

## **Abstract**

This study examines the ways in which drama therapy can be an effective intervention aimed at building resilience in adolescents in children's homes in South Africa. An analysis of the South African setting and the state of children's homes in the country sets the scene for this research. Statistics with regards to adolescents with specific reference to orphans, and the problems and conditions that affect them follows. A brief introduction as to what the average adolescent faces, as well as known developmental theorists' work on the developmental stages of adolescents will be addressed. Through the defining of abuse, trauma and neglect and the effects and impact thereof the situation as regards adolescents in children's homes is explained and interrogated.

Drama therapy as an intervention in children's homes is investigated by looking conceptually at the terms drama therapy as well as resilience. Drama therapy does not happen in isolation and therefore the ethics and issues around working in a multicultural environment are discussed. I also look at the impact that the broader field of creative arts therapies can have on trauma and discuss the role that drama therapy specifically plays in building resilience amongst adolescents. The use of drama therapy as opposed to traditional psychotherapies is deliberated; embodiment and metaphor as drama therapeutic concepts are discussed. The usefulness of group work as a therapeutic intervention is explored and contrasted with that of individual therapy.

Lastly the expected outcomes of a drama therapeutic intervention are discussed within the described population and circumstances of adolescents in children's homes, looking specifically at resistance, mixed emotions and agency experienced by these adolescents. This study concludes with suggestions and a way forward.