

Perceptions of male adolescents regarding sexual abuse

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**PERCEPTIONS OF MALE ADOLESCENTS
REGARDING SEXUAL ABUSE**

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my beautiful daughter who is the sunshine in our lives.

“We made a wish and you came true.”

There are no adequate substitutes for father, mother, and children bound together in a loving commitment to nurture and protect. No government, no matter how well-intentioned, can take the place of the family in the scheme of things.

Gerald Ford

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I would like to thank my Heavenly Father for guiding me throughout my studies. All the glory be to God.

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- All the participants who contributed and participated in the study.
- The North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus for financial support.
- Mrs Van der Walt for the language editing. (**Annexure 7**)

STATEMENT

I, Daleen Buchanan hereby state that the manuscript with the title:

Perceptions of male adolescents regarding sexual abuse

is my own work.

.....
D. Buchanan

.....
Date

SUMMARY

Perceptions of male adolescents regarding sexual abuse

Keywords: Adolescent, perception, sexual abuse.

Individual factors that might influence the way sexual abuse is defined and perceived within a culture include gender, the extent to which one adheres to and internalizes traditional roles, and levels of acculturation. The underlying assumption in many studies regarding child sexual abuse is that there is a correlation between perception of abuse and abusive behaviour – a positive mind-set towards abuse may lead to abusive behaviour.

The **aim** of this study was to explore what the perception of adolescent males were regarding sexual abuse in order for social workers to have a better understanding of the adolescent male regarding sexual abuse. Interviews were conducted with 20 adolescent males to gain a keener insight into their perception of sexual abuse. From the data received it was found that adolescent males do not have adequate knowledge regarding the broader definition of sexual abuse, and that misconceptions still persist. The respondents' main source of information regarding sex and sexual abuse was the school. The sex education focuses mainly on anatomical and physiological information and lacks information on sexual abuse and sexual values. From data received, it was also found that the majority of parents never spoke to the adolescent males about sex; the respondents received no education from their parents concerning sexual abuse.

A holistic approach is necessary when educating the adolescent male, which entails a comprehensive sexual education that focuses on sexual abuse, sexual values and preventative behaviour. A holistic approach requires sexual education provided in the home, the school as well as the community. It should consist of an integration of informal and formal education. Other organisations in the community such as NGO's, counselling centres and medical support centres should also form part of this holistic approach as they can offer valuable assistance.

OPSOMMING

Die persepsie van adolessente seuns rakende seksuele misbruik

Sleuteltermes: Adolessent, persepsie, seksuele misbruik

Individuele faktore wat 'n invloed mag hê op hoe seksuele misbruik binne 'n kultuur gedefinieer en beskou word, sluit in geslag, die mate waarin 'n persoon tradisionele rolle internaliseer en aan voldoen asook akkulturasie-vlakke. Onderliggende gevolgtrekkings word in verskeie studies rakende seksuele misbruik van kinders waargeneem, naamlik dat daar 'n korrelasie bestaan tussen persepsie rakende misbruik en misbruik-gedrag 'n positiewe ingesteldheid teenoor mishandeling kan lei tot misbruik-gedrag.

Die **doel** van die studie was om die persepsie van adolessente seuns rakende seksuele misbruik te verken sodat maatskaplike werkers die adolessente seuns rakende seksuele misbruik beter kan verstaan. Onderhoude is gevoer met 20 manlike adolessente om 'n beter insig te verkry in hulle persepsie rakende seksuele misbruik. Uit die data wat ingesamel is, is bevind dat manlike adolessente nie oor voldoende kennis besit van die breër definisie van seksuele misbruik nie en dat dwaalbegrippe steeds voortduur. Die respondente se hoof inligtingsbron aangaande seks en seksuele misbruik was die skool. Die seksopvoeding het hoofsaaklik gefokus op anatomiese en fisiologiese inligting en bly in gebreke om kennis rakende seksuele misbruik en seksuele waardes oor te dra. Van die data wat ingesamel is, is daar ook bevind dat die meerderheid ouers nooit met hul manlike adolessente oor seks gepraat het nie; die respondente het geen opvoeding rakende seksuele misbruik van hulle ouers ontvang nie.

'n Holistiese benadering is nodig wat betref die opvoeding van die adolessente seun en dit behels omvattende seksuele opvoeding wat op seksuele misbruik, seksuele waardes en voorkomende gedrag fokus. 'n Holistiese benadering is seksuele opvoeding wat in die huis, in die skool én in die gemeenskap voorsien word. Dit behoort uit 'n integrasie van formele en informele opvoeding te bestaan. Ander organisasies in die gemeenskap soos NRO's, beradingsentrums en mediese

ondersteuningscentrums moet ook deel uitmaken van die holistische benadering want hulle kan ook waardevolle hulp verleen.

FOREWORD

The article format was chosen in accordance with regulations A.7.5.7.4 for the degree MA in Social Work: Forensic Practice. The article will comply with the requirements of the journal *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE AUTHORS

Social Work

The journal publishes articles, brief communications, book reviews and commentary articles already published from the field of Social Work. Contributions may be written in English. All contributions will be critically reviewed by at least two referees on whose advice contributions will be accepted or rejected by the editorial committee. All refereeing is strictly confidential. Manuscripts may be returned to the authors if extensive revision is required or if the style of presentation does not conform to the practice. Commentary on articles already published in the Journal must be submitted with appropriate captions, the name(s) and address(es) of the author(s), preferably not exceeding 5 pages.

The entire manuscript must be submitted, plus one clear copy as well as a diskette with all the text, preferably in MS Word (Word Perfect) or ASSII. Manuscripts must be typed, double spaced on the one side of the A4 paper only. Use the Harvard system for references. Short references in the text: When word-for-word quotations, facts or arguments from other sources are cited, the surname(s), year of publication and the page number(s) must appear in parenthesis in the text. More details concerning sources referred to in the text should appear at the end of the manuscript under the caption "References". The sources must be arranged alphabetically according to the surnames of the authors.

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PERCEPTIONS OF MALE ADOLESCENTS REGARDING SEXUAL ABUSE

Keywords: Adolescent, perception, sexual abuse.

INTRODUCTION

In a study conducted by De Wet *et al.* (2008:97-122) in a Free State school with Grade 8 to 12 learners regarding sexual harassment it was found that peers were the main perpetrators in all the forms of sexual violence and abuse. They also concluded that, contrary to most research findings, the greater threat to sexual harassment in schools was to school boys, mostly from harassment by fellow male learners. Looking at the findings of De Wet *et al.* (2008:97-122), it is therefore important to know what the perceptions of male adolescents are regarding sexual abuse.

DuBois and Miley (2005:404) point out that youths such as adolescents must be viewed as individuals with strengths and resources for building competent communities rather than “youths as problem-ridden or victims of risk-filled circumstances”. The participation of adolescents is a process through which they can solve problems such as sexual abuse and carry out plans that provide tangible benefits and increase their involvement in the community to prevent sexual abuse of peers and children (Checkoway *et al.*, cited in DuBois & Miley, 2005:404). Through studying the male adolescents’ perception of sexual abuse, professionals can capture teachings and environmental influences of previous generations, which will again be instilled in generations to come. Hence the male adolescent plays an important role in the community – an influential role – concerning the prevention of sexual abuse in future.

1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Sexual abuse, as defined by DuBois and Miley (2005:374-375), “encompasses a wide range of sexual maltreatment and misuse by family members and strangers”. Several definitions of sexual abuse are available. Aucamp *et al.* (2012:2) argue that people may disagree on the question whether certain sexual acts are abusive.

Sexual abuse, as described by DuBois and Miley (2005:374-375) and Zastrow (2010:187), is non-consensual sexual contact with a person and includes molestation, rape, child pornography, incest, and child prostitution. Johnson (2004:374) defines child sexual abuse as “any activity with a child before the age of legal consent that is for the sexual gratification of an adult or a substantially older child”. These activities include oral-genital, genital-genital, genital-rectal, hand-genital, hand-rectal, or hand-breast contact; exposure of sexual anatomy; forced viewing of sexual anatomy; and showing pornography to a child or using a child in the production of pornography. According to the Children’s Act, Act 38 of 2005 (South Africa, 2005) a child means any person under the age of 18 years, which includes the adolescent. *Adolescence* describes the teenage years between 13 and 19 and can be considered the transitional stage from childhood to adulthood (Psychology Today, 2013:1).

During the survey of Richter *et al.* (2007:55), 30% of adolescents reported that their first sexual encounter was forced. According to Rape Statistics of the World (2011), police studies estimated that only one in 36 sexual abuse cases were reported and of those only 15% culminated in conviction. Girls and boys have experienced sexual abuse of equal numbers up to the age of 15 years (Brookes & Higson-Smith, 2007:111). According to Jewkes *et al.* (2006:2950) a child is sexually abused every four minutes in South Africa, which means that the country has a particularly high prevalence of sexual abuse. According to Smith (2013:1-4), statistics in 2010 to 2011 show that 56 272 sexual abuse cases were recorded in South Africa, an average of 154 a day. Further statistics by Smith (2013:2) show that between a quarter and a third of men admit to sexual abuse. This indicates widespread social acceptance of sexual abuse or rape in South Africa. Kaufman (2001:1) asserts that in a large percentage of all adolescent sexual assaults, the perpetrator is a family member or is known to the adolescent.

The environmental context can influence the adolescent male’s perception (Weiten, 2004:165). Individual factors that might influence the way sexual abuse is defined and perceived within a culture include gender, the extent to which one adheres to and internalizes traditional roles, and levels of acculturation. Several studies show that society’s perception of sexual abuse of a child is affected by the age of the victim. Younger children are assigned less blame than older children such as

adolescents, according to Giglio *et al.* (2011:398). More blame and culpability was attributed to victims by male respondents. Also, same-sex interaction was seen as more abusive than opposite-sex interaction (Giglio *et al.*, 2011:398; Kanukollu & Mahalingam, 2011:227). How the community understands sexual abuse, also of a child, will influence how they would react to such occurrence. Cultural context may relate to unsupportive responses. Public perception influences access to treatment and societal consequences for both the perpetrator and the victim. Studies show that the perpetrator will most likely be a man (90%) who can also sexually abuse the male adolescent (Kaufman, 2001:1). The male adolescent experiences the same feelings of anger, sadness, poor self-esteem, confusion and loss of power as sexually abused females (Spies, 2006:53). Sexual abuse robs children of their personal power and violates their boundaries regardless of their sex. According to Kaufman (2001:1) boys are often told that when they had sex with women, they were lucky to be initiated so young and it is often viewed as a rite of passage that makes him a man.

There is nothing as damaging for an adolescent boy as to be sexually abused, especially by a female perpetrator (Spies, 2006:50). Female perpetrators were viewed as a rare event but recent studies show that it is not uncommon (Yost, 2012:2). The male adolescent victim is less likely to report the sexual abuse than the female adolescent (Kaufman, 2001:1). Spies (2006:52) mentions that male victims will not disclose the abuse as a result of the perception that they are emasculated and no longer men but failures. An impediment in the disclosure process of the adolescent boy is the fear that he will be stigmatised as a homosexual. The adolescent male may experience conflict concerning his own sexuality when abused sexually and will question his own masculinity in a society that allocates value to manhood (Allnock, 2010:2). The adolescent males are expected to be men, they cannot be victims. They might believe that they were supposed to be able to protect themselves and through disclosing they are denying their masculinity. The adolescent male will minimize the abuse or deny it all together. The abuse is rationalized through proclaiming punishment and sexual initiation. The adolescent male may also believe that the abuse may alter his sexual orientation (Yost, 2012:1).

Adults as well as adolescents can be possible perpetrators of sexual abuse, Richter *et al.* (2007:55) point out. In “a survey conducted among 1,500 schoolchildren in the Soweto Township, a quarter of all the boys interviewed said that 'jack rolling', a term for gang rape, was fun” (Richter *et al.*, 2007:55). Rape Statistics of the World (2011) reported that three out of four men admitted to rape and stated that “they had forced a woman or girl into sex before the age of 20 years, and nearly one in ten admitted to doing so before the age of 10 years”. According to Brookes and Higson-Smith (2007:117), studies conducted showed high levels of gender violence in high schools, for example some learners and educators understood the use of sexual abuse as punishment for a girl who refused a boy’s advances or sexual abuse by her boyfriend’s friends because he suspected she was unfaithful (Brookes & Higson-Smith, 2007:117). It was also found that female victims were blamed for the sexual abuse. It was perceived by educators and learners that sexual abuse is an unavoidable aspect of the male-female relationship (Brookes & Higson-Smith, 2007:117). An additional factor identified by Madu and Peltzer (2000:259) influencing sexual abuse is male dominance in society. Males declared that they cannot control their sexual desire and magic beliefs. To have sex with a physically developing girl is acceptable. In research done by Jewkes (2007:131) among 7,089 respondents aged 15 years and older, 1.6 percent had specific convictions that AIDS could be cured by sex with a virgin, while 10.1 percent did not know. Child sexual abuse myths comprise incorrect perceptions of sexual abuse, victims, and perpetrators such as sex with a virgin cures HIV and AIDS (Bird & Spur, 2007:43; Ferguson, 2004:51; Van Niekerk, 2006:105-107). Despite accurate knowledge regarding sexual abuse, myths continue to persist in our society.

When studying the male adolescents’ perceptions of sexual abuse it is important to understand the crucial developmental stage they find themselves in. Adolescence is frequently characterized by a transformation of an adolescent's understanding of the world, the rational direction towards a life course, and the active seeking of new ideas rather than the unquestioning acceptance of adult authority (Louw *et al.*, 1998:390). An adolescent starts developing a unique belief system through his or her interaction with social, familial, and cultural environments. Adolescence is also a time for rapid cognitive development. Piaget, cited in Louw *et al.* (1998:418), describes adolescence as the stage of life in which the individual's thoughts start

taking more of an abstract form while the egocentric thoughts decrease. This allows the individual to think and reason in a wider perspective. The thoughts, ideas and concepts developed during this period of life greatly influence one's future life, playing a major role in character and personality formation (Louw *et al.*, 1998:418). Erikson's theory of stages of development includes the identity crisis in which adolescents must explore different possibilities and integrate different parts of themselves before committing to their beliefs. He described the resolution of this process as a stage of "identity achievement" (Louw *et al.*, 1998:430; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2004:254).

It seems from the afore-mentioned information that the adolescent male's perception of child sexual abuse may be perplex. The underlying assumption in many studies regarding child sexual abuse is that a correlation exists between perception of abuse and abusive behaviour. Positive mind-sets towards abuse may lead to abusive behaviour. Weiten (2004:123) defines perception as the selection, organization, and interpretation of sensory input. It is the process by means of which people translate sensory impressions into a coherent and unified view of the world around them. Though necessarily based on incomplete and unverified (or unreliable) information, perception is equated with reality for most practical purposes and guides human behaviour in general. Perception is an active process in which people organize and interpret the information received by the senses. Several factors shape these interpretations including knowledge and the environmental context (Weiten, 2004:165).

Neuman (2006:2) contends that one learns the most from your parents and from what others have told you. Neuman (2006:2) also discusses authority, tradition, common sense, and media myths as resources for learning, but clearly states that information provided by all of these aspects are not always correct and true. Personal experience develops one's attitude and these attitudes influence one's beliefs as well as one's behaviour. Attitudes are a learnt tendency to evaluate things in a certain way. This can include evaluations of people, issues, objects or events. Such evaluations are often positive or negative, but they can also be uncertain at times (Cerry, 2007:1). A belief is an idea one holds as being true. These ideas shape our perceptions, attitudes, moods, and how we perceive our reality. It seems from literature that the adolescent male's beliefs regarding child

sexual abuse is worrying at times (Cerry, 2007:1). Adolescent males' knowledge, attitude and beliefs of child sexual abuse have an enormous impact on their perception and how they perceive reality and will also have an effect on the disclosure of sexual abuse.

The research question asked was: *What are the perceptions of male adolescents regarding sexual abuse?*

2 RESEARCH AIM

The aim of the research was to explore what the perceptions of adolescent males were regarding sexual abuse in order for social workers to have a keener understanding of the adolescent male regarding sexual abuse.

3 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

If social workers in the Fouriesburg area have a better understanding of the adolescent male's perception of sexual abuse, the social worker will be able to empower adolescent males with knowledge and skills, and in so doing assist the adolescents in preventing and disclosing sexual abuse.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method of investigation was a literature review and an empirical research.

4.1 Literature review

Reviewing literature was aimed at providing a theoretical background contributing to a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem identified (Fouché & Delport, 2011a:134; Silverman *et al.*, 2004:85). This study attempted to understand the adolescent male's perceptions of sexual abuse. The literature review contributes to framing the problem and providing the outline of what was studied (Botma *et al.*, 2010:208; Fouché & Schurink, 2011:305).

According to Lues and Lategan (2006:11) the literature study plays a significant role during a qualitative study. The researcher conducted a detailed analysis on literature regarding the adolescent, sexual abuse and perceptions of adolescents

regarding sexual abuse. Thyer (2001:401) explains that the literature study provides the foundation for every other stage of this study.

The literature was aimed at further assisting the researcher in understanding the adolescent male's perception of sexual abuse. A variety of accredited literature was utilized such as books, professional journals, research reports and theses. The following databases were consulted EBSCO Host, Science Direct, Psych lit, ERIC, South African Journals, Social Sciences Index, Google Scholar, The Nexus of South African Magazine articles and the Catalogue – Ferdinand Postma Library, North-West University and Potchefstroom Campus.

4.2 Empirical investigation

4.2.1 Research context

The research was conducted in the Eastern Free State province in South Africa. The Free State is home to over 2.7 million South Africans. It is characterized by farmlands, mountains, goldfields and widely dispersed towns. Despite its natural beauty, the province faces a number of socio-economic challenges. Fouriesburg is a small town situated near the Maluti Mountains in the Free State Province of South Africa a mere nine kilometers from Lesotho. The land was given by Rooi Stoffel Fourie to be used as a temporary seat of the Free State government during the Boer War. Today Fouriesburg is an agricultural community. The total population of Fouriesburg and the neighboring Mashaeng township is nearly 30 000 individuals. It is a small community with limited resources. The population is scattered throughout the landscape, since workers and their families reside on farms which further limit access to basic resources. The nearest medical, dental and social resources are 45 km away in the closest town, Bethlehem. Most children grow up in Fouriesburg without ever accessing these basic resources.

As already discussed, De Wet *et al.* (2008:97-122) conducted a study regarding sexual harassment in a Free State school with Grade 8 to 12 learners (adolescents) and they found that peers were the main perpetrators in all the forms of sexual violence, including rape. They also found that the greater threat to sexual harassment was to the adolescent boys and it mostly came from harassment by fellow male learners.

4.2.2 Research approach

The aim of empirical research is to present new data according to Drake and Jonson-Reid (2008:42). A qualitative approach was used for this study. Qualitative researchers use a qualitative approach to collect data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study (Creswell, 2007:37; Fouché & Schurink, 2011:316). The researcher seeks to listen to the adolescent males and build an understanding based on their perceptions of sexual abuse (Botma *et al.*, 2010:190; Fouché & De Vos, 2011:95).

Qualitative research has always been part and parcel of mainstream science and is used to answer questions on the complex nature of phenomena, with purposes of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participant's point of view (Fouché and Delport, 2011b:64; Thyer, 2004:257). The qualitative researcher seeks thus a better understanding of the complex situations and their work is often exploratory and may use observations to build theory from the group (Fouché & Delport, 2011a:64).

In this case the qualitative approach will determine what adolescent males' perceptions are of sexual abuse in order for social workers to empower adolescent males with knowledge and skills and in so doing assist them in preventing and disclosing sexual abuse.

4.2.3 Research Design

Babbie and Mouton (2001:72) define the research design as being a blueprint, plan, structure and strategy of investigating and answering the research question. In turn, Fouché *et al.* (2011:142), describes research design as that it focuses on the end result and all the steps in the process to achieve the anticipated outcome. Babbie and Mouton's (2001:647) definition of research design is that it is a plan or a blue print of how one intends to conduct research. Grinnell's (2001:231) explanation of what research design means is that it is a plan which includes every aspect of a proposed research study from conceptualization of the problem to the dissemination of findings. The phenomenology design was used to describe the perceptions of the male adolescents regarding sexual abuse (Botma *et al.*, 2010:190; Fouché & Schurink, 2011:316). At the root of phenomenology is the intent to understand the

phenomena under study on their own terms and to provide a description of human experience as it is experienced by the individual (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:316). According to Botma *et al.* (2010:190), “the goal is not to generate theories or models or to provide general explanations, but to carefully describe ordinary conscious experiences of everyday life”.

4.2.4 Participants and sampling

The researcher used the non-probability sampling technique, in other words purposive sampling. According to Marlow (2005:144) and Strydom and Delport (2011:392), purposive sampling is based on the judgement of the researcher and is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics – representative attributes – of the population that serve the purposes of this study best. In qualitative research the sample size depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what is useful, what is credible and what can be reached with the available time and resources (Patton, 2002:244 cited in Strydom and Delport, 2011:391).

Research was done with the two High schools in Fouriesburg after the Department of Education in the Free State and the principals of the Ipokelleng Secondary School and Fouriesburg Intermediate High School had given written consent for the research (Annexure 2). The research population consisted of adolescent males between ages 14 and 15 years. Data saturation was reached after the interviews with 20 adolescent males between ages 14 and 15 years. According to Botma *et al.* (2010:202) and Strydom and Delport (2011:393), data saturation is the collection of data to the point where a sense of closure is attained because new data yield redundant information.

The following inclusion criteria have been identified for purposes of this study:

- Any adolescent male between ages 14 and 15 years attending either of the two High Schools Ipokelleng Secondary School and Fouriesburg Intermediate School.
- After explaining the aim of the research to the adolescent males ages 14 and 15 years, the principals asked for male adolescents to volunteer to participate in the research.

- Adolescent males, between ages 14 and 15 years, who provide written assent to be part of the research and whose legal guardians also provide written consent for them to form part of the research was included in the research (Annexures 3 and 4).
- Adolescent males between ages 14 and 15 years that can speak and understand English. However, a translator, Mr Teboho Mofokeng (an Auxiliary Social worker and Pastor) was available to the participants when required. In social work practice the use of translators is allowed as long as the translator agrees to maintain confidentiality. The translator signed a confidentiality agreement (Annexure 6). Training was provided to Mr Mofokeng by the researcher regarding the purposes of this study and the role of the translator.

The following exclusion criteria have been identified for purposes of this study:

- Adolescent males younger than 14 years and older than 15 years.
- Adolescent males who did not provide written assent to be part of the research and whose legal guardians did not provide written consent for them to form part of the research were excluded from the research.

4.2.5 Data Collection

The qualitative manner of data collection by means of interviews was used for purposes of this research. Interviewing according to Greeff (2011:343) is the predominant mode of data collection in qualitative research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to gain a better understanding of the perceptions and to collect the richest data possible (Greeff, 2011:351-352).

As a primary method, data was collected by means of one of the predominant methods in qualitative research, namely semi-structured interviews. Botma *et al.* (2010:206) point out that a semi-structured interview suggests a conversation that captures the attitude of the interaction. Interviewing the participants involves a description and a replication of the experience. The interviews were organized around areas of particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth.

The interviews were guided by a semi-structured open-ended schedule to enable flexibility and free-flowing discussions (Annexure 5). With the semi-structured

interview schedule the researcher had a set of six predetermined open questions (Gaizauskaite, 2012:24; Gill *et al.*, 2008:293; Greeff, 2011:366). By using open-ended questions, probing and follow-up questions, more descriptive data was gained during the interview. This allowed the researcher to gain a detailed picture of the respondents' perceptions or beliefs regarding child sexual abuse.

The interview schedule was reviewed by experts of the Social Work Division as well as the Human Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University on the Potchefstroom Campus to ensure quality control (Botma *et al.*, 2010:137). Once the interview schedule had been reviewed, adjustments were made to the schedule. The questions were stated in a conversational manner in words the participants use. A pilot study was conducted concerning the questions on the interview schedule to determine the clarity of the questions with three adolescents who did not form part of this study. Videotape recordings were made of each interview with the written assent of the participant and the written consent of their primary caregivers (Annexures 3 and 4). Extensive field notes were written directly after each interview (Greeff, 2011:359-360).

For purposes of this study a male senior social worker, Mr Dawie van Niekerk, a registered social worker at the South African Council for Service Professions was identified to conduct the semi-structured interviews with the adolescent males. Mr van Niekerk as well as the assistant and translator, Mr Teboho Mofokeng, a registered Auxiliary Social worker at the South African Council for Service Professions signed a confidential agreement (Annexure 6). Mr Teboho Mofokeng as assistant and translator had rendered services in the Fouriesburg area and is well known to the local community. The interviewer and assistant were trained by the researcher regarding the aim of the research, the questions on the interview schedule as well as the interview process and skills in qualitative research.

4.2.6 The Research Procedures

- **The roles of the interviewer and assistant**

The roles of the interviewer and assistant were clearly defined by the researcher as follows:

- The interviewer's primary role was to direct the discussion by means of questions and keep the conversations flowing. Furthermore, the interviewer explored the participants' responses by making use of different interview communication techniques (Gaizauskaite, 2012:23; Greeff, 2011:368).
- The assistant was responsible for logistics. Monitoring of video recordings, taking notes, and providing support. Furthermore, the assistant observed non-verbal information of the participants and took notes with possible follow-up questions in mind (Greeff, 2011:368; Gaizauskaite, 2012:23).
- The interviewer made use of a video recorder during interviews. He also took notes. Rubin and Babbie (2005:457) state that a video recorder is a powerful tool because it allows the interviewer to keep full attention focused on respondents. According to Botma *et al.* (2010:214) tape recordings ensure accuracy as transcription of recordings will be possible. Participants were informed about methods of data collection prior to the interviews. A written informed consent was required from the participants' primary caregivers to whom confidentiality of information and information regarding a referral system for counselling and debriefings was made available (Annexure 3).

- **The role of the researcher**

- Written permission was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) to conduct the research (Annexure 1).
- The researcher sought written permission to conduct the research project from the Department of Education in the Free State and the principals of the two High Schools, after having explained to them the aim of the research (Annexure 2).
- The Site Base Support Team (SBS) of Ipokelleng Secondary School and the Management Board of Fouriesburg Intermediate School were approached from whom permission was obtained to conduct the study at the two schools.
- The aim of the research was explained to the principals of the two schools, the male adolescents and their legal guardians.
- The researcher requested written assent from the adolescent males. After having explained the aim of the research to, written consent was obtained from

the adolescent males' legal guardians for them to form part of the research project (Annexures 3 and 4).

- The place and time of the interviews were explained to the male adolescents' legal guardians before they gave their consent.
- The semi-structured interviews were conducted in one of the offices on the premises of the two different schools.
- The place and time of the interviews were discussed with the adolescent males before they assented to participation in the research.
- Written consent was obtained from the legal guardians as well as a written assent from the participants for video recordings of the interviews (Annexures 3 and 4).
- Data was collected and recorded.
- After each interview, video recordings were transcribed and a detail report was written by the interviewer with the assistance of the researcher and translator.
- A male Psychologist was available to the respondents after the interview if needed, so as to provide emotional support. None of the respondents were in need of emotional support after the interview. A social worker was identified to refer respondents if there had been any form of disclosure of sexual abuse. No respondents disclose any form of sexual abuse during the interviews and were therefore not referred. The respondents were not in need of further assistance.

4.2.7 Data analysis

Schurink *et al.* (2011:397) describe qualitative data analysis as reducing the volume of data, identifying the significant information, recognizing important patterns and developing a structure for communicating the essence of what the data reveals. It is a process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorising. For purposes of this study the researcher made use of content analysis. According to Botma *et al.* (2010:213), content analysis produces an inclusive summary or overview of the data and is relatively systematic. The researcher analysed the data according to Tesch's approach.

Neuman (2006:459) points out that the researcher's focus in a qualitative data analysis is to "organize specific details into a coherent picture". Explanations are inclined to be rich in detail. Themes will be used for making generalizations. Botma

et al. (2010:213) and Schurink *et al.* (2011:402) identified the following guidelines for analysing data:

- The initial research context, approach and design acted as a framework for processing the information.
- The correctness of transcripts was ensured by an external person, Mrs Louw, who transcribed the data and signed an agreement of confidentiality. The researcher verified the correctness (Annexure 6).
- During transcription, enough space was left on both the left and right margin to allow the researcher to make notes during analysis.
- Where translation was needed an external person, Mr Mofokeng, verified the information.
- Topics were coded by hand by making use of different colour codings.
- The processing and interpretation of the qualitative data was done by hand, and themes and sub-themes were identified.

5 ETHICAL ASPECTS

Strydom (2011:114) and Stichler (2014:15) stress that researchers have two categories of ethical responsibility: towards humans that participate in the project, and towards the discipline or science.

Ethical permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). The following ethical aspects were taken into consideration for the study (Annexure 1).

- **Voluntary participation**

Written permission was obtained from the Department of Education of the Free State and from the principals of the respective High Schools. The Site Base Support Team (SBS) of Ipokelleng Secondary School and the Management Board of Fouriesburg Intermediate School also provided the researcher with permission to conduct the study. For purposes of this study, the researcher ensured that all parties were aware that participation was voluntary – no one was obligated to

participate. Self-termination of participation in the study did not disadvantage anyone in any way (Nelson *et al.*, 2011:6; Strydom, 2011:117).

- **Deception of respondents**

The participants and legal guardians were briefed about the aim of the research and no information was withheld from them in order to allow them to make an informed decision regarding their participation in the research and to ensure non-deception (Nelson *et al.*, 2011:10; Stichler, 2014:16; Strydom, 2011:118-119).

- **Informed consent**

According to Nelson *et al.* (2011:7), Strydom (2011:117) and Thyer (2004:340), the emphasis falls on accurate and complete information to the subjects to ensure that they fully comprehend the details of the investigation. For purposes of this study the relevant information was provided by the researcher by means of an interview with the principals and male adolescents and their legal guardians regarding expected duration of involvement, procedures that were to be followed, confidential and voluntary participation and self-termination thereof. Adequate opportunity was provided for questions before commencement of this study.

Before obtaining informed consent, the researcher explained to the adolescents and their legal guardians that should a participant disclose sexual abuse of themselves or another child, the disclosure had to be reported to the social worker for further investigation.

- **Debriefing of respondents**

Debriefing refers to sessions during which people are afforded the opportunity of working through their experience and its aftermath and where they can have their questions answered and misconceptions removed (Babbie, 2001:475; Strydom, 2011:122). The interviewer was available to clarify possible misunderstandings of the information received from respondents. A male Psychologist was available to the adolescent males after the interview, if needed, to provide emotional support. The respondents that needed further assistance had the opportunity to be referred to organizations such as the Department of Social Development should they need

any assistance. None of the respondents were in need of further assistance; therefore none were referred to a Psychologist or the Department of Social Development for further emotional support.

- **The right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality**

Strydom (2011:119) accentuates that “every individual has the right to privacy and it is his or her right to decide when, where, to whom and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs and behaviour will be revealed”. Special care was taken to work in an ethical manner. All video-recorded materials and completed interview schedules were safely stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s office to which no one has access, and thereafter it was stored in a store room at the Social Work division of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, prohibiting all people, including the researcher and study leader from having access to the material. All research data on the researcher’s computer were password protected. Interviews were conducted separately with each participant in a quiet, private office so as to avoid interruptions. Each participant was allocated a number in advance, such as respondent 1, respondent 2 etcetera, to maintain confidentiality. The researcher maintained anonymity as far as possible during the research process. The participants were informed about the confidentiality that would apply regarding their identity.

Consent was obtained from the Department of Education in the Free State, the principals of the two schools, the Side Base support team of Ipokkeleng Secondary School, the Management Board of Fouriesburg Intermediate School, legal guardians of the adolescent males and assent from the male adolescents. Information provided remains confidential in that the identity of the participants has been reported anonymously so as to protect their identity.

- **Benefits and risks**

Benefits to participants arise when participants receive the intervention being studied and to society when knowledge is gained that will result in new products, treatments or cures or when they are applicable to many different social groups (Botma *et al.*, 2010:21). Benefits to the participants in this study were to explore

what the perceptions of the adolescent males are regarding sexual abuse in order for social workers to gain a better understanding of the adolescent male regarding child sexual abuse. If social workers in the Fouriesburg area have a better understanding of the adolescent male's perception regarding sexual abuse, the social worker will be able to empower adolescent males with knowledge and skills to prevent them from inflicting sexual abuse on children or being sexually abused. Participants received refreshments after the interviews for their inconvenience of participating in the study. The participants received no payment of any kind for their participation.

Emotional harm may occur due to self-disclosure of adolescents regarding the sexual abuse of themselves or the sexual abuse of someone else. The respondents that needed further assistance regarding sexual abuse on them or their sexual abuse of someone else could be referred to the social worker in Fouriesburg for further services. Throughout the research study, risks were diminished by evaluating the participants' emotional well-being, by means of the answers they proffered. The benefits outweighed the risks, not only for the participants but also for their legal guardians and the community.

- **Release and publication of the findings**

The findings of this study will be introduced to the reading public in hard copy written form by means of a dissertation as well as an article in an accredited journal. The principals of both schools and the Department of Education in the Free State as well as the social workers will be informed about the results regarding the research project.

6 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THIS STUDY

Botma *et al.* (2010:232) as well as Shenton (2004:64) refer to Lincoln and Guba's constructs for validity and reliability in qualitative research. The four standards, namely truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality will be discussed as follows.

TABLE 1: STANDARDS, STRATEGIES AND APPLIED CRITERIA TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

Epistemological standards	Strategies	Application
Truth Value	Credibility	Credibility refers to internal invalidity. The researcher must have confidence in the truth of the findings in regard to the participants as well as the context in which the research was undertaken. For purposes of this study the researcher ensured credibility through prolonged engagement, member checking and peer examination (Botma <i>et al.</i> , 2010:232 & Shenton, 2004:64).
Consistency	Dependability	Dependability refers to the replication of a study, in which the findings will remain consistent when the study is repeated in the same context, makes use of the same methods and with the same participants. To enable dependability the researcher included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dependable audit: the researcher provided a detailed account on how data was collected. ○ Description of the methodology: It was included in the research design what had been planned and executed during the study. ○ The researcher ensured that data was correctly coded. ○ Peer examination of this study had taken place (Botma <i>et al.</i>, 2010:232 & Shenton, 2004:64).
Applicability	Transferability	Transferability is determined by the degree to which findings can be generalized to the larger population. The findings in regard to this qualitative study will be specific to a small number of individuals in the Eastern Free State. The researcher improved transferability by selecting resources and sampling, saturation of data and detailed description of the data (Botma <i>et al.</i> , 2010:232 & Shenton, 2004:64).
Neutrality	Conformability	Conformability entails the research process, and results are free from prejudice. The researcher must ensure that as far as possible the study's results are objective and are not based upon biases, motives and perspectives of the researcher. For purposes of this study conformability field notes were made available for auditing (Botma <i>et al.</i> , 2010:232 & Shenton, 2004:64).

(Botma *et al.*, 2010:232; Shenton, 2004:64).

7 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The researcher struggled to obtain permission from the Free State Department of Education to conduct the research. The researcher only received permission from the Health Research Ethics Committee in the fourth quarter of the school year 2014. No research is allowed to be conducted at a school in the fourth term, according to the Department of Education, which resulted in a delay. The researcher was only able to continue with her research the following year after having received permission from the Free State Department of Education. This restraint caused a major delay and hindered the progress.

As a result of the sensitivity of the research and the fact that the population consisted of adolescent males the researcher was not able to conduct the interviews. A male senior social worker was identified who conducted the interviews with the assistance of a translator.

The researcher was unable to obtain male respondents to form part of the research that could only speak Afrikaans or English, and were able to provide a written assent form as well as a written consent form signed by their legal guardians.

The researcher experienced challenges regarding the use of English during some interviews. Three of the respondents were not fluent in English due to the fact that their home language is Sesotho, and the translator, Mr Teboho Mofokeng had to translate the respondents' answers to the interviewer to ensure clear communication.

Although data saturation was achieved after the sixteenth interview, the researcher decided to include the other four participants because they wanted to be in this research project.

8 DEFINITIONS OF TERMINOLOGY

8.1 Adolescent

According to Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman (2004:221) the adolescent phase is between childhood and adulthood. It is described as to grow into maturity. The New Dictionary of Social Work (2005:2) defines adolescence as a life phase beginning at

puberty and ending in adulthood during which reproductive organs begin to function and the secondary sexual characteristics begin to develop (New Dictionary of Social work, 2005:51). There is an increase in sexual development as well as development of thoughts, feelings and behaviour during adolescence. Adolescence can be identified by physical changes, development of socially acceptable behaviour, and the development of moral concepts and values that guide behaviour (Louw *et al.*, 1998:389; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2004:221).

8.2 Perception

Perception is defined as an “interpretation or impression; an opinion or belief” (The Free Dictionary, 2015:1). It is also defined as “an opinion about somebody or something” (Dictionary Central, 2015:1). Investor Words further defines perception as follows: “A conscious or unconscious state of awareness or understanding of one’s surroundings that exists within the mind and is formed through sensory signals stimulated by current conditions and past memories. The confluence of complex sensory inputs often times create a perception that is unreliable or unverifiable. In other words, it may not be based on reality.” (Investor Words, 2015:1.)

Perception is formed from past experiences and from information received from one’s environment. Perception influences one’s behaviour and how one evaluates one’s choices and actions. Perception is determined by the qualities of both the thing perceived and the perceiver.

8.3 Sexual Abuse

Fox and Nkosi (2003:3) define child sexual abuse as “the assertion of power, through sexual acts, against children before the age of consent – that is, under 16 years of age. Whether or not a child under the age of 16 allegedly consented to such sexual activity is immaterial to the definition of sexual abuse. Sex with a child under the age of 16 is legally defined as statutory rape. Sex without consent at any age is illegal. Child sexual abuse may be perpetrated by adults or children”. Sexual abuse may include:

- Contact abuse: genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, object/finger penetration of the anus/vagina and/or encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator.
- Non-contact abuse: exhibitionism, suggestive behaviours or comments, exposure to sexual activity, pornographic materials or producing visual depictions of such conduct.

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offence and Related Matters) Amendment Act (32/2007) (South Africa, 2007) defines sexual abuse as that practised by any person who engages a child (under the age of 18 years) with or without the consent of the child, in a sexual act. A sexual act is legally defined as an act of sexual penetration or an act of sexual violation.

According to the Children's Act, Act 38 of 2005 (South Africa, 2005) sexual abuse, in relation to a child means molesting or assaulting a child or allowing a child to be sexually molested or assaulted and encouraging, inducing or forcing a child to be used for the sexual gratification of another person and using or exposing a child to sexual activities or pornography, procuring or allowing a child to be procured for commercial sexual exploitation or in any way participating or assisting in the commercial sexual exploitation of a child.

9 DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

The following discussions were based on categories and subcategories of themes that emerged from the data. These findings also reflect the number of participants and their home language. The purpose of the research is to explore what the perceptions of adolescent males aged 14 to 15 years are of sexual abuse in the Fouriesburg area. Twenty adolescent males from the two schools in Fouriesburg were interviewed for purposes of this study. Tables were used to graphically depict some of the information that was gathered for this study.

A semi-structured interview schedule was used during the interviews with the adolescents. The following results of the interviews are subsequently discussed:

9.1 Data received from adolescents

9.1.1 Identifying data of the adolescents

The interviewer introduced the interviews with the adolescents by identifying data such as: what their home language is; how old they are and what grade they are in.

TABLE 2: IDENTIFYING DETAILS OF ADOLESCENTS

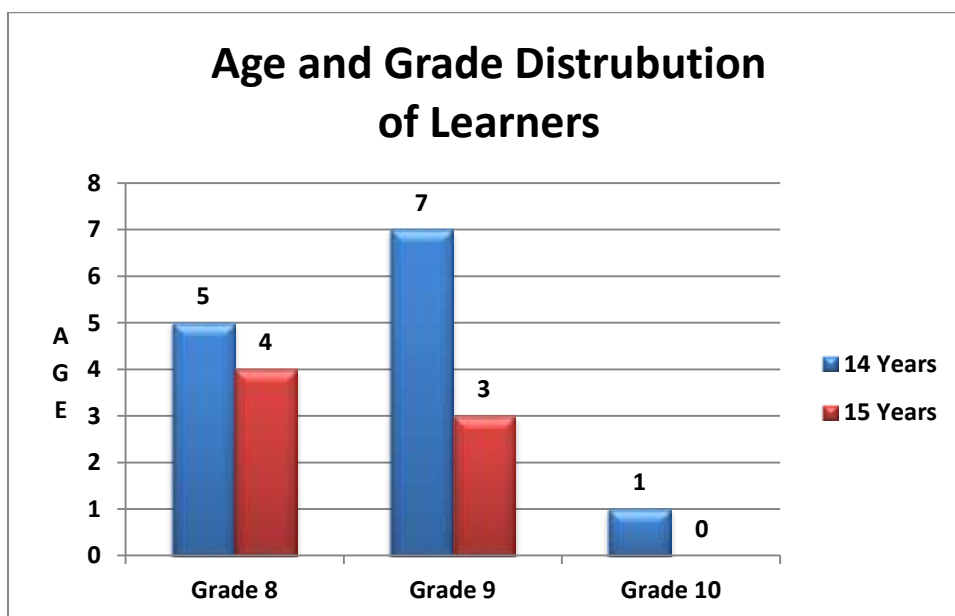
Participants	Home Language	Age	School Grade
P1	Sotho	14 years	Grade 9
P2	Sotho	14 years	Grade 8
P3	Sotho	14 years	Grade 9
P4	Sotho	14 years	Grade 9
P5	Pedi	14 years	Grade 9
P6	Sotho	15 years	Grade 9
P 7	Sotho	15 years	Grade 8
P8	Sotho	15 years	Grade 9
P9	Sotho	14 years	Grade 8
P10	Sotho	14 years	Grade 10
P11	Sotho	15 years	Grade 8
P12	Sotho	14 years	Grade 8
P13	Sotho	14 years	Grade 9
P14	Sotho	15 years	Grade 8
P15	Sotho	15 years	Grade 8
P16	Sotho	14 years	Grade 8
P17	Sotho	14 years	Grade 8
P18	Sotho	14 years	Grade 9
P19	Sotho	14 years	Grade 9
P20	Sotho	15 years	Grade 9

The respondents were learners from the only two high schools in Fouriesburg, namely the Intermediate School Fouriesburg and Ipokelleng Secondary School.

The respondents were 14 and 15 years old. From the results above it is obvious that 19 (95 %) of the respondents were Sotho speaking and 1 (5%) was Pedi speaking. This could be expected as the people in the Eastern Free State Province mostly are Sotho speaking. The researcher was unable to obtain adolescent males that are

Afrikaans speaking to form part of the research population. Ages of the adolescents were distributed as thirteen respondents (13) aged 14 years and seven (7) aged 15 years. School grades of the adolescents were distributed as ten (10) learners in Grade 9 and nine (9) learners in Grade 8 and one (1) learner in Grade 10 as shown in the graph below.

GRAPH 1: AGE AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION OF LEARNERS



From the above graph it is clear that 45% of the learners were in Grade 8, 50% were in Grade 9 and 5% were in Grade 10.

Adolescence comprises three phases, namely pre-adolescence that falls between the ages of 11 years and 14 years, mid-adolescence between the ages of 14 years and 18 years and late adolescence between the ages of 18 years and 21 years (Louw *et al.*, 1998:389; Smith *et al.*, 2011:652-656; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2004:220-221). An increase in sexual development as well as in the development of thoughts, feelings and behaviour takes place during adolescence. These developmental stages can be identified by physical changes, development of socially acceptable behaviour, and the development of moral concepts and values that guide behaviour (Louw *et al.*, 1998:389; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2004:221). All the respondents were male adolescents. By studying the male adolescents' perceptions of sexual abuse, professionals can capture teachings and environmental influences of previous generations, which will in turn be instilled in

generations to come. Hence the male adolescent plays an important role in the community and exerts an influence on future prevention of sexual abuse.

9.2 Themes and sub-themes

TABLE 3: CATEGORIES OF FINDINGS

Themes	Sub-Themes
View of the adolescent	Sexual abuse Child sexual abuse
Education of the adolescent	Source of education Awareness and understanding of sexual abuse
Identification of risk factors	Contributing factors
Prevention	How can sexual abuse be prevented

Table 3 gives a brief overview of the themes and sub-themes identified during the data analysis process. These themes were identified following responses given by participants in this study. The data in this table as discussed in this article showed the following:

9.2.1 Perceptions of adolescents

The purpose of asking questions such as “*What do you think sexual abuse is?*” and “*what do you think child sexual abuse is?*” was to determine the adolescent males’ perceptions and understanding of sexual abuse and child sexual abuse. Perception refers to how you interpret the world around you and influence behaviour and decision making (Investor Words, 2015:1).

- **Sexual Abuse**

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offence and Related Matters) Amendment Act (32/2007) (South Africa, 2007) defines sexual abuse as an act performed by any person who engages a child (under the age of 18 years) with or without the consent of the child, in a sexual act. A sexual act is legally defined as an act of sexual penetration or an act of sexual violation.

Sexual Penetration includes, according to The Criminal Law (Sexual Offence and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 32/2007 (South Africa, 2007) any act of which causes penetration to any extent whatsoever by:

- The genital organs of one person into or beyond the genital organs, anus, or mouth of another person:
- Any other part of the body of one person or, any object, including any part of the body of an animal into or beyond the genital organs or anus of another person; or
- The genital organs of an animal, into or beyond the mouth of another person.

Where sexual violation according to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32/2007 (South Africa, 2007) includes any act which causes –

- Direct or indirect contact between the genital organs, anus or breast of one person and any part of the body of another person or an animal, including any object resembling or representing the genital organs or anus of a person or animal.
- Direct or indirect contact between the mouth of one person and genital organs, anus, breast of another person.
- Any other part of the body of another person, which could be used in an act of sexual penetration or cause sexual arousal or stimulation.
- Masturbation of one person by another person, or
- The insertion of any objects resembling or representing the genital organs of a person or animal, into or beyond the mouth of another person.

The respondents answered to what they understand sexual abuse was, as follows:

- *“I think sexual abuseis when people abuse people..... with things they don't want to do..... like forcing them to have sex with them and such things. I don't think it is a good thing.”*
- *“When you force. Yes, when you are forcing her to do it.”*
- *“It's when someone touches someone's private parts. Or maybe when someone rapes someone. It's when they refuse it.”*
- *“Sexual abuse iseh.... sexual intercourse but they force. Eh, girls are sexually abuse and forced into sex, they are sold into criminal.”*

- *“Sexual abuse is when some, uh, older person need to sleep with you, forcing you to sleep and give you money, pay you.”*
- *“Can happen between a male forcing a uh, female or a female forcing a male to do sex with her or him.”*
- *“Sexual abuse is something that happens to really old boys and girls, you find that the grownups forced boy, girls to have sex with them and they don’t, they can’t say no. Because they are scared. She might say if you talk I will kill you. You must keep secret, you must keep secret. Never tell anyone that I have done that.”*

Three respondents identified sexual abuse as a negative action, for example *“Something bad, Sir. They steel their future”* or *“It is a wrong feeling.”* One of the respondents reported the following *“They abuse someone and after that someone feels unconfident, they don’t want to be in the world anymore. I don’t know, the... people that do that... I don’t think that they’re stable in their minds.”*

From the above answers it was clear that respondents have an understanding of what sexual abuse is although it seems limited. Several respondents associated sexual abuse with force while other respondents only identified rape (forced sexual intercourse). Only three respondents referred to touching of private parts as sexual abuse. Respondents mostly identified girls and women as possible victims of sexual abuse. The data received from the adolescents in this research were more or less the same as that which Buckley-Willemse (2005:56) experienced in research conducted with adolescents. Some of the adolescents in his research showed an understanding of what sexual abuse is while other adolescents lack sufficient knowledge of sexual abuse. Meyer (2011:25) conducted a study with Grade 10 learners from two schools and found that the majority of adolescents referred to sexual abuse as only involuntary sex. The respondents’ answers indicate that they are unfamiliar with the different types and forms of sexual abuse. Adolescents did not have adequate knowledge regarding the broader definition of sexual abuse.

- **Child Sexual Abuse**

According to the Children’s Act, Act 38 of 2005 (South Africa, 2005:15), sexual abuse, in relation to a child means:

- molesting or assaulting a child or allowing a child to be sexually molested or assaulted;
- encouraging, inducing or forcing a child to be used for the sexual gratification of another person;
- using or exposing a child to sexual activities or pornography;
- procuring or allowing a child to be procured for commercial sexual exploitation or in any way participating or assisting in the commercial sexual exploitation of a child.

Aucamp *et al.* (2012:2), Faller (2007:20) and Long *et al.* (2012:370) all define contact sexual abuse as “sexually abusive behavior where there is direct or indirect contact between the body of the child and that of the perpetrator(s)”. This description includes sexual penetration and sexual violation. It is clear from above information that sexual abuse is not limited only to contact sexual abuse.

Non-contact sexual abuse is defined as “sexually abusive behavior where there is no direct contact between the child’s body and that of the alleged perpetrator, and it thus involved other forms of sexual abusive behavior in which actual physical contact is excluded” (Aucamp *et al.*, 2012:2; Faller, 2007:20). Non-contact sexual abuse includes exposing a child to pornography, a sexual offence, a sexual act or self-masturbation.

On the question asked about what their views are concerning child sexual abuse, the respondents answered as follows:

- *“When a parent forces a child to have sex with him.”*
- *“When parents sexually abuse them. When they rape them.”*
- *“what happens when a grownup raping a small child.”*
- *“When that other person is forcing the child to sleep or to have sexual intercourse.”*
- *“When an elder person or father is forcing a child to sleep with her or sometimes selling this child so that we gain money.”*
- *“Uhm, I think child sexual abuse is like, when an older person, like he or she is aged like, 14 and a child is like 3 months old and he is or she is having sex with the child, I think its child abuse.”*

- *"I have no idea,"* was one respondents answer when asked what he thinks child sexual abuse is. He further stated that he had never heard of child sexual abuse before.

Most respondents when defining child sexual abuse identified adults as the abuser or perpetrators. A large number of respondents initially identified parents as the perpetrator and only after being prompted on the subject, included other adults. A question was asked by the interviewer whether participants think it is only a parent that can force himself on a child and the answer received was *"Other guardians of the child can also."* Cromer and Goldsmith (2010:631) found that a misconception in the community is that the perpetrator is an outsider, the perception of "stranger danger", which does not relate to the data found here. The data received from this study was that it is mainly parents that are the perpetrators in this rural area. However, data received from Makoe *et al.* (2009:2) and Kaufman (2001:1) show that the sexual offenders are mainly male adults and youth who are known to the child, in particular relatives and acquaintances

One respondent indicated that sexual abuse can only take place when you are *"13 years and upwards"*. Two respondents reported that young people cannot be involved in sexual abuse and further stated *"Yah, because they are too young and this things is only adults that are doing them."* Only one respondent stated that fellow learners can commit sexual abuse. In today's society the misconception still persists that perpetrators are "old men" according to Cromer and Goldsmith (2010:632) Research shows that perpetrators of sexual abuse include young adults, adolescents and children (Richter *et al.*, 2007:55).

A large number of respondents only identified girls as possible victims of child sexual abuse. During an interview one of the respondents reported the following for an example: *"I only think about girls."* On the interviewer's question *"You think only girls can be sexually abused,"* the respondent answered "Yes". When asked what about boys, the answer received from the respondent was: *"I don't know about boys."* Data received from adolescents relate to research done by Cromer and Goldsmith (2010:633) who found that misconception still persists as individuals believe that "only girls are sexually abused," "boys cannot be sexually abused," and "if a boy is sexually abused then he will be gay". Scholes *et al.* (2012:110) state that

boys require a specific consideration as they tend to believe that they have less risk being sexually abused.

From the above answers it was clear that the respondents had a very limited understanding of what child sexual abuse entails. The limited understanding of what child sexual abuse entails was also experienced in research done by Mamabolo (2014:26-27) and Nqaphi (2013:25) in the rural areas of the Limpopo and Eastern Cape Provinces. The respondents associated child sexual abuse with force and did not even mention non-contact sexual abuse. The respondents generally identified females as possible victims of child sexual abuse. According to Brookes and Higson-Smith (2007:117), studies conducted at schools showed that learners and teachers identified penetrative sexual acts as abuse but did not always recognise gender-based violence as sexual abuse. Forms of abuse such as verbal harassment, touching, exposure to pornography were hardly mentioned.

Adolescents might not report sexual abuse because they are not aware that they are being abused. Tomlinson and Philpot (2007:68) stated that children that are sexually abused may not see the abuse as unusual. The child experiences the abuse as the norm as they have nothing to compare it with. (Tomlinson & Philpot, 2007:68). It is not likely that the adolescent will disclose the abuse if it is seen as the custom. Meyer (2011:19) also found that there is a need for adolescents to have more knowledge of sexual abuse.

9.2.2 Education the adolescent received regarding sexual abuse or sex

Adolescence is a physical and mental period of moving into adulthood and the adolescent has a natural curiosity about sexual matters, according to Kang (2005:4). Adolescents are inquisitive and will obtain sexual information from various sources. This may result in gaining incorrect knowledge and distorted sexual views (Kang, 2005:4).

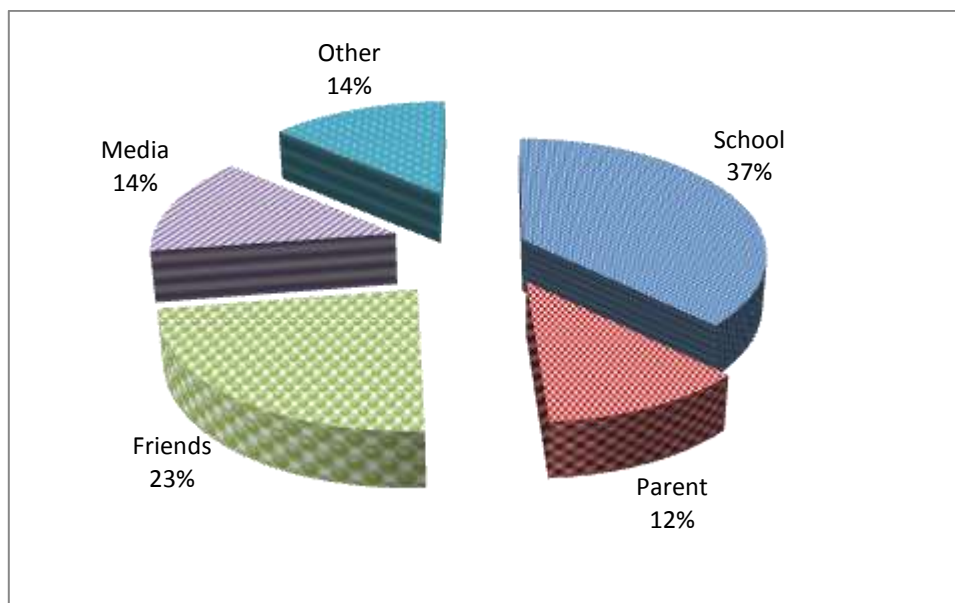
Helleve *et al.* (2009:189) warn that we can't just look at the adolescent's perspective; we also need to look at the perspectives of the numerous groups of people they interact with. These include peers, family members, religious leaders, media workers and school teachers.

9.2.2.1 Source of education

Kang (2005:4) explains that adolescents, especially in the middle period, are much more open-minded and accepting about aspects of sexual attitudes and behaviour.

The respondents' answers to the question as to who gave them information about sex and sexual abuse were as follows:

GRAPH 2: SOURCE OF INFORMATION



- **School**

All twenty respondents indicated that they received education regarding sex and sexual abuse from the school. Respondents reported that they received information about sex in the subjects of Life Orientation and in Natural Science but limited education was received on the topic of sexual abuse. Buckley-Willemse (2005:45) conducted a study regarding sexual education in secondary schools and also found that the school was the main source of sex education for adolescence.

According to the Department of Education (2002:4), Life Orientation was introduced in South Africa during the late 1990's as a learning area in the educational system. HIV and AIDS as well as sexuality were crucial learning areas in the South African Life Orientation Program. The purpose of Life Orientation Learning Area is to "enable learners to make informed, morally responsible and accountable decisions about their health and the environment" (Buckley-Willemse, 2005:3; The Department of Education, 2002:4).

A study was conducted by Helleve *et al.* (2009:189) that focused on the teachers who provide Life Orientation in the schools in South Africa. It was found that teachers were supportive of the subject as they saw sex education as a necessity. Furthermore it was found by Helleve *et al.* (2009:195) that teachers saw parents as irresponsible and that “they as teachers where forced by the circumstances to do a job that was the parents’ responsibility”. They were blaming parents for being morally absent.

Studies from Helleve *et al.* (2009:189) and Meyer (2011:22) show that teachers are experiencing more challenges when providing sex education than with HIV and AIDS education. HIV and AIDS are more technical and focus on biological aspects whereas sex education is more of a social aspect and a sensitive issue. According to Van Deventer (2008:132), Life orientation needs to prepare learners for life challenges by focusing on their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

Delpont (2010:1) and Meyer (2011:4) regard the school to be the ideal environment where learners can learn about sexual abuse. Magalhaes *et al.* (2009:456) states that intra-familial sexual abuse usually is incorporated into a situation of secrecy and low visibility. This enables the abuser to continue with the abuse, which results in late disclosure. Fischer and McDonald (1998:915) define inter-familial sexual abuse as being practised by “a perpetrator from the child’s family, someone who is usually, although not always, living in the same house as the victim. These include parents, siblings, other blood relatives, and step-parents”. Extra-familial sexual abuse “involves persons from outside of the family, such as strangers, teachers, and friends. Interfamilial sexual abuse is associated with secrecy and alienation” according to Faller (2007:23). Parents or family members may be perpetrators and therefore will not easily provide any education regarding sexual abuse (Delpont, 2010:1; Meyer, 2011:4).

Only a few respondents indicated that their parents discussed sex with them.

- Two respondents reported that their parents have spoken to them on several occasions about sex. One reported: “*I also wanted to learn, to know better.*”
- One respondent stated that his mother talked to him about circumcision but never about sex. When asked if he spoke to his father he reported: “*No, I am too scared to ask him that question.*”

➤ Two respondents reported that only their mothers educated them about sex.

Respondents that received education on sex and sexual abuse from their parents indicated that it took place between ages 12 and 15 years. Information received from respondents indicates that the education focused on sex rather than sexual abuse.

Another respondent reported: *"No, I'm scared to tell them, to speak to them, I feel shy"*. The respondent further stated that he is glad his parents never spoke to him about sex and sexual abuse but afterwards stated that he thinks it is good that parents speak to their children about sex.

"No! I don't, I would not like that," was one respondents answer when asked if he would want his parents to speak to him about sex and sexual abuse. He further explained that he would be too scared to talk to them and that it will confuse him more if they spoke to him as he will not be able to concentrate. (*"Because it makes me, I can't scare then I say I want to talk with them and that thing will confuse me, I will not concentrate exactly nicely."*)

The remaining respondents indicated that their parents never spoke to them about sex. One respondent indicated that he never wants his parents to speak to him about sex and that he is afraid to ask them as he believes that they will be angry. *"Yes sir. I am scared to ask them."*

It seems that respondents were afraid and uncomfortable to discuss such topics with their parents. The respondents whose parents educated them on the topic only started doing so during their adolescence. It is hard to belief that in our present environment where sex has become a normal sensation in our media only six respondents reported that this is a medium by which they received information regarding sex and sexual abuse.

Communication about sex between a parent and an adolescent has been described as challenging. Sex is seldom discussed within a family according to Coffelt (2008:1), as it is seen as a taboo topic. Parents are reluctant to discuss sex with their adolescent children as they are embarrassed; they are not certain when the right time and place is and they experience difficulty in explaining ideas clearly. Coffelt (2008:2) and Mamabolo (2014:28) found one of the most critical influences

on the adolescents' sexual behaviour was communication from a parent. Coffelt (2008:2) further states that "parents are often referred to as the primary socialization agent for their children". Parents play a vital role in contributing to the development of the adolescent male's perception of sex and sexual abuse.

Wang *et al.* (2014:501) point out that through communication parents can play a vital role in protecting their adolescents against risk behaviour. Healthy parent-adolescent communication provides an environment in which adolescents feel comfortable sharing information with their parents about their activities (Wang *et al.*, 2014:501). This can contribute to adolescents reporting sexual abuse at an earlier stage. In research done by Meyer (2011:23) she found that 85% of 214 adolescents indicated that they wanted to learn more about sexual abuse by a parent.

In the past, issues of sexuality in the Sotho culture were discussed with adolescents when they reach marriageable age (Kau, 2012:412). Sexual education was given in traditional initiation schools for boys. Today there are several aspects that influence the adolescent male perspective and they are exposed to these influences at a much younger age. Kang (2005:52) found that by the time children enter puberty, they have accumulated a vast amount of sexual knowledge. This knowledge is not necessarily correct and can thus be based on misconceptions.

- **Peer group.**

According to eleven respondents they received information about sex and sexual abuse from their peers.

- *"Friends at the location they talk sometimes."*
- One respondent reported that older boys informed him that *"sex is not good if you must use a condom. You will get hurt in sex then if you don't use a condom, then you might get the baby with the, with the woman"*.
- Two respondents indicated that *"we talk a lot about these things with my friends"*.
- *"From next door. From the next door neighbour. The boy."*
- Another respondent indicated that *"yes, we always talk about it"*, when asked whether he learned about sex from his friends.
- When asked whether he learned about sex from his friends, one respondent stated: *"Yea, No. Here at school we don't talk about it."*
- Another respondent reported that *"ah, they used to talk about sex but I was not interested about it"*.

- *“Two of my friends, sometimes they will talk about sex.”*

All of these respondents indicated that they learn from their friends. Information received during interviews indicates that the information shared among friends mostly focused on sex rather than sexual abuse. The respondents identified their peer group as their second resource of information regarding sex and sexual abuse. Gass and Seiter (2007:130) and Louw *et al.* (1998:457) found that a characteristic of the adolescent life phase is the increase in conformity regarding peer relationships. Gass and Seiter (2007:130) and Louw *et al.* (1998:457) further state that peer relationships play a crucial role during the adolescent developmental phase and have an impact on the adolescents' choices of music, language, social activities and relationships. Conformity towards a peer group can lead to premature sexual activity (Gass & Seiter, 2007:130; Louw *et al.*, 1998:458).

In a study by Ragsdale *et al.* (2014:552), looking at the contributing factors of parents, peers and media on the development of sexual expectancies among adolescents the researcher also found that peers exert a significant influence on each other regarding sexual aspects (Ragsdale *et al.*, 2014:552). It was found that adolescents that received sexual information from friends and cousins were more positive about sex and likely to engage in sexual activity. Sexual communication with peers has a lasting effect given the high rate of sexual communication with one another (Ragsdale *et al.*, 2014:552). Kang (2005:53) supports this and states that peers and friends are found to be very important sources of sexual information for both male and female adolescents.

- **Media**

Television, movies and a cell phone was identified by six respondents as a source of education regarding sex and sexual abuse.

- Movies were identified by one of the respondents as a medium by which he received education about sex and sexual abuse. *“Yes, in some movies I have seen.”*
- Another respondent indicated that he learned about sexual abuse in the news: *“Eish, many people are getting raped.”*

- One respondent explained that he learned about sex and sexual abuse from the television and admitted that he has watched pornography.
- *“From TV, I learn that many people, many, many children are, are abused to do sexual abuse.”*
- One respondent indicated that he learned about sex through his cell phone.
- *“Yes, I have seen it on TV. Ai, I’m just fine I don’t feel anything.”*
- *“No, I haven’t watched this. I haven’t actually watch books.”*

The media play an important role in the practice, policy, and public perception of child sexual abuse, to a large extent by the way in which news stories are framed, according to Weatherred (2015:16). Media has the ability to influence society’s perception and basic values. Adolescents’ sexual perceptions are related to their exposure to sexual content in the media (Weatherred, 2015:16). Kings (2012:1) asserts that adolescents with access to technology in South Africa are now talking about sex and sexuality more than ever before in history. Ragsdale *et al.* (2014:557) found that television “has been referred to as a supper peer”. Gass and Seiter (2007:317) state that the media create a culture for the youth of sex, romance, rebellion and social status. Hartley *et al.* (2014:772) support this by stating that the representation of romantic and sexual relationships by the media influence adolescents’ constructions of gender-appropriate sexual behaviour.

When the news on television focuses on child sexual abuse it primarily focuses on the criminal justice details of a specific incident, according to Mejia *et al.* (2012:470). In the opinion of the researcher the news on television or radio rarely reports contextual information about causes of and solutions to child sexual abuse. Furthermore, prevention is seldom mentioned by the news.

• **Other sources**

Six other sources of information about sex and sexual abuse were identified by respondents accordingly:

- One respondent reported that he received information from Sister Tlatsa, the Medical Sister at the local community clinic.
- Another reported that he attended a group called *Soul Buddies* at a previous school that taught them about sexual abuse.

- Maranatha, a Christian Youth group in Fouriesburg, was identified by one respondent where he learned about sexual abuse.
- One respondent indicated that Social Workers came to his school and described what abuse is.
- Love Life was identified by one respondent as a source of education regarding sex and sexual abuse.
- One respondent reported that he learned about sex through a game he played as a young child called Buntwana. He stated that *"We used to do such things, silly things. But now I learned it's not good."* He explained the game saying that *"you'll be some houses and then see its time to sleep, then we do sex"*. This game was played between young boys and girls; the boy will play he is the father and the girl the mother. *"The mother and father must sleep in their own room. Then we have sex."* A second respondent reported that he also played Buntwana for two years.

Only one respondent mentioned the medical nurse at the local clinic as a resource of information. Hoffman-Wanderer *et al.* (2013:40) states that one of the roles of a healthcare worker at the clinic is to provide value-based education to adolescents regarding sex education and reproductive healthcare services. Hoffman-Wanderer *et al.* (2013:40) found that medical staff experience challenges in this regard as they have not received training in dealing with these issues. Kings (2012:1) states that clinics are not as inviting as they should be and this contributes to adolescents turning to their peers for information.

Support groups in the community like Love Life, Soul Buddies and Maranatha Youth Ministries have also been identified as sources of education by three respondents. Coleman and Hagel (2007:82-83) argue that support groups play an important role in an individual's protective factor of knowledge, personal achievement, self-worth and self-esteem. Support groups, according to Toseland and Rivas (2009:20), are using supportive intervention strategies to help people such as adolescents how to cope with stressful life events as well as revitalise and enhance people's coping abilities so that they can effectively adapt and cope with future stressful life events.

Kelly cited by Kang (2005:4) states that human attitudes towards sex cannot be easily classified in any single way because there are many different factors involved

in their creation and expression. The sexually related attitudes of and values held by individuals clearly do not exist in a vacuum. It is clear from the information received by the respondents that various factors contribute towards their knowledge regarding sex which indirectly form their sexually related attitude and values.

9.2.2.2 Awareness and understanding of sex and sexual abuse

After determining the source of the adolescent male's education regarding sex and sexual abuse the interviewer explored the content of the information received. The respondents' answers to the question as to what kind of information they receive concerning sex and sexual abuse was as follows:

- *"Having intercourse. Sexual intercourse."*
- *"Uh. Two people mating."*
- *"We have learned about STDs, and how to protect ourself and how it can transfer. Eh, you contraceptives, condoms, if you don't have those things you cannot have sex as it is not safe".*
- *"That we should not have unprotected sex. And that we should not force someone to have sex with us if he or she does not want to."*
- *"We got information about sex, about how people lead to such consequences and how to avoid those consequences. We learned about saying no and using protection. The respondent then further explained more about sexual abuse "People abuse people and don't think that it is Don't think that we should treat each other equally."*
- *"From the school it was about safe sex. Right now in the class the book says... when they have, when they are HIV positive they can have sex withuhm... virgins, children virgins and they will be HIV negative. I don't think this is true."*
- *"They told us we don't have to do sex now, or else if we do sex, we must have safe sex. To use condoms."*

From the interviews it became apparent that the adolescent males received their education regarding sex and sexual abuse from school during Life Orientation and Natural Science. The adolescents received a basic indication of what sex is. The information they received focused mostly on anatomical and physiological aspects and on protection, contraceptives and to some extent, their rights.

Jacobs (2011:212) states that researchers and learners have different opinions of the Life Orientation programs in South Africa. Several people believe that it has enormous potential where others experience it as very negative. Learners from previously disadvantaged schools were positive about the Life Orientation Program as it taught them skills which they did not learn elsewhere. Currently more effort is

devoted to life skills programs as a result of the alarming risk behaviour observed by adolescents and children, as pointed out by Jacobs (2011:212).

Kang (2005:86) is of opinion that sex education should focus on changing attitudes and behaviour, based on knowledge and information. "Sexuality education, therefore, is the process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and beliefs about sex, sexual identity, relationships and intimacy." Sex education should be made available to adolescents at a young age and should be comprehensive (Kang, 2005:86).

Jacobs (2011:220) found in her research that life orientation programs may not affect the attitudes and actions of the learners as expected. The subjects discussed in these programs do not bring about much meaningful change in the learners' behaviours. Buckley-Willemse (2005:2) found that the life skill programs are no indication that the knowledge adolescents receive affect their behaviour in any way.

On a follow-up question as to what education they received from their parents the respondents gave the following information:

- *"They say it is not right..... Because we make babies."*
- *"A, they just told me about body change, that the body change."*
- *"She teach me when you was, when you are 15 and above you must not sleep without protection."*
- *"They say it's wrong to have sex when you are still young."*
- *"They told me I am still young to have sex with another girl."*
- *"Ya, they told me, like but they not specific. They told me that you must not do sex. It's for older people."*
- *"My parents tell me not to do sex right at this stage."*
- *"She said to me I must not do things because I am too young."*

It seems from the answers received that the information shared by the parent with the adolescent males the emphasis falls on "don't have sex and if you do, use protection". It seems that the accent falls on the consequences of sex and that no discussion takes place regarding values and morals. From the information received from the interviews the parents of the adolescent boys never discussed sexual abuse with their sons.

Research conducted by Ragsdale *et al.* (2014:552) also found that parents' conversations with adolescents focus on abstinence, sexual and reproductive health

issues such as condom use, pregnancy prevention, and HIV and STI preventions. Hyde *et al.* (2013:3443) conducted a study that looked at parents' constructions of communication with their children about safer sex and found that parents did not communicate direct messages when communicating about sex. It was also found that these messages were at a superficial level and that parents were under the impression that the school educated their children regarding sex (Hyde *et al.*, 2013:3443). It further seems that parents believe that sex education only consists of abstinence and protection which include condom use. Parents do not associate values and morals with sex education and do not see sexual abuse as a necessary topic of concern.

Values and morals are people's fundamental beliefs. They are the principles defining what is right, good and just. (Dictionary, 2015:1; The New Dictionary of Social Work, 2005:66). Dolamo (2013:5) states that in the African culture in the past an individual would be nurtured within a community to become a mature and responsible person who would embrace the values, norms and principles of ubuntu. Ubuntu can be described as a constellation of value claims and morally normative requirements (Dolamo, 2013:6). In today's society the responsibility to educate the adolescent male regarding values and morals rests with parents and to a certain extent schools and churches. Louw *et al.* (1998:464) asserts that one of the most important developmental tasks for an adolescent is to develop a personal value system. According to the social learning theory, moral values are learned through observation and imitation of parents, friends and other important role-players in a person's life (Louw *et al.*, 1998:464). Kau (2012:412) states that sexual education should empower the adolescent through knowledge which will shape their values, attitudes and beliefs towards sexuality.

9.2.2.3 Age distribution regarding sex expectancies

Respondents shared their perspectives regarding sex at their age with the interviewer and some of their viewpoints were:

- One respondent shared an incident where older boys approached him and encouraged him to have sex with the girls: "*They said I am not a man if I don't have sex.*"

- “At 13, 14 and upwards” is the age when they start having sex according to one respondent. He further stated that *“it’s not good, Sir, cause they still young to do sex. You will, you might get a baby and you will not, not get eh, child support”*.
- *“I say sometimes now in the modern days, they think it’s cool to have sex.and also the girls they would talk about that. I don’t think it’s cool. Cause, we are not full responsible as we might be.”*
- *“No, I feel like its wrong thing because a mistake can happen and you bring a girl pregnant. I won’t be doing sex for now, but I think I can protect, I can prevent doing sex. But I think I can double up. She can use a condom, I can use a condom.”*
- “Uhm, 22 years. I think because when I’m 22 years old I will be having many responsibilities.”
- “I think when I have responsibilities, like when we are 18 but I think I’m gonna do it when I’m already working.”

During the interviews respondents shared at what age they would like to have sex. Four respondents explained that they first would like to work, *“when you can take care of yourself as a job”*. One respondent reported that he only wants to have sex *“when I have my own child and kids”*. Another respondent stated *“I’d like to wait for the right time, not now”*. Next follows the age distribution of the respondents regarding when they would like to have sex.

TABLE 4: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF WHEN ADOLESCENTS WANT TO HAVE SEX. N=16

Indicative Age	f	%
18 years	5	31%
20 years	1	6%
21 years	3	19%
22 years	2	12.5%
25 years	2	12.5%
27 years	3	19%

It seems from the information above that the respondents have been exposed to different viewpoints regarding sex at their age. Universally it seems that they feel they are too young themselves to consider such an act. Respondents indicated that they are still too young and irresponsible and first need to become more

independent before they can consider being sexually active. It seems that respondents are taking into consideration all the negative consequences of sex. These negative consequences are affecting their perception of sex which will then ultimately affect their decision making and actions. Although the respondents that formed part of this study plan to be much older before they will consider being sexually active, the statistic of South Africa's youth tells a different story. Kings (2012:1) refers to a Praekelt Foundation's Youth Sex Survey of 17 000 adolescents, in which it was found that 15% have had sex by their 16th birthday, a further 27% have had sex by the age of 18 and 25% were still virgins.

During the interviews of this study some respondents shared their perspective and experiences of child sexual abuse and the conditions under which it can take place.

- *"It happens but it is wrong."*
- *"I feel ashamed because some small or big children sleep with men."*
- One respondent explained that if an adult has sexual intercourse with a child and the child agrees to this action, the adult does not have to feel guilty. He further explained that the child will experience feelings of guilt *"cause, first the child will not think of what he or she was doing. The child thinks about it afterwards"*. The respondent further explained that the child will blame himself or herself. *"He thinks he or she is a bad guy."* The respondent promoted that the child should except money for the sexual intercourse: *"Yes. The child will also not feel guilty because he or she wants the money to use it for survival. There are a lot of children struggling today and need money."*
- One respondent indicated that he only believes that sexual abuse can take place between children and grown-ups.
- Two respondents indicated that they are not sure whether sexual abuse can take place between men and younger boys. Several respondents did not believe that boys their age can be sexually abused.
- *"Some children do have sex because they live out of that. They know that they are going to be paid after having sex."*
- *"Ya, because some girls, Uh, I'm not speaking on behalf of the boys, I'm speaking on the behalf of the girls, some girls just like money. If you, you can buy them, then you can abduct them. A, just because of money."* The respondent later stated in the interview that he would consider having sexual

intercourse for R1 000.00 and explained that *“because, if like at home my parents can afford, cannot afford to give me that money”*.

Sexual abuse of boys is not a new phenomenon according to Sikweyiya and Jewkes (2009:530). Yet, globally very little is known about the nature and extent of sexual violence against boys. Sexual coercion by men involves abuse of trust and age-related power, temptation through material goods, as well as use of aggression (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2009:530; Spies, 2006:50; Yost, 2012:3). In contrast, coercion by women was framed as ‘temptation’. In some cases young men were tempted by much older women and those in a position of trust which resulted in negative emotional reactions from the boy (Allnock, 2010:2; Spies, 2006:50). Given the high rates of nondisclosure it is anticipated by Sikweyiya and Jewkes (2009:530) and Spies (2006:50) that rates of sexual assault of boys is likely to be much higher than is estimated.

From the above answers it was clear that respondents have different perceptions of sexual abuse at their age. Although respondents were able to previously provide the correct definition or description of sexual abuse and child sexual abuse, their understanding might not be so clearly and simply defined. It seems that the adolescent males might still have some misconceptions of child sexual abuse. Most of the adolescents stated that they are too young to have sex at their age but shared several viewpoints regarding sex in the community. It seems that from the information adolescents received, there are still misconceptions regarding sex and sexual abuse. Cromer and Goldsmith (2010:633) found that misconceptions regarding sexual abuse still exist in today’s society. Misconceptions only cause harm in our community as it discourages victims from disclosing abuse. Misconceptions regarding sexual abuse diminish the attentiveness of community members (Cromer & Goldsmith, 2010:633).

9.2.3 Identification of risk factors

A question was posed as to *what respondents think the reasons are that adolescents are sexually abused*. Not all respondents could provide an answer to the question. Some respondents identified a lack of knowledge, peer pressure, poverty and uncontrolled behaviour of adolescents as possible risk factors that can contribute to sexual abuse. Answers received were the following:

- **Lack of knowledge**

Data from this study indicate that the adolescent male has a limited view with regard to sexual abuse. It became clear during this study that misconceptions still persist and that adequate knowledge and a deeper understanding of sexual abuse is lacking. The adolescent's perspective places him at risk as he does not have sufficient knowledge. The adolescent's answers can be concluded with:

- *"Because they don't have, they don't know about sex..... Because you do things without thinking, without knowing the consequences."*

Meyer (2011:19) also found that there is a need for adolescents to have more knowledge of sexual abuse. It is unlikely that the adolescent will report abuse if it is seen as the norm and because they have nothing to compare it with. Tomlinson and Philpot (2007:68) state that children that are sexually abused may not see the abuse as unusual.

- **Peer pressure**

Negative peer pressure as pointed out by Crockett *et al.* (2006: 503) can be identified as a factor that may lead to risky sexual behaviour. As already mentioned by Gass and Seiter (2007:130) and Louw *et al.* (1998:457) peer relationships and conformity play a crucial role during this developmental phase of the adolescent. Conformity refers to the tendency to give in to social pressure. Gass and Seiter (2007:130) and Louw *et al.* (1998:458) contend that these social pressures can lead to risky sexual behaviour which can expose the adolescent to sexual abuse. The adolescents' perceptions of peer pressure as a risk factor were:

- *"Not to ask your girlfriend to show you how much she loves you".*
- *"Because if, if a boy is older than a girl, she's gonna tell her, tell her that she must do this and do that and sometimes if a girl doesn't want to sleep with a boy, his gonna hit him."*
- *"There are friends who pressurise the other friends. They pressurise them by telling them that all of them had sex but it is only that person who hadn't had sex. So that person needs to go and try to have sex to prove that he is part of the gang."*

- **Poverty**

Poverty was also identified as a risk factor for child sexual abuse.

- *“That lady must work, she must find a job like cleaning,”* reported one respondent as an alternative to selling your body for sex.
- *“Some of the children do have sex because they live out of that. They know that they are going to be paid after having sex.”*
- *“Yes, people, young people get into these situation because of the money they get, they receive.”*
- A response by one of the respondents already discussed in 9.2.2.3 stated that if an adult has sexual intercourse with a child and the child agrees to this action, the adult does not have to feel guilty. He further explained that the child will experience feelings of guilt *“cause, first the child will not think of what he or she was doing. The child thinks about it afterwards”*. The respondent further explained that the child will blame himself or herself. *“He thinks he or she is a bad guy.”* The respondent promoted that the child should expect money for the sexual intercourse *“Yes. The child will also not feel guilty because he or she wants the money to use it for survival. There are a lot of children struggling today and need money.”*
- A response by one of the respondents in 9.2.2.3 already discussed is referred to again. *“Ya, because some girls, Uh, I’m not speaking on behalf of the boys, I’m speaking on the behalf of the girls, some girls just like money. If you, you can buy them, then you can abduct them. A, just because of money.”* The respondent later stated in the interview that he would consider having sexual intercourse for R1 000.00 and explained that *“because, if like at home my parents can afford, cannot afford to give me that money”*.

Townsend and Dawes (2007:74) found that between 60% and 70% of South Africa’s children live in poverty. There is a strong relationship between poverty environment and sexual abuse (Townsend & Dawes, 2007:70). Oshima *et al.* (2014: 368) state that the higher the poverty rate in a community, the higher the risk of abuse. It was also found by Oshima *et al.* (2014:368) that child sexual abuse victims living in poverty were more likely to have re-reports of maltreatment. In addition to re-reports, child sexual abuse victims living in poverty had restricted access to

treatment which contributed to a negative outcome for these children (Oshima *et al.*, 2014:368).

- **Uncontrolled behaviour**

- One respondent discussed behaviour of adolescents that might place them at risk of sexual abuse as follows: *“Cause they go to taverns and drink, they hanging out at night so that might just happen, Sir. Because they drink alcohol and lose control.”*

Drug and alcohol use can also be linked to sexual abuse (Crockett *et al.*, 2006:503; Meinck *et al.*, 2015:98). A study was conducted by Mahura (2013:3) to identify the factors that contribute to adolescents committing sexual crimes. It was concluded that substance abuse, lack of school attendance and parental supervision are the main contributors.

- **Parent-child relationship**

From the data received during the interviews with the adolescent males it became evident that the parent-child relationship plays a crucial role. From the literature it is clear that the parent and home environment are crucial factors that need to be discussed when looking at risk factors of sexual abuse of the adolescent male. Meinck *et al.* (2015:98) emphasises that the parent-child relationship is a contributing factor to sexual abuse. Attachment is described by Louw *et al.* (1998:215) as the development of an emotional bond between two individuals (especially between the primary caregiver and child). Friedrich (2007:69) found that 95% of children that have been abused have insecure attachments with the parent that abuses them. Reid and Sullivan (2009:486) adduce proof that children that are emotionally deprived and experience the caregiver as inadequate and unavailable demonstrate elevated risk for sexual abuse.

The above data obtained from the respondents enabled the researcher to identify several risk factors of sexual abuse on community level, household level and child level. Poverty was an additional risk factor that came to the fore that needs to be taken into consideration when looking at sexual abuse.

9.2.4 Prevention

A question posed was: “How do you think sexual abuse of adolescents can be prevented?” Not all respondents were able to provide information on preventative actions that can be taken regarding sexual abuse. Some of the respondents’ suggestions were:

- *“They must always be open, and if it happens they must report it so that those people can talk to them, to other.....their parents should teach them, or they can learn it at school.”*
- *“The person that was abused, they must report it. It is a bad thing to keep it a secret. Because they will continue with the abuse.”*
- *“They can get more information, get taught and when they need more helping like centres if they need help they can go for advice.”* The respondent then indicated that there are no such centres in his community but further stated that *“I will tell them to the police or school teacher that you trust.”*
- *“Maybe we can go to a studio somewhere where people can all hear that, please old people must not abuse us. Because sometimes you are a dangerous person, we can’t see you, cause you know that if we say no, he’s gonna put you in trouble. Maybe he’s your guardian, he’s the dangerous one.”* The respondent also made another suggestion with regard to reporting the abuse: *“To tell that whenever there is someone is trying to want to do the sexual abuse with you, just say no, or else go and report to your teacher or tell the grownup that you trust. Maybe she, she can help you or talk to him that stop doing this cause you are abusing these children.”*
- *“A community can provide centres that can teach children about sex and protecting themselves.”* The respondent then further stated that it is very important to teach children and that *“parents should often sit down with their children and discuss such things to teach their children about life”*. The respondent then admitted that parents in the Sotho culture don’t often talk to their children about such things. He explained that *“children are ashamed to talk to their parents about such things”*. The respondent was not sure why parents don’t talk to their children about sex and sexual abuse but stated that it could help.

- Several respondents suggested that it should be reported to the police, social workers, the councillors, teachers and parents.

From the above answers from the respondents it is clear that information and communication are two crucial facets of prevention. Information must be provided through centres in our community to the community as well as that which must be shared between parents and adolescents. According to the respondents, information must be shared by the adolescents with the police, social workers, teachers and their parents after abuse has taken place

The importance of education is highlighted throughout the literature as significant preventative action against sexual abuse (Kang, 2005:5; Ragsdale *et al.* 2014:557; Cromer & Goldsmith, 2010:633; Meyer, 2011:40). Regarding education of the community, parents and children Kang (2005:92) further states that the home should be the primary source of sex education as parents are children's educators and models of identification. The adolescent males' positive sexual development is dependent on their primary caregiver giving them proper education regarding sexual abuse and sex. This education should start at a young age and must continue until the children become young adults (Kang, 2005:92).

Scholes *et al.* (2012:104) argued that teachers have a significant role to play in the prevention of child sexual abuse. Teachers have the most contact with the adolescent male outside their families. According to research, the community is increasingly expecting teachers to facilitate child sexual abuse prevention in the classroom. Scholes *et al.* (2012:105) believe that teachers should equip themselves with the correct knowledge and understanding to enable them to contribute to the safety of the children in their care.

10 RESEARCHER'S OBSERVATIONS

During the study the following became apparent to the researcher:

- For these adolescent males, sex and sexual abuse is still a taboo topic. Respondents were hesitant and uncertain about whether or not to discuss sex and sexual abuse with the interviewer, a male adult. When the respondent received sex education from the school it took place in large classrooms, which

may provide safety in numbers but can also hinder learners from asking intimate questions.

- Sex education programs in school focus mainly on anatomical and physiological information and lack information on sexual abuse, sexual values and preventative behaviour
- As previously mentioned one of the objectives of the Life Orientation subject according to the Department of Education (2002:4) in South Africa is to “enable learners to make informed, morally responsible and accountable decisions about their health and the environment”. Data received from this study indicate that this objective has not been achieved successfully.
- The majority of respondents do not feel comfortable discussing sex with their parents and perceive it as an off-limits subject. Trough data received from the study and available literature it is clear that adolescents experience an intense need for parents to connect and educate them on sex and sexual abuse.
- The family only plays a small part in this vital learning curve. One of the church and family’s roles are to impart morals and values. Their absence during this crucial developmental period of adolescent males creates a reason for concern.
- Information received from parents only focused on sex and using protection. None of the respondents received education on sexual abuse from their parents, which is a great cause for concern
- Adolescents obtain more in-depth knowledge from friends and the mass media than from their parents.
- The media rarely report contextual information about causes of and solutions for child sexual abuse.
- Data indicated that the adolescent male had a limited view with regard to sexual abuse. Misconceptions still persist in our community since adequate knowledge and a deeper understanding is lacking. The adolescent’s perspective places him at risk. It is unlikely that the adolescent will report abuse if it is seen as the norm in the community.
- The male adolescent believes that boys can’t be sexually abused. Only girls are victims of sexual abuse.
- Clinics are not involved enough in educating the adolescent regarding sex and sexual abuse.

- Churches are not playing an active role in the education of families regarding sexual abuse.

Kang (2005:21) reminds the reader that adolescents are in a significant phase and that sexual education plays an important role seeing that it assists them in succeeding in the transition into adulthood. Unhealthy behaviour patterns, reinforced by years of traditions and taboos, as well as the contradicting information given by the media, place adolescents at risk.

Hence it is important for adolescents to be educated on sexual matters so as to protect themselves against sexual risks. They should have accurate sexual knowledge to make critical sexual decisions and to form positive sexual attitudes (Kang, 2005: 21).

11 DISCUSSION

From the data derived from the study the following can be summarized:

- Respondents were able to give a brief explanation regarding what they think sexual abuse is. The respondents were unfamiliar with the different types and forms of sexual abuse. Adolescents did not have adequate knowledge of the broader definition of sexual abuse.
- Misconceptions regarding sexual abuse were identified. Respondents generally identified females as possible victims and mostly believed that boys cannot be sexually abused. Parents or guardians were identified as prospective perpetrators, and fellow learners were never considered.
- The respondents' main source of information regarding sex and sexual abuse was the school. The sex education mainly focuses on anatomical and physiological information and lacks information on sexual abuse, sexual values and preventative behaviour.
- The majority of parents never spoke to the adolescent males about sex. Respondents were afraid and uncomfortable to discuss such topics with their parents. The minority of parents who did provide education did so during the phase of adolescence, which only focused only sex and using protection. Respondents did not receive education regarding sexual abuse from their parents.

- Respondents were able to identify possible risk factors that may contribute to sexual abuse which include lack of knowledge, alcohol, peer pressure from friends and romantic relationships.
- Information plays an important role in the prevention of sexual abuse, according to the respondents. The importance of parents educating their children regarding sex and sexual abuse was highlighted. An additional suggestion to aid in prevention is that resources in the community contribute to educating the community, parents and adolescents.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the research findings and contextualization of the findings, the following recommendations can be made:

- Parents in the communities should be made aware of the importance of educating their children on sexual abuse. Parents should be assisted to communicate with their children about sex and sexual abuse.
- Social workers have to start with empowerment programs for parents to empower and motivate them to communicate with the adolescent male regarding sex and sexual abuse.
- Churches in the communities should be educated regarding the need and the importance of sexual abuse education. These churches should receive support to enable them to educate the adolescents on sex and sexual abuse.
- Existing support groups in the community such as Maranatha and Love Life need more support to enable them to reach more youths in the community and to educate children about sexual abuse as well.
- As schools are the main source of information regarding sex and sexual abuse it is recommended that they evaluate their current curriculum and that sexual education will consist of more than just anatomical and physiological information. Adolescents should obtain more in-depth knowledge of sex and sexual abuse.
- Life Orientation teachers need to take responsibility and need to understand the importance of the subject.
- The Social Workers rendering services in the Fouriesburg area as well as other areas in South Africa need to start to mobilize sex education programs in the

community to empower the adolescent males regarding sexual abuse with knowledge and skills to aid in the prevention of sexual abuse.

- More research on male and girl adolescents as well as children's perceptions of sexual abuse are necessary.
- A holistic approach is essential when educating the adolescent male, which includes a comprehensive sexual education that focuses on sexual abuse, sexual values and preventative behaviour. A holistic approach is sexual education provided in the home, school and community. It should consist of an integration of informal and formal education. Other organisations in the community such as NGOs, counselling centres and medical support centres should also form part of this holistic approach as they can offer valuable assistance.

13 CONCLUSION

The researcher concluded that the adolescent male's perception of sexual abuse is very limited in the Fouriesburg area and misconceptions regarding sexual abuse are still prevalent. Educational resources for the adolescent concerning sexual abuse are lacking, which may result in gaining incorrect knowledge and distorted sexual views. It is important for adolescents to be educated on sexual matters so that they may be able to protect themselves against sexual abuse. They should have accurate sexual knowledge in order to make critical sexual decisions and to form positive sexual attitudes.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE 1: ETHICAL APPROVAL



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
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Dr AA Roux
Social Work

Faculty of Health Sciences
Tel: 018 299-2092
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Email: Minnie.Greeff@nwu.ac.za

15 August 2014

Dear Dr AA Roux

Ethics Application: NWU-00027-09-A1

Perceptions of male adolescents regarding sexual abuse

Thank you for amending your application. All ethical concerns have now been addressed and ethical approval is granted 11/08/2015.

Yours sincerely

Minnie Greeff
Chairperson of Health Research Ethics Committee

Original (date: Minnie Greeff 10/08/2014) C:\Users\10210572\Documents\ETEX2014\ETHICS\NWU-00027-09-A1 AA Roux & D Buchanan Goodkauring.docx
15 August 2014

File reference: NWU-00027-09-A1

ANNEXURE 2: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enquiries: Phori JR
Reference: Research Approval
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education
Department of
Education
FREE STATE PROVINCE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING, POLICY DEVELOPMENT & RESEARCH

Mrs. Buchanan D

RE: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:

1. This letter serves as an acknowledgement of receipt of your request to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education.
2. Research topic: **Perception of male adolescents regarding sexual abuse.**
3. Approval is granted for you to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education.
4. This approval is subject to the following conditions:-
 - 4.1 The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
 - 4.2 A bound copy of the research document should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education (Strategic Planning, Policy Development & Research).
 - 4.3 You will be expected, on completion of your research study, to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
 - 4.4 The attached ethics document must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
5. Please note that the costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.
6. This letter should be shown to all participants.

Thank you for choosing to research with us. We wish you every success with your study.

Yours faithfully,

Mothebe MJ
Director: Strategic Planning, Policy Dev. & Research.

29/01/2015

Date

ANNEXURE 3: WRITTEN CONSENT BY PRIMARY CAREGIVER

CONSENT FORM LEGAL GUARDIANS

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY.

You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw at any point even after you have signed the form to give consent, without any consequences.

Should you be willing to participate you are requested to sign below:

I _____ hereby voluntarily consent my child to participate in the above mentioned study. He is not coerced in any way to participate and I understand that he can withdraw at any time should he feel uncomfortable during the study. I also understand that his name will not be disclosed to anybody who does not form part of this study and that the information will be kept confidential and not linked to his name at any stage. I also understand that he might benefit from participation in this project and is aware of the possible risks. Should he need further discussions someone will be available to assist him.

Signature of caregiver

Date

Signature of the person obtaining

Date

.

ANNEXURE 4: WRITTEN ASSENT FROM ADOLESCENT

ASSENT FORM FOR ADOLESCENT

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY.

You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw at any point even after you have signed the form to give assent, without any consequences.

Should you be willing to participate you are requested to sign below:

I _____ hereby voluntarily assent to participate in the above mentioned study. I am not coerced in any way to participate and I understand that I can withdraw at any time should I feel uncomfortable during the study. I also understand that my name will not be disclosed to anybody who is not part of this study and that the information will be kept confidential and not linked to my name at any stage. I also understand that I might benefit from participation in this project and is aware of the possible risks. Should I need further discussions someone will be available to assist me.

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of the person obtaining

Date

.

ANNEXURE 5: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH ADOLESCENTS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH ADOLESCENTS

Perceptions of male adolescents regarding sexual abuse

Respondent:

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INTRODUCTION

- I am a social worker doing research on the perceptions of adolescent males regarding sexual abuse.
- The purpose of the research project is to hear what male adolescents views are regarding sexual abuse.

The result from the research will help social workers to have a better understanding of the adolescent male views regarding sexual abuse. If social workers in the Fouriesburg area have a better understanding of the adolescent male's perception of sexual abuse, the social worker will be able to empower adolescent males with knowledge and skills to prevent them from the sexual abuse of a child or from being sexually abused.

- Thank you for your voluntary co-operation, your opinions and time. Your support is of great value in the sexual abuse of adolescents and children.

Please answer the following questions with honesty and to the fullest. Remember there is no right or wrong answers.

A. BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF ADOLESCENT

1. Home language

English	1
Tswana	2
Xhosa	3
Sesotho	4
Other	5

2. Age in years

14 years	1
15 years	2

3. School grade

Lower than grade 7 (Specify)	1
Grade 7	2
Grade 8	3
Other (Specify)	4

B SEXUAL ABUSE

1. *What do you think is sexual abuse?*
2. *What do you think is child sexual abuse?*
3. *Who gave you information about sex and sexual abuse?*
4. *What kind of information did you get about sex and sexual abuse?*
5. *What do you think are the reasons that adolescents are sexually abused?*
6. *How do you think sexual abuse of adolescents can be prevented?*

Mrs D. Buchanan

Master's degree student in Social Work: Forensic Practice
North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus

ANNEXURE 6: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I _____ (Name and surname) hereby agree to keep all information regarding the research project confidential. Special care will be taken to work in an ethical manner. Information received will remain confidential and special care will be taken to protect the identity of the participants.

Signature

Date

Witness

Date

ANNEXURE 7: CONFIRMATION BY LANGUAGE EDITOR



4 April 2015

I, Ms Cecilia van der Walt, hereby confirm that I took care of the editing of the dissertation of Ms Daleen Buchanan titled *Perceptions of male adolescents regarding sexual abuse*.

MS CECILIA VAN DER WALT

BA (*Cum Laude*)

HOD (*Cum Laude*),

Plus Language editing and translation at Honours level (*Cum Laude*),

Plus Accreditation with SATI for Afrikaans and translation

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