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Support required by CYCWs in executing their work functions can be divided into four categories, namely emotional support, instrumental support, conceptual support, and support of clear institutional guidelines (Maas & Ney, 2005). These are detailed below.

- **Emotional:** CYCWs, as other professionals working with youth and families, need to be aware of and understand how they react emotionally to particular youth and families, as well as their reactions to certain themes such as abuse and sexuality. Teamwork can trigger both positive and negative emotions.
- **Instrumental:** This refers to flexibility in work schedules, sharing tasks amongst MDT members, the availability of life space supervision and consultation.
- **Conceptual:** This links theoretical knowledge with personal conceptions. This concerns self-awareness and CYCWs need to be aware of how their personal values impact on their practice.
- **Institutional:** This refers to clear institutional guidelines concerning job descriptions, organisational policies and procedures impacting on services to children and families (Maas and Ney, 2005).

Clinical supervision concerns theory and translating theory into practice while organisational supervision concerns accountability, logistics and the congruence between interventions and organisational policy (Maas and Ney, 2005).

Vanderwoerd (2010, para. 2), laments about the experience of starting out in CYC and experiencing firsthand what it was like trying to control difficult children:

“I never had any magic aura about me, so I was one of those who engaged in a constant battle of power and control. It seemed the better I was able to control children, the more positive feedback I received from colleagues and supervisors. Put another way, the better-behaved the children, the better I felt as a worker.”

However, a CYCW's performance cannot be judged by the behaviour of children especially if the intervention is with those whose emotional disturbance and history of neglect and abuse makes them all the more difficult to manage. Thus, using the children's behaviour as a yardstick for gauging the CYCW competence is not only unfair and inaccurate, but destructive. In the experience of this author this was often the case, to the detriment of the CYCW, the programmes, and the children.

Border (2001) contends that qualities found in good teachers and practitioners are the same as those required by good supervisors. They include empathy, being genuine, open and flexible. Supervisees are respected as people and as developing professionals and supervisors have to be sensitive to differences such as gender, race, and ethnicity of CYCWs. Supervisors are comfortable with the responsibility that is inherent in supervision, they enjoy supervision, are accountable to their supervisees with regard to preparation and keeping to appointments. They have self-awareness with regard to their own strengths and developmental areas as supervisors, and know how their character and personality may affect how they conduct themselves in supervision. Border further suggests that good supervisors are knowledgeable and are themselves competent practitioners and competent supervisors. Supervisors should have extensive training and wide experience in the field, which should have helped them to achieve a broad perspective. Good supervisors continue on their own path of personal and ongoing professional development.

Michael (2005) believes that supervisors must show initiative in how they work with different staff and take into account the CYCWs' learning style as well as their own learning style and how they will balance each other. The supervisor's approach to each CYCW they supervise should be as different as the intervention strategies used for the children. The CYCW has to feel cared for. If CYCWs do not feel their own physical and emotional needs are being attended to by the supervisor, they become demotivated and do not pay sufficient attention to the needs of the children. Supervisors need to facilitate an understanding among supervisees of the importance of being involved in meetings and being a good team player and sharing ideas and learning from each other. The best way to achieve this is for the supervisor to model this behaviour.

Confrontation is a daily occurrence in the CYCC. Delano and Shah (2005) suggest that for most CYCWs in the CYC field, the word "confrontation" brings uncomfortable feelings, and that confrontation is not in the nature of people in the helping professions. As such it is viewed as a tense, negative interaction.

When it is considered that good practice occurs in an MDT setting where a number of passionate people have different opinions, confrontation is inevitable. The authors argue that a positive resolution of these conflicts could result in the strengthening of relationships. If confrontation does not happen, issues remain unresolved. Passive aggressive tensions can occur and these tensions are displayed in attacking tones, subtle hints, or lack of respect for self or other staff members.

In order to confront constructively, the supervisor should use creative skills to put the confrontation in a professional and non-personalised framework when raising the issue. The supervisor has to frame the reason for confrontation in a logical, professionally accepted way so that the CYCW can not dispute the basis of the confrontation.

Supervision is an opportunity and a right; it is not about obligation and demand. The supervisor is responsible for providing the opportunity for quality supervision and it is the responsibility of the supervisee to take advantage of the opportunity presented. The responsibilities of both parties are of equal importance (Garfat, 2007).

Thus one can conclude that supervision concerns dual responsibility. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that CYCWs have the opportunity to practise what they have learnt and are given the scope to make decisions involving practice in the life space – while the CYCW takes responsibility for implementing learning, reflecting on interventions, confronting and asking for supervision in order to discuss the concerns around interventions with specific children and youth. All of this is guided by organisational policies and procedures.

In many instances, the CYC work supervisor/manager comes from a different profession and does not understand the CYC work profession or feels that the CYCW is not qualified for therapeutic interventions. This perception results in workers being treated differently (Michael, 2005). Professionals from similar disciplines can be loyal to each other and in that way undermine CYCWs. Teamwork is essential in creating developmentally appropriate and therapeutic interventions when managing the behaviour of children and youth.

#### **4.3.3. *Theme 3: CYCWs are challenged by children in CYCCs showing behaviour that requires discipline***

CYCWs should expect to be faced with challenging behaviour from children in CYCCs. In addition, the South African Children's Act (Act 38 of 2005) states that the CYCC should offer developmental and therapeutic programmes and treatment for children and youth who display behaviour that is out of control. It is a legislative requirement that CYCCs have programmes in place for children with behavioural challenges and therefore CYCWs have to be prepared to deal with their behaviour.

Children with developmental delays or at-risk children who have been admitted to residential facilities demonstrate behaviour which often includes immaturity, exaggerated negative aggression, dependency, poor impulse control, low self-esteem, egocentricity and ineptness in social relationships, generalised anger and hostility (Beukes & Gannon, 1993).

Inappropriate behaviour by children and youth is often a signal of distress. CYCWs can interpret such a signal as the problem in itself, and, rather than getting involved in caring activities, they may punish the child and stifle the symptoms instead of using it as an opportunity to gain more insight into the child's need and to develop therapeutic programmes to address this need. The behaviour is then turned into disciplinary issues and CYCWs engage in discussing consequences rather than identifying what the problem is (Fox, 2007).

Children in need of care and who are placed in CYCCs have run away from home and have lived on the streets, and/or they may have serious behaviour challenges or developmental delays. CYCWs are then challenged by these children and often struggle to cope with the behaviour of the children and youth in their care (Maherty *et al.*, 2011). A child removed from his or her home, however inadequate or harmful that home may be, experiences a collapse of the world he/she has accepted and trusted thus far. The child is left with a broken past and an unpredictable future. It can be expected that this child will display difficult behaviour in order to feel safe by either acting out to meet his/her needs or by lashing out to experience some sort of control.

Thus in their attempts to feel safe, children and youth expose CYCWs to the following challenges with regard to their behaviour as discussed in the next sub-theme.

#### **4.3.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: CYCWs are challenged by physical and verbal violence and aggressive behaviour by children**

Children who come from abusive backgrounds tend to react in a variety of ways when being cared for in CYCC. They lack trust, have feelings of guilt, have trouble understanding basic cause and effect and therefore lack impulse control. It can thus be expected that children will display aggression, whether physically or verbally.

The participants in this study indicated that they are often challenged by the violent and aggressive behaviour of children in their care and raised their concerns in this regard:

*“Children become violent towards the childcare worker and you ask yourself what is the rights of the childcare worker and how protected am I on the premises if the child becomes violent towards me.”*

*Their violence tested my patience with the child and somehow it changed my personality.”*

*“The child is becoming very rude at some stage. She is very aggressive because she don't want to be here anymore.”*

*“The child is hitting other children. I even have a mark here [pointing to her chest] where she hit me.”*

*“The child's aggressive behaviour is stemming from the substance abuse.”*

*“A child hit me until I bleed and another child hit the childcare worker with a pan. Her tongue lay like this, her tongue splits.”*

The findings of this study are in agreement with previous studies which conclude that children and youth who are referred to CYCCs are generally children with problems, and are often seen as different, maladjusted, disturbed, disruptive and sometimes delinquent and violent (Arieli, 1997:33). Foster and Brooks (2009) emphasise that youth involved in abusive situations often tend to respond to the use of control as a threat and will use the fight or flight response in order to attempt to regain control of their environment. In addition, youth living in economically deprived areas characterised by poverty, unemployment, poor living conditions and a lack of resources are more likely to display delinquent behaviour in contrast to more advantaged areas (Williams, Ayers & Arthur in Fraser, 2002).

According to American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2011), it has been concluded that a complex set of interaction or combination of factors lead to an increased risk of violent behaviour in children and adolescents and may include the following:

- Being the victim of physical abuse and/or sexual abuse ;
- Exposure to violence in the home and/or community ;
- Genetic (family heredity) factors can contribute to violent behaviour;
- Exposure to violence in media (TV, movies, etc.);
- Use of drugs and/or alcohol;
- The presence of firearms in the home encourages violence;
- Combination of stressful family socioeconomic factors (poverty, severe deprivation, marital breakup, single parenting, unemployment, loss of support from extended family);
- Brain damage from head injury can also cause violent behaviour.

Anglin (2002:109) agrees that CYCWs often experience violent and aggressive behaviour from children in their care and pointed to the fact that some CYCCs have even been subjected to riots. Others have been restricted to the office, windows have been broken, cupboards emptied and furniture destroyed to the point where police had to be called in to restore order. The author also warns that the “staff philosophy of control may breed aggression whereas acknowledging each child and youth’s freedom of choice and encouraging them to make good choices tends to limit the incidence of such explosive behaviour”. However, it must be noted that not only children in CYCCs are violent and aggressive. Community norms and the levels of crime often determine whether children and youth will thrive or develop antisocial behaviour.

In addition to violent and aggressive behaviour, CYCWs are also challenged by truancy, swearing and stealing of children and youth in their care as discussed in the following sub-theme.

#### **4.3.3.2 *Sub-theme 3.2: CYCWs are challenged by children’s truancy, swearing and stealing***

Jamieson (2013a) is of the opinion that behaviour such as truancy, swearing and stealing is to be expected from children with developmental delays. The author also points the reader to the fact that children and youth are admitted to CYCCs because of problematic behaviour and therefore it should be a validation that the child needs to be in a programme to address the

developmental delay. The CYCWs who took part in this study highlighted their challenges around children who are stealing and swearing as follows:

*“Hier was goed al gesteel, waardevolle goed, soos ipods, iphones van die volunteers van oorsee. Die kindertjies ken dit mos nie eintlik nie.” [Valuable things get stolen here from international volunteers, like ipods and iphones. The children are not used to these things]*

*“It is about absconding, swearing, stealing. They take this place as a jail but as childcare workers we need to take responsibility, but they don’t take it seriously.”*

School absenteeism and truancy is also a historical problem that has over the last decade received new-found attention, as the link between the lack of school attendance and delinquency has become more apparent (Trujillo, 2002). Although there are many reasons for absconding from CYCCs, this is often due to the changeable aspects of the CYCC programme, as well as to boredom (Vera Institute, 2005). In addition, Grohol (2010) believes that children are learning to swear at an earlier age and swearing more often than children did a few decades ago. The rise in profanity among children is attributed to the general rise of the use of swearing among adults during the same time period.

It is normal for a very young child to take something which excites his or her interest, and is therefore not regarded as stealing. Although they have learnt that theft is wrong, older children or teenagers steal for various reasons. A child may steal to make things equal if another person in the household is seen to be the favourite; a child may steal as a show of bravery for his friends or to give presents to family or friends or to be more accepted by peers (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2011, para.1).

CYCWs therefore need to offer warm, consistent and stable attachments to children and youth in their care. These are known as attachment behaviours which will enable the children to develop a healthy sense of belonging and attachment in accordance with the child and youth’s individual developmental plan (Brentro *et al.*, 1992).

From the above discussion, it is evident that theft, truancy and swearing happen not only in the CYCCs, but also occur in the community at large. It must be kept in mind that placement for a child in a CYCC is a traumatic experience. CYCWs are presented with the opportunity of building a relationship with the child and creating an environment in which the child can feel

safe. In doing so, various feelings are experienced and these feelings become into needs that are met through a variety of behaviours.

Apart from violent and aggressive behaviour, swearing, stealing and truancy, CYCWs are also challenged by sexual development needs of children as portrayed in the ensuing sub-theme.

#### **4.3.3.3 *Sub-theme 3.3: CYCWs are challenged by the sexual development needs of children***

Although CYCWs can expect children in their care to display a range of sexual behaviour as they develop from childhood into adolescence – which could constitute normal or distorted behaviour depending on the context – the participants portrayed their challenges in this regard as follows:

*“I am struggling with the sexuality of the children.”*

*“The children are trying to find out to what sex do they belong, where do I fit in, girls kiss each other, girls get into the bed with each other, so I am struggling.”*

Knox (2003) alerts the reader to the fact that there appears to be a growing awareness in society regarding the complex issue of developing sexual identity in adolescence. Teenage years are often troubled with a multitude of developmental concerns for adolescents who are questioning their sexual identity or who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or intersexual. The relationship between sexual behaviour and identity is often complex and difficult to understand and CYCWs need to sensitively and skilfully manage the behaviour of the youth struggling to find their sexual identity.

At the same time, the average age at which a youth identifies himself or herself as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender is dropping and CYCWs may find themselves confronted by issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity with children who have not even reached secondary school (Bochenek, 2006; Ricks & Vilches, 2007). Ricks and Vilches further argue that institutions and schools are ill-prepared to accommodate diversity and even more reluctant to discuss sexual diversity with children and youth.

In addition, research suggests that increased sexual behaviours in children and youth may be an indication that a child is being, or has been, sexually molested. It is therefore important to evaluate whether children and youth are being coerced into unwanted sexual behaviours by other children and youth. On the other hand, overreacting to children’s sexual behaviours can



also have negative consequences as it could cause them to feel ashamed and self-conscious about a natural and healthy interest in their bodies and sexuality (Johnson, 2001).

It is therefore important for CYCWs as well as other social service professionals to demonstrate understanding of the inappropriate sexual behaviour of children when managing such behaviour. CYCWs need to recognise the trauma of the sexual abuse the child may have suffered. Together with life space interventions, professional help is of the utmost importance. Behaviour management in these situations cannot be effectively dealt with by simply employing consequences (Allsopp, 2012).

CYCWs also need to be aware of the South African Sexual Offences Act (Act No. 32 of 2007), sections 15 and 16 which make it a criminal offence for children between the ages of 12 and 16 to have sex. In addition, kissing, heavy petting and oral sex is considered an offence if the age difference between the children is more than two years.

On the other hand, unqualified, inexperienced workers or professionals from different disciplines may view youth behaviours as extreme and deviant when, in developmental and situational terms, they are not (Foster and Brooks, 2009). Supervision will help the CYCW understand how different behaviour satisfies different needs. CYCWs should be trained and should work in MDTs in order to develop children holistically. In addition to normal training, CYCCWs are of the opinion that they require training for working with children with special needs, as is evident in the discussion in the next sub-theme.

#### **4.3.3.4 Sub-theme 3.4: CYCWs are not trained to manage children with special needs**

The participants in this study indicated that they are especially challenged by children with special needs, as can be seen in the following quotations:

*“If you have someone who is ADHD and bipolar like we have experienced, you can’t discipline them in the same way because it does not work that way. There should not just be one way of doing things, but you should be versatile, flexible and creative which is not always easy.”*

*“We have to focus on children who are developmentally challenged.”*

*“This child is mentally disabled, her disability is the result of abuse.”*

*“She mess up herself and she can’t tell you when she wants to go to the toilet. If she go to the toilet and she come across the toilet paper you give her, she cannot*

*use it properly so you have to help her or the cottage will just stink. I never got training for this kind of work I am doing.”*

One of the objectives of CYCW is to promote and facilitate the optimum development of children with both normal and special development needs. CYCWs therefore have to ensure that they have the qualities and attributes and training to work with children who have special needs (Jamieson 2013b). Whittaker (1981) contends that CYCWs are in an ideal position to build strong relationships with children and can make use of this relationship to address the children's developmental delays.

Curwin and Mendler (1999) concur with the abovementioned authors and conclude that children with special needs who display behavioural problems create more work for CYCWs and drain their energy. This often causes feelings of inadequacy and frustration among CYCWs as they are expected to implement and use skills that they have not been given training in. Anglin (2002:114) supports this view and notes that although CYCWs have to deal with the most complex and demanding role in the care and treatment of traumatised children and youth, these workers have the least – and in many cases no – specific training for the work they are required to do.

The support, education and training of CYCWs is therefore crucial in order to assure and enhance the quality of service delivery to children and youth and their families. This outcome can only directly be achieved from the development of workers' knowledge and skills and indirectly through the enhancement of their perception of their own feelings of self-esteem and self-respect when they receive supervision that recognises and supports increased effective performance (Garfat, 2007).

Curry (2005) takes this further when he proposes that education and training can help CYCWs to understand the principles they glean from theoretical learning as well as how to apply these principles in the form of policy and procedures, to their daily practice and effectively discipline children. From this discussion it is clear that CYCWs are faced with a variety of behavioural challenges. As professionals, CYCWs should be engaged in personal and professional development in order to maintain the temperament required and the skills needed to render the services required in the CYCCs.

CYCWs need training and guidance in implementation of training as discussed above. This will help CYCWs effectively work through power struggles as discussed in the next sub-theme.

#### **4.3.3.5 Sub-theme 3.5: CYCWs are challenged by power struggles with children who do not comply with rules**

In accordance with the Policy for Social Services Professionals (2012) and Jamieson (2013a), CYCWs in residential facilitates work with children from infancy to adolescence with the purpose of facilitating the optimal development of these children in all dimensions. It is therefore likely that as the child develops, the CYCW will be confronted with children who challenge the rules. The participants in this study voiced their challenges in this regard as follows:

*“You have to force the child to make up his/her bed and you get into a power struggle with a child about something that is expected from them.”*

*“It is a rule that the cottage must look in a certain way before the children go to school and that is where the power struggle starts in the morning.”*

Phelan (2009b) asserts that new CYCWs in particular, need to be aware of the inbuilt dangers in the life space of children. The inexperienced CYCW often becomes engaged in a power struggle and should have training and skills to know that he/she should be disengaging from conflict cycles and not get caught up in power struggles.

Vanderwoerd (2010, para. 2) reflects on his practice as a young CYCW and experiencing what it was like trying to control difficult children. The author acknowledge that there was a constant battle to control children, the better the children in his care behaved, the more positive feedback he got from his colleagues. The author therefore emphasise that, a CYCW's performance cannot be judged by the behaviour of the children in his/her care especially if the intervention is with those whose emotional disturbance and history of neglect and abuse makes them all the more difficult to manage. It is not only unfair and inaccurate, but destructive, to the detriment of the CYCW, the programmes in the CYCC, and the children (Vanderwoerd, 2010).

Allsopp (2013) emphasises once again that the children admitted to CYCCs have often been abandoned and abused by adults who have violated the trust the children had in them. They therefore do not have any reason to trust adults and will engage in power struggles in order to protect themselves and to test the consistency of the CYCW.

CYCWs therefore need to reflect and respond and intervene appropriately, in order to meet the needs of the children and youth in their care. The CYCW should respond to this behaviour appropriately and in the context of the developmental stage of the child. Rules have to make sense to children and youth.

Foster and Brookes (2009); Brentro and Long (2004) explain that youth typically oppose external structures of control and will rebel as a normal part of their development. CYCWs need to use this as an opportunity to develop children, rather than engage in power struggles with them. Sinclair in Knorth, et. al.(2002), argue that children and youth cannot be active participants in a process that they do not know about or do not understand. The CYCW therefore has to actively seek the child's view and perspective with regard to the rules of the CYCC in order to develop them.

Olive (2008) suggests that if the behaviour of children is understood and managed by strategies and techniques that not only consider what the child is doing but endeavour to understand why the child is demonstrating the particular behaviour, it usually ends in favourable interventions. The author concludes that too many interventions focus on what the child is doing and not why he/she is doing it.

CYCWs often get caught up in what the child is doing and therefore most of their energy is focused on stopping the child from doing what he/she is doing.

To this end, CYCWs should be skilled and have the different behaviour management skills required, in order to implement effective developmental programmes and effectively intervene, and manage a variety of behaviour displayed by children who are trying to meet their own developmental needs as discussed in the next sub-theme.

#### **4.3.3.6 *Sub-theme 3.6: CYCWs are challenged by the influence of older children over the younger ones***

Children in CYCCs are relationship-reluctant and do not feel safe (Allsopp, 2013). They will test the CYCW and expect consistency from the CYCW in order to feel safe (Fox, 2005). As a result of group dynamics, behaviour will spread from one to the other in the life space. The CYCW has to be consistent in the routines and responses to children in order for them to learn and to trust the environment.

*“Once the child is placed at ... it becomes so shocking what comes out ... the child not going to school ... taking things out of the cupboards... they are just really destructive.”*

*“It is disturbing how easily they can be influence and follow what the other one is doing and for me being a parent it's very disturbing that they show no remorse for their actions.”*

CYCWs often expect that once a youth is involved in a residential setting, he/she will conform to the rules of that setting. When this does not happen, it is assumed that the nonconformity is by choice and that restriction and consequences will teach responsibility and self-control (Foster and Brookes, 2009). In addition, youth will challenge authority as a developmental stage (note the discussion in section 4.3.3.5).

According to Holden (2009), in residential care, the group setting is the context for providing care. Children and adolescents want to be special and they want to be just like their peers. In contrast to the research findings, CYCWs need to be aware of group dynamics and provide the structure required in the environment, for children and youth to experience belonging and also to expose children to the rewarding feeling of helping others in the group (Holden, 2009).

In addition, Tate (2001) contends that CYCWs tend to overlook the positive influence of peers. Research has found that peer groups and peer pressure can be a powerful force in maintaining orderly, productive, and positive academic and rehabilitative environments.

CYCWs should come to expect difficulties and develop skills in dealing with problems related to the hurt and anger which children and youth feel. CYCWs therefore are required to be able to intervene in a myriad of ways and master techniques in order to successfully manage the behaviour of children as discussed in the ensuing theme.

#### **4.3.4 Theme 4: CYCWs' applied/used behaviour management methods**

Fulcher and Garfat (in Garfat, et. al., 2012:13), suggest that in order to develop children and youth, the CYCW has a unique approach to working with children, youth and families. Being present in the daily life of children and youth allows the CYCW to intervene and respond proactively and immediately to their behaviour, and provide them with the opportunity to learn new ways of being and understanding their environment.

Fox (2004) argues that discipline requires a lot of thought before and during the intervention. It requires the CYCW to design an intervention that will teach the child or youth something about the situation, or about him/herself, and that it will enable him or her to handle the situation better next time. Foster and Brookes (2009) on the other hand, recommend that CYCWs employ methods and techniques of behaviourism in planning interventions.

Fine and Tomlinson (2000) consider four ways of practising behaviour management, namely reward or punishment, natural consequences, logical consequences that are imposed by caregivers and negotiated logical consequence – the latter being for anticipated future behaviour.

The following sub-theme will aid the reader in understanding the importance of relationship in managing the behaviour of children in CYCCs.

#### **4.3.4.1 *Sub-theme 4.1: CYCWs' applied/used relationships as the core method in managing children's behaviour***

Placement for a child in a CYCC is a traumatic experience. CYCWs are presented with the unique opportunity of building a relationship with children and youth and creating an environment in which the child can feel safe. Children and youth who display challenging behaviour may however be relationship-reluctant due to previous experiences in relationships and do not trust the environment and feel unsafe. CYCWs should therefore be expecting this behaviour from the children they are working with and view this as an expectation rather than a challenge (Allsopp, 2013).

The participants in this study elaborated as follows on the relationships between the CYCW and children in their care:

*“Relationship-building with the child is the biggest part.”*

*“Relationships ... I find that sometimes other care workers want to be boss but they don't spend time with the child.”*

*“We all have a relationship with the child; like yesterday I spent some time in the room with one boy just chatting.”*

*“Everybody [CYCWs] has a relationship with all of the children.”*

Perlman, 1983,( Garfat, 2008; Fewster in Garfat, 2012; and Gannon, 2012), in Garfat, et. al., 2012, concur with the findings of this research study and assert that CYCWs can influence the behaviour of children and youth in their care with effective relationships. A relationship is a child's or youth's feeling or sense of emotional bonding with another person. It seeks to enable a person to feel secure and go forward to risk new learning and grow through the nurturing of the relationship. (Perlman, 1983:23-30), Garfat in Bellefeuille and Ricks (2008:26) continue

even further to assert that being with children and youth and sharing their experiences creates a place of safety and security for experiencing new things that otherwise may have been overwhelming. Phelan (2008) however warns that in order to use relationships effectively in child care, it should rely on safe positive connections between children and youth and adults.

It becomes clear from the aforementioned discussion that if the behaviour of children is to be understood and managed effectively, the CYCW is required to work on building positive relationships with the children in the CYCC. Children and youth find a sense of belonging and attachment in relationships. Conversely, where CYCWs fail to meet a child's basic needs, children learn that CYCWs are unreliable and unpredictable. Children and youth who have been mistreated, abandoned and rejected by adults, become relationship-reluctant and perceive even helpful and friendly adults with deep distrust and engage in protective behaviours to shield themselves from subsequent potentially destructive relationships (Brentro *et al.*, 1992).

Foster and Brookes (2009) stress that CYCWs should not be afraid of relationships with children and youth. CYCWs should walk alongside or behind children and youth instead of in front of them. In addition, CYCWs should not be afraid to allow children and youth some control of their decisions and to be educated by them. Children and youth should therefore also be allowed the space to express joy as well as disappointment, and they should be comfortable in knowing that the CYCWs will support them if they are being treated unfairly.

Fewster (in Garfat, et. al, 2012:17), however requires CYCWs to remain attentive to the mutual relationship that children and youth as well as the CYCWs created and are therefore also influenced by. Being in a relationship means engaging with the other person in a deep and profound manner that influences both children and youth as well as CYCWs.

A positive way for CYCWs to use their relationships with children is through modelling appropriate behaviour. CYCWs have an opportunity to effectively manage children's behaviour by demonstrating what could be done and how to control oneself when confronted with problems in the environment.

The basis of a positive interaction between two people is the attitude they display toward one another. This feeling of acceptance and belonging facilitates the development of a sense of trust and the ability to influence children and youth.

In addition to the use of relationships to manage behaviour in CYCCs, the participants who took part in this study also redirected aggression with behaviour management. The following quotation bears evidence to this approach, in that CYCWs are able to support children with their feelings by intervening.

*“When two kids fighting, step in immediately and separate them and ... give them the punching bag ...”*

Discipline should teach children appropriate decision-making and behaviour management skills; the intervention should indicate a rational relationship between actions and consequences. This should start with clearly defining expectations with regard to behaviour and then reinforcing these with skills development. Children and youth who need direct instruction and skills development in interpersonal relations or conflict resolution should be able to access this and other social skills directly in a learning environment (Armistead, 2008). As the above participants’ quotes suggest, therapeutic interventions and life skills are an important part of the interventions with children in CYCCs.

Guetzloe (2000), concurs with the research findings. The author suggests that in avoiding the escalation of acting out behaviour into aggression, the appropriate early intervention strategy early in the cycle is essential. Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey (in Guetzloe, 2000) have identified a number of ways in which caregivers can avoid the escalation of acting-out behaviour. These include assigning a preferred task for a short time, engaging the student in problem-solving (identifying alternative ways to deal with the problem), sending the student on an errand, engaging the student in relaxation exercises, allowing the student to work in a quiet area, or allowing more time to finish an assignment.

Holden (2009) argues that if they do not want offensive behaviour to be repeated, CYCWs should not pay a great deal of attention to such behaviour. CYCWs should redirect the children’s energy to something which is known they do well. A youth can be redirected to the original task and given another chance to succeed or given another task which he/she can do well.

CYCWs build and use relationships as part of the method of reaching their goals of developing children and youth, while at the same time teaching children and youth the social skills required to maintain their own relationships, as discussed in the following sub-theme.



#### **4.3.4.3     *Sub-theme 4.3: CYCWs are teaching children social skills by means of examples***

Behaviour problems should be seen as opportunities to teach children and youth self- control (Brentro & Long, 2004). CYCWs work in the life space of children and crisis or conflict should be viewed as an opportunity to teach, a moment to use as a learning platform rather than the behaviour being perceived as a problem. CYC work therefore focuses on direct care. This includes the designing and implementation of programmes and the management of the behaviour of children in planned environments, with the ultimate goal of equipping children and youth with the necessary skills to function effectively in the community they come from (South African Policy for Social Services Professionals, 2012).

Being part of the life space of the child, CYCWs work with the children 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and form part of the therapeutic environment. Every opportunity that presents itself should be used as an opportunity to develop children, no matter how insignificant it may seem. CYCWs should also take advantage of an event immediately after it happens and use it to expedite an intervention to facilitate the development of the troubled child (Maier, 1987).

The CYCW manages the day-to-day behaviour of children and therefore the opportunity to intervene and use the daily routine as a place for therapy is created in this environment (Vanderwoerd, 2010). This is an opportunity that is unique to life space intervention. From the above discussion, there can be no confusion as to the position the CYCW holds in relation to the child in the life space. In addition, “distorted behaviour” is expected from troubled children and the CYCW should be aware of what behaviour could be displayed and therefore utilises these moments as developmental opportunities to teach the children and youth coping skills.

Stein (2005), asserts that often behaviour is punished by natural consequences. It therefore becomes unnecessary for the CYCW to institute an extra disciplinary measure. Discipline should therefore be consequences as a result of actions, or a set of logical designed consequences that are developed in response to those actions, as suggested by the following participants:

*“Make the child understand the reason why it has happened and then explain to him better how he can handle situations differently.”*

*“Teach the child social skills ... they need to apologise for their behaviour and one needs to accept the apology to get it out there so that when they go into the outside world, they understand the concept of social skills.”*

Social skills are vital for reciprocally productive interactions and durable interpersonal relationships. Children will not only benefit socially, but also academically if they are able to master socially acceptable behaviours. Children and youth who display socially appropriate behaviours that are appreciated by teachers and CYCWs are more likely to repeat such behaviour, and they will encourage their peers to behave appropriately because appropriate behaviours are acknowledged (Vincent, Horner & Sugai, 2010).

The purpose of behaviour management is to build capacity in children and youth so that they are better able to function in their families and communities and are able to adapt as they develop and experience different challenges as discussed in the ensuing sub-theme.

#### **4.3.4.4 Sub-theme 4.4: CYCWs find a midway between empathy, support and firmness**

In order for all the children to feel safe and secure, it is expected from CYCWs in CYCCs to maintain order; however, the ultimate goal is to develop children, not to control them.

Redl and Wineman in Vanderwoerd (2010), argue that behaviour management should only be seen as intervention. Redl and Wineman (1957) list numerous techniques in which helpers seek to rebuild and support the damaged egos of children in their care, and manage the challenging behaviours displayed at the same time. When using life space interventions, all parts of the life space, the physical characteristics of the surroundings, the furniture, the routines, the people, the food, all become tools for therapy. This is an essential part of behaviour management as the participant quotation proposes:

*“In our house we fool around and play with the boys, but when it comes to discipline we change our tone and then they will immediately pick up.”*

*“This is where we [children and youth] have to stop, we are stepping out of line. In our house is more about the tone of voice. Firm, but with love ... they can hear a difference in the pitch.”*

Durrant (2007) states that positive discipline is about long-term solutions that develop a child’s self-esteem. It involves clear communication of your expectations, rules and limits, mutual respect, empathy and non-violence. Positive discipline concerns self-respect, respect for others and observing human rights. CYCWs should consider different approaches as the following participants stated:

*“Keep between the rules but acknowledge the child’s needs.”*

*“So I get him and say, can I give you a hug, just to get them to go to school.”*

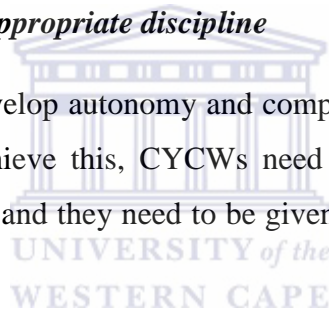
*“I said when you get at school, just say sorry to the teacher because she is fed up and she don’t know how to handle the situation.”*

Teaching children and youth the skills of conflict resolution empowers them to handle their own conflicts. This is an important life skill for children and youth because positive conflict resolution can help strengthen relationships, create safer and more supportive communities and institutions. Furthermore having to deal with conflicts should be seen as an opportunity for personal growth and for relationship, organisational and community building (Foraker-Thompson & Edmunds, 2001).

CYCWs have to see the child in his/her totality and as an individual as this is central to the process of healing and growth as the following sub-theme suggests.

**4.3.4.5 *Sub-theme 4.5: CYCWs used individualisation of the child in order to understand behaviour and select appropriate discipline***

Children have the strength to develop autonomy and competence to manage themselves in a changing world. In order to achieve this, CYCWs need to expose children and youth to opportunities to develop mastery and they need to be given the latitude to take responsibility for their actions.



Phelan (2006) argues that each child and youth is on his or her own unique programme and this requires different, creative and unique responses from staff. The workers who took part in this study were unanimous that children should be treated as individuals, and voiced their opinions as follows:

*“There shouldn’t be a disciplinary code just for one type of problem because one person may have different problems.”*

*“You can’t discipline one person the way you discipline the next because it does not work that way. So there should not only one way of doing things you need to be versatile and flexible. You should be creative.”*

*“It’s good to know the background of the child, where the child is coming from before you even think of disciplining the child. He may be from Wynberg but the home setup is very abusive and violent so you cannot discipline him using that. If you know your child and more about the background you will know what triggers the child’s behaviour and you can also prevent things.”*

*“The children’s upbringing are also all different, if you look at the environment where they grow up and where they come from in the sense of discipline... they kind of react differently to things.”*

Laursen (2003) concurs with the findings of this research study and notes that CYCCs often have a pre-set list of rules and CYCWs are expected to take action when the rules are violated. Punishment or consequences are also prescribed and administered in the same manner to all the children and youth who violate the rules, without regard to the situation or the person or whether they produce a change in behaviour. Laursen continues that these zero tolerance approaches often do not work and children have to be treated as individuals when dealing with the consequences of their behaviour in order for them to understand and learn from the consequence.

Fox (2004) in a similar vein argues that the CYCW must consider who is behaving in an unacceptable way, why they are meeting their needs in an inappropriate way, and how the CYCW can provide an intervention and consequence which will facilitate effective learning from the intervention. Fox (2004) furthermore contends that discipline is often avoided in favour of punitive interventions simply because of the fact that it demands more time and energy. It is often easier to have charts on the wall predicting consequences for all manner of misbehaviour, to remove privileges and luxuries, to send someone to his/her room, rather than to take the time to evaluate each incident of unacceptable behaviour displayed by the children. CYCWs have to use their knowledge of the child and of the individual and group dynamics to understand the reason for the behaviour of the child and to then devise a consequence directed at meeting the needs of the individual child or youth.

The purpose of natural or logical consequences is to help the individual child learn by experiencing the reality of the social order. Arbitrary one-fits-all punishment involves the CYCW exerting power over the children and youth and this invites resistance and power struggles (Fine and Tomlinson, 1999:31). However natural and logical consequences do not always succeed. A child may not be able to connect the implication of his/her actions with their logical consequences and therefore may not learn anything from the imposed consequence (Fine and Tomlinson, 1999).

CYCWs should therefore rather empower children and youth with the knowledge and skills required in order for them to take responsibility for their choices and behaviour as discussed in the following sub-theme.

#### 4.3.4.6 *Sub-theme 4.6: CYCWs are withholding privileges*

CYCWs need to know what they can expect from children at a particular age and how to respond appropriately to the child of that particular age. Withholding privileges might work for a young child, while practising this strategy with an adolescent may lead to rebellious behaviour.

Foster and Brooks (2009) suggest that CYCWs should endeavour to reduce the use of control required over the behaviour of children and youths as it may result in reactive and punitive measures when the individual's behaviour challenges the norm. The use of control and restrictions may lead to rebellion, resentment and the creation of environments that are not conducive to therapeutic programming and relationships.

The participant's quotation suggests that the behaviour management method used is considered as punishment and not discipline where the child is allowed to learn from the consequence.

*“The taking away of privileges like luxuries and that of suspending privileges, but he must not know that you will give it later.”*

Fox (2005) asserts that discipline is about an intervention with the intent to teach. If the intervention has any other intent, such as inflicting or causing pain, loss or suffering then CYCWs are not administering true discipline for a transgression, and it is punishment. When workers remove privileges, belongings and things the children under their care value, or cause discomfort or emotional suffering, it remains punishment (Stein, 2005). Phelan (2009a) on the other hand asserts that punishment has often been disguised by CYCWs as consequences, while punishment only reinforces CYCWs relieving their own anxiety.

The end result of discipline should therefore be self-control and self-discipline (Laursen, 2003). CYCWs may believe that they are using discipline to teach children; however, more often than not, the disciplinary measures used are punitive and children do not learn anything with the result that it remains punishment. The intention of the intervention should be for the child to gain a positive learning experience from the interaction with the caregivers.

As far as Curwin and Mendler (2007) are concerned, much of what we call discipline sends children the message that they will be punished if they do not do as they are told. The children who follow the rules are perceived as responsible and gain rewards and privileges. The others are viewed as defiant. Redl in Fox (2005) on the other hand argues that the terms “discipline”,

“punishment” and “consequences” are frequently used in dialogue, and consequently in practice, as if they were the same thing. If the CYCW is clear about the distinctions, and administers each according to a deliberate plan with considered and intentional responses for the purpose of developing a children, then these interventions including punishment, are acceptable.

It can therefore be concluded that the withholding of privileges may have a place in the overall discipline plan, but it rarely results in changing the behaviour and can also be viewed as punishment. The next sub-theme portrays how CYCWs make use of house rules and disciplinary measures to manage the behaviour of children and youth in their care.

#### **4.3.4.7 *Sub-theme 4.7: CYCWs involve children in house rules and disciplinary measures to manage their behaviour***

The participation of children and youth in decision-making concerning their lives is protected by legislation. Naturally, decision-making will depend on the child’s age, however allowing the child’s input builds trust, and mutual respect. In addition, the CYCW manages a “buy in” from the children and youth involved in the process.

All CYCCs, every CYC supervisor and in turn every CYCW, has to decide whether they want to control children and youth or whether they want to manage the behaviour of children and youth (Phelan, 2006). Where programmes are focused on the management of behaviour, some external control is used to create safety and good boundaries. The overall aim of the programme is rather self-control and not necessarily good behaviour (Phelan, 2006). This method involves the child in logical negotiated consequences and in setting up applicable rules and routines. As the participant quotations suggest:

*“We have regular house meetings with the girls.”*

*“You call a house meeting and select a leader from the group to write the minutes. Everybody sign by themselves for whatever rule is set up there ... so the book is part of the organisational system and procedure and the children have bound themselves in the house meeting with their signature.”*

Sinclair in Knorth, et. al. (2002), supports the findings of the current study and concludes that children and youth have to be part of the decision-making process and that participation is part of the process.

Children and youth therefore have to be informed of the process; they need to voice their opinions and to attend meetings that discuss their care, and finally receive a written record concerning decisions made.

Fox (2005) believes that consistency is important in CYC work. This consistency applies to consensus amongst CYCWs with regard to the aims of managing children's behaviour, as well as in the execution of rules and routines.

#### **4.3.5 Theme 5: Staff work overload and staff turnover as disciplinary challenges**

CYCWs often allow the boundaries between their work and private life to become blurred, which may lead to feeling overwhelmed, resentful, stressed and tired. Unskilled and new CYCWs or other social service professionals could perceive youth behaviours as dangerous and unusual (Foster & Brookes, 2009) and this may lead to stress and burnout and leaving the profession.

The participants in this study referred to the constant staff turnover in the CYCCs as contributing to inconsistency in their services and also causing challenges for the discipline of children in their care as the following participant suggested (group members agreed with the participant):

*“Staff turnover has a major effect on discipline.”*

Colton in Knorth, et. al. (2002), is in agreement with the participants in this research study and argues that residential CYC work is a demanding job and notes that the high turnover contributes to burnout among CYCWs in many countries. Fleischer (1985) in Colton (2005:59) concludes that the high turnover among CYCWs is linked to workload, lack of clear performance feedback, and lack of supervisory support.

Foster and Brookes (2009) recommend that for CYCCs to function effectively, only qualified CYCWs who work full-time need to be employed. The high staff turnover, insufficient qualifications and poor salaries among CYCWs are of concern (Jamieson in Proudlock, 2014). Those who took part in this study describe their challenges with regard to a staff shortage as follows:

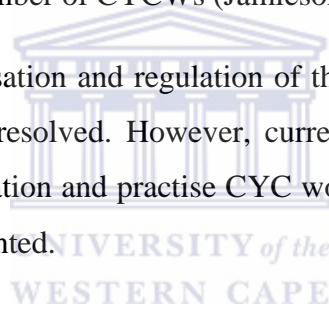
*“To work alone with 16 kids! I have to write reports, I have to observe them, I have to look at their strengths, I have to assess them, I have to moderate them! It is challenging especially when you are alone on duty and weekends.”*

*“Two people for 25 boys, especially the mixed group, 2 years up to 17 years, that is the challenges of staff shortages.”*

*“Less the ratio childcare worker to children to have less children per child care worker.”*

The abovementioned quotations are in contrast with the norms, standards and practice guidelines of the Children’s Act (2005:306) that determines a ratio of one CYCW to every 10 children in a CYCC. The Department of Social Development commissioned a situational analysis of the number of social services professionals available for the implementation of the Children’s Act No.38 of 2005. According to the findings of that study, South Africa has a chronic shortage of social workers, social auxiliary workers and CYCWs and more than a third of CYCCs had an insufficient number of CYCWs (Jamieson in Proudlock, 2014:245).

With the advent of professionalisation and regulation of the CYC field, the issues of understaffing and training should be resolved. However, current CYCWs should reflect on the process of change and transformation and practise CYC work to the best of their ability until the regulations are fully implemented.





#### 4.3.6 *Theme 6: Social workers make inappropriate placements*

The South African Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, section 157 dictates that a designated social worker must investigate and determine whether a child is in need of care and protection or not, and then make a recommendation as to the appropriate placement for the child.

Children in CYCCs are in need of care and protection due to abuse or neglect and are at risk because of the interactions in their own family systems (Maherty *et al.*, 2011). Placement in a CYCC is only the last option after a developmental assessment has been done for the child appearing in the Children's Court.

The workers who took part in this study, however, pointed to the fact that the aforementioned procedures do not always take place when children are admitted to the CYCC. The participants related their challenges in this regard as follows:

*".... but goodness to me they haven't even done the proper homework before they bring their child here. Her [social worker] mind is made up to bring the child here, but there was no screening and assessment."*

*"Kids are placed wrongly at ... We not equipped correctly or they shouldn't even be here. If I was on the panel I would have said no, the child is not suitable."*

Jamieson in Proudlock (2014) concurs with the findings of the participants in this study and notes that there is insufficient monitoring of placements at CYCCs as well as a lack of staff members.

In addition, South Africa is in the process of shifting to a more limited use of residential care which is in line with children's rights frameworks (Allsopp, 2008). Institutionalisation such as at CYCCs is also very expensive and should only be used for those who really need specialised intervention.

*"When a social worker comes in with the child obviously they have been doing all the assessments that the external social worker at the organisation has to do as well as the screening. My concern is that the external social worker almost wants to have this child institutionalised. Why?"*

In addition to the above as discussed, CYCCs are experiencing what is perceived as a lack of service delivery by social workers as discussed in the ensuing sub-theme.

#### 4.3.6.1 *Sub-theme 6.1: CYCW experience a lack in service delivery from social workers*

Legislation in South Africa recognises various social services professions with defined scopes of practice. This has all been done to improve delivery of services to vulnerable children, families and communities.

According to the South African Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, the CYCC should assist in returning the child to the family and community by implementing family reunification and family preservation programmes. This can only be done in collaboration with the social worker who placed the child in the CYCC. However the participant quote suggests that social workers are not rendering the required services:

*“Die buite social worker se die kind se ma is so siek sy kan nie eers loop nie. Hier kom die vrou een saterdag middag verby en ek vra hoe dit met haar gaan. Ek se toe ons wil jou kind gebring het, maar sy se die vrou [maatskaplike werker] was nog nooit by haar nie.” [The external social worker says the child's mother is very ill; she cannot even walk. Then the woman walks past me on a Saturday morning and I ask her how she is doing. I tell her we wanted to bring her child but she said she had not seen the social worker at all]*

*“In die gemeenskap wat ek in bly is daar al hele paar van ons kinders wat hier is wat ek somer self vakansies inligting gaan soek het so dat die kind nie vakansie tye in te bly nie en daai buite social worker he ook nie hulle werk gedoen nie so die inligting wat die binne social workers het was alles deur my.” [Many of the children I work with come from my community, I myself gather information over the holiday in order to make it possible for the child to go home. The external social workers had not done their work; the internal social workers got the information from me]*

Young people in alternative care have expressed concerns about the lack of family reunification work done by social workers. The government and Non Profit Organisations services providers have voiced concerns that for various reasons designated social workers lack the time to provide family reunification services (Jamieson in Proudlock, 2014:239).

Everything done by social services professionals should be measured against a philosophy. Therefore it is important that the MDT have a framework of policies and guiding procedures in order for efficient services to be rendered to children and families.

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the reader with an in-depth understanding of the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the study. The descriptions of the findings were supported by verbatim quotations from the semi-structured focus groups. The discussions were framed by supporting and contrasting literature from prior studies.

The main themes that emerged from the data were as follows:

1. The role of discipline among CYCWs in CYCCs: CYCWs are unified in their expression of CYCWs being present in the life space of children and youth and therefore are the primary MDT members responsible for the implementation of discipline with children and youth.
2. CYCW's challenges with the MDT regarding the discipline of children in CYCCs: CYCWs in CYCCs are challenged by the lack of teamwork when it comes to discipline; decisions with regard to discipline are influenced by policy and procedure and are further complicated by a lack of supervision and interventions of social workers and managers who practise favouritism and disempower CYCWs.
3. CYCWs are challenged by CYCC children's behaviour that requires discipline: CYCWs are challenged by children who are violent and aggressive. In addition, children with special needs are admitted to facilities and CYCWs are not trained to work with these children. Children are challenging the rules of the CYCC and are stealing, swearing, absconding and exhibiting challenging sexual behaviour.
4. CYCWs' applied/used behaviour management methods: CYCCs are unanimous in their opinion that the relationship is their most important tool in managing the behaviour of children and youth. CYCWs are redirecting behaviour and teaching life skills in order to help children control their behaviour.
5. Staff work overload and staff turnover as disciplinary challenges: CYCWs are being challenged by having to attend to administrative duties while working with many children and simultaneously having to deal with discipline while staff are continually changing.

6. Social workers make inappropriate placements: In their experience, CYCWs are finding that social workers are placing children in CYCCs without doing the proper investigations. Social workers are also professing to render family reunification services when in reality they are not doing what they claim to be doing.

The research goal and objectives were achieved and the research question answered through a qualitative enquiry which was considered the best research approach for this study as it acquired rich comprehensive data. The findings of the study provided a better understanding of the challenges faced by CYCWs with regard to the discipline of children in CYCCs.



## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, the researcher presented the themes and sub-themes that arose from the findings of the study. This final chapter concludes the study concerning the challenges faced by CYCWs with regard to the discipline of children with challenging behaviour in residential CYCCs. A brief summary and conclusions for each chapter is given, followed by recommendations for all relevant stakeholders in the CYC work sector as well as for future research.

#### 5.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

##### 5.2.1 Chapter 1

Chapter 1 provided the reader with an overview of the research study undertaken, and the researcher discussed the reasons for placing children in CYCCs. In the preliminary literature review the researcher introduced the concept of residential CYCCs and the programmes facilitated by CYCWs in residential CYCCs. The concept of discipline, some background and contextual information and the research problem were also introduced. The research question for the study was then presented, namely:

What are the challenges faced by CYCWs with regard to the discipline of children with challenging behaviour in residential CYCCs?

In order to answer the research question, the following aim and objectives were formulated:

The aim of the study was to explore and describe the challenges faced by CYCWs regarding the discipline of children with challenging behaviour in CYCCs.

The objectives were:

- To explore and describe the challenges faced by CYCWs with regard to the behaviour of children in CYCCs;

- To explore and describe the challenges with regard to exercising discipline in the CYCCs.

Consequently, the research approach that was implemented for this study was of a qualitative nature while exploratory, descriptive and contextual designs were used to expedite the process. Chapter 1 functioned as the introduction to the study and provided the study's context, the research problem, research goal, research objectives and the methodology. The researcher used a qualitative research approach to address the research problem and to effectively and efficiently work towards the research goal and objectives. Bowen's systems theory was discussed in its application as a theoretical framework for the study. The research question that was produced from the research problem was answered by the research design. The research methodology, according to a qualitative research approach, provided the procedure for the implementation of the study. Purposive sampling was applied and the sampling criteria utilised in the study was discussed. Focus group interviews as means of data collection, together with the analysis of the data were considered. Strategies to ensure trustworthiness and the ethical considerations of the study were also discussed in this chapter.

In conclusion, the researcher reasoned that the qualitative research approach and the designs and methodology used in the study were adequate for reaching the goals and objectives of the study.

### **5.2.2 Chapter 2**

In Chapter 2 a review of the literature that guides CYCWs in their interventions with children and youth in residential settings was presented. The concept of CYC work was explored and the researcher considered definitions for CYCWs as provided by the South African Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005 and the South African Social Services Professions Act, No. 110 of 1978. The origins of CYCCs from a historical context were scrutinised as well as some definitions of CYCCs as detailed in the South African Children's Act No. 38 of 2005. Various interpretations from different authors in the field of CYC work were also discussed. The context of South African CYCCs was considered from its inception through to the transformation of CYCCs with the role out of developmental assessment training and the launch of Project Go in 1996.

The professionalisation of the field of CYC work, and a discussion on the current status of the field of CYC work in South Africa were presented. Theoretical frameworks used in the study, such as Bowen's family systems theory (1974) and how it works in relation to the CYCC as a system, and John Bowlby's attachment theory (1969) were discussed as well as the lack of attachment which children and youth experience in CYCCs.

A part of the discussion included the requirements of meeting the attachment needs of children and youth in residential settings. Bandura's social learning theory (1969) was discussed in the context of how children and youth can learn new ways of managing their behaviour in the setting of the CYCC as their life space.

Frameworks for intervention were introduced and the concept of practicing CYC work where children and youth live their lives (life space work) was introduced in detail. Behaviourism and the use of natural and logically designed consequences was discussed in relation to its benefits of these techniques as opposed to punishment. Subsequent to this, the notion of discipline was explored in detail.

Chapter 2 provided literature assertions from previous studies which gave credibility to the significance of this study. From the literature reviewed, it was deduced that the behaviour of children and youth as well as the dynamics in MDTs working in CYCCs, posed challenges for CYCWs with regard to disciplining these children and youth. Discussing some of the possible causes and concerns provided the basis from which comparisons and contrasts about discipline in CYCCs could be made. The researcher concluded that the literature reviewed was in line with the goals and objectives of the study, and would serve as a reference for the study.

### **5.2.3 Chapter 3**

In this chapter, the methodology that was implemented in the research study was discussed. The choice of a qualitative research approach and the explorative, descriptive and contextual design was motivated. The various steps that the researcher carried out during the research process were set out exactly as they were implemented. Subsequently, the steps implemented were discussed in depth. The study's population encompassed all the CYCCs registered with the Department of Social Development of the Western Cape.

The purposive sampling technique was used and focus group discussions were facilitated at four CYCCs, one in each metropole of the greater Cape Town area. A representative sample of between eight and ten CYCWs was selected from each CYCC.

Data collection occurred by means of focus group interviews with the aid of an interview schedule. The interview schedule and interview techniques used were discussed in accordance with Greef (in De Vos *et al.*, 2005). In order to test on the effectiveness of the interview schedule and interview techniques, a pilot interview was conducted as a precursor to the research (Fox & Bayat, 2007). The data collection process started with preparation and refining of the interviewing schedule, setting up of the focus groups and preparation of the participants. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim and analysed according to Tesch's eight steps of data analysis (Tesch in Creswell, 2009). The data analysis culminated in the themes and sub-themes presented in Chapter 4. Trustworthiness was used to ensure the reliability and validity of this study. Ethical considerations such as confidentiality, voluntary participation and informed consent were discussed in detail to provide evidence of adherence to research ethics in conducting this study.

The chapter concluded with the limitations of the study which included the researcher's role in the field of CYC work.

In summary, Chapter 3 provided the reader with a detailed account of the research methodology and the implementation of the methodology used.

#### **5.2.4 Chapter 4**

In this chapter, the findings of the study were presented by means of themes and sub-themes which were identified during the data analysis process. The participants' voices, in the form of relevant quotations from interviews, provided evidence for the findings, and were contrasted and compared with literature. The demographic data showed that 35 of the 38 participants were female, with the majority being in their 30s and studying for the qualification in child and youth care with the National Association of Child Care Workers.

Six themes and their respective sub-themes were generated from the obtained data. A summary and conclusion for each of these themes is presented in the following sections.



#### **5.2.4.1. THEME 1: The role of discipline among CYCWs in CYCC**

CYCWs share the life space of children and as such form part of the children's experiences. Thus CYCWs work with the children and youth 24 hours a day, seven days a week and in this way are presented with opportunities to facilitate the development of children and youth who display challenging behaviour.

CYCWs clearly identified with this perception of their role. The data indicated that CYCWs consider themselves as the primary persons responsible for dealing with the discipline of children and youth in CYCCs as they are the MDT members who are always present, and are exposed to the behaviour when it occurs.

CYCWs deal with discipline as the incident unfolds; they work in the moment and discipline children and youth in the life space in accordance with their own perception of what constitutes an appropriate intervention and response to the behaviour.

CYCWs need the support of their colleagues when dealing with discipline. The support can be informal peer supervision, or formal group or individual supervision with the supervisor. The supervisor should ideally have CYC work experience and should therefore be in a position to support CYCWs from an experiential point of view, with this support in place. CYCWs have the confidence to intervene and alter interventions as required in order to provide a context where children are able to learn from the consequences of their behaviour.

In order to achieve their goals with children and youth, CYCWs rely on their colleagues for advice on how to handle incidents and situations. An essential part of this support is also in taking time out, where a colleague will stand in for the CYCW who needs to remove him/herself from the environment in order to regain composure and reflect on interactions after a stressful incident or shift.

The data points in the direction of teamwork being a critical factor for the MDT. The evidence suggested that teamwork is lacking in CYCCs. CYC work in residential facilities cannot effectively be practised without the MDT approach. Consistency is therefore required amongst MDT members. CYCWs need clear communication, while positive, constructive confrontation is essential for effective team functioning. The findings suggest that multi-disciplinary teams are not functioning effectively in CYCCs.

Additionally, discourse suggested that effective supervision translates into effective MDT work, and in turn, to good CYC work practice in CYCCs. The lack of MDT functioning, however, points toward poor supervision of CYCWs in CYCCs.

#### ***5.2.4.2. THEME 2: CYCWs' challenges with the MDT regarding the discipline of children in CYCCs***

MDT work requires that all team members communicate with each other in professional language, and that all the role players are involved in shared decision-making around special disciplinary issues. Where this happens, interventions are successful, multi-disciplinary team members need to confront each other where discipline results in punitive responses towards children and youth (Mattingly & Stuart, 2001). The research findings showed that CYCWs are struggling in this area; there are communication break downs between CYCWs, managers and social workers. MDT work is critical for effective behaviour management interventions with children and youth in CYCCs.

Additionally, the data supports the need for organisational policies and procedures for dealing with the disciplinary issues arising in CYCCs. The lack of policies and procedures and/or application of said policies is causing inconsistency and disagreement with regard to discipline between CYCWs and social workers.

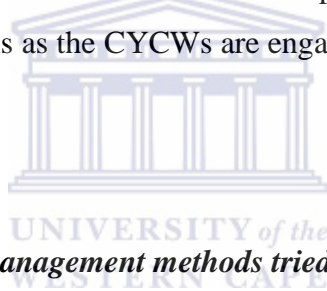
The research findings indicated that colleagues in MDTs are making decisions without consultation and working in isolation. On the other hand, where CYCWs as partners are communicating and making joint decisions, behaviour management interventions are effective. However, managers and social workers are intervening and changing decisions made by CYCWs concerning consequences for challenging behaviour.

The findings also suggested that CYCWs are concerned about the lack of authority they have with regard to discipline. Managers are impacting on how empowered CYCWs are feeling during their shifts in residential CYCCs. These managers are practising favouritism among children and among CYCWs, and routines are disrupted by managers who choose to facilitate different activities with their favourite children. CYCWs are thus disempowered by these actions which constitute disloyal behaviour towards them.

#### **5.2.4.3. THEME 3: CYCWs are challenged by children in CYCCs behaviour that require discipline**

The CYCWs had been confronted by physical and verbal violence and aggression, and had even been assaulted by children; they believe their rights as workers are not being upheld. CYCWs in CYCCs are confronted by certain children who abscond on a regular basis, swear and even steal from volunteers at the CYCCs. In addition, CYCWs are challenged by adolescents who are struggling to find their sexual identity or who are not able to manage their sexuality appropriately. This pertains to young people who feel they identify with sexual minority groups, or could be displaying deviant sexual behaviour.

CYCWs are also struggling to manage the behaviour of children with special needs in their care as they have not been appropriately trained to work with special needs children. In addition to working with children with special needs, CYCWs are already being challenged by children who rebel against authority and do not follow the rules and procedures of the organisation. The latter is causing stressful situations as the CYCWs are engaging in power struggles with these children.



#### **5.2.4.4. THEME 4: Behaviour management methods tried**

The CYCWs believed that the relationship is the most important tool in managing the behaviour of children and youth, although it appeared that some CYCWs want to control children and do not spend enough time in building a relationship with them. CYCWs need to teach children social skills. Children are required to understand the sequence of how events unfold, and with this understanding, they need to be taught how to respond differently to their triggers and to be offered alternative behaviours when they become aware of these triggers.

CYCWs offer children and youth support, empathy and boundaries. The life space and everything in it becomes a tool to manage their behaviour. Children are taught to keep within the set boundaries of the CYCC. While their needs are acknowledged, they are exposed to and experience the natural consequences of their actions.

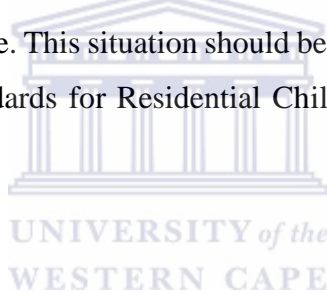
Importantly, CYCWs acknowledged that children and youth are all unique individuals, and should therefore be disciplined according to their varying individual needs. In order to do this CYCWs should be aware of the problems children have experienced and the context and

environment they come from. This should be taken into consideration when disciplining children.

CYCWs indicated that it is acceptable practice to disipline a child by removing privileges; however the children need to be made aware that they are not losing the privileges permanently. CYCWs believe that it is important to include children in decision-making around the CYCC such as in meetings. In this process, records are kept and children are contracted into inclusive decisions taken in meetings with regard to the rules of the CYCC.

#### ***4.2.4.5 THEME 5: Staff work overload and staff turnover as disciplinary challenges***

CYCWs felt that having to follow a developmental approach to working with children, and having to work with ratios of 25 children to one childcare worker has a major impact on maintaining discipline. This, together with the fact that there is a high turnover in staff, creates a significant disciplining challenge. This situation should be remedied with the implementation of the National Norms and Standards for Residential Child and Youth Care (South African Children's Act No. 38 of 2005).



#### ***4.2.4.6 THEME 6: Social workers make inappropriate placements***

CYCWs were of the opinion that social workers are removing children and youth from their homes for the wrong reasons and making inappropriate placements. The CYCWs also believed that social workers are taking these decisions without appropriate consideration of the views expressed by the CYC team.

Social workers are perceived to be reporting on families for reunification purposes. However upon closer investigation by the CYCWs, it was found that some social workers had not been rendering reunification services to families. Discourse suggested that the reason for this could be the shortage of social workers as well as the presence of inexperienced residential care social workers. In addition, high caseloads impact on service delivery by social workers. It is hoped that the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers from the Department of Social Development will help alleviate the current situation.

Through this study, the researcher acknowledges that CYCWs employed in CYCCs experience several challenges with regard to the discipline of children and youth in CYCCs. In view of this, the following recommendations are made to various stakeholders.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.4.1 Recommendations pertaining to the research findings**

In order to promote effective MDT work in CYCCs, the National Association of Child Care Workers and other relevant role players need to engage in developing support systems for staff in CYCCs by:

- Developing a skills programme for all non-child and youth care staff. This will enable all staff to understand the developmental approach to working with children and youth and facilitate effective and efficient MDT work.
- Developing a template of policies and procedures for CYCCs to use as a guideline. This template would create consistency among CYCCs and serve as a guideline for CYCCs regarding the requirements in CYCCs.
- Designing a programme based on best practice models, to support staff in CYCCs to implement good CYCW practice in residential CYC settings.
- Ensure effective management of MDTs in CYCCs in order to ensure continuity in service delivery.

The Department of Social Development needs to engage tertiary educational institutions and advocate for the development of tertiary study programmes for CYCWs.

It is recommended that the Department of Social Development commissions a study of the residential CYCW sector in order to:

- Understand and articulate the role of CYCWs in contrast to other social services professionals in CYCCs to facilitate the cultivation of a professional identity for CYCWs.

- Determine the budget required in making available learnerships and bursaries for the varying needs of CYCWs in order to practise at either auxiliary or professional level as proposed by the Professional Board for Child Care Workers.

The National Association of Child Care Workers could benefit by developing systems to support good supervision by:

- Ensuring the National Norms and Standards for Residential Child and Youth Care Centres contain regulations with regard to supervision training for all residential CYC work managers.
- Designing supervision training aligned to the FET Qualification Child and Youth Care Work.
- Advocating for a supervision module as a compulsory module of tertiary child and youth care work qualifications.
- The MDT member who is responsible for supervising the CYCW should have supervision with the CYCW on a monthly basis as a minimum requirement.

The National Association of Child Care Workers needs to develop nodes of best practice models for residential CYC work in all the regions of South Africa.

It is recommended that the Department of Social Development jointly with the National Association of Child Care Workers develop a programme to mentor CYCCs in the implementation of the National Norms and Standards for Residential Child and Youth Care Centres and support all CYCCS towards developing into best practice centres.

The Department of Social Development in conjunction with the Department of Labour jointly with the National Association of Child Care Workers could set up a task team to investigate the working conditions of CYCWs in order to:

- Ensure CYCWs are elevated to the professional level in accordance with the National Norms and Standards for Residential Child and Youth Care Centres and in line with the provisions of the Professional Board for Child Care Workers.
- Ensure that working conditions are within the accepted guidelines of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and that the Occupational Health and Safety Act is adhered to.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendations with regard to further and future research**

It is recommended that future research engage with the growth and development of the CYCWs in CYCCs in terms of the following:

- Explore the empowerment of CYCWs in the life space by appropriate supervision in CYCCs;
- Explore what constitutes good CYC work practice by the MDT members in CYCCs;
- Explore transforming CYCCs into best practice models through CYC work practice by the MDT;
- Explore effective MDT work in CYCCs;
- Determine what constitutes effective supervision of CYCWs in CYCCs by supervisors.

#### **5.5. CONCLUSION**

The conclusions arrived at during the course of the study were outlined in this chapter. The significance and value of the qualitative research process was described by a short evaluation of the different research components of the research process. The research goal and objectives were achieved and the research question answered through a qualitative enquiry which was considered the best research approach for this study as it acquired rich comprehensive data concerning CYCWs and their experiences with children and youth in CYCCs.

The findings of the study provided a better understanding of the challenges of CYCWs with regard to discipline of children and youth in CYCCs. This final chapter of the study provided the reader with a summary and conclusions of the foregoing chapters from the introduction, literature review and applied methodology to the major research findings.

Based on these findings, the researcher made a number of recommendations in relation to the learning from the research for the South African CYC work sector involved in CYCCs. The research outlined further possible areas of research. In addition, the researcher made a number of recommendations based on the newly uncovered information which may have a positive impact on CYCWs and their management of challenging behaviour presented by children and youth in CYCCs.

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## Appendix A



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**Tel: +27 21 9593674**

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### INFORMATION SHEET

**Project Title: Challenges faced by Child and Youth Care workers with regard to discipline of children with challenging behaviour in Residential Child and Youth Care Centres.**

**What is this study about?** This is a research project being conducted by E.J. Thesen at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are a trained child and youth care worker. The purpose of this research project is to explore and describe the challenges faced by CYCW with regards to disciplining children with challenging behavior in the CYCC's.

**What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?** You will be asked to be part of a focus group, you will be required to respond to various questions, listen and respectfully consider the opinions of others, the session will be recorded, and confidentiality will be held. A voice recorder will be used, I will then transcribe verbatim, and pseudo names will be used to ensure confidentiality and privacy. You can withdraw from the study at any time. The focus group will be conducted at your centre.

**Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?** We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, procedures to maintain the confidentiality of the data include having locked filing cabinets and storage areas, using pseudo names



only on data forms, and using password-protected computer files. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible.

In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, we will disclose to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities information that comes to our attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harm to you or others.

**What are the risks of this research?** There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.

**What are the benefits of this research?** This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the researcher to learn more about the challenges faced by CYCW with regards to disciplining children. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of how to overcome these challenges faced by CYCW.

**Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?** Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may withdraw at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

**Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?** The researcher will arrange with a colleague to debrief participants after the interview should this be required

### **What if I have Questions?**

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Head of Department: Prof. C Schenck

Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences:

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

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This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.

**Appendix B**



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## FOCUS GROUP CONFIDENTIALITY BINDING FORM

**Title of Research Project: Challenges faced by Child and Youth Care workers with regard to discipline of children with challenging behaviour in Residential Child and Youth Care Centres.**

The study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way. I agree to be audio-taped during my participation in the study.

I also agree not to disclose any information that was discussed during the group discussion.

**Participant's name.....**

**Participant's signature.....**

**Witness's name.....**

**Witness's signature.....**

**Date.....**

## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. How have you been involved in discipline of children in the CYCC?
2. Think back over all the years that you've disciplined children and explain why you think the desired result was achieved.
3. What went well with discipline?
4. What needs improvement with regard to discipline?
5. Suppose that you were in charge and could make a change that would make the programme better. What would you do?
7. What can each one of us do to make the programme better?

