

**Explaining the ways in which parents of children
with hearing impairments access
counseling services in Zimbabwe**

by

John Charema

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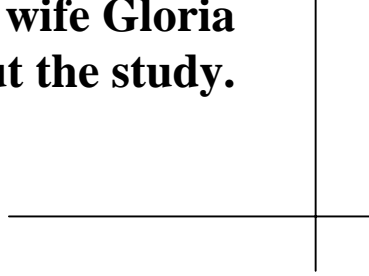
PROMOTER:
Prof. Dr. Irma Eloff

2004



THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO:

**my children Louis, Linette and Larry
and my wife Gloria
for the support they gave me throughout the study.**





I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Irma Eloff who directed and supervised this study. The success of this study lies in her dedication, unfailing support and encouragement. Lecturers in the department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria must be acknowledged for their useful contributions towards this study during the proposal stage. My sincere thanks go to Mr. Lance Cocker who worked tirelessly on the language editing. Mrs. Adrie van Dyk is greatly thanked for doing all the technical editing and for her support throughout the study. I thank Dr. Forcheh who helped with the statistics of this study.

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---oOo---




I, JOHN CHAREMA (Student number 2321809) declare that

**“Explaining the ways in which parents of children with hearing impairments access
counseling services in Zimbabwe”**

Is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and
acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature: _____

Date: _____



The purpose of this study was to explain the ways in which parents of children with hearing impairments access counseling services. In order to focus attention on these issues, a research question and objectives were formulated: In what ways did parents of children with hearing impairments in Zimbabwe access counseling services during the period 1999 to 2000? Five distinct but related major issues, in relation to parents of children with hearing impairments accessing counseling services in Zimbabwe during the period 1999 to 2000 emerged. This came from observation of practice, personal experiences, and discussions with parents. The objectives of the study were thus formulated as follows:

- to find out who counseled parents of children with hearing impairments.
- to investigate whether parents who received or did not receive counseling were aware of organizations that offered guidance and counseling.
- to find out parents' perceptions on whether or not counseling helped them to accept and cope with their children.
- to establish the qualifications of the counselors who counseled parents of children with hearing impairments.
- to explore recommendations by parents on ways in which counseling can be made more accessible in Zimbabwe.

A pilot study was conducted in which two questionnaires that covered the research question and the five objectives were constructed and refined. Subsequently a survey was carried out on a sample of 300 parents of children with hearing impairments and 28 counseling service organizations. The questionnaires sought to find out: who counseled parents of children with hearing impairments, their views about the counseling they received, whether they were able to accept and cope with their children after counseling and their views on how counseling could be made more accessible. The questionnaire to service organizations sought to establish the qualifications of their counselors, the needs of parents of children with hearing impairments and their views on what they thought could be done to help parents access counseling services. Female and male parents were compared in terms of

their sources of counseling, acceptance and coping with children of different genders and different age groups. Quantitative data on organizations and parents' responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative analysis was used to analyze data from open-ended questions collected from parents of children with hearing impairments.

Results from the study indicate that the majority of the parents received counseling from special schools, followed by individuals, then hospitals, churches, registered counseling organizations and friends. Slightly more than half of the parents were aware of registered organizations that offer counseling services. Most parents believed that counseling helped them and were able to cope with their children after counseling. The majority of the counselors who counseled parents of children with hearing impairments were not qualified. Most parents indicated that they faced difficulties in communication, financial constraints, societal attitude, lack of transport and lack of skills to teach children basic living skills. Parents suggested the use of parent support groups, workshops and advertisements as means of making counseling services more accessible.

Key words

Access to counseling

Children with hearing impairments

Counseling in Zimbabwe

Counseling organizations

Hearing impairments

Parents of children with hearing impairments

Support for parents

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