

https://dspace.org/

"Getting their stories : narratives of youths in a shelter for orphaned and vulnerable children"

Kostopoulos, Anna

2014-09-15
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/15539

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

Abstract

This research explored the narratives of orphaned and vulnerable youths who currently reside, or have previously lived their childhood and/or adolescent years, in a shelter in Johannesburg, Gauteng. Data was collected using a semi-structured interview and thematic content analysis was used to interpret and analyse the collected data. Interviews were conducted with 8 participants, all male youths between the ages of 18 and 25 years. This research explored their perceptions of life in the shelter and particularly how the youths make sense of their experiences, relationships, social support, and their ability to cope in the childcare institution. This research also explored the participants' views of the future.

The elicited 'insider' perspectives yielded rich information regarding life in a childcare institution, and may additionally serve to guide future interventions to adequately meet the needs of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in childcare institutions, and subsequently attempt to improve their psychosocial well-being. Results of the study indicate that there is a need for more consistent psychosocial support for institutionalised OVC, especially during the adjustment period into the institution. It seems that participants in the study were still struggling with unresolved emotional issues of the past which appeared to be negatively impacting their current well-being. Consequently, it was not uncommon for them to rely on unhealthy coping strategies to deal with the emotional distress thereof. Despite the various challenges described, it seems that participants have demonstrated considerable resilience, gratitude, and hopefulness for the future.