

https://dspace.org/

Strategies for mobilising the community to prevent family violence The role of social workers

Zintle Ntshongwana; P TANGA

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/45567
WOS

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk
A professional journal for the social worker
w: https://socialwork.journals.ac.za/pub e: socialwork@sun.ac.za eISSN: 2312-7198 (online)
Vol. 61, No. 1, 2025
DOI: https://doi.org/10.15270/61-1-1310

STRATEGIES FOR MOBILISING THE COMMUNITY TO PREVENT FAMILY VIOLENCE: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Zintle Ntshongwana[1] and Pius Tanga[2]

[1] *University of the Witwatersrand, Department of Social Work, Johannesburg, South Africa*
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4305-6402 *Zintle.ntshongwana@wits.ac.za*

[2] *University of Fort Hare, Department of Social Work/Social Development, Alice, South Africa,*
https://orcid/org/0000-0003-1359-8729 *ptanga@ufh.ac.za*

Article received: 19/06/2024; Article accepted: 14/10/2024; Article published: 27/03/2025

ABSTRACT

Family violence is one of the most pressing social issues in South Africa. Its contributing factors are complex, and in fighting against it, social workers are using different strategies to mobilise communities to work together in fighting this vicious cycle of violence. Therefore, this study aims to provide insight into the role of social workers in mobilising community involvement as a strategy for preventing family violence. Ecological and systems theories were used to show how different systems contribute to the social and psychological aspects of families' wellness and the community at large. This qualitative study used a sample of 20 participants comprised of 10 social workers, who were individually interviewed, and 10 community members, who were part of the two focus group discussions. An exploratory design was used in this study. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to select the participants. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Findings showed different factors contribute to family violence. This article concludes that social workers play a crucial role in preventing family violence. However, the study recommends that social workers should establish violence-prevention programmes by working with men and boys to address gender inequality and prevent men's perpetration of violence.

Keywords: community involvement; family violence; interventions; mobilisation; strategies; social workers

INTRODUCTION

Family violence is destructive behaviour where one person tries to dominate, control or oppress their family or household (current or former) through intimidation, threats or physical harm. (Mahlangu et al., 2022). It is a concept that shows that all members of the family, including the perpetrator, as well as direct and indirect victims, are exposed to serious psychological trauma and emotional challenges, educational challenges and personality disorders (Shea et al., 2010). As a result of its long-lasting effects on family members, family violence has received widespread recognition as a critical human right and public health issue (Wood, 2014), and because of that, most local and international organisations, donors, faith-based organisations, non-profit organisations and even governments have a vision of fighting against all forms of violence in families (Medie & Walsh, 2021; Price-Robertson et al., 2020).

Social work as a human service profession advocates for peace, human rights, equality and development, and plays a significant role in addressing family violence and promoting respect for the value, dignity and worth of a person (McCandless & Rogan, 2013). Social workers increase and strengthen protective factors through public awareness programme designs and the delivery of services they provide. In this regard, social work programmes help victims of family violence to cope with injuries, trauma, stigma and psychological frustration associated with family violence as well as helping in preventing incidents of family violence (Hawkins et al., 2010; World Health Organization [WHO], 2012). Community mobilisation as a preventative strategy that is used by social workers to prevent family violence offers a means to challenge social norms that encourage the use of violence. Recently, this strategy has attracted a lot of attention from both researchers and practitioners (Minckas et al., 2020), because it is a means of collaboration between practitioners and communities to fight against family violence. The current study aims to explore strategies used by social workers to mobilise communities to prevent family violence.

OVERVIEW OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

In South Africa many families are fractured and going through a crisis because of traumatic life events such as divorce, unemployment, poverty and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which make them more vulnerable to stressors that lead to acts of violence (Spinelli et al., 2020). Like many societies in South Africa, often the adult (parent) group is superior to the young (children) group, and the male (husband) is superior to the female (wife). However, this is not to argue that all men are aggressive, but rather to clarify that a sense of entitlement features strongly in the dominant social construction of masculinity (Asay et al., 2014). According to Statistics South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2021), violence against women and children in South Africa is nearly six times the global average, roughly 24.6 per 100,000 population. This suggests that women between the ages of 15 and 44 years are considered to be at a higher risk of rape and gender-based and domestic violence (WHO, 2021). Statistics South Africa (2021) further points out that women are more likely to live in poverty and economic insecurity than men, and that economic poverty, gender inequality and gender-based violence (GBV) are interlinked. Less economically empowered women are more vulnerable to abuse on account of their lower financial contribution to their households (Vyas & Watts, 2009). Hence, the stress associated with poverty and low income may carry a greater risk of

family violence by male partners (Krishnan et al., 2010). The Gender-Based Violence and Femicide National Strategic Plan (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2020) shows that the prevalence rates reported in other studies are consistently higher than 50%, with men invariably being the main perpetrators. Population-based studies suggest the prevalence of male perpetrators of physical violence against their lifetime partner ranges from 24% in Brazil to 42% in South Africa.

Furthermore, family violence is associated with unequal power relations that emphasise men's and women's roles, where men assert their dominance over women (Vyas & Jansen, 2018). These inequalities are theorised to be the products of broader structural systems that reinforce the disadvantaged status of women and children at both individual and community levels (Montesanti & Thurston, 2015).

The findings of Ndumo et al. (2022), who conducted a study on intimate partner violence in KwaZulu-Natal, revealed that the prevalence of threat, physical violence, sexual violence and any form of intimate partner violence (IPV) by men towards women was 19.7%, 16.6%, 1.8% and 20.2%, respectively. This shows that structural inequalities could contribute to family violence, especially against women, because of the intersection of gender with existing conditions such as poor health, as well as inadequate education and care (Sinha et al., 2017).

Additionally, economic stress as a result of poverty is increased in settings where ideals of successful masculinity are firmly established to place men as the main providers of the household. In those settings, limited or poor employment options for men may lead to feelings of anxiety and despair; a crisis of male identity may then ensue and as a result of the stress, men might carry out acts of violence towards family members. (Chikhungu et al., 2021). A study conducted in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa indicates that 60% of men were abusing their women psychologically, which in turn had implications for the mental health of the abused women (Mngoma, Fergus & Jolly, 2016). According to the study by Fleming et al. (2015) conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), India, Mexico and Rwanda, 13% of men across the sample indicated that they had perpetrated physical violence against their partners; this percentage included those who were married and cohabitating. Prevailing norms related to masculinity and gender (in)equality in most societies often motivate men to perpetrate family violence. Research studies show that men who adhere to more traditional gender roles and gender ideologies are more likely to perpetrate family violence (Jewkes et al., 2011; Mshweshwe, 2020; Reidy et al., 2014). Societies with greater gender inequities are also characterised by family violence as they normally teach young men traditional gender roles and pressure them to act in traditionally masculine ways, which may include perpetrating family violence (Mshweshwe, 2020).

An ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1974) posits that violence is a result of factors operating at four levels: the 'individual', 'relationship', 'community' and 'societal'. The ecological model allows researchers to detect the invisible role of cultural elements in perpetrating violence (Di Napoli et al., 2019). The gender-based perspective stresses that men and women do not hold the same amount of power in their dynamics as a couple and among the family as a whole. Deutsch (2007) conceptualises gender, including masculinity, as being constructed through social interactions. Thus, a man's masculinity depends on his collection of behaviours

and interactions, and how his social environment judges them. Men are often obligated to project a masculine image, often emphasising strength and power over women (Fleming, DiClemente & Barrington, 2016).

Gilchrist et al. (2017) found another factor that contributes to family violence perpetration. Their findings indicate a higher prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) among men who abuse substances than in the general population. Also, similar findings were indicated by Renzetti, Lynch and DeWall (2018), namely that high levels of alcohol consumption have a greater impact on physical IPV. Since power over others is such a critical element of traditionally defined masculinity, men can sometimes feel a need to assert their power in their relationships with women. In this way men's conduct, including violence against women, helps them construct an outward image of power over women that is aligned with a socially constructed ideal of masculinity (Partab, 2012; Park et al., 2022).

COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

According to Khasnabis et al. (2010), community mobilisation is a process whereby various stakeholders come together to campaign for and demand a particular programme to help in service delivery, and to strengthen the participation of the community in promoting sustainability and independence. These authors further state that this process involves people from different parts of the community who have a common goal and are active in terms of participation to identify both needs and form part of the solution. Community mobilisation aims at preventing family violence by bringing together communities in developing, supporting and implementing prevention strategies and tactics that aim at changing individuals and communities at large.

According to Minckas et al. (2020), because the causes and determinants of family violence are so deeply rooted and complex, community participation assists in promoting problem-solving skills to address the prevailing inequalities between men and women, as well as encouraging members of the community to change gender norms and prevent family violence. Educating and sensitising communities is a powerful way of creating support among different stakeholders in prevention efforts, establishing programmes that strengthen social networks, organising community groups to challenge social norms that encourage the use of violence and advocating for the accountability of communities; these are some of the potential strategies to prevent family violence within communities (Nair et al., 2020). These strategies have the potential to transform and change those social norms and structures that contribute to the reproduction of family violence.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The systems and ecological theories of Bronfenbrenner (1974) are relevant frameworks for this study, because the systems theory focuses on the social aspect. Systems theory requires professionals to think about the social and personal elements in any social situation and how those elements interact with each other (Payne, 2005). Similarly, ecological theory views social problems and psychosocial challenges as contributing factors to human wellness and cannot be ignored from the helping process. Smeeton (2013, p. 488) acknowledges that systems such as families, the surrounding environment and the community influence an individual`s life.

Furthermore, Engelbrecht (2014, p. 15) suggests that these systems can be viewed as interrelated and having an influence on the other systems within the organisation.

Ecological theory is mostly used to explain the multiple levels at which factors operate to influence family violence, including the community, society and personal relationships (Heise, 2011). Ecological theory states that to address family violence, a prevention strategy should address the social, cultural and economic challenges that generate family violence. According to Bronfenbrenner (1974), individuals are affected and influenced by different systems. These systems include the microsystem, which refers to the interactions and relationships that one has with one's family; and the mesosystem, which includes all of the interactions between microsystems. The microsystems influence the individual, but their interactions together play a large part in an individual's life. The exosystem is the environment (including the community) in which an individual might not be personally involved and is external to their experience, but it affects them. The macrosystem focuses on how cultural elements, which include socioeconomic status and poverty, for example, affect the individual's behaviour and attitudes. The last system is the chronosystem, which consists of all the environmental changes that influence an individual that occur over the lifetime, including major life transitions and historical events. Using systems and ecological theories is useful in terms of understanding how different systems contribute towards the social and psychological aspects of wellness of families and the community at large. It also helps to understand how different systems influence impulses to violent behaviour within an individual. These theories also show how different systems can influence the behaviour of an individual; for example, being unemployed frustrates men and some end up taking out their frustrations on their families by abusing them.

METHODOLOGY

This article was based on a larger study that was conducted from 2017 to 2019 in Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. According to the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (2016), Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality had the second-highest overall crime index in the Eastern Cape province in 2017 and 2018. This qualitative study from the social workers' and community members' points of view was aimed at exploring strategies used by social workers to mobilise the community to prevent family violence. The qualitative approach was chosen as it allowed the researchers to obtain data from social workers and family members through open-ended conversations about their own experiences of family violence and mobilisation strategies that social workers used to prevent family violence. Since social workers are providers of social services to vulnerable families and communities, they were purposely selected for the current study to give their insights into the factors that contribute to family violence and in particular into the mobilisation strategies that they use to eliminate family violence. Utilising this approach was advantageous, as it allowed the researchers to build a detailed picture of the phenomenon (family violence) researched and it also allowed the researchers to encourage participants to elaborate further on their responses, thus potentially opening up new topics that may not been considered at first. Using purposive sampling, 20 participants were selected, consisting of 10 social workers and 10 community members, both males (4) and females (6). The social workers who participated were from the Department of Social Development (DSD) and the Christelike Maatskaplike

Raad (CMR) and were interviewed individually using semi-structured interviews in their offices at Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. Semi-structured interviews were found to be the most suitable option as they allowed for an open-ended, broad and flexible shift from broader to more specific questions. To recruit the social workers from both agencies, a purposive sampling technique was used. The researchers approached the DSD and CMR and sought permission to conduct the study, after which they produced the participant information sheet that explained the study. After getting approval from both agencies, researchers approached social workers to do interviews based on their availability. The interviews for social workers were conducted at the Department of Social Development (DSD) and CMR offices in both East London and King Williams Town. The inclusion criteria were that all social workers must hold a BSW and work under DSD and CMR at Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. All social workers were expected to have at least 2 years of work experience in social work with individuals and communities and be above the age of 25 years. This study excluded social auxiliary workers and social workers who were not practising in the abovementioned agencies, as well as social workers who had less than 2 years of work experience. All social workers who were below the age of 25 years were excluded from this study. The interviews with the social workers were presented in English and each interview lasted 45 minutes to an hour.

Furthermore, two focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with community members, with each group consisting of 5 individuals. To recruit community members, snowball sampling was used whereby the researchers approached the community leader to help them recruit another 9 community members who were knowledgeable about family violence in the community, and who were actively involved in the community committees that combat violence. The discussions took place at the CMR satellite office, Duncan Village in East London. The focus group discussion guide was written in English and the researchers had to translate the questions into IsiXhosa for community members, as some of them did not understand English. Each focus group discussion took 60 to 90 minutes. Both interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants. The interviews and focus groups, as well as the data analysis, were done by academics who have extensive knowledge of research procedures as they have published in reputable journals.

To analyse the collected data, this study utilised reflexive thematic analysis (Byrne, 2022). According to Terry and Hayfield (2020), reflexive thematic analysis is a method of analysing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyse and report on repeated patterns. The process of analysing themes also involves coding and categorising information. Data were fully double-transcribed and coded to check the interpretations against data and to evaluate the 'intercoder reliability' (ICR). A code book that describes each code with a concrete definition and example quote from the data was developed by the researchers. The two researchers independently coded the same transcripts and then discussed and amended the codebook as necessary. The researchers then developed a thematic structure to describe the results concisely. The coding concordance rate across coders between the two coders was high as both of them coded almost all sources with the same codes and themes.

All raw information was converted into text in that the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim (Creswell & Baez, 2021). Data were analysed following six steps: (1) becoming familiar with the data, (2) generating codes, (3) generating themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) locating exemplars (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Reflexive thematic analysis was deemed to be appropriate as it assisted the researchers in identifying themes or patterns from the answers provided by the participants. These patterns or themes are based on similarities, differences and contradictions in the data. The researchers provided 'thick descriptions', which entails writing thorough descriptions of the characteristics, processes, transactions and contexts that constitute the factors that contribute to family violence, as well as the community mobilisation strategies that were used by social workers (Creswell & Baez, 2021). In ensuring confidentiality, codes were formulated for anonymity (Saunders et al., 2015). Social work participants are identified as SWPs, namely SWP1 to SWP 10. Similarly, community members are identified as CMPs, ranging from CMP1 to CMP10. This study was approved by the University Research Ethics Committee at the University of Fort Hare, with an ethical clearance number, TAN111SNTS01.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, the researchers applied the four criteria, which include credibility through triangulation, dependability maintained through peer debriefing, confirmability through member checking, and transferability by providing a rich and detailed descriptions of the context in which this study was conducted (Ahmed, 2024).

FINDINGS

The findings begin with an indication of the characteristics of the participants, followed by the factors that could contribute to family violence. Then the community outreach programmes that social workers use as a community mobilising strategy to prevent family violence are presented.

Demographic characteristics of social workers

All social workers were qualified in their field and had extensive knowledge in the provision of social work services to families and communities in Buffalo City. All social workers had at least a Bachelor's degree in Social Work, and there was only one participant with a Masters' degree in Social Work. The majority of them (70%) were junior social workers, and the other 30% were social work supervisors. Of the 10 participants, a few (35%) reported having less than 5 years of work experience, and most (65%) had 5 to 14 years of experience in the field by the time of data collection for this study.

Theme 1: Factors contributing to family violence

Findings from the interviews and focus group discussions highlight several factors that contribute to violence within families. Three sub-themes emanated from this main theme. They are discussed below.

Sub-theme 1.1: Poverty

Findings indicated that poverty contributes to episodes of violence within households. Many participants mentioned that being unable to meet the basic needs of the family causes frustration, which then leads to abuse and violence towards other members of the family. Social workers reported that some people who perpetrated family violence were living in poverty, especially those who were living in informal settlements.

> *Some of the cases that I have received about family violence involved money, for example, one of my cases involved a man who wanted a child support grant because he claimed that he was the father of the children so the mother should give him some money from the child support grant.* (SWP 3)

Another social worker mentioned that:

> *Most people, when they are hungry or do not have any means to meet basic needs, they become abusive toward their families, especially men.* (SWP 4)

Community members stated that:

> *If the government is not creating job opportunities for everyone, we are still going to be abused; we are still going to be killed for our own money. People are frustrated out there and they display their frustrations on us.* (CMP 7)

> *I'm staying with a monster, who does not want to look for a job. He is always home, controlling us and sometimes beats me. We don't have a stable source of income, we only get money when I do laundry for people here, and then they give me money. It's bad.* (CMP 6)

> *Sometimes we have to hide food because when he comes back, he eats all the food. I have children who need to go to school and carry lunch. He does not assist; I have to make means for my children to be just like other children.* (CMP 5)

> *I want to admit that really when you are a man with a family and unemployed, it's frustrating. You have children and a wife to take care of and because you are not working, you do not have money, it's either you start abusing alcohol or abuse your family. It's really hard seeing yourself as a failure, especially to your children.* (CMP 9*)*

Sub-theme 1.2: Drug and alcohol abuse

Throughout the interviews and focus groups, the majority of the participants maintained that drug and alcohol abuse triggers violent behaviour in people. Participants explained that everyone has a violent side that is hidden until a person gets intoxicated, then violence can quickly escalate into a dangerous situation that is difficult to avoid. Most of the participants come from homes where violence happened mostly when the perpetrator was intoxicated. Most participants reported that people use drugs to escape their realities. Some of them mentioned that they are frustrated because of being unemployed, so they resort to using drugs and alcohol to numb the pain and frustration they are going through. Others mentioned that they are now addicted to drugs and do not find it easy to escape.

When someone is intoxicated, it is easy for them to commit a crime, and it is easy for them to be violent towards anyone because they feel powerful, and they are not afraid of anything that is why we still have many cases of violence. Our legal system releases people who are a threat to their communities and families, I can say; that alcohol is just an excuse for crime and abuse. (SWP 8)

Community members said that:

Drugs and alcohol play a big role in every negative thing that is happening in our communities, and I blame the government for that because they are not doing anything about the drugs that are being sold in our communities. It's not as if people do not report that, they do. I feel like our government is destroying us and our children. (CMP 10)

When he is sober, he is very nice, loving, and caring but once he gets drunk, he becomes violent to me and everyone in the house. Bear in mind, he gets paid every Friday; as a result, everyone knows that on Fridays we have to sleep next door because he becomes violent. (CMP 6)

Sometimes, we abuse alcohol because of things that we are going through. Some of us abuse alcohol because we have money to buy, and that affects our families because you will find that a man does not buy any house necessities, and when the wife is asking for money, he becomes violent. (CMP 8)

Sub-theme 1.3: Traditional gender norms

Based on the findings of this study men are the main perpetrators of family violence in this Municipality. The majority of the participants reported that the perpetration of men's violence against women is regarded as an outward manifestation of traditional roles and a display of unequal power relations between men and women.

When I got married to him, my parents, and my in-laws, told me to respect and submit to him. I'm doing that but he is now abusing us. Sometimes he does not sleep at home, and when I ask him where he is, he becomes angry. I told my mother-in-law about his behaviour, but she said I need to persevere, all men are like that. The reason I'm still here is because of my children and not him. (CMP 4)

If I remember correctly, most cases that have been reported to me involved physical abuse of women and children by men, either husband or boyfriend. Some of these cases involved older children abusing their parents and grandparents, I'm so sad that women have to suffer because they are overpowered by men, and as social workers, we are trying our best to fight that. (SWP 8)

As a man, you have to be guided by cultural norms. Sometimes, we are not aware that we perpetrate violence when we are being harsh to our partners. We grew up like that, it is something that we witnessed and learned from our parents and grandparents. We thought by being harsh to your partner, you show love and care; however, we are open to being corrected. (CMP 10)

> *The violence does not start when you are old and married. I believe that it's something that our brothers learned. I still remember when we were young, boys would pursue you, and if you didn't give them a chance, they would twist your arm until you gave in. Growing up, it was normal because we had a belief that it was love.* (CMP 1)

The study also found that the subordination of women ensured that they remained dependent on men socially and financially, with limited or no resources and finances of their own. Therefore, cultural barriers reinforced the marginalisation of women; such unequal power relations serve to increase women's risk and vulnerability to family violence.

Theme 2: Community outreach programmes

The following sub-themes relate to community outreach programmes that social workers conduct as mobilising strategies to alleviate family violence.

Sub-theme 2.1: Seminars with community members

Findings from the interviews with social workers showed that social workers visit communities and have seminars with community members about family violence and other social issues. Social workers also indicated that they hold seminars with community members but other stakeholders are included in the discussion to find out about the challenges that communities encounter. These seminars lead to deeper relationships between them and the communities they serve. Through these seminars, social workers were able to identify the needs of the survivors of family violence and any other social issues, as well as those who are at risk of family violence. They also use these seminars to educate community members in a non-judgemental manner about the consequences of using violence, and how it affects the perpetrators, victims and the community at large.

> *We conduct seminars with community members on various topics, especially family violence. These seminars allow people to interact with us and share their challenges.* (SWP 5)

> *We always make sure that we invite other relevant stakeholders such as SAPS, the Department of Health, and other NGOs* [non-governmental organisations] *that deal with social issues to sensitise community members about family violence.* (SWP 7)

A community member said that:

> *Social workers do visit us once in a while and we would meet in a community hall. They would talk about various issues that affect us as families and as a community. They always encourage us to seek help, especially if one is in an abusive environment.* (CMP 1)

> *The visits from social workers and other departments are helpful to me, they opened my mind. The other day, when my husband wanted to beat my daughter, I told him that I would call the police and social workers to deal with him. I think he listened to me because he no longer beats anyone, when he is angry, he leaves the house and comes back the following day and I don't care.* (CMP 6)

A community member mentioned that:

> *I'm just hoping that the efforts that social workers make to help us confront the issues that we have do not go in vain. As a community, we are learning a lot, and the discussions open up our minds about violence and abuse.* (CMP 2)

Sub-theme 2.2: Organising community groups to challenge social norms that contribute to the use of violence

Social workers mentioned that their programmes are aimed at facilitating change by addressing the main and contributing factors leading to family violence at a community level. Findings also revealed that gender inequality and social norms of the society that are harmful and sustain violence within families revolve around the sexual purity of women, protecting family honour regarding the safety of women, and the authority of men to discipline women and children. Community members also noted that some social norms encourage the use of family violence by putting men in a superior position, and women in an inferior position when it comes to resolving family issues. One of the social norms that some communities still hold onto is the use of violence when "a woman does not listen".

A social worker mentioned that:

> *Some of the social norms contribute to the perpetration of family violence, especially violence against women and children. So, as social workers, we organise communities to challenge such norms. Family violence does not only affect families, but it also affects the community, therefore, community members should find ways of alleviating it, with the help of us, and other relevant stakeholders.* (SWP 10)

Another social worker indicated that:

> *I believe that community members have the potential and ability to change social norms and practices that are harmful to human nature, including those that contribute to the high prevalence of family violence.* (SWP2)

Community members said that:

> *There is a belief that when parents die, firstborn sons inherit everything. Here, we had a case of that nature, whereby this man was chasing his sisters because their parents died, and he claimed that the house and cars belonged to him. One of his sisters is still at school, doing Grade 12, she was so disturbed by this. As a community leader, I had to intervene and we advised the sisters to take the matter to court.* (CMP 3)

> *We now feel safe as social workers ensure that our rights are not compromised by traditional beliefs. We at least have the law that protects us, because sometimes the traditional beliefs oppress us, they don't consider our rights.* (CMP 1)

> *I am happy that members of the community forum are also showing interest in this social workers' initiative of working with groups of community members to challenge social norms that contribute to the use of violence. Social workers are doing their best to ensure that everyone is protected, and our rights are protected and respected.* (CMP 7)

Therefore, social workers developed and used valid and reliable strategies to break the malicious cycle of violence. Findings also showed that social workers challenge communities to develop, support and implement strategies that aim at changing individuals and communities.

Sub-theme 2.3: Prevention and early intervention programme (PEIP)

Social workers made specific mention of the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP), which they offer to different groups of people, especially in cases of family violence. Social workers further reported that where family violence occurs, child abuse usually becomes prevalent, as children become exposed to violence first-hand in their homes.

Social workers stated that:

> *More support is needed for survivors of family violence because some of these people have suicidal thoughts so sharing their feelings with someone would help them cope with the effects of family violence.* (SWP 2)

> *We visit communities to tell people about the availability of our programmes. By doing that, we are trying to motivate and encourage them to make use of our services and to report any violence that may occur.* (SWP 7)

Community members shared their experiences on PEIP:

> *As someone who works in a school environment, we have a social worker that is placed there. I'm very happy because our children are safe, at least they have someone to talk to. We all know that in some families there is no proper channel of communication. Sometimes these children end up taking their lives because they do not have anyone to talk to. Now that there is a social worker there, as parents we are happy and relieved.* (CMP 2)

> *We were once invited to one of the schools and we were told that social workers would be there to talk to us as parents. For both mothers and fathers, one of the topics that were covered is how to cope with daily stress as a parent. Also, how stress affects our relationship with our children. I don't want to lie, some of the things were new to me.* (CMP 6)

> *Social workers do not only focus on us as adults, but on our children as well. They are doing their best to protect them against all forms of abuse.* (CMP 3)

These programmes include home visitation programmes, parenting programmes, programmes for children exposed to violence, and empowerment programmes that aim at reducing gender inequality. Social work participants also mentioned that there are three levels of prevention – primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. They further mentioned that primary prevention includes techniques and activities that provide resources and education to enable families to function optimally, and which offer protection against some of the main stressors that lead to abuse. These activities mostly aim at the general population to prevent abuse and violence before it occurs. Secondary prevention, also known as early intervention activities, focuses on means and resources that will identify families and children who are at an increased risk of violence, this strategy limits ongoing abuse. In tertiary prevention, social workers provide services to families and communities who have already been affected by family violence.

Sub-theme 2.4: Collaboration with other relevant stakeholders

Findings revealed that men's foundations, student organisations, youth development groups, offenders inside prisons, officials working in the criminal justice system, and communities at large are some of the stakeholders that the Department of Social Development has collaborated with to fight against family violence and other challenges facing communities. Other stakeholders include non-governmental organisations such as 'Men Championing Change', which mainly focus on men who will use their strength to love, protect and provide for their loved ones, and who will be agents of change and stand against any form of abuse within and outside the family system.

As a social worker explained:

> *As the Department of Social Development, we are working hand-in-hand with other stakeholders, including the communities in fighting violence within families. We believe that violence is a complex problem that needs a multi-sectoral approach, so we are doing our best to curb it.* (SWP 1)

Another social work participant reported that:

> *There are many factors that contribute to the perpetration of family violence, therefore, as social workers, we first need to address them. We can never be able to address them without involving other stakeholders, including communities themselves. So, we are working with community members.* (SWP 3)

Community members shared their sentiments regarding their collaboration with different stakeholders:

> *As a community, we are working very well with the social workers and other departments. We also work with SAPS because as a community leader; once I receive a case of violence in a particular household, I quickly call the police; if the case involves a child, elderly or one of the parents, we then call the social workers and so far we are doing well.* (CMP 3)

> *As community members, we are glad that we have a working relationship with different departments to ensure our safety. We had a case of elder abuse in my area, whereby children, who are now adults of an older woman were taking her grant and using it to buy alcohol, but we worked together as a community, and we involved social workers who came and removed that old woman and placed her with another family member who is taking good care of her.* (CMP 9)

CMP 7 mentioned that:

> *As a community, we are very happy to work with the social workers because we are learning, and we want our community to be a safe place, where our children will grow and enjoy their childhood. I just hope that this relationship that has been established between us, and the social workers will remain so that we can work together to tackle other issues that we have in this community.*

DISCUSSION

The findings on community members corroborate those on the social workers. They revealed that various factors contribute to family violence. These factors also include some of the social issues that communities are battling. Poverty is one of the major factors that make people feel frustrated, useless, angry and sometimes inadequate. When men/husbands cannot provide for basic needs such as food, they tend to become violent (Hatcher et al., 2022). The issue of basic needs also includes housing standards and the environment where the house is. These findings echo what Meth (2017) found about the significance of housing; it is a harsh reality for millions around the world who live in informal settlements where housing standards differ enormously. The current study found that violence is more prevalent in informal settlements, indicating that those communities are environments that are not safe places.

Earlier, we argued that family violence is further impacted by social differences such as gender and age, showing the differentiating significance of identity in the perpetration of violence across societies. This argument addresses the detrimental impact of poverty, patriarchy and inequality, which carry a high risk of family violence. The cycle of violence is extremely difficult to break and is more difficult in the midst of poverty. The cycle of poverty or financial strain continues to cause more anger and lashing out by men who become aggressive towards their families, especially their partners. Poverty makes living conditions more challenging and it also affects the psychological wellbeing of all family members, especially men (Eralp & Gokmen, 2023; Williams, 2015). In many instances, men feel powerless as they fail to provide for their families.

It is evident in this study that as a result of their frustration and inability to meet the needs of their families, men tend to become aggressive, especially towards their spouses. This shows that poverty has greater emotional and psychological effects on men compared to women and they act on their emotions.

Being unable to pay for the utilities and the house is a source of great frustration to men, as every man's dream is the ability to provide for the family. If they fail to provide, they resort to violence; Schwab-Reese et al. (2016) argue that violence is sometimes a consequence of financial stress. Being the breadwinner is the primary role of men in most African societies and failing to fulfil that role leads to men being frustrated and disempowered and they displace their anger onto their families (Petersen & Mkhize, 2023).

Both social workers and community members revealed that drug and alcohol abuse also contribute to family violence. Heavy drinking is linked here to increased coercive and controlling behaviour, especially of female partners through financial control, threatening and intimidating behaviour, as well as emotional control. To show that drug and alcohol abuse is a serious factor that contributes to aggressive actions and behaviour in men, Graham et al. (2011) and Reno et al. (2010) show that when men are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they are likely to assault their families. This shows that the use of drugs and alcohol contributes to the violent behaviour that men exhibit toward their families. Furthermore, aggression is the precursor of violence and individuals prone to aggressive behaviours are more likely to commit violence impulsively, especially under the influence of alcohol (Sontate et al. 2021). This

shows that drug and alcohol abuse is a serious issue that contributes to family violence, as these studies were conducted on two different continents but show similar findings. Gender norms have been found to contribute to the perpetration of family violence by men. Some socially constructed ideologies about masculinity or the expectations and beliefs about what men should do, or the attributes they should possess, are implicated in men's use of violence against their partners. To support the findings of this study, systems theory indicates that men grow up surrounded by culturally and socially supported ideas of masculinity and virility, which stress the importance of recognising their power, strength and control (Esmailzadeh et al., 2005; Shen-Miller et al., 2011). This shows that most societies, including where this study was conducted, subscribe to and are characterised by unequal gender norms. These norms include men exercising their masculinity in their families through violence.

The study findings showed that in trying to prevent family violence, social workers use a wide range of mobilising strategies in working with communities. These strategies allow them to engage community members and build relationships with other stakeholders, including the communities they serve. In this study, social workers mentioned conducting seminars with community members, where they educated them about the causes and consequences of family violence. Community members also acknowledged the role that social workers play in their communities by engaging them on various topics about issues that communities are battling with. Conducting workshops and seminars with community members is one of the strategies that social workers use to educate the communities about different forms of family violence, as well as the availability and accessibility of their services. These seminars identify and mobilise resources and cultivate community leaders. These findings concur with those of Watson et al. (2012), who define the purpose of outreach programmes as addressing issues by bringing information, services and resources to communities where people live, especially those who are poverty-stricken. Through these programmes, outreach workers engage with community members and intervene in situations where the highest risk of violent behaviours occurs.

To show that social workers indeed play a crucial role in alleviating family violence, they work with communities to implement prevention strategies. The findings of the current study concur with what Abramsky et al. (2014) and Wagman et al. (2015) found in their studies, namely that in South Africa social workers have trained volunteer activists to act against violence within the family system. They also engaged community groups to reflect on gender norms by encouraging youth leaders, providing training, developing teams and sharing power on how gender norms contribute to family violence. We also argue that community-level gender transformative approaches create opportunities for critical reflection among men and women about gender roles and norms, promote the position of women, challenge the unequal distribution of resources and allocation of duties between women and men, and seek to redress power imbalances.

The findings also showed that the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme is a prevention strategy that consists of different programmes offered to those who are at risk of family violence as well as those who have already been exposed and subjected to family violence. One of the primary prevention strategies that social workers used was helping the communities

identify the most urgent problems affecting their community, with one of the burning issues being family violence. Through seminars that they conduct with community members, they were able to identify families that are at a high risk of violence and those who are already experiencing family violence. According to Cameron (2016), early intervention supports people to overcome the short- and long-term psychological, emotional and physical effects of family violence; they also lower the risk of intergenerational transfer of abusive behaviours and values in adulthood.

Lastly, social workers collaborate with other stakeholders and community members. Since family violence is a complex social issue that needs a holistic approach from different stakeholders, social workers create partnerships with various departments such as SAPS, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and the communities at large. During seminars with community members, these different stakeholders come together and educate communities about family violence, as well as share information on the availability and accessibility of their services. According to Scholtz (2012), collaboration is important as it allows different professionals to address social problems that are beyond the scope of any one person or organisation. The collaboration of these different stakeholders allows for early detection and resolution of the issue, which in this case is family violence. In the current study, the collaboration also brings together different organisations to advocate for the respect and protection of people's rights, especially those who are vulnerable.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD

Family violence affects not only the direct victims but the entire family including the perpetrators, and the community. Family violence has devastating, long-lasting effects on the victims, which can be physical, emotional and psychological. Community mobilisation is one of the strategies that social workers use to eliminate and prevent family violence. They bring together different societal factions to deal with family violence. The ecological and systems theories provides the best way to understand how different systems contribute to the violent behaviour of an individual as well as the way that various stakeholders can contribute towards the eradication of family violence.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH

There is a need for social work scholars and practitioners to expand the evaluation, refinement and impact of interventions through research. Social work scholars should also promote the importance of screening for exposure to violence. More social work research on the factors contributing to family violence is needed. In particular, research addressing cultural norms and inequalities, and how these contribute to the perpetration of family violence, is urgently needed.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK POLICY AND PRACTICE

Legal protection against violence within the family is provided for in the Domestic Violence Act (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1998). Similarly, social workers are doing their best to prevent family violence by involving communities and other relevant stakeholders. To supplement this, the Department of Social Development should develop a tool to assess and

monitor the implementation of policies to determine the effectiveness of community mobilisation as a strategy for preventing problems faced by vulnerable communities.

Furthermore, there is a need to target the phenomenon of family violence through the media and on various social media platforms. Social workers need to have slots on the radio stations where they will talk about family violence as part of their community outreach programmes.

Social workers should establish relationships with traditional leaders and ward councillors, as they are the most influential people in their communities. If they can build a good working relationship with them, they can train them about the nature of family violence in particular and other social issues in their communities. It is also crucial that the social work profession lend its voice to helping to shape legislation and inform public policies that can greatly reduce cases of family violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

- Social workers should establish violence-prevention programmes by working with men and boys, if they are to address gender inequality and prevent men's perpetration of violence. In these violence-prevention programmes, social workers need to also address the way patriarchal norms negatively impact on men and women. In this way, they will engage men in attempts to transform gender norms and relations and prevent violence. Working with men and boys to address their needs and enhance their lives, including by affirming positive constructions of masculinity might help in fighting against gender inequality.
- To reduce food insecurity, economic interventions for men should be coupled with gender training to ensure that reductions in household stress are accompanied by improvements in relationship quality.
- Interventions focusing on resolving conflict without fighting, or on reducing controlling behaviours, may also be important for men who live in poor communities. These need to be paired with economic efforts and should be couched within building gender-equitable views to be effective.
- Opportunities should be created to discuss and critique prevailing understandings of masculinity and men's discomfort with them, as well as men's misperceptions of other men's attitudes and behaviour. This strategy will encourage men to take the necessary steps to avoid perpetrating and confront the inappropriate behaviour of male peers.

CONCLUSION

Developing strategies to prevent family violence is still a challenge. However, community mobilisation appears to be a way forward for the prevention of family violence, even though the evidence for the effectiveness of this strategy is scanty. This paper shows the extent of the role that social workers play in preventing family violence and providing support through community mobilisation as a strategy. Based on the research findings, the community mobilisation strategy holds the potential for transforming social norms and structures that are the root cause of family violence. These strategies that social workers implement allow them

to engage diverse segments of the community in promoting change and thereby enhance the long-term sustainability of prevention efforts.

REFERENCES

Abramsky, T., Devries, K., Kiss, L., Nakuti, J., Kyegombe, N., Starmann, E., Cundill, B., Francisco, L., Kaye, D., Musuya, T., & Michau, L. (2014). Findings from the SASA! Study: a cluster randomized controlled trial to assess the impact of a community mobilization intervention to prevent violence against women and reduce HIV risk in Kampala, Uganda. *BMC Medicine*, *12*(1),1-17. http://www.biomedcentral.com/1741-7015/12/122

Ahmed, S. K. (2024). The pillars of trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health*, *2*, 100051. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2024.100051

Asay, S. M., DeFrain, J., Metzger, M., & Moyer, B. (2014). *Family violence from a global perspective: A strengths-based approach*. SAGE Publications.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101. http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1974). Developmental research, public policy, and the ecology of childhood. *Child Development, 45*(1), 1-5. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1127743

Byrne, D. (2022). A worked example of Braun and Clarke's approach to reflexive thematic analysis. *Quality & Quantity*, *56*(3),1391-1412. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-021-01182-y

Cameron, P. (2016). *Expanding early interventions in family violence in Victoria*. Domestic Violence Victoria.

Chikhungu, L. C., Amos, M., Kandala, N., & Palikadavath, S. (2021). Married women's experience of domestic violence in Malawi: New evidence from a cluster and multinomial logistic regression analysis. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *36*(17-18), 8693-8714. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519851782

Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. (2016). *Profile and analysis district development model*. Buffalo City Metro, EC. https://www.cogta.gov.za/cgta_2016/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/DistrictProfile_BUFFALOCITY07072020.pdf

Deutsch, F. M. (2007). Undoing gender. *Gender & Society*, *21*(1), 106-127. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243206293577

Di Napoli, I., Procentese, F., Carnevale, S., Esposito, C., & Arcidiacono, C. (2019). Ending intimate partner violence (IPV) and locating men at stake: An ecological

approach. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *16*(9), 1652. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16091652

Engelbrecht, L. K. (2014). *Towards a conceptual framework for management and supervision of social workers within a social development paradigm*. International Social Work Conference. Kampala: Uganda.

Eralp, A., & Gokmen, S. (2023). The impact of poverty on partner violence against women under regional effects: the case of Turkey. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *38*(5-6), 4906-4924. https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605221119515

Esmailzadeh, S., Faramarzi, M., & Mosavi, S. (2005). Prevalence and determinants of intimate partner violence in Babol City, Islamic Republic of Iran. *EMHJ-Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal,* 11(5-6), 870-879. https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/117014

Fleming, P. J., DiClemente, R. J., & Barrington, C. (2016). Masculinity and HIV: Dimensions of masculine norms that contribute to men's HIV-related sexual behaviours. *AIDS and Behavior*, *20*,788-798.

Fleming, P. J., McCleary-Sills, J., Morton, M., Levtov, R., Heilman, B., & Barker, G. (2015). Risk factors for men's lifetime perpetration of physical violence against intimate partners: Results from the international men and gender equality survey (IMAGES) in eight countries. *PloS One*, *10*(3), e0118639. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0118639

Gilchrist, G., Radcliffe, P., Noto, A., & Flavia, A. (2017). Prevalence and risk factors for IPV among males attending substance misuse treatment in England and Brazil. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, *36*(1), 34-51. https://doi.org/10.1111/dar.12436

Graham, K., Bernards, S., Wilsnack, S. C., & Gmel, G. (2011). Alcohol may not cause partner violence but it seems to make it worse: A cross-national comparison of the relationship between alcohol and severity of partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *26*(8), 1503-1523. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260510370596

Hatcher, A. M., Neilands, T. B., Rebombo, D., Weiser, S. D., & Christofides, N. J. (2022). Food insecurity and men's perpetration of partner violence in a longitudinal cohort in South Africa. *BMJ Nutrition, Prevention & Health*, *5*(1), 36. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjnph-2021-000288

Hawkins, J. D., Shapiro, V. B., & Fagan, A. A. (2010). Disseminating effective community prevention practices: Opportunities for social work education. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *20*(5), pp.518-527. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731509359919

Heise, L. (2011). *What works to prevent partner violence? An evidence overview*. https://www.oecd.org/derec/49872444.pdf

Jewkes, R., Sikweyiya, Y., Morrell, R., & Dunkle, K. (2011). Gender inequitable masculinity and sexual entitlement in rape perpetration South Africa: Findings of a cross-sectional study. *PloS One*, *6*(12), e29590. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0029590

Khasnabis, C., Motsch, K. H., Achu, K., Juba, K. A., Svein, B., Chervin, P. C P., Daves, M., Deepak, S., Eklindh, K., Goerdt, A., Greer, C., Heinicke-Motsch, K., Hooper, D., Ilagan, V. B., Jessup, N., Khasnabis, C., Mulligan, D., Murray, B., Officer, A., Ortali, F., Ransom, B., Robert, A., Stubbs, S., Thomas, M., Balakrishna, V., Wabuge-Mwangi, R., Mattock., & Lander T., (2010). *Community-based rehabilitation: CBR guidelines*. World Health Organization.

Krishnan, S., Rocca, C. H., Hubbard, A. E., Subbiah, K., Edmeades, J., & Padian, N. S. (2010). Do changes in spousal employment status lead to domestic violence? Insights from a prospective study in Bangalore, India. *Social Science & Medicine*, *70*(1), 136-143. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.09.026

Mahlangu, P., Gibbs, A., Shai, N., Machisa, M., Nunze, N., & Sikweyiya, Y. (2022). Impact of COVID-19 lockdown and link to women and children's experiences of violence in the home in South Africa. *BMC Public Health*, *22*(1), 1029. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13422-3

McCandless, E., & Rogan, J. (2013). Bringing peace closer to the people: The role of social services in peacebuilding. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, *8*(3), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1080/15423166.2013.866877

Medie, P. A., & Walsh, S. D. (2021). International organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and police implementation of domestic violence policies in Liberia and Nicaragua. *Politics & Gender*, *17*(1), 136-166. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X19000515

Meth, P. (2017). Informal housing, gender, crime, and violence: The role of design in urban South Africa. *The British Journal of Criminology*, *57*(2), 402-421. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azv125

Minckas, N., Shannon, G., & Mannell, J. (2020). The role of participation and community mobilisation in preventing violence against women and girls: A programme review and critique. *Global Health Action*, *13*(1), 1775061. https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2020.1775061

Mngoma, N., Fergus, S., & Jolly, R. (2016). Psychosocial risk and protective factors associated with perpetration of gender-based violence in a community sample of men in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *South African Medical Journal*, *106*(12), 1211-1215. http://dx.doi.org/10.7196%2FSAMJ.2017.v106i12.11233

Montesanti, S. R., & Thurston, W. E. (2015). Mapping the role of structural and interpersonal violence in the lives of women: Implications for public health interventions and policy. *BMC Women's Health*, *15*(1), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-015-0256-4

Mshweshwe, L. (2020). Understanding domestic violence: Masculinity, culture, traditions. *Heliyon*, *6*(10), e05334. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e05334

Nair, N., Daruwalla, N., Osrin, D., Rath, S., Gagrai, S., Sahu, R., Pradhan, H., De, M., Ambavkar, G., Das, N., & Dungdung, G. P. (2020). Community mobilisation to prevent

violence against women and girls in eastern India through participatory learning and action with women's groups facilitated by accredited social health activists: A before-and-after pilot study. *BMCInternational Health and Human Rights*, *20*, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12914-020-00224-0

Ndumo, M. L., Bhengu, B. S., Mashaphu, S., Paruk, S., & Tomita, A. (2022). Intimate partner violence, adverse childhood experiences and prenatal substance use in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychiatry*, *28*(0), a1937. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajpsychiatry.v28i0.1937

Park, E., Wolfe, S. J., Nalugoda, F., Stark, L., Nakyanjo, N., Ddaaki, W., Ssekyewa, C., & Wagman, J. A. (2022). Examining masculinities to inform gender-transformative violence prevention programs: Qualitative findings from Rakai, Uganda. *Global Health: Science and Practice*, *10*(1). https://doi.org/10.9745/GHSP-D-21-00137

Partab, R. (2012). *Challenging violent masculinities: A critical feminist investigation of the relationship between domestic violence and religion*. (Doctoral Thesis). University of KwaZulu Natal, Durban, South Africa.

Payne, M. (2005). *Modern social work theory*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Price-Robertson, R., Kirkwood, D., Dean, A., Hall, T., Paterson, N., & Broadley, K. (2020). *Working together to keep children and families safe*. Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Reidy, D. E., Berke, D. S., Gentile, B., & Zeichner, A. (2014). Man enough? Masculine discrepancy stress and intimate partner violence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *68*, 160-164. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2014.04.021

Reno, J., Marcus, D., Leary, M. L., & Samuels, J. E. (2010). *A full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women.* Department of Justice. https://www. ncjrs. gov/pdffiles1/nij/183781. Pdf.

Renzetti, C. M., Lynch, K. R., & DeWall, C. N. (2018). Ambivalent sexism, alcohol use, and intimate partner violence perpetration. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *33*(2), 183-210. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515604412

Republic of South Africa (RSA). (1998). *Domestic Violence Act, 116 of 1998.* Government Gazette, Vol. 402, No. 19537, (20 November 1998). Pretoria: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 2020. *National strategic plan on gender-based violence and femicide human dignity and healing, safety, freedom & equality in our lifetime.* Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Saunders, B., Kitzinger, J., & Kitzinger, C. (2015). Anonymising interview data: Challenges and compromise in practice. *Qualitative research*, *15*(5), 616-632.

Scholtz, L. (2012). *Social workers interactions within the profession and the effects on collaboration in the workplace*. (Masters Dissertation). St. Catherine University, Minnesota.

Schwab-Reese, L. M., Peek-Asa, C., & Parker, E. (2016). Associations of financial stressors and physical intimate partner violence perpetration. *Injury Epidemiology*, *3*, 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794114550439

Shea, B., Nahwegahbow, A., & Andersson, N. (2010). Reduction of family violence in Aboriginal communities: A systematic review of interventions and approaches. *Pimatisiwin*, *8*(2), 35.

Sinha, P., Gupta, U., Singh, J., & Srivastava, A. (2017). Structural violence on women: An impediment to women empowerment. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine: Official publication of Indian Association of Preventive & Social Medicine*, *42*(3), 134. https://doi.org/10.4103/ijcm.IJCM_276_15

Smeeton, J. (2013). *Systems theory.* In M, Davies (Ed.), *The Blackwell companion to social work* (pp. 488). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Sontate, K. V., Rahim Kamaluddin, M., Naina Mohamed, I., Mohamed, R. M. P., Shaikh, M. F., Kamal, H., & Kumar, J. (2021). Alcohol, aggression, and violence: from public health to neuroscience. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, 699726. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.699726

Spinelli, M., Lionetti, F., Pastore, M., & Fasolo, M. (2020). Parents' stress and children's psychological problems in families facing the COVID-19 outbreak in Italy. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *11*, 1713. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01713

Statistics South Africa. (2021). *Statistical release: PO341 victims of crime*. http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0341/P03412021.pdf

Terry, G., & Hayfield, N. (2020). Reflexive thematic analysis. In M. Ward, & S. Delamont (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research in education* (2nd ed, p. 430-441). Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.

Vyas, S., & Jansen, H. A. (2018). Unequal power relations and partner violence against women in Tanzania: A cross-sectional analysis. *BMC Women's Health*, *18*(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-018-0675-0

Vyas, S., & Watts, C. (2009). How does economic empowerment affect women's risk of intimate partner violence in low- and middle-income countries? A systematic review of published evidence. *Journal of International Development: The Journal of the Development Studies Association*, *21*(5), 577-602. https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.1500

Wagman, J. A., Gray, R. H., Campbell, J. C., Thoma, M., Ndyanabo, A., Ssekasanvu, J., Nalugoda, F., Kagaayi, J., Nakigozi, G., Serwadda, D., & Brahmbhatt, H. (2015). Effectiveness of an integrated intimate partner violence and HIV prevention intervention

in Rakai, Uganda: analysis of an intervention in an existing cluster randomised cohort. *The Lancet Global Health*, *3*(1), e23-e33. https://doi.org/10.1016%2FS2214-109X(14)70344-4

Watson, T.M., Bayoumi, A., Kolla, G., Penn, R., Fischer, B., Luce, J., & Strike, C. (2012). Police perceptions of supervised consumption sites (SCSs): A qualitative study. *Substance Use & Misuse*, *47*(4), 364-374. https://doi.org/10.3109/10826084.2011.645104

Williams, K. (2015). *The impact poverty has on adolescents' experiences at school according to school social workers.* (Masters Dissertation) St. Catherine University, Minnesota.

Wood, L. G. (2014). *Domestic violence advocacy*. (Doctoral Thesis). Indiana University, Indiana.

World Health Organization (WHO). (2021). *Devastatingly pervasive: 1 in 3 women globally experience violence*. https://www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2021-devastatingly-pervasive-1-in-3-women-globally-experience-violence

World Health Organization (WHO). (2012). *Understanding and addressing violence against women: Intimate partner violence*. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-RHR-12.36

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences [SDS17/1403].

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Zintle Ntshongwana was a PhD student at the University of Fort Hare, South Africa, and is currently a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. Her field of specialisation is family social work, social work services and interventions, and GBV. The article has resulted from her PhD, conducted from February 2017 to December 2019, and she wrote the initial draft of the article.

Pius Tanga is a Professor at the University of Fort Hare, South Africa. His fields of specialisation include gender, social welfare, social protection, child rights, HIV/AIDS and family social work. He supervised the study from February 2017 to December 2019 and assisted with the writing of the draft article and final editing.