

Research Report

Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Behaviour of the South African Police Service in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality on Gender-Based Violence during COVID-19

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

Abbreviations/Acronyms	Description
COVID19	Corona Virus Disease of 2019
SAPS	South African Police Services
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersexed Queer and Questioning
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
DVA	Domestic Violence Act
CSP	Civilian Secretariat for Police
ICD	Independent Complaints Directorate
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
SBCC	Social Behavioural Change Communications
ECLB	Eastern Cape Liquor Board
HIV & AIDS	Human Immune Virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report on the study done on Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and of the South African Police Force in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality on Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The economic impact of COVID-19 has increased domestic violence and Gender-based Violence cases in communities. Literature review was done to find out studies that have been done in this topic. This study utilized a qualitative method and phenomenological design was employed to gain deeper understanding of the challenges. Data was analyzed by means of the thematic analysis method. The findings of the pilot study were that SAPS staff is overworked. COVID-19 has increased the workload of member of the South African Police Service (SAPS). Lockdown exacerbated domestic violence thus escalating the pressure on the SAPS members. This has placed an additional burden on the SAPS members who now have less time to spend on domestic violence cases. The study recommends that research should inform the review of: Domestic Violence Act. Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act, in relation to the register of sex offenders. Legislation pertaining to the Criminal Procedure Act to tighten bail and sentencing provisions for perpetrators of Gender-Based Violence; and the drafting of Gender Based Violence legislation. The study concludes that due the challenges faced by the police force, there is need for more police force who are well trained in matters of Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence. There must be capacity building to the current police force to ensure that receive the necessary training for the challenges they face. SAPS recommended other groups of people such as the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with the agenda on Gender-Based Violence, LBTQI+ organizations, social workers and healthcare workers that needed support and capacity building for them to effectively work.

Key words: *Gender-Based Violence, Domestic Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, South African Police Service*

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The South African President Cyril Ramaphosa confirmed the country's commitment to addressing Gender-Based Violence and femicide, on 18 September 2019. This was a reaction to social activism across the country against the insufficient response to the plague. The South African President has continued to make announcements on every presidential address together with COVID19 statements. He announced the roll out of immediate actions in the next six months to fast track a more medium-term method to address Gender-Based Violence and femicide to be taken into the National Strategic Plan (South African-Emergency response plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, 2019).

The South African Police Force are on the forefront when dealing with social issues such as domestic abuse including the Gender-Based Violence that has been declared a pandemic during the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). that has brought the world to its knees. They are the implementing agents of policy and legislation to victims of domestic violence at community level. They play a pivotal role in creating a caring and supportive environment for the victims when reporting the incident (Corcoran, Stephenson, Perryman & Allen, 2001; Glanz & Spiegel, 1996). International literature on best practice demonstrates that supportive police responses is critical, which is not the case in South Africa, available reports on domestic violence indicate a high level of dissatisfaction with police assistance and negativity towards the responses of police officers (Padayachee, 1989; Pretorius, 1987; Van der Hoven, 1989). More than two decades has elapsed since the promulgation of the Domestic Violence Act, 1998 (DVA) there is evidence that the South African Police Service (SAPS) are still not complying with the provisions of the DVA. According to a report by the Civilian Secretariat for Police Service, which looked at SAPS compliance with the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) of 1998 between April 2012 police stations are still struggling to deal with domestic violence complaints, with officers not understanding the law and failing to cope with the paperwork.

Results obtained from the last compliance audit conducted by the Civilian Secretariat for Police (CSP) indicated in the Second Quarter 2013 performance report, November 2013, that only two of the 145 police stations are fully compliant to the Domestic Violence Act 116 OF 1998, which is 1.4 per cent of the sample size. This result may be viewed as a serious indictment on the commitment of the SAPS to the implementation of the DVA. Until 2011 the mandate for monitoring the implementation for the DVA (by the SAPS) was with the Independent

Complaints Directorate (ICD). Thereafter it changed through the implementation of the Independent Police Investigative Directorate Act, No 1. Of 2011.

The CSP is responsible for overseeing the implementation and compliance of all policy and legislation by the SAPS. In April 2012, the CSP assumed this role and developed a standardized tool to use when doing site visits to police stations. These visits are further utilized to identify challenges with the implementation of the DVA by police stations. The visits are intended to equip officers with information on how to improve compliance and implementation with specific focus on regulatory compliance, and record keeping, and services offered to complainants.

1.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to explore police officers' experiences in policing different types of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Domestic Violence in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. therefore, providing information for decision makers on how to strengthen Gender-Based Violence (GBV) interventions at police stations.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are your experiences in dealing with domestic violence?
- How would you describe the level of alcohol consumption in the community you serve?
- What process do you follow for the implementation of the Domestic Violence Legislation?
- What are the differences between Domestic Violence and Gender-based Violence?
- Are there negative attitudes of SAPS employees at the station towards Domestic Violence victims? If yes, why?
- How can we identify the practices that are being implemented to address Domestic Violence at police station level?
- Explain how SAPS employees are trained about Domestic Violence?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To explore the experiences of SAPS employees in dealing with Domestic and Gender-Based Violence.

- To identify the process followed by the SAPS in implementing the Domestic Violence Act.
- To determine the level of knowledge that SAPS employees have in order to differentiate between Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence.
- To discover the attitudes of SAPS employees towards the victims of Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence.
- To identify measures that are being implemented to address Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence at police station level.
- To formulate recommendations and inform policy for all stakeholders on how to enhance SAPS training on Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The COVID19 pandemic exposes underlying inequalities in our socio-economic and health systems, such as Gender-Based Violence (GBV). In emergencies, particularly ones that involve quarantine, GBV often increases. Policymakers must utilize community expertise, technology and existing global guidelines to disrupt these trends in the early stages of the COVID19 epidemic (Lynch & Teagle, 2020). Gender norms and roles relegating women to the realm of care work puts them on the frontlines in an epidemic, while often excluding them from developing the response. It is critical to value women's roles in society and include their voices in the decision-making process to avoid unintended consequences and ensure a comprehensive response that caters to the needs of the most vulnerable groups (Neetu, et. Al., 2020).

COVID-19 arrived in South Africa at a critical time for Women's Rights. The lockdown has brought with it an increase in reports of domestic violence. In addition, it threatens to disrupt access to sexual and reproductive health services, which is a cornerstone of gender equality. Interventions to protect sexual and reproductive health rights during the crisis need to be part of an intersectional effort that considers vulnerabilities brought about by diverse identities and experiences, including those faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, ally, pansexual (LGBTIQ+) individuals (Neetu, et. al:2020).

On average, 856 women and 321 children were murdered over 107 days in 2018/19, according to South African Police Service (SAPS) crime statistics. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the country has now been in some form of lockdown for 6 months. Although we do not know how many women and children have been murdered in this period. Due to media reports however, we are painfully aware of the high-profile cases of Tshegofatso Pule, 28, and Naledi Phangindawo, 25, whose brutal killings last month made international headlines and sent shockwaves through the country. A functioning criminal justice system can play an important role in ensuring that victims of Gender-Based Violence are able to access justice. In South Africa, COVID-19 is both undermining the functioning of the justice system and bringing its shortcomings that preceded the pandemic into focus (Temba: 2020). The country could use this opportunity to become more innovative in its response to Gender-Based Violence. In the past few months, the police, prosecution service and courts have been put under unprecedented strain. This has exacerbated the challenges already faced by victims of Gender-Based Violence in accessing justice.

COVID-19 is exacerbating challenges faced by victims of Gender-Based Violence in accessing justice.

As a reactive and blunt instrument, the police and courts are not the solution for dealing with this type of violence. The focus should be on changing patriarchal attitudes and behaviour, particularly in the context of how the country's history of violent racial oppression has affected men's identities (Dartnall & Gevers: 2020). Still, there is much more that the police (SAPS), prosecutors (NPA) and the courts can do to help Gender-Based Violence survivors. The police are often the first responders in murder or severe assault cases and are responsible for gathering evidence; ensuring that survivors obtain medical treatment and finding them suitable accommodation. Research on domestic violence shows that some police stations do not adequately respond to victims. They still lack dedicated and trained personnel to attend to such matters and to give victims legally correct information and other support.

African National Congress Member of Parliament Ms Claudia Ndaba said she had received reports from women during lockdown who described how they were victimized and humiliated by some police officers (Temba: 2020). The women said other police were not always willing to help them. Ndaba was chairing the Commission for Gender Equality's 2020/21 Annual Performance Plan meeting. These policing problems have been aggravated by the pandemic. By early July, 36 police officers had died from COVID-19 and over 5 000 were infected. Several police stations have closed as SAPS officers tested positive (Lynch & Teagle: 2020).

As lockdown regulations are eased, there may be an increased demand for support services from survivors. This is because the factors that drive Gender-Based Violence have not changed during the pandemic. The police are among providers of these services. They should be on high alert to address potential increases in violent crimes and to help those seeking their protection and support. Alcohol is one of the key drivers of Gender-Based Violence, and since lockdown restrictions on alcohol sales were lifted, trauma cases linked to alcohol consumption have increased (Dartnall & Gevers: 2020). Sindile Nkabinde, a Control Prosecutor at the Hillbrow Magistrates Court in Johannesburg, told ISS Today that she had seen a drop in the number of domestic violence cases while the alcohol ban was in place. *'The day after sales were opened, I received 10 cases of assault and related matters not limited to domestic violence,'* she said (Temba: 2020). In many cases, the victims told her that their partner was fine when they did not drink but became violent when they did.

COVID-19 has also had far-reaching implications for the prosecution service, and these are likely to continue for months to come. Justice Minister Ronald Lamola said the courts had registered a substantial decline in the number of new applications for domestic violence protection orders (Temba: 2020). These went from 22 211 new applications in January to 18 112 in February and 10 262 between 26 March and 30 April. Nkabinde said one of the main reasons behind victims the withdrawal of charges by victims, was the pressure placed on them to settle the matter in the family. Another key reason was that victims were often financially dependent on the perpetrator (Lynch & Teagle, 2020).

In recent months, the optimal operation of the courts has been disrupted as several magistrate's courts, as well as the justice department's head office in Pretoria, have been closed for decontamination following COVID-19 cases (Neetu, et.al., 2020). Addressing the Gauteng Provincial Legislature in May 2020, the Acting Head of Department Gauteng Community Safety Mr. Siphon Thanjekwayo, mentioned magistrate's courts were not functioning optimally during early stages of lockdown, forcing matters to be postponed. He also noted that there was *'an inability to properly coordinate Gender-Based Violence cases which had been withdrawn because officials were unable to travel to various courts.* (Dartnall & Gevers: 2020). *'COVID has created a massive backlog in the finalization of our cases,'* said Nkabinde. *'There have been sporadic outbreaks of positive cases in police stations, courts as well as the Johannesburg prison ... members of the public and police alike have to come to us and this is how the virus keeps circulating.'*

2.2 International COVID19 Innovations

The pandemic has led to innovations in other parts of the world and South Africa could learn from these. Innovations include special hearings and mobile courts dealing exclusively with Gender-Based Violence.

In India, police are following up telephonically with those who have previously reported this crime. In France and Spain, early-warning systems in shopping centre and pharmacies enable domestic violence victims to get help by using code words such as 'Mask 19', and access counselling and help with reporting (Lynch & Teagle: 2020). In Columbia, courts have automatically extended protection orders that were due to expire. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has identified other innovations such as special hearings and mobile courts that deal exclusively with Gender-Based Violence cases. It also uses social media to publish messages on how the criminal justice system is responding to such violence during COVID-

19. South Africa should take heed of these initiatives and start implementing those that can be adapted to local conditions. At least then, the pandemic will have resulted in some positive outcomes to enable Gender-Based Violence survivors to access justice (Temba: 2020).

2.3 Domestic violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a silent public health epidemic in South Africa (SA). Interpersonal violence in South Africa is the second highest burden of disease after HIV&AIDS, and for women 62% of the former is ascribed to IPV (Gordon: 2016). South Africa, therefore, has the highest reported intimate femicide rate in the world. IPV has far-reaching consequences, stretching across generations. The cost to the economy and burden on health services are considerable. IPV presents in many ways, cutting across all medical disciplines (Lynch & Teagle: 2020). Therefore, all medical professionals should be conversant with this issue. This article provides essential, practical steps required for identifying and managing IPV, applicable to any setting. These steps are summarized as six Rs: Realize that abuse is happening (be aware of cues); Recognize and acknowledge the patient's concerns; Relevant clinical assessment; Risk assessment; cRisis plan; and Refer as needed for medical, social, psychological and/or legal assistance. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a silent public health epidemic in South Africa (SA), despite progressive reforms in the constitution, legal system, and the implementation of a Victim Empowerment Programme. It is also a substantial cause of morbidity and mortality (Gordon, 2016). Despite the human rights ethos of our constitution, far from being a national priority, identifying and managing IPV remain largely unaddressed. When victims seek help, most do so through the healthcare system, yet undergraduate medical curricula persistently produce healthcare professionals unprepared for IPV. As IPV cuts across all medical disciplines, all practitioners should be conversant and competent with this issue.

The definition of the SA Domestic Violence Act No. 116 of 1998 extends beyond physical and sexual abuse to include 'verbal and psychological abuse; economic abuse; intimidation; harassment; stalking; damage to property; entry into the complainant's residence without consent, where the parties do not share the same residence; or any other controlling or abusive behaviour towards a complainant' (Gordon, 2016). Central to this definition is the perpetrator's desire to subjugate or control the victim, including sexual entitlement, coupled with the belief that this is their right (Lynch & Teagle: 2020). Domestic violence can occur in any current or

previous relationship - even with a rejected suitor. Although IPV also affects men, this article focuses on IPV against women, as it is widespread.

2.4 What are reasons for women not to be eager to report, and why do they not leave their abusive partners?

Multiple reasons prevent women from reporting abuse (Dartnall & Gevers: 2020). A lack of human rights awareness about IPV, which is consonant with the normalization of abuse in South Africa, means that women tend not to frame their experiences as abuse. Access to sensitive care is a further barrier - either as physical access to medical or legal facilities (distance, cost of travel) or a lack of access due to abuse being missed (or ignored) by providers. Poor knowledge about, or faith in, the legal system also contributes to this situation. Furthermore, abusers often intimidate women into not reporting and/or withdrawing cases (perpetrators may threaten harm to children, taking children away, or abandonment) (Gordon: 2016).

Reasons for not leaving an abusive situation echo reasons for non-reporting. Many SA women remain profoundly economically disempowered, as they rely on their partners for financial support, which makes escape arduous. However, even well-educated and/or economically independent women have difficulty leaving an abusive relationship. IPV engenders a complex psychological cycle where victims are made to believe that they deserve the abuse. Victims' self-esteem can erode to the degree that they feel fortunate to have a partner, that they would never cope without their partner or are unworthy of finding other partners. Love of the partner and hope of change also contribute to these factors. To complicate matters, women become alienated from health professionals, who label them as irresponsible or unco-operative for not leaving (Gordon, 2016).

2.5 Domestic violence during COVID-19

The number of domestic violence cases reported to the South African police between March and April dropped by 69.4% (Dartnall & Gevers, 2020). This figure makes it tempting to believe that in South Africa, unlike many other countries, lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic reduced family and domestic violence. However, police statistics, call numbers to hotlines and counts of women accessing services during lockdown tell us little about the number of women and families experiencing violence at the hands of men. Many countries have documented an increase in reported cases of violence against women and children under lockdown (Gordon, 2016).

This may be because of the high levels of anxiety and tension in households where people are living together in close proximity. Unemployment, hunger, isolation and uncertainty also probably play a role (Lynch & Teagle, 2020). These are stresses that many, if not most, South African families experience. Police statistics of reported cases and the number of calls to hotlines or non-governmental organizations are not sources of information on the extent of violence experienced by women. However, they can tell us who was accessing services and reporting cases, and they raise important questions about whether it was possible for women to access services under lockdown. Studies on the impact of pandemics on levels of violence against women and children are scarce (Neetu, et.al., 2020).

What data should we be using to understand levels of violence against women during COVID-19? What does the reduction in reporting in South Africa tell us about the nature of abuse, and women's trust in the systems intended to support them? It is not surprising that the police, NGOs, and shelters reported a drop in cases during lockdown. Could women confined with their abusers find a safe time, a private space, and means to make contact? Did they trust support systems enough to believe they would get help if they risked asking? Did they know whom to contact? In the face of highly publicized abuse by some security force members, could women risk trying to access shelters or courts? It is important to understand the impact of lockdown and the alcohol ban on levels of violence in our homes (Dartnall & Gevers, 2020). Nevertheless, the available information, i.e., service level data, cannot demonstrate these trends. That being the case, can usable and actionable statistics on domestic violence during the pandemic be collected ethically and safely? Rigorous studies on the impact of pandemics on levels of violence against women and children are scarce. It is difficult to ensure the safety of women who are asked to respond to questions about their experiences of abuse, so the accuracy of the information gathered is likely to be questionable. Can usable statistics on domestic violence during the pandemic be collected ethically and safely (Temba: 2020)?

Social distancing and lockdown limit our ability to conduct face-to-face interviews and do research according to accepted ethical standards. This applies particularly to keeping respondents safe and their answers confidential during data collection (Dartnall & Gevers, 2020). In addition, while reliable information during a pandemic is important, international organizations agree that the priority must be to ensure that survivors have access to good-quality support and services. Data about the scale of violence against women and children can most reliably be captured through large national specialized surveys that use standard measures and highly trained enumerators (Lynch & Teagle, 2020). These include the World Health

Organization Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women, the United Nations Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific, and the Violence against Children Surveys (Lynch & Teagle, 2020).

Administrative or service data (e.g., from police, justice, or health and social services) are poor measures of domestic violence levels. This violence is largely under-reported and many survivors do not seek help. When they do, cases may not always be properly recorded.

What can be done to ensure women are not cut off from services when social distancing is required? The research is clear about the factors that drive intimate partner violence (Temba, 2020). These include gender inequality, childhood emotional abuse and neglect, frequent arguing with a partner, depression, and gender norms that support men's use of violence. The image below shows findings from the United Nations Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific. It aimed to generate knowledge about the factors that contribute to men's perpetration of intimate partner violence against women (Gordon, 2016). The circle sizes indicate the relative impact of each factor. The larger the circle the greater contribution the factor has on levels of intimate partner violence. The colours indicate thematic groups. This is a clear visual representation of how complex the drivers and risk factors of intimate partner violence are (Gordon, 2016).

South African research also points to the significant role that alcohol and drugs, gender norms and beliefs about the roles of women in society, and childhood trauma play in increasing the likelihood those men will perpetrate violence against women. The important questions to ask during this pandemic are not whether the violence has increased or decreased which we cannot answer (Temba, 2020). We should rather be asking about the impact of the virus and social distancing measures on women and children, and whether they have been able to access services (Dartnall & Gevers, 2020). Those working with women and children on the frontline best answer this question. We also need to learn from others elsewhere and build a global set of measures to inform current responses to and future management of pandemics.

What we know suggests that social distancing regulations and lockdowns are unlikely to reduce violence in the home. As we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis, it will be important to undertake research to better understand how women and families experienced the lockdown and what informed the reduction in reporting (Lynch & Teagle, 2020). Meanwhile the Department of Social Development and National Treasury should ensure that high-quality services are available to victims of domestic violence, and that preventive services are not

compromised by the shift in state spending to address the pandemic. Finally, we need to be asking what can be done to ensure that women are not cut off from services when social distancing is required (Temba, 2020).

2.6 Social Behavioural change model

The reasoning of the social behavioural change was directly associated with the belief that if people were better informed, they would become more aware of environmental problems. Thus, they would be motivated to behave in an environmentally responsible manner. Thus, as evident in Figure 1, when knowledge increases, environmentally favourable attitudes that lead to responsible environmental actions are developed (Akintunde, 2017).

Figure 1 illustrates the relationships emanating from the models proposed at that time (Akintunde, 2017).



Figure 1: Social Behavioural change diagram

However, some research refuted the arguments of those that saw the principles of human behavioural change in this model. As a result of this, the legitimacy of such simplistic linear model was not recognized or supported for a long time (Akintunde, 2017). Researchers then focused their attention on a hypothesis that they would quickly verify and accept over the course of the following years: that a multitude of variables interacts in different degrees to influence the embracing of environmentally responsible behaviour.

The behavioural model, though it is unsophisticated, provides a base for the consideration of possible relationship existing between environmental knowledge, environmental awareness, and attitude and how these can translate to action or inaction. A good knowledge of environmental variables may not necessarily imply good and sustainable environmental behavior. On the other hand, lack of environmental knowledge or awareness may also not necessarily imply a poor environmental practice. Therefore, other intervening factors like the Locus of control, intention to act and personal responsibility need to be considered. While a line of possible relationship can be deciphered through this model, reality is far more complex

than this linear trend, hence a more advanced model, incorporating this line of relationship is needed to offer a succinct explanation of the interacting variables of human behavior in environmental preservation.

Behavior change theories can help understand why people act the way they do and why behaviors change. SBCC theories can be helpful to guide SBCC program design and help you focus on what or who to address in your program. Each theory or model has a different set of factors to explain behavioral change and area of focus-the individual, their intention to change their behavior or their surrounding environment.

The figure 2 below displays the most used behavior change theories in SBCC programs and identifies the intervention level according to the socio-ecological approach (NIH, 2015).

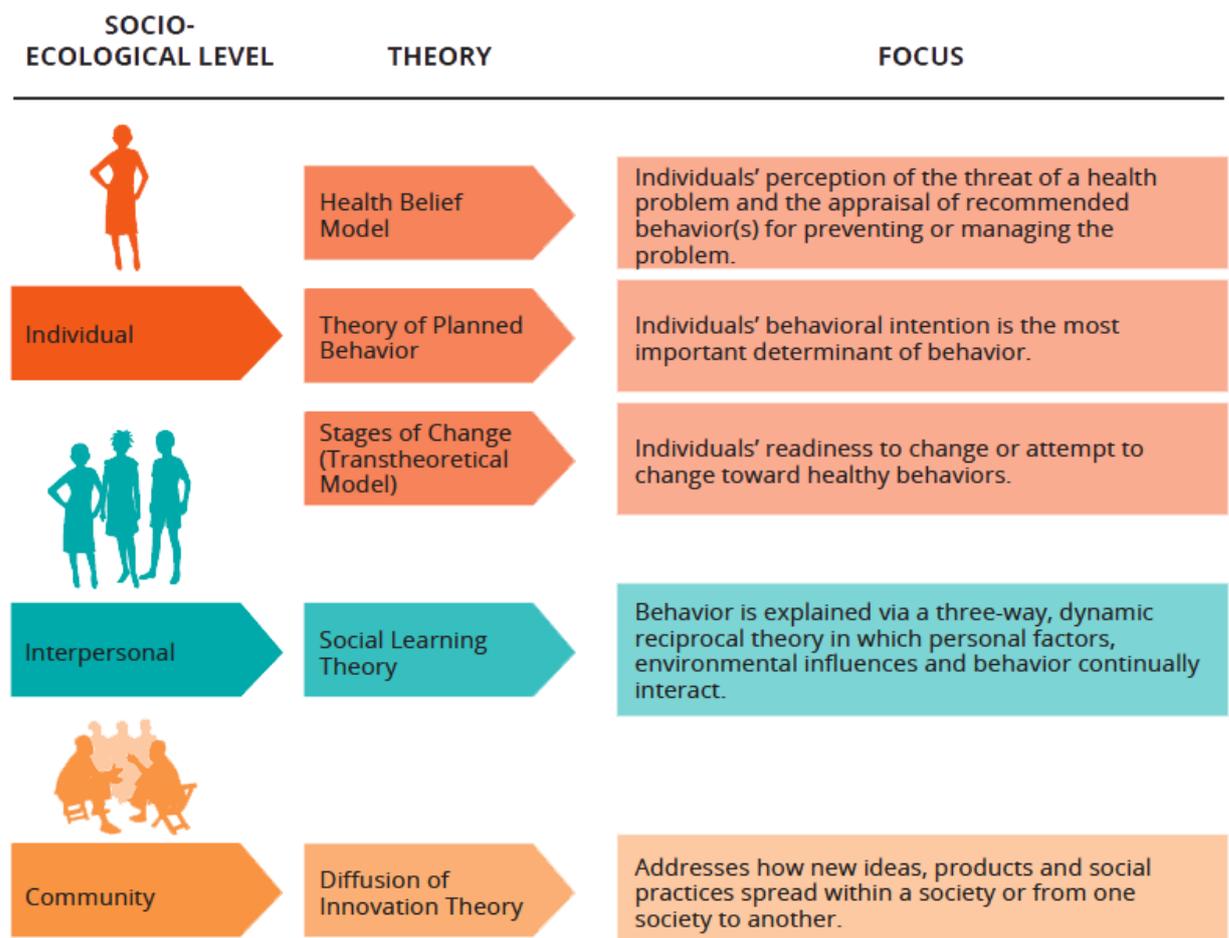


Figure 2: Social Behavioural Change Communications (NIH, 2015)

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study employed the qualitative research method. Patton (2001) indicates that qualitative research methodology involves an interpretative naturalistic approach. This statement implies that qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Patton, 2001: 39; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). This study therefore seeks primary data from people who are directly involved with the subject in focus. The primary sources of data used in this pilot study are commanders of two (N=2) police stations in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.

3.1 Phenomenology

According to De Vos, (2003) phenomenology is an approach, which aims at understanding and interpreting the meaning that participants give to their daily lives. De Vos (2003) regards it as a study that describes the meaning of experiences of a phenomenon, topic or concept as experienced by various individuals. The researchers utilise this approach to reduce the experiences to a central meaning or to the core of the experience being studied. For this to be accomplished, the researcher should go into the 'life world' of the participants and imagine them being in the participants' situation. It is mainly done by using the natural methods of study, analysing the conversations and the researcher's interactions with the participants. Individuals who have experienced the particular phenomenon being researched must be identified. Data is collected systematically; meanings, themes and general descriptions of experiences are analysed within the specified context.

Van Manen (1990) states that phenomenology as a research method tries to 'ward off' any tendency toward constructing a predetermined set of fixed procedures, techniques and concepts that would rule or govern the research project. The description of meaning is a mediated expression and is interpretative of life experiences. Interpretations of life experiences are made by using some type of text or symbolic expression. A phenomenological text is descriptive because it names something and through that, points to something. It aims at letting something show itself, with the assumption that the meaning of lived experiences is hidden. A good phenomenological description is collected by lived experiences and a recollection of lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990; De Vos, 2003). In addition, personal experience is a starting point in phenomenology. Research of this nature focuses on a particular situation or event. A description of experiences is given without offering casual explanations or interpretative

generalizations of experiences (Van Manen, 1990; De Vos, 2003). The process of the descriptive production of lived experiences as suggested by Van Manen is that:

- The experiences lived must be thoroughly described, avoiding as much as possible casual explanations, generalisations or abstract interpretations;
- The experiences must be described from the inside as it were;
- The focus is on a particular example or incident of the object of the experience;
- Examples of experiences, which stand out vividly, are focused on;
- Attention is paid to how the body feels, how things smell or smelled, how they sounded or sound; and
- Beautifying accounts with fancy words or flowery terminology should be avoided.

In this study, no casual explanations have been given. The information collected is from the actual people that lived the experiences of the phenomenon being studied.

3.2 Empirical phenomenological research

According to this approach, the researcher returns to the experiences of participants' stories in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions. The descriptions then provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis to portray the essences of the experiences. To start with, the original data is comprised of 'naïve' descriptions obtained through open-ended questions and dialogue. The researcher then describes the structure of the experiences based on the reflection and interpretation of the research participants' stories (Van Manen, 1990; De Vos, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

For the pilot study, the two (N=2) commanders of police stations were identified, based on the following inclusion criteria:

- Completion of basic training;
- Practical experience in policing of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence incidents;
- Geographical area of the communities they served; and
- and availability of the police station commanders during COVID19 lockdown (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:153).

3.3 Participants (respondents)

The data was collected at top level of Police stations. This is a strategic level (person in charge of the police station). Two (N=2) top level officials were individually interviewed in their respective police stations during the time they allowed the researcher to collect data. In addition, SAPS recommended other groups of people such as the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with the agenda on Gender-Based Violence, LBTQI+ organizations, social workers and healthcare workers that needed support and capacity building for them to effectively work. Therefore, we embarked on bi-weekly capacity building workshops with:

- Phila Ndoda: An organisation that works with men and abused men.
- DOXA: An organisation that works with men and abused men.
- Yethu: An organisation that works with abused women and children, abuse of alcohol and drug abuse.
- Yokhuselo: An organisation of social workers.
- OUT-Health Engagement: An organisation that works with LGBTQ+ group.
- Phapamani rape crisis centre: An organisation that works with rape victims.

Other government departments requested to be part of this agenda. These were:

- Eastern Cape Liquor Board (ECLB).
- Eastern Cape AIDS Council.

Discussions with NGOs suggested inclusion of community leaders. The thinking around this idea is that if we leave the community at the end of project or move on to do capacity building in other provinces, the knowledge will remain in the community thus that will ensure longevity and knowledge will be passed on to the community at large.

3.4 Sampling strategy

The first ten (N=10) responding police stations. The first two (N=2) responding police station commanders participated in the study during COVID19 lockdown to adhere to the regulations of the Presidential address. Participants from NGOs were as follows:

- Phila Ndoda: The CEO. One (N=1) member.
- DOXA: The CEO. One (N=1) member.
- Yethu: The founder and CEO: The CEO. One (N=1) member.
- Yokhuselo: One (N=1) social workers representative.

- OUT-Health Engagement: One (N=1) LGBTQ+ representative.
- Phapamani rape crisis centre: One (N=1) representative.

Other government departments requested to be part of this agenda. These were:

- Eastern Cape Liquor Board (ECLB): Five (N=5) members of the social responsibility department.
- Eastern Cape AIDS Council: One (N=1) representative from the research department.

In addition, the following private organizations also participated in this study:

- Automotive Industry Development Co-operation (AIDC) - HIV and AIDS, COVID19 Stigma discussions and GBV among factory workers as well as Citrus Industry and workplace wellness. Two (N=2) members of their research department participated in the study.
- Skills Factory - Co-construction of GBV programmes. One (N=1) member of the organization participated in the study.

Seventeen (N=17) respondents participated at this stage. Research and Capacity Building among the South African Police Department will be rolled-out as soon as we get the funds available.

3.5 Data collection

Information was needed to address Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of the South African Police Force in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality on Gender-Based Violence. Phenomenological interviews were found ideal for this study. The interviews were audio taped with the permission of the participants so that everything that the participants said could be preserved. The field notes were also written in a detailed manner. The interviews were transcribed as soon as possible after each interview in order to ensure as much relevant data was recorded. The researchers held back all preconceived ideas, which could have contaminated the data collection. The phenomenon was to be understood through the voices of the participants (Creswell, 1998: 52; Holliday, 2007).

Two (N=2) police stations in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality were visited in order to conduct the study. Interviews were conducted with commanders of the police stations.

The main purpose of the interviews was to:

- Assess the feasibility of the study.

- Gain the commitment from the leadership for the study.
- Identify key stakeholders to participate in the study.
- Map the protocol and communication channels to be followed for the study.
- To test the research questions.

3.6 Data Analysis

Strauss and Corbin (1998:9; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) explain that the analysis phase of data in qualitative research involves a process of comparison of data and the identification of patterns between instances and individuals. The data analysis of this research was done according to this process. The data that was captured during interview sessions is presented *verbatim*. As such, the data collected was analysed and interpreted simultaneously.

Furthermore, the data was organised according to the sequence of the interview schedule. For every question included in interview schedule, the problems and successes indicated by the participants were analysed and interpreted.

4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Theme 1: Domestic violence only happen in poor communities

Station commander A stated the following:

'Domestic Violence occurs among the poorest of the poor and the richest of the rich. Most of the people think that Domestic Violence only happens in poor communities, but we called for cases at every level of our society'.

This statement highlights the South African presidential address and dismisses the myth that domestic and Gender-based Violence only happens in the previously disadvantaged areas. Therefore, the police who work in suburbs work just as much as those who work in poor communities.

4.2 Theme 2: Socio-economic impact of COVID19 increased violence

Station commander B said the following:

'The economic impact of COVID-19 has increased domestic violence cases in communities. The worst part is the fact that we receive calls from the same people all the time, but the victims refuse to be taken to the place of safety. In some cases, they run away from the place of safety and return to the abuser. Just imagine, when you think that you will receive no calls from a particular residence, the calls start again, it is confusing'.

Station commander B continued by saying that:

'Staff is overworked and COVID-19 has increased the workload of SAPS members and lockdown exacerbated domestic violence thus escalating the pressure on the SAPS members'.

Being at work alleviates the domestic violence. During the lockdown of the COVID19 pandemic, more especially during level 5 when only the front-liners were allowed to go to work, despite the fear of the pandemic, family members are expected to stay at home and enjoy quality life that they normally do not have due to work requirements and work schedules. However, the opposite was reported to be constantly happening, which made the police to be very exhausted from the cases of domestic and Gender-Based Violence that they had to run to all the time.

4.3 Theme 3: The challenge of releasing prisoners from correctional services due COVID19

Station commander A stated the following:

‘The release of prisoners during lockdown resulted in an increase in crime in the community. This has placed an additional burden on the SAPS members who now have less time to spend on domestic violence cases. There was a protest from the community members when some of the prisoners were release from prison due to COVID19. Just when the community members felt that they were safe, the perpetrators of domestic and Gender-Based Violence were released from prison. Of cause, the community members think that the release of prisoners had something to do with us but we were not involved in that decision, if anything we would have said that for sake of peace in the community keep them in prison’.

There must be communication between the police, criminal courts, and correctional services. This very important collaboration needs to happen. Before, releasing the prisoners, the police docket and the police who were involved in the case need to be consulted to avoid the challenges that are currently being experienced by the police force.

4.4 Theme 4: Police stations are engaged in community issues that are not part of their work

Station commander B said the following:

‘Police stations are involved with the running of soup kitchens and other community projects. Can you imagine, I am a station commander but when everyone in the station has gone to respond to the cases of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence, I am forced to leave my work and start serving soup to the people. The reason I have been doing this, is because if I do not give them soup, they will be a lot of people sitting outside like there is a public meeting of people who are just waiting to be given a bowl of soup, but we are not paid for such duties.’

COVID19 has revealed economic and social challenges such as challenges such as unemployment. Unemployment has resulted in hunger in most families. Since the police are seen as places of refuge, the community members ask for food from the police. As a result, the police have opened soup kitchens to feed the communities they serve. These projects are not relevant to policing work. They have added work on the police departments, thereby going beyond the call of duty, which is not remunerated.

4.5 Theme 5: Police serve as escorts to community service providers

Station commander A alluded to the following:

'In some areas due to high crime levels SAPS members must escort other service providers in the community, which takes their time away from policing. Let me tell you, there is no one who can enter this community without police escort. People such as municipal workers who come to collect garbage, repair broken water pipes and those who come to fix lights, are all in danger without our escort. Therefore, the day they are coming, we have to offer protection. If they go on their own, their car and tools will be stolen from them at gunpoint. So, it is rough here'.

Station commander B added:

'Where victim friendly centers are available work at police stations inter-sectoral collaboration between government institutions is enhanced'.

The police officers and women sometimes they seem not to respond to emergency calls on time, but when one considers that they are thinly, spread to serve on matters that were already arranged for municipality to provide the required services in the community it becomes very difficult. The reason is that they cannot divide themselves to respond promptly to emergency calls. It is also unreasonable to expect them to do so much work. The community leaders must be tasked to liaise with the criminals so that municipal workers, plumbers and electricians can get into the community without fearing for their lives. It is unreasonable to expect the police to do protection service for service providers. Victim friendly centers must be provided, and work at police stations inter-sectoral collaboration between government institutions to enhance police services.

4.6 Theme 6: Pivotal role of safe houses

Station commander A avowed that:

'Safe houses are places of safety for victims of domestic violence. However, they are not available everywhere in places we serve. For example, we do not have a safe house, so where available the safe houses play a pivotal role in dealing with domestic violence, although not all victims agree to be sent to a place of safety. They prefer to stay with the abusers. In their defense, I think they think that their partners will change after they have seen the police in their houses, however our experiences have taught us that nothing changes, abusers remain

abusers. Sometime, we respond to emergency calls from the same residence more than 10 times in a day. I think some community members need rehabilitation of some sort’.

Looking at statement above, there is need for all police stations to have safe house for victims who require a place of safety. For the victims who accept to be placed in safe houses, that alleviates the burden on police in terms of responding to emergencies in the same house of residence numerous times. What must be understood as well is that the police are human beings too! They require situations that suggest that they served, and the issue has been resolved. There is also an issue of resources such as transport, listening to the case and documenting, fuel in addition to work force that must be considered. The individual community members must also understand that they are not the only ones who need to be served, they are others too.

4.7 Theme 7: South African Police training on domestic violence

Station commander A said that:

‘The SAPS officers receive 1-week domestic violence training. New police officers are trained in college. In one police station, refresher courses are offered regularly, however, in the other police station there is a need for refresher courses’.

She also added that:

‘Each charge office has a domestic violence policy file with the relevant legislation. The current legislation only covers domestic violence, Gender-Based Violence is not covered holistically’.

The statement above suggests the need for more training and comprehensive training in terms of domestic violence and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). During the COVID19 pandemic, Gender-Based Violence was declared a pandemic too. That requires drastic measures to be used in terms of building the capacity of the police. There must be consistency too in terms of having regular refresher courses for this pandemic. The other reason may be that there is diversity in GBV that needs to be taught thoroughly so that the police are well equipped to provide services to the community such as ways to serve the LGBTI+ community that may not be covered (Or overlooked) in the training of domestic and Gender-Based Violence.

4.8 Theme 8: Myth on police negative attitude

Both station commanders said that:

'SAPS members do not display negative attitudes towards domestic violence victims. The force members are going out of their way to support the victims-some of the victims are refusing interventions, protection and support'.

It is not fair on the police force that are performing beyond their call of duty to be deemed as law enforcement agents that have negative attitudes towards the people they serve.

4.9 Theme 9: Required change of mind set

Participants alluded to the following:

'Male officers have a mindset that domestic violence and GBV victims must be attended to by female officers. There is a need to change their mindsets'.

This is a challenge! Law enforcement agents must be trained to serve the community regardless of their gender that is being presented. The LGBTI present diverse sexual orientation that need to be understood by the police and serve them accordingly too. If male police officers have a problem with serving the female victims, the question then arises how they deal with the LGBTI community in the population that have people who are “gender fluid”. Who look like they might not be whom they will say they are, and present themselves to the police something else in accordance to who they think they are or feel? The capacity building is required to ensure that everyone in the community is served without discrimination or marginalization.

4.10 Theme 10: Alcohol abuse is the major contributor to domestic and Gender-Based Violence

The station commanders agreed on alcohol abuse being the major contributor to domestic and Gender-Based Violence.

They stated the following:

'You will not believe that even now when alcohol is not allowed to be sold in South Africa during COVID19 lock down level 5 that most of the perpetrators and the victims are drunk when we attend to their cases. Do you know that they are brewing their own alcohol with fruits such as pineapples etc....when they are drunk, they start fighting? It is one of the most exhausting cases we face because sometimes when they are drunk,

they cannot recall what happened when they are finally sober, it is frustrating but can one do? So imagine then what happens when liquor stores and shebeens are open in every street of their community! This is one of the major challenges that we face on daily’.

Alcohol abuse is a major challenge. Drastic measures need to be taken to educate the community on responsible alcohol consumption. Community members must elect champions to take up the responsibility of education and advocacy so that alcohol consumption is taken according to the policy requirements.

4.11 Theme 11: Overpopulated households

The participants alluded to the following:

‘You have no idea how some people live. You find that there are more than 40 people in one room. What we know is that these over-populated households, people sleep in shifts. It is does not make sense to you and me but that is how they live. So, even now during lockdown, you find that there are people walking up and down the streets because it is not their time to sleep, and they are drunk too. How does anyone prevent these men and women not to be violent? The streets are busy 24 hours a day. Sometimes, when they are causing public disturbance we bring them to the police station, and they tell us that we must just show them were to sleep’.

Over-populated households speak to poverty in the communities. Which makes it difficult to do police work, because while they are roaming the streets, chances are that they will commit some of the crimes deliberately so that they can have a place to sleep at the police station. That equally speaks to over-crowded police stations and over working of the police force for petty crimes. The fact that they are normally drunk when they are on the streets at night, poses danger to themselves and the community at large. Therefore, in some communities the police patrol 24 hours a day and they are overworked too.

4.12 Theme 12: Testing knowledge for capacity building

During this phase of the project, we engaged seven (N=7) organizations with seven that work that deal with victims Gender-Based Violence. These organizations deal with:

- Rape crisis.
- Women who are GBV victims.
- Alcohol and drug abuse.

- Social worker organizations.
- LGBTI+ organizations.
- Men who are GBV victims.
- Men who advocate for positive masculinity.

The lessons learnt will be used to create media messages and posters in the clinics, hospitals, schools and recreation community centers in the hope of bringing Social Behaviour Change. We hope to mobilize the community at large by engaging the community leaders. In addition, we hope to train the community leaders on Gender-Based Violence so that the knowledge remains in the community when the project ends to ensure longevity. When community members change their behaviour for a better environment, the law enforcement agents (SAPS) will not deal with communities that effected with Gender-Based Violence pandemic.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Recommendations

5.1.1 Legislation and policy review

The findings of this research suggest a review of the policies and legislation:

- National and Provincial liquor policies (or legislation).
- Domestic Violence Act.
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act, in relation to the Register of Sex Offenders.
- Criminal Procedure Act, in relation to tightening bail and sentencing provisions for perpetrators of Gender-Based Violence; and
- The drafting of Gender-Based Violence legislation.

5.1.2 Victim friendly centers

Victim friendly centers that are created in the communities must adhere to the following:

- Regular debriefing sessions for the staff.
- Management support.
- Staff is from the community and understand the needs of the community.
- SAPS members visit schools and do youth education.
- Health promotion material is available.
- Comprehensive service is provided, however more workforce is needed.

5.1.3 The role of Community Policing Fora

Community Policing Forums must be empowered to be actively involved in domestic violence and Gender-Based Violence prevention and support.

5.1.4 Understanding of Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence

An understanding of Domestic Violence (DV) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the South African Police Service (SAPS) should be bolstered, capacity building initiatives in this front must be intensified to improve services delivery to victims of DV and GBV.

The SAPS should implement measures to encourage the participation of members in DV and GBV refresher courses.

5.1.5. short learning programmes to bolster the capacity of SAPS's members

The following Domestic Violence and Gender-based Violence short learning programmes are recommended in order to building the capacity of members of the SAPS to further improve service delivery towards victims of DV and GBV:

- Understanding Gender-Based Violence,
- Framework for addressing Gender-Based Violence in emergencies,
- Preventing Gender-based Violence in emergencies, and
- Responding to Gender-Based Violence in emergencies.

In addition to the skills programmes mentioned above, the findings of the current study suggests that there is a dire need Employee Wellness Short Learning Programmes covering the following area (modules):

- Introduction to Employee Wellness in the Workplace,
- Managing Employee Wellness in the Workplace,
- [Managing]Work-related Stress,
- Dealing with Alcohol and Drugs in the workplace,
- Dealing with Violence in the Workplace,
- Managing HIV & AIDS in the Workplace,
- Managing the Smoking (including secondary smoking) in the Workplace,
- Nutrition in the Workplace,
- Physical Activity for Health,
- Healthy Sleep,
- [Dealing with] Economic {Financial} Stress, and
- From Theory to action.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that due the challenges faced by the police force, there is need for more police force who are well trained in matters of Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence. There must be capacity building to the current police force to ensure that receive the necessary training for the challenges they face. In addition, civil society organizations and community leaders must be equipped with knowledge on Gender-Based Violence to ensure longevity and sustainability. This implies that when the project is completed, the community leaders and

NGOs, SAPS and government departments will continue with the capacity building on Gender-Based Violence. When knowledge is imparted from person to person over a long period, they will be a better chance to achieve Social Behaviour Change in the nation.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure 1: DOXA and Yethu Civil Society Organisation CEOs receiving masks and pamphlets



Annexure 2: OUT: Health and Engagement Organisation receiving masks and pamphlets



Annexure 3: Phila Ndoda Civil Society Organisation CEOs receiving masks and pamphlets

