDREN AND THEY CONSEQUENTLY DEVELOP PROBLEMS

The participants believed that the experience of sexual abuse had created an array of confusing and overwhelming feelings about themselves and their world in the affected child. They stated that the experience of sexual abuse had negative effects on the children and that they consequently developed problems. They contended that the problems were evident in the academic performance of these children, as the sexually abused children generally did not cope at school.

All the teachers that were interviewed by the researcher acknowledged that sexual abuse was affecting children academically and that those children generally did not cope at school, because of the burden of being sexually abused.

“… it is difficult for the children to cope at school, because they have this burden.”

4.2.1 Academic work

4.2.1.1 Absenteeism

According to the participants, teachers who are teaching children coming from the
squatter camps experienced a lot of absenteeism in their schools, and on investigating the cause, they often found that most of these children had been sexually abused.

“She is not always at school, she is always running away, and we know there is a problem with that child [sic].”

“The other factors that affect children who are sexually abused is the rate of absenteeism. You find out that an abused child stays off for long days and as a caring educator in our school, when a child has been absent for 3 days, we try and investigate from other learners. When after 5 days … we try to contact parents … It is where we discover there has been a problem with the child.”

Children who are sexually abused may be at higher risk for academic problems, especially poor grades and dropping out, but also absenteeism and truancy (Wearmouth, Richmond, Glynn & Berryman, 2004:53; Banon & Carter, 2003:100). Teachers often observe a sudden decline in children’s performance in class that cannot be ascribed to any specific cause, while some children resort to truancy (Petty & Spies, 2005:97).

4.2.1.2 Underachievers

Participants expressed the concern that children who were constantly absent from school would definitely underachieve in their schoolwork, because they were missing out on some work. The participants believed that the sexual abuse affected the children’s state of mind. The participants felt that sexually abused children became slow thinkers; they became pre-occupied with their traumatic experience and consequently could no longer cope at school. These children often developed learning problems, in some instances their homework was either incomplete or not done at all, which resulted in underachieving.

“These kids, they [sic] do not cope well with their studies. A child can be born with intelligence that is above average, but being abused by opposite sex or being abused sexually affects that learning ability … the result of that child will slowly or drastically drops [sic].”

“I believe teachers, you know a child has been sexually abused,
you see the child drop her average [sic]."

“Even before the neighbours came to school, the class teacher did notice that the learner is not achieving academically as the learner has been doing before.”

“He is not coping in class, he does not do the homework and other things.”

The sexually abused child may have problems concentrating or following instructions in class. Children who previously did their homework regularly may begin to lose interest in doing well. They may suddenly, without an apparent reason, relinquish their participation in school sport or cultural activities (Petty & Spies, 2005:07).

Le Roux (1992:180) concurs, noting that disturbance of concentration and fluctuating school achievements appear to be common among victims. The inability to concentrate and the consequent deterioration in school achievements can probably be ascribed to the following factors:

- A constant feeling of anxiety;
- Lowered self-confidence;
- Sleep disturbances; and
- Intrusive and recurring thoughts about the event.

Banon and Carter (2003:101) contend that child sexual abuse has an enormous impact on the general health of our society. The short-term effects in the victims include behavioural problems and school failure, while long-term effects include mental health problems. Obviously, a child who suffers from mental health problems will underachieve at school.

4.2.1.3 Divided attention

Not all sexually abused children receive the attention that they so desperately need from teachers at school, because it is difficult to identify them, especially when there are many learners in a class. One participant stated that she had 72 learners in her class; she therefore found it difficult to identify children with problems. The
participants stated that cases of sexual abuse often went unreported, mainly because the children themselves tended to hide the abuse.

Some of the participants stated that because the children were hiding the abuse, they were frustrated and could become disturbed. Teachers would notice in class that the child’s attention was always divided. The participants also noticed that the child could not concentrate well, speculating that his/her poor concentration was caused by the fact that the child was constantly thinking of the abuse, resolving to keep it a secret, hence the divided attention displayed in the classroom.

“… because they are frustrated and so disturbed … their attention in the classroom is always so divided.”

“It just does something to the mentality of the child because the child she [sic] just cannot concentrate.”

“The minds are on the other side of town [sic]. Her concentration is very, very poor.”

“The child sometimes he lose concentration. If you are teaching in class, you will notice that child is fidgeting [sic].”

“These children they lose concentration, they don’t concentrate at all in the classroom … not writing anything when the teacher are teaching. There is a short span of paying attention [sic].”

“They tend not to be attentive, they tend to be very poor listeners.”

Disturbance of concentration and fluctuating school achievements appear to be common among victims (Le Roux, 1992:180).

4.2.1.4 Handwriting deteriorates

Some participants stated that an observant teacher would easily notice a sudden change in a child’s handwriting. In a child who normally keeps her books and belongings neat and has a neat handwriting, a sudden change will be very noticeable.

“It is the teacher who must notice the changes. It starts with the handwriting.”
“As an old teacher you can see a change from handwriting first, that she does not care [sic]. She writes just for the sake of writing.”

The abused child ceases to care what he/she does, or what his/her teachers say. He/She does not care how he/she writes, harbouring the suspicion that you want to control him/her (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2003:182).

4.2.1.5 They cannot think

The participants in this study were concerned that the sexually abused children had been affected mentally. Such children became confused, because in many instances they had been abused by their biological fathers, relatives, or somebody known to them – people they had trusted and who had violated that trust. The participants contended that the sexual abuse destroyed the children mentally and hence the children could not think straight, to such an extent that some children had been sent to mental institutions. Many of the children are still very young when they are abused, causing them to have detailed sexual knowledge, which is age inappropriate (Le Roux, 1992:180).

“… sexual abuse and this kind of thing, it plays with the mental side of the child [sic], it just destroys the child.”

“Some of them end up in mental institutions … because they feel that they are not accepted by the community.”

Petty and Spies (2005:83) takes the view that sexual abuse engages the child in behaviours that are inappropriate for children.

4.2.2 Behavioural problems

Children respond to sexual abuse in different ways. The sexual abuse has both short- and long-term consequences. Short-term consequences refer to the emotional, interpersonal, cognitive perceptual, behavioural and physical symptoms displayed by the child. The participants highlighted that when a child had been sexually abused, his or her behaviour would change. Some of the abused children became aggressive or even suicidal, while some turned to bullying other children. Children reacted in different ways; for example, some would constantly proffer
excuses for not participating in activities, while others would display their sex organs in class.

“… child changes his or her behaviour, because sexual abuse happens to both boys and girls.”

4.2.2.1 Aggressive behaviour

Some sexually abused children may display disrespectful and aggressive behaviour. This is a way of showing or expressing their anger. The participants stated that aggression was more common in boys, but was also found among girls.

“No of them become aggressive because, what was done to them was done under very bad conditions [sic].”

“No of them become so aggressive; they don’t want to be touched. They don’t want even a child to joke with them … burst as if they were waiting for something to happen to them [sic].”

“… do things that are unethical to others that is showing some actions or unethical actions in the toilets, initiating that thing … done by adults.”

“No the other symptoms that you see from a child that is sexually abused is the child [sic] becomes aggressive to other children, because they feel insecure.”

4.2.2.2 Suicidal behaviour

The participants referred to suicide as one of the symptoms of a behavioural problem. Children react in different ways when they are suicidal; some will talk about suicide, others will listen to loud music, while others will express their feelings in notes. The participants noted that some of the sexually abused children had become suicidal.

“No of them become suicidal … they feel that what was done to them was not their fault.”

Spies (2006:57) and Le Roux (1992:181) contend that self-destructive behaviour is one of the disturbing consequences of child sexual abuse self-destructive behaviour. The child may feel guilty about the sexual abuse and try to punish him-
herself with self-degrading activities. This kind of behaviour takes various forms, including suicide notions and suicide attempts.

Suicide is an act by which the child kills him-/herself of his/her own free will. These children could resort to suicide in an attempt to escape from a situation that has become unbearable. Suicide attempts are generalised cries for help (Pretorius, 2000:320). The child may attempt to communicate with the parent or the teacher and fail, and when no one hears or responds to his/her cries, he/she may regard suicide as the only escape from the unbearable situation of sexual abuse.

4.2.2.3 Demonstrations in class

The participating teachers narrated that they would often receive reports that, when they had left children alone in the classroom, a certain girl had lifted up her tunic or that a boy sitting at the back of the class had displayed his private parts.

“This reminds me of a 9 year old who was in my Department, the Foundation Phase, in Grade 3. This girl invited boys to sleep with her after she had stripped her underwear. I was told by my learners that she offered each boy who sleeps with her 50 cents and that she had a collection of these 50 cents. She never denied the act.”

“Some of them do the demonstrations in front of the others, inside the class. They do some bad things like [sic] they strip their trousers and they show their private parts to others.”

Le Roux (1992:181) notes that sexual abuse has a hypersexual effect on small children. He considers this sexual preoccupation at an inappropriate age as a contraphobic reaction to the sexual abuse on the one hand, and as the consequence of the experience of erotic sensations at too early an age, on the other hand. These experiences may result in the following

- Age-inappropriate sexual games with other children;
- Exposure of the sex organs, and a preoccupation with own sexual organs;
- Constant portrayal (drawing) of sexual organs.
4.2.3 Social behaviour

4.2.3.1 Interaction with others

The participants emphasised that before assistance could be rendered to sexually abused children, these children must first be identified. Certain signs may be seen as possible indicators, but do not necessarily confirm the occurrence of the abuse. Identifying potentially sexually abused children could provide a point of departure for the teacher to explore the possibility further. The teacher may identify problems such as withdrawal, isolation and non-communication from the child.

“These kids do not interact well with other learners. This is noticed during extracurricular activities… during break-time …”

“She cannot express herself to the fullest or well … the self-esteem of the child has been affected.”

“She will stand alone … doesn’t want to socialise with others. It becomes worse when they go home.”

“… because a child cannot communicate that.”

Child sexual abuse victims may find it difficult to relate to their own peers. Such children often experience intense feelings of guilt or shame, as they feel that they were responsible for the abuse (Spies, 2006:56).

4.2.3.2 Inactivity

Children who are sexually abused are usually stigmatised by stereotypes, which has a negative impact on their socialisation. Participants highlighted that the abused children generally did not play with their peers and very seldom displayed any initiative in play and other activities at school. The abused children always complained of being tired.

“I can always say a sexually abused kid won’t play. They won’t initiate anything.”

“The child is sleeping, the child does not want to play with the other child [sic] whenever it is break-time, she just wants to sit in the
classroom.”

The effect of child sexual abuse has negative consequences for the child’s socialisation. The victims often react to the sexual abuse by isolating themselves, not wanting to play or mix with peers. Such inactivity can manifest in or be caused by the following (Petty & Spies, 2005:97; Le Roux, 1992:178):

- The child victim avoids the peer group out of fear that the abuse will be recognised;
- The sexually abused child often becomes the victim of peer groups ostracism, that is, the peers give the victim a cold shoulder or refuse to associate with him/her;
- Adolescent girls often feel sexually contaminated and sometimes fear that boys will abuse them because of the abuse they had already suffered.

4.2.3.3 Withdrawal

It has already been confirmed that it is fairly easy for teachers to identify learners who experience problems in class. The participants concurred that abused children tended to be withdrawn and not to respond to questions, as if they were not in the classroom. There was also a claim that sexually abused children did not participate in classroom activities. This frustrated the teachers, because they had to assess certain tasks, and it was difficult to score these children.

“… withdrawal from class … you can see they are withdrawn.”

“Whenver she is in the group, she is always withdrawn, when you try to see her efforts; there is nothing that she writes [sic].”

“Always the child is withdrawn without [sic], doesn’t want to participate in group works.”

“… the child becomes isolated from other children … because he/she has the fear that other children will notice [sic] he/she is sexually abused.”

“As teachers, you notice these children, because they don’t want to look you in the eye … they feel dirty for what they are doing.”
Child victims of sexual abuse often experience intense feelings of shame, as they feel that they were responsible for the abuse, struggling with questions such as “Why did it happen to me?”; “Why didn’t I say no?”; and “Why didn’t I tell someone immediately?” (Spies, 2006:56).

Le Roux (1992:168) concurs with Spies that shame is the main cause for withdrawal. This is evident from the following response of a fourteen-year old victim of incest: “I feel ashamed to think that my father was the one who did this to me …”

### 4.2.3.4 Small adults

The participants proclaimed that in black cultures, children were generally taught to respect adults: to greet not only the people they know, but everybody; to respond when an adult called them; if sent to the shops, they must obey.

Until the adults change their mindset, about children obeying adults in whatever they say, children will always be victims of child sexual abuse, and become small adults.

“They become adults at a very early age.”

“… sometimes they fall pregnant … and as a result, they do not enjoy being children.”

“… especially the black culture, any adult who calls a child, the child must go … they no longer enjoy their childhood because of the rife sexual abuse [sic] … and because of the high rate of alcohol abuse …”

In a healthy nurturing relationship, the child obeys the responsible adult. This adult’s lifestyle reflects the accepted norms and values of society, and he/she serves as an example to the child. Child sexual abuse, as do other forms of child abuse, takes place against the background of an unequal balance of power between the child and the adult. The adult abuses his position of authority and power to exploit the child sexually (Spies, 2006:56; Berns, 2001:297).
4.2.4 Emotional disturbance

4.2.4.1 Emotions

Sexual abuse has both short-term and long-term consequences. These consequences in turn have symptoms. Emotional symptoms are manifestations of short-term consequences. According to the participants, sexually abused children would develop signs of emotional disturbance.

“It is anger, because this thing was planned.”

“…which can cause anxiety to the learner.”

“The other symptom that you see from a child that is sexually abused, is the child becomes aggressive to other children, because they feel insecure [sic].”

“Sometimes the child becomes moody and does not want to mix with other children.”

Sexually abused children stay angry with the child within, the child who was vulnerable, who was injured, and who was unable to protect himself/herself. These children need therapy to help them ventilate their anger (Spies, 2006:55).

4.2.4.2 Stigmatisation

The participants felt that communities in squatter camps needed to be educated to accept and help sexually abused children, and not stigmatise them. The stigmas the communities attached to sexual abuse caused as much trauma to the abused child as the abuse itself, the participants contended.

“To me, I also feel that they should not be stigmatised … It mustn’t be something that is being whispered in the corridors of the school …”

“… and also you find that these children, they [sic] become so withdrawn from society because they fear the stigma …”

As a result of misconceptions about sexual abuse, blame is often assigned to the wrong person, namely the child victim, rather than the perpetrator. False
accusations make survivors feel like second-hand shop-soiled goods, not worthy of the respect and acceptance of society. They are left believing that society holds them responsible for the actions of offenders (Petty & Spies, 2005:85).

4.2.4.3 Low self-esteem

Many sexually abused children are given ugly names or messages by the abusers and even by their own friends after they realised or have heard about the abuse. Often children might say, “You are too old to play with us”. The child might say, “The abuser said I’m so ugly, I’ll never get a husband”. The participants contended that such messages made the child feel that there was something wrong with her/him, and that she/he was really different from others. These children soon cease to believe in themselves.

“The esteem of the child has been affected … she doesn’t believe in herself and she doesn’t trust anyone.”

“They have low self-esteem …”

“… they start losing confidence in themselves.”

Sexually abused children may experience low self-esteem as a constant feeling of worthlessness. A nagging voice tells them they did not do enough, did not do it right, and do not deserve anything. These children are likely to have received messages, directly or indirectly, that they are bad, that they will never amount to anything, or that the abuse was their fault. These destructive feelings are bottled up with the memories of the abuse, and will result in a negative low self-esteem (Spies, 2006:54-55).

4.2.5 Health risks

4.2.5.1 HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a worldwide pandemic. There is a growing awareness of the link between the high rates of sexual violence in South Africa and HIV/AIDS (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002:257). The participants also referred to this pandemic in
relation to sexual abuse:

“… some of them are infected by HIV/AIDS … at an early age a child suffers diseases that he is not supposed to be suffering from, like STDs or STIs …”

“… if the child is abused, you can think that there are more chances of contracting the HIV and Aids … the child of this little ones, [sic] be infected by HIV/AIDS.”

“They are infected with HIV/AIDS and the parents are not aware. At some stage, it shortens the lives of the children, because the child dies before he or she reaches his or her goals in life.”

“The boy got sick. Apparently, the boy was HIV positive. And then he got Aids and he died.”

The greatest danger and fear that sexually abused children have to confront, is the possibility of contracting the HI virus from the abuser. It is therefore important that they receive immediate medical attention (Petty & Spies, 2005:180).

The National Education Policy Act (RSA, 1996) requires that a continuing HIV/AIDS education programme be implemented in all schools. This should be integrated in an age-appropriate way, in the life-skills education programme at all levels (Donald, et al., 2002:258).

4.2.5.2 Prostitution

The participants proclaimed that children living in squatter camps often made quick money from prostitution. In this regard, reference was made to the Truck-Inn in the Motherwell Township, a station, where long-distance drivers sleep over to rest. Girls from surrounding schools saw this as an opportunity to make money by selling sexual favours. Some also prostituted themselves to local taxi drivers, by becoming their mistresses.

“Some of them end up being prostitutes.”

“… the girls who are selling themselves, the prostitutes, get money from those trucks.”
“… there’s crime, prostitution … but all starts at home … the whole society talk of prostitute [sic].”

In many instances, child prostitution occurs with the consent of the parents, who benefit financially from the child’s activities. Some children who have escaped from their intolerable home situations turn to prostitution in order to survive (Petty & Spies, 2005:78).

4.2.5.3 Early pregnancy

The participants noted that child sexual abuse generally resulted in early sexual involvement. They contended that the conditions of poverty and overcrowding in squatter camps contributed to early pregnancy. Some of the young girls who fall pregnant are abused, while some fall pregnant because they had exchanged sex for money because of poverty and dropped out of school. The participants also stated that policies such as the policy in terms of which a twelve-year old could abort without the permission of the parent, increased the risk that sexual abuse would result in early pregnancy.

“These young children … they get pregnant and you see that [sic] … children as young as Grade 6, they are pregnant and do not know what to do.”

“So this happens for a long time until such times [sic] as a child falls pregnant.”

The incidence of unmarried teenage pregnancies is very high in the South African society. It has recently been estimated that more than 50 per cent of female youth were still at school when their first child was born. The problem of being a single teenage parent is exacerbated by the prevailing poverty (Donald, et al., 2002:257). Girls who were molested as small children tend to have consensual intercourse at a slightly younger age and to fall pregnant before their seventeenth birthday (Shipler, 2004:145).
4.2.6 Physical appearance

4.2.6.1 Weight loss

Participants expressed the possibility that children who were keeping the secret of their sexual abuse may lose interest in food. The trauma or nervous condition caused a loss of appetite, and the child would show physical signs of losing weight.

“… if the child was a little plumpy or fat, and then the child was losing weight [sic].”

A child may also starve him-/herself by limiting his/her food intake (Le Roux, 1992:121). A range of self-destructive behaviours may manifest in sexually abused children. Some children develop eating problems, such as refusing to eat, causing dramatic weight loss (Petty & Spies, 2005:97).

4.2.6.2 Cannot sit or walk properly

In most cases, child sexual abuse has no physical signs. However, the alert teacher may observe that a child is reluctant to move from his/her chair when commanded to do so. The child may not be able to walk or sit properly, or may walk slowly. Only after investigating, will the teacher be able to establish if abuse has occurred.

“All of a sudden the child cannot sit still … she was not sitting still in the chair whenever she is writing [sic].”

“… when you want to observe what is happening with them, the way they move … they move slowly …”

The child may develop an awkward posture; he/she may develop an awkward way of walking in an attempt to ease physical pain (Petty & Spies, 2005:98).

4.2.6.3 Appearance

Some sexually abused children may develop an “I don’t care” attitude. They do not wash themselves or take care of their personal hygiene or even their personal belongings such as schoolbooks. According to the participants, such learners’
physical appearance often deteriorated.

“Sometimes, their physical appearance changes.”

Literature confirms that some sexually abused children refuse to pay attention to their personal hygiene and appearance (Wearmouth, et al., 2004:164).

4.2.6.4 Avoidance of eye contact

The participants narrated that abused children suddenly refused to look them in the eye, as if hiding something. An extroverted child would suddenly become shy and introverted.

“They move away their eyes, so as not to look at you directly.”

Sexually abused children often feel shy or lonely and believe that they can be recognised. A fourteen-year old girl complained to the author that she was “transparent” and that people could immediately tell what happened to her (Le Roux, 1992:170). Hence, they move their gaze away from people to protect themselves.

4.2.7 Alcohol abuse by abused children

4.2.7.1 Escape strategy

It is common practice that people use alcohol to escape from their problems. Psychologically, the children believed that alcohol was the best medicine for coping with their problems, stated the participants. Abused children would often use alcohol to escape from what has happened to them.

“They end up being alcoholic, because they are trying to hide what happened to them.”

Drugs and alcohol do not only serve to numb and block the pain temporarily and induce a feeling of goodwill or oblivion, they can also effectively block out the attempts of others to help (Walker, 2004:42; Berns, 2001:290). Walker (2004) asserts that substance abuse prevents the survivor from being in touch with his/her
pain and others from getting too close. It is the survivor’s expression of anger towards the abuser and towards the helplessness of the abused child.

Experimentation with alcohol is common among children, mainly because of pressure to be the same as their peers. Alcohol serves as an escape mechanism for stress and personal problems. Alcohol abuse in this case causes a change in the consumer’s frame of mind, which in this case is a sexually abused child (Donald, et al., 2002:253; Berns, 2001:296; Le Roux, 1992:94).

4.2.7.2 Street children

The participants were of the opinion that because of the poor family conditions in squatter camps, some children resorted to running away from their homes to live on the streets, hoping that life would be better. They narrated that some children left their homes, because there was inadequate space in the shacks, while some left because they were not receiving an adequate food intake. They took off to the streets, sometimes hoping to return when they had made enough money to buy food for the family. The most disturbing reason why children became street children, was sexual abuse by siblings or a biological parent.

“... some of them end up being street kids, because they feel that they are not accepted by the community.”

“They feel it is better to be on the street, because here there is no one who listens to me, helping me [sic].”

There are many personal reasons why individual children may leave home to live on the street. Some children choose a lifestyle that is destructive and detrimental to their development; they sleep in open spaces and do not get good nutrition. Some of them are sexually abused by delinquent adults (Donald, et al., 2002:215; Omari, 1993:79).

4.2.7.3 Crime

The level of violent crimes in South Africa is disturbingly high. Reports in the media acknowledge that this is in fact a worldwide problem. It is a daily reality in squatter
camps, fuelled by overcrowding and unemployment. Crime is not only committed by strangers. Abused children may resort to crime themselves.

“… these children become so problematic, and it is then them that cause the high rate in South Africa of crime to be like this [sic].”

“The most thing that young youth, who do these things, are smoking dagga, using drugs and all sorts of things. They rob people and steal their neighbours, all these things [sic].”

Some children steal insignificant objects in shops to create a sense of security. This happens when children are told never to talk about the abuse or do not want people to know what is really going on at home or elsewhere. Stealing is also a way of defying authority; an attempt to take back what was stolen (Spies, 2006:58).

4.3 THEME TWO: TEACHERS PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE WHERE LEARNERS ARE SEXUALLY ABUSED

4.3.1 Emotional effect on teachers

The participants were adamant that teachers could play a significant role in cases of sexual abuse, both in identifying the problem or helping the child to deal with the trauma. Having to deal with affected children on a daily basis makes the teacher experience the same pain, because his/her emotions are affected by their trauma.

The participants explained that teachers regarded child sexual abuse as a sensitive and emotional topic, stating that they had to be supportive to the child and help him/her to cope with the situation.

4.3.1.1 Emotions

The participants experienced different feelings in dealing with the abused children. Some felt that the trauma of the children was also affecting them as teachers psychologically. They felt frustrated that they were not doing enough and also felt frustrated by the justice system.
“I could find myself, I am being psychologically affected by this as she was telling me [sic].”

“I feel the pain because I am a mother; I feel the grief and the pain …”

“I will find out and I will feel very sad about what she or he has experienced.”

“You just feel so powerless, it devastates me and so powerless [sic].”

“I felt so guilty. Why didn’t I say something, because I have seen the signs?”

“Sometimes, the teacher become afraid for their lives …[if they report such cases] they are living in the same community … and these abusers of these children.”

“We need support from the Police …”

Dealing with sexually abused children is considered to be a frustrating task for teachers and could generate feelings of powerlessness, pain, sadness and incompetence (Wearmouth, Glynn & Berryman, 2005:90).

4.3.2 Role of teachers

4.3.2.1 Facets of teacher’s role

The participants regarded themselves as the guides and support of learners who were sexually abused. One participant stated that teachers should model themselves on Jesus Christ. Learners pay more attention to people they trust and care about. Teachers are most effective when their relationship with abused learners is warm and nurturing. Their consistent awareness of children’s needs and feelings and their caring behaviour set a powerful example for these learners.

The participants emphasised that teachers should love and support these learners. They need to take responsibility for them, teach them morals, and earn their trust. Importantly, they need to protect them and encourage them to report incidents of abuse.
“We must learn to embrace all those children that have been sexually abused and we must make sure that we must make them enjoy their life as children and they continue to be children [sic].”

“We have to be the light, we are the light of the country, because everything starts with the teacher.”

“I try by all means that I [sic] help the child.”

“So we need as educators, to embrace these children … and we support them fully and take responsibility as educators.”

“We refer them to Dora Nginza, then at Dora Nginza they take the case to labour then labour assesses who is going to the social worker …”

“We don’t make them feel bad, instead primary school teachers are kinder and highly helping when it comes to sexually abused kids.”

“… we are not only here to teach them, we are here to teach them to read and write and also here to teach them their morals.”

“So we try by all means at school that our children learn to trust us … we show them love … whatever happens to them, they must make sure that they report it to an adult that they trust …”

“Because it is our duty to protect them, because if you do not, no one will fight for them …”

The pedagogic relationship of trust implies that the child is accepted, respected and cared for by the teacher. The child can then realise his/her potential within the safe environment thus created (Le Roux, 1992:161). Kaiser and Rasminsky (2003:130) concur that children pay more attention to people they trust and care about; teachers are most effective when their relationships with children are warm and nurturing. The teacher’s consistent awareness of children’s needs, problems and feelings and their caring, helpful behaviour set an example.

4.3.3 Teamwork

4.3.3.1 Members of the team

The participants believed that a teacher who had a sexually abused child in her/his
classroom should involve the principal, learner support team and even the school governing body. The matter must also be immediately referred to the Police, who will then notify a social worker. Good communication between the school and the parent will further expedite the process and may even lead to the arrest of the abuser. Childline also helps to educate both the teacher and the learner regarding child abuse and child sexual abuse.

“... as class teachers, take this matter to our seniors, that is our principals, thinking there is something that can be done ...”

“Then we go through the required channels, so that the child may get help.”

“We first call the parents and inform them that we have discovered this from the child ... we invite the social worker. The social worker takes up the situation and deals with it in conjunction with the educator ...”

“... that now has changed, because we contact Childline, who train educators on child abuse and sexual abuse.”

“... you can report the situation to the Police.”

“Each school should have its own educational psychologist, each school to have school social workers, so that when we have the problems like this [sic], there can be somebody who specialises in counselling these children.”

All teachers are leaders and managers within their classrooms, in the school. In an effective school, all members of the school community work together, support each other and share resources. The development of a health promoting school helps teams in addressing the problems of the school, aided by a greater understanding of broader social issues (Donald, et al., 2002:153).

4.3.4 Teachers need more training

4.3.4.1 Teachers feel incompetent

Teachers need more training in dealing with sexually abused children in order for them to be able to manage such children as part of their educational responsibility. The participants were convinced that valuable support must be provided by the Department of Education, together with the Department of Health. They also contended that teachers needed support services such as Childline, to empower teachers on child abuse generally, and on child sexual abuse specifically. Generally, the participatory teachers felt incompetent, as they possessed inadequate resources to manage cases of child sexual abuse. The general feeling of the teachers was that they needed counselling and to be empowered with counselling skills to equip themselves to manage such cases.

“I feel there must be more than Hope World Wide, and these people must train the teachers, because we are the first recipients of all these problems.”

“As a [sic] teacher, we feel unskilled.”

“I think the Department must go beyond the training on academic uses of the school [sic].”

“… I think that is why I say they also need counselling, because they are expected to be counsellors to the learners …”

Dealing with sexually abused children may generate feelings of helplessness and incompetence in teachers, which may threaten their teaching authority (Wearmouth, et al., 2005:90; Wearmouth, et al., 2004:153; Donald, et al., 2002:153). Skills in dealing with child sexual abuse will enable teachers to cope more effectively with classroom demands and challenges. These skills would be valuable in empowering teachers to engage and cope successfully in school and face their challenges (Donald, et al., 2002:156).

Although teachers may not be trained as professional counsellors, there will always be situations in which they will have to deal, at first hand, with individual social and
interpersonal problems before professional help and intervention can be found (Donald, et al., 2002:249). For example, if a child is raped on the school premises, a teacher with counselling skills can immediately assist, before professional help arrives.

4.3.5 Observations of teachers

4.3.5.1 Gifts from God

Some of the participating teachers saw children as gifts from God that needed to be nurtured.

"Because children are a gift from God, we need to protect them and whenever you find that your child has been abused, do not blame the child."

Teachers, therefore, need to be warm and sensitive and display a caring attitude towards children. Children, especially those who have been sexually abused, need a full-time nurturing experience (Wearmouth, et al., 2004:202). Nurturing involves love and protection.

4.3.5.2 Both genders

Often, boys are told to be strong and not to cry. As a result, when boys are sexually abused, they rarely speak out. Many people therefore think that only girls are abused, and the focus is therefore placed on girls only. However, the participants observed that both genders were sexually abused.

"… you concentrate on the female side, on the girl child. That is something very common, meanwhile, even these boys are being sexually abused."

"… sexual abuse happens to both boys and girls. It doesn’t only affect girls …. ”

Research indicates that the percentage of girls subjected to sexual abuse exceeds that of boys, but that a significant percentage of boys also fall prey to sexual abuse (Le Roux, 1992:146).
4.3.5.3 Some become strong

Children react differently to abuse; some may become stronger because of the abuse and ultimately reach their goals. These children suppress their feelings and may unleash their frustration by studying hard and reaching their goals, or some may have a strong support system.

“… become so strong and fight off and reach their goals, … if she has got, or he has got enough support, that child may become the President of the country …”

“That is why she can reveal the strengths that she has …”

If a sexually abused child of any age can view him-/herself favourably, and if his/her self-awareness is enhanced and a stable sense of identity is fostered, that child will achieve his/her goals (Friedrich, 2001:196). Some abused children experience an extreme desire to achieve, as a compensating measure for a negative self-concept. These children attempt to gain respect from themselves and others through outstanding intellectual achievement (Le Roux, 1992:180).

4.3.5.4 Children have rights

The participating teachers observed that the offending adults were violating the children’s rights for their own selfish gratification. Many of the rights of children living in squatter camps were not fulfilled, in the sense that they were abused sexually, despite the fact that they had the right to be protected.

“Since our children sometimes do not know their rights, they keep quiet when they are abused by people.”

“… they know that they have got rights, somehow, so they do speak.”

It is questionable whether Southern Africa, has the social commitment and economic structures to transform children’s rights into reality (Zama, 1994:93). The right to the provision of services is sometimes ignored by Government; especially as it applies to the many children in South Africa who live in squatter camps. The right to protection is lip service only. Though children have the right to be protected
against harmful acts and practices, it remains common practice that they are sexually abused.

4.3.5.5 Children are the future of South Africa

The participants were concerned about the fact that sexually abused children would one day be required to build the future of South Africa doubting the future in a country in which children were abused every day. When people abuse children, they do not reflect that they are killing the future of our country. The teachers stated that most of the sexually abused children became drop-outs at an early age.

“… these children are the ones that are going to take our places when we grow old, and when we die.”

“The children are our future, they are the future of this country, and if they are traumatised can you see the country being traumatised? … so they are the future, they are our future … and the leaders of our future will just vanish.”

“… this rape, abuse and everything is going to kill the future of our kids … we are mostly seeing drop-outs.”

A sexually abused child appears to be depressed; he/she lacks interest in or enjoyment of activities that would normally stimulate interest and enjoyment. Anxiety attacks may increase to such an extent that the child no longer wants to go to school, and the parents may then also decide against sending the child to school. The child then becomes a drop-out, with serious implications for his/her future ability to be a valuable and economically active member of society (Le Roux, 1992:175).

4.3.5.6 Learners need professional help

The participants observed that it would be wise for teachers to involve NGOs in their schools, so that the learners could access the professional help they needed. Teachers deal with situations that they cannot handle on their own, so professionals from Hope World Wide, Childline and even personnel from the Department of Health, such as school nurses, social workers and psychologists, are needed. By
doing so, the teachers would be promoting health in their schools.

“… the teacher will always keep trying her best, but in vain, if the kid is not being helped by the professional people, psychologist or social worker.”

“There is a [sic] Childline, Childline came to us to tell us what we can do when our children are abused [sic] … we are able now to call Childline, and other children talk to the lady that ‘so-and-so are doing dirty things’.”

The involvement of other professionals, NGOs and community workers in the school will help in addressing the broad range of social problems that besiege both schools and communities, for example, alcohol, violence, sexual abuse and HIV/AIDS. Asking a professional, with more specific or specialised expertise than yourself, to help with a particular problem, will improve the quality of education (Donald, et al., 2002:29).

4.3.5.7 Not reported

The participating teachers observed that many cases of child sexual abuse were not being reported, especially by the parents and the children themselves. In most cases, the abuse was being successfully hidden. The children were sometimes threatened and therefore did not disclose their terrible secret, or they had no-one trustworthy to tell.

“… because others are not being reported by the parents or by the kids themselves.”

“Most of them do not report the problems to their parents, because they will be, they are also frightened they kill you … so they decide not to report the problems.”

“The child kept quiet, because she had nowhere to go.”

It is possible that the long-term effects of the abuse will not always be observed, as the victims have become adept at hiding or suppressing these feelings as a way to cope with the abuse, and there will therefore be nothing to report (Lown, 2001:1).
4.3.5.8 Sexual abuse destroys children

The participants perceived child sexual abuse as a betrayal of trust; hence, when a child is abused, his/her emotional world would be shattered. This destroys the child; one participant indicated that child sexual abuse was destroying the plans and dreams for the future that the child had: Their morale, mental condition, future and self-esteem were being violated. In some cases, the victim would offer to become a sexual volunteer.

“They take them as a father, as an uncle, as a family member and they are trusted … and they easily get raped for their trust.”

“They don’t trust anyone.”

“It takes time for her to accept that male, even if it is a teacher.”

“It is killing the intelligence of the kid. Killing the moral [sic].”

“… it is difficult because sexual abuse and this kind of thing, it plays with the mental side of the child [sic], it just destroys the child.”

“Its four years now, which means the trauma is there, mental stigma is there.”

“… generation has no future.”

“… you are saying, this child is stupid, or the child is being naughty, you just label the child …”

“… he or she is no longer now a victim, she become volunteer [sic]. And that is not because she wants to volunteer, but the circumstances are forcing her to become a volunteer, because there is no one to take care of her and also to protect her.”

The perpetrators use these children’s need for love, affection and acknowledgement to their own advantage. The children experience that the person they trust most, hurt and use them (Petty & Spies, 2005:186).

4.3.5.9 Community involvement

The participating teachers observed that it was important that teachers engage with parents in order to achieve and maintain the unity needed to combat the sexual
abuse. They reasoned that teachers, together with the community, could fight child sexual abuse; they needed each other in this battle.

“We first call the parents and inform the parents that we have discovered this from the children .”

“… as long as the community and the parents and the educators are not interested in it jointly.”

“If the children talk and the parent heard [sic] and the Police work together, then there will be a better community … just by communicating and just by saying to the community that we must fight this.”

“I mean we need to join hands as educators to make aware that, to our community where stay, we teach them [sic].”

Schools and communities should work together, they should engage through workshops and community outreach programmes in such a way that social and interpersonal problems might be prevented. Teachers should identify with parents and other community representatives ways in which the school might engage and deal with social problems that are manifesting in the school and community (Donald, et al., 2002:240).

It is important to bear in mind what communities expect and need and what professionals aspire to in present community relationships. Schools need to take their power to affect the lives of children and their families seriously (Wearmouth, et al., 2005:128; Berns, 2001:300).

4.3.5.10 Church

The participants were of the opinion that the parents must send their children to church, to learn morals and values. The church, according to the participants should play a role in teaching children about sexual abuse. By being taught stories, such as the incestuous story of Lot and his daughters, learners learn about human values and about right and wrong. The young ones must attend Sunday school.

“I think churches must play an important role in teaching the children about sexual abuse.”
Children learn what is and what is not acceptable behaviour (Berns, 2001:482).

4.4 THEME THREE: REASONS FOR SEXUAL ABUSE

4.4.1 Parents and families

In all societies, the family is the basic source of security and support and the springboard for the physical, emotional, cognitive, moral, social and spiritual development of its children (Donald, et al., 2002:246). Families that live in squatter camps, with the associated poverty, unemployment and inadequate and overcrowded housing, often find this responsibility impossible to fulfil. Food supplies are always insufficient, because parents are generally unemployed, making it difficult for parents to maintain the health of their children. There are a lot of single parents in squatter camps; they often have large families, which they cannot support. Seemingly, people who cannot work or are not working spend their time in destructive ways, that is in stealing, robbing, sexually abusing children and even making them pregnant.

4.4.1.1 Ignoring abuse

The participants explained that parents and the family generally found it devastating that their child had been sexually abused. Parents go through immeasurable pain when they discover this terrible fact. Some unemployed families, because of their financial constraints, decide to ignore or deny the abuse, because they cannot afford any special services, such as taking the child to a psychologist for counselling. Desperate families sometimes decide to ignore the abuse in exchange for money from the perpetrator.

“… this happens where people are really struggling and people are very poor in the squatter camp.”

“Some parents will be in denial.”

“And when the child told the mother, the mother wouldn’t believe it. She said, ‘No, you are talking dirty’.”
“… people are unemployed, hence they cannot afford the special services.”

“Sometimes the parent is getting something from the abuser. Maybe money, maybe the abuser is the family caretaker, so the parents do not want to tell about the abuse, so that is why they keep it a secret … the person will go to jail, and they will starve.”

“Sometimes the parents get very defensive …”

“… the person who is abusing this child sexually is the father who is the breadwinner of their home, so the parent will be ‘If I tell, then I won’t have anywhere to stay.”

“… parents try to keep abuse as a secret, because they are protecting the image sometimes, and embarrassment to other family or to the nation [sic].”

Good family functioning is evident when there is a coherent family structure in which the members accept each other; when there is good, clearly understood communication between family members; when there are positive values, such as personal honesty, and these are transmitted from parent to child (Wearmouth, et al., 2004:299). This may be achieved even if the family is from a squatter camp.

4.4.1.2 Illiteracy

According to the participants, illiteracy was rife in squatter camps. Such people still did not know about the abuse, or who did not know what to do or where to report such cases.

“Some of the parents do not know that they have the right to report these things.”

“Parents are not aware.”

“… we have learnt that most parents are illiterate, and do not know how to go about reporting their child’s sexual abuse.”

Poor educational and social conditions in the squatter camps are the main reasons why communities are illiterate and do not know their rights. As a result of the prevailing poverty and illiteracy, parents living in squatter camps also lack information (Donald, et al., 2002:208). Parents do not know where and how to
report cases of child sexual abuse, because of this lack of information.

### 4.4.1.3 Alcohol abuse of parents

The participants remarked that certain behaviours practised in the squatter camps were unacceptable; while to the squatters it was just normal activities in which they engaged to survive and cope. They are unemployed, therefore they choose a certain spot and spend an entire day drinking there. Many parents drink alcohol in front of their children, and even send them to buy it. The alcohol abuse of parents renders the children vulnerable to sexual abuse, because the perpetrators know where the parents of the children are and what their condition is.

“Parents go sit in a particular shack, and these abusers know that whenever the parents are in that particular shack, they won’t come out.”

“Some parents …; they [sic] drink alcohol in front of these kids.”

“Sometimes it is a question of alcohol abuse, you find that a person is [sic] doing this, is a person who is drinking all the time.”

“… something is going on at home … because parents are drinking.”

“… and that allows them to be awake and to be exposed to many things … parents abusing alcohol [sic] …”

“… be so drunk and when they drunk [sic], they are helpless.”

“… and most of the time they came home drunk, so they have … that power of doing this thing [sic] to the learners.”

“The parent end up always drunk … parents drink this cheap beer called Umtshovalale or Tap, and they have no chance to look after their children.”

In any community, certain values, attitudes and ways of seeing things will be accepted as normal. This results in certain behaviours and practices being more acceptable; drinking and smoking dagga have a way of life in squatter camps (Donald, et al., 2002:240).
4.4.1.4 Uninvolved parents

The participants stated that many squatter camp parents did not want to involve themselves in the education and the problems of their children. This was particularly evident at school meetings. These parents do not attend the meetings called by school governing bodies, nor do they respond when teachers write or send them notes, inviting them to the school. They do not even come to collect school reports.

“But the parent didn’t want to be involved at all, to the extent that, that parent decided to remove the child from that particular school.”

“… but at home parents are doing nothing … they do not want to disclose the truth to us as educators …”

“That’s when the parents will say ‘no, this child is lying’ …”

“I am talking about ‘mind your own business’, for that matter ‘why do you bother?’ … if the parents are closing their doors for us, then they make us, make it difficult for us.”

The parents may become physically and emotionally exhausted, feel that they are not coping and become increasingly demoralised and depressed. As a result, they may become uninvolved in the physical and psychological needs and problems of their children (Donald, et al., 2002:208).

4.4.1.5 Perpetrator’s relation to the family

The participants alleged that in many instances, the perpetrator was somebody known to the child. The child may be abused sexually by her/his own father, a sibling, or a relative. The perpetrator takes advantage of the child’s likes and preferences. For example, the child may crave attention and affection, and the child may enjoy having pocket money. The perpetrator also takes advantage of the situation of the child, especially the conditions under which children are living in squatter camps. They sometimes use their power to abuse the children sexually.

“Some of these children are abused by their own parents …”

“In most cases, some of these learners are abused by family
members … because there is high rate of unemployment … the mother is having a part-time job … then she will stay with her uncle or brother …”

“… these children are abused by people that they trust, by people that they are very close [sic] … the grandfather, … the uncle … the dad himself.”

“Maybe 70 per cent of the time, the person who is sexually abusing the child is a person known to the family.”

“Children stay with relatives and mostly the perpetrators of sexual abuse are relatives, uncles, half-brothers and distant relatives.”

“Later on we found out that this was a relative of the child … sometimes the perpetrator is the breadwinner at home.”

Sexual abuse often occurs within a relationship in which the perpetrator has misled his or her victim. The perpetrator takes advantage of the victim’s needs for his/her own sexual gratification and need for power (Petty & Spies, 2005:86). In some cases of child sexual abuse, the perpetrators insist that they “meant well” in committing the sexual acts; that they wanted to educate the child with regard to sexuality; or believed that the child should be initiated into sex by someone who truly “loves” him/her (Le Roux, 1992:166).

The participants stated that perpetrators often exercised pressure on the victim not to disclose the abuse. The child may be enticed with gifts, clothes, cell phones and money. In some instances, the child would be threatened that he/she would be killed if the abuse was disclosed.

“… the perpetrator provides for the child for anything that the child needs, maybe clothing … and there is this issue of cell phones now, when there is money.”

“… the child will be threatened by the abuser not to say anything …”

“Because I can see that they accept the bribes instead of thinking more about the future of their children.”

Perpetrators often lure children with presents such as sweets, money and gifts. Children should therefore be cautioned to be careful when accepting presents.
They should be warned especially not to accept any gifts from strangers (Petty & Spies, 2005:89).

4.4.1.6 Parents are absent

According to the participants, the squatter camps were generally occupied by young, single parents. Children were often cared for by their grandparents or others. The young mother would be either staying with her boyfriend or working away from home. There is a lack of control in some of these squatter camps, probably because of the lack of a father figure. The children may attempt to take advantage of the young mother and the grandmother. The perpetrators study the conditions in these homes and then take advantage of the situation.

“Most of these houses are owned by single parents.”

“Parents do not stay with their children … some of these parents are sleep-ins in town [sic].”

“… the adults are working far away and then the children are left alone, and some of them, they are abused by even the cousins [sic]. There are no parents.”

“Because they have grown up where there is no one to say ‘no’; the parents are not there to say that …”

Children from broken and incomplete families run a greater risk of being sexually abused, because they are more vulnerable to the manipulation of transgressors, who try to entice them with affection, gifts and friendship. Children in these homes experience lack of parental control. Second marriages also pose a risk of child sexual abuse, as abuse by a stepfather and step-siblings is a reality (Berns, 2001:296).

4.4.1.7 Cultural issue to obey

The participating teachers explained that in the black culture, children were taught not to argue with adults; even if an adult is wrong, it is rude to say no. It is these practices that put the lives of children at risk. Adults abuse the child’s subservience to adults to abuse the child sexually.
Local taxi drivers entice the girls with money to obtain sex from them. Parents and the communities should be educated about the danger of such practices, and about the need to educate young girls, since their educating would in fact mean that an entire nation is educated (Rubagiza 1993:70).

4.4.2 Poverty

Poverty is associated with inadequate facilities and resources, for example, the dilapidated, inadequate and overcrowded housing common in squatter camps, not forgetting the poor sanitation and hygiene facilities (Donald, et al., 2002:207).

Poverty is like a bleeding wound; it weakens defenses. It lowers resistance and it attracts predators (Shipler, 2004:18). For children, growing up in conditions of poverty, may lead to disabilities and difficulties in learning, ultimately causing them to drop out of school. Donald, et al. (2002:29) further note the fact that in South Africa, millions of children are living under severe conditions of poverty and malnutrition.

FIGURE 4.1: Poverty and parenting

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<td>Inadequate access to health services</td>
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<td>Poor nutritional resources</td>
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<td>Poor parental education/information</td>
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4.4.2.1 Unemployment

The participants stated that because of unemployment, the squatters resorted to the use of alcohol such as Tap and Umtshovalale. Parents living in squatter camps find it difficult to keep their children healthy under such conditions, especially because most of them are unemployed. Squatters lack opportunities to acquire skills for employment, and that reduces their chances of securing meaningful employment. Most of the youth in squatter camps is dependent on their parents or families. Their inability to get a job creates feelings of anger and powerlessness among the youth and squatters at large.

“Another contributory factor is unemployment.”

“In most cases, some of these learners are abused by family members, because there is a high rate of unemployment…”

“If they are just sitting in the location and doing nothing, but abuse [sic] … and also do the drugs …”

“In these areas there is poverty, there is unemployment.”

Poverty is an indirect effect of unemployment and places enormous strain on the squatters. South Africa should be serious about ensuring that all people have access to meaningful work opportunities (Petty & Spies, 2005:222; Donald, et al., 2002:208).

4.4.2.2 Overcrowding

The participants agreed that children from the squatter camps were living in inadequate, overcrowded housing. Most shacks are one-roomed houses, occupied by a large number of people. There are no playgrounds for children and the sanitation in these areas is poor. Most squatters are still using the unsanitary bucket system. The participants highlighted a number of effects that overcrowded housing had on children, such as deprivation of rights. For example, children may have to sleep in the same room as their parents and are consequently exposed to
adult life. Overcrowding may also promote incest and sibling abuse.

“Most of the time, they are staying in small houses or shacks.”

“… these grandkids stay in an overcrowded house, one-roomed house … undivided one room. So there is no privacy. They just see.”

“They decide to do all these things in front of their children … they thought it right, because it’s been done in front of them at their homes [sic].”

The crowded households have several effects on the children. Children are deprived of their own private space. They sleep with parents in the same room, a situation which leads them to learn about and witness sexual activities between adults. Such crowded households may lead to incest and child sexual abuse among certain groups. Adult children of the opposite sex may become sexually involved themselves, due to the close space they are sharing (Omari, 1994:76).

4.4.2.3 Truckers

The participating teachers expressed their concern about a large local garage frequented by delivery trucks. The school-going youth from the disadvantaged squatter camps in Motherwell used the truckers at the garage as a source for obtaining money. However, the money did not come easy, as they had to have sex with the truck drivers. That is how children, especially girls from the poverty-stricken areas in Motherwell, manage to pay their school fees, put food on the table, and buy clothing.

“… most truck drivers … when they are at that station, they take young girls and abuse them sexually and pay them money to sleep with them.”

“… the girls who are selling themselves, the prostitutes, get money from the truck drivers.”

There is a belief that trafficking is fuelled primarily by poverty and disruption. It is believed that traffickers capitalise on the vulnerabilities created by HIV/AIDS, endemic poverty, a weak education system, lack of opportunities and general
unemployment (Pharoah, 2006:26).

### 4.4.3 Vicious circle of abuse

People who were once abused, tend to become abusers themselves at a later stage. The researcher observed this in her class, when a girl invited a boy to have sex with her. On investigating, the researcher found that the girl had been sexually abused. The participants also had similar experiences in their period of teaching.

> “These abusers who are abusing children, they were abused themselves, when they were young.”

> “… they just have their own family, and it is going to be started, just a cycle.”

> “… this is something that is recurring. The child was abused … and now abuse another person [sic].”

> “Once abused, they will be abused again.”

Researching the ‘cycle of abuse’ carries methodological difficulties; many adults abused as children have never been identified and are therefore not visible as a distinct and recognisable group for research purposes. So this is a myth that is actually misinterpreted in some studies (Petty & Spies, 2005:117).

Poling (1991:62) holds a different view. He argues that some men who have been victims of sexual abuse develop into abusers themselves, acting out their trauma on those who cannot protect themselves.

### 4.4.4 Government laws

According to the participants, legislation that legitimises abortion without parents’ consent, contributes to sexual abuse.

> “I am fighting child abuse and at the same time, the Government is giving a chance for abuse of children.”

Public debate on abortion has escalated after the new legislation (Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act No. 92 of 1996) was promulgated on 22 November
1996 in Government Gazette No. 17602, allowing abortion on request in South
Africa for women from the age of twelve years old during the first twelve weeks of
pregnancy (Olivier & Bloem, 2004:177).

4.4.5 Peer influence

There is a perception that children teach each other better than the parents do. The participants disagreed stating that while peers sometimes had a good influence, most of the time the influence was negative.

“… and another factor, by hearing stories from the peer learners …
so and so is doing this …”

Children are heavily pressurised to conform to the peer group, for example, alcohol abuse is rife as a result of peer group pressure (Le Roux, 1992:94). In the peer group, children gain their first substantial experience of equality. Children entering a peer group are interested in the companionship, attention and goodwill of the group, particularly of the members of the group who are significant to them. For behaving according to the peer-valued manner, the group rewards its members by bestowing attention, approval or leadership. Otherwise, the peer group punishes by disdain, or other expressions of disapproval (Berns, 2001:61).

4.5 CONCLUSION

Three themes that emerged from the transcriptions of the interviews were discussed in this chapter and were substantiated with literature. Quotations from the participants were included without editing to give a valid reflection of their perceptions on the problem of teaching sexually abused children from a squatter camp and on how these children are coping at school. Literature references further substantiated the findings of the research dissertation.

Conclusions, recommendations, limitations and suggestions for further research will be presented in the final chapter of this research.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this research study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers on how sexually abused children from a squatter camp are coping at school. Based on the information obtained during the study, recommendations have been formulated to help the teachers deal with the problem of sexual abuse. Some limitations encountered by the researcher will also be highlighted.

Chapter 1 covered the background and rationale to the study, problem statement and aim, research design, method and research plan. A theoretical perspective on child sexual abuse within the context of the squatter camp was presented in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, a comprehensive discussion on the chosen research design and methodology was given. Chapter 4 presented the findings of the study as themes, subthemes and categories. This work was authenticated by direct quotations from the participants and the relevant literature. In this final chapter, Chapter 5, the main research conclusions, recommendations and limitations will be detailed.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY

5.2.1 Main conclusions

It can be concluded that child sexual abuse is a prevalent problem in squatter camps as seen through the eyes of the teachers. Based on the research findings, the following broad conclusions are presented:

- Sexual abuse has negative effects on children and they consequently develop various problems.
- Teachers could and should play a significant role where learners are sexually abused.
There are various reasons for sexual abuse in a squatter camp.

5.2.2 Detailed conclusions and implications of child sexual abuse in the context of a squatter camp

5.2.2.1 Sexual abuse has a negative effect on children and they consequently develop problems

It can be concluded that behavioural problems may develop after children have been sexually abused. Failure to acknowledge these subsequently developing negative effects, could result in a problematic situation at school, which may lead to any of the following: deterioration in academic work; problems in behaviour socialisation; emotional problems; health problems; deterioration in physical appearance and delinquent tendencies, such as the abuse of alcohol.

Academic work

It has become evident that sexual abuse may disrupt education. This implies that children who have to endure the psychological trauma caused by sexual abuse will develop school learning problems. Thus, the academic work of such children will deteriorate. If the deterioration in the academic work continues, it could result in absenteeism, underachieving, divided attention, the development of an ‘I don’t care’ attitude, and the inability to think straight.

- The negative way in which learners at school view their sexually abused peers, is likely to be a contributory factor to academic problems. This may result in truancy and absenteeism; techniques adopted by the children to avoid their schoolmates.
- The children may suffer from fear and anxiety, caused by their sexual abuse. This implies that the children could underachieve at school. Failure to achieve, may lead to early school leaving, which could result in these children not achieving their full potential.
- It has become evident that sexually abused children often display unacceptable behaviour in the classroom or at school. This may manifest
recurring thoughts about their abuse. The subsequent decrease in attention and concentration may result in divided attention.

- To sexually abused children, education often ceases to be a key commitment, and this could cause such children to lose their creativity and pride in their schoolwork and themselves. This may lead to agitation, and the children may develop an ‘I don’t care’ attitude, resulting in a major deterioration in their handwriting and the neatness and pride they take in their person and belongings.

- Urged by the intense feelings and negative thoughts of sexual abuse, these children do not listen well and say, and do things they do not mean. Their negative thoughts may prevent the children from concentrating on their school activities, while their inability to think straight may lead to poor scholastic achievement.

**Behavioural problems**

The negative effects of sexual abuse could change the behaviour of the children, leading them to trouble at school.

- It may be concluded that, if not addressed, sexual abuse that is experienced in combination with a number of individual and family variables, could result in aggression, which can lead to the emergence of sexually aggressive behaviour in a child. If this inappropriate sexual behaviour is not immediately detected, it could lead to sexual preoccupation at an inappropriate age, resulting in sex-related demonstrations in class and engaging other children in sex talk, that makes the latter feel very uncomfortable.

- Based on the research findings, the pain that sexually abused children endure sometimes becomes so severe that the children develop self-destructive behaviour, from sheer desperation. Without adequate support, the situation could become unendurable and may result in suicide, perceived as the only way to end the pain.
**Social behaviour**

The implications evident from the research are that sexual abuse may impede and restrict the social life of the victims. The children may illustrate inadequacy in their behaviour, resulting in poor interaction with the other learners, being inactive and passive, withdrawn and becoming ‘small adults’:

- Socialisation may cause sexually abused children great discomfort. The child may avoid all social interaction. If this behaviour continues, it may cause serious subsequent relationship problems for the children, resulting in their isolation. That could result in the children feeling different and also missing out on the rewards that healthy relationships could bring.
- The research results suggest that sexually abused children may possibly develop a negative attitude towards school. The implication is that children who suffer from feelings of inferiority may become passive and inactive and may therefore be unwilling to participate in school tasks or activities, which may impede their academic and social achievement and success.
- It has become clear that children, who have been abused, find it difficult to talk about their troubles. The children may feel isolated and alone, and that could lead to withdrawal. The children may even resort to alcohol abuse or the abuse of any addictive substance.
- Sexually abused children often find it difficult to relate to their own peer group. The loss of childhood impacts on the children’s personalities and may lead to a mature appearance for their age, which could further imply that their capacity for play is diminished and that they may not be able to relate to their peers.

**Emotional disturbances**

The findings indicate that sexual abuse could cause emotional damage in the children living in squatter camps, who are already emotionally vulnerable because of their impoverished living conditions. This may arise from the feelings of shame and worthlessness that they have experienced, which may result in stigmatisation and low self-esteem.
• Sexually abused children are considered to react to sexual abuse with inconsistent emotions. Their emotional development, normal before the abuse, is often affected. For example, they may display sudden and inexplicable mood changes, and disruptive behaviour.

• From the research results, it is evident that sexually abused children often receive discouraging messages from their peers. Their knowledge of sex, usually gleaned from peers, often contains misinformation and distortion, which may lead to stigmatisation and isolation and consequently anxiety.

• According to the research results, sexual abuse shatters children’s self-esteem. Should they not have the ability to protect themselves or to alter their situation, they may develop general feelings of inferiority and powerlessness, which could add to their negative self-concept.

Health risks

With reference to health risks, these children may not have access to social security, which may lead them to be sexually exploited in exchange for access to resources for their basic needs. In this process, these children may contract HIV/AIDS, fall pregnant, or engage in prostitution.

• The results suggest that sexually abused children need adult supervision and access to social security. If these needs are not met, these children are at risk of contracting STIs and HIV/AIDS, which could result in HIV infection being passed on to unborn children and even the death of the young mothers, leaving their children as orphans.

• It has become evident that children living in squatter camps could turn to prostitution in order to survive. If their intolerable home situations do not change and the issue of prostitution is not taken seriously, these children could run away from home and suffer from forced sex acts and exploitation.

• The implications evident from this research are that an alarming high number of school girls are falling pregnant. Enormous problems and difficulties face single teenage parents who live in poverty. The physical and psychological development of the children born under such circumstances could be at risk.
and the young mothers could drop out of school at an early stage, resulting in them struggling to find employment.

**Physical appearance**

Whilst the presence of the following symptoms may be related to other causes, it is believed that they are often an indication of sexual abuse: loss of weight; not walking or sitting properly; an untidy appearance; and avoidance of eye contact. Such children need to be observed and offered the needed help, as they may develop gynaecological problems and eating disorders.

- Most sexually abused children do not make their abuse known. This implies that teachers need to be observant in class and be able to identify these children so that they can be helped. For example, if a child who suddenly loses weight, is not identified and assisted in time, the child could starve him-/herself and could develop anorexia nervosa.
- The findings indicate that sexually abused children can often be identified by their awkward posture.
- An untidy appearance is an indication of stress factors and is common among sexually abused children. It is vital that this symptom be followed up with immediate effect, as the problem may be aggravated if left unattended. The children may ultimately neglect to pay any attention to their personal hygiene and appearance.
- Sexually abused children often believe that other people can tell that they had been sexually abused. This may imply that the children have feelings of being different and of no value. This attitude may also result in the child behaving inappropriately, such as avoiding eye contact, which could result in feelings of sadness and loneliness.

**Alcohol abuse by abused children**

It may be argued that sexually abused children attempt to escape from or hide what has happened to them by using mood-altering substances such as alcohol and drugs (Petty & Spies, 2005:131). Constant usage of these substances could result
in serious addiction, which in turn could force these children to run away from home, or become street kids and turn to crime for survival.

- The results confirmed that in order to overcome the feelings of stress, anxiety and insecurity that often result from sexual abuse, the children may resort to the use of alcohol, as a strategy to escape from their reality and from coping with their feelings.
- The social and contextual disadvantages of children living in a squatter camp are viewed as the reason why these children often leave home for a life on the street. The children see life on the street as offering better prospects. This distorted view may lead them to become victims of sexual abuse, and this could result in a life of crime and exploitation.
- It is evident from the research results that crime is rife in the squatter camps. Sexually abused children have a low self-esteem and may commit crime as a means of regaining some self-worth. Unless these children receive support, the results of crime will have a devastating impact on their lives.

5.2.2.2 Teachers play a significant role where learners are sexually abused

The research findings confirm that teachers often take it upon themselves to play a supportive role if a learner has been abused. They feel a sense of duty and responsibility towards these children, particularly because some of them are parents themselves.

*Emotional effect on teachers*

Teachers are generally alert to changes in the emotional, social or learning behaviours of their learners. Dealing with children who are sexually abused, is considered to be a frustrating task for teachers. If the teachers are not succeeding in helping these learners, they may generate feelings of helplessness, sadness, pain, anger and guilt, and may also be frustrated by the justice system, that often fails such children.

- The results suggest that, in most cases, teachers do not have sufficient
knowledge with regard to child sexual abuse. This implies that teachers are untrained in meeting such children’s needs and where support services are insufficient to back up the teachers, they may not be able to provide the children with the necessary support. This may lead to children dropping out of school without the skills to help them cope with the situation, causing teachers to feel frustrated, powerless, guilty, devastated and sad, and angry at the justice system for failing the children.

**Facets of the teacher’s role**

Teachers must be constantly aware of and alert to children’s needs and feelings. This implies that teachers must have open communication with their learners and earn their trust. If trust, support and love is made available to the learners, they will feel encouraged to report their abuse.

- It is evident that learners are convinced that those teachers who love them and show them affection will support them through their experiences of sexual abuse. Failure by teachers to show affection and support could result in learners finding it difficult to disclose their terrible secret.
- Evident from the research is that sexually abused children often extend an instant appeal for help to a trusted teacher. Teachers are often the only persons who can help these children with their problems and should bear this heavy responsibility. If teachers do not recognise their learners’ cry for help, behavioural and learning problems may result.
- It may be concluded that teachers need to keep the lines of communication with parents and learners open, giving them full information and guidance, when needed. The implication is that teachers must earn the trust of both parents and children. This may make teachers aware of the needs and feelings of sexually abused children.
- It has become evident that sexual abuse adds to teachers’ responsibilities and intimidates their teaching authority. The incidence of sexual abuse among their learners may therefore be frustrating for teachers and may result in feelings of helplessness and incompetence.
It is important for teachers to have a knowledge of or familiarise themselves with the Department of Education’s guidelines on child sexual abuse in “Opening your eyes”, as distributed to schools. These guidelines will help teachers to handle any sensitive information on sexual abuse disclosed to them by a learner. That will help the teacher to earn the trust of the learner.

Learners feel protected when their teacher is empathetic and supportive. Learners will be keen to come to school if they feel safe and protected around their teachers, and that could also boost their self-esteem.

The results of this study indicate that children decide which adults they can talk to and trust, and who not. This implies that teachers should reflect a positive attitude, create a trusting atmosphere, have good listening skills, and not be judgemental. This may encourage learners to report sexual abuse, as they will feel free to speak honestly.

Home visits should be communicated in advance and not be a ‘surprise’. Communicated visits could help build a good relationship between the teacher and the home. Such visits will help teachers to obtain background information on learners and families, to build confidence in the school and the teacher. Learners will benefit by developing a more positive attitude towards their learning when any problem they may experience, is communicated in a mature way to their families.

**Teamwork**

When teachers at school help each other, the learners emulate that co-operative spirit. The learners also observe how their teachers interact with the school principal, and their parents. When all these stakeholders, including the social workers and the Police, work together as a team, the learners will observe this collaboration and may benefit through developing a more positive attitude towards learning, which could also improve their chances of coping with their trauma.

The research results indicate that, as key persons fostering good working partnerships, school principals influence good communication in their schools. This may lead to a positive teacher relationship, which can result in
a conducive, disciplinary climate and a good pedagogical influence on the learners.

- When teachers work together as a team, they become more effective. This promotes collaboration. If teachers who possess expertise in child sexual abuse will help those teachers who are unskilled, cooperation among staff will be enhanced and this knowledge exchange will empower more teachers to be able to help sexually abused learners.

- Parental involvement has a marked influence on the children’s success, and a sound relationship and parental support may reduce learners’ anxieties and stress, enhancing their chances of academic success.

- The research results indicate that social workers should possess knowledge and broad skills and should clearly explain the nature of what they do and where they work to learners and parents. If the social workers are knowledgeable people, they may earn the trust of the learners, and this will lead to greater cooperation from the learners.

- Schools should form a relationship with the Police, who must respond quickly when summoned. If the Police respond quickly when they are called, abused learners will feel more protected and secured. It is further suggested that notorious locations, such as the infamous Truck-Inn, be monitored by the Police to stop the prostitution and other illegal activities on the premises.

- Youth centres such as LoveLife must provide relevant life skills programmes to learners. Learners generally learn better from somebody of their own age group. This may lead to the redirection of learners to more positive behaviour.

**Need more training**

The research results confirm that there is a need for teachers to have more or proper training regarding the issue of child sexual abuse. With proper training, they will be able to offer first-aid help to learners while waiting for the professionals to step in to assist the child.

- As people who deal with sexually abused children on a daily basis, teachers
urgently need to be empowered, as they have no professional knowledge of sexual abuse. Teachers may therefore feel frustrated at their own incompetence and lack of training on sexual abuse; their self-esteem may decrease as their feelings of worthlessness and incompetence increase.

- The research findings suggest that teachers urgently require professional skills. As teachers are professionally involved in bringing about changes in children’s behaviour, they need to be empowered with skills to teach abused children new, positive behaviour.
- It has become evident that many parents in squatter camps cannot afford the cost of private psychological help for their sexually abused children. Appropriately trained school counsellors can make a substantial therapeutic contribution in such a situation. If schools do not provide school counsellors with counselling skills, needy sexually abused children could be deprived of the help they so urgently need.
- The teachers from schools in the townships who are teaching children from the squatter camps generally felt that they needed support from the Department of Education with regard to sexual abuse. If the Department could support teachers with workshops and work together with outside organisations, the teachers would be able to offer direct help to children who are abused by, for example, referring them to relevant professionals.

**Observations of teachers**

It is evident from the research findings that teachers need to be alert to changes in social, emotional and learning behaviours. Teachers who observe their learners closely should be able to identify those with problems. If such learners are not identified, they may not get the help they so desperately need.

- Teachers generally regard children as gifts from God that need to be nurtured. If sexually abused children do not get the required love and support from their teachers, these children may feel shunned and neglected, which could result in them sinking into a deep depression.
- There is a misconception that only girls are abused. If teachers do not
observe both genders in their classroom, sexually abused boys will not be identified, and this oversight could result in them abusing alcohol or running away from school.

- It may be concluded that not all sexually abused children have a disturbed concentration and fluctuating school achievement. Some sexually abused children may in fact develop a very strong desire to achieve; children may even obtain outstanding intellectual achievements.

- The results suggest that sexually abused children’s rights are violated. If the rights of these children could be translated into reality and be respected, such children could take responsibility for their own healing process and help their significant others to understand their emotional needs.

- Children are the future of South Africa. However many of our children are sexually abused, and some are destroyed by that abuse. In all, these children, the abuse introduces fear and insecurity. If nothing is done to stop the abuse, South Africa will have a sick generation, who is not interested in assuming leadership roles, as they see their future as bleak.

- A conclusive view from the research results was that both learners and teachers need professional help on the issue of sexual abuse. Teachers should seek the assistance of professionals in dealing with sexually abused children. Through the specialised advice of the professionals, both the teacher and the learner will achieve more comprehensive results than trying to solve the problem on their own.

- The results indicate that sexual abuse could destroy children. Unless the communities in squatter camps, schools and churches work together in trying to combat the problem, and build trust, morale and mental functioning, many of our children will be destroyed by sexual abuse.

- Many sexually abused children have lost all faith in adults. Sexually abused children lose faith in human beings, because their boundaries have been transgressed. Unless these children get professional help, they will fall into a depression and may turn away from all adults who want to help.

- Sexual abuse may destroy children mentally. If children’s mental development is impeded, low intelligence may result and these children may
not achieve at school, or even drop out of school.

- Children who are sexually abused, are often viewed by others as people who have no future. The implication is that sexual abuse can impede such children’s social life, and these children may consequently become socially confused and uncertain about the future. This may increase their sense of isolation.

- Many sexually abused children are judged by their reactions to sexual trauma. This implies that the children have to deal with being ridiculed or teased. This may lead to the experience of being labelled and as a result, the children may develop deep feelings of guilt and shame.

- It may be concluded that some sexually abused children are considered as sexual volunteers. These children are deprived of freedom to refuse sexual advances (Le Roux, 1992:165). Without intervention, such children could be overstressed.

- The research results confirm that parents struggle to raise their sexually abused children who have been damaged by the abuse. Without support from the community at large, these parents may fail their children. The solution to this problem is captured in the African proverb: “It takes a whole village to raise a child” (Wearmouth, et al., 2004:90). Without the support of the community, the parents will struggle to raise their abused child, and this will aggravate an already bad situation.

- The church is seen as an extrinsic factor that could help influence the child’s behaviour positively. Parents, especially single parents, urgently require support from the community, for example, in rebuilding their abused children. Children who do not have contact with or receive support from the church, may miss out on a sound foundation of morals and values.

5.2.2.3 Reasons for sexual abuse in a squatter camp

The research results indicate that poverty, overcrowding and unemployment are the main contributory factors to sexual abuse in a squatter camp. The implication is that a squatter camp is a deprived and disadvantaged environment that offers inadequate stimulation. This may result in poor scholastic performance, job
progress, and socially deviant behaviour patterns (Pretorius, 2000:303).

**Parents and family**

The family is the basic unit of the society. It has to provide in both the physical and psychosocial needs of its members (Le Roux, 1993:174). Parents and families living in squatter camps struggle to meet the physical and psychosocial needs of their children, because of the inadequate conditions in which they are living. If parents fail in their task to meet the needs of their children, the latter may display inadequacy in their behaviour.

- The research results indicate that some parents ignore the sexual abuse of their children. Some abused children are rejected by their mothers when reporting the abuse, as the perpetrators may be known to the mothers and they may be financially or otherwise dependent on them. This may lead to a sense of disappointment in the children and result in intense feelings of fear, guilt and shame.

- The results imply that the depraved living conditions in a squatter camp expose people to poor scholastic patterns that will result in illiteracy. This may be a factor why parents do not report the abuse: they simply do not know how.

- The research results indicate that parents living in squatter camps abuse alcohol in an attempt to escape from the misery and squalor of their everyday existence. Although alcohol may make the parents temporarily feel better, it generates even more problems and may make their children vulnerable to sexual abuse.

- The implication is that when parents are physically and emotionally strained, they could become uninvolved in the lives of the children, especially when they abuse alcohol. If the situation is not changed, sexually abused children may lose interest and enjoyment in all activities.

- The research results indicated that in many instances, the perpetrators are known to the children; they may be family members or someone from the neighbourhood. Perpetrators may threaten the children, which could cause
the children to fear for their lives and not disclose the abuse.

- It has become evident from the research results that squatter camps are generally occupied by single parents. Children who are raised by single parents are often left unattended when the parents are at work, which means that the children are at increased risk. This may result in the sexual abuse of these children.

- The research results indicate that adults sometimes abuse cultural traditions, such as that children must obey their elders. This obedience may lead children to do as they are told by adults, which might result in sexual abuse.

Poverty

People living in squatter camps are poor, with home environments that are not stimulating to children. These children are caught up in demotivating situations, which may make them vulnerable to sexual exploitation and may even result in violence.

- Squatters are unemployed, due to the fact that they lack the necessary skills needed in the job market. To meet their basic needs, they may use sex in exchange for money. This may result in feelings of powerlessness and in ill-health and vulnerability (Le Roux, 1993:29).

- The inadequate overcrowded homes in a squatter camp are characterised by a high crime rate, alcoholism and poverty. The children who grow up under these conditions will be seriously impeded in their social development. This may lead to negative character traits, which could result in low self-esteem.

- Money is an easy lure for children from disadvantaged squatter camps. This may lead to exploitation and could result in prostitution.

- It may be concluded that some sexually abused children may display sexually inappropriate behaviour (Poling, 1991:169). If the children are not supported, they may act out their trauma on those who cannot protect themselves.

- Based on the findings of the research, it may be concluded that certain laws, such as the act that legitimises abortion without the consent of parents,
contribute to child sexual abuse. If such laws cannot be revisited and altered, the incidence of child sexual abuse may escalate.

- Based on the research findings, peer groups act as agents of socialisation and exert a strong influence on the ideas and behaviours of those who desperately need social approval and fear rejection. Abused children may lose out on proper identity formation and learning of age-appropriate and positive tendencies.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO TEACHERS WHO ARE TEACHING SEXUALLY ABUSED CHILDREN

5.3.1 Sexual abuse has a negative effect on children and they consequently develop problems

5.3.1.1 Recommendations regarding academic work

Inexplicable changes in the academic performance or behaviour in children that were not previously evident, require careful checking. Teachers must try to help children and seek the right kind of help and assistance for the problems related to academic work.

- It is important for teachers to follow up when they notice a pattern in learners’ absenteeism, as this not only affects the children’s academic work, but the teachers and the other learners in the classroom, especially those that are in the learner’s group.

It is recommended that teachers send an official letter to the parents; it must have a school stamp and the principal must sign it. If the parents do not respond, the teachers must arrange a home visit. The teachers could also change their style of teaching by planning challenging activities. The atmosphere in the classroom must be warm, stimulating and inviting.

- To accomplish high achievement motivation in their learners, teachers must communicate their expectations to them. Learners must believe that their
learning success is achieved through ability and effort and that failure can be attributed to a lack of effort (Pretorius, 2000:216). Teacher must not isolate sexually abused learners in their efforts; as such, motivation may help other learners who are not sexually abused.

- Almost all students at one time or another experience difficulty concentrating on a task. This is a major problem among sexually abused children. Teachers must help learners increase their attention and be taught to recognise when learners’ attention or concentration is reduced or divided through the stress of being sexually abused or pressurised. Teachers should encourage and allow the children to switch their attention (most children do this naturally enough) briefly and productively (Wearmouth, *et al.*, 2004:319).

Teachers could also read a magazine or newspaper story out aloud and ask the learners to report on *who? what? where? when? and why? Questions.*

Alternatively, teachers could whisper a message to one learner and have him/her repeat it to another, who in turn, repeats it to another, and so on down the line. The last learner to hear the message must repeat it aloud and compare it with the original message the teacher whispered.

Overstressed by their traumatic experiences, children may adopt an ‘I-don’t-care’ attitude. If the teacher reacts harshly to the child’s behaviour, the child will react more negatively. Wearmouth, *et al.* (2005:182) caution that if you let the child’s behaviour push your emotional buttons and respond angrily to the child, you will make the merry-go-round spin even faster. A recommendation is that the teachers employ the ‘interrupt’ response. When the child is climbing on chairs, instead of telling him/her to put his/her feet on the floor, as he/she would be expecting, ask him/her to help you with a puzzle or join you in a game. That will get him/her off the furniture without the usual rebellion, and when he/she is sitting next to you doing the puzzle, you can talk to him/her about the danger of climbing on furniture (Kaiser & Rasminksy, 2003:182).

- Wearmouth, *et al.* (2004:317) note that it is helpful to identify the behaviour
and then look deeper for the underlying causes of that behaviour. When a child is sexually abused, he/she cannot think straight. His/her distractibility increases and his/her focus on what is being said or is happening is lost.

Teachers could help the children to switch off their current focus. Feelings tend to follow the focus of attention. Rather lead the child to think of something pleasant and more pleasant feelings will follow naturally.

5.3.1.2 Recommendations regarding behaviour problems

- Learners whose parents or teachers have failed to meet their needs may illustrate inadequate behaviour, such as aggression.

Therapists help sexually abused children deal with their anger by letting them make up a parcel of objects that remind them of their aggressive behaviour. Therapists discuss the meaning attached to the contents of the parcel, metaphorically where it belongs, namely with the perpetrator (Spies, 2006:3).

- Some children who were sexually abused, resort to suicide, thinking that it is the only way to escape the pain of their abuse.

Teachers should ideally identify the abused children in their classes in the early stages of the abuse, before thoughts of suicide could enter their heads. Call in the parent find a way to ask him/her about problems experienced with the child, but never accuse the parent of any neglect or offence. Refer the child to professionals for help. Continue observing the child for other problems that may emerge, such as learning or behavioural problems. Pretorius (2000:360) maintains that by referring the child to a professional, the vicious circle in which the abused child becomes an abusive parent will be broken.

- When children are demonstrating in class, the teacher must deal with the problem immediately, as the other children in class may be distracted and lose focus on classroom activities.

Teachers must involve the parents of these children when referring them for
professional help. Frierich (2001:164) suggests that specific attention be paid to the parents and that a behavioural plan be established. Boundaries and a habit of frank and open discussion on sexual matters must be established. The children's success in this domain may then be generalised to their home environment, by working jointly with the parents.

5.3.1.3 Recommendations regarding negative social behaviour

- Children who are sexually abused, often experience problems in interaction with others. It is recommended that teachers seek help, especially on behalf of those children whose parents are not taking any action to help them.

Children need affirmation and acceptance; they must therefore have opportunities to spend time with caring adults who enable them to be part of the larger community and who give them a sense of values and spirituality (Berns, 2001:36).

- Extroverted children may suddenly become shy and inactive or introverts. It is recommended that teachers encourage sexually abused children to participate in the tasks performed in class and also involves the child in religious organisations or the school choir. The child will soon overcome his/her loneliness.

- Sexually abused children often display withdrawal and isolation symptoms. They lack humour and self-confidence. It is recommended that teachers do not try to solve the children’s problems for them. Rather teach them assertiveness skills. For example, a child may want to have a turn on the swing, or another child may try to dominate or verbally or physically attack her. Knowing how to approach or respond assertively, offers children a means to achieve their goals without resorting to aggression.

- Small adults find it difficult to relate to their own peer groups. Teachers should motivate them to attend debates, Life Skills programmes offered by LoveLife after school, etc.
5.3.1.4 Recommendations regarding emotional disturbances

A child’s emotional development is generally normal until the occurrence of sexual abuse. Such a child then suddenly displays mood changes, which the teacher or parent cannot explain.

It is recommended that teachers pay attention to emotion regulation in the child. As teachers are usually at the heart of whatever schools are trying to achieve, they could initiate policies or programmes for emotional development and wellness, such as storytelling sessions (Wearmouth, et al., 2004:278).

- Being stigmatised makes the sexually abused child feel like second-hand shop-soiled goods, not worthy of the respect and acceptance of society.

Teachers should refer abused children to a therapist. It is important that the therapist establish what the children already know about sex and sexuality and then clear any misconceptions by openly discussing sexual organs and sexual feelings with them (Spies, 2006:261).

- Sexually abused children need to believe in who they are and be conscious that they have the ability to change their negative attitudes. These children need to pay attention to their strengths in order to overcome their shortcomings, and refrain from lingering over the past.

5.3.1.5 Recommendations on health risks

- HIV/AIDS has devastating effects on children, families and society as a whole and is an issue that all teachers should address.

  - Teachers should inform parents about any HIV/AIDS programme that the school has implemented.
  - Teachers should invite parents who have knowledge about HIV/AIDS to assist, whenever possible.
  - Teachers must arrange puppet shows on HIV/AIDS for Foundation Phase learners.
Teachers must invite LoveLife to the school to facilitate lessons on sexual education and debates on HIV/AIDS.

Teachers must educate the older children about abstinence and advocate the use of condoms and moral values to those who are already sexually active.

Every school should have an HIV/AIDS policy in place.

- Children from intolerable home situations in squatter camps often resort to prostitution in order to survive. The school should therefore consider subsidising children from disadvantages homes.

- Organise food parcels for these children from organisations such as Hope World Wide, that provide for the orphans and vulnerable children.

- Motivate these children to join support groups.

- Invite their parents to the school and consult the School Governing Body about allowing the parents to provide services at the school, like cutting grass, in exchange for exemption from school fees.

- Schools should engage in strategies that will help prevent early pregnancy. It is suggested that teachers take the responsibility of arranging or presenting the awareness programmes in schools, as parents generally leave the duty of giving guidance of sexuality and sex to their children to teachers. The communication between children and parents on issues of sexuality and sex is generally very poor. Schools should therefore offer programmes such as:

  - The ‘No Apology’ Programme
  - The HIV/AIDS and Sexuality Programme offered by LoveLife and Childline.
  - Contraceptive education and information on the use of condoms.
  - Life skills teachers must offer lessons on acceptable norms and values.
  - Programme on abstinence offered by LoveLife facilitators.
5.3.1.6 Recommendations on physical appearance

Teachers should always be alert to behaviour that may result from sexually abused children, such as eating disorders, which could result in alarming weight loss and place their health at risk.

- The teachers must enquire from the parents if the child has a problem.
- The teacher must suggest to the parents that they take the child to the hospital or doctor.
- The teacher must organise food from the school feeding scheme for the child to eat during break-time.
- The teacher must monitor the child closely.

- A child who has walking and sitting problems can easily be identified by a caring and observant teacher.

- It is suggested that teachers be warm and welcoming to the children, in order for them to feel accepted and comfortable and confident in telling their teacher their problems.
- Sexuality based programmes should be implemented at school, and these programmes should include effective communication skills.
- Support groups in schools with trained peer counsellors could help educators, because children relate more easily to children of their age than to adults.
- The child must be referred to the nearest clinic.
- The teacher must communicate with the parent.

- Sexually abused children have experience of being somehow different and are sad about what has happened to them. They think that they and their secret are transparent (Le Roux, 1992:170), hence they do not look you in the eye.

- The learner must be referred to professionals, as the stress accumulating in him/her must be relieved.
The child should be given pen and paper to draw, to express his/her anger.
Lessons should be stimulating to build the child’s self-esteem.

5.3.1.7 Recommendations regarding alcohol abuse by abused children

- Alcohol is so common in our society that we seldom think of it as a drug. Yet, beer, wine and liquor are all central nervous system depressants. They are similar to other sedative drugs in slowing down bodily functions such as heart rate and respiration (Berns, 2001:295). Abused children often use alcohol as an escape strategy.
- Teachers should undertake home visits in order to see what is happening at home.
- Teachers should refer children with a drinking problem to a therapist.
- Teachers should organise meetings with the parents of the children and introduce awareness campaigns on the effect of alcohol.
- Teachers must inform and guide children in terms of the dangers of alcohol use.
- A policy on alcohol usage should be implemented at all schools.

- Sexually abused children need to be closely monitored and supported by their teachers. Without the necessary help, a child may exhibit conduct disorders, such as running away from home and become a street kid, in the mistaken belief that they are running to a haven of security (Le Roux, 1992:183).
- It is recommended that teachers reach out to these children; the children have the desire to reach out and touch, but that desire may be hurtful, as there is often no-one to touch.
- Parents should be educated to watch over and keep an eye on their children; this is of course very difficult if the parents are inebriated!
- Programmes to improve emotional competence must be implemented.
- A study day could be organised with parents to enhance their parenting

- Sexually abused children often resort to crime, in an illogical attempt to take back that which was stolen from them. Sometimes they steal insignificant objects, simply to defy authority. Spies (2006:59) emphasises that professionals should study the thoughts, perceptions and behaviour of sexually abused children to develop a clear understanding of the ways in which these children attempt to survive with the scars of abuse.
  - Teachers should show their love and support to their abused learners, to ease their pain.
  - Teachers should encourage the parents to love and support their children.

**5.3.2 Teachers play a significant role where learners are sexually abused**

**5.3.2.1 Recommendations concerning emotional effect on teachers**

Teachers are likely to experience emotional difficulties themselves when they realise that a learner is sexually abused. Wearmouth, *et al.* (2005:90) assert that the abuse of children add to teachers’ concerns and worries and threatens their teaching authority. Dealing with such children could be a hugely demanding task for teachers and potentially generate feelings of helplessness and incompetence.

- It is recommended that teachers have access to a regular reflective forum, coordinated by a competent person from outside.
  - Schools principals should organise life skills programmes for teachers and not wait for the Department of Education to do this. This could be achieved by inviting Childline to present a workshop for teachers. Teachers should be familiar with the development of various aspects of emotional opportunities for helping learners.
  - Teachers must be careful listeners. Teachers need to be counselled by a psychologist organised by the Department of Education so that they
will be resilient and strong enough to deal with cases of abused learners in their classes.

5.3.2.2 Recommendations regarding role of teachers

- Teachers should be role models, because teachers are among the significant others in the life of a child. Teachers should exert a positive influence in the classroom, by exuding great warmth, understanding and empathy. They must exercise control and be efficient and effective teachers, always trying to improve on their teaching skills. Kaiser and Rasmisky (2003:130) suggest that teachers should set the stage and play the lead, which means that teachers must model the behaviour they expect from the learners.

- Facets of a teacher’s role
  - Teachers should bestow love and affection on the learners; by doing so, the learners will feel wanted and secure – a feeling that they may seldom experience at home. Teachers must be able to identify the needs of abused children in order to support them.
  - Teachers should enable the learners to be responsible; encourage participation; and provide opportunities.
  - Teachers have a responsibility to know how to handle difficult behaviour safely.
  - Teachers should work to establish a healthy climate at school; a climate that will promote, enhance and develop trust, accountability and open communication when teaching.

- Teachers should be sensitive and alert, especially when learners try to communicate their problems, whether through drawings, writing poems or by displaying unacceptable behaviour. Teachers also need to be assertive in communicating their expectations and requirements to learners clearly and firmly (Wearmouth, et al., 2005:162). Teachers should consider the learners’ background and needs when they are planning for teaching. Teachers must
be enthusiastic about their work, always taking into consideration their lesson situation, and exercise consistent, sympathetic educational authority to instil order and discipline.

- Teachers must earn the trust of the learners by applying positive communication in the class, being good listeners, and developing a trusting relationship with the learners. Positive communication with the learners will make the latter feel secure.
- Teacher should make the abused learners feel protected.
- Teachers must encourage the learners to report when they feel harassed and uncomfortable, and when they are being sexually abused.

5.3.2.3 Recommendations on teamwork

The participants highlighted the importance of teamwork in a school between the principal, teachers and parents. Research studies have provided conclusive evidence that when schools work together with parents in supporting learning, children tend to succeed (Berns, 2001:299).

It is recommended that all the stakeholders in a school work together as a team. The principal, as head of the school, should provide the teachers with the required resources, information and support. As a teacher, it makes good sense to consult with one’s principal when one has a problem. Pretorius (2000:91) recommends that teachers develop the ability to communicate, to understand pupils and to actualise I-You relationships.

Members of the team

- The principal should support his/her teachers, especially those who are new to the profession and have no idea of how to deal with sexually abused children. As the head of the school, he/she is the key person who must foster good working partnerships and assist the teachers who report sexual abuse or any other problem. Obviously, he/she must treat sensitive issues in the greatest confidentiality.
Specialists in the field of sexual abuse should be invited by the principal to present workshops to the staff on sexual abuse issues, such as how to identify learners that are abused; what to do when a learner discloses a history of abuse; and where to refer the learners. The staff should work together as a team.

Parental involvement is a key determinant of children’s success at school. Parents should therefore work hand in hand with the school, that is, they must advise teachers in advance when the child will not be attending school and of the reason for his/her proposed absence.

Each school should be allocated a Police officer responsible for that specific school. This will expedite the process when the Police are called out for an incident. It is further recommended that teachers involve the Police when they suspect abuse and any type of criminality at school.

Help from child protection units, such as Lifeline and Childline, is important, because these units raise awareness of the need to safeguard children. Each school should work in partnership with such units. Childline must be informed immediately when a child is sexually abused.

5.3.2.4 Recommendations regarding more training for teachers

When teachers lack certain skills, it becomes a problem when there is a crisis in school. It is important that teachers be empowered with skills so that they will be able to help the sexually abused learners in their classroom, while waiting for professional help. Children generally feel more secure when their teachers help them with their problems.

Teachers feel incompetent

It is recommended that teachers acquire good listening skills in order to understand what learners and parents are saying. It is further recommended that teachers acquire communication skills. Some parents may react with extreme emotion when told that their child has been abused. Good communication skills will help the teacher discuss such sensitive issues with parents in a calm way.
Knowledgeable teachers with regard to child sexual abuse must assist those teachers who have sexually abused children in their class, by empowering them with the knowledge they have. Teachers in schools in the Motherwell Township of Nelson Mandela Bay could make use of Childline, that is empowering teachers on the issue of child sexual abuse. The Department of Education must also provide teachers with relevant workshops.

Teachers need to have counselling skills to be able to render assistance while waiting for professional intervention. Donald, et al. (2002:249), concur that while one may not be trained as a professional counsellor, there will always be situations that one will have to address at first hand, involving individual, social and interpersonal problems, before further help can be found.

### 5.3.2.5 Recommendations regarding observations of teachers

It is recommended that teachers observe the learners in their classrooms closely, not only for academic assessment purposes, but also to identify behavioural problems in learners so that they may receive the necessary help without delay. Teachers should record their observations to look for patterns in children's behaviour.

**Gifts from God**

Teachers generally feel that children are gifts from God. The teachers and parents should nurture children, because they are entrusted in their care by God. Teachers and parents should therefore display unconditional love and care for the children entrusted in their care.

**Both genders**

Teachers should treat both boys and girls who have been sexually abused in the same way, according both genders the same respect and non-judgemental acceptance. The school should minimise the differential treatment of males and
females. Society at large and the media should change their stereotypical portrayals of gender roles (Berns, 2001:578).

**Some become strong**

It is recommended that all sexually abused children be referred for professional help. Although some may appear strong, they are suppressing their hurt and pain in an attempt to forget about the abuse. Such children may vow to achieve and excel at school and in life. Some may succeed, but some may push themselves too far. All need help. The children who become strong, must be afforded the respect they covet, and not be constantly reminded of the sexual abuse.

**Children have rights**

It is recommended that the rights of sexually abused children be respected at all times, especially with regard to confidentiality. However, the children must also be challenged to take responsibility for their own healing process by helping the significant others in their lives understand their emotional needs (Spies, 2006:276).

**Children are the future of South Africa**

It is recommended that children be treated with respect and dignity, favouring their rights, because they are the future generation of the country. Communities must reflect in what type of leaders South Africa will have in future decades.

**Learners need professional help**

The prevailing poverty in a squatter camp must not deny children access to resources. Schools must try to help those learners that, for example, do not have money for a psychologist, by using school-trained counsellors to help the abused child at school. Schools must make use of remedial teachers, because they can do much to help learners with behavioural and learning problems.

**Not reported**

It is recommended that teachers must report it immediately when they suspect that
a child is being abused. One may report such cases to Childline or to the Police. Children must also be encouraged to disclose the abuse. Parents, especially the mothers, who are often dependent on the perpetrators, must break their silence. Workshops for the communities must be presented by the Police. At assembly in schools, teachers must talk to the children and encourage them to report sexual abuse. The churches should preach about sexual abuse and encourage disclosure so that the perpetrators can be prosecuted.

**Sexual abuse destroys children**

- Spies (2006:248) suggests that children need to experience physical and emotional safety in order to let their guard down. An environment conducive to a sense of emotional safety must therefore be created in various ways. Teachers must build the trust, the morale and mentality destroyed by the adult perpetrator whom the child trusted. Westway (1993:168) suggests that the therapeutic process should begin by engaging the child, by comforting the child, by putting one’s arm around the child.
- Children who are mentally disturbed must be hospitalised; teachers should help parents who have no means to do so.
- The motivation and support of teachers is vital for those learners who think that the future holds nothing for them. Their eroded self-esteem must be rebuilt by teachers and the significant others in their lives.
- Children who have become sexual volunteers must be sent for counselling until they realise that they can escape from the situation.

**Community involvement**

Community involvement is important especially in a household where parents abuse alcohol or work late and arrive home late. The neighbours could look after the child or children who is/are left alone. The community could also help the very poor, by sharing whatever is left with them. It is also recommended that communities provide the inclusiveness that is needed by the sexually abused children, as it will assist them in healing. The residents of squatter camps must be
encouraged to build inclusive communities where there is no place for perpetrators to hide and where the veil of secrecy is destroyed (Poling, 1991:149).

**Church**

It is recommended that parents instil respect for religion in their children, as it could support their abused children. Teachers should motivate their learners to attend Sunday School, to learn moral values and even invite church members to conduct prayers at school once a week. Wearmouth, *et al.* (2004:90) support shared child-rearing obligations with extended families, churches and other community networks. Le Roux (1992:112) concurs that “the family that prays together, stays together.”

### 5.3.3 Reason for sexual abuse in a squatter camp

#### 5.3.3.1 Recommendations regarding parents and families

Many parents have relegated the duty of talking to their children about sexuality to teachers. The Department of Education must be consistent in offering the HIV/AIDS sexuality and the “No apology” Programmes. Parents could also be invited to the teachers’ workshops. The school governing bodies should also attend; subsequently, they could workshop problems and challenges together with the teachers and the parents of the school. Parents and families must also be workshopped regarding acceptable norms and values of conduct and behaviour.

**Ignoring abuse**

Teachers must invite the parents, especially mothers, to the school, and communicate the situation of the abused child and encourage the parents to take care of their child and not ignore him/her, as he/she needs to be comforted by the parents. Teachers could also advise parents to seek professional help if they themselves (the parents) feel helpless to address the situation.

**Illiteracy**

The Police Forum and community structures must empower the community about
ways of reporting and dealing with sexual abuse at their meetings. This will help illiterate parents to know where and how to report the abuse. At the meetings, the community must also be made aware of the possibility of anonymous reporting, as some may be afraid to report the abuse. The communities must also be alerted that the media at times report incorrect messages about child sexual abuse. For example, they must disregard myths such as "the virgin cure".

**Alcohol abuse of parents**

Parents who abuse alcohol, must be warned by teachers that their children are not coping well at school, because they neglect to spend time with them. They must also be alerted that their drinking frustrates and demoralises their children and affects their teaching and learning. The parents may be invited to a school meeting and be advised of better ways of alleviating the misery about their poverty that causes them to drink. Parents could be motivated to attend the skills workshops offered by the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. For example, they could be taught skills such as bricklaying or be organised into the food gardening projects in Motherwell. Le Roux (1993:250) suggests that schools need to be pro-active in informing, training and providing parents with the knowledge and skills that they need to address the scourge of child sexual abuse.

**Uninvolved parents**

Teachers who notice that the parents of abused children are uninvolved, could visit their homes so that they may develop a better understanding of circumstances in those homes. Teachers must convince the parents of the importance of working together, explain to the parents that working together supports learning and also the children who are suffering. Teachers must emphasise to the parents that sexual abuse does not mean the end of their child’s life, without in any way minimising the serious effects of such abuse. Teachers can further explain to the parents that when families are actively involved, their children get help at school and also develop positive attitudes.
The perpetrator's relation to the family

Teachers who have knowledge that sexual abuse is happening in a child's home, should report the matter to the Police or make an anonymous call to Childline, giving them the home address of the sexually abused child.

The justice system, together with the social workers, will usually remove the perpetrator – not the child – from the home, as the child will otherwise think that the abuse was his/her fault. The social workers and counsellors must help those children who have been threatened that they will be harmed if they reveal their secret of the abuse.

Parents are absent

It is recommended that teachers caution the children who are alone at home in the evenings because their parents are absent. Teachers must caution them not to open the door for anybody, and that the parent must first identify him-/herself. The community network must monitor such homes; people in the squatter camps know what is going on next door, living in close proximity as they are. The Police Forums should also monitor squatter areas, to reduce the high crime rate.

Cultural issue to obey

The school and the community must discuss the cultural norm that adults must be obeyed and reach consensus that no child will henceforth be sent on errands by anybody other than his/her parents. Children must be told of this decision and also of the reason for it.

5.3.3.2 Recommendations regarding poverty

The government must focus its efforts on the eradication of poverty. Promises made by the politicians have not translated into any change in the conditions of people living in squatter camps, and they are losing hope. Schools that are health promoting schools must educate and encourage their communities not to lose hope. The parents at each school could be taught about how to work a difference
in their own lives, including the unemployed youth. Teachers must nominate activities for the youth, such as assisting at the support centres in Motherwell Township, cultural dance; music; and joining the Garden Project in Motherwell.

**Unemployment**

The communities in the squatter camps must be taught to become more self-sufficient and do things for themselves. They must be reminded of President Mbeki’s slogan “Vukuzenzele”. Teachers must educate children at school that life does not offer one things on a silver platter; one has to work for it. The unemployed youth could join other youth at the Motherwell Support Centre, to participate in different crafts such as sewing and beadwork. They must also not disregard the employment opportunities created by the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, such as cleaning open spaces and picking up papers and rubble. The Municipality offers numerous skills training courses for the unemployed of the city. At the end of the month, they could earn some money this way. Parents could join in the Garden Project, also in Motherwell Township, where people plant vegetables and then sell the produce. They could erect vegetable stands at busy locations, such as at taxi ranks.

**Truckers**

The recommendation is that the Motherwell Police monitor the truckers at the Truck Inn in the evenings. Any girls found there, must be put in the back of Police vans and delivered to their homes. This will embarrass the girls and might stop them from frequenting the Truck Inn. Another recommendation is to arrest truck drivers who are caught ‘in the act’ with a minor in the truck. The teachers must educate the children about prostitution and its consequences. The children must be warned that they may contract sexually transmitted infections or even be infected with the HIV virus.

**5.3.3.3 Recommendations regarding vicious circle of abuse**

The social workers and the psychologists dealing with sexually abused children
must advise children of the consequences of the negative behaviour they engage in. They must be told that what they are experiencing is bad, but that they must not compound the wrong with another wrong, because they will end up in even greater trouble. The therapy should break the vicious cycle established by the abuse. The children must be warned of the serious consequences if they persist in their behaviour, such as arrest.

5.3.3.4 Recommendations regarding government laws

The recommendation is that parents teach their children morals and values. Parents must actively oppose some government laws, such as the law on abortion, in terms of which 12-year old children can abort without the consent of their parents. Teachers at school must explain to the children the meaning of the law, for example, that it does not stipulate that 12-year old children can engage in sexual promiscuity and openly flaunt their parents’ authority.

5.3.3.5 Recommendations regarding peer influence

Parents must monitor their children, especially when they are still of school-going age. Parents must know who their children’s friends are, and must always be aware of the whereabouts of their children. Children must be cautioned against playing far from home. Teachers at school must teach children the meaning of good and bad friends. Learners must be taught how to make choices. They must be encouraged to join a LoveLife Youth Centre, which offers the youth different skills, such as basic computer skills, debates, dramas, etc. which will bring them into contact with good peers. The children must be motivated to join the home-based care centres in Motherwell and be trained as peer educators at different schools, teaching other children about sexual education and HIV/AIDS.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

In this study, the following limitations have been identified:

- The participants provided rich information but not all of it could be used in
this study; because of the limited scope of the study.

- The research was done in one squatter camp only. It would be interesting to compare the perceptions of teachers who teach in different areas. The findings could therefore not be generalised.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It would be interesting to interview the parents of the abused children, living in the squatter camps, on the problem of child sexual abuse, and how are they helping their children to cope with the situation.

Further research should be on the role of the communities on the problem of child sexual abuse.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

The study focussed on the perceptions of teachers, who are teaching sexually abused children coming from a squatter camp, on how these children are coping in school. Recommendations were tabulated. The limitations of the study were tabled and the researcher offered some recommendations for further studies.
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