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Educators' experiences of school violence

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UNIVERSITY OF WITSWATERSRAND

SUPERVISOR: TANYA GRAHAM

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Shenaaz Pahad, hereby declare that this thesis entitled "Educators' experiences of school violence" is my own work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts in Community-based Counselling Psychology, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or at any other institution.

Signed on the day ___ of _____ 2010, Johannesburg, South Africa.

_____

Shenaaz Pahad

This research is dedicated to all those who have taught me in life

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> People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within. (*Elizabeth Kubler Ross)*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAP	American Academy of Paediatrics
APA	American Psychological Association
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CJCP	Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention
CPA	Centre for Peace Action
CSVR	Centre for Violence and Reconciliation
CVILP	Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme
DoE	Department of Education
HPCSA	Health Profession Council of South Africa
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
LINCISS	Learner Incident and Injury Surveillance System
MRC	Medical Research Council
NAS/UWT	National Association of School Masters and the Union of Women Teachers
NCAPCS	National Coalition to Abolish Corporal Punishment in Schools
NCES	National Centre for Education Statistics
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
SABC	South African Broadcasting Commission
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SAPS	South African Police Services
SASA	South African Schools Act
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SSAIR	South African Institute of Race Relations
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
UCT	University of Cape Town
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISA	University of South Africa
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organisation
WITS	University of Witswatersrand

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore South African educators' subjective experiences of school violence within their schools. Educators' experiences as victims and perpetrators of school violence were examined to gain an understanding of the definitions, contributing factors, impacts and incidents of school violence. An interpretive qualitative research method was used and interviews were conducted with 12 educators selected from two government schools in the low-income community of Alexandra. Participants' data was then analysed using a thematic content analysis. The findings suggest that current definitions of school violence are too narrow and require expansion so as to include all acts of school violence, victim-perpetrator relationships beyond the confines of the school. Violence in schools was found to increase educators' dysfunctional coping mechanisms, absenteeism, attrition, burnout and to compromise teaching efficacy and the performance of school. Using Brofenbrenner's Ecological Approach the principal conclusion of this study was that school violence is a result of the interplay between individual, familial, school, communal and societal factors.

School violence, learners, educators, school environment, Alexandra