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Educators' perceptions of school violence.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores educators' perceptions of school violence. Internationally, school violence is a relatively well researched area in comparison to South Africa. However, both internationally and in South Africa the perceptions of school violence held by educators who are shared stakeholders in schools are relatively understudied. This research focused on educators' perceptions of school violence in Alexandra, South Africa. The community of Alexandra, located north of Johannesburg was the focus site of the study and this community is characterised as being markedly affected by poverty, social marginalisation and high rates of violence within the township schools. Data took the form of transcripts generated from discussions of school violence by educators in two focus groups. This data was analysed using thematic content analysis. Findings showed that the participants attributed most of the causes of school violence to being deeply rooted in the community and emphasised the influence of broader community contextual factors. The use of violence at school was perceived by the educators as a misplacement of anger and frustration experienced from factors stemming from outside the school grounds. This was perceived as contributing to the educators becoming the targets of the learners' misplaced frustration and anger. Furthermore, violence is perceived as a normal occurrence and, according to these educators forms an integral part of South Africa's culture of violence.