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COPING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY THIRD YEAR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS TO MANAGE EMOTIONALLY CHALLENGING ENCOUNTERS

A report on a study project presented to

The Department of Social Work

School of Human and Community Development

Faculty of Humanities

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In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of Social Work

By

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Abstract

Social work students as part of field education are exposed to the client's suffering through direct intervention which requires them to employ personal skills like empathy to respond to the client's unpleasant circumstance. This study attempted to explore strategies that third year Wits social work students employ to manage emotionally challenging encounters during field practice. Aspects of coping could be included as part of field instruction training to benefit the students. This study adopted qualitative approach and an exploratory case study was appropriate. Purposive, non-probability sampling was utilized to identify a sample of third year social work students at Wits. Interview schedule was structured reflecting on challenges that students encounter during field work. Data was collected through conducting face to face interviews and 10 participants took part in the study. Thematic analysis was employed as a method of data analysis. The study revealed that traumatic cases and lack of recognition during field work were the most challenging aspect of field works. Themes that emerged included feelings of helpless by students that result from the intention to assist the client, impact of supervision and the exhaustion that comes with report writing. Moreover the lack of trust and support from multi-disciplinary team together with traumatic cases contributed to emotionally challenging encounters. It was found that supervision was the most effective method that assisted students manage the emotionally challenging encounters.

Key words: Emotionally challenging encounters (ECE), occupational stressors and Social Work field instruction.

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FI: Field instruction

ECH: Emotionally challenging encounters

CBH: Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital

MDT: Multi-disciplinary team

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 *BACKGROUND*

Field instruction in social work is recognized as a significant component of social work education and it provides the students with a platform to integrate theory through practice (Hemy, Boddy, Chee & Sauvage, 2016). Many students go into the field of social work not conscious of the effect of the nature of their work will have on their well-being and those who are practicing already pay little attention to the impact of their case work on their lives (Newell & Gardell, 2014).

Dziegielewski, Turnage and Roest-Marti (2004) conducted a study on addressing stress with social work students, they recommend that social work students must develop new techniques and replace old ones to be successful in handling stressful situations. For instance, to respond to the different roles that they occupy the students should think of methods to cope with adaptations to university life, interpersonal relationships and ability to adapt to academic pressure (Dziegilewski et al, 2004). Student's methods of coping that were utilized in first year could not be appropriate in third year because they are confronted with new developmental tasks especially in the Bachelor of Social Work Degree.

Social work students as part of field education are exposed to the client's suffering through direct intervention which requires them to employ personal skills like empathy to attentively understand and respond to the client's unpleasant circumstance (Dziegielewski et al, 2004). MacRitchie and Leibowitz (2010) found that secondary trauma occurred due to exposure to emotionally challenging encounters during field work. Dziekelewski et al (2004) and MacRitchie and Leibowitz (2010) emphasized that social work students are vulnerable to the cost of caring and measures need to be put in place to identify the causes of stress among students and appropriate methods to employ.

In contemporary South Africa, suffering and vulnerability persist across cultures. According to a child abuse review conducted by Meinck, Cluver, Boyes and Ndhlovu (2015) it was reported that South Africa has high rate of child abuse 19% for physical and 21% for emotional abuse (Meinck et al, 2015). Exposure to abuse can predict negative outcomes like depression, suicide,

substance abuse and personalities disorders. These are few of the issues that exposes the social work students to emotionally challenging encounters.

The present study aims to explore the coping strategies that third year social work students employ to manage emotionally challenging encounters during field work. Harr and Moore (2011) in their study on compassion fatigue pointed out that social work students were found to have a high level of psychosocial distress associated with field placement.

1.2 ***PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RATIONALE***

Third year social work students at the University of the Witwatersrand are required to be at their placements for a minimum of 8 hours per week where they work with individuals and the communities regarding specific challenges. Every student is allocated a supervisor who would guide them in the helping process. The arrangement is made by the Department of Social work and the supervisor can either be internal or external (Field Instruction III, 2017).

The internal supervisor is a professional social worker who currently works at the setting which the student is placed and has a certain expertise about that specific setting. Whereas the external supervisor does not work at the placement, but have specific skills and competence and is available for consultation and supervision. The availability of supervisors and other resources has been pointed out to be significant however, the nature of the work has been said to be demanding due to emotionally challenging encounters (Kim & Stoner, 2008).

According to Dziegielewski, Turnage and Roest-Marti (2004) social work students are likely to experience feelings of anger, frustration and stress when exposed to the client's suffering which requires them to engage empathetically as part of field instruction requirements. The nature of their work makes them susceptible to occupational stressors and problems in coping (Dane, Barbara & Chachkes, 2001). It is argued that failure in employing effective coping strategies to deal with difficult encounters experienced in field work could increase their chances of expressing unpleasant behavior related to the symptoms of occupational stressors.

This is a concern regarding a lack of coping mechanisms exacerbated by the exposure to occupational stressors and academic demands which includes paperwork, intense case load, weekly report writing, facilitating a community project and dealing with difficult clients (Kim & stoner, 2008). Although students are trained to utilize certain skills and resources when dealing

with overwhelming cases, stressful feelings that can result from such encounters are likely to be inevitable because of the nature of their profession. It is at such intersections where the need for coping strategies emerge (Kim & Stoner, 2008).

This study holds the view that third year social work students are overwhelmed, stressed and may have a negative view towards the profession because of emotionally exhausting encounters and failure to employ strategies that could help them manage the cases effectively. The researcher is interested in exploring the coping strategies that the students employ to cope with emotionally challenging encounters and protect themselves from occupational stressors.

This interest in student coping skills was motivated by the behavior that the researcher observed among social work students regarding the difficulty to cope with the requirements. The behavior includes lack of interest towards going to the field placements, having outstanding reports, negative perception towards counselling, moving to a different course and absenteeism.

Nissly, Barack and Levin (2005) pointed out that emotional exhaustion and organizational stress are two of the factors that play a role in social workers leaving their jobs. With the increase in social ills, this create a challenge for the society because students are trained to go into practice and intervene in some of the challenges experienced by vulnerable groups.

Moreover, there is a gap in the existing literature, regarding social work students and emotionally challenging encounters, more attention has been paid to professional social workers and other helping professionals. This research intends to advance knowledge regarding the methods used by students to manage emotionally challenging encounters. It is envisaged that the findings will be valuable, as students can articulate methods that have been successful and these can be shared with future students.

The study is solution focused in that it recognizes that it is inevitable for social work students not to be affected by their intervention in emotionally challenging encounters due to the nature of their work, thus it aims to recommend effective strategies that can be employed.

The practical implications of the findings suggest that aspects of coping may be included as part of field instruction training; thus, students would not only be trained on how to apply themselves as social workers but rather how to effectively cope with difficult cases without neglecting their self-care.

This research study is a social issue as professionals who are not effective because of the nature of their work are unsuccessful in bringing about positive change and that affect the development of the country.

1.3 **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

1.3.1 ***Research question***

What coping strategies do wits 3rd year students employ to manage emotionally challenging encounters during field work?

1.3.2 ***Primary aim***

To explore methods that third year social work students use to manage emotionally challenging encounters

1.3.3 ***Secondary objectives***

To explore meanings that social work students attach to affective interchanges in the field instruction.

To understand the types of emotionally challenging cases the students have encountered during field instruction.

To explore personal coping strategies that social work students use to manage emotionally challenging case work.

To investigate the resources that are available to help students manage emotionally challenging case work.

1.4 ***BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF METHODOLOGY***

This research adopted the qualitative approach as it was concerned with obtaining in-depth textual information to answer the research question. Qualitative approach is a strategy in research which aims at understanding people from their own perspective using their own spoken language and it is suited when you trying to understand a phenomenon in a natural setting (Creswell, 2013).

It involves inductively building from specific to general themes and the researcher interpreting the data (Creswell, 2013). The present study gathered information on the student's coping mechanisms based on the way events unfold and as they occur. The study used explorative case study because the required data was obtained from a specific group which in this context was the third-year social work students. Case study is a qualitative strategy which seeks to explore information in one specific social setting and pay attention to the sequence of events over time (Yin, 2013). The case can be an event, activity, individuals or a process.

1.5 *METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS*

The study had several limitations. The fact that the researcher is a senior student in relation to the participants could have encouraged the participants to provide socially desirable responses. For instance, one of the respondents provided positive responses only and was hesitant to be completely honest regarding her challenges as compared to other responses. The challenge about interviewing people is that they are likely to use their personal defense mechanisms to respond to certain issues. The mechanisms include denial, exaggeration, rationalization and intellectualization. Regardless of this limitation, the researcher managed to probe more on the responses and encouraged the respondents to feel free and understand that anonymity is guaranteed.

1.6 *DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS*

1.6.1 *Emotionally challenging encounters (ECE)*

ECE are different unpleasant circumstances that social work students are exposed to. These circumstances are emotionally exhausting and are likely to affect the students. These challenges are normally revealed by the clients through counselling, where the students take a role of a counsellor. The encounters do not have an objective reality; it depends on the student's perceptions whether the circumstance is challenging or not.

However, there are critical issues that are commonly perceived as challenging. The encounters that students are exposed to can either remain in their consciousness after the sessions, could affect their state for the whole day or could be prolonged depending on the nature of the circumstance and the coping strategy employed.

ECE include clients disclosing on issues like traumatic experiences, violence, abuse, the student witnessing death, client in a critical state, experiences that the student can relate to and other cases.

1.6.2 ***Occupational stressors***

Occupational stressors are common in helping professions like nursing, medicine and social work for this is where the professionals are exposed to the client's suffering. A stressor is a circumstance or circumstances that cause the body to respond to a stressful condition. The body automatically respond to every circumstance that it identifies as stressful. Occupational stressors thus refer to job related circumstances that caused the body to respond to stressful encounters. The body can respond through physical reactions like irregular sleep patterns, headache, fatigue, eating disorders and psychological reactions like anxiety, depression, isolation and feeling powerless. The occupational stressors common in the helping profession include compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, burnout and stress.

According to Lizano, Hsiao, Barak and Casper (2014) occupational stressors and personal stressors can manifest physically and emotionally by placing demands on the mind and the body. One in third of Social Workers in National Association of Social Workers (NASW) study reported experiencing sleeping disturbances and fatigue due to occupational stress (Lizano et al, 2014).

1.6.3 ***Social work field instruction***

Field instruction is a course within social work practice that prepares the students for work place (Bongo, 2005). It is regarded as the heart of social work because it provides the students with the platform to integrate theory with practice. According to Hamilton and Else (1983) field instruction is, 'a consciously planned set of experiences occurring in a practice setting designed to move students from their initial level of understanding, skills and attitudes to levels associated with autonomous social work practice'.

At the University of the Witwatersrand, students are given the opportunity to choose three placements that they prefer. Every student is allocated a supervisor who would provide necessary support and guidance. Students who are in their third year of study are required to have two long term clients where the intervention would be for a maximum of eight sessions and two short term

clients for five sessions. The services that the students provide in the placements include counselling and community work.

1.7 ***STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT***

This report constitutes of five chapters. Chapter one introduces the theoretical background of the topic and brief description of the rational and methodological approach. Chapter two will discuss the literature and theoretical framework of the study. This is where different perspectives will be analyzed and intergraded with the topic. The third chapter will focus on the research methodology. It will pay attention to the aims, objectives and research approaches. The fourth chapter will discuss the findings, paying attention to the themes that emerged and the relevance of literature and last theme will conclude and provide recommendations where applicable.

CHAPTER TWO

LIRERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 *OVERVIEW*

South Africa is one of the countries that experiences issues that mostly affect vulnerable groups, this is according to the research done by Pillay and Wassenaar (1997) on stressors in suicidal adolescents in South Africa. Even though the research was conducted 20 years back, we still witness horrific experiences like the Wits student who allegedly committed suicide, the increase in rape among women and children, depression in different contexts and the list is un ending.

The above issues highlight the nature of the challenges faced by social work students, the need for field instruction to include therapeutic and preventative strategies for student well-being (Peleg Oren & Ronnit, 2014). It is important that when we think about social issues and groups that we perceive as vulnerable, we pay attention to the service providers and their ability to adapt to the accelerating challenges because they are susceptible to being affected by emotionally challenging issues encountered during field work. (Peleg Oren & Ronnit, 2014).

Field instruction in social work is recognized as a significant component of Social work education and it provides the students with a platform to integrate theory through practice. It is through practice that theory, values and skills shape the student's professional identity. (Hemy, Boddy, Chee & Sauvage, 2016). Many students go into the field of social work not conscious of the effects of the nature of their work on their well-being or rather those who are practicing already pay little attention to the impact of their case work in their lives (Newell & Gardell, 2014).

Literature on field placement suggest that social work students are bound to face emotionally challenging encounters in their field work, however failure to manage the challenges could compromise their lives as well as their profession (Nuttman, Shwarts & Ranz 2015). Field work in social work plays a vital role is exposing students to the world of work and give them the capacity to manage different cases and apply themselves effectively. However, Figely (2002) pointed out that many professional and student social workers leave the field because of the exposure to the nature of the work, which they perceived as overwhelming.

It could be argued that as much as field work develop the students, it might also interact with their well-being. This include their perception towards life, ability to be productive, sense of humour and other factors (Macritchie & Leibowitz, 2010) Social work students are susceptible to occupational stressors like burn out, secondary trauma and compassion fatigue because as part of field education social work students are exposed to the client's suffering through direct intervention which requires them to employ personal skills like empathy to attentively understand and respond to the client's unpleasant circumstance.

The researcher holds the view that there is a need for social work students to have effective coping strategies because they are exposed to cases that might affect their emotional and psychological functioning. Although Nuttman, Shwarts and Ranz (2015) as well as Macritchie and Leibowitz (2010) pointed out that there is a need for coping strategies but the need goes beyond difficult cases, we must also look at the fields of practice, how the students are successful in applying themselves, their professional growth and other factors. This point out that should exhaustion be prevalent among social work students, the attention should be paid to a variety of other contributing factors.

In a State of the Nation address 2008, former president Thabo Mbeki declared social work as a scarce skill, emphasizing the importance of equipping social workers and social work students with relevant skills that would help them meet the needs of the population they serve and avoid any form of negligence. The statement is necessary and required for the improvement of service, however, like other authors the emphasis in on the quality of services than the importance of prioritizing service provider's self-care.

The aim of this review is to incorporate current literature with the researcher's perspective on how other scholars have addressed the issue. The first part of this review will critically explore the causes and consequences of emotionally challenging encounters, effective methods and resources available to help the students. The second part will provide a theoretical approach of the study, analyses the broad trends and the last part of this review will summarize the key debates within which the study will be located and the contribution that the study would make theoretically.

2.2 ***PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE***

With reference to South African history, apartheid, racism and different forms of oppression might have been overthrown however its effects are visible. This include xenophobic violence, the events that occurred on the 11th of May 2008 where more than 62 black foreign nationals including Ernesto Nhamuave were murdered while 35 000 homes were destroyed (Steenkamp, 2009).

The recent abductions of young women in South Africa leave the victims and their families in distress (Kaminer & Eagle, 2017). Such activities reinforce violence and put vulnerable people like women, children and those with disabilities at risk. The violence in South Africa is a call for preparedness, because of the prevalence of violence helping professions like social work are in demand. This study proposes that the violence that is taking place exposes both social workers and social work students to emotionally challenging encounters.

According to Li, Marshall, Rees, Nunez, Ezeanolue and Ehiri (2014) globally it is estimated that one in every four women experiences violence in their life time. Violence in South Africa is constantly increasing, from intimate homes, to the community and the world at large. The researcher is of the opinion that social work students might be expected to make sense of the violence that is evident in their different systems and in the field instruction, they are trained to work on empowering clients to cope with the unpleasant event they have encountered.

The field instruction placements include medical and disability hospitals, refugees, rehabilitation centers, orphanages and centers for abused women and children. According to Macritchie (2006) social work students because of the nature of their work they are likely to have physiological symptoms and a negative perception towards their occupation, students and professionals are likely to describe it as overwhelming.

2.3 CONTEXT OF FIELD INSTRUCTION

Field instruction is a course within social work practice that prepares the students for work place. It is regarded as the heart of social work because it provides the students with the platform to integrate theory with practice. The key role players are the field instruction coordinator, who equips the students with knowledge, skills and instruments that guides practice. This include the

different cases to handle, the format of reports, personal development and the students' professional self.

The field instruction supervisor plays the role of a counselor, an educator, a support and an administrator. The supervisor is regarded as resourceful and plays a crucial role in the student's ability to integrate theory and practice. Supervisors are qualified social workers with a minimum of 4-5 working experience (Davys & Beddoe, 2009). Students on the other hand are not viewed as passive participants but rather they are actively involved in the field and are required to abide by the requirements prescribed by the coordinator, use the supervisor as their guider and support system.

According to carl Rogers person-centered approach, supervision is more like a therapy for the supervisee (Dunbar-Krige & Fritz, 2006). The supervisor must empathize with the supervisee, use warmth and geniuses for the working relationship. Furthermore, the supervisor must believe in the supervisee's motivation for growth their ability to move towards self-actualization (Dunbar-Krige & Fritz, 2006).

2.4 ***CAUSES OF EMOTIONALLY CHALLENGING ENCOUNTERS BY SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS DURING FIELD INSTRUCTION***

Macritchie and Leibowitz (2010) proposes that emotionally challenging encounters during field practice are strongly associated with the exposure to the client's suffering and the worker's use of empathy. This is when the counsellor has a direct intervention with the clients. Figley (2010) holds the idea that exposure to the client's suffering is the reason why counsellors come to a different stream like admin work, lecturing and other job titles that they perceive as not being emotionally exhausting.

Case work in field practice requires the students to empathize and their ability to understand the client's circumstance and reflect their feelings, empathetic presence makes the student social worker vulnerable to the cost of caring (Figley, 2010). The student makes effort to put him/herself in the client's shoes, gain insight on the client's thoughts and that makes them susceptible to experiencing the client's feelings (Egan, 2010).

In a study that was conducted by Macritchie (2006) it was reported that trauma counsellors who work full time are more susceptible to secondary traumatic stress because they are exposed to the client's suffering on a regular basis. Considering the study by Marchritchie (2009) it suggests that social work students who are in their third year of study have lower chances of being affected by emotionally challenging encounters because they visit the agency only twice a week.

However according to Badger, Royse and Craig (2008) emotionally challenging encounters during field work are reinforced by the regular exposure to the client's suffering but it can also result from the intention to assist a client who is vulnerable, even though the interaction is not regularly. The study by Badger et al., (2008) provides the insight regarding the student's chances of suffering from emotionally challenging encounters, students do have a chance of being affected and however they are in a better position to prevent and manage it as compared to professional social workers who work at the field and experience emotionally challenging encounters daily.

The present study holds the view that emotionally challenging encounters are caused by exposure to the client's suffering and the student's empathetic presence and these factors are in line with the field instruction's requirements. However, it pays more attention to factors that promote or impede students from managing emotionally challenging encounters effectively.

It could be said that Macritchie (2006) exclude students who are placed at placements that are viewed as not being emotionally challenging, this include schools, rehabilitation Centre and orphanages since the exposure is based more on the verbal responses than on visible traumatic situations like death and medical conditions. However, it was also pointed out that empathetic response contributes to emotionally challenging encounters, this means that the setting might not be challenging as compared to the others but the nature of the cases differs.

Unlike other helping professions like medicine, nursing, law and police department. Social workers are limited with regards to having an authority and the change they bring is not always evident or guaranteed. This is the case in a sense that they don't always have sufficient resources to assist the clients, are likely to work with involuntary clients and the profession is perceived negatively by other professions and it is difficult to measure the positive outcome of the intervention (Badger, Royse & Craig, 2008).

Figlely (2010) pointed out that counsellors have a need to self-satisfaction, if they are not satisfied by the work they do they are likely to feel overwhelmed and helpless, in most cases that change their perception towards the profession and increases their chances of being vulnerable to the cost of caring. When considering the work of Figley (2010) and Macritchie (2006) as well as other researchers it may be realized that social work students do deal with emotionally challenging encounters, however the encounters must be understood in different contexts. There are quite many factors that contribute, this include empathetic presence, the nature of the encounter, the frequency of the exposure to the unpleasant circumstance. Students would have to employ coping strategies based on the identified cause of exhaustion.

2.5 ***EFFECTS OF EMOTIONALLY CHALLENGING ENCOUNTERS ON STUDENTS***

The effects of emotionally challenging encounters are subjective depending on the awareness of the effects and the personal coping strategies employed, people respond and are affected by circumstances in different ways. However, there are common effects that can be recognized particularly on social work students. Emotionally challenging encounters can lead to occupational stressors like secondary trauma, compassion fatigue and stress.

Secondary trauma is an occupational stress disorder caused by the exposure to the client's suffering and it affect a person's functioning Macritchie (2006). Physiological symptoms include sleep disturbances, irritable, re-living the experiences of the exposed suffering, isolation, loss of purpose, clingy, procrastination and thinking about the event over and over Macritchie (2006). This condition is susceptible to social work students because their work exposes them to unpleasant circumstance.

Figley (1995) defines compassion fatigue as a natural and emotional distress of being exposed to traumatic cases. It causes the councilor to be apathetic, not be productive at work and lack motivation. The loss of compassion does not happen immediately but overtime and it is enhanced by exposure to the client's suffering. Lack of motivation, prolonged exposure and the client's demand can make the student feel overwhelmed and lack motivation to be effective in their life style, professions and other responsibilities.

Stress is likely to result from any emotionally challenging encounter. The symptoms could include eating disorders, headaches, feeling powerless and sleep disturbances (Dziegielewski, Turnage &

Roest-Marti, 2004). The students could have experienced the effects but failed to link them to the cause. The current study holds the view that students are likely to internalize irregular changes and fail to link the effects with the cause. The above argument suggest that symptoms of occupational stressors are likely to be common among social work students.

Students in general have different roles to fill, this include adjusting to the new environment, establishing their identity, managing academic demands and choosing a career. The challenges are greater for social work students since they have multiple roles, manage their lives as students and as students' social worker's disturbances (Dziegielewski, Et al, 2004). Stress affect social work students differently than the general population. Regardless of this predicament, there is gap in the existing literature. More attention is paid to the medical students and professional therapists. The next section will focus on methods used by social work students.

2.6 **METHODS *OF COPING BY STUDENTS***

Drolet and McLennan (2016) argues that students need to prioritize their wellness and self-care in the field placements, they see the lack of self- care as one of the factors that contribute to failures in managing emotionally challenging encounters. Self-care is ethically important for student social workers because occupational hazards experienced in their field. The hazards include death of a client, exposure to traumatic cases, work load and insufficient resources to intervene.

Similarly, Newell and Gardell (2014) suggest that self-care content must be introduced in the social work curriculum so that students are better able to manage the impact of stressful encounters during field practice. They define professional self-care as the skills and strategies utilized by social workers to maintain health and balance by being conscious of their personal needs while they attend the needs of their service users (Newel & Gardell, 2014). Literature suggests that social work students go into the field without being aware that the type of stressful situations that their client's experiences may become emotionally exhausting and if they are not prepared to cope with the emotional challenges of direct practice they may be at risk.

However, it can also be argued that students are given resources to reflect on their personal needs and how they have applied themselves. This can be the part in the field instruction manual where they are expected to be honest and introspect amount the self. With regards to introducing self-care content, the present study supports the argument by Newell and Gardell (2014) on that

incorporating material on self-care into social work curriculum is necessary. Students must learn to prioritize and take good care of the self as much as they are trained to cater for the client's needs. This is required because their work is demanding and their self-care is likely to be neglected.

The educational content on self-care would prepare them for the field work and would help them on how to deal with emotionally exhausting cases. However, this strategy might have weaknesses in a sense that there is no one size fit all approach when it comes to the selves, all students are unique in their own ways and come from different historical backgrounds. Employing a general approach might not be suitable for all of them. It is worth noting that student's self-care care is enhanced by support systems, use of supervision, consultation, having a consistent diet and sleeping patterns and socialization (Drolet & McLennan, 2006). Even though students are different and have certain preferences, there are general strategies which can help them manage emotionally challenging encounters

Moral and Hughes (2006) and their colleagues conducted a study on the relationship between a social worker's sense of humour and their stress levels. They propose that humour is an effective strategy for coping and they found out that there is a positive correlation between humour and stress. The above authors suggest that the topic of humour must be formally introduced in the social work curriculum in a sense that it provides relaxation, good for their health, reduces anxiety and it is therapeutic on its own (Moral and Hughes, 2006). It can be introduced in field instruction course during the first year of study.

By humour, they refer to the characteristic of the student before engaging with the service users. Humour is perceived differently by different people and not everyone understands it as a coping strategy. However, in this context it is viewed as the social work student's personal characteristic that helps them manage or be effective in dealing with cases that are emotionally exhausting. Sampson and Gross (2012) predicted that positive humour would be very effective in managing negative emotions, they support the idea of humor as a coping mechanism to manage unbearable circumstances.

Flynn, Kamasua, Brydon, Lawihin, Kornhauser, and Grimes (2014) conducted a study on preparations for field education placement. They found out that most students who participated in the study responded that they were never prepared for practice. This review suggests that coping mechanisms that could be effective must be a two-way process, prepare for practice and consider

an effective strategy after practice. Practical mechanisms that the students could use include setting realistic goals, time management, positive relationships with other students, online discussion forums and peer monitoring (Hemy, Boddy, Chee & Sauvage, 2016).

2.7 *TYPES OF FIELD INSTRUCTION PLACEMENTS THAT ARE EMOTIONALLY EXHAUSTING*

Not all field instruction placements have the potential to be challenging or expose the students to emotionally challenging encounters. There are some field instruction placements that are more emotionally challenging due to the nature of work such as an agency that caters to the need of clients in distress, this include hospitals, trauma Centre, acquired disability Centre.

2.7.1 *Hospitals*

According to Holliman (1997) hospital social workers are exposed to people who suffer from chronic illness, disabilities, pregnancies, death and other unpleasant conditions. The services that they provide include counselling which in other cases is single sessions, social work practitioners play the role of an advocate, mediator, organizer and educator. Students who are placed at hospital setting are exposed to unpleasant circumstances that are likely to affect them emotionally. Unlike other agencies, hospital social workers deal with cases that are likely to affect the councilor's sense of satisfaction, like a patient who is on his death bed.

In a hospital setting, there is multi-disciplinary team, this include doctors, nurses, social workers and other specialists. In a research that was done by Cowles and Lefcowitz (1992) on inter-professional expectations of medical social workers. It was found that other professions do not understand the role of the medical social worker, they question social worker's competency while others discredit the biopsychosocial model. The research was conducted 25 years ago however it seems like it is still applicable contemporary. Lack of understanding could affect the way in which other professions perceive social workers in a medical setting.

2.7.2 *Trauma counselling setting*

This refers placements that provide counselling services, you find trauma service at placements like life line, trauma clinic, children of fire, domestic abuse centers and others. Therapists placed at such fields work with people who witnessed death, were raped, and involved in accidents, juvenile prisons sexual and gang violence. These settings demand empathetic presence and response and are emotionally challenging in nature (MacRitchie & Leibowitz, 2010). Social work students who are placed at such setting have a higher risk of having the effects of emotionally challenges encounters.

TYPES OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT STUDENTS REGARDING EMOTIONALLY CHALLENGING ENCOUNTERS

There are different resources available to prevent the students from being victims of occupational stressors and to assist them in different ways. Students have resources at their disposal, however the researcher does not have knowledge on how they have been utilizing the available resources and how the resources have impacted their lives.

All the students have been allocated to their own supervisors who they have supervisions with almost every week. Supervisors are there to talk to the students about any challenges and they support them where necessary. The aim of supervision is to facilitate reflection and learning in students and promote independence (Davys & Beddoe, 2009). The approach used by the supervisor plays a vital role in the process, if the supervisor uses a didactic approach the students are likely to over depend and the knowledge obtained would not promote change (Davys & Beddoe, 2009).

If the supervisor has strong need to teach, the supervisor might not benefit from the supervision. Tsui (2004) proposes a feminist partnership approach which assumes that the supervisor and the supervisee are equal partners and the supervisee has the platform to self-regulate the process. Davys & Beddoe (2009) emphasize the importance of a student focused approach which address both content and process. The field instruction coordinator is available for consultation. Students are encouraged to consult regularly and communicate with their lectures. The coordinator is also available in weekly tutorial where students engage in critical thinking and raise their different

challenges. Critical reflection is an essential skill in field instruction and in preparing students for work (Milne & Adams, 2015).

The university offer counselling and support for student, the services are free and accessible. Career counselling and development unit (CCDU) is an institution available at the University of the Witwatersrand, W west campus and it is in collaboration with Gender Equity violence (GEO) and Student development centre, which don't only aim to support them emotionally but also empower them and protect them from any harm.

2.9 ***THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK***

2.9.***1Person in the environment theory***

Person in the environment highlight the importance of the interaction between individuals and their environment (Norton, 2012). According to this approach, individuals and their behavior cannot be understood apart from their environment. There are different systems in our lives which influence our behavior and in the same direction also impact our environment, there is an ongoing interaction between people and their environments (Norton, 2012). Individuals interact with their families, friends, colleagues, clients and communities. This approach allows social workers to understand their client's through locating them in a specific context that affect their behavior.

For this study, this theory was used to understand students in their different fields work and the effects of different factors that interact with their adaptations. The term environment in this context does not only refer to their physical spaces but also factors such as the professional setting, language, cultural norms support system and other factors. Environments that we find ourselves in play a crucial role in our effectiveness and the way we apply our selves.

In the same way, this theory suggest that students bring their spiritual aspects, personality traits and political affiliations. The student impact and are impacted by the environment they are placed at, however some of the factors that would enable them to survive or be overwhelmed by their environment include their personal traits and strategies used to respond to their surroundings.

Social constructivist approach was also used, it holds the idea that there is nothing absolute about our realities. People shape and construct knowledge, ideas, norms and practices according to the meanings they bring to their lives. Coping mechanisms pay attention to student's ways of

responding to difficult cases. The responses that the research seek to explore are based on re-contracting knowledge that is applicable to their context. This approach helped the researcher to provide the student with a platform to think about methods that they perceive as important and applicable to approaching emotionally challenging encounters.

Bourdieu's theory of social habitus was used to together with the above-mentioned approaches, constructivist and the persona in the environment. This theory is based on the perception that there are different factors that contribute to the person's functioning and ability to adapt to situations (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). The factors can either hinder or promote the personal's ability to manage situations. The factors include historical background, achievements, class, personality traits and other factors that makes them who they are. Bourdieu argues that if people are conscious of their habitus they have greater chances of achieving their goals.

The theory further points out that cultural capital is very essential in helping people manage their situations, this include networks, recognized personal skills like communicating, working under pressure, writing and flexible, personal belongings and support systems. The capital can either be structural or personal. Structural can include things like class, university and agency resources and the personal factors were mentioned above.

Bourdieu's theory suggests that in re-viewing mechanisms that can be applied, the researcher will have to understand the context which the student comes from and different factors promote or hinders their functioning. According to him, if there is a misfit between students and the field they are placed in or between themselves and how they apply themselves then incongruence will result which is one of the factors that lead to intense exhaustion at work.

2.9.2 ***Diagram representation of Bourdieu's habitus***

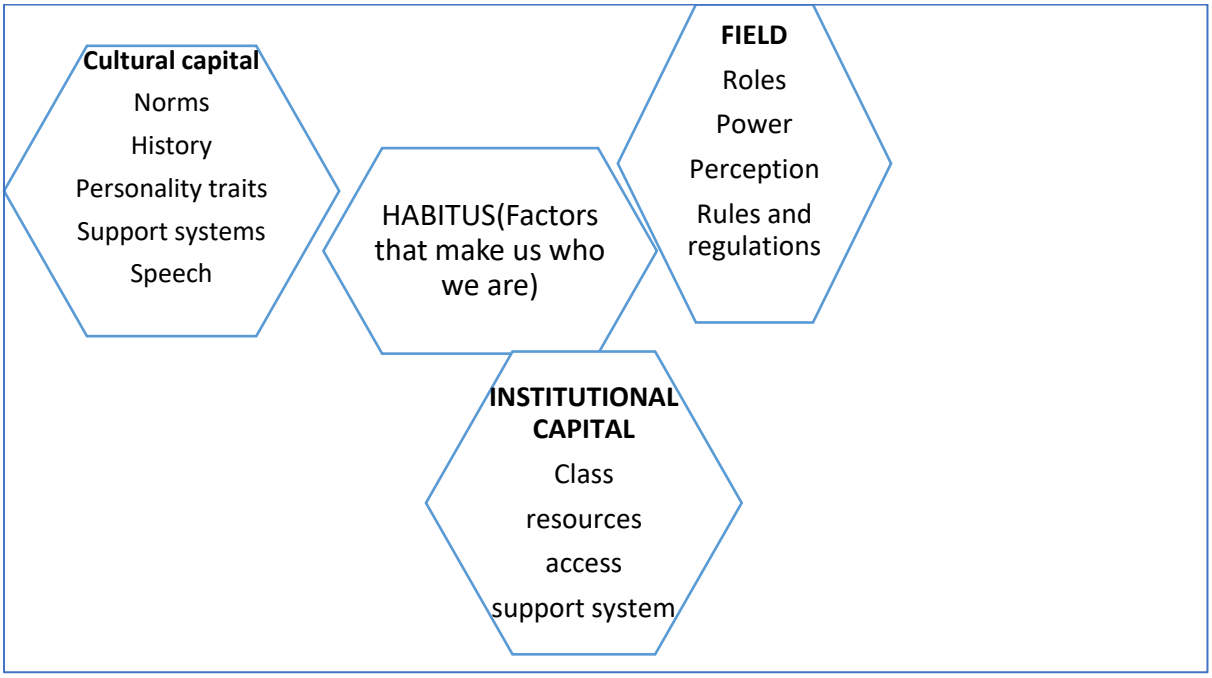

FIGURE 1 Bourdieu's diagram of habitus

2.10 ***CONCLUDING REMARKS***

This literature review was successful in connecting both the South African and the agency contexts with the nature, effects and an understanding of emotionally challenging encounters. It was pointed out that Violence in South Africa is escalating and does not only endanger the lives of the vulnerable groups but also helping professionals like social work. This calls for the need to be careful about measures put in places to helps social work student manage ECEs. Social work students face emotionally challenging encounters because of their empathetic presence, exposure to unpleasant circumstances, failure to assist the clients which according to Figley (2010) it affects their need for self-satisfaction. Failure to manage the encounters could lead to occupational stressors like secondary trauma, compassionate fatigue and burn out. Some of the coping mechanisms that were highlighted by scholars include introducing self-care and humor content in the curriculum, this was emphasized by (Newell & Gardell, 2014). Followed by practical methods like time management, goal setting, participating in on-line forum and others. Theoretical frameworks that were employed managed to gather information regarding to the participant's different contexts and could pay attention to different factors that contribute to the student's

functioning. Some of the factors that were pointed out include student's personality traits, historical background, their cultural capital and ability to adapt to the environment. The next chapter will consider methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 *INTRODUCTION*

This chapter intend to provide an overview of the research process, design and method employed to collect data. The study has adopted a qualitative approach, this is defined as a research strategy that seeks to gather in-depth information using the participant's spoken language. This chapter will include the research question, aim, sampling procedures, research instrument, ethical considerations and other methodological aspects.

3.2 *RESEARCH QUESTION*

What coping strategies do 3rd year students employ to manage emotionally challenging encounters during field work?

3.*3 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES*

3.3.1 *Primary aim*

Explore methods that third year social work students employ to manage emotionally challenging encounters.

3.3.2 *Secondary objectives*

To explore meanings that social work students attach to affective interchanges in the field instruction.

To understand the types of emotionally challenging cases the students have encountered during field instruction.

To explore personal coping strategies that social work students use to manage emotionally challenging case work.

To investigate the resources that are available to help students manage emotionally challenging case work.

3.4 ***RESEARCH DESIGN***

The research was exploratory as it explored methods that social work students employed to manage emotionally challenging encounters. Explorative case study was used as the research design because the required data was obtained from a specific group of multiple individuals which in this context is the third-year social work students. Case study is a qualitative strategy which seeks to explore information in one specific social setting and pay attention to the sequence of events over time (Yin, 2013). The case can be an event, activity, individuals or a process.

This approach is intensive and managed to produce in-depth data, this is because it focused on a specific setting (Yin, 2013). For instance, the study would have been time consuming and yielded un-reliable data if the unit of analysis was every social work student currently engaged in field instruction at the University of the Witwatersrand. However, focusing on one case could have prevented the study from being transferrable (Tellis, 1977).

This approach made it easy to formulate an interview schedule because the researcher is knowledgeable about the unit of analysis and its context. Though, bias could have occurred due to a limited representative. A specific setting is likely to be discriminated or perceived in a specific way and that might have affected the results and the researcher is a social work student in the same setting.

3.5 ***RESEARCH METHODOLOGY***

This research adopted the qualitative approach as it intended on obtaining in-depth textual information to answer the research question. Qualitative approach is a strategy in research which aims at understanding people from their own perspective using their own spoken language and it is suited when you try to understand a phenomenon in a natural setting (Creswell, 2013).

It involves inductively building from specific to general themes and the researcher interpreting the data (Creswell, 2013). The present study gathered information on the student's coping mechanisms based on the way events unfold and as they occur. The approach was applicable in a sense that it is process orientated and it enabled the researcher to gather information on the processes rather than waiting for outcomes (Greenstein & Roberts Sitas, 2003).

The current study relied on student's experiences and understandings to answer the research question and such data was gathered thorough understanding the students and their views of the world. However, it does qualify to use the quantitative approach where the student's coping mechanisms would be compared and analyzed numerically using a structured survey. But because of the primary goal of this research, only qualitative approach was used.

Qualitative approach is best suited for this study because it aims at providing thick descriptions and understanding a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). This approach appropriate for this study because it did not require many resources and that makes it affordable and easy to be implemented, the data gathered in this approach is rich and comprehensive, it uses interactive methods that create a close relationship between the researcher and the participant and this relationship allows the researcher to obtain valuable and meaningful data (Carr, 1994). Baruch (1981) support the argument that the interaction between the researcher and the participant is the strongest strength as the researcher obtain a first-hand experience.

A qualitative approach is time consuming, because of the methods and techniques used it was not appropriate for a large sample. In this study, the researcher ensured these aspects were reduced by using necessary communication skills like interruption where necessary, summarizing, active listening, probing and encouraging the respondents to provide honest responses.

3.6 ***SAMPLING PROCEDURES***

The researcher identified all the third-year social work students as the population of the study, however not all members of the population contained the desired characteristics. This population was relevant and contained the content required to answer the research question in a sense that the potential participants had at least two years of experience in the field and had been exposed to different cases since they started practicing in their second year of study.

The study used non-probability sampling because it required specific characteristics, selecting participants randomly would negatively affect the result as they might not have characteristics that the research seeks to study (Strydom & Venter, 2006). This sampling procedure selected cases gradually and paid attention to a specific content that determine whether a case is chosen (Royse, 2009). For instance, not every third-year student was placed at emotionally challenging field and not every third-year student was registered for field instruction.

The type of sampling is purposive. This is where the researcher intentionally selects participants based on a specific experience or knowledge which could be useful to the study. The researcher was an expert in the selection criteria and selected cases with a specific purpose (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013).

The present study had a sample size of 10. Aspects that were included in the criteria include the type of the placement, services provided at the placement, number of clients they have session with in one day. Students who were placed at fields that provide medical care, trauma debriefing, and counselling to cases of abuse and acquired disabilities were selected. This sampling allowed the researcher to select participants that contain characteristics that are not evident (Royse, 2009).

3.6.1. ***Participant criteria***

Table 1: Participant criteria

Inclusion	**Exclusion**
1. Third year social work students	1. Social work students from other levels of study
2. Third year students who are currently registered for Field Instruction	2. Third year social work students who are not registered for field instruction
3. Students who are placed at fields that the study operationalised as emotionally challenging, like hospitals, acquired disabilities,	3. Students who are placed at agencies that are not emotionally challenging according to the study, like schools, children's homes, employee wellness,
4. Students who study full time	4. Students who study part time

To fulfil the secondary objective of the study, deviant cases were included, this include students who were placed at agencies that the study does not perceive as emotionally challenging. For instance, students who were placed at rehabilitation centers and employee wellness programs were included. This was done to avoid subjectivity and selecting a sample that does not represent the population.

3.7 *RESEARCH TOOLS*

3.7.1 *Researcher as the primary instrument*

In qualitative study, the researcher interacts with people in a natural setting and directly collect information without relying on an external instrument like tested statistical techniques. The researcher was equipped with skills and knowledge on asking questions, being empathetic, interpreting responses, being aware of her personal attitude and personality, the ability to probe with an aim of obtaining in-depth responses (Hepworth et al., 2013).

A researcher who does not use necessary skills to obtain information would negatively affect the findings. In the present study, the researcher was aware of communication skills since she applies them in her social work field practice, this aspect was an advantage. (Creswell, 2013). This instrument was effective to the study in a sense that the researcher did not only gather verbal responses but also responses that are not directly communicated (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006). The researcher gathered information directly and analyzed the findings based on what she heard, observed and perceived.

Furthermore, this instrument requires a certain expertise which include communication skills, establishing a rapport and employ appropriate interview skills. This limitation did not affect the study because the researcher is equipped with communication skills that can be used when interacting with people. The researcher used minimum probes and more of verbal following to avoid making anticipations and providing the respondents with the use of words.

3.7.2 *Interview schedule*

The study utilized an interview schedule, this is a structured set of pre-coded questions that guide the researcher on the questions to ask and possible answers to expect. It helps the researcher to respect the participant's time and avoid dishonesty. The researcher prepared the questions thoroughly with the help from the literature that was reviewed. The questions were planned to avoid being insensitive or inappropriate and to include the most important aspects of the research topic. As much as this instrument guide the researcher, she could still add questions that are not included on the schedule based on the client's responses.

Before the interview could commence, the researcher gave the participants a chance to browse through the interview schedule to minimize their anxiety levels, help them be at ease and communicate if the is any question that they wish to cut off. Throughout the interview, participants would provide in-depth responses that covered some of the questions that were not yet asked, the researcher did not stop them from expanding their responses although she skipped the question that was covered. Through the interview, the researcher introduces a new theme to the participants, this was done to prepare their minds and encourage them to answer the questions within a specific context.

3.7.3 *Diagram representation of the research process*

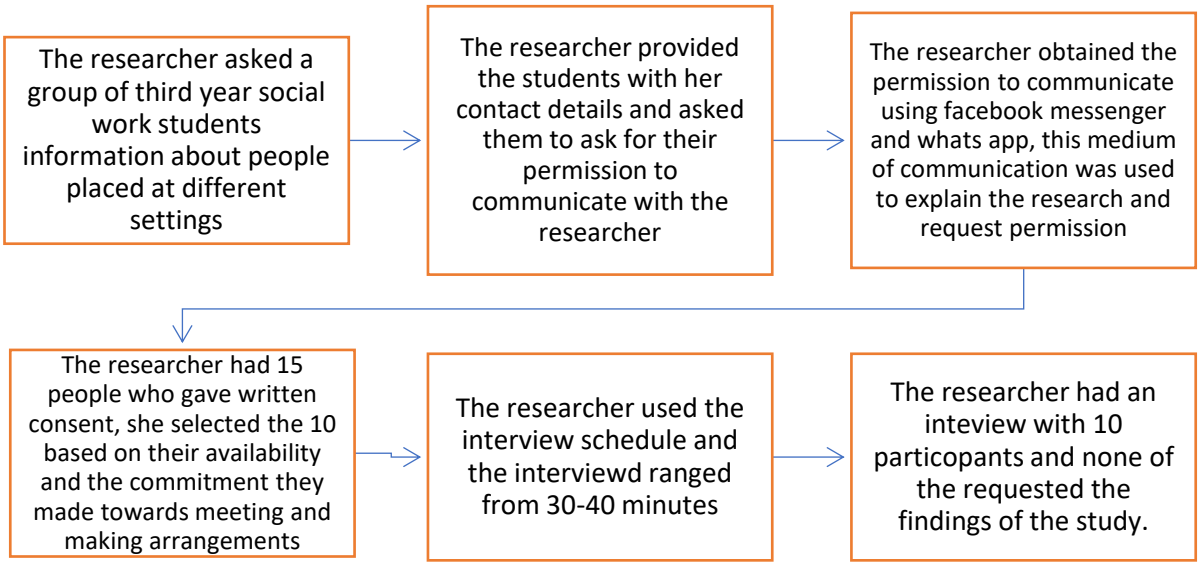

FIGURE 2: Diagram representation of the research process

3.8 ***PRETESTING OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS***

Conducting a pilot study enabled the researcher to solve anticipated problems and make necessary adjustments. Pilot study involves preparation for the major study through testing the research instrument. According to Teijlingen and Hundle (2000) pilot study is essential in research because it warn the researcher about possible outcome and if there is any necessary pre-caution, provide detailed information about research protocols that should be put in place, prepares the researcher for the possible responses and test the validity of the instrument.

The researcher interviewed one student with an aim of testing the research instrument, below is the table that demonstrates information gathered from the pre-test and the aspects that were identified as concerning and the changes that were made.

3.8.1 ***Pilot study feedback Table representation of pretesting feedback***

Identified aspects	Changes that were made
Duration of the interview, less than 45 minutes	At first the researcher anticipated that the interview will take an hour, after the pre-test changed the approximate duration **to *30-40 minutes***. This information helped the researcher to gather participants because students are busy and would prefer a short duration.
Question C1, student's *satisfaction* about their academic performance.	Respondent was confused and not sure how to respond, researcher changed the word from satisfaction to ***thoughts*** about academics
Starting the interview without going through the themes, the respondent was anxious and would hesitate before responding	The researcher ***read the themes and some of the questions*** with the responded and encouraged the responded to feel free and communicate her understanding.
Question C2, how the students describe their consistency.	The respondent was not sure whether to be personal or respond according to what was submitted. The researcher extended the

	question by asking ***them how they have applied*** themselves in the field work

Table 2: Pre-testing feedback

3.9 *DATA COLLECTION*

The researcher gathered data from 10 participants and conducted face to face structured interviews were used to collect data. Structured interviews refer to the reliance of an interview schedule which contain predetermined questions that reflect pre-conceived ideas, to verbally administer the questionnaire. Structured interviews can produce rich textual information and it yield a large amount of data. Respondents are not constrained from expressing themselves and that enhances the quality of the data. They were given a chance to provide long ended responses.

The researcher went over the interview schedule with the participants to familiarize them with the questions and help them feel at ease. The researcher asked the questions according to how they were structured on the research instrument, though in other cases unplanned questions were asked to follow up on the responses that were provided. The face to face interviews were time consuming in a sense that participants did not all commit to the arrangements that were made, they scheduled few minutes before the sessions, others did not respond and each session took about 30- 35 minutes. The interviews took place at the Emthonjeni auditorium in an open space.

3.10 *ANALYSIS OF DATA*

The present study used thematic analysis as a method to analyses data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative approach that involve the organization and identification of themes within data with an aim of describing data in detail (Kawulich & Holland, 2012). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis moves beyond data description to interpreting various aspects of the research topic. They added that thematic analysis is flexible and can yield detailed data.

However, De Weber, Schellens, Valcke and Van Keer (2006) pointed out that this method is very descriptive in that it points out information that is there already without looking at other aspects, it is more like summarizing data without interpreting it. The researcher linked the identified themes with the literature and in that way, she managed to produce meaning from the analyzed data. Data was analyzed using two important aspects, data management and data interpretation. In managing data, the researcher first organized every detailed material like

transcripts, journal notes and ensured that the information was captured and accessible. The researcher familiarized herself with the data, this was achieved through visiting the findings regularly, identifying occurring themes and engaging with the content (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, & Delport, 2011). The last aspect of data management is thematization, this is where the researcher used a thematic content analyses and applied her judgement in choosing the themes.

Data interpretation constitutes of three components, description, explanation and evaluation (De Vos et al, 2011). Data was described through presenting the findings and identifying important aspects. It was explained in depth, this is where the researcher analyzed the trends, linked the findings with the research objectives, data was evaluated and a conclusion was reached.

For the present study, this method of analyses was contextual, the researcher identified themes or patterns that came from the people's responses through transcribing the interviews and listening to the audio repeatedly to capture both direct and in-direct communication (Kawulich & Holland, 2012). It is important for the researcher not to focus only on one theme but rather on different themes to enhance the validity of the study.

Thematic framework was used to capture the dominant themes and summarize the responses in table form. The researcher made use of tools such as Microsoft excel to capture data and word document to transcribe data. Analyzing qualitative data was time consuming, the researcher managed the time by extracting coded chunk of data from the data set and the extraction was made based on the themes. Themes represents the trends in the data set.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the frequency of the theme does not necessarily mean that the theme is crucial but rather it is how it captures information that is related to the research question. The researcher did not choose themes based on their dominance, but rather according to how they are connected to the research questions and objectives. In determining the themes, the researcher's judgement was used.

3.11 **TRUSTWORTHINESS**

According to Shenton (2004) there are four aspects to be considered to pursuit trustworthiness of the research, this include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility refers to the ability of the study to measure what it intends to measure, transferability is when the study produce the same results should it be conducted in a different context, dependability is

when the study produce the similar results when repeated in the same context and following the same research process and confirmability is concerned with the researcher's ability to be objective and realized how she has personally affected the findings (Shenton, 2014).

3.11.1 ***Credibility***

Appropriate research methods were employed, the interview transcript was structured according to the questions that intended to obtain information on emotionally challenging encounters. There was an inclusion criteria which was used to guide the researcher in selecting participants, in this context only third year social work students who were doing their field instruction could participate. The questions asked are in line with the research aims and objectives.

3.11.2 ***Transferability and dependability***

The results of a qualitative study are specific to a small context, therefore it is difficult or rather impossible to provide evidence that the findings can be applicable to a different context (Shenton, 2004). However, the context that was studied could be an example to other contexts. To enhance transferability the researcher provided information on context of the study which includes different field placements, inclusion criteria, geographic location and other factors. Sufficient thick description of the phenomena was provided, particularly issues on the field instruction manual for the year 2017, interview transcripts were attached, diagram representation of the research process and the methodology of the study. This is also applicable for the dependability of the study.

3.11.3 ***Confirmability***

The researcher kept a journal, the journal was used to record information, to reflect after an interview with a participant and this most likely reduced investigator biased. The researcher also communicated with the supervisor about her own influence in the research especially since she is familiar with the responses that were obtained from the interviews. D'Cruz, Gillingham and Melendez (2007) define reflexivity as an individual's self-critical approach that question the generation of knowledge. To be objective, the researcher used thematic frame work and her judgement regarding the themes were based on the link between the responses and the literature review.

3.12 *ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS*

According to Nicholas, Rautenbach and Maistry (2010) ethical principles refers to agreements that protect the rights of the participants and can address initial issues and issues that arise during the research process. Some of the ethical principles that were employed include voluntary participation, informed consent, no risk of harm and confidentiality.

3.12.1 *Informed consent*

This means that potential research participants must be informed about the research (Nicholas, 2010). Consent forms (See annexure C) were handed over and participant information sheets were provided to the participants to enable them to make informed decisions.

3.12.2 *Avoidance of harm or non-maleficence*

This requires that the researcher may not harm the participants in any way, either physically, emotionally or psychologically, directly or indirectly (Babbie, 2011). The researcher met with the participants in a safe environment to avoid exposing them to any harm. Because the study had a potential of exposing them to psychological harm, researcher communicated with them about CCDU in case they feel affected by the interview. Participants were encouraged not to share about information they are not comfortable with.

3.12.3 *Voluntary participation*

This guides the researcher not to use any form of cohesion (Nichols et al, 2010). The researcher emphasized that participation is voluntary and participants may withdraw from participating at any time.

3.12.4. *Confidentiality*

This means that the information that the participants provide will not be available to anyone who is not direly involved in the study. It also implies that only the researcher can link the responses to the participants. In this study, the researcher reminded the participants about confidentiality and pseudo names were used in the consent forms. Refer to annexure E.

3.12.5 ***Approval of studies by institutional ethics committee***

Ethics clearance was obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand Human research ethics committee (Non-Medical). Refer to annexure B

3.13 **CONCLUSION**

This chapter discussed the theoretical background that underpin the methodology of the study. Exploratory case study was applied as the research design because it is best suited for studying a specific group, which in this context is the third-year social work students. Qualitative approach was defined and some of its advantages were highlighted, it was applicable for the study because of its ability to provide thick description which is one important aspect needed to answer the research question. The researcher was the primary instrument and an interview schedule was used to direct the interview. 10 participants took part in the study and a face to face structured interviews were used as the method to collect data. However, the study had several limitations. This include the researcher being a senior student compared to the respondents, the difficulty for the study to be transferable because the sample size was relatively small. Despite the mentioned limitations, pilot study was used to make the instrument more credible, the researcher managed to make thee participants feel at ease and communicate openly and appropriate research methods were used. The next chapter will focus on the presentation and analysis of the results.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 *INTRODUCTION*

This chapter discusses the results of the data collected with specific reference to the aim and objectives of the study. Included are the recurring themes that emerged, description of patterns and trends that were captured from the interviews and other aspects that contribute to the findings. The data will be presented through tables, graphs and direct quotations. The chapter begins by providing information on the participants that were part of this study, interpret and evaluate the value of results in accordance with objectives.

4.2.1 ***Profile of participants***

Table 3 demonstrates the geographic profile of participants, key components that appear in the table include age, race, gender, religious affiliation, number of years enrolled as social work students and the field placement sites.

Table3: Geographic profile of participants (n=10)

Demographic factors	Sub-category	Number
Age	19-21	1
	22-24	7
	25-27	1
	28+	1
Race	Black	10
	Other (White, Indian, colored)	0
Gender	Males	3
	Females	7
Religious affiliation	Christianity	9

	None	1
Number of years enrolled	3 years	9
	4 years	1
Field placements sites	Net-care rehabilitation center	3
	Chris Hani Baragwanath hospital	1
	Helen joseph hospital	1
	Refugee's children's project	2
	St Mary's children's home	1
	West-view clinic rehabilitation center	1
	Employee assistance programme	1

Table 2 shows names of students in relation to their gender and age

Table 2: Names of students(pseudonyms)

Pseudonym	**Gender**	**Age**
Bongi	Female	22
Brian	Male	22
Naledi	Female	22
Palesa	Female	31
Gugulethu	Female	22
Samuel	Male	22
Lesego	Female	24
Nomfundo	Female	22
Sfiso	Male	26
Nelisiwe	Female	22

4.3 *DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS*

4.3.1 **Age**

Ten participants took part in the study and completed successfully. Their ages range from 22-31 where seven of them were 22 years of age. The 31 years old participant mentioned that apart from academics and pressure from work she has a house and family issues that need her attention. Her response highlights the necessity to consider different roles that nontraditional students play as that is closely related to their coping methods. Age as a demographic factor played a crucial role in understanding the different roles and commitments that the participants are exposed to, as Dziegielewski, Et al (2004) mentioned that students occupy different roles and therefor need to learn different coping mechanisms to accommodate the roles.

According to Erickson's psychosocial stages of development, the participants who took part in the study are in the intimacy vs isolation stage (Mcleod, 2013). In this stage, young adults are still learning to understand their identity and establish long term relationships, those above 25 are more concerned about forming intimate relationships and have a desire to be part of groups however failure to establish a fixed identity and maintain long committed relationships could lead to isolation. Friends play a significant role in their lives and they have experienced a shift from the immediate connection with their families to initiating new relationships with other people.

Erickson's theory suggest that participants are likely to consider their friendships as one of important systems that provide them with support (McLeod, 2013). The findings support this theory as eight out of ten participants identified their friendships as their support system. The two participants who did not talk about friends mentioned colleagues and supervisors which also provide the students with a need of belonging. One of the participants mentioned that after having a difficult session she would be in contact with her social media friends and use different forms of communication. There seem to be harmony between the participant's ages and their responses, they indicated that important aspects to consider regarding coping mechanisms include the different roles they occupy and their need for friendships through social media and on the personal level.

4.3.2 **Gender and race**

All the participants who took part in the study reported that they classify themselves as black. The study constituted of 7 females and 3 males. In short, most of the participants were black women. Gender was not a focus in this study, however it was expected to find most participants to be women. In a research study conducted by Khunou, Pillay & Nethononda (2012) on student's perception of gender as a career choice, it was reported that social work is a predominately female profession. The male participants who took part in the Khunou, et al., (2012) study perceived therapeutic work as too feminine and male social workers desired to occupy management positions as compared to female social workers.

Adichie (2014) also highlighted that the dominance of females in helping professions like social work and nursing is caused by the way in which socialization exaggerates the differences between men and women. Women are perceived to be nurturing, motherly and natural at emotional labor. All the males reported that they do not need any coping strategy and are not concerned about their emotional functioning for they are perfectly coping. The following extracts illustrate the responses from Naledi a female student and Samuel a male student.

> *There was a time where I did not go to my practicals for two weeks, it's because the case made me emotionally drained, I was just helpless and I could not help the client*- [Naledi]

> *Interviewer: Are you concerned about your emotional and psychological state with regards to difficult cases that you deal with at work****? For me it is weird because it is not something that affect me or makes me worry****"*-[Samuel]

The above responses may suggest that female students are likely to be more emotionally affected by the different cases they engage with as compared to males. For instance, with the above quotes Naledi was not in a good state of mind after the difficult case she had and that affected her everyday functioning. Samuel on the other side was not concerned and does not view therapeutic roles as something that need coping methods. According to Bourdieu's theory of habitus cultural capital play a role in managing their situations, this include personality traits, norms and beliefs. For

instance, in black communities' black men are socialized not to express their emotions, to be strong and courageous and be careful not to demonstrate any form of weakness

4.3.3 **Religion and number of years enrolled at Wits**

Religion can be seen as a support system, nine participants who took part, except one reported that they identify themselves as Christians and two of the participants linked their religious affiliation with their ability to cope. Turner (1996) argues that situations that humans are exposed to are always located in a world of practices, cultural believes and symbols which serves as a method to solve different challenges that they face. With regards to the years of practice one participant indicated that she has been in the field for four years as compared to majority of the participants who have been in the field for 3 years however have not mastered any coping strategy suitable for her.

4.4 **DESCRIPTION OF PLACEMENTS**

Table 3 shows a diagram representation of the placements which the participants were placed, the participants were placed in 7 different settings. Helen Joseph and Chris Hani Baragwanath (CHB) hospital are two public hospitals that provide medical and social services, Helen Joseph caters for adults and exclude children whereas CHB is the 3rd largest hospital in the world and has different specialties. Medical practitioners and other professionals in the field refer the clients to the students based on their professional opinion. In most instances, the students would conduct single sessions with clients because they work with the outpatient clients who do not visit the hospital regularly and others would leave the hospital before the termination of services.

In the literature that was viewed earlier, Badger, Royse and Craig (2008) pointed out that emotionally challenging encounters are enforced by regular exposure to the client's suffering. This could imply that students who are placed at medical setting might have greater chances of encountering emotionally challenging cases because of the nature of the field and dealing with more cases. This is how some participants describes their ECEs.

> *I think the challenge is that most of the cases are traumatic, we have to deal with patients who have been involved in accidents, we work with amputees, go to see a patient who have been recently amputated… I ended up seeing more than 11 or 12 clients*-[Brian]

The above statement comes from a student who was placed at Helen Joseph Hospital and had sessions with approximately 12 different clients. The field instruction at third year requires the students to have two long term clients and two short term clients (Field Instruction III, 2017). According to Holliman (1997) students who are placed at hospital setting are likely to deal with cases that affects their job satisfaction. Three students who were placed at Net-care rehabilitation took part in the study and are prone to emotionally challenging encounters. Net-care rehabilitation hospital provide psychosocial and medical support to patients with acquired disabilities.

Two participants were placed at refugee's children's project, the agency provide support to women and children who are refugees though it was pointed out that the agency does not have proper facility. The participants who were placed at the refugee's center reported that the lack of resources has contributed to the challenges they faced as compared to those placed at private settings. The challenges include infrastructure, equipment and space. Other placements include employee assistant programme which provide counselling, crisis management and de-briefing to employees, St Mary's children hospital provide children with accommodation and psychological support and lastly West view clinic rehabilitation center is an alcohol and substance abuse recovery center that prepares the clients for recovery. Next consideration is given to the role played by students at field instruction sites.

4.4.1 **Role of the students in the placements and the environment**

All the students who took part in the study reported that they played the role of counsellors as that is expected from them. The role involves actively listening to the client's concerns with an aim of understanding and responding according to the nature of the concern. The role requires empathetic presence and use of relevant theory for the case. Figley (2010) pointed out that exposure to the client's concerns makes the students social workers vulnerable to the cost of caring. The other roles involved mediating between the client and significant others, working with multi-disciplinary team and that of a supervisee. Below is a response from Bongi, one of the students placed Net-care rehabilitation center.

> *I'm responsible for doing psychosocial evaluation, organize a family meeting with multi-disciplinary team and I will be facilitating without supervision. I focus on how best the hospital can integrate the patient back into the society, are they accommodated at home.*

> *I handle cases of patients who were injured at work. I work very closely with therapists*-[Bongi].

The above response suggest that students placed at hospitals are given platform to put their skills to practice and interact with different systems. However, regardless of the different tasks expected from them, therapy was the center and common among all the students. According to Bourdieu's theory of habitus, every field has its roles, rules, stakes and regulations. In every field, members are positioned into different roles and there are goals that must be achieved to be successful in the field. This applies to student social workers placed in different fields, they experience a pressure. Pressure can emerge from the need to successfully transit to professional training, to demonstrate their competency and provide good standard of work to their supervisors. Contrast to the comment made by Bongi, Lesego a student placed at refugee pointed out that her role and occupation produced feelings of helplessness:

> *Sometimes it makes me feel like the profession is useless, sometimes what we do is talking about issues but not really finding solutions to the issues, I feel like I'm not doing anything to help anyone*-[Lesego].

The above extracts highlight that the type of placements contribute to emotionally challenging encounters, while Bongi sounded proud and excited about the work that the field entrusted her with. It seemed that her role is beyond counselling, she is expected to account and engage with other professions as well as beneficiaries. The role has a potential of either promoting job satisfaction or producing misery. Lesego on the other side found the work miserable and not rewarding. She felt helpless as compared to Bongi who felt empowered.

Four participants found the agency environments enabling, diverse and found it easy to adapt. According to Bourdieu's theory of habitus, if there is a misfit between people and their environment then incongruence will result. Student's connection to their field placement is likely to affect their perception on the field.

4.4.2 Student's **attendance and duration at the placement**

Half (5) of the students who participated in the study indicated that they attend most of the lectures, four out of ten students attend few lectures and only one attend all the lectures. Reasons behind attendance were based on using the lecture slot to have a session with clients and in other

cases to complete their assignments. There was no identified connection between student's attendance and the emotionally challenging encounters during field work. All the participants who indicated that they attend most classes together with those who attends had similar challenges, however, there is no connection between attendance and duration at the placement.

Figure 4.3 below represent the frequency and number of hours that students spend at the placemen. It is evident that most of the students who participated in the study visited the placements twice a week where they had to work for 4 hours each day.

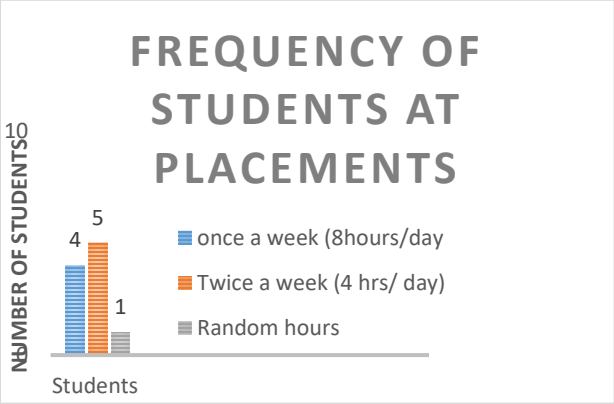

Figure 3: Frequency of students at placements

The students who went to the agency twice a week provided reasons such as majoring in sociology, meeting the field instruction requirements regarding hours and number of sessions. Those who were going once a week were majoring in psychology and had enough hours while the students who had random hours reported that the placement was not organized and their attendance was not monitored.

Information on the frequency at the field placement raised questions on whether the time spend at the placement contribute to emotionally challenging encounters. In a study that was conducted by Machritchie (2006) it was pointed out that therapist who have sessions with clients on a regular basis are more susceptible to emotionally challenging encounters. However, in the literature that was reviewed by Badger, Royse and Craig (2008) it was indicated that the cause can also come from the intention to assist the client. It is recommended that the students visit the agency once a week as that would increase their chances of attending all their lectures. The

following discussion illustrate the encounters that students face and their personal experiences on the fields.

4.5 *TYPES OF EMOTIONALLY CHALLENGING ENCOUNTERS*

The findings suggest that some of the factors that were identified as challenging by the students include lack of respect by multi-disciplinary team, making the difference, traumatic cases and the type of clients that students engage with. Figure below demonstrate that lack of respect from multidisciplinary team was identified as an important factor.

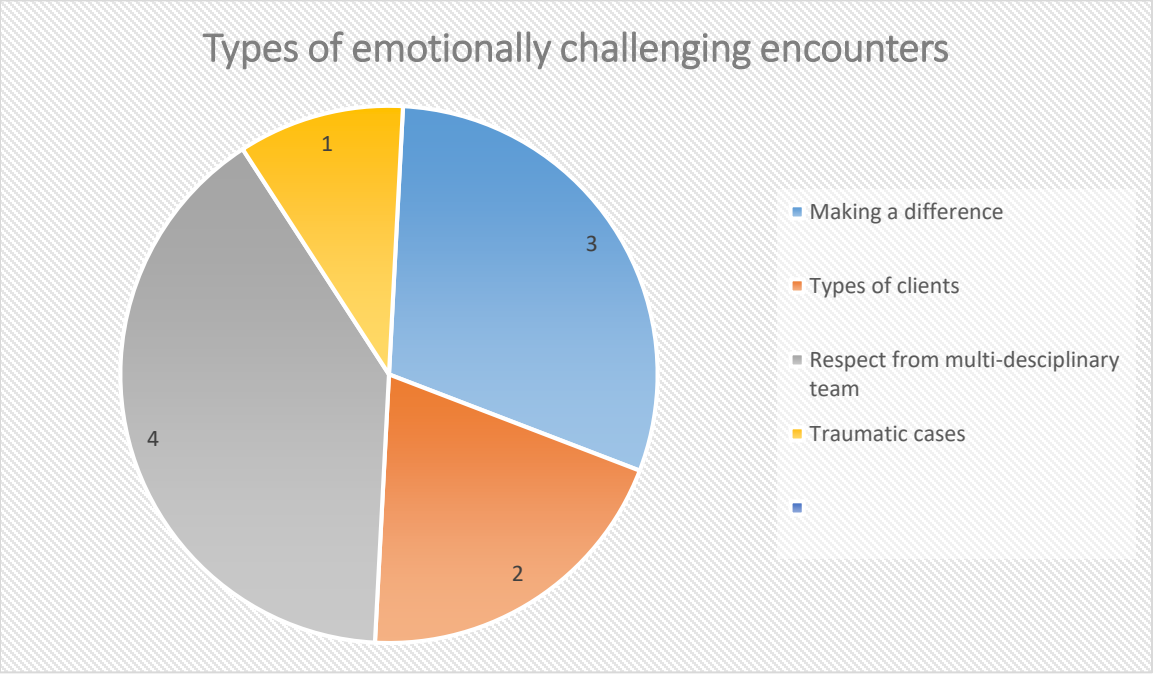

Figure4: types of emotionally challenging encounters

4.5.1 **Lack of respect by the Multi-disciplinary team (MDT)**

Four out of ten participants who took part in the study communicated about the way they are negatively perceived by other professionals and the lack of recognition at the placements. They indicated that the attitudes and conduct from their colleagues disregard their abilities first as students and the important role they play as student social workers. Some aspects that were pointed out include the tendency of senior colleagues to interrupt the work of the students without apologies or any form of communication. Brian, a student placed at Helen Joseph hospital mentioned that social workers are negatively perceived by other professions, he said:

> *Something that was discouraging, lack of professionalism in multi-disciplinary team. For instance, I had a patient who died, I was not informed. We were in the nursing station with the patient's family, the nurse came in and announced "O shonile not long ago" Which means he died not long ago. The way she announced it was unprofessional, it was shocking to the mother as well-* [*Brian*].

This response imply that the different professions play a role in the student's transition to the professional environment and are likely to contribute to the encounters they face. Stokvholt and Ronnestad (1992) are of the opinion that the student's central task is to imitate experts at the practice level as that create a foundation for development. When experts fail to recognize and embrace the work of the students then the students begin to question their competency and abilities. In the literature that was reviewed, it was highlighted that one of the factors that contribute to ECEs include traumatic factors, however the findings prove otherwise. They suggest that the encounters move beyond therapeutic cases. Below is a commend made by Gugulethu, student placed at children's home:

> *Given an opportunity to work at your field full time would you consider it: I don't think so, because of the people in that place. They are not nice. I would love to work with children but not that place, I feel like people don't recognize us, when I was doing my practical's people will just pass by without greeting-* [Gugulethu].

The comment suggests that in other cases the difficult encounter is not necessary the nature of the work but rather dealing with different people that display questionable personalities. While Brian was concerned about the professional conduct of multi-disciplinary team Guguletho mentioned their personal conduct that she regards as negative. The two comments introduce the element on power-dynamics. Social work students occupy an inferior position in the work place, first as students, supervisees, social workers and the fact that they are not financially rewarded. Different negative attitudes and personalities are common in most working environments, however the students identify that as a challenge because they are susceptible to abusive treatment (Branch, Ramsay & Barker,2013). The department of social work might have to consider introducing content on adjusting to work place and power dynamics.

4.5.2 **Making a difference**

Three participants reported that there is no sense of satisfaction in field work. The difficulty in measuring the outcomes of the intervention, not being able to help the client directly but work according to the boundaries. Social work students feel like there is only little they can do, in most cases the help involves empowering the client through case work. Engaging with the client without providing them with the help they need is said to produce feelings of dissatisfaction, refer to annexure A1 The following comments were made by Bongi and Lesego respectively:

> *It is difficult in most instances, as social workers we are called a helping profession, but the thing is I'm not supposed to help but rather show you the steps you need to take to get help, not directly help. We do not give a man fish, we teach them how to fish and the process is long and is very difficult. Especially since we did not have preparation on what to expect*-[Bongi]

> *I think it's more emotional dealing with the type of people we are dealing with, the organization does not get to the roots of helping a person. Sometimes you cannot provide what the client needs, it gets emotional knowing that you do home visits but at the end of the day you don't help a person* –[lesego].

The above comment imply that students strive to make a difference in the work that they do and failure to make the difference produce feelings of helplessness. The quote by lesego highlights her feelings of helplessness and frustration with the lack of resources and could refer to structural and societal social justice problems at an environmental level that include the agency's administration which was pointed out to be disorganized, finances and modification of policies to promote effective change. Bongi does have the necessary resources as compared to Lesego, her concern is on the role that social workers play. She feels that talking to someone with challenges without providing essential input is not effective.

Kurland and Hasson-Gilad (2015) found out that there is a correlation between job satisfaction and job performance. Job satisfaction is enhanced by the organization through providing the workers

with necessary resources, an enabling environment for them to work effectively and positive feedback to boost their performance. This is where the importance of supervision is highlighted. Supervisors continuously interact with the students and provide feedback regarding the work they present.

Social wok profession is different from other field where the effect of the intervention is evident or measurable, in most cases the practitioners do not have guarantee that they were successful in assisted the client. Method to assess the intervention and how the practitioners have applied themselves could be employed, particularly the consistent use of evaluation forms.

4.5.3 **Types of clients and traumatic cases**

Two out of 10 participants identified the type of clients as a challenge in the field placement. This involves the type of clients that are referred to the students. Different clients that the participants encountered include people who are abusing substances, those with medical challenges like chronical conditions and physical disabilities, children who resides at the orphanage, professionals who use the employment and wellness services and women and children who are refugees. One participant was providing services to the employees, to clients who are intellectual, competent and older. From her personal view, the experience was very intimidating and her conduct was always questioned. The other one mentioned that she was intimidated by client's identity:

> *Something that hinders my work is working with aged people as a young person, you know old people tend to underestimate your abilities before you provide them with services, they already make their judgement that this person is not going to help me-[Naledi]*

> *It was quiet intimidating, communicating with white people and other professionals. imagine if you counsel a professor from Rhodes*-[Bongi]

The above quotes suggest that students are likely to not only be intimidated by their colleagues and other professions in the field, but also their clients. Earlier on power dynamics was mentioned in the context of the students and colleagues and now it is brought on the interaction between the client and the supervisor. Foucault (1995) argues that experts use tactics and knowledge to express their power and normalize the people, he further says that knowledge is a pursuit for power. According to Foucault's notion of power the feeling of intimidation could have emerged from the

way in which both participants view their client as more intellectual, knowledgeable and professional. In this case using techniques and methods to assist the client could be difficult. Some of the factors that are linked with power relations between the student and the client include class, gender, status and race, all of which are relevant given the apartheid history of South Africa.

One of the participants mentioned traumatic cases as a challenge faced by students during field work. She highlighted that one must prepare for the unexpected because not every encounter has a potential of being anticipated. Some of the cases that were reported as traumatizing include the death of a patient, preparing a patient who will go through a process of amputation for the second time. Below is the response by the participant who encountered death of a client:

> *My first patient died and I was like what do I do now. Reflecting back on it you feel so bad, he did not want to be amputated and I tried convincing him why supportive counselling is important. What if he wanted to spend his last days at home*-[Bongi]

The above quote provides the assumption that traumatic encounters during field work are inevitable and if unresolved like the case of Bongi they are likely to leave the students with feelings of guilt. However, the challenge moves beyond the exposure to the encounter, it also include the ability to assist the client. This section has achieved one of the research objective, which was to understand the types of emotionally challenging encounters the students have encountered during field work. The next discussion will focus on meanings that students attach to field instruction and their roles as social work students

4.6 ***MEANINGS GIVEN TO FI BY STUDENTS***

Six of the participants who took part in the study described their roles as exhausting. Roles that social work students occupy include as students, interns at the field placement and that of a supervisee. Exhaustion emerged from engaging with emotionally challenging cases and failing to provide necessary help, weekly report writing as well as reports requested by the agency. They do not view themselves as people who play significant roles but rather focus most of their time on paperwork. Two out of ten participants regret choosing social work and they came to that realization after they commenced with their practical's, they have indicated that they are considering moving to a different course.

Two participants reported that as much as the field can be exhausting, positive feedback received from the clients is encouraging. It reminds them that they are doing something important. Figley (2010) pointed out that counsellors have a need to satisfaction, failure to feel satisfied could result in feelings of helplessness and exhaustion

4.7 *STUDENT'S PERCEPTIONS ON EMOTIONALLY CHALLLENGING ENCOUNTERS*

When reviewing the literature, the emphasis was placed on traumatic cases as the cause of emotionally challenging encounters. The present study holds a different view, it acknowledged that difficult cases does contribute to some extent, however there are other factors that should be given attention. The current section would provide a detailed information regarding student's views on the encounters. The figure below provides an overview of student's perceptions on emotionally challenging encounters.

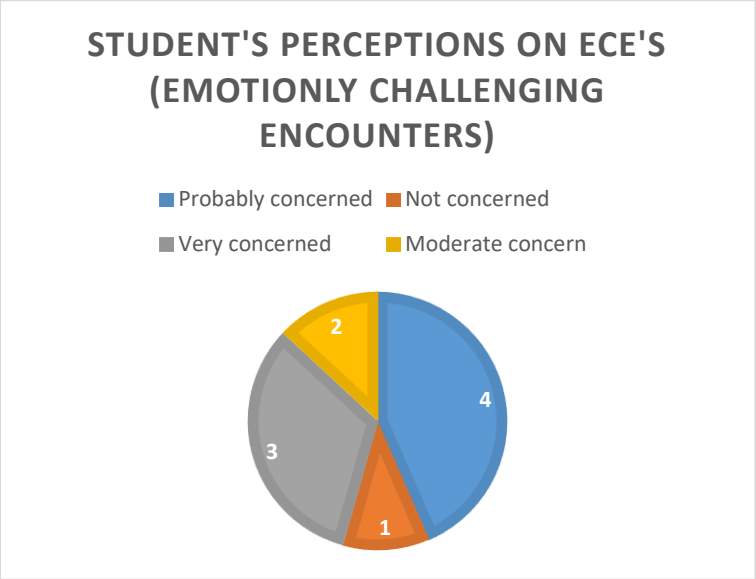

Figure 5 Student's perceptions on emotionally challenging encounters (n=10)

Four out of 10 students who participated in the study indicated that they were concerned about their emotional and psychological state however it is not something they pay attention to. They reported that it is hard not to internalize the pain but supervision play a crucial role in allowing them to cope. Three participants demonstrated concern where they feel a need for intervention followed by two students who were concerned but did not see necessity for any form of

intervention. One participant was not concerned, he responded that his upbringing prepared him for the difficult cases that he is dealing with at work and-said:

> *"Coming back to my personal experience, I used to visit the hospital a lot, I learned to deal with that, I used to suppress it sometimes when you are in hospital those thoughts come back, it was more of a preparation. I'm also emotionally intelligent, some cases I will realize that they are painful but I won't show any remorse, I'm less sensitive" – [Brian]*.

The above quote comes from one of the participant who was placed at hospital, based on his communication it is evident that his upbringing contributed to how he has learned to manage difficult encounters at work. This support Bourdieu's theory of habitus on that different aspects that contributed to a person's habitus play a crucial role on how they cope in the environment.

4.7.1 ***Student's consideration regarding future employment at their field placement sites***

Seven out of ten people who participated in the study pointed out that they will never consider working in their current placement full time. The reasons that were provide include lack of passion for the profession, the profession was described as draining and overwhelming, the lack of autonomy and working with people who do not show respect for social workers. Those who replied yes mentioned that they have passion for social work and that they love the type of clients that they provide services to.

This aspect was included with an aim of exploring student's reasons for either choosing to stay or to leave the field placement. It is believed that the reason to either stay or leave can be motivated by the encounters they face during field work. Having seven out of 10 participants with no desire to work at their field is a concern, in a sense that social work students are trained to work in the communities and promote change. The findings support the assumption made by Figley (2010) on that social workers come to different streams like admin, lecturing and other job titles that they do not consider as emotionally challenging.

4.7.2 *METHODS USED TO MANAGE EMOTIONALLY CHALLENGING ENCOUNTERS*

The participants mentioned a variety of methods that have helped them deal with emotionally challenging encounters. The methods were personal, provided by the university and others by the agency. Some of the methods include supervision, debriefing, social media and support from family and friends. Below is a diagram representation of the types of support systems that were highlighted. The graph is arranged into three categories, actions that students take, resources available and support systems that they approach.

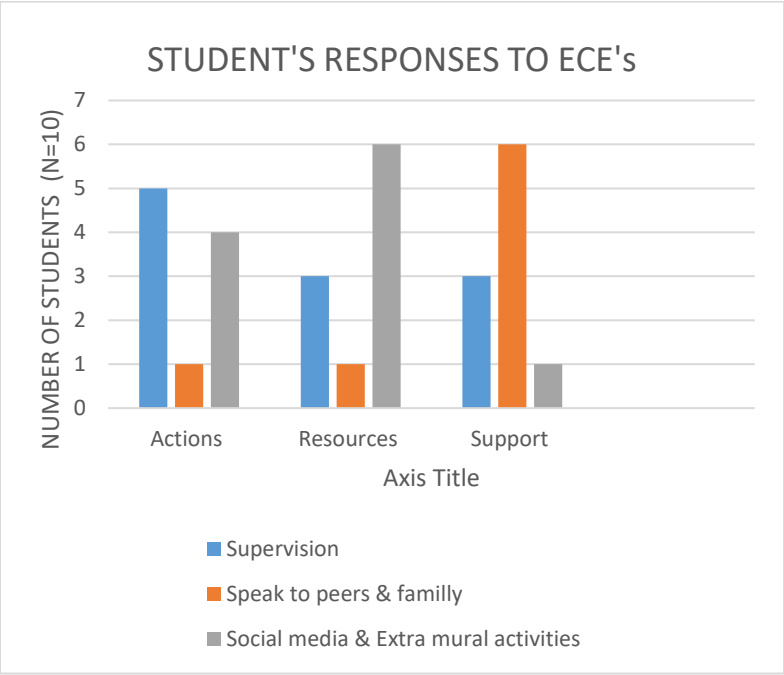

Figure6: methods employed by students

4.7.2.1 **Supervision**

Half (5) of the students who participated in the study indicated that they consult with their supervisors before or after the session. They mentioned that supervision has always been helpful and it played an important role. Though regarding supervision contradictory perceptions emerged. The following extracts illustrates the different perceptions with regards to supervision and other methods of coping.

> *My supervisor always played an important role. I was supervised before and after seeing any patient and because I am also a Christian and I think that I just have to be-* [Brian].

> *I don't go to the supervisor, she will tell me what to do. I remember I had a client, who was talking about how she was moved from one place to the other, sometimes I felt like I was too attached, I mean she is still a child, I felt like my supervisor did not understand what it was for me*"-[Gugulethu]

The first extract by Brian suggest that supervision plays a crucial role if the supervisor is actively involved and meet the student's needs regularly. According to Carl Rogers person-centered approach, supervision is more like a therapy for the supervisee (Dunbar-Krige & Fritz, 2006). Supervision provide the students with a platform to communicate their challenges and learn how to deal with certain aspects during field work. Gugu on the other hand mentioned that she hardly makes use of supervision, her responses imply that she did not find it useful but in fact she was passive participant. Supervision according to Dunbar-Krige and Fritz (2006) should be centered around the supervisee, this could be a challenge to supervisors because they are likely to use control and to demonstrate their power.

4.7.2.2 **Support from family and friends**

Six out of ten participants emphasized on the importance of consulting family and friends and identified this aspect as very supportive and reliable. Extra mural activities can be resourceful according to the participate, particularly games, social medial and religious activities. Supervision was considered as a resource and a support system, however it was emphasized that it depends on the type of supervisor. Two participants who were supervised by the same supervisor indicated that their supervisor has been helpful and managed to make them feel at ease. They said:

> *My supervisor is one and a half, very helpful, very hands on. Stop pushing students back to the supervisor if it's not helping, if there's a problem it should be dealt with*-[Palesa]

> *My supervisor is hands on. she provided us with de-briefing and one on one sessions. Emotionally it helps to take it off. There are days when you don't see your supervisor for weeks and that week you will have a heavy heart until you talk to your supervisor. They are emotionally challenging but you can manage when you have a good supervisor*-[Bongi]

The two quotes by Bongi and Palesa suggest that supervision can be regarded as a support system based on the role it plays in the student's lives. The two quotes imply that the supervisor can be present in the student's lives but not have an impact. The course coordinator is available for consultation, CCDU is an institution available at the university of the Witwatersrand, it offers offer counselling and support for students and the services are free and accessible. Gender equity violence and student development center empower the students and protect them from any harm.

4.8 ***SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER***

This chapter presented the findings that were gathered from the 10 interviews. The findings were interpreted and analyzed in the form of graphs and tables. Major themes that emerged from this chapter include factors that contribute to emotionally challenging encounters, student's perceptions on emotionally challenging encounters and methods used to manage the encounters. Dominant factors that were reported to contribute to the challenging encounters include failure to make a difference, types of clients, lack of respect from multi-disciplinary teams and traumatic cases. However, lack of respect from MDT was highlighted as the most contributing factor though other factors were mentioned to also have an impact. Regarding perceptions on ECEs, most participants reported that they are concerned about their emotional and psychological state. The last section focused on the coping strategies employed by students, these include supervision, support from family and friends, social media and extra mural activities. This chapter addressed the objectives that were set by the study. This include different resources that students employ and meanings students attach to ECEs. The chapter emphasized that encounters move beyond traumatic cases. The next chapter will discuss recommendations and conclusion from the results.

CHAPTER 5

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary aim of this study was to explore methods that third year social work students employ to manage emotionally challenging encounters. Ten participants took part in the study and face to face structured interviews were employed. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data and the dominant themes that emerged were highlighted in the previous chapter. This chapter will pay attention to the summary of findings, recommendations and concluding comments.

5.1 ***SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS***

The research instrument was divided along the five themes that were influenced by the reviewed literature, the themes include demographic information, information about the placement, student's personal habits, students' perceptions about their roles as students and student's methods to manage ECEs. The demographic component highlighted the different responses of females as compared to males. Female students indicated to be more concerned about difficult encounters and the need to address the challenges whereas male students reported to not viewing the encounters as a challenge that needs to be attended to.

The response from the male students was linked to the idea that social work is a female profession. The study had an assumption that traumatic cases could be the cause of emotionally challenging encounter, however based on the findings that was not the case. Some of the factors that were identified include failure to make a difference, types of clients, lack of respect from multi-disciplinary team and traumatic cases. Lack of respect from multi-disciplinary team was the dominant cause of ECE's.

Four participants mentioned that social work field instruction is exhausting, the exhaustion resulted from report writing and the failure to successfully provide the client with the help they need. Even though the participants experienced difficulties in the field, they had different methods employed which include supervision, support from family and friends, social media and extra mural activities. Supervision was highlighted to be the most effective method provided that the supervisor is present emotionally and academically.

5.1.1***Types of emotionally challenging encounters that students have encountered***

- Failure to make a difference (feelings of helplessness emerge)
- Types of clients (Amputated patients, intellectuals, drug abusers)
- Lack of respect from multi-disciplinary team (Dis-regard student's opinions, unprofessional communication, unrecognised)
- Traumatic cases

5.1.2 ***Meanings given to FI by students***

- Exhaustion
- Paperwork
- Need for positive feedback

5.1.3 ***Method used by students to manage emotionally challenging encounters***

- Supervision
- Support from family and friends
- Social media and extra mural activities

5.2 ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

Three participants were more concerned about the criteria used to employ supervisors and the form used to write report. This aspect was cited by most of the students who took part in the study. They mentioned that supervisors must contribute to their educational growth and have passion for social work. Two participants did not see the need for coping mechanisms, according to them the issue is with the system. They mentioned that the system must change before they can start thinking of mechanisms. Furthermore, one student raised the issue of time management. She understands it as one strategy than could enable social work students to manage emotionally challenging encounters. Below is a table with a summary of recommendations made by students.

Content	Sub-category	Number of students

Recommendation	Selection of supervisors	3
	Reformative curriculum	2
	Report writing format	3
	Not sure	1
	Time management strategies	1

Table 5: Recommendations made by students

5.2.1 ***Recommendations to the department***

It is recommended that the department introduces content on work student's adjustment to the work environment and power dynamics. This recommendation was motivated by four participants who passionately mentioned the negative conducts from their colleagues. Some of the dominant responses include tendency to be overworked, expectations that other professions have from students and different modes of communication. The findings suggest that social work students are susceptible to bullying at the work place because of their social status. It could be said that in other cases the students could have endured conducts that likely contributed to the challenging encounters.

5.2.2 ***Recommendations to the course-coordinator***

The course coordinator plays a crucial role in designing the manual that will be used to facilitate the student's learning and is also a mediator between the students and the supervisor. It is recommended that the course coordinator introduces debriefing sessions for students which could be facilitated by an external therapist. This is crucial in a sense that students are not given platform to ventilate their feelings regarding difficult encounters and failure to that results in negative perception towards the profession, employing personal skills like detaching from the world, change in sleeping patterns and others.

5.2.3 ***Recommendations to the supervisors***

Supervisors play a crucial role in the student's development and transition to the work environment. It is recommended that that the supervisor must monitor the student's adjustment's process paying attention to different aspects like their coping methods, their personalities, personal background and how they are adaption to the environment. Rapport between the student and the supervisor is very crucial and must be taking into consideration.

5.2.4 ***Recommendations to the students***

It is recommended that the students need to learn to consistently evaluate the intervention employed, this recommendation was motivated by the student's need to made a difference and be aware of the difference they make. In social work profession, change is not always evident and in most cases, it takes time and it is difficult to measure. According to the findings all the participants who took part in the study are not interested in utilising university resources like CCDU, SDLU and GEO. It is recommended that the students should make the best out of the resources.

5.2.5 ***Recommendations for future research***

It is recommended that the future research should pay attention to the impact of supervision as a coping strategy and support system employed by students. To extend from the present study, more attention should be given to the correlation between supervision and student's emotionally challenging encounters.

5.3 ***CONCLUDING COMMENTS***

In closing, student's social workers encounter difficult challenges during field work and that is inevitable. The findings pointed out that different encounters have different causes. In all the causes that were pointed out traumatic cases and lack of respect from the multi-disciplinary team were the most dominant and should be given further attention. It could be said that some social work students do not have coping strategies, however supervision is one of the effective methods that students employ but the approach used by the supervisor also plays a crucial role.

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ANNEXTURE A

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT **ANNEXTURE A1**

Date of interview:12 October 2017

Name of interviewer: Mbono Mthimkhulu

Number of people present in the session: 2

Person interviewed: BONGI (pseudonym)

Verbatim account of the interview

I: interviewer

R: Respondent

Process
I: Hello, hope you had a great day. Thank you for your willingness to take part in the study. As I communicated with you, my research topic is based on coping strategies employed by third year students to manage emotionally challenging encounters. Please keep it in mind that you are not forced to participate, you can withdraw from participating if you do not wish to continue, ask for clarity if you don't understand and you are not forced to discuss anything that you are not comfortable with. R: (Nodded her head) alright (The interviewer and the respondent went over the interview schedule, the interviewee was provided with an overview of the themes that would be covered. The interviewer handed over the consent form which was signed, the responded was asked to provide a pseudonym. the interviewer requested to tape record the conversation. I: Please provide me with your demographic information, starting with age? R: 22 I: Race R: Black I: Gender R: Female I: Religious affiliation R: Christianity I: Number of years as a social work student?

R: 3

I: Where are you currently placed?

R: Net care rehabilitation hospital

I: Now we will move to information about your placement. How would you describe your field placement? briefly describe the services that are provided

R: Rehabilitation hospital that provide services to people with acquired disabilities, it can be accidents, amputation or a fracture or any type of disability

I: Briefly explain your role in your placement and the work that you do?

R: My job as a social work student I do supportive counselling

I: Please explain that in depth, what do you mean by supportive counselling.

R: I'm responsible for doing psychosocial evaluation, organize a family meeting with multi-disciplinary team and I will be facilitating without supervision. I focus on how best the hospital can integrate the patient back into the society, are they accommodated at home. I handle cases of patients who were injured at work. I work very closely with therapists. As a student social worker, it really touches you. It is difficult in most instances, as social workers we are called a helping profession, but the thing is I'm not supposed to help but rather show you the steps you need to take to get help, not directly help. We do not give a man fish, we teach them how to fish and the process is long and is very difficult. Especially since we did not have preparation on what to expect.

I: How do you feel about the environment which your environment is situated in?

R: For me it's a good working environment, it was not easy at first but I understand that as humans we should transit to other environments. Yes, English is not my first language but I learned to accept and learn. It was quiet intimidating, communicating with white people and other professionals. imagine if you counsel a professor from Rhodes.

I: What would you consider as challenging? something that will make it difficult for you to do your work effectively.

R: I think preparing for the unexpected. It's not like your acute hospital, you don't expect patient to die. My first patient died and I was like what do I do now. reflecting on it you feel so bad, he did not want to be amputated and I tried convincing him why supportive counselling is important. What if he wanted to spend his last days at home.

I: How often do you go to your placement?

R: because I'm a sociology student, I go twice a week, Wednesday and Tuesday.
I: from what time till what time:
R: Tuesday from 10 to 16:00 and Wednesday from 12:00 to 16:00 so I can cover the 8 hours
I: Given an opportunity to work on you field full time, would you consider it?
R: Definitely, I would. It's a challenging environment, it challenges you to be a better person, not break you. I am passionate about social work.
I: How would you describe your grades, what are your thoughts about them?
R: I just know that I can do better, I am not an average nor an A student. Sometimes you have to compromise, social work consumes a lot especially field. Report writing. I'm writing reports for both the agency and the and the field instruction.
I: Moving to another theme, please describe your personal experience as a social work student, say something about how they personally make you feel.
R: They are days where they make you feel like, can I just quit social work. but once you realize the change you make in people's lives, I think social work challenges yourself drive, your self-motivation. it will make you doubt yourself in so many levels. It can be discouraging, what is challenging is the emotional strain the intensity of it. Dealing with people's problems is hard not to internalize the pain. You find that there are many issue that you can relate with.
I: Would you say that the challenges that social work students face are different from other students?
R: I definitely think that, yes in psychology they deal with counselling but in social work is very different. We look at the client's family
I: Are you concerned about your emotional and psychological state with regards to difficult cases that you deal with at work.
R: I wouldn't really say that, because my supervisor is hands on. she provided us with de-briefing and one on one sessions. Emotionally it helps to take it off. There are days when you don't see your supervisor for weeks and that week you will have a heavy heart until you talk to your supervisor. They are emotionally challenging but you can manage when you have a good supervisor.
I: Do you sometimes feel like difficult cases that you are handling are affecting you, it can be that they are affecting your moods, your social life or your growth?

R: Not really, I don't think they affect your growth, they prompt your growth. It challenges us to be better and think on our toes.

I: You mentioned that you once had a patient who died, I want to know how that impacted you.

R: It really was not easy, it was traumatizing. blamed myself, if I had allowed the patient to go home maybe he would not have died like that, what if it was God's plan.

I: We are moving to section B, will ask questions that you have not answered yet. What are some of the resources that you use to help you manage the stress that you encounter.

R: Taking time to your elf, for instance on Saturday is my e time, I don't touch any school work unless I have a test or assignment. I can either eat junk food or go out. So, I think taking time to yourself, self-loving can really be helpful

I: alright, do you have support system?

R: Yes, I do, at home they are very supportive. Most of my friends were social work students at some point but they all quit, they do understand and are always there for me.

I: Last question, if we were to suggest coping strategies to the department what will you recommend?

R: I think they really need to check the supervisors, they must make sure that they are passionate about social work. I don't know what I learned from my previous supervisor. supervisors play a crucial role.

I: Alright, thank you so much for your time, we have come to the end of our interview.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT **ANNEXTURE A2**

Date of interview:12 October 2017

Name of interviewer: Mbono Mthimkhulu

Number of people present in the session: 2

Person interviewed: BRIAN (pseudonym)

Verbatim account of the interview

I: Interviewer

R: Respondent

I: Hello, thank you for agreeing to meet with me.
R: It's my pleasure, I know that this will be me next year
I: You are considerate, I appreciate that. As I communicated with you previously, my name is Mbono Mthimkhulu a fourth-year social work research student. My research is based on coping strategies employed by third year social work students to manage emotionally challenging encounters. Our interview will approximately take 30 to 40 minutes. Please be reminded that you are not forced to participate, if you don't wish to continue you can withdraw, you will use a pseudonym and the conversation will be recorded if you consent.
R: The respondent read the consent form and signed it.

(The interviewer and the respondent went over the interview schedule, the interviewee was provided with an overview of the themes that would be covered. The interviewer handed over the consent form which was signed, the responded was asked to provide a pseudonym. the interviewer requested to tape record the conversation.
I: Please provide me with your demographic information, starting with age?
R: 22
I: Race
R: Black
I: Gender
R: Male
I: Religious affiliation
R: Christianity

I: Number of years as a social work student?

R: 3

I: Where are you currently placed?

R: Helen Joseph hospital

I: Now we will start with the information about your placement, how would you describe your placement? Briefly describe the services that are provided.

R: Ok, Helen joseph is a hospital that provide services to only adults, no maternity or pediatric. It's a government hospital.

I: Alright, briefly explain your role in your placement and the work that you do as a social work student.

R: So, my role was to do counselling, debriefing, referral to external services, we used to deal with para-suicides patients where we must provide them with counselling, we had to do psycho-social assessment on patients with knee replacements and other surgeries. We assessed the social aspect of it, the family system, if patients are willing to comply with the hospital requirements or the surgery itself, if they are emotionally ready.

I: How do you feel about the environment which your placement is situated in? Think about the safety, culture, language and other factors.

R: Well in terms of the environment, personally I think it was enabling, when it comes to professionalism, because it's a hospital setting. We are dealing with real issues, though yes, I will do some mistakes but my supervisor will work with me on that, but also, I feel like its multi-cultural, embracing diversity was highly important.

I: So, you are saying that you found it easy to adapt?

R: I can say I found it easy based on my personality

I: You think your personality to some extend contributed to how you cope

R: It did contribute to how I cope

I: What other professions do you find in the placement?

R: You find doctors, nurses, psychologists, different doctors based on their specialties axillary social workers.

I: What would you consider as challenging in your placement? Something that makes it difficult for you to do your work effectively?

R: I think the challenge is that most of the cases are traumatic, we have to deal with patients who have been involved in accidents, we work with amputees, go to see a patient who have been recently amputated, there were people in my family who experienced the same thing, having to deal with those patients was a reminder but how I coped with that is that in debriefing, will discuss it with my colleagues. Realizing that you are not the only one always helps.

I: So, you are saying that after realizing that you will discuss it with you colleagues

R: Yes

I: How often do you go to your placement? Do you go once a week, twice a week, anytime when you are available?

R: I was supposed to go once a work, but because of my schedule and that I was doing sociology I had to go twice a week sometimes will miss other lectures. Only psychology students had a free day in the week. Tuesday 11 until 16:00 and Friday spend four hours also.

I: Given an opportunity to work at your field full time, would you consider it?

R: Full time, I think I have adapted, it will be easy to go back to the field, but I don't see myself working at the field all my life because it is quiet draining.

I: You mentioned that it is quiet draining, so the draining part does it come from the exposure to difficult cases?

R: Exposure to that and also the amount work that we do, there are also challenges with regards to working with the multiple disciplinary team. How our profession is perceived also. What happens is that before I see a patient the doctor must have referred, they only refer when they feel stuck. For example, if the patient needs placement and has been is hospital for 8 weeks, we are then pressured to speed up the process.

I: Now we move to another theme, your personal habits. How would you describe your academic performance, what are your thoughts about it?

R: I think I'm getting what I deserve, they are quite good.

I: Can you say they are likely to be affected by your work at your placement, or can you say your field work somewhat hinder your academic progress.
R: I think I am doing well, but I would have done better if field instruction was not structured the way it is. Because you must compromise a lot, having to meet the field instruction requirements.
I: How would you describe your consistency at the placement? Do you meet the field instruction requirements, including number of hours, number of sessions, using the necessary skills?
R: In terms of meeting the requirements it was quite a challenge, we were expected to have 6 long term clients and two short term. In the hospital setting it is different, the clients are referred, doctors assess if the patient needs intervention. Sometimes the intervention might require only two sessions or three, I ended up seeing more than 11 or 12 clients, we had one or two sessions. Some of them I see them today and the following day they are discharged. during the holidays, I will go there the whole week consistently.
I: How would you describe your attendance in class?
R: My attendance was very very bad, as I had to balance and skip other classes.

I: Moving to another theme, your perception of your life as a social work student. Pease describe your personal experience as a social work student doing your practicals at your placement? say something about how they personally make you feel?
R: You know, at first, I thought that the environment was not just for me, but over time you adapt, I fell in love with it, I remember you know when you deal with patients they always provide feedback they are like wow thank you for helping me, you know those words, that was quiet encouraging, I tend to realize that we are making a difference in someone's life and that is encouraging.
I: So, you say that the feedback you receive from the service users and other people, lift you up.
R: Yes, it lifts me up
I: Are you concerned about your emotional and psychological state with regards to difficult cases that you deal with? Do you think that the cases that you are handling are affecting your moods, social life?

R: Coming back to my personal experience, I used to visit the hospital a lot, I learned to deal with that, I used to suppress it sometimes when you are in hospital those thoughts come back, it was more of a preparation. I'm also emotionally intelligent, some cases I will realize that they are painful but I won't show any remorse, I'm less sensitive.

I: Can you describe aspects of your placement that was experienced by you as discomforting and discouraging. You can provide an example if necessary.

R: Something that was discouraging, lack of professionalism in multi-disciplinary team. For instance, I had a patient who died, I was not informed. We were in the nursing station with the patient's family, the nurse came in and announced "O shonille not long ago" Which means he died not long ago. The way she announced it was unprofessional, it was shocking to the mother as well. Another case, I was working with a patient who was amputated below the knee, because the virus has spread they had to amputate the upper knee also. The patient did not understand. I had to explain it to him, familiarize myself with medical terms.

I: Moving to the last aspect, I want to know how you respond to those challenges. Describe some of your actions after you have conducted a long and difficult session with your client.

R: You mentioned this one, we can skip it.

I: What are some of the resources that you use to help you manage the stress you encounter?

R: My supervisor, always played an important role. I was supervised before and after seeing any patient. Personally, some of the things I tend to suppress them, things that I cannot change I get over them.

I: What happens when you get to your place, how do you manage that.

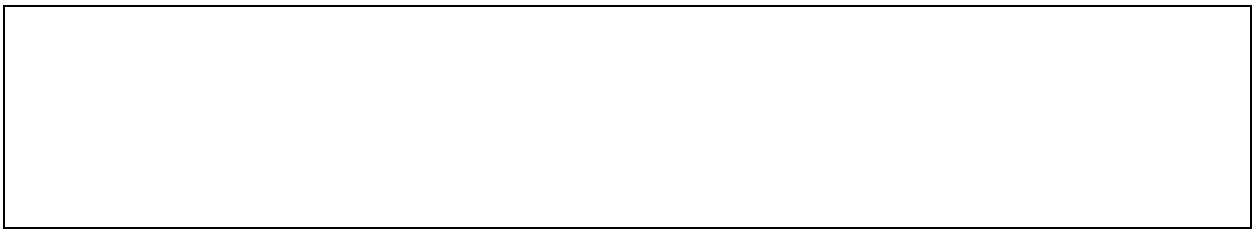
R: Because I am also a Christian and I think that I just have to be strong.

I: Do you have support system? lectures, friends, church, family. what other system, you have mentioned supervisor, church what other systems do you approach??

R: My family is not that involved in my studies.

I: I we were to suggest coping strategies to the department of social work, what will you recommend?

R: Honestly speaking I wouldn't suggest coping mechanisms, I will suggest a reformative curriculum. It is not conducive, they are trying to make us do everything. The system should be conducive first before we come to the issue of coping



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT **ANNEXTURE A3**

Date of interview:23 October 2017

Name of interviewer: Mbono Mthimkhulu

Number of people present in the session: 2

Person interviewed: NALEDI (pseudonym)

Verbatim account of the interview

I: Interviewer

R: Respondent

Verbatim
I: Hi, thank you for agreeing to take part in the study, I am very aware that you have work to do. R: I don't mind I: As I mentioned before, my name is Mbono Mthimkhulu, a fourth-year social work student. I am currently conducting a study on coping strategies employed by third year social work students to manage emotionally challenging encounters. The interview will take between 30 to 40 minutes, you are not forced to participate, you can withdraw from participating at any time if you do not wish to continue. Ask for clarity here necessary, you will use a pseudonym and nothing you say will be linked to your identity. (The interviewer and the respondent went over the interview schedule, the interviewee was provided with an overview of the themes that would be covered. The interviewer handed over the consent form which was signed, the responded was asked to provide a pseudonym. The interviewer requested to tape record the conversation. I: Please provide me with your demographic information, starting with age? R: 22 I: Race R: Black I: Gender

R: Female

I: Religious affiliation

R: Christianity

I: Number of years as a social work student?

R: 3

I: Where are you currently placed?

R: City of Johannesburg, under employee assistant programme.

I: Alright, we will start with the first theme, information regarding your placement. How would you describe your placement? Briefly describe the services that are provided?

R: Okay what we are basically doing is that we provide counselling, de briefing, crises management, group counselling.

I: Alright, briefly explain your role in your placement and the work that you do as a social work student?

R: Okay, what I do is that I do counselling with the employees and debriefing.

I: Okay, how do you feel about the environment which your placement is situated in? think about the safety, culture, how you adapt to it, language and other factors.

R: For language because I can speak various languages it is not much of a challenge, for culture because its corporate and I am a student so you have to fill in the gaps in terms of the dress code and the way you present yourself as a professional in a professional work place, in terms of safety it is not far from where I stay.

I: What other professions do you find in your placement?

R: There are 22 000 employees, where I am is a health care facility, there are EAP specialists, we have deputy director who supervises EAP specialists.

I: What would you consider as challenging in your placement, something that makes it difficult for you to do your work effectively?

R:……Something that hinders my work is working with aged people as a young person, you know old people tend to underestimate your abilities before you provide them with services, they already make their judgement that this person is not going to help me. They start with small concerns, when they have established trust they then start with main issues, by then you have to terminate.

I: How often do you go to your placement? once or twice a week?

R: well because I was behind, we were placed mid-March so I had to g twice a week. Also like, its employees. These people are working you cannot say that you only come on Tuesday. from Tuesday its 08-16:00 or 08:30 till 16:00, but our supervisor was chilled, when you are done you were allowed to leave.
I: Given an opportunity to work at your field full time would you consider it?
R:……I would because the salary seems good and there's not much work, but no as a young person I wouldn't but as an older person I would.

I: Moving to another theme, now we will focus on your personal habits. How would you describe your academic performance, what are your thoughts about your grades?
R: I can say its medium, it's not failing or passing very well. I can't compare myself with sociology or psychology students. When I write reports, I write between 15 to 16 pages.
I: Can you say that how your work is at the moment can be linked to field instruction education?
R: I would squeeze my clients during exam period, I would be studying but I'm busy typing reports. Perhaps I get a 50 something or 60, I would have achieved better if I was not busy with reports and field work.
I: How would you describe your consistency at the placement?
R: I don't think I met them, being in the environment I am at, is a work setting and judgmental Sometimes they don't come to sessions and I can't lie and say the client was here.
I: Regarding your attendance, do you attend all the lectures?
R: No, I don't attend all the lectures.
I: Moving to another theme, your perception of your life as a social work student. Please describe your personal experience as a social work student doing your practicals at your placement. Say something about how they personally make you feel?
R: As a social work student, I see myself as a person who does paperwork. The focus in more on paperwork than engaging with the client.
I: Are you concerned about your emotional and psychological state regarding difficult cases that you deal with at work?
R: Yeah, there was a time where I did not go to my practicals for two weeks, it's because the case made me emotionally drained, I was just helpless and I could not help the client.

I: Can you describe aspects of your placement you experienced as challenging, particularly this case?

R: The client was raped when she was young and also contracted HIV, it really took me back to what some of my friends went through.

I: During that eight weeks did you go to school?

R: I did not do anything, until my supervisor sends me an email and asked what was going on. I also did not write reports, every time I tried I would cry.

I: Did you found that discouraging?

R: It was discouraging, a lot. I felt like I failed my client, was helpless, did not know what to do so I might as well dis-engage from everything?

I: Describe your feelings after you have conducted a long and difficult session with your client?

R: Like I said I felt helpless, had puffy eyes, as much as I was trying to help the client I was also not well.

I: Last theme, regarding how you will respond to the emotionally challenging encounters. describe some of your actions after you have conducted a long and difficult session with your clients?

R: What I normally do is that I speak to my colleagues, they have seen the person so I will share in short after that I will go home.

I: What are some of the resources that you use, that help you manage the difficulties that you encounter.

R: The supervisor suggested at the beginning of the year that we should go to CCD regular, I'm not a person……I would talk to my friends, I talk a lot, I read novels that's what help me.

I: Do you have any support system:

R: My supervisor does try, she has a on her plate, lectures yeah when I go to consult but I'm not a consulting person, my grandmother is my biggest support system but she is not a person to trust, social media.

I: Last question, if we were to suggest coping strategies what will you recommend?

R: I think everyone has their coping strategies, I think if they give us more time to write reports or a shorter structure. They should also take student's concerns serious, there are those students who are depressed and cannot help their clients, also look at the type of team that they

put us with, consider what we are writing as well. If I write 15 pages report and I get a 50% how is that going to impact me.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT **ANNEXTURE A4**

Date of interview:25 October 2017

Name of interviewer: Mbono Mthimkhulu

Number of people present in the session: 2

Person interviewed: PALESA (pseudonym)

Verbatim account of the interview

I: Interviewer

R: Respondent

Verbatim
I: Hello, thank you so much for availing yourself, I understand that you have other things to do. R: You are welcome I: As I communicated with you, my name is Mbono Mthimkhulu a fourth-year social work research student. My research is based on coping strategies employed by third year social work students to manage emotionally challenging encounters. The interview will take between 30 to 40 minutes, participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from participating if you don't wish to continue. You can use a pseudonym and information that you provide will not be linked to your identity. (The interviewer and the respondent went over the interview schedule, the interviewee was provided with an overview of the themes that would be covered. The interviewer handed over the consent form which was signed, the responded was asked to provide a pseudonym. The interviewer requested to tape record the conversation. I: Please provide me with your demographic information, starting with age? R: 31 I: Race R: Black I: Gender

R: Female

I: Religious affiliation

R: Christianity

I: Number of years as a social work student?

R: 3

I: Where are you currently placed?

R: Net care rehabilitation hospital

I: Alright, we will start with the first theme, information regarding your placement. How would you describe your placement? Briefly describe the services that are provided?

R: I'ts a rehabilitation facility, basically catering for people with acquired disabilities. People who could walk, talk, normal but due to unfortunate accidents they found themselves disable and must learn to navigate to learn.

I: Briefly explain your role in your placement and the work that you do as a social work student?

R: My role was not different from the work that the social worker at the agency did, we provided supportive counselling, we went for multi-disciplinary meetings, we did home visits where he heard to look at psycho dynamics at home, looking at the applications.

I: What do you think about the environment which the agency is situated in, think about the culture, safety, how you adapt to it, language and other factors?

R: Safety is 100%, it's a private agency and access is not easy, language was not a problem the only thing is that we had a variety of patients some from South Africa and others not, for instance there was one patient who always spoke Afrikaans, although I did BANTU education but Afrikaans was never my favorite.

I: What other professions do you find?

R: Doctors, social workers, physiotherapists and other professions

I: What would you consider as challenging in your work, something that makes it difficult for you to do your work effectively?

R: The different personalities and professionals in the setting, there is one colleague who I am not sure has bi-polar or any other condition, she was horrible.

I: Aright, how often do you go to your placement?

R: Once a week from 08:00 to 16:00

I: Given an opportunity to work at your agency full time, would you consider it?
R: No, I wont
I: can I ask, why wouldn't you?
R: Social workers only do what they are told, you cannot be radical and you cannot think out of the box. It's like yes maam no ma'am kind of a vibe. I felt like I will only work here if my house is about to be auctioned.

I: How would you describe your academic performance, what are your thoughts about your grades.
R: I think I'm doing fairly well
I; can you link that with field work, the place work, the field instruction requirement.
R: Field instruction is one course which could have compromised my performance because it drains you, it sucks everything out of you. I am not only doing field instruction. For instance, in June the field instruction mark was very good but that was opposite for psych.
I: Do you attend all the classes?
R: I do, towards the end of the block I miss one or two lectures.
I: How would you describe your consistency at the placement? Do you meet the field instruction requirements, including number of hours, skills and the theory required?
R: Yes, over and beyond.
I: Moving to another theme, please describe your personal experience as a social work student doing practicals at your placement?
R: Oh, my word……. beside draining its emotionally exhausting. Seeing people who are unemployed and disabled and not receiving their compensation, seeing a grown man cry, you just feel like am I even in the right lace, as a social worker what do I do? Social workers are very good at saying what can I do? what can you do when you have done what exactly? This has made me re-evaluate my decision-regarding social work. That is why I took industrial psych as my major.
I: Are you concerned about your emotional and psychological state regarding difficult cases that you face?
R: Yes, of course it does. This other time I came across a problem of a domestic nature, it changed how I view relationships, how I view marriage in the African context. A woman was

enduring unnecessary hardships because he has kids with the man, in my mind I was like are you mad, do I have to get married if marriage is like this?

I: Describe your feelings after you conducted a long and difficult session with a client.

R: I want to quit

I: Describe some of the actions after you have conducted a long and difficult session with your client.

R: If there is no one I can talk to at that moment, my Wi-Fi will have a problem. I am going to be on-line for days. Social media help me feel better, I will move from the real world to a virtual world where its humor all the way, can be Facebook, tv but my academics will take a back seat.

I: Do you have support system?

R: Yes, I have my family, friends, off line and on line.

I: If we were to suggest coping strategies to the department what will you recommend.

R: Make sure that they hire people who knows their job, good supervision. My supervisor is one and a half, very helpful. Stop pushing students back to the supervisor if it's not helping, if there's a problem it should be dealt with.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT **ANNEXTURE A5**

Date of interview:24 October 2017

Name of interviewer: Mbono Mthimkhulu

Number of people present in the session: 2

Person interviewed: Lesego (pseudonym)

Verbatim account of the interview

I: Interviewer

R: Respondent

Verbatim
I: Hello, thank you so much for availing yourself, I understand that you have other things to do. R: You are welcome I: As I communicated with you, my name is Mbono Mthimkhulu a fourth-year social work research student. My research is based on coping strategies employed by third year social work students to manage emotionally challenging encounters. The interview will take between 30 to 40 minutes, participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from participating if you don't wish to continue. You can use a pseudonym and information that you provide will not be linked to your identity. (The interviewer and the respondent went over the interview schedule, the interviewee was provided with an overview of the themes that would be covered. The interviewer handed over the consent form which was signed, the responded was asked to provide a pseudonym. The interviewer requested to tape record the conversation. I: Please provide me with your demographic information, starting with age? R: 24 I: Race R: Black I: Gender

R: Female

I: Religious affiliation

R: Christianity

I: Number of years as a social work student?

R: 4

I: Where are you currently placed?

R: Refugee children's project

I: We will then start with information about your placement, how would you describe your placement? briefly describe the services that are provided?

R: Ok, basically it deals with women and children of refugees, it helps them with relevant papers, like asylum seekers, it also provides for support where it's needed, counselling, for children it helps them with school, placement and uniforms.

I: Briefly explain your role in your placement and the work that you do as a social work student?

R: What I do is that I deal with clients basically, I assess clients, I do home visits. After home visits, you determine if the client qualify for support.

I: How do you feel about the environment which your placement is situated in? Think about the safety, culture, language, how you adapt to it, language and other factors.

R: The environment is not that good because the place does not have proper facilities, the place is more like a hall. In terms of case work there are containers that we use, there's no problem with language, most of the clients are Congolese but the agency has people who are translators.

I: What other professions do you find except for Social Workers?

R: Education officers, most of them are social works and only few are not, we have programme management.

I: What would you consider as challenging in your placement? Something that makes it difficult or you to do your work effectively?

R: I think it's more emotional dealing with the type of people we are dealing with, the organization does not get to the roots of helping a person. Sometimes you cannot provide what the client needs, it gets emotional knowing that you do home visits but at the end of the day you don't help a person.

I: How often do you go to your placement?
R: Academically I should go once, but in the organization, there are no strict rules. If you have other things to do you can leave. Unless if we have other programs to work on like Mandela day etc.
I: Given an opportunity to work at your field full time, would you consider it?
R: NO (The respondent's tone increased when she replied no". As I have said, those particular clients don't get the help they need, I feel like I'm not doing anything, yes, I'm engaging with clients, it may empower them or build their self-esteem but that does not change anything, sometimes I feel like there's nothing I have done to change the client's situation.
I: Moving to another theme, how would you describe your academic performance, what are your thoughts about it?
R: I'm ways worried about my academics
I: Do you think that has something to do with your field work
R: No, I think it's more personal. It's about how you manage.
I: How would you describe your consistency at the placement? Do you meet the field instruction requirements, including number of hours, sessions, using the expected skills and theories?
R: Yeah, I think I do.
I: Do you attend all the lectures?
R: Most of them

I: Moving to another theme, your perception about your life as a social work student? Please describe your personal experience as a social work student doing your practicals at your placement? Say something about how they personally make you feel.
R: Sometimes it makes me feel like the profession is useless, sometimes what we do is talking about issues but not really finding solutions to the issues, I feel like I'm not doing anything to help anyone.
I: Are you concerned your emotional and psychological state with regards to difficult cases that you deal with at work? Do you feel like cases that you are handling are affecting you?

R: No, no. It does affect me emotionally but not psychologically. It worries me as a person knowing that there are people facing real issues and the help is limited, that's how it gets emotional.

I: Can you describe aspects of your placement that was experienced by you as discomforting and discouraging?

R: I think it's the setting, they don't have proper facility, the filing system, the environment is not conducive.

I: Describe your feelings after you have conducted a long and difficult session with your client:

R: Sometimes I have mixed emotions, I feel useless like I really can't, okay I am busy with this but at the end of the day there is no place to sleep for them.

I: Last section regarding on how you respond, describe some of your actions after you have conducted a long and difficult session with your client?

R: What I usually did is I consulted with the supervisor, raised issues based on that issue. It's very sad talking to someone, you then book them to another session only to listen. The supervisor will tell me that I can't satisfy every single client.

I: What are some of the resources you use to help you manage the stress you encounter, resources can either be your own personal resources, agency or anything that you find useful.

R: Sleeping, shame I just sleep.

I: Do you have any support system?

R: My supervisor and colleagues that I am placed with

I: If we were to suggest coping strategies to the department of social work, what will you recommend?

R: Coping strategies, I don't even have them myself. I think minimizing the work load, report writing, the way we write reports the verbatim part, we don't learn anything. You can determine the improvement in one report academic requirements are really not necessary.

I: Alight, we have come to the end of our interview, thank you so much for your time.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT **ANNEXTURE A6**

Date of interview:17 October 2017

Name of interviewer: Mbono Mthimkhulu

Number of people present in the session: 2

Person interviewed: Gugulethu (pseudonym)

Verbatim account of the interview

I: Interviewer

R: Respondent

Verbatim
I: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me, I understand you are busy and still preparing for the oral examination. My name is Mbono Mthimkhulu, a fourth-year social work research student. My research is based on coping strategies employed by Wits third year students to manage emotionally challenging encounters. The interview will take 30- to 40 minutes, you are not forced to participate, you may withdraw from participating if you do not wish to. You can use a pseudonym and information that you provide will not be linked to your identity. R: Alright, noted. (The interviewer and the respondent went over the interview schedule, the interviewee was provided with an overview of the themes that would be covered. The interviewer handed over the consent form which was signed, the responded was asked to provide a pseudonym. The interviewer requested to tape record the conversation. I: Please provide me with your demographic information, starting with age? R: 22 I: Race R: Black I: Gender R: Female I: Religious affiliation

R: Shembe

I: Number of years as a social work student?

R: 3

I: Where are you currently placed?

R: I'm just working with children, it's more like an Orphanage. It s called St Mary's children's home

I: Aright, now we will talk about the information regarding your placement. How would you describe your placement? Briefly describe the services that are provided.

R: Where I was placed we were counselling children who were referred by the placements as having problems, those showing anger issues, find out if they are adapting at the home.

I: Alright, briefly explain your role in your placement and the work that you do as a social work student?

R: I just do counselling

I: From what age to what age

R: From 5 to 21, though the client I had was an adolescent.

I: How do you feel about the environment which your placement is situated in? Think about the safety, culture, how you adapt to it, language and other factors.

R: It was fine, however the receptionist was really not nice.

I: What other professions do you find in your placement?

R: Social workers, admin, finance department and care workers.

I: What would you consider as challenging in your placement?

R: The people that we work with, they are not nice at all.

I: Please explain, what is it that they do that makes you say they are not nice?

R: Sometimes they can pass by without greeting you, the way they treat us.

I: How often do you go to the placement?

R: Once a week.

I: Given an opportunity to work at your field full time would you consider it?

R: I don't think so, because of the people in that place. They are not nice. I would love to work with children but not that place.

I: How would you describe your academic performance, what are your thoughts about them?

R: Yes, I pass but I'm not happy about them, this makes me unable to perform.

I: Would you say that, it can be connected with Field instruction requirements?
R: They ask us to do many things and at the same time I still have sociology that I'm carrying and psychology.
I: How would you describe your consistency at the placement? How do you think you have applied yourself, the skills and theory?
R: I do use theory, though there was a time when the client refused to come the session, I shouted at her and I was very angry on that day.
I: How would you describe your attendance in class? Do you attend all the lectures?
R: yes, I attend most of them.
I: Moving to your perception about your life. Please describe your personal experience as a social work student doing your practical's at your placement? Say something about how they personally make you feel?
R: I feel like people don't recognize us, when I was doing my practical's people will just pass by without greeting.
I: Are you concerned about your emotional and psychological state regarding difficult cases that you deal with?
R: Yes, sometimes when I come back from work I think about things that I discussed with my client, if I had family around I would talk to them.
I: Can you describe aspects of your placement that was experienced by you as discouraging?
R: I had a client who was depressed, I was not happy at how she responded to the sessions.
I: Describe your feelings after you have conducted a long and difficult session with a client.
R: I feel ok, tired and bored.
I: Moving to the last session, how you respond. Describe your actions after you have conducted a long and difficult session with the client?
R: I don't go to the supervisor, she will tell me what to do. I remember I had a client, who was talking about how she was moved from one place to the other, sometimes I felt like I was too attached, I mean she is still a child, I felt like my supervisor did not understand what it was for me.
I: What ae some of the resources that you use to help you manage the stress that you encounter?
R: I play games

I: Do you have support system

R: My mom and my supervisor to some extent.

I: If we were to suggest coping strategies to the department of social work, what will you recommend?

R: I am not sure.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT **ANNEXTURE A7**

Date of interview:18 October 2017

Name of interviewer: Mbono Mthimkhulu

Number of people present in the session: 2

Person interviewed: SAMUEL (pseudonym)

Verbatim account of the interview

I: Interviewer

R: Respondent

Verbatim
I: Hello, thank you for coming. I appreciate it. As I explained to you my name is Mbono, a fourth-year social work research student. My research is based on coping strategies employed by Wits third year students to manage emotionally challenging encounters. The interview will take between 30 t0 40 minutes, you are not forced to participate, you can withdraw from participating if you don't wish to continue, you will be required to use a pseudonym and information that you provide will not be linked to your personal identity. (The interviewer and the respondent went over the interview schedule, the interviewee was provided with an overview of the themes that would be covered. The interviewer handed over the consent form which was signed, the responded was asked to provide a pseudonym. The interviewer requested to tape record the conversation. I: Please provide me with your demographic information, starting with age? R: 22 I: Race R: Black I: Gender R: Male I: Religious affiliation R: Christianity

I: Number of years as a social work student?

R: 3

I: Where are you currently placed?

R: Refugee's children's project

I: We will start with information about your placement, how would you describe your field placement? Briefly describe the services that are provided?

R: They provide psycho social services to the refugees, mostly Congolese, women and children so they can work for themselves.

I: Briefly explain your role in your placement and the work that you do as a social work student?

R: I do more psychosocial support, we provide support in terms of counselling, they come needing someone to talk to, they need documents, food parcels, the agency do assessment to determine their struggle.

I: How do you feel about the environment which your agency is situated in? think about the safety, how you adapt to it, language and other factors.

R: I think in terms of safety it's in Yew vile, it is kinda scary. But to me it is a normal environment. The environment consists of many diverse people, so when you get there you see many nationals, in terms of integrating it is very favorable.

I: What other professions do you find in the placement:

R: The agency is quite small, you find community developers, administrators, pre-school for those children, pre-school teachers.

I: What would you consider as challenging in your placement?

R: It is not organized, the admin is bad, papers are everywhere and lack of resources

I: How often do you go to your placement?

R: I go twice a week sometimes when I need my supervisor to sign some stuff.

I: Alright, if you go once, from what time till what time?

R: The organization is disorganized to an extend that you can come and leave

I: Given an opportunity to work at your field full time, would you consider it?

R: I wouldn't consider it, its small even the activities they do. It's not that much, even the clients they serve.

I: How would you describe your academic performance, what ae your thoughts regarding your grades?

R: To me I think they are okay, although I feel like I'm putting a lot of effort but I'm not getting much.

I: Do you think we can link that to the field instruction requirements?

R: Actually, field instruction does not contribute very much to my theory, I use theory but there is no connection. Maybe it's the type of organization, we don't actually learn about refugees.

I: How would you describe your attendance in class? Do you attend all the lectures?

R: yes I attend most of them

I: Moving to another section, your perception about your life. Please describe your personal experience as a social work student doing your practicals at your placement? say something about how they personally make you feel?

R: Actually, field instruction drains me, there's so much work and at the end of the day you don't do the right thing. The paper work is too much, at the end of the day you don't recall the things you practiced, you make up things to it on your paper work.

I: Are you concerned about your emotional and psychological state with regards to difficult cases that you deal with at work?

R: For me is weird because it is not something that affect me or makes me worry… what makes me happy is when I see a person and there is change, that really makes me happy, when the situation changes to be a positive one, that lifts up my moods.

I: Aright, what happens when the situation does not change?

R: That is quiet discouraging

I: Can you describe aspects of your placement that was experienced by you as discomforting and discouraging? You can provide an example if necessary?

R: My supervisor is useless, I'm sorry to say that but she is useless. I submitted my reports in the beginning of the semester and she was only marking them last week.

I: How do you feel after conducting a long and difficult session with the client?

R: It is not big deal, I just feel alright.

I: Now we will look at how you respond to the challenging encounters? Describe some of actions after you have conducted a long and difficult session with your clients?

R: When it comes to emotions, it's not my emotions but rather the client's, I speak to my supervisor. Not be saying that I need a debriefing or support.

I: What are some of the resources you use to help you manage the stress you encounter?

R: I don't do much, go back to my place and continue with life.

I: Do you have any support system that you believe is there for you?

R: I have friends, you see with the cases the reason why they don't affect me is because I speak about them, it has become a normal thing.

I: If we were to suggest strategies to the department of social work, what will you recommend?

R; I think the department should employ the supervisor because they are willing to work, because it should be collaborative. At the end of the day we don't see ourselves growing.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT **ANNEXTURE A8**

Date of interview:16 October 2017

Name of interviewer: Mbono Mthimkhulu

Number of people present in the session: 2

Person interviewed: NOMFUNDO (pseudonym)

Verbatim account of the interview

I: Interviewer

R: Respondent

Verbatim
I: Hello, thank you so much for coming finally after weeks of communicating we managed to meet up. As I informed you, my name is Mbono Mthimkhulu a fourth years social work research student. My research is based on coping strategies employed by third year social work student to manage emotionally challenging encounters. The interview will take between 30 to 40 minutes, you are not forced to participate, you can withdraw from participating at any time if you don't wish to continue, you will be required to use a pseudonym and the information you provide will not be linked to your identity. (The interviewer and the respondent went over the interview schedule, the interviewee was provided with an overview of the themes that would be covered. The interviewer handed over the consent form which was signed, the responded was asked to provide a pseudonym. The interviewer requested to tape record the conversation. I: Please provide me with your demographic information, starting with age? R: 19 I: Race R: Black I: Gender R: Female I: Religious affiliation R: Christianity I: Number of years as a social work student? R: 3 I: Where are you currently placed? R: Net care rehabilitation hospital I: Alright, now I will ask you information about your placement. How would you describe your field placement? Briefly describe the services that are provided. R: It's a rehab hospital for people with disabilities, most of the people are injured at work. some disabilities are temporary while others are permanent. I: Briefly explain your role in your placement and the work that you do as a social work student?

R: Ok, so there are different types of disabilities. We are placed under WCA, work man's compensation, mostly government workers. We provide supportive counselling, we also involve families to some extent.
I: How do you feel about the environment which your placement is situated in, think about the safety, culture, how you adapt to it, language and other factors.
(Phone ringing, the interviewee was given a chance to answer the phone)
I: Would you like to continue?
R: Yes, we can continue
R: The hospital, is mostly black people. The supervisor said we should be placed with different types of people so that we can be able to communicate with them.
I: What other professions do you find in the placement?
R: Cleaners, nurses, when a patient comes in, the social worker and the therapist set the plan together.
I: How often do you go to your placement?
R: Twice a week, from 12 to 4.
I: What would you consider as challenging in your placement? Something that makes it difficult for you to do your work effectively?
R: It's the people we work with, it seems like sometimes they don't take us serious because we are students, they underestimate our work and sometimes overwork us.
I: Given an opportunity to work at your field full time would you consider it?
R: No
I: Please elaborate
R: I don't think I would like to work in a social work environment, more especially with the people I have been working with. Hospital environment is too overwhelming.
I: Alright, moving to another theme, your personal habits. How would you describe your academic performance, what are your thoughts about your grades?
R: I feel like I have been trying my best but somehow, I feel like I've been lacking because I'm not at that level where I feel satisfied.
I: Can you link that with field instruction?
R: Yeah, I guess I could. I don't know. Field instruction is a lot of work, sometimes you don't get to do other things, especially reports.
I: How would you describe your consistency at the agency, think about how you have applied yourself in some of the cases that you handled?
R: I think I haven't been consistent or trying hard enough because there were patients I were dealing with, I had two sessions with them. Though I've left them because I did not want to force someone, maybe I should have done more because sometimes when we face difficulties we don't want to speak.
I: How would you describe your attendance in class? Do you attend all the lectures and tutorials?
R: No, I don't attend all the lectures

I: Another theme, your perception of your life as a social work student. please describe your personal experience as a social work student doing your practicals at your placement? Say something about how they personally make you feel?
R: Yoh! they make me feel like social work is not for me, sometimes I just regret doing it, I'm seriously considering leaving it and move to BA, but I feel like I have come a long way I might as well finish it. My heart is not there anymore
I: Are you concerned about your emotional and psychological state with regards to difficult cases that you deal with at work? Do you feel like the difficult cases that you are handling are affecting you?
R: Yes, I am, I need therapy myself.
I: Can you describe aspects of your placement that was experienced by you as discomforting and discouraging?
R: I would say what was discouraging was what I said earlier about our colleagues, it is as if they were never students before. They are just bringing us down, when you confront them they don't talk about it but can talk about it behind our backs.
I: Describe your feelings after you have conducted a long and difficult session with a client?
R: To be honest I was not really emotionally affiliated, but I did think about what would I do if the situation could happen to my parent. I was thinking of myself and I was just thinking that I should be more appreciative, not that I was not feeling sorry for the patient, I was not emotionally there.
I: Now we move to the last theme, describe some of your actions after you have conducted a long and difficult session with the client?
R: Usually I just wait for supervision, I explain to my supervisor what happened and she would be able to tell me, this is what you should do, this is what must happen. Supervision is helpful.
I: What are some of the resources you use to help you manage the stress you encounter, resources can either your own personal resources, agency resources, school or anything that you consider s helpful.
R: I haven't used any resource
I: Do you have a support system, think of family, friends
R: My friends are there, supervisor and family.
I: If we were to suggest coping mechanisms to the department of social work, what will you recommend?
R: Less work, I guess it's required of them but then maybe they could give us time management strategies so we know how to sort out our time and other things.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT **ANNEXTURE A9**

Date of interview:19 October 2017

Name of interviewer: Mbono Mthimkhulu

Number of people present in the session: 2

Person interviewed: NELISIWE (pseudonym)

Verbatim account of the interview

I: interviewer

R: Respondent

Verbatim
I: Hello, hope you are well. Thank you for agreeing to take part in the study, I appreciate it. As I communicated with you, my research topic is based on coping strategies employed by third year students to manage emotionally challenging encounters. Please keep it in mind that you are not forced to participate, you can withdraw from participating if you do not wish to continue, ask for clarity if you don't understand and you are not forced to discuss anything that you are not comfortable with, you will be required to use a pseudonym and information that you provide will not be linked to your identity. R: Alright (The interviewer and the respondent went over the interview schedule, the interviewee was provided with an overview of the themes that would be covered. The interviewer handed over the consent form which was signed, the responded was asked to provide a pseudonym. the interviewer requested to tape record the conversation. I: Please provide me with your demographic information, starting with age? R: 26 I: Race R: Black I: Gender R: Male

I: Religious affiliation

R: Christianity

I: Number of years as a social work student?

R: 3

I: Where are you currently placed?

R: West-view clinic rehabilitation center

I: I would like information about your placement, how would you describe your placement. what kind of services does your placement provide?

R: It is a rehab for people who are recovering from alcohol and substance abuse, where I am placed we work with outpatients. We help patients improve in their addiction before were refer them to an in-patient facility. We have six sessions with them.

I: Briefly explain your role in your placement and the work that you do as a social work student?

R: It is basically counselling, mostly people who are going there for the first time but mostly is people who are willing to start recovering, some of them have relapsed and they come back.

I: How do you feel about the environment which your agency is situated in? Think about the culture, language, how you adapt and other factors.

R: It was easy to adapt because I'm from a township myself, it is dominated by Tswana speaking people and I'm Xhosa, sometimes people say Townships are dangerous but for me it did not feel like that, it was easy to adapt.

I: What other professions do you find in your placement?

R: It is an outpatient satellite, there is a nurse and social workers. We refer people to doctors, police station.

I: What would you consider as challenging in your placement?

R: Right now, I think most of the people we are dealing with do not speak the truth, that becomes difficult for us to help them. I don't know if they lie because of stigma, if they have been forced to go there, you only discover later Two or three of the servicers, there's a service user who started using drugs affter discovering that her mother had cancer, had dad was in prison, it's one of the things that made me emotional, became very emotional.

I: How often do you go to your placement?

R: I spend roughly 5 or 4 hours, I go once a week. The main challenge is that the place is very far, by the time I get there it is already late. Sometimes I did my block placement for full two weeks from 08:00 up until 16:00

I: Given an opportunity to work at your field full time, would you consider it??

R: Yes, I think I will. Most of the people that experience addiction are young people and I love working with young people, most especially the recovery plan.

I: Moving to your personal habits, how would you describe your academic performance? What are your thoughts about your grades?

R: I cannot say I am satisfied, but there are some subjects that I would say I am doing well. But in terms of field instruction I am not really doing well

I: Do you think that has something to do with the field instruction work?

R: It has something to do with the academic aspect of it, in terms of writing reports, doing the same thing every day I become bored.

I: How would you describe your consistency at the placement? Think about how you have applied yourself in terms of theory and skills.

I: How would you describe your attendance in class, do you attend all the lectures, tutorials?

R: (Laughs) I don't attend all the lectures

I: Looking at the perception of your life, please describe your personal experience as a social work student doing your practicals at your placement? say something about how they personally make you feel?

R: I feel tired, very very tired. I really feel tired, I feel angry, the anger is developing towards the situation that the people are going through, angry towards the fact that there is no much to do, the department for not being considerate, the quality of learning is reduced.

I: Ok, are you concerned about your emotional and psychological state with regards to difficult cases that you deal with at work? Do you feel like the difficult cases that you are handling are affecting you? It can be that they are affecting your moods, your social life, your growth?

R: I think I am concerned, I cannot just ignore. So far, I have a way of dealing with them, I am coping.

I: Describe your feelings after you have conducted a long and difficult session with a client?

R: I feel like I have not done anything

I: Describe some of your actions after you have conducted a long and difficult session with the client?

R: It is because of the support I get from supervision, it's because I'm a Christian, the family particularly my mother, I'm involved in other things like music, playing the band, get to socialize with the people you love, but I have never tried methods like going for counselling. For me, I don't really believe in counselling, I think it can be relevant for other people but not for me.

Do you have any support system:

R: Supervisor, family, friends, people from church.

I: If we were to suggest coping strategies to the department of social work, what will you recommend?

R: The department must give students enough time to explore other things than social work, like what they love doing, for my case is music. The curriculum must be changed,

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT **ANNEXTURE A10**

Date of interview:15 October 2017

Name of interviewer: Mbono Mthimkhulu

Number of people present in the session: 2

Person interviewed: SFISO (pseudonym)

Verbatim account of the interview

I: Interviewer

R: Respondent

Verbatim account of the interview

Verbatim
I: Hello, thank you so much for agreeing to meet up with me. I appreciate it. As I mentioned it to you, my name is Mbono. I'm a final year social work research student currently looking at coping strategies employed by third tear students to manage emotionally challenging encounters. The interview will take between 30 t0 40 minutes, you are not forced to participate, you can withdraw from participating if you don't wish to continue, you will be required to use a pseudonym and information that you provide will not be linked to your personal identity. (The interviewer and the respondent went over the interview schedule, the interviewee was provided with an overview of the themes that would be covered. The interviewer handed over the consent form which was signed, the responded was asked to provide a pseudonym. The interviewer requested to tape record the conversation. I: Please provide me with your demographic information, starting with age? R: 22 I: Race R: Black I: Gender

R: Female

I: Religious affiliation

R: Christianity

I: Number of years as a social work student?

R: 3

I: Where are you currently placed?

R: Chris Hani Baragwanath hospital, commonly known as Bara

I: Aright, now we will talk about information regarding your placement. How would you describe your field placement? briefly describe the services that are provided?

R: Bara is a public hospital situated at Soweto. It provides health services to different groups and there are specialties. Compared to other hospitals it is more advanced in resources and areas of specialization.

I: Briefly explain your role in your placement and the work that you do as a social work student?

R: I offer counselling to patients that are referred by the doctors, in most cases I have one or two sessions.

I: Please explain why one or two?

R: Well in a hospital setting we cannot guarantee to meet with patients regularly, they can be dismissed at any time, those who are out patients are not consistent and not always available.

I: How do you feel about the environment which your agency is situated in? Think about the safety, culture, how you adapt to it, language and other factors.

R: Must familiarize myself with medical terms, but with practice it becomes easy. Using English to communicate also with time you get used to it I mean we are students, it's a challenging field to be honest you and I just don't imagine my self working in a hospital.

I: What other professions do you find in your placement?

R: In our department, we are the department of social services at hospital, different patients are referred to us from different departments. We have social workers, psychologist, therapists, nurses.

I: What would you consider as a challenge?

R: Being overlooked by other professions, lack of recognition.

I: How often do you go to your placement

R: I'm supposed to go once a week, but because I'm a sociology student I go twice, from 12 up until 16:00.
I: Given an opportunity to work at your field full time, would you consider it? Please elaborate.
R: Only if it's a last option, but other than that I don't consider myself working at hospital.
I: Now we are moving to your personal habits, what are your thoughts about your academic performance?
R: It is not as I would like it to be and I know it might sound crazy but field instruction is very demanding.
I: Please elaborate
R: I spend most of my time tying reports than studying or focusing on any other course.
I: Alright, how would you describe your consistency regarding how you apply yourself? Think about the theory you used, modes?
R: I can say I try, I think that's what makes social work more tiring. You sit there listen to the client, empathize and use other skills, there is nothing exciting about that. its tiring, plus working with patients.
I: How would you describe your attendance in class?
R: I don't attend all the classes, but most of them.
I: Now we moving to your perception about yourself as a social work student. Please describe your personal experience as a social work student doing your practicals at Bara. say something about how they personally make you feel?
R: Emotionally exhausted, drained Yoh.
I: Alright, are you concerned about your emotional and psychological state with regards to difficult cases that you deal with at work?
R: I'm really not sure hey, I don't know. All I can say is that sometimes I feel drained and can't get out of bed.
I: Can you describe aspects of your field placement that you experienced as discomforting or discouraging? You can provide an example if necessary.
R: There was one time I was writing a patient's file and I think doctors were also studying, the big doctors came in, they gapped the file, disregarded me and left. it did not make me feel good. the intern doctors could see but could not do anything about it.

I: You mentioned that you offer counselling to your clients, have you ever experienced a challenge?

R: Yes

I: Please give an example

R: There was this one time, this lady wanted to commit suicide because her husband was having an affair with her niece. few days ago, the husband decided to kill himself. dealing with the case was hard.

I: Alright, describe your feelings after you have conducted a long and difficult session with your client?

R: I talk about it with my supervisor, I feel really hungry and just want to sleep.

I: Moving to the last session, describe some of your actions after you have conducted a long and difficult session with your clients?

R: Take a pain killer, go to bed and will be fine the next morning. But firstly, I talk about it.

I: What are some of the resources you use to help you manage the stress you encounter? Resources can be personal, agency or school. Anything that you consider as useful.

R: I'm not placed alone, after difficult day I speak to other students. We kind of have a debriefing.

I: Do you have support system?

R: Yes, family

I: If we were to suggest coping strategies to the department of social work, what will you recommend?

R: Debriefing sessions among students, where we break up in separate groups. Interaction with other students will be helpful.

SOCIAL WORK
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

ANNEXURE B

DEPARTMENTAL HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SOCIAL WORK) CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: SW/2/17/8/06

ROJECT TITLE: Coping Strategies employed by social work students to manage emotionally challenging encounters

RESEARCHER/S•. Ms Mbono Mthimkhulu (723912)

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT: SHCD Social Work

DATE CONSIDERED: 20 July 2017

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE: Approved

EXPIRY DATE: 30 November 2018

DATE: 6 September 2017

CHAIRPERSON: Dr E Pretorius

Cc: Supervisor: Dr Roshini Pillay

DECLARATION OF RESEARCHER(S)

To be completed in DUPLICATE and ONE COPY returned to the Administrative Assistant, Room 8, Department of Social Work, Umthombo Building Basement.

l/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorised to carry out the abovementioned research and l/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved l/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the committee. For Masters and PhD an annual progress report is required.

SIGNATURE

DATE

ANNEXURE C

SOCIAL WORK
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050• Tel: 011 717 4472• Fax: Oi l 717 4473 • E-mail: socialwork.SHCD@wits.ac.za

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

Tittle of the study: Coping mechanisms employed by social work students to manage emotionally challenging encounters Name of supervisor: Mrs Roshini Pillay

Name of HOD: Dr. Pretorius

Counselling services: CCDU

I hereby consent to participate in the research study and to tape-recording of the interview: The purpose and procedures of the study have been explained to me.

I understand that

- My participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw from the study without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I may choose not to answer any specific questions asked if I do not wish to do so
- There are no foreseeable benefits or risks associated with participation in this study.
- My identity will be kept strictly confidential
- The recording will be stored in a secure location with restricted access to the researcher and research supervisor
- The recording will be transcribed and any information that could identify me will be removed.
- When the data analysis and write -up of the research study is complete, the audio recording of the interview will be kept for two years following any publication or for six years if no publication emanate from the study.
- A copy of my interview transcript without any identifying information will be stored permanently in a locked cupboard and may be used for future research.
- I understand that my responses will be used in the write up of an honours project and may also be presented in conferences, book chapters, journal articles or books.

Name of participant Brian M

Date: 18 Oct 17

Signature:



ANNEXURE D

SOCIAL WORK
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050 • lei: 01 1 717 4472 • Fax: 01 1 717 4473 • E-mail: socialwork.SHCD@wits.ac.za

6 September 2017

Ms Mbono Mthimkhulu
Student number 723912

Request to conduct research with undergraduate social work students

This is to confirm that the Department of Social Work gives you permission to conduct your research study Coping strategies employed by social work students to manage emotionally challenging encounters with the undergraduate students in the Social Work Department who voluntary participate in the study.

All the best with your research study.

Yours sincerely

Dr Edmarie Pretorius

Head of the Department
011-7174476

ANNEXURE E

Tittle: **Coping mechanisms employed by social work students to manage emotionally challenging encounters**

723912@students.wits.ac.za

Dear student

Re: request your participation in a research project

Mbono Mthimkhulu request your participation in a research project on coping mechanisms employed by social work students to manage emotionally challenging encounters. I am a fourth-year social work research students at the University of Witwatersrand.

I would appreciate an opportunity to interview you regarding my study. There is gap in the existing literature with regards to social work students and practice, your participation could provide in-depth knowledge that would promote effective coping mechanisms to students.

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary and there is no reward for participating or penalty for not participating. Involvement in this study requires your participation in an interview of approximately an hour which will be scheduled at a time and place that is suitable for you. You will not be obliged to answer any questions with which you are uncomfortable and therefore have the option to decline to respond to any questions asked. You will also have the option of terminating your participation at any stage that you choose.

All data collected through the interview will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. You will also have the option of remaining anonymous in which case all transcripts and reports will be appropriately coded to ensure that your request is fully respected. You will also be provided with the transcripts and research report if requested. The results of the research will be submitted as part of the requirement for the course Research report SOCW 4004.

However, if you feel that you have concerns regarding the study or if you require any additional information, please contact me or my supervisor,*Mbono Mthimkhulu*- 723912@students.wits.ac.za /*Roshini* Pillay-roshini.pillay@wits.ac.za to discuss these further.

Kind regards,

Mbono Mthimkhulu

ANNEXTURE F

Research instrument: **Interview schedule**

Research topic: Coping strategies employed by third year social work students to manage emotionally challenging encounters.

A) Demographic information

1) Age
2) Race
3) Gender
4) Religious affiliation
5) Number of years as a social work student
6) Current field placement

B) Information about the placement

1) How would you describe your field placement? Briefly describe the services that are provided?

2) Briefly explain your role in your placement and the work that you do as a social work student?

3) How do you feel about the environment which your placement is situated in? Think about the safety, culture, how you adapt to it, language and other factors.

4) What other professions do you find in the placement?

5) What would you consider as challenging in your placement? Something that makes it difficult for you to do your work effectively?

6) How often do you go to your placement? Do you go once a week, twice a week, anytime when you are available, do you go on weekends? Also talk about your duration at the placement.

7) Given an opportunity to work at your field full time, would you consider it? Elaborate? This question aims not to restrict the respondent, but rather give them a platform to explain why they would or would not work at the placement full time given an opportunity. There might be a couple of reasons that motivates their choice. I found out that in most cases, social work graduates leave social work because they fail to deal with emotional exhaustion. This question

might help me find out if students are aware of emotional challenging encounters during field work and how they feel about this issue.

C) **Student's personal habits**

1) What are your thoughts about your academic performance?

2) How would you describe your consistency at the placement? Think about how you have applied yourself in the field? The necessary skills and models you are expected to use?

3) How would you describe your attendance in class? Do you attend all the lectures?

D) Student's perceptions of their lives as social work students

1) Please describe your personal experience as a social work student doing your practicals at your placements? Say something about how they personally make you feel
2) Are you concerned about your emotional and psychological state with regards to difficult cases that you deal with at work? Do you feel like the difficult cases that you are handling are affecting you? It can be that they are affecting your moods, your social life, your growth etc.?
3) Can you describe aspects of your placement that was experienced by you as discomforting and discouraging? You can provide an example if necessary.
4) Describe your feelings after you have conducted a long and difficult session with your client?

E) How students respond to emotionally challenging encounters

1) Describe some of your actions after you have conducted a long and difficult session with your clients.
2) What are some of the resources you use to help you manage stress you encounter? Resources can either be your own personal resources, agency resources, school or anything that you consider as helpful.
3) Do you have support system? Think about your family, supervisor, lectures, church, friends or any system that you believe is there for you and you can always approach it should you experience any challenge.

4) If we were to suggest coping strategies to the department of social work, what will you recommend.