

https://dspace.org/

Making meaning of volunteering in the child abuse services sector in South Africa.

Alexander, Kerri Ann

2013-04-05
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/12629

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

ABSTRACT

Child abuse in South Africa is considered one of the foremost challenges the country is currently facing, and is believed to hold long-term consequences for adults if not adequately addressed in the childhood years. In order to meet the needs of abused children in the country, various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have targeted abused children as the primary beneficiaries for services, and these NGOs rely a great deal on the contributions from formal volunteers. While there is an expansive body of literature on formal volunteering in general, limited research explores target-specific volunteering, especially among children or abused children in particular. Furthermore, the literature on volunteering has not extensively examined the meaning-making process volunteers engage in when seeking an organisation or cause for their target-specific volunteering. The process of making meaning of volunteering is additionally influenced by a complex set of negotiations between individual and broader socio-political factors. In order to expand the current literature on volunteering, this research aimed to explore the meanings volunteers make of their target-specific volunteering in the child abuse services sector in Johannesburg, and to explore how those meanings could potentially be influenced by the dynamics of socio-political realms. This research was located within the interpretive paradigm, and data collection comprised of qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted with six volunteers from the Teddy Bear Clinic for Abused Children. The interview transcripts were analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA), where four primary themes emerged. The four primary themes, namely transformation, prioritisation of children, prioritisation of sexual abuse and vocation, were examined for their resonance with critical theories of governing 'healthy' populations. The limitations of this research related primarily to issues of scope and sample, both of which guided the recommendations for future research in this area.