

**A SOCIAL WORK ASSESSMENT OF THE
EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF HIV/AIDS
ORPHANS**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER ARTIUM

In

**SOCIAL WORK
(PLAY THERAPY)**

in the

Faculty of Humanities

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

PRETORIA

Study Leader: Dr C.E. Prinsloo

October 2003

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere thanks to the following people:

- *All the honour goes to our creator, God. Because with Him we are able to accomplish anything.*
 - Dr C.E. Prinsloo for her inspiration and guidance throughout the research study.
 - My husband, Stan, for his support and assistance in completing this research. Thank you for always believing in me.
 - To my parents, for creating opportunities in my life.
 - To Pretoria Child and Family Care Society for allowing me to do the research within their organization.
- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To the respondents for opening up and sharing their grief. |
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SUMMARY

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HIV/AIDS ORPHANS

By

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HIV/AIDS has assumed epidemic proportions in the world of today. The main age group infected by this disease is between the ages of 20 – 40 years. The result of this is that the children who are not infected by the disease will be orphaned and forced to assume the role of head of the house and breadwinner, at a stage in their lives when they should not be burdened with these responsibilities.

Orphans are perhaps the most tragic long-term legacy of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The stigma attached to HIV/AIDS exacerbates the trauma, hampers the bereavement process and exposes children to discrimination and victimization in their community and their extended family.

Investigation into existing literature has revealed that insufficient previous studies have been conducted on HIV/AIDS orphans and even fewer pertaining to the emotional needs of the HIV/AIDS infected population in the South African context. For the purpose of this study it was decided to assess the emotional needs of HIV/AIDS affected orphans in the developmental stage of middle childhood.

A literature investigation into the historical background of HIV/AIDS was done and the demographic impact of the disease on South Africa was given. The impact that HIV/AIDS has on the patient was discussed along with the impact that it has on the affected significant others of the patient.

Secondly a literature investigation on middle childhood was done. The child in middle childhood as well as the family with children in middle childhood was discussed. Attention was given to the developmental tasks,

developmental characteristics and the child's comprehension of death during middle childhood. Attention was also afforded to the family with children in middle childhood with specific emphasis on the developmental tasks and needs of the family and the developmental tasks of siblings.

The aim of the research study was to assess the emotional needs of HIV/AIDS orphans. An exploratory research design by means of a qualitative approach was followed. Five respondents were purposively

sampled that complied with the set criteria. They were assessed through the utilization of six different Gestalt therapy techniques over a period of one week. Themes were identified through the empirical study.

The research question “*What are the emotional needs of HIV/AIDS orphans?*” was answered and the following emotional needs of the respondents were identified:

- Longing for the deceased mother.
- Loneliness.
- Stigmatization.
- Preoccupation with the physical features of the deceased.
- Anger.
- Insecurity.
- Preoccupation with death.
- Fear of death.

The following themes can be considered for further research in this field:

- Establishment of a therapeutic program for affected children.
- A comparison between the emotional needs of those children who have knowledge regarding their parent/s status and those who do not.

KEYWORDS

Assessment

Affected significant others

Developmental tasks

Emotional needs

Gestalt play therapy techniques

Gestalt play therapy

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS orphans

Play therapy

Middle childhood

OPSOMMING

**‘n MAATSKAPLIKEWERK ASSESSERING VAN DIE EMOSIONELE
BEHOEFTE VAN MIV/VIGS WEESKINDERS**

Deur

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**MIV/VIGS het epidemiese afmetings
in die wêreld van vandag aangeneem.
Die vernaamste ouderdomsgroep wat
deur hierdie siekte geïnfekteer word,
is in die ouderdomsgroep 20 – 40
jaar. Dit het tot gevolg dat kinders
wat nie geïnfekteer is nie, wees gelaat
word. Hulle word gedwing om die rol
van ‘n broodwinner of hoof van die**

huis aan te neem, in ‘n fase van hulle lewe waar hulle nie veronderstel is om hierdie verantwoordelikhede te dra nie.

Weeskinders is waarskynlik die mees tragiese langtermyngevolg van die MIV/VIGS pandemie. Die stigma verbonde aan MIV/VIGS vererger die trauma wat die kind ervaar, belemmer die rouproses en stel die kinders bloot aan diskriminasie en viktimisering in hulle gemeenskap en hulle uitgebreide familie.

‘n Ondersoek na bestaande literatuur het aangedui dat daar nie genoegsame navorsing ten opsigte van MIV/VIGS weeskinders en nog minder ten opsigte van die emosionele behoeftes van die MIV/VIGS populasie in ‘n Suid Afrikaanse konteks, gedoen is nie. Vir die doel van die navorsing is daar besluit om die emosionele behoeftes van MIV/VIGS geaffekteerde weeskinders in die middelkinderjare te assesser.

‘n Literatuurondersoek na die historiese agtergrond van MIV/VIGS is gedoen en die demografiese impak van die siekte in Suid Afrika is weergegee. Die impak wat MIV/VIGS op die pasient en op die geaffekteerde betekenisvolle ander persone het, is bespreek.

‘n Literatuurondersoek is tweedens oor die middelkinderjare gedoen. Die kind in die middelkinderjare asook

**die gesin met kinders in die
middelkinderjare is bespreek. Klem
is gelê op die ontwikkelingstake, -
eienskappe en die kind se begrip van
dood gedurende die
middelkinderjare. Klem is ook gelê
op die ontwikkelingstake en
behoefte van die gesin asook die
ontwikkelingstake van die sibbe.**

Die doelstelling van die navorsing was om die emosionele behoeftes van MIV/VIGS geaffekteerde weeskinders te assesser. Die verkennende navorsingsontwerp is aan die hand van die kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering gebruik. Vyf respondente is doelbewus geselekteer wat aan die voorgeskrewe kriteria voldoen het. Hulle is geassesseer deur die gebruik van ses verskillende Gestaltherapie tegnieke oor 'n periode van een week. Temas is vanuit die empiriese studie geïdentifiseer.

Die navorsingsvraag, “*Wat is die emosionele behoeftes van HIV/AIDS weeskinders?*”, is beantwoord en die volgende emosionele behoeftes is by die respondente geïdentifiseer:

- ‘n Verlange na die oorlede moeder.
- Eensaamheid.
- Stigmatisering.

- Gepreokkupeerd met die fisiese voorkoms van die oorledene.
- Aggressie.
- Onsekerheid.
- Preokkupasie met dood.
- Vrees om dood te gaan.

Die volgende aspekte kan vir verdere navorsing oorweeg word:

- Die ontwikkeling van 'n terapeutiese program vir geaffekteerde kinders.
- 'n Vergelykende studie ten opsigte van die emosionele behoeftes van geaffekteerde kinders wat bewus is van hulle ouers se MIV/VIGS status en diegene wat onbewus is daarvan.

SLEUTELTERME

Assessering

Geaffekteerde betekenisvolle ander

Ontwikkelingstake

Emosionele behoeftes

Gestalt speltherapie tegnieke

Gestalt speltherapie

MIV/VIGS

MIV/VIGS weeskinders

Speltherapie

Middelkinderjare

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