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Exploring psychologists' perceptions of the relationship between HIV-related stigma and the self-esteem.

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Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters in Community Counseling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

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Lynn Primo

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Date

Acknowledgements

I hereby wish to dedicate this research to my ma who started this journey with me seven years ago and supported me in all my endeavors, but will not be able to finish this race with me due to her passing following a short illness in October of this year.

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Abstract

HIV-related stigma has left visible tracks in the history of HIV and AIDS in South Africa and continues to remain an obstacle to the prevention of HIV and the support of people living with HIV and AIDS. The manner in which people evaluate themselves, based on how they experience their world can be determined through an understanding of their self- esteem. The meaning that people who are HIV positive associate with the experience of HIV-related stigma was therefore explored as it relates to the self esteem. Semi-structured interviews were utilised to explore the relationship between HIV-related stigma and the self esteem. Interviews were conducted with psychologists' from different parts of Johannesburg. Interview sessions were tape recorded and transcribed. Thematic content analysis was considered the most appropriate method of analysis for this study. Based on findings from this analysis the following three main themes were elicited: constructing the self esteem of people living with HIV and AIDS, factors associated with HIV-related stigma that impact on the self-esteem of people living with HIV and AIDS and recommendations for the preservation and development of self esteem of people living with HIV and AIDS.