

**An interpretative phenomenological study of policewomen's experiences of policing
child abuse**

Armand Luijk

submitted in accordance with the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts in Research Psychology

at the

University of Pretoria

Supervisor: Mr Sulaiyman Philander

31 August 2023

Declaration

Student number: 14008841

I declare that

AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF POLICEWOMEN'S
EXPERIENCES OF POLICING CHILD ABUSE

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

Mr Armand Luijk



.....

DATE..... 30/08/20

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to:

My supervisor: Your guidance, expertise, and continuous support have been invaluable throughout this journey. Your mentorship has not only shaped the direction of my work but has also enriched my understanding of the subject and methodology. I am truly fortunate to have had you as my supervisor.

My parents and siblings: Your unwavering belief in me and your unconditional love have been my foundation. To my parents, your sacrifices, both emotional and financial, have enabled me to pursue my dreams. I am grateful for your constant encouragement and for instilling in me the values that have brought me to this point.

My girlfriend: Your presence in my life has brought me immense joy and strength. Your love, understanding, and support have been a source of comfort, especially in the last phases of this journey. Your belief in me has given me the confidence to overcome obstacles and to strive for excellence. Thank you for standing by my side.

My friends: Your company has brought joy, laughter, and a sense of belonging to my journey. Your encouragement and camaraderie have also been a source of strength during challenging times. I cherish the memories we have created together and look forward to the adventures that lie ahead.

Participants of the study, as well as the police station commanders: I extend my sincere appreciation to each participant who dedicated their time and energy to contribute to this study. Your willingness to share your insights and experiences has been invaluable in shaping the outcomes of this research. Your participation has not gone unnoticed, and I am thankful for your contribution. To the station commanders, your assistance and willingness to help have been instrumental in the success of this endeavour.

This achievement is not just mine; it is a testament to the power of collaboration and encouragement. I am excited to continue striving for excellence, knowing that I have a network of incredible individuals standing by my side. Thank you for being an integral part of my journey and for being the wind beneath my wings.

Abstract

This research investigates the roles and challenges faced by policewomen in child abuse investigations, focusing on their experiences. This research delves into the global and local context of child protection work. It examines the demand for child protection efforts, police responses in child abuse cases, and the specific functions and roles of policewomen in these cases. Findings were drawn from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with three policewomen, between the ages of 32 and 54, who engage in child abuse investigations after they were purposively selected. The participants' narratives were explored individually, highlighting their experiences, perspectives, and challenges in this demanding field. Interpretative phenomenological analysis, as utilised in the data analysis phase, revealed the superordinate themes that emerged from the participants' accounts: The emotional labour associated with policing child abuse, the long-term impact on policewomen, and the sources of strength that sustain the policewomen.

Some of the key findings revealed the emotional challenges and toll of policing child abuse cases for policewomen, along with the potential for long-term impact. It also highlighted sources of strength, including collaboration, family support, and faith, which played essential roles in helping these policewomen cope with the demands of their emotionally challenging work. The study recommends prioritising policewomen's mental and emotional well-being by providing access to counselling, mental health resources, and peer support programmes. This research deepens understanding of challenges and coping mechanisms of policewomen working in this challenging environment and also sheds light on the broader societal implications of their work on personal lives and relationships.

Keywords: Child abuse, women police officers, trauma, child protection, interpretative phenomenological analysis, IPA, phenomenology, qualitative research.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract.....	iii
List of Figures.....	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Overview of the Study	1
1.2 Research Problem	2
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	2
1.4 Research Question	3
1.5 Scope of the Study	3
1.6 Justification or Significance of the Study	3
1.7 Research Setting.....	4
1.8 Definition of Key Terms.....	5
1.9 Chapter Outline.....	6
Chapter 2: Literature Review	8
2.1 Overview of Literature Review	8
2.2 The Context.....	8
2.3 The Extent and Demand of Child Protection Work.....	9
2.3.1 Globally	9
2.3.2 Locally.....	10
2.4 Police Responses in Child Abuse Investigations	10
2.5 Specific Role of Policewomen in Child Abuse Cases	11
2.5.1 Promotion of Advocacy and Prevention	11
2.5.2 Support to Child Protective Services and Immediate Response	12
2.5.3 Investigative Role and Victim Support	13
2.6 Policewomen’s Special Function.....	13
2.7 Policing As a Stressful Occupation.....	15
2.8 Specific Challenges Associated With Policing Child Abuse.....	17
2.9 Policing Child Abuse Cases: Implications for Policewomen	18
2.10 Summary	20

Chapter 3: Research Methodology	21
3.1 Overview.....	21
3.2 Paradigmatic Assumptions.....	21
3.3 Research Approach: Qualitative Research Approach.....	23
3.4 Research Design: Phenomenological Approach.....	23
3.4.1 Sampling and Recruitment.....	24
3.4.2 Quality Criteria.....	26
3.4.3 Reflexivity.....	27
3.4.4 Data Collection Procedure.....	27
3.4.5 Data Analysis.....	29
3.5 Ethical Considerations.....	30
3.6 Summary.....	32
Chapter 4: Biographical Information of the Participants	33
4.1 Overview.....	33
4.2 The Research Participants.....	33
4.2.1 Anya.....	33
4.2.2 Bea.....	41
4.2.3 Colleen.....	49
4.3 Summary.....	53
Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion	55
5.1 Overview.....	55
5.2 Themes and Discussion.....	55
5.2.1 Emotional Labour.....	56
5.2.1.1 A Challenging Environment.....	57
5.2.1.2 Empathy and Compassion.....	58
5.2.1.3 Catching and Caring.....	60
5.2.2 The long-term impact of policing child abuse.....	61
5.2.2.1 The Conflict of Professionalism and Emotional Reactions.....	62
5.2.2.2 Raising Their Own Children.....	64
5.2.2.3 Vicarious Trauma.....	66
5.2.3 Sources of Strength.....	68
5.2.3.1 Collaboration with Other Units.....	68

5.2.3.2 Policewomen’s Families as Sources of Strength.	70
5.2.3.3 Faith as a Source of Strength.	72
5.3. Summary	74
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	75
6.1 Introduction.....	75
6.2 Summary of Key Findings	75
6.3 Recommendations.....	76
6.4 Strengths of the Study.....	77
6.5 Limitations	78
6.6 Conclusions.....	79
References.....	81
Appendices.....	93
Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet	93
Appendix B: Participant Consent Form	97
Appendix C: Permission From the Faculty Ethics Committee.....	99
Appendix D: Permission From SAPS.....	100
Appendix E: Permission to Conduct Research in SAPS	101
Appendix F: SAPS Undertaking.....	103
Appendix G: Interview Guide.....	104
Appendix H: Raw Data Example.....	106
Appendix I: All Codes	107
Appendix J: Editor’s Certificate	138
Appendix K: Declaration of Originality	139
Appendix L: Turnitin Digital Receipt.....	140
Appendix M: Plagiarism Report	141

List of Figures

- Figure 1:** A summary of the superordinate themes and associated subordinate themes identified within this research study. 54
- Figure 2:** A visual summary of the three superordinate themes and the related subordinate themes drawn from the analysis. 55

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview of the Study

One of the most common kinds of violence to which police officers must respond is child abuse. Typically, this abuse occurs in the home, which is meant to be a safe haven for children physically and emotionally. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2022), one billion youngsters worldwide are exposed to domestic abuse. Often hidden from public view, child abuse places children in much higher danger in their homes, where they should feel safe. This abuse remains concealed from those who could assist the children, such as the police. This is problematic because police officers strive to protect children and combat abuse, but these cases often remain concealed and difficult to address. In general, the police play a vital role in assisting child abuse victims whose cases end up in the justice system where the child has become a victim of abuse, maltreatment or neglect. Child abuse and the investigation thereof are reported to be associated with high levels of trauma for both the victims and the investigators (Hovey et al., 2023). Thus, police officers who are in charge of investigating a child abuse case are at high risk of developing stress and trauma due to their involvement in the investigation and the sensitive nature of these types of cases.

Police personnel frequently encounter situations involving child abuse because of their visibility in the community (Schut et al., 2020). For instance, they might be summoned to incidences of major physical harm to children, domestic violence, or child mortality. This means that officers may uncover instances of abuse while investigating other crimes, as child abuse is so often concealed from the eye of the public. During drug or other arrests, police officers may also see evidence of harm to a child. In child abuse cases, law enforcement's duties include determining if a crime was committed, finding and detaining the suspected criminal, filing the appropriate charges, and taking the children away from their homes when their immediate safety is at risk (Weber, 2018). The initial law enforcement response is typically provided by the patrol officer and occasionally by a detective or investigator with expertise in investigating child abuse and neglect (Police Chiefs' Association of Santa Clara County, 2023).

In the past ten years, the field of child protection has grown, which has increased the amount of police personnel employed in divisions that specialise in conducting child abuse investigations (Ettinger, 2022). It has long been accepted that police officers must deal with a range of situations that may be frightening, unpleasant, or disturbing to some people (Redmond et al., 2023). Investigating child abuse often involves listening to distressing

accounts of abuse and viewing evidence of harm inflicted on young victims (Martin et al., 2017). This exposure to trauma can have a significant emotional toll on police officers. Thus, investigating child abuse cases is a field of policing increasingly characterised as traumatic for police officers. This likely affects the investigating officers and exposes staff to adverse stress. Although this area of policing has seen a considerable rise in the number of child abuse cases, the effects of such work on the officers conducting the investigations remains an area rarely the focus of research. In a study of police officers in the USA, Violanti et al. (2016) found several areas of policing that may be highly traumatising to investigating officers. The study found that the most commonly occurring traumatic events for police personnel were cases in which family members and minors were involved, followed by events in which officers or citizens were at risk of serious injury or killed in primarily nonfamilial-related circumstances (Violanti et al., 2016).

1.2 Research Problem

Child abuse and neglect is a major issue not only on a global scale but also in South Africa (Badoe, 2017). South African police officers are often on the frontline in dealing with child abuse cases and protecting the victim. Retief (2013) asserts that one of the most widespread types of violence that police officers have to respond to is violence against children. Research on the experiences of police officers' personal experiences regarding the policing of child abuse is largely unexplored. Foley and Massey (2021) pleaded with other researchers to start investigating the experiences of police officers in addressing child abuse because of the limited empirical studies undertaken. Even less research focuses on the experiences of women police officers and their reaction to cases of child abuse, even though policewomen are more adept at handling these cases (Retief & Green, 2015). This research aimed to gain an understanding of the experiences of women police officers concerning the policing of child abuse or maltreatment cases.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In order to achieve the research aim, the following objectives were devised:

- To gain a better understanding of how policewomen respond to child abuse cases;
- To explore ways in which policewomen cope with conducting child abuse investigations;

- To broaden understanding of the meaning policewomen attach to the policing of child abuse.
- To understand how these child abuse cases affect the policewomen's lives and interpersonal relationships.

1.4 Research Question

The research question in this study was formulated as follows: How do women police officers experience the policing of child abuse?

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study will, therefore, focus solely on the experiences of women police officers and their involvement in policing child abuse. This research study will have a narrow and specific focus, centering exclusively on the experiences of women police officers and their roles in the context of policing child abuse cases. The study will delve deeply into the unique experiences, challenges, and perspectives of women within the police service who are tasked with responding to and investigating child abuse incidents. It will encompass a qualitative exploration of their narratives, emotions, and perceptions related to their involvement in child abuse policing. The study will exclude any investigation of the experiences of male police officers, as it seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the distinct experiences of women in this particular context. Furthermore, the geographical and organisational context of the research will be clearly defined to ensure that the findings are contextually relevant and applicable. The study will not extend its scope to address other aspects of policing outside the domain of child abuse cases involving women police officers.

1.6 Justification or Significance of the Study

Learning about policewomen's perspectives and experiences of child abuse is essential to understanding their experiences of responding to child abuse incidents (Wright et al., 2006). Therefore, the emphasis of the research study was on the detailed investigation of policewomen's experiences of policing child abuse. Findings from this study may assist in helping policewomen raise awareness of child abuse and its effects on South African children. In addition, it may provide the opportunity for women to voice their experiences in policing. In turn, the study may perhaps contribute to the existing knowledge of policing

child abuse cases and could also offer information for police personnel involved in these cases (Retief & Green, 2015).

Child abuse can have detrimental effects that can significantly exhaust the healthcare system, law enforcement and the economy (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). Apart from these effects, children who experience many forms of assault, whether physical, sexual or emotional assault, are at risk of developing various negative health, behavioural, and social problems (Hsiao et al., 2018). One of the most important responsibilities the police perform is keeping children safe. Thus, every police officer and staff member must be aware of their duty to protect children in their daily work. Therefore, police officers are responsible for safeguarding children and stopping abuse. In their function as officers, they can try to end child abuse by safeguarding the child, maintaining the peace, and upholding the law (Edwards, 2019).

According to Millar et al. (2021), police officers' past experiences and responses toward child abuse cases are essential in future responses to child abuse cases. However, only a few research studies attempt to describe and understand police experiences of policing child abuse. What remains unexplored is how policewomen experience responding to a child abuse case, and there is a need for first-hand accounts from women officers and how they experience the task of policing child abuse. The study will, therefore, focus solely on the experiences of women police officers and their involvement in policing child abuse. This will allow the researcher to understand better how policewomen experience and make sense of the complex phenomenon of policing child abuse. Studying policewomen's experiences policing child abuse cases is essential for fostering a more inclusive, compassionate, and effective response to these critical incidents. Their unique perspectives can help shape better policies, training, and practices, ultimately leading to better outcomes for child victims and the communities they serve.

1.7 Research Setting

The research setting for this study is specific and confined to the environment in which women police officers engage in policing child abuse cases. The study will be conducted within the operational framework of the SAPS where these officers are actively involved in responding to and investigating child abuse incidents. The primary research setting comprises the police department who operates within a designated jurisdiction. The SAPS is responsible for maintaining law and order, including the investigation of child abuse

cases. The study's geographical context will be defined according to the location(s) where women police officers are actively engaged in policing child abuse. This may include specific cities, regions, or areas where child abuse incidents are reported and investigated.

The research will be conducted within the day-to-day operational environment of the SAPS. It includes police stations, special units or divisions dedicated to handling child abuse cases, and any other relevant facilities where policewomen work. In addition, the specific research setting will focus on the handling of child abuse cases. This may encompass a range of child abuse types, such as physical, sexual, emotional, or neglect, and the processes involved in addressing them. Within this research setting, the study will specifically involve women police officers who are actively engaged in the investigation and response to child abuse incidents. These officers play a pivotal role in ensuring the safety and well-being of child abuse victims. The research setting will encompass the interactions between women police officers and child abuse victims, as well as potential perpetrators. It involves the various stages of the investigative process, including initial response, evidence collection, victim support, and legal proceedings. The study will also consider the internal policies, procedures, and practices within the law enforcement agencies that guide and govern the handling of child abuse cases, with a specific focus on how these impact women police officers' experiences.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

Numerous terms frequently referred to throughout this study are defined below for transparency, dependability and clarity.

Child abuse: “Any form of harm or ill-treatment deliberately inflicted on a child and included assaulting a child or inflicting any other form of deliberate injury to a child; sexually abusing a child or allowing a child to be sexually abused; bullying by another child; a labour practice that exploits a child; or exposing or subjecting a child to behaviour that may harm the child psychologically or emotionally” (WHO, 2022, p. 1).

IPA: “The aim of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world, and the main currency for an IPA study is the meanings particular experiences, events, and states hold for participants” (Smith & Osborn, 2015, p. 53).

Neglect: “The absence of sufficient attention, responsiveness, and protection appropriate to the age and needs of a child” (Parkinson et al., 2017, p. 4).

Trauma: “Trauma is the lasting emotional response that often results from living through a distressing event. Experiencing a traumatic event can harm a person’s sense of safety, sense of self, and ability to regulate emotions and navigate relationships” (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2023, p. 1).

Policewoman: “A female member of a police force” (Merriam Webster, 2023, p. 1).

Secondary trauma: “Secondary trauma is a stress response in reaction to hearing about or [witnessing] the firsthand traumatic experience of another. Firsthand trauma can be in the form of emotional distress or physical pain” (Kubala, 2022, p. 1).

1.9 Chapter Outline

This research report is divided into six (6) chapters.

Chapter 1 contains an introduction which offers the background to the study. This includes the aim of the investigation and research question, as well as the study’s justification and background. This chapter also includes an overview of the limits and delineations inherent in the study.

Chapter 2 includes a contextualised review of the nature and extent of child abuse within an international and local context. This chapter discusses how South Africa’s police handle child abuse cases and why police members may be susceptible to negative stress. The chapter further highlights the importance of policewomen in child abuse investigations and why policewomen may be at risk of developing stress symptoms.

Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology employed in this research and the paradigmatic point of departure. The research approach will be elaborated upon concerning the utilised theory of phenomenology. The methodology chapter also summarises the sampling procedure, data collection and analysis as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 includes the study’s findings via an idiographic introduction to each of the participants involved in the study.

Chapter 5 discusses the empirical data regarding the identified superordinate themes and the subordinate themes. The chapter will discuss the research findings and the identified literature. The discussion explores how the research findings contribute to, affirm and contrast with the literature reviewed in the second chapter.

The conclusions and recommendations are presented in *Chapter 6* and are based on the literature review and the empirical study findings. This chapter finally reflects the

limitations and potential contributions the research study has sought to make. Lastly, recommendations for future studies are provided, and the chapter concludes with a summary of the research study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Literature Review

In order to gain a better comprehension of how policewomen experience the policing of child abuse, I reviewed the literature on specific challenges for policewomen in South Africa. Reviewing existing literature, I incorporated descriptions of what constitutes child abuse, including the various types and short- and long-term consequences of this offence. The definition of child abuse is important, as policewomen deal with various legislations, and these women have to respond to various forms of abuse. The chapter will follow a structure in which the background information on the issue of child abuse is provided, as well as policewomen's function in child abuse cases and investigations. Following this, the chapter contextualises the stressful nature of policing these types of cases and the implications for policewomen involved in the investigation. This chapter, therefore, highlights the importance of understanding policewomen's unique challenges, investigative practices, support systems, and what it takes to respond to child abuse cases effectively and compassionately.

2.2 The Context

As defined above, child abuse may be understood as any act of commission that causes some kind of harm to the child (Gonzales et al., 2023). South African children may face a distinct combination of distinct types of child maltreatment, including physical -, emotional -, and sexual abuse, as well as child labour and exploitation, neglect and abandonment (Who, 2020). Child abuse's long-term effects include physical, psychological, behavioural and social consequences. Children facing this abuse may be at risk for leading a destructive life path characterised by continuous violence, criminality and alcohol or drug abuse (Weber, 2018). Child abuse not only has a serious lifelong effect but is a widespread, global problem (Levey et al., 2017). In addition, child abuse may have serious consequences not only for the victim but also for those who are responsible for investigating allegations of child abuse, such as the police (Brady, 2017).

It is estimated that one in seven children between the ages of two and seventeen have experienced some form of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect in the 2022/2023 year alone (Substance Abuse And Mental Health Service Administration, 2023). In South Africa, one in three children are victims of physical abuse and/or sexual abuse before they reach the age of eighteen (Strydom et al., 2020). This means that police must react to child abuse in a hostile and dangerous environment with many children at risk of exploitation.

Police officials have a unique task to protect children and take action against abuse. They can attempt to resolve cases of child abuse in their capacity as officers by protecting the child, keeping the peace, and enforcing the law (Hovey et al., 2023). However, child abuse and neglect crimes present unique issues and challenges to investigate because it is a major source of secondary stress and trauma among police officials (Brady, 2017).

Policewomen have, throughout history, mainly been in charge of policing social crimes such as violence against women and children (Retief & Green, 2015). This means policewomen are becoming more experienced at attending to domestic violence victims in South Africa. Despite women officers' particular skills in dealing with child abuse, there is a lack of studies on policewomen's experiences in policing child abuse. The perceptions and views of policewomen about their experiences are important because they can facilitate a better appreciation of the lived experiences of women officers as well as how their experiences impact their relationships with others, their sense of self, and their careers (Wilson, 2016).

2.3 The Extent and Demand of Child Protection Work

2.3.1 Globally

The number of children at risk of abuse and neglect is very high; for example, international studies demonstrate that nearly three-quarters of children (or 300 million children worldwide) between the ages of two and four regularly suffer emotional abuse or physical punishment by their parents or caregivers (WHO, 2022). It was also estimated that up to one billion children around the ages of two and seventeen years of age have experienced some form of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect in the year 2022 alone, according to the WHO (2022). In addition, the WHO (2020) also reported that international data show that, on average, one in five women and one in thirteen men report experiencing sexual abuse as children. Furthermore, around 120 million young women and girls have suffered a certain form of coerced sexual contact (WHO, 2022). It is also estimated that around 40 150 homicide-related mortalities in children under the age of 18 years, of which some are most likely due to the physical consequences of child abuse (WHO, 2020). Even more concerning is that only a small number of these abused children will be referred to the police (Weber, 2018).

In the same way, Bezuidenhout (2020) stated that these numbers might not provide a true reflection of the actual extent of child abuse and maltreatment as many child abuse

incidents go by unreported for several reasons such as fear of retaliation from caregivers, inadequate access to social services or distrust in the police. There is, however, an ongoing rise in referrals to the police for child protection cases (Moore et al., 2021). It is, therefore, vital that the police provide confirmation that they are constantly providing high-quality protection and safeguarding to all those who need their help.

2.3.2 Locally

On a local level, the police service has an enormous task of protecting children. The Optimus Study South Africa provided nationally representative data on the extent and impact of child sexual abuse in South Africa (2018). In the research mentioned above, 9,717 adolescents (ages 15 - 17 years) were recruited locally from schools (n=4 086) and households (n=5 631). The Optimus Study SA shows that sexual abuse of youngsters and adolescents is prevalent: 36.8% of boys and 33.9% of girls reported some form of sexual abuse. Overall, 35.4% – one in every three teenagers – stated having experienced some form of sexual abuse at some point in their lives. All the children were interviewed and allowed to complete a confidential questionnaire independently (Artz et al., 2016). Of the 4 086 children interviewed in schools, 16.8% reported experiencing some sort of sexual abuse. However, of those same children who filled out a questionnaire themselves, 35.4% (or 1 399 children and adolescents) reported some sort of sexual abuse. Furthermore, according to Strydom et al. (2020), one in three children are victims of physical abuse and/or sexual abuse before they reach the age of eighteen. Those involved with child abuse cases must fulfil their duty in an extremely challenging environment where many children are at risk (Weber, 2018).

2.4 Police Responses in Child Abuse Investigations

The police have been involved in managing child abuse for a considerable amount of time, more than any other professional group (Martin et al., 2017). However, because they have two roles that can occasionally conflict—apprehending criminals and protecting children—controversy has frequently surrounded their work (Brady, 2017). The major responsibility for managing child abuse cases transferred from the police to child protective service units during the 1960s due to the quick implementation of reporting laws (Office of Children and Adult Services, 2019). However, the police can play a central role in protecting abused and neglected children. Police officers' duties in situations of child abuse include investigating to determine whether a crime was committed, finding and capturing the

offender, and filing the appropriate charges. According to Retief and Green (2015), the police are on the frontline dealing with domestic violence and child abuse. They embody the state and act as a vital connection between the prosecution procedure and providing services to child abuse victims and their families.

Since 1998, police officers in the SAPS have been held accountable for promoting reparations and preventing crimes against women and children using various strategies, including fostering trust among the public and police (Retief, 2013). Police officers' personal experiences, especially those of policewomen, of policing child abuse cases are, however, largely unexplored. South African academics have been studying violence against women and children more frequently since the 1980s, and much has been published recently regarding the involvement and reactions of the police in these cases (Retief & Green, 2015; Hsiao et al., 2018). These researchers discovered that the entire topic is virtually unexplored in empirical studies, particularly concerning police officers' personal experiences of policing child abuse cases. For instance, Retief and Green (2015), as well as Hsiao et al. (2018), urged researchers to conduct complete and in-depth examinations of police officers' opinions and experiences in dealing with child abuse because there have not been many comprehensive empirical studies done to date.

2.5 Specific Role of Policewomen in Child Abuse Cases

The policewoman taking charge of the child abuse case may fulfil various roles. The following list includes some of the numerous roles that policewomen may fulfill in the reaction to child abuse and neglect, as discussed by Herbert and Bromfield (2017):

2.5.1 Promotion of Advocacy and Prevention

Police officers are in a great position to increase community awareness regarding child abuse and neglect since they are recognised as a symbol of public safety. The media and the general public will give much credence to their point of view on the matter. As a result, a large number of police officers actively participate in community education initiatives that aim to lower the probability of child abuse and neglect and promote reporting. Most preventative initiatives center on sexual abuse and are completed in educational settings. To be effective for most prospective victims, officers running such programmes must balance their presentations with information regarding abuse by family members and caregivers in a sensitised manner. Police personnel frequently encounter circumstances that seem to include

child abuse due to their visibility in the community or schools. For instance, the officer may observe signs of child abuse during drug arrests, domestic call-outs, or when the school asks the officer for assistance. In South Africa, police are required by law to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect (Herbert & Bromfield, 2017).

2.5.2 Support to Child Protective Services and Immediate Response

Support from law enforcement to child protection services is one area of cooperation. Caseworkers for child protection agencies occasionally have to travel to remote, hazardous areas and deal with people who are mentally ill, violent, or under the influence of drugs. Caseworkers typically lack special self-defence training, weapons, or on-site communication equipment like radios and cell phones. It is frequently required for police personnel to accompany child protection services (CPS) caseworkers when they conduct their investigations because of this and the stabilising influence that police members have on many persons. Depending on the site of the investigation, the time of day, or the history of the persons involved, law enforcement personnel may accompany CPS caseworkers. Sadly, inadequate support has led to several CPS caseworkers' deaths and numerous others' injuries (Herbert & Bromfield, 2017).

The legitimacy of the police is likewise far more universally recognised than the legitimacy of the child protection services. When police ask to visit a young person who is allegedly the victim of maltreatment, child protection services caseworkers are frequently refused admission. The arresting officer is also well-positioned to carry out any court-issued standing orders. For instance, an offender who has previously been subject to restrictions by the court may be removed from the residence by the officer where permitted. In some cases, this could prevent the need to take a child away from his or her household. At times, the police can respond to emergencies more quickly than child protection services. A patrol unit can typically reach the location much more quickly than the child protection service or social workers, stabilising the situation. Caseworkers or police detectives can arrive if officials become aware of significant child abuse or if the perpetrator is attempting to escape with a child. While child protection services and social workers' after-hours response is often limited, police are on duty around-the-clock (Herbert & Bromfield, 2017).

2.5.3 Investigative Role and Victim Support

The police, the community's criminal investigative agency, frequently have to look into the same occurrence involving the same individuals. This calls for a dual investigation in many places where child protection services and the police must try to avoid working in opposition to one another. A team approach with child protection services and police cooperating is preferable to prevent potential conflict and improve investigative results. However, there are instances of abuse where police professionals typically work alone or assume the primary responsibility, such as in child killings. Furthermore, the police officer may be needed to assist in preparing and supporting the young victim during the legal process in areas without victim witness services. This could mean just being accessible to a youngster who needs to talk about what is occurring during the trial, or it could entail taking the youth to the courtroom beforehand to show them around and to describe their roles (Herbert & Bromfield, 2017).

2.6 Policewomen's Special Function

In the police service, women may play a noteworthy role. People frequently have faith in women police officers, particularly in cases of sexual and gender-based violence, i.e., "women trust policewomen when it comes to investigating gender-based violence cases," which "eases and speeds the process of delivering justice" (Amora, 2019, p. 4). Evidence suggests that policewomen use a different policing approach, depend more on communication skills than physical force, and are less likely to engage in or intensify into situations involving excessive force (Miller & Segal, 2019). As a result, civil lawsuits or citizen complaints are much less likely to happen. Experiences from all over the world, including the South Africa, Rwanda, Kenya, Albania, Dubai, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia as well as the United States, have demonstrated the success of policewomen in this respect (Oruta et al., 2016).

However, the implications of insufficient female officers are evident in most of the world's nations (Brodeur, 2018). The underrepresentation of women significantly impacts the culture and operational effectiveness of the police in South Africa at all levels of the modern police agencies (Mushwana et al., 2019). Additionally, the few women police officers who are currently employed in the system may face a variety of difficulties, including organisational difficulties like transfers, housing, and low pay; personal difficulties like juggling work and family obligations; intense scrutiny; and professional difficulties like

bullying, sexual harassment, and discrimination (Violanti et al., 2016). Against this backdrop, this study aimed to learn about women's experiences in the police and then describe those experiences concerning policing child abuse cases.

Policewomen appeared to be far more open to talk about their opinions and experiences about the policing of family violence in a study by Retief and Green (2015) that examined the difficulties in doing so. According to data gathered through interviews, women participants found it easier to respond to reports of family violence than their male counterparts (Retief & Green, 2015). This means that, whereas policemen do not develop the essential abilities and tend to have less practical experience dealing with domestic violence, policewomen are becoming increasingly adept at treating victims of domestic violence with the requisite decency and respect (Shen & Schulz, 2022). In general, policemen deal with “hard-core crimes” like murder, while policewomen handle “social crimes,” which mostly include vulnerable victims who are seen as being more “emotional” and “softer” in character (Retief & Green, 2015).

There is a dearth of research on policewomen’s experiences in policing child abuse despite policewomen having unique skills in dealing with the issue. Policewomen’s opinions and viewpoints are crucial because they help us understand how women officers’ lived experiences affect their interpersonal connections, sense of self, and professional careers (Retief, 2013; Veldman et al., 2017; Shen & Schulz, 2022). These authors assert that policewomen have the most expertise in dealing with violence against women and children. According to Violanti et al. (2016), there is an implicit understanding among police officers that historically, policewomen have taken the initiative when responding to a report of child abuse. Male police officers frequently acknowledge that women are more adept at handling social work-related difficulties and that it is generally accepted that the policewoman handles sensitive cases, particularly those involving youngsters (Retief & Green, 2015). Because policewomen frequently respond to crimes against women and children, their chance of developing traumatic symptoms may be increased (Wright et al., 2006). In addition, being a police officer and a mother simultaneously can add significant stress and challenges to a person’s life. Balancing the responsibilities of being a police officer, which often involves dealing with high-pressure situations and unpredictable work hours, with the duties of being a mother, which demands constant care, attention, and emotional support for the children, can be emotionally and physically taxing (Agocs et al., 2015).

2.7 Policing As a Stressful Occupation

Due to the rigorous and dangerous nature of the police job, being a police officer is regarded as one of the world's most stressful careers (Wasserman et al., 2019). Officers are frequently exposed to upsetting events that significantly negatively influence their physical and mental health (Craddock & Telesco, 2022). Due to the distinct heritage of apartheid, the South African police situation is unique in many ways and places significant strain on police officers in particular (Retief & Green, 2015). The South African Police Service (SAPS) underwent a significant restructuring process after democratisation in 1994 (Bezuidenhout, 2020). Numerous unforeseen repercussions of the SAPS restructuring were experienced, including losing important skills (Retief & Green, 2015). Police officers experienced a great deal of uncertainty and fear due to the transition, which made them feel exposed, helpless, and vulnerable (Young et al., 2012). South Africa's crime rate increased during the turbulent socio-political climate of the 1990s, adding to the pressure and concern felt by the SAPS (Breetzke, 2010). Due to widespread urbanisation, inequality, high unemployment rates, and racial tension, there is a systemic and pervasive crime problem where children are frequently the victims (Bezuidenhout, 2020).

Police officers frequently deal with serious trauma during their everyday duties and serve as the initial point of contact for those in need (Young et al., 2012). The SAPS has established several units to help police officers cope with their work in an effort to safeguard and maintain the psychological welfare of police officers (Williams, 2016). For instance, the SAPS's assistance services are represented by psychological, chaplain, and social services. One of their programmes' key goals is to help police officers develop proactive coping skills rather than maladaptive and potentially harmful coping strategies like substance abuse, domestic abuse, and suicidal ideation (South African Police Service, 2021).

Police officers are subjected to daily pressures, regardless of whether it is argued that police work is more or less stressful than other professions (Violanti et al., 2016). Professionals' psychological health can be impacted by work stress both positively and adversely. For instance, certain kinds of stress can improve performance and increase a professional's motivation and sense of fulfilment at work. Stress aids in new skill acquisition, goal attainment, situational adaptation, and problem-solving (Chen & Wu, 2022). Other forms of stress, however, may negatively affect the employee's health and the organisation as a whole.

The effects of negative stress are especially noticeable in occupations like law enforcement, where employees' knowledge, expertise, and experience are crucial to the quality of the services provided (Wright et al., 2006). Over the past thirty years, there has been much research conducted on stress among police officers as a result of a growing understanding that the associated physical and/or psychological damage may affect one's own well-being and hinder one's ability to perform their job (Bozga et al., 2021). Three police cohorts that are particularly at risk were highlighted by Hesketh and Tehrani (2018): (a) first responders; (b) people who are involved in significant catastrophes; and (c) experts, such as police officers who deal with rape and sexual assault. However, exposure to distressing information is not the only form of adverse stress that child abuse investigators experience. By its very nature, the process of investigating and pursuing child abuse is difficult and complex (Violanti et al., 2016).

Of course, not every employee subject to these demands exhibits negative symptoms (Wright et al., 2006). However, organisations are under more and more pressure to make sure that the risk of psychological harm is kept to a minimum for all employees and that procedures are put in place to ensure early identification of traumatic symptoms and efficient response when they occur (Kulkarni et al., 2013). According to one study, police officers may be at greater risk of psychological harm than mental health experts from exposure to stressful case material (Violanti et al., 2016). According to the argument put forth by Wright et al. (2006), police officers are less likely to seek out therapy counselling to stop or reduce their stress reactions to case material. Police officers often need to react to child abuse cases, and their attitudes, previous experiences, and perceptions may determine the outcome of the situation (Retief & Green, 2015).

According to previous studies, police personnel are now in the uncomfortable and challenging position of having to control their emotions in difficult, psychologically demanding settings (Burns & Buchanan, 2020). Police officers may experience severe mental discomfort due to the pressures of keeping an indifferent response to human suffering and violent behaviour while still attempting to show empathy for the victims of child abuse (Bozga et al., 2021). This can be further compounded where this role conflicts with their organisation's wider goals and expectations, according to Oxburgh et al. (2014). These contradictory expectations may have an influence on the progress of prosecution as it has been established that, while there is no straight link between empathy and the amount of investigation-relevant information attained, there was an indication to suggest that more compassionate approaches to interviewing abuse victims may lead to the implementation of

more applicable questions, and consequently, elicit more items of relevant information (Oxburgh et al., 2014).

2.8 Specific Challenges Associated With Policing Child Abuse

Other particular problems are presented by the crimes of child abuse and neglect (Violanti et al., 2016). First, the victim is almost invariably a youngster, sometimes even a very young child, according to Violanti et al. (2016). The officer's capacity to interact with children depends on their comprehension of their verbal and cognitive growth (Paul & Adamo, 2014). Second, many abusive behaviours resemble non-abusive circumstances. The child's caregiver may explain the child's inflicted traumatic injuries as the result of accidents (Paul & Adamo, 2014). Accordingly, determining if a perpetrator was involved in a child crime is a challenging duty for police personnel and calls for a particular skill set and social support network to prevent traumatisation (Violanti et al., 2016). Police investigators of abuse-related crimes, including neglect, homicide, or sexual abuse, may be more susceptible to secondary traumatic stress, according to prior studies (Wright et al., 2006; Powell & Guadagno, 2013). In addition, Powell and Guadagno (2013) speculate that police personnel may be more susceptible to vicarious traumatisation, the cumulative impact of trauma on oneself. Heavy caseloads and a lack of established coping skills were shown to be the two main causes of negative work stress often linked to child abuse investigations by Wright et al. (2006). The top four of sixty stressful police job experiences, according to Wright et al. (2006), were seeing abused and battered children, being physically attacked, killing someone while on duty, and witnessing a fellow officer being killed.

Police investigators of child abuse are more likely than the general public to experience high levels of occupational stress, which increases their risk of psychological injury (MacEachern et al., 2011). Professional and public expectations for a police officer's level of performance are very high, and a wide variety of skills and expertise are required (Violanti et al., 2016). Therefore, it is not surprising that these extremely high expectations often have a negative effect on the police officer's sense of well-being and job satisfaction. The demands made of police personnel regarding talking to vulnerable children and adults who have committed crimes against children are particularly noteworthy. According to Wright et al. (2006), police officers do not believe that their mastery of forensic interviewing techniques is the problem; rather, the difficulty appears to be related to the high levels of anxiety and apprehension that such interviews with children who had experienced abuse

caused. Police officers also worry that their job in child protection would make them less sensitive or even desensitised to children's problems (Wright et al., 2006). Due to the subjective nature of police officers' experiences, it may be difficult to quantify the emotional toll that child protection work has on them (MacEachern et al., 2011).

Additionally, police personnel must maintain emotional distance in their work environment in order to adequately handle conflict and crime scenes (Violanti et al., 2016). This includes suppressing feelings of shock, fear, or sorrow. A police officer who shows emotion may be at risk of being alienated from their coworkers because they may be perceived as being too "soft" (Mushwana et al., 2019). Officers must continually alternate between being empathic, dispassionate, and, in some situations, unduly assertive, which could cause cognitive disorientation (MacEachern et al., 2011). In addition, they are also expected to exhibit sympathy and understanding for crime victims (Mushwana et al., 2019). Before posing questions about abuse, it is important to make a youngster feel comfortable and build rapport with them (Blasbalg et al., 2018). Ahern et al. (2017) discovered this was especially true for child abuse victims who were less willing to talk about their experiences, possibly because the original assault had been discovered through other channels (such as a witness complaint or police monitoring). They discovered from their interviews with practitioners that building rapport over time through consistent communication and discussing neutral subjects was more likely to result in trusting relationships that facilitated disclosure in the future.

Since children's positive interactions with police engagement are positively correlated with more in-depth and reliable accounts of abuse, police officers play a crucial role in facilitating the investigation process for underage victims (Redmond et al., 2023). This could be difficult owing to limited resources and the sensitive nature of the case material, and it also requires a certain skill set that police officers assigned to these cases would need to obtain (Blasbalg et al., 2018).

2.9 Policing Child Abuse Cases: Implications for Policewomen

Actual crime, prevention, and detection are frequently dealt with by policewomen, particularly if children are the offenders or the victims. However, their contact with the public is usually of a protective or helpful kind (Violanti et al., 2016). Tracing missing girls; constructive work in connection with young girls stranded in dangerous surroundings or children in need of care or protection; custody and escort of women prisoners; the protection

of children playing in streets and public parks; these are a few instances out of many (McCarthy, 2013). Although their areas of work expanded considerably, women police continue to be associated with ‘specialist’ work with women and children from their appointment in the early 20th century until their official integration on the same terms as officers just before the 21st century (Violanti et al., 2016).

Their involvement in policing was very gradually accepted during the first of the twentieth century precisely because of notions of gender difference: women, it was argued, had particular skills associated with distinct activities (McCarthy, 2013). For instance, The Metropolitan Police General instruction book, first produced in 1829, had to establish that ‘prevention of crime’ was the ‘principal object’ of policeman culture, emphasising catching the thief - the detection and arrest of criminals (Bindler & Hjalmarsson, 2021). Women’s role in policing became accepted because it could be positioned as ‘soft’ policing (hence lacking in status) through associations with ‘social’ and ‘welfare’ work (McCarthy, 2013).

Numerous prior research studies from the 1980s and 1990s point out some of the stressors women officers may face (Violanti et al., 2016). These include the mistreatment of women officers by policemen, the lack of acceptability by law enforcement organisations, the necessity to prove oneself, and sexual harassment (McCarthy, 2013). The number of policewomen in South African police organisations has increased, although many of the same pressures may still exist for policewomen (Nowich et al., 2018). According to research by McCarthy (2013), compared to policemen, policewomen experience much greater levels of harassment and experience a lack of influence. According to Brodeur (2018), interpersonal stresses and a lack of support considerably increase policewomen’s stress levels. This means policewomen often have to fulfil their duty, where they may face a variety of stressors. For instance, Shelley et al. (2011) assert that policewomen believed that policemen often questioned their suitability for the position. In addition, women officers frequently list sexual harassment and discrimination as stressors (Brodeur, 2018).

A study of policewomen who work in professions that support, treat, and investigate trauma survivors and crime victims found that these professionals have a higher chance of developing secondary stress (Violanti et al., 2016). This is in addition to the problems that women face in law enforcement. In a study by Queiros et al. (2020), police officers were asked about their job-related stress. According to their research, negative effects of stress include an increase in sickness and absence from work, poor work performance, job dissatisfaction, a decrease in motivation, a reduction in one’s ability to perform complex tasks, the use of unhealthy coping mechanisms like alcohol abuse, and an increase in

aggression and irritability. Additionally, poor work performance and job dissatisfaction brought on by secondary stress may result in lower motivation, a diminished ability to handle difficult tasks, and potentially worse standards of case submission, inquiry and investigation (Mushwana et al., 2019). The lack of research on police child protection units, particularly on the women who work in these units, emphasises the urgent need to study this profession within the SAPS.

2.10 Summary

Child abuse and neglect is a major issue in South Africa. These offences can have major consequences on the healthy development of children. Police officers are often on the frontline in dealing with child abuse cases and protecting the victim. Therefore, violence against children is one of the most widespread forms of violence that police officers have to deal with. However, child abuse investigations are reported to be associated with high levels of trauma for both the victims and the investigators. Research on the experiences of police officers' personal experiences regarding the policing of child abuse is largely unexplored. This is why Bendall (2010) pleaded with other researchers to start investigating the experiences of police officers in addressing child abuse because of the limited empirical studies undertaken. Even less research focuses on the experiences of women police officers and their cumulative stress reactions to cases of child abuse. In this chapter, I have discussed why the experiences of policewomen are important to explore. Therefore, this study positions itself amidst the identified scarcity of research regarding policewomen's experiences of policing child abuse by examining policewomen's subjective experiences, meanings and interpretations of policing child abuse. After situating this study amongst the identified bodies of literature, the following section highlights the methodology and guiding paradigmatic assumptions used to ground and guide this research study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Overview

This research study attempted to discover the experiences of policewomen concerning policing child abuse. Thus, the following chapter sets out to provide the research approach undertaken by the researcher. I will discuss the research approach followed and discuss why this approach was utilised. The methodology chapter comprises the paradigmatic assumptions, sample and strategy used, collection methods, and the methods utilised to analyse data, as well as an indication of the ethical issues considered during the study. The section on sampling includes the size, characteristics, and recruitment of the sample obtained. In addition, the appropriateness of the sampling method is discussed. The section on data collection includes a discussion of the semi-structured interview. In addition, the applicability of semi-structured interviews utilised for the present study is provided. Interpretative phenomenological analysis is described to demonstrate the method of data analysis used in the study. Finally, ethical considerations implemented throughout the study are discussed concerning the methodology utilised.

3.2 Paradigmatic Assumptions

The research was guided by the interpretivist paradigm, as the main enterprise of this paradigm is to understand and accept that we experience the world subjectively. Fundamentally, researchers guided by the interpretivist paradigm tend to gain a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon explored (Pham, 2018). Thus, the focus shifts to the complexity of a phenomenon within a unique context rather than focusing on a generalised understanding of a phenomenon applicable to the population concerned (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Similarly, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) emphasised that interpretivist researchers should attempt to comprehend the different ways people view and experience the world in various social circumstances. Therefore, interpretivists often assume a relativist ontology where a single phenomenon may have various interpretations as opposed to a distinct fact that can be found by a measuring process (Junjie & Yingxin, 2022). In addition, by adopting an interpretivist paradigm, one cannot merely describe experiences but must also attempt to understand experiences deeply within a specific context (Pham, 2018). Interpretivist researchers might have their own understanding, worldviews and interpretations of a certain phenomenon due to cultural and historical influences (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Thus, it was important that I, the researcher, interpreted and understood the world from the

participants' viewpoint. I also had to recognise that my own background might influence interpretations of the phenomenon. No explicit theoretical framework was employed beyond the assumptions inherent to phenomenology as a philosophical approach, which is discussed below. The reason for utilising phenomenology is because phenomenology offers a theoretical tool that allowed me to engage in, describe, and help to understand complex phenomena, such as various facets of social experience, and in this instance, the policing of child abuse as a policewoman (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

Interpretive researchers use meaning (as opposed to measurement) oriented methods, for example, by focusing on meaning-making and inter-subjectivity instead of finding objective truths (Nickerson, 2023). In light of this, interpretive research emphasises the full complexity of how people make meaning of a situation as it unfolds rather than predefining dependent and independent variables (Junjie & Yingxin, 2022). In addition, this type of research allowed me to conduct this research in a natural setting by utilising methods to obtain the insider's perceptions to provide trustworthy information about the research aim (Pham, 2018). For instance, the in-depth interview enabled me to explore and prompt things that one could not observe because the interviewee's thoughts, values, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives could be probed (Monday, 2019). Thus, the valuable data collected gave me improved insights for further action later. Regardless of the above key strengths, utilising this paradigm also had disadvantages (Pham, 2018). One of these limitations was the inability to generalise findings across populations (Carminati, 2018). The second criticism of interpretivism is that it tends to have a subjective rather than an objective ontological perspective (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). Therefore, research outcomes can be impacted by the researcher's interpretation, belief system, and ways of thinking or cultural background (Pham, 2018). Despite the above limitations, the goal was not to generalise across populations or to remain objective but to understand and interpret the complexities of the policewomen's experiences policing child abuse cases.

Interpretivist research revolves around the idea that human reality is created by interpretation and dialogical processes, as well as discursive practices, through which people who are embedded in and affected by their life contexts create, maintain and adjust meanings (Neubauer et al., 2019). Thus, the facts about human reality are not facts about a fixed reality but rather that they are shared meanings by ways in which people "agree" on how to comprehend and interpret their continuously changing realities (Capps, 2023). Therefore, there is something such as an area of consensus or intersubjective shared meanings on the nature of reality (Neubauer et al., 2019). Accordingly, from a qualitative stance, good science

always starts with the insight that scientists are subjectively involved in what they observe in participants or subjects (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Therefore, the research participants were co-constructors of meanings that shaped human experiences and behaviour concerning the policing of child abuse cases. With this in mind, the researcher did not have the only say in how the given phenomenon had to be explained or understood (Neubauer et al., 2019). Thus, the researcher is nothing more than an interpreter or co-interpreter in a community of meanings that relate to a given phenomenon in a certain context (Capps, 2023).

3.3 Research Approach: Qualitative Research Approach

A qualitative research approach was utilised to explore how policewomen experience the phenomenon of policing child abuse (Thanh & Le Thanh, 2015). The advantage of utilising a qualitative method was that it generated rich, detailed data that left the participants' perceptions intact (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative researchers attempt to comprehend the issue under study in context-specific situations and how different people make sense of the same phenomenon (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). Therefore, by using a qualitative approach, I developed an in-depth understanding of women police officers' experiences of policing child abuse as well as the meaning these policewomen attach to the experience.

3.4 Research Design: Phenomenological Approach

The research assumed a phenomenological design, and according to Creswell and Poth (2018), phenomenology guides the study of subjects' perspectives of their world while attempting to describe, in detail, the content and structure of the subjects' experience. In addition, phenomenology allowed for the potential to grasp the qualitative diversity of the subjects' experiences and to attempt to interpret their meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, I could explore the lived experiences of policewomen and their task in policing child abuse to some extent through several accounts provided by the research participants.

This phenomenological approach aimed to gain an insider perspective into how the participants experience the policing of child abuse as women officers in the police service and the meaning they attribute to these experiences (Willig, 2013). This implied that the phenomenon of policing child abuse as a policewoman would be best described by understanding the way that research participants make sense of their experiences and their world. To accomplish this aim, I made an effort to 'get inside' the participant's experience,

and phenomenology provided an avenue into the participants' inner worlds (Neubauer et al., 2019). This is known as a double hermeneutic process, and the concept is essential for understanding the complexities of social research and the role of the researcher in the process (Montague et al., 2020). The term "double hermeneutic" highlights the reciprocal relationship between the social researcher and the social actors being studied (Smith et al., 2009). Social scientists are not neutral observers but actively engage in interpreting the interpretations made by the individuals they study (Neubauer et al., 2019). This creates a dynamic and interactive loop where the understanding of social phenomena, such as the policing of child abuse, is co-constructed through the ongoing process of interpretation (Montague et al., 2020).

Phenomenological research can be divided into two approaches – descriptive and interpretative phenomenology (Thanh & Le Thanh, 2015). The former is a method in which researchers minimise interpretation and describe the participants' experiences as they are lived (Willig, 2013). This study about the experiences of policewomen utilised an interpretative approach to obtain a better comprehension of the phenomenon of policing child abuse. Interpretative phenomenology is centered on finding meaning through interpretation and using elements, such as themes, developed from the gathered data to understand better participants' experiences (Thanh & Le Thanh, 2017). In order to gain an understanding of policewomen's lived experiences in policing child abuse, the specific methodology of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was applied as this approach permitted both participants and myself to arrive at an intersubjective co-constructed understanding of policewomen's experiences. An interpretation of the participant's experiences occurred through open dialogue that allowed for the sharing and interpretation of unique perspectives and, ultimately, an understanding of multiple perspectives across various themes (Smith et al., 2009).

3.4.1 Sampling and Recruitment

A primary aim of qualitative research is to find information-rich cases (Palinkas et al., 2015). Because of the focus on particular cases, purposive sampling is a principal feature of qualitative research. The participants were, therefore, recruited through the use of the non-probability procedure of purposive sampling. The purposive sampling technique is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses (Etikan, 2016). Furthermore, purposeful sampling involves studying information-rich cases in depth and

detail (Palinkas et al., 2015). Participants were intentionally selected because they could provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of policing child abuse as a policewoman. In line with qualitative studies, the sample size of this research project was relatively small (Smith et al., 2009). Three policewomen were selected from three major police stations around Gauteng upon receiving ethical clearance to proceed with the study from the University and the SAPS. Three participants are an acceptable number and will likely still provide enough data for a dissertation (Smith et al., 2009). In addition, snowball sampling was also used to identify other potential women participants with practical experience in policing child abuse (Naderifar et al., 2017). The third and final participant was identified through snowball sampling, as the previous participants recommended contacting the last participant. By doing this, particular individuals with experience in policing child abuse were identified for inclusion in this study (Christensen et al., 2015).

This study was conducted among women police officers of various ethnicities and age groups in Central Gauteng, South Africa. Participants were selected because of their shared experience of policing child abuse. The study's participants were a homogeneous sample of adult women who self-identified with the experience of policing and responding to child abuse cases (Saunders & Townsend, 2016). Potential participants needed to possess specific attributes to qualify for the study. For this study, a maximum of three women police officers were identified and who showed an interest in partaking in the study based on the following inclusion criteria:

- It was required that the participants be proficient in English in order to ensure that the researcher can communicate with participants and explore their experiences;
- The participants must have all been women;
- The participants must have been employed as a frontline police officer for the South African Police Service (SAPS) after they had completed basic training;
- The policewomen must have had practical experience in policing child abuse.

Based on the aforementioned inclusion criteria, the following exclusion criteria were developed for the study:

- Participants who were not proficient in English were excluded from the study. This was to ensure effective communication between the researcher and participants as well as the exploration of their experiences;
- Only women participants are eligible. Men are excluded from the study.

- Participants who were not employed as a frontline police officer for the South African Police Service (SAPS) after completing basic training were excluded from the study;
- Policewomen without practical experience in policing child abuse were excluded from the study.

Before data collection, I e-mailed the police administrator from the research office within the SAPS to notify them about the study and inquire about possible participants. I was given a list of station commanders of various police stations to contact regarding possible interviews with policewomen at their stations. The station commanders identified policewomen who he or she felt had adequate experience in policing child abuse. The station commander relayed the information about the study to potential participants, and contact between the researcher and the participant was made. After possible participants were identified and permission from the SAPS was obtained, a meeting was set up with potential candidates to help establish interest and willingness to serve as research participants. After participants consented to this research, we scheduled a date that would best suit the participants and commenced the data collection phase.

3.4.2 Quality Criteria

Although IPA has become a well-established qualitative method, certain qualities showcase high-quality IPA research. According to Nizza et al. (2021), these qualities include, firstly, constructing a compelling, unfolding narrative, which means that the analysis needs to tell a persuasive and coherent story. I read and re-read the transcripts before analysing them to arrive at a compelling narrative. The narrative is built cumulatively through an unfolding analytic dialogue between carefully chosen and interpreted participant extracts. Secondly, I developed a vigorous experiential account that focuses on the important experiential meaning of participants' accounts as it gave depth to the analysis. Thirdly, a close analytic reading of participants' words enabled me to do a thorough analysis and interpretation of quoted material within the narrative, and this close reading helped me give meaning to the data and the experience it describes. An example of this process (Appendix H) is included, while the structuring of the superordinate and subordinate themes along with the corresponding extracts are included in appendix I. Lastly, attending to convergence and divergence enabled me to obtain idiographic depth and systematic comparison between participants, and this quality further creates a dynamic interweaving of patterns of similarity and individual idiosyncrasy (Nizza et al., 2021).

3.4.3 Reflexivity

Research reflexivity was particularly important when I, as a male researcher, was conducting a qualitative study on the experiences of policewomen in policing child abuse. In this context, my gender and background may have had an impact on the research process and outcomes. Participants may have been more reserved or cautious in discussing sensitive and potentially traumatic experiences related to child abuse cases due to the gender difference. It was, thus, important to build rapport with the women participants, especially when discussing sensitive topics like child abuse. I had to ensure that participants had autonomy in sharing their experiences. I also had to avoid imposing my own views or assumptions about what their experiences should be like due to gender. It was further important to pay special attention to ethical considerations, particularly with regard to informed consent and the emotional well-being of participants. These matters were discussed openly and I had to ensure that participants feel comfortable throughout the research process. It was also important to show sensitivity to their experiences and the potential gender-related issues they might discuss. During data analysis, I also had to be mindful of how my gender might have influenced the interpretation of participants' narratives. I used techniques like bracketing to temporarily set aside my own biases (Smith et al., 2009). I also regularly discussed my research with my supervisor who could provide an outsider's perspective. This could help identify any biases or preconceptions I might have missed (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.4.4 Data Collection Procedure

Based on the phenomenological approach, the researcher studies the phenomenon by attempting to understand the data from the participants' perspectives (Neubauer et al., 2019). The key purpose of the proposed study is to investigate the phenomenon namely policing child abuse, by exploring participants' experiences of policing child abuse. The data collection method was guided by the phenomenological approach by utilising in-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interviews as these interviews are often richer in nuances and depth (Englander, 2012). This study included a semi-structured interview protocol because in-depth information could be derived from interviews and probing, according to Warren and Karner (2015). Semi-structured questions were used in the interview guide as they offered the interviewer and the interviewee with some format and helped to direct the responses; however, there was also room for the participant to elaborate (Appendix G). In addition, the interview guide was developed iteratively, and questions were developed, tested, and then

refined based on what I learned from asking participants these questions (Warren & Karner, 2015). The interviewer could clarify responses, and the interviewee could clarify questions, which would not have been possible with a questionnaire or a structured interview guide. Although semi-structured interviewing takes longer, it provides the required level of engagement necessary to utilise IPA more fully (Smith et al., 2009).

When all ethical obligations were met, and after informed consent (Appendix B) was obtained, I initiated the data collection process by initiating contact via email with potential participants (frontline police officers) at identified stations after station commanders put me in contact with the women. This was done by inviting suitable candidates and informing them about the nature of the study. During this initial contact phase, I introduced myself to the potential participants and explained the purpose and methodology of the research study. In this way, I may have facilitated the readiness of police officers to participate in the study as more information could be provided to potential participants. Appointments for interviews were set up and confirmed with potential participants. The interviews were carried out on a one-to-one basis at the police station of each respective officer in Gauteng, where permitted. The interview was done in a private room availed to the policewoman at the police station. Participants who met the inclusion criteria were asked to attend an interview scheduled for approximately 30 to 60 minutes. Permission was requested from participants to record all interviews. An explanation was provided to them regarding the importance of this method of data collection in order to explore personal lived experiences. One of the primary benefits of recording an interview (audio or visual) is that it allowed the interviewer to concentrate on the interview rather than writing notes, which can distract both the interviewee and the person asking the questions (Medjedovic, 2011).

The phenomenological approach focuses on experience to obtain complete descriptions that provide the basis for reflective interpretation and analysis that portrays the essence of the experience (Neubauer et al., 2019). In addition, a phenomenological approach provided an understanding of the themes and patterns that emerged from attempting to understand the participants' experiences. Therefore, the officers in the study were asked open-ended interview questions so that their specific experiences could be explored (Christensen et al., 2015). By doing this, I could explore and interpret the experiences and feelings of the policewomen from their own point of view. Thus, the interview questions guided the conversation and ensured that the interviewer focused on exploring specific aspects related to the lived experiences of the policewomen (Christensen et al., 2015).

3.4.5 Data Analysis

Once the data was collected, the next step was to explore and categorise the information (Willig, 2013). The objective was to identify any patterns related to the participants' lived experiences communicated during the data collection phase. Data was then organised into logical categories, summarising and giving meaning to the notes and interviews manuscript. The participants' interview transcripts were analysed per principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as discussed by Smith et al. (2009). IPA allowed me to focus on the individual lived experience through case-by-case analysis (Smith et al., 2009) and committed to understanding unique experiences involving sense-making of the policing of child abuse as a policewoman (Smith et al., 2009). IPA captures how participants interpret their experiential world and encourages the researcher to be an active participant through empathetic interpretative engagements with the participant's account (Smith et al., 2009; Smith, 2009). I undertook the fieldwork and aimed to address this through reflective diaries of my own sense-making and reactions to working with the interview material.

In order to capture the quality of experiences, I initiated the process by focusing on the first transcript before identifying common themes across the remaining transcripts (Smith et al., 2009). I analysed individual transcripts line-by-line following procedural guidelines by Smith et al. (2009). This was done to safeguard the idiographic perspective by first coding each transcript as a distinct unit before progressing to the next one. I included interpretative comments on the scripts while remaining close to the participants' words and experiences. I made notes of my initial thoughts and observations while focusing on better understanding participants' experiences.

After thoroughly reading the transcript, I identified emerging themes while occasionally referring to my own notes. Once I finalised the emergent themes for the first transcript, the process was repeated for each remaining transcript. The emergent themes for all the transcripts were further explored in more detail to determine how these themes were related (Willig, 2013). In the final analysis phase, the themes were grouped to form clusters or master themes. The superordinate or master themes captured the main categories of meaning that I used in my account of the experiences of policewomen concerning policing child abuse. Each theme needed to be described and exemplified with extracts from interviews, followed by my analytic comments. I constructed a table of superordinate themes and sub-themes for each participant (Smith et al. 2009) and summarised patterns and

divergences across cases in a master table of themes using detailed examples from particular cases. The process outlined above ensured that I could describe the officers' experiences and then interpret how their experiences related to the phenomenon being explored, namely, the policing of child abuse (Smith et al., 2009).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Before initiating the research, permission to embark on this study was obtained from the office of research within the SAPS. I then proceeded with an application to the Departmental Research Committee initially and then submitted an approved version of the proposal to both the institutional Ethics Committee and to the Divisional Commissioner for research within the SAPS. Furthermore, the study commenced once the Departmental Research Committee of the University of Pretoria approved the proposal (Appendix C), it also included the approval letter from my supervisor required to conduct research within the SAPS (Appendix D-F).

In ensuring that ethical standards were upheld during the course of this study, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study so that their informed consent could be obtained before continuing with data collection (Gupta, 2013). The participants were also informed that the study was voluntary and that withdrawal from the study could be done at any time without risk to the participant. The included participant information sheet (Appendix A) communicated to the research participant about the purpose and procedures, including the time commitment of the participant, the risks and benefits of the study, and the confidentiality of their information (Strydom, 2011). Participants might have questions about the study or report negative feelings about their experience during the research endeavour (Christensen et al., 2015). Therefore, all participants in the study needed to be made aware of the aspects of the study that could have affected their willingness to volunteer for the study. Care was taken to lessen any harm caused to the participants by establishing at the onset if they had any objections to participating in the study or whether they foresee any negative impact being caused to them by participating in it (Strydom, 2011).

According to Vanclay et al. (2013), conducting research may potentially harm the participant physically or psychologically; therefore, several safeguards have been developed to protect research volunteers. Child abuse is a sensitive topic and a very complex area of research, and discussion with participants may have caused unwanted or negative feelings or emotions (Gupta, 2013). Given the sensitive nature of child abuse, the researcher attempted to

avoid harming the participants, psychologically or otherwise (Christensen et al., 2015). I attempted to avoid harm and prevent stress by treating participants with the necessary respect and empathy. The researcher must protect participants from any harm. Therefore, participants were reminded of the counselling services in the SAPS if talking about child abuse lead to re-traumatisation of events from the past (Gupta, 2013). The Employee Health and Wellness (EHW) of the SAPS follows an integrated approach utilising psychologists, psychometrists, social workers and chaplains to support and assist the employees of SAPS. Counselling is provided to all SAPS employees in line with the needs identified. SAPS employees are continuously made aware of the EHW and the support services that can be provided, and the participants may have requested assistance from EHW if they experienced difficulty in any aspect of the research (Williams, 2016). Like all other institutions or organisations, the SAPS have their own ethical requirements for conducting research. The SAPS has a code of conduct that guides members on moral judgement. The SAPS is a government organisation that must comply with legislation and regulations. Therefore, I needed to apply to do research in the SAPS, and after the application was approved, I had to undertake to comply with the approved protocols (Appendix F) (Smit et al., 2009).

Respecting the privacy of research participants is central to ethical research conduct (Surmiak, 2018). One way to ensure privacy is through confidentiality, which refers to the agreement between the researcher and the participants about what may be done with the information gathered from the participant and how the participant's identity will remain unknown (Christensen et al., 2015). The identity of the participants remains confidential and cannot be directly associated with any data. The privacy and confidentiality of the participants were ensured by not requiring them to reveal their names to ensure the anonymity of their responses and protect them from any retributive action. Additionally, I ensured that the data collected was not disclosed to any unauthorised person. The anonymity of research participants is a central feature of ethical research practice, and all identifying data was removed prior to publication. All participant responses were coded to ensure confidentiality, anonymity, appropriate reporting, and data analysis. The participants were given pseudonyms as identifiers to ensure privacy further. The collected information was stored in an Excel file maintained on a password-protected flash-memory data storage device. The hard copies of the transcripts, including the signed consent form, are kept in sealed envelopes and stored in a locked cabinet for 10 years at the University of Pretoria in the department of Psychology, which only the researcher has access to (Surmiak, 2018).

3.6 Summary

An overview of the research approach used for the research study was provided in this chapter. A qualitative approach was employed to enable the development of new knowledge concerning policing child abuse as a woman. Concerning methodology, the selected sample of three policewomen was described in terms of sampling methods and recruitment strategies used. The data collection procedures were identified by discussing the use of semi-structured interviews and enhancing the data quality. The process of analysing the collected data was highlighted by discussing the selected method of IPA. Lastly, all considered ethical implications inherent to the study were discussed. Following the description of the methodology, the following chapter presents findings on the participants' lived experiences as a policewoman and policing child abuse in South Africa.

Chapter 4: Biographical Information of the Participants

4.1 Overview

The aim of this study was to give voice to the lived experiences of policewomen and how they comprehend and make sense of policing child abuse cases. The study was also designed to explore how these women experience the effects that these types of cases and the policing thereof and how it affects their lives and interpersonal relationships. The analysis was conducted based on the researcher's interpretation using the process outlined by Smith et al. (2009) for IPA studies. This chapter discusses the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the policewomen. As proposed in phenomenological work, chapter four offers an opportunity for each of the three participants' voices and experiences to be recognised and respected as contributions to this research. It includes idiographic accounts of each of the three participants to help the reader better understand each woman's perspectives and experiences.

4.2 The Research Participants

4.2.1 Anya

Anya is a constable in the SAPS, and at the time of the interview, she was 32 years of age with approximately four years of experience in police work with a specific focus on protecting children. She believes it was not her initial calling to do this kind of work, but she also believes it was the path she had to go on. She initially did not want to apply to be a police officer out on her own to avoid the disappointment of not getting selected, as she “*made room for that disappointment*”. She describes the reason for becoming a policewoman as the following:

“I didn’t even apply. A family member came to apply for me. I was still working at another company. My family member was just like, “let me try”, and I was like: “No, I can’t take off from work” She said: “No, I’m going to take it in”. I think she is the reason I’m here because I physically couldn’t come myself to give in my documents. So I just thought, you know when you apply for some position “okay, they are not even going to see my CV”. “Like I’ve wasted this paper you know?” I think there is where it changed because I didn’t want it as badly; that’s maybe why it was given to me.”

After getting successfully selected, she was very excited about becoming a policewoman as it was “*something new, it was something different. It was challenging, mentally, emotionally...*” She described how she experienced her training as physically and mentally tough. The first part of the process was passing the psychometric evaluation, “*it’s almost a 3-hour exam. And in that exam, if you do not pass your psychometric exam, you do not go forward. So you need to pass your evaluation.*” Her training affects how she handles and experiences all cases today. She described her physical training, the second part of the selection process, as follows:

“After evaluation what they do, they send you for medical to see that you are physically able to do the training for the next 18 months or 12 months, depending on the training. After that, if you pass medical and you have no chronic, serious illnesses because most of the things we do are hard labour. When we go to college, it’s not like sitting like this. It’s up 5oclock, 4oclock, busy, it’s mostly a disciplinarian, its changing the mind-set that you have from the outside world to become the person that you need to become when you deal with the work that is there. I didn’t know that until now where I am right now.”

She also explained that her training made her physically fit, such as being able to run “*30 laps, and I think after five laps they increase the speed*”. After these two stages, she had to move on to the interview process. It took her a long time, and in all that time, her experiences of faith and religion helped her cope with the intensity and effort required to become a policewoman. She described how her religion played a big part in becoming a police officer:

“I think for me, my religion played a big part in all of this. Because I couldn’t have done this without a more spiritual aspect. Because I had to keep faith, I had to be motivated. I had to have hope, you know. I had to be driven; you cannot not be driven and do this mentally, emotionally; it’s a challenge.”

I asked Anya how many child abuse cases she had responded to approximately, and she explained that she had “*lost count.*” She experiences many difficult cases to handle in which the guardians of the abused child mostly come to the station to report the crime. She explains that it is very difficult to quantify the number of cases she has dealt with. She has to deal with so much in her work that it is difficult to keep count of all the individual cases as she explains it in her own words: “*You deal with so much, you don’t remember because it’s not just child abuse, it is an entire broad theme. There specific things that stand out in my brain, but I won’t be able to tell you. It’s over the hundreds.*” She is also concerned about

those cases that do not get reported, as she thinks people are afraid to come to the police station to report a crime that has been committed. Anya describes this phenomenon as a ‘broken telephone’:

“There’s this thing of a broken telephone. Somebody has an experience with SAPS, and people have this idea when they walk into the station, they have this idea. This is how it is supposed to be, but they don’t know the behind-the-scenes. For us to do our work, we need to follow certain protocols. Some people are impatient, they don’t wait for the necessary help. They stand up, and they leave.”

Anya experiences that the community she serves often hears false or negative claims against police when the police have to follow certain procedures when investigating a crime. These negative claims then spread as rumours influence other citizens’ willingness to interact with the police and report crime. A part of this protocol that police officers follow is working hand-in-hand with other units dealing with child abuse. Examples of these units are “*social workers; it’s our psychologists, FCS our sexual unit, as well as umm shelters*”. This happens because policewomen are not always equipped with the necessary social work skills to deal with the child or the family. Anya explains dealing with a child abuse case as an ‘umbrella’:

“It’s like an umbrella because here is sexual assault; it deals with its own legislation. Physical, mental, it deals with its own legislation. So you can’t just say child abuse; there’s a lot of child abuse, different types.”

Anya experiences that abused children conflict with having trust broken in an older person responsible for caring for the child, and still needing to trust this person. She stated that this makes her sad as abused children have their innocence and trust destroyed:

“The sad thing about is, I think children are afraid to come out because sometimes, the abuser is a person who they know. It is someone in their personal spaces. I think most children feel betrayed because a person who you are loving is busy doing these stuff. I think most of the children that I’ve interviewed are in disbelief; they still can’t, they know it’s wrong because their body is telling them it is wrong, but they are busy struggling with it in their mind against their body. It is a fight with internal. So there’s this conflict to still trust this person, but they know something is not right.”

In her experience, schools often have an important role in identifying cases of abuse and to “educate the children in what is right and what is wrong...” But she also feels that there needs to be a fine balance between educating children about sexual abuse and keeping their innocence intact. She describes it as a “*balance; you need to find a balance so that you don’t damage this child’s idea of what it is to be free and happy and loved*”. However, in our

country, with high child abuse cases and “*in our community where there are people who take advantage of vulnerable children’s innocence*”, children need to be educated as these offenders often re-offend after being investigated or even sentenced. This reoffending is what especially makes Anya angry:

“Because sometime these perpetrators redo these things. Redo it [pause]. And I think there’s where the frustration comes in. the re-offense. Because our justice system is not taking the priority that it needs to take to deal with this sufficiently.”

When I ask Anya what her primary role is during an investigation of a child abuse case, she explains that she mostly has to deal with the mother of the victim, she explains:

“Most mothers come to report it because mothers are more aware of their children’s’ day-to-day emotional states; you know your child, you know when this child is at his or hers happiest, you can figure out that tone already, and you can notice when something is wrong with your child immediately.”

She also explained that teachers can also help identify the abuse, as the teachers are “*sometimes also our eyes outside to identify where the abuse is coming from.*” Anya is often assigned to child abuse cases because her “*spirit, my aura attracts it, because I am always, I am in the vicinity*”, and she has “*got that motherly instinct*”. She finds it easy to put a child in comfort and to ensure the child that he or she can speak to the officer. She mentioned:

“I think the only way you are going to make someone comfortable is you give them their comfort zone. I don’t think somebody will speak to you about something that is hurtful if they don’t feel safe. So I think mostly as a police officer, most children draw to me because it’s my uniform. Some of them feel safe when they see me. Only with the physical appearance feel safe when they see me. When they start talking, it goes deeper; it goes deeper, it goes deeper.”

Another important factor in the investigation process for Anya is building trust with the victim: “*A child abuse case needs to be sensitised. It needs to be sensitised. So that you can build the trust with that child so that they can give you all the information for you to be able to make them feel safe.*” A major reason Anya is able to build trust with the children she comes in contact with is because of her own children, and she knows how to relate to a child. Anya explained to me:

“So, for me, it is easy because I have my own children. So, it is easy for me to go down to a child’s level. Even before I had my children, it was easy for me because I think, as a woman, you have a motherly instinct. It comes naturally. If you see a child cry, you just want to get help them. If you close your eyes and you’re a baby cry, you want to go look for the baby. Really. Sometimes, it is my instinct kicking in to care for that child. Even though it’s not your own. And, I think personally, my work gives me the opportunity to help those that cannot protect themselves. Like, I wish I had that voice when I was a young girl; I wish I had someone like me to explain to me like, to my friends, or to whoever who might be going through these things, “It’s okay, you know?” And now I’m that person that I wanted. I think I’ve warped into the person that I needed as a child for my friends, my family, my community.”

Anya also explained that she can do child abuse investigations successfully because of partnerships with other branches and professionals such as social workers and psychologists. Anya said they *“need other’s hand to assist us to do our work. It is needed. These people are sent and permanently based at the station as an outsourced stakeholder.”*

I ask Anya if and how investigating child abuse cases impacts her life, and she explains that *“it is emotionally traumatising”* as it causes her to be very protective of all children in general because of her profession. She specifically describes feeling emotions of anger and powerlessness:

“I have my own children, so it makes me be so protective. Not even my own, my friends’ children, any person that I share a personal relationship with. I am very protective when it comes to children, very. Because I have been dealing with abuse because of my professionalism, it is my profession to deal with certain cases of abuse. I don’t only deal with abuse, but I’ve have been affected because it is something I have dealt with in my career. Not once. Not twice. But a recurring offence. It makes me angry. It makes me sad. If I could, I would climb in a car and go fetch him. But our laws do not allow us to take the law in our own hands. That is what makes me angry. Because criminals have more rights than civilians. So it makes me feel kind of powerless because if the laws are tightened, it allows me to enforce the necessary law or the necessary procedure for me to go do the right thing.”

Anya also explained that because of her profession as a policewoman who focuses specifically on child abuse cases, she often worries about her child’s safety to the point where

she has become very protective of her child. She explains, *“I want to know where my children are all the time.”* It has also impacted her to a place where she has made it financially possible to provide the best care for her child, as she mentions: *“Financially, I made the means possible to provide the best for my child so that I can be content where I’m sitting here and I know he’s safe. I have this satisfaction that I know if something is going on in the school, I will have evidence.”* Thus, for Anya, knowing where her child is all the time gives her satisfaction and a sense of security:

“I can know where my child is; I know the environment he is in. I know where he plays, where he stays, who’s the parents. I know everything because of my work. Because of my work. I have gone K9, special forces on my child’s movement. It has made me emotionally protective of my own because if my child does something and I’m noticing it.”

Despite the emotional impact of investigating child abuse cases, Anya does not believe that investigating these types of cases hinders her from carrying out her professional duties and responsibilities. In fact, Anya stated: *“It actually motivates and drives me to do even more, better in what I have done in this case. Maybe there is something. I always evaluate myself. Is there something I could have done differently? Maybe I should go with the child. Fetch the perpetrator. “Go lock him up”. That’s where the emotion comes in. So I am always reviewing myself to see if there something I could have done better.”* Anya further explained that she often finds herself going the ‘extra mile’ to make sure the victim and the family are assisted:

“Normally what I do is, I go back to trauma, that’s my own personal thing I go, and I ask them what has happened to the case of the underage child, just for my emotional comfortability, just to find out if the person was helped, you know? It’s not something that you have to do, you are not obliged, it’s not compulsory, but personally, I take my time just to find out if the child is being looked after. Just to go the extra mile.”

What angers Anya is when a perpetrator reoffends after being caught the first time as she opened up about a case that stood out for her:

“The person did it again. [Pause, tick with pen]. The person did it again. There is where my anger, that’s where I got angry. Like? “Go fetch the man, go lock the man up, or something, or something, do something.”

Anya sometimes has contact with the offender if the family does not unknowingly alert the perpetrator that they have been to the police to report the case. Suppose the perpetrator finds out about the reporting. In that case, he or she may disappear, making it very difficult for the police to find the perpetrator as they have limited resources to track down offenders:

“Sometimes, if we find them because, you know, victims sometimes notify the offenders or the perpetrators: “Now I am going to open a case” so they are notifying them. So they are giving them information that they actually don’t need. So when we go look for them, they are not at the address given because they know they have done something. So it is very difficult sometimes because normally what I try to find out: “Did you speak to this person?” “Yes, I went to go curse at him”, the parent. “You should’ve just came here before you went to do the emotional thing” because now you are alerting this person, and it is making our work difficult because if we don’t find at their address, that’s why it takes so long for them to be arrested because they are being notified and we don’t have these systems like overseas to track the offenders. We don’t have the resources because we are still living in a third-world country, you know? Our technology advances is not like America or UK. It’s not like CSI, you know? So yeah, it was emotionally traumatising for me.”

I asked Anya how she copes with police child abuse cases and if she ever uses the support services within the police to help her cope. She explains to me that she has her way of coping by praying and by being able to vent to her partner, who is also in the police:

“No, I don’t use the support services provided. I think praying helps me. My religion helps me not to go mentally unstable or have an emotional breakdown because you need to vent. My partner is a police officer as well. So that’s the nice thing about it, I speak to him, I vent everything on him. I vent it. Sometimes, I am shouting things at him that he has no clue about: “Listen here, the perpetrator did this and that”. I tell him because he has the same confidentiality because we are in the same career pattern. I cannot go tell somebody else because some people like to gossip. Other people like other people’s stuff, and I am trying to protect this child. Privacy, you know? So, I can’t be telling people from outside things that are happening within my work. My work is protected; it is confidential. People tell me confidential things, even it is not agreed. It is an oath I have taken: It is confidentiality. I can’t go. “They

opened up a case to that guy” It is unlawful to do so. So I am very disciplined. It is either right way wrong way. There is no in-between or maybe in my world.”

Just before we concluded the interview, I asked Anya if there was anything that she would still like to talk to me about that we did not cover in the interview. She explained that she does not get involved in these cases only because she is a woman. She believes gender has nothing to do with her work.

“Male officers would refer most child abuse cases to you. I am more dominating than a lot of males. I don’t take any bullshit. No. I don’t care who you are because I have given myself that opportunity not to be classified as a policewoman. I’m not a policewoman. I’m a police officer. My gender has got nothing to do with my work. It is not because you are a woman. It’s not what they teach us at basic training. We all get basic training. It becomes that you are a policewoman when it comes to certain things, you know? Social crimes, abuse. A lot of policemen get more recognition than the women. I’m very active, you know? Sometimes, people treat you the way allow them to treat you. You need to let people know what is your boundaries, especially in an organisation. I don’t just do these cases because people assign it to me. If a child is more comfortable, I will not even question it. But if you think I must attend to this because I am a woman, NO! You don’t allow people to dictate. We are all officers here, we all know the law and the right procedure. We are all supposed to be able to do the work. Female or male. The most males have this idea because our females are allowing them to think that way. I fight for what is right. I fight for myself on a daily basis. They know me. They know me. All of them, they know me. I stand up for myself.”

4.2.2 Bea

Bea is a warrant officer, and at the time of the interview, she had been working in social crime prevention for close to two decades of her approximate 23 years working as a police officer. Her father was also a police officer, and he was a detective. She thus grew up in a “*police house*”. Her uncle was also a police officer and his wife, and she can remember that she wanted to be a policewoman since she could remember. She specifically stated:

“My father was a policeman. He was a detective. I'm not a detective. So you grew up in this house, you know? Father is talking. He worked for very long at murder and robbery. So I, I just from small, I wanted to be a policewoman. I'm in the police now, and I was never a detective. I'm not interested in that side of the police. I am interested in this side of the police. So I grew up in a police house. My uncle, my mother's brother, is also a policeman. His wife is a police woman. So I just grew up in this, and I always had the love for the police. I wanted to be a police lady since the time that I can think. So that's that.”

I asked Bea how many cases she responds to as an indication of her experience. She responded that it is very difficult to quantify in numbers how many cases she has to respond to because it happens so often. She stated that “*it happens. I don't want to say every day, but its daily on average. I mean, there's not a day that goes by that I do not talk to a school.*” According to her, she has to respond to cases of child abuse and neglect almost daily. Many of these cases are not reported by the family or the child, but it is brought to the police’s attention by the school to which the child attends. Bea elaborated on her experience in the following way:

“I've been in the Social Crime Prevention Office for about 18 years now. And being in the Social Crime Prevention Office, you specialise in the two Children's Acts. Children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with the law. So any case regarding a child is coming to my office, so much so that the client service center will phone me and tell me that I must attend this case of a child. So in numbers, I cannot tell you, I can really not answer in numbers. But in years, it's approximately 18 years of experience, doing children cases, on a daily basis. In that, I can also say that I am the safety coordinator of many of the schools in our policing area. And so many schools is a lot of children. And anything concerning a child at the school that is brought to my attention. And that is also where you have to deal with cases like this

child abuse cases because it is reported firstly by the school; the school have an obligation to report this to the police. And I've got a lot of those cases, mostly the case this is coming from there. Because of the school. It's not the parents that report; it is the school."

Bea further mentioned that it is very difficult to deal with these types of cases because she often experiences a conflict in which she *"needs to only think with your brain and not your heart"*. She tells me that experiencing the heartbreak of the child is one of the most challenging things about these cases as the child's innocence and trust is broken, usually by those adults who were supposed to care for and protect the child. Working with the schools specifically and collaborating with other professionals to solve the case helps her in the profession. However, she still gets emotional during these cases and investigations, to the extent that she will sometimes burst out in tears. Bea mentioned:

"It is not nice. I must be very honest with you. To respond to things like this, you need to only think with your brain and not your heart, but it is impossible. So it doesn't matter when I attend a case with a child abuse, I have a case at the moment. It's very bad. It is so bad that, you know, you get emotional, you get emotional and then you see the heartbreak of the child and you need to address the problem. And that is also very difficult. Because a child is being abused, mostly, by people that he or she knows, it is not a stranger that is coming into the house and abuse these children. In my experience, I have safety talks with schools. And in that specific moment, if I talk about that (child abuse). You can see who are the children who are being abused, because they will just burst out in tears. And I have that a lot of times. And then you address it from there. Most of the schools have these ladies that is caring for them, social workers. So then we address it from there, it is still very hard. It's still very bad. I, I always get emotional if I do things like this, but you need to keep your head straight and do the right thing. Because I am a police official, and I'm always doing everything in the best interest of the child."

I asked Bea to describe some of the emotions she experienced while attending a child abuse case, and she repeated that it is very difficult to see and experience the heartbreak of the abused child. She says it impacts her emotionally to see so much pain. She stated that the victim is always crying and that a young child cannot describe what had happened to him or her. Children find it very difficult to understand how and why the abuse occurred. Bea says

they “do not have the sentences that we [adults] have”. However, Bea mentioned that she is a firm believer in God and believes and experiences calmness from God when she has to attend to these cases. She does not get carried away by her emotions, but she is “very calm”. She specifically stated:

“It is just I'm a believer in God. And I believe that I have this talent. It doesn't matter at what scene I am. It's as if I'm getting this calmness. I don't get hysterical and scream, and go on, I'm very calm. And I do it specifically, I handle it specifically, the way I need to handle it, and not any case is the same. I cannot compare this case to that case, saying that I did the same things, it is always different. Your circumstances under which this thing is happening is always different. And it's difficult, it is very difficult to see a child in so much pain and then you must address the father or the mother or the brother or the sister or the uncle, grandpa, grandmother whoever. So it is very difficult, I believe that I have this gift from God and that is why I'm still sitting here. But being calm at the scene is a different story from going home, take out the uniform, get a cup of tea and just cry it out. Because that happens always. It's very bad, you know you it has an emotional impact on you as a person, because I don't see a child with just a blue mark on his face or an arm that is broken or what. You see the heartbreak of this child and that is very bad. You know they always cry, they always cry if they explained to you what happened or this suspect did this or that. And you talk about a child, how must the child word these things to you? Because they do not have the sentences that we have. So it's very difficult it's really it's very difficult but I am very blessed to have this calmness coming from God if I attend to scenes like this especially if we can talk about child abuse and in regard to the sexual offenses act, then it is also very, very difficult. It's heartbreaking to see what the children is going through.”

Bea further explains to me that she cannot just let out all of her emotions; she has to deal with it, as she must fulfil her duty in her office and continue her work. She mentioned that her children are very good motivators for her because they understand that their mother sometimes deals with a lot or has a lot to deal with in the day. Being in her children's presence also helps her deal with the day's challenges and praying at the end of a tough day at work. She explains that she does not use professional services to help her cope with negative emotions arising from her job as she finds her “own way, not by their office, but by the privacy of my own room, doing my own thing.” Bea mentioned:

“You must just deal with this because I must come back to this office tomorrow and what's going to bring the day of tomorrow. So, I am fortunate that I can deal with these things as I can deal with it because you cannot come back to this office with the brokenness of yesterday because you do not know what tomorrow or the next week is going to bring to you. So I am dealing with these things as it comes and that is my way. My children are also very good motivators, because I can sit them I don't need to discuss anything with him but they know “Mommy's not feeling nice” and just to be in their presence also helps me a lot and just talk about their day and how was your day and okay Mama's not feeling well tonight. I just need some time, it's fine mommy and go and rest and I have some tea in then it is prayer time and cry time and then I go on.”

Bea believes that her experience in dealing with child abuse has been a major contributor to successfully dealing with these cases, or as she says it: *“Experience taught me that, my experience, I must be honest with you, I have experience in this. And that is why I can honestly tell you this is my way. The young members is not that, it's not that easy for them. So for me personally, that is my way. But for members that is attending to these cases, we see to it that they go for professional counselling”*.

Bea also prefers interviewing the child at some place the child feels comfortable at, as she believes, because: *“The police station is not a place for a child to see. I prefer that because they get scared, and then it is more difficult for me to take a statement for an example. So I do that where the child is comfortable. And it's usually by the school or even by the church if needed, or otherwise by the house, but not at the police station.”*

I asked Bea how it is to have contact with the child, and she explained that it is very difficult as the child victim's emotions also influence her. According to her, a child cannot comprehend such abuse and all the investigations thereof. She elaborates, *“You are heartbroken. Why must this child going through this much pain? So much sadness; I mean, it is a child. I'm not talking about an adult that can handle these things; you're talking about the child that do not need to handle all of this emotions and stress and trauma.”* Bea also told me that she often has contact with the offender, which is also very difficult as it is often a person the child knows or trusts. She also experiences feelings of anger and aggression towards the perpetrator, but she has to stay composed in her professional capacity. She also

mentioned that the child often remembers her as the policewoman who arrested the person who committed the crime, and the child might remember her negatively, which she experiences as challenging. She specifically said:

“Aaaaag, it’s very difficult, because this is somebody that the child know and trust and love. So it's very difficult. It's very, very difficult. But it needs to be done. And that is how we protect the children is by doing that things. So yes, it's not. Ooooooh It's not nice, you can get a bit aggressive and so on. But you just know how to do this and handle this. So I take my time and be calm and so on. But on the end of the day [sigh], you will always be remembered by: “this police lady arrested my daddy” [pause] and [pause] that is also not nice to hear, because that is how that child is going to remember me. And I prefer that the child remembers me by something positive, and not something that negative. But it needs to be done. And it's difficult.”

As the interview continued, I asked Bea how policing child abuse affects her life. She responded that she experiences the effects of child abuse through investigation almost daily. This affects how she raises her children as she wants to provide them with the perfect safe environment where they do not have to experience any form of abuse. However, she was very tough with her son to ensure he would never abuse anybody. Bea experiences a sense of responsibility to help children – she thinks it is important and that investigating this type of offence is very difficult as there are many role players in the case. She tells me that policing child abuse cases impacts her whole being as she aspires to be positive and good in a world of very dark and sad case material. She mentions:

“You know, you cannot answer in saying that it does not have any influence on how I'm bringing up my children, for an example. I am in this environment where I see what kind of things is being done to children. So much so that when I go home, I make very sure that I don't even complain to my children. I don't scream, I don't fight, I don't do anything. I just love them. Support them. Protect them. I don't do anything wrong with my children, just because of the fact that you see what this specific child went through in his own home. So it definitely has an impact on me in the way that I do things in the way that I see things in the way that I handle specific things. It has an impact on, I can go and have a safety talk and tell these children come forward, so that we can help you because at the end of the day, we need to help the children. And that is very important. So it a big impact on me on the way you see things on the way you do things the way you think, because I have to handle the victim. And on the other

hand is the suspect. And on this side, you have the family. I mean, I'm just giving an example this child is being abused by a father, who is married to the mother. So you have the child, which is the victim, you have the father, that is a suspect, you have the mother that is also a victim. So you need to address all of this. And it has a big influence on the way that I do things. The way that I make decisions. So it's having a big impact. Because I try to do the right thing. Because you have seen this, this is what this kind of things is doing to a child. So you try to do it right by your own children. Oh, I only have children. I'm not married or so. I've got my parents, I've got sisters. So I really do need to do things right. Let me give you an example about my son, I have a son. And I think I was tougher on him than on my girls. Because you cannot abuse a woman, it is not acceptable. So, I was tough on my son, really. But I can say with certainty, he will never abuse a woman, never. So yes, it has an impact on my whole being. Because I tried to do the right thing every day, every day, every day, I do my utmost best not to fight with anybody from the office, wherever I go, just to be a positive impact on everybody. Because of the fact that you see this sadness and bad things happening. We try to make a difference by being good and being positive.”

I asked Bea if she felt responsible for protecting children, and she responded that “it is her duty” and that she “would not do anything else within the police”. She states that the community plays an important role in protecting children. Thus, her experience and connections to other sources of help, such as schools and NGOs, have allowed her to do her job more effectively. Bea specifically mentioned that she experiences her duty as the following:

“Ja, Ja! It is my duty. I need to do that! Yes. Otherwise, I will not sit here and it is my choice by sitting here. As I said, I don't apply for promotion or things like that. I don't, I mean, I'm a Warrant Officer, I think for 23 years now, and in this office about 18. So I love my work, I love doing this, I don't need I don't want to do anything else. And you must know, to do things like this, you need to know the community. I cannot just phone and make an appointment. I can go now and say, “Sir, we need to talk, there this problem. For example, if I go to school, I can go and sit with the principal. And, you know, we have an open door policy, they can phone me any time of the day. Anybody from the community for that matter. I mean, my phone is working 24 hours, seven days a week. So I'm known in the community by doing this. I mean, the security officers phone me “we have this case, what can we do?” Can you advise us?” I have

a lot of NGOs that I work with. Even then, we work with the social workers, we have a relation, I have a relationship with the social workers. And it took time. I mean, it took time to come there, where I can just pick up the phone a social worker and say: “We have this problem. Can you help us? Yes, let us do this or that”. So it took some time. But I am there where I can say they can phone, the people in the community know that I’m the one doing this. And I help where I can.”

I probed Bea on her earlier response and asked her how she handles or deals with the stressors in her life or even a difficult day. Accordingly, she answers that she deals with it in her own way; she prays and lets out her emotions by crying or watching a film. Bea also mentioned that her professional experience has equipped her with the tools to handle these types of cases and stress in general. However, she also mentioned that, sometimes, one needs to go for professional help if you can no longer deal with it on your own. She highlighted two specific incidents that were very stressful to her: when her colleague passed away and when the police were the only people on the streets during the harsh COVID-19 lockdown. Bea mentions that she feels that God called her to do this type of work and that it is His will for her. Despite this, Bea feels that she is still only a human being, a mother, and a caregiver and that the nature of this type of work can sometimes become too much to handle on her own. She believes that her faith is the one thing that saves her from becoming overcome with sadness because of the sensitive case material. She specifically mentioned:

“I pray a lot and I cry a lot and when I’m done with that I watch a movie [laughter]. Yeah, but it was not that easy. It wasn’t that easy. I’m just fortunate to be here with so much experience that I can say “I’m here”. And there are times [long pause], uhm, there are times when you just can handle all of these things. Then you just need to go the medical route once in a while. I can’t remember when but my colleague passed away here close to the station. It is about six or seven years ago and now you must know you have a whole lot of things that you must handle here at your desk, in your office, and then one of your members pass away. Now you go to that crime scene, you do this whole crime scene, and because of that I went the medical route by going to a psychiatric facility, just to find my way a bit and I think that was the best thing that I have done for myself. Because of all the things that you must handle. So yes, I’m really a person that will recommend that. If you feel that things are not good anymore, look at yourself. Go and do this whole psychiatric places for a while. Just find yourself. And I think that is the best thing you can do for yourself because they

have these programmes and things to equip yourself with how to handle trauma and stress and blah blah blah. So I'm also very positive about things like that. There is no shame in things like that. Not at all. I mean, we are being exposed to all these things. Not everybody is being exposed to. And yeah, so you are not, you are just a human being and you must handle a whole lot of things. It is not nice. I remember the first day of lockdown in 2020, 27th of March. We were the only people in the road. I mean there is no vehicle. There is no life. There is nothing there. I mean, how do you handle that? And I mean that was just "Wow". And we are being exposed to this. And we have lost members. You are too scared to go to a complaint because what do find there? "Please stay there I'm positive with COVID, and yeah. Now, I must go back home and my children are there. So, it is definitely having an impact. As I said, I'm a child of God and I believe that if I wasn't. I would not sit here. I really strongly believe that. I believe that is the will of God that I am here. And I also believe that I'm getting the protection and wisdom from God to do these things. The correct way. Really, I strongly believe that. But it is not easy. I must emphasise that. It is not easy. I'm also just a woman. I am also just a mother. A caregiver. I'm just that. And sometimes, it gets too much. Really, and then you just take a break for a day and go and do something totally different and then the next day we will go on. But yeah, it's not easy. But, my faith is the only thing that carries me through the day. Really, otherwise I will go mad. I mean you see all of these things. You are being exposed to all of these things. It is not easy. And that is really all I wanted to say. Thank you."

4.2.3 Colleen

Colleen was 49 years of age at the time of the interview. She is a warrant officer, and according to her, she attended to some child abuse cases. She further states that *“it is difficult to say how much. As I indicated earlier, we are often not dealing with the child, but the concerned party will come to the police station and give a statement.”* She explained that she is often the one dealing with the victim's parents and not the child, as they have a family violence unit dealing with the child. She stated that:

“As we have got our family violence officers, they are the ones who are dealing directly with the child. That officer will then write a statement what he or she was told by the child. So we are mainly dealing with the parents and not the child. The family violence unit are the ones who are dealing with the child.”

Colleen told me about a specific incident that stood out for her when she had to deal directly with a child abuse victim. The child travelled from another province after being promised work and money. However, the perpetrator offering the work trafficked the young girl, and she was also forced to take drugs to make her addicted. The young girl could escape, *“so she came to the police station looking for help”*. Colleen *“worked on this case until I had a certain suspect”*. She explained to me how difficult and emotional this case was:

“It was a very difficult case for me. To attend to that little girl. It was emotional. It was emotionally tough on me because I put myself in the shoes of the child. How is she going through it? At her age? How is it going to be in the future of this young girl? But we managed to help her and we also eventually caught the perpetrator.”

I asked Colleen how it was to deal with the perpetrator after apprehending him, and she experienced feelings of anger for doing this to a young girl; however, she also felt feelings of pride for apprehending the criminal:

“Uhhhh, after I arrested the perpetrator, I felt very proud, you know? Proud that I was able to save the life of one girl. Because of this guy, if we don't arrest him, he will continue doing it. At the end of the day, maybe he was going to hunt for this girl, and kill this innocent girl because that girl was revealing information about him to the police. So ya, I felt very proud to be able to put this guy in jail because who knows? He could have done this to other children. I was angry. The first time I met him I was very angry. “How can you do that to a young girl?” She was supposed to be at

school, focusing on her education. Her life was disrupted because of this guy. If it was not for him, she would still be at home, focusing on her studies. Doing stuff that a normal eleven year old does, but now she must become an adult quickly sleeping with old men on the street, and what is she gaining? Only the drugs that are destroying her life in order to keep her on working. To keep her on being a sex slave. It was hard. It was difficult.”

Despite her feelings of anger towards the criminal, she was conflicted as she could not show the victim any emotional reaction or judgement, but instead, she had to show unconditional support towards the child victim:

“You know the anger it was there. I was feeling that I can get this person now, the perpetrator. I was so angry that he did it to this innocent child, I felt obligated to catch him because I did not want to see the sadness on that girl’s face on any other child’s face. You know, I was also sad for what had happened to the life of this young girl. A crime has been committed, her life will never be the same again. I had to be careful to not ask her all these questions, you know? “Why did leave your house?” “How could you trust this man?”. I had to be there to assist this young child. It happened, I could only be there for support. She could not feel judgement from my side. Whatever was in her mind, it had happened and I had to help this child to the best of my abilities. Not to put more things on her, you know, worry and stress about the reason why the crime occurred. Not to do more damage than what had been done already. I had to support her in order for us to solve the issues, to bring justice. I did not want to stress her out unnecessary because she came to us looking for help. She was crying for help, so what does it help if you are crossing your arms like that. What does all the questions help? She needed help and not more judgement.”

The conflict in Colleen is further exemplified in her emotional reaction towards responding to child abuse cases. She mentioned that her emotions would come in the way of helping other children if she did not contain her emotions and reactions. As she is a mother who cares deeply for the well-being of her children, she had to decide to keep her emotions separate from her professional duties as a police woman:

“It was very difficult, it was emotionally, but as times went on I thought: “If I keep on being emotional, how will be of assistance for other children?” Because I would be dealing with the situation while being emotional. I must balance myself so that I can

do what is expected of me. I have to keep these emotions inside me and I cannot act on those emotions. You know, as a woman, I am a mother, I care deeply for children, and I see all of these bad things happening to kids. I see everything that is happening, but I have to deal with the situation, I have to act as a professional and still carry out my duties. You see, that's the thing, you still have to keep on with your duties. By being emotional, you won't do anything. You won't."

Colleen further explained that she has children and that: *"It is also what made it more difficult because I thought about my child. If something happened to my child. How could I handle this issue?"*. Colleen told me that incidents of child abuse and responding to these types of cases impact her relationship with her children in a way that she says: *"I am often worried about the safety of my child. I need to keep my child safe at all times"*.

She also stated that being involved with these types of crimes has an impact on the way she raises not only her children but all children who are entrusted into her care:

"I have seen what people can do to children so I raise my child in a strict manner. I always want to know where my child is. After this incident I was more focused. I was more focused on the safety of my child. Not just my child. Any child. I was running a child protection programme. In that one I was focusing on the issue. If ever I see another child on the street, I must feel that that child is mine. If that child needs help, I must go all out. Not to focus on the fact that it is not my child, I won't help her. And I was running the project on it and even now we are busy with the child protection week and that is my initiative."

Colleen made it clear to me that her work is all about balance. On the one side, she has to deal with this abused child who is very traumatised and saddened due to what happened, as well as Colleen's own emotions, and on the other side, she has to contain her emotional reactions as not further to traumatise the child, but instead to win the child's trust:

"I did have contact with the child. First, it was difficult, but as time goes on it gets better as the child learns that you are a person that they can trust. You know, a child needs to trust you. If you are acting in that way, you know, all stressed and emotional, also she becomes like that in a way. So you must really balance that things, you know? You have got this child in front of you that you need to help but you are also dealing with your own emotions on the inside. If you are showing all of these

emotions, she will feel “It is true that I am a victim of this abuse”. She must feel that I am being supported on this issue, but if you are over-emotional and overly comforting on that thing, she will feel depressed as well. She won’t cope with the situation. And she will also not open up and tell me details about the case. You need to have her trust.”

Colleen believes she was put in the Child protection office for a reason and that protecting vulnerable children is very important to her and, in fact, her responsibility:

“It is something very close to my heart. Very close to my heart. It is difficult to put into words, but I feel that I have a responsibility to protect those vulnerable children. That is what keeps me going. It is very difficult to work in this office, but I do believe that God put me here for a reason, and that is the reason: to help those vulnerable who need someone they can trust, you know?”

I asked Colleen if she believed responding to child abuse cases hinders her from fulfilling her duties as a policewoman, and she said: *“It is emotionally difficult to be dealing with these types of crime, but I do not think it would stop me from doing my work”*. She also stated, *“I would keep doing my job for as long as it takes.”*

I asked Colleen how she copes with child abuse cases and the sensitive case material related to these incidents, and she explained to me that she had to use professional services:

“Yes, I did use support service. I went for counselling. I went for counselling. It helped me. A lot. It helped me a lot, and that is why I am still around. In fact, if I didn’t go for that counselling, it was going to be more difficult.”

She also mentioned that she has other, more personal ways of coping, such as praying: *“I pray a lot. A lot. That is the other thing that also keeps me in this office and gives me strength. It makes me strong. God keeps me strong so I pray to Him every day. You know, you deal with all this bad stuff on a daily basis and you have to keep it to yourself. So when I get home, I often just start to cry and then I pray and then I can go on. I get this feeling of closeness from praying as if someone is listening to me and He helps me to cope every day. In my mind I tell myself: “If it was not Him, I would not be here”. He chose me to be here so that I can help people that are in need. He chose me over all these other people to be in this office. You know? He put me here. I*

believe that. There is a reason for everything and that is the reason why I am in this office. I have been in this office since the early 2000s. Around two decades in this specific office. And I never got any special training. I have never done anything like that to be in this office. Through Him I go through it every day, and I can keep carrying on. You know, another thing is that when I'm done at the end of the day at this office, I don't take these things with me. When I get home I'm a parent, I'm a housewife. To my kids, to my husband, I am there for them. They don't have to know about all the details of my day. I have to be there for them. I cannot put everything onto them. But, in the mornings, when my kids are at school and my husband goes to work and I put on my uniform, I am a policewoman, an officer in the line of duty who is there to offer my services to those who cross my path. So, what I am trying to see is that I am here with a purpose, a higher purpose. I am not here for myself, if it was then I would be gone a long time ago. And that is what other officers must understand as well, we are not here by ourselves, it is because of Him. He chose us."

I further asked Colleen if she had any closing remarks or some things that she has not yet mentioned, and she explained to me that the community often do not trust the police and that the police could provide valuable protection if the community just put their trust in the police for handling a certain case:

"You know, a lot of people don't think of the police as the first persons to ask for help when they need it. People had a bad image of us but we can provide so much assistance in an event of crime. You know, a lot of people don't trust us but there is a lot of help in the police. It doesn't help to complain, complain, complain but you never come to the police, never open a case. We are not limited to one unit. The police has got lots of categories inside. It is not only our duty to arrest. You know there is still some people out there who don't even know about this office. We are trying by all means to bring the message to them that the police is not only here to arrest, but if you come here we will be able to help you as far as we are able to and I think the communities need to know this."

4.3 Summary

The above chapter provided in-depth summaries of the three study participants to help the reader get to know the women who took part in the research and learn about their various

perspectives on their experiences as policewomen and their experiences investigating child abuse cases. Through these summaries, readers are introduced to the women who generously shared their stories, offering a glimpse into their lives and the significant roles they play within the context of law enforcement. The chapter ultimately aims to foster empathy, understanding, and a deeper appreciation for the challenges faced by women police officers in the realm of child abuse investigation.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion

5.1 Overview

This research study sought to explore, understand and interpret the lived experiences of three policewomen and their experiences policing child abuse cases within a South African context. In line with the research question and guiding aim, this chapter discusses the superordinate themes and subordinate themes that emerged from the data analysis and the interpretation of the researcher. The chapter aims to provide an understanding of each participant's experiences and perceptions of policing child abuse, followed by integrating literature and findings. Thus, this chapter reveals the thematic findings developed as a result of the data collection and analysis process outlined in Chapter Three. The following superordinate themes discussed in the chapter below are *emotional labour*, *the long-term impact of policing child abuse*, and *sources of strength*.

5.2 Themes and Discussion

The following section will discuss the three superordinate themes along with the associated subordinate themes for each of the three superordinate themes. Figure 1 represents the experiences of the policewomen concerning policing child abuse. Unlike some other qualitative research methods, IPA does not start with a predefined theoretical framework or hypothesis. Instead, IPA, as utilised in this study, takes a more open and inductive approach to the role of theory (Smith et al., 2009). IPA is open to the role of theory, but it places a strong emphasis on exploring and understanding participants' experiences without preconceived notions (Frechette et al., 2020). It was thus important to be mindful of my own theoretical inclinations and biases to maintain the integrity of the interpretative process (Smith et al., 2009).

Figure 1

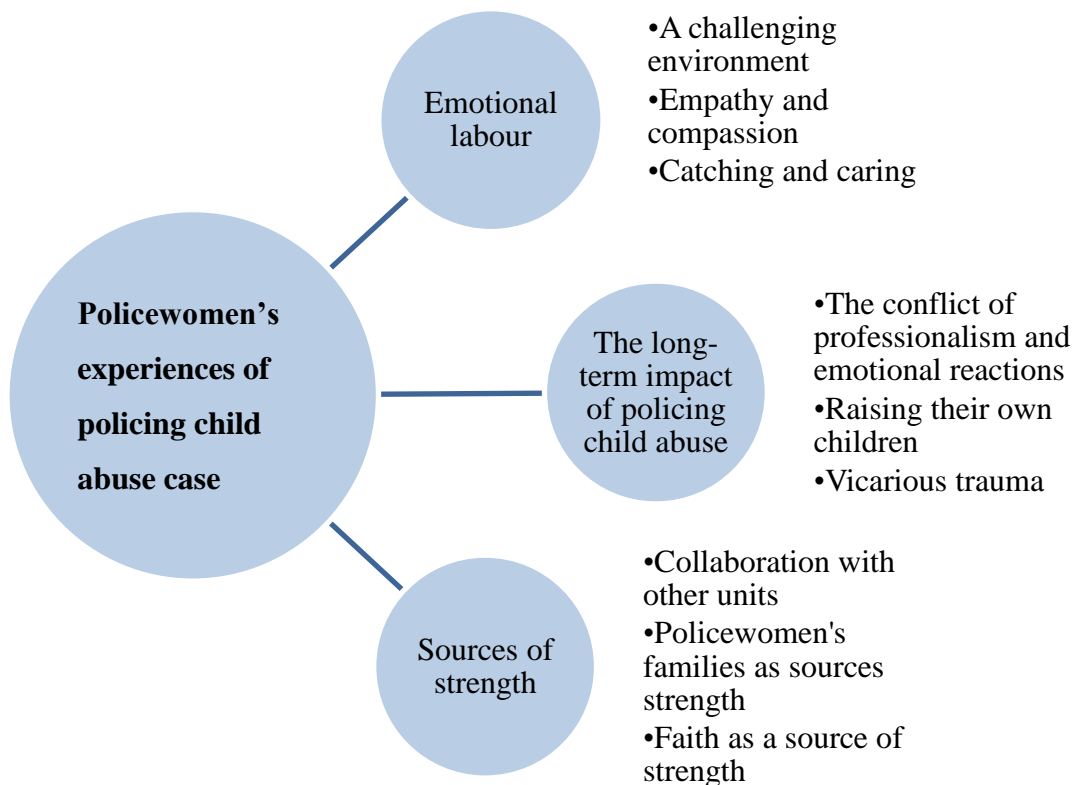
A summary of the superordinate themes and associated subordinate themes identified within this research study.

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
1. Emotional labour	1. A challenging environment 2. Empathy and compassion 3. Catching and caring
2. The long-term impact of policing child abuse	4. The conflict between professionalism and emotional reactions 5. Raising their own children

3. Sources of strength	6. Vicarious trauma 7. Collaboration with other units 8. Policewomen's families as sources of strength 9. Faith as a source of strength
-------------------------------	--

Figure 2

A visual summary of the three superordinate themes and the related subordinate themes drawn from the analysis.



5.2.1 Emotional Labour

Responding to questions regarding their experiences of policing child abuse, all three participants reflected on policing child abuse cases that require *emotional labour*. The characterisation of policing child abuse as emotional labour can be attributed to the nature of the work involved and its impact on law enforcement officers. This theme of *emotional labour* was deemed important by the researcher in the interpretation phase as it was impactful to all the participants. The theme illustrates the effort required to manage and regulate one's emotions in response to the demands of policing child abuse cases. When it comes to policing child abuse, policewomen are often faced with highly distressing and emotionally charged

situations. They may witness the physical and emotional trauma experienced by children, listen to their accounts of abuse, and interact with distraught family members. These encounters can be deeply disturbing and provoke strong emotional responses in officers, including sadness, anger, frustration, and empathy. During the analysis, three subordinate themes were created to capture the complexities of the emotional labour required to police child abuse cases as a woman, and these include (1) a *challenging environment*, (2) *empathy and compassion*, as well as (3) *catching and caring*.

5.2.1.1 A Challenging Environment. All of the participants reflected on their personal experiences of policing child abuse in a challenging environment. These police women mentioned that they encounter child abuse cases frequently to such an extent that it is difficult to recall or quantify how many cases they have dealt with. As Anya explains the severity of child abuse cases:

“You deal with so much; you don’t remember because it’s not just child abuse; it is an entire broad theme. There specific things that stand out in my brain, but I won’t be able to tell you. It’s over the hundreds.”

Similarly, Bea explained that she attends to child abuse cases almost daily. She specifically mentioned:

“So any case regarding a child is coming to my office, so much so that the client service center will phone me and tell me that I must attend this case of a child. So in numbers, I cannot tell you, I can really not answer in numbers. But in years, it’s approximately 18 years of experience, doing children cases on a daily basis.”

Colleen reflected on her past experiences and the number of cases she has dealt with, but she expressed that it is difficult to say. She stated:

“It is difficult to say how much. As I indicated earlier, we are often not dealing with the child, but the concerned party will come to the police station and give a statement.”

With high caseloads, there may be delays in responding to reports of child abuse, which can result in prolonged exposure of children to unsafe environments. Investigations may also take longer, potentially jeopardising the collection of crucial evidence. In addition,

the women in the study also mentioned that they often have to deal with these cases with limited resources. Limited resources can lead to understaffing in law enforcement and child protective services, making handling the sheer volume of cases challenging. This can result in overburdened officers, affecting the quality of care and attention given to each case. For instance, Anya mentioned:

“... and it is making our work difficult because if we don’t find their address, that’s why it takes so long for them to be arrested because they are being notified and we don’t have these systems like overseas to track the offenders. We don’t have the resources because we are still living in a third-world country, you know? Our technology advances is not like America or UK. It’s not like CSI, you know? So yeah, it was emotionally traumatising for me.”

Dealing with child abuse cases can be emotionally taxing for professionals, and the combination of high caseloads and limited resources can exacerbate this. Burnout and compassion fatigue may lead to a decrease in the overall quality of care provided. Limited resources and high caseloads pose significant challenges in effectively addressing and combating child abuse. These challenges can strain the ability of policewomen to provide adequate support and protection to vulnerable children. The reviewed experiences of policing child abuse cases in a challenging environment correspond to earlier research findings. For instance, Weber (2018) maintained that police staff involved with child abuse cases must work in an extremely challenging environment where many children are at risk. In addition, Hershkowitz et al. (2014) also mentioned in their research that successful investigation of child abuse cases could be difficult due to limited resources, the sensitive nature of child abuse cases and a certain skill set that police officers might need in these cases.

5.2.1.2 Empathy and Compassion. Policing child abuse cases requires policewomen to navigate highly distressing and sensitive situations involving vulnerable victims. Policewomen must demonstrate empathy and compassion while interacting with traumatised children and their families. At the same time, they need to create a safe environment for victims to disclose their experiences and ensure their emotional well-being throughout the investigation. Anya mentions how she needs to empathise with the victim:

“I think the only way you are going to make someone comfortable is you give them their comfort zone. I don’t think somebody will speak to you about something that is

hurtful if they don't feel safe. So I think mostly as a police officer, most children draw to me because it's my uniform. Some of them feel safe when they see me. Only with the physical appearance feel safe when they see me. When they start talking, it goes deeper; it goes deeper, it goes deeper."

Similarly, Colleen explained that during one of her experiences with a child abuse case, she had to show unconditional support towards the victim despite her own emotions during the investigation. She reported:

"You know the anger it was there. I was feeling that I can get this person now, the perpetrator. I was so angry that he did it to this innocent child, I felt obligated to catch him because I did not want to see the sadness on that girl's face on any other child's face. You know, I was also sad for what had happened to the life of this young girl. A crime has been committed, her life will never be the same again. I had to be careful to not ask her all these questions, you know? "Why did leave your house?" "How could you trust this man?". I had to be there to assist this young child. It happened, I could only be there for support. She could not feel judgement from my side. Whatever was in her mind, it had happened and I had to help this child to the best of my abilities. Not to put more things on her, you know, worry and stress about the reason why the crime occurred. Not to do more damage than what had been done already. I had to support her in order for us to solve the issues, to bring justice. I did not want to stress her out unnecessary because she came to us looking for help. She was crying for help, so what does it help if you are crossing your arms like that. What does all the questions help? She needed help and not more judgement."

Empathy and compassion play crucial roles in child abuse cases, as they are essential qualities that enable professionals to provide appropriate care and support to child victims and their families. Child victims of abuse often feel scared, confused, and ashamed. Demonstrating empathy helps create a safe and supportive environment where the child feels comfortable sharing their experiences. This understanding is crucial for tailoring interventions that address the child's unique needs, and it was important for the policewomen as it was central to their experiences and in providing a safe space for already victimised children. This finding aligns with past literature on the topic, as Oxburgh et al. (2014) found that a more empathic approach to victims can lead to a more successful investigation of a child abuse case. When victims sense that someone genuinely cares about their well-being,

they may be more willing to open up about their trauma. Empathy allows professionals to view the situation from the child's perspective, enabling them to better grasp the emotional and psychological impact of abuse.

5.2.1.3 Catching and Caring. Policewomen involved in these cases often find themselves torn between their duty to enforce the law and their natural inclination to care for and protect children. The primary role of police officers is to uphold the law, identify perpetrators, and bring them to justice. In child abuse cases, this might involve taking actions that separate children from abusive caregivers. This can lead to conflict as the policewoman might be torn between enforcing the law and considering the child's emotional well-being when removing them from their home environment. For instance, Bea mentioned that she needs to apprehend the offender, often known to the child. The child might get upset with the officer for apprehending the person whom the child trusted despite the abuse. The policewoman might be in the uncomfortable situation of caring for the child but fulfilling their duty by catching the criminal. Bea reflected on her experiences with this conflict of “catching and caring” in the following way:

“Aaaaag, It's very difficult, because this is somebody that the child know and trust and love. So it's very difficult. It's very, very difficult. But it needs to be done. And that is how we protect the children is by doing that things. So yes, it's not. Ooooooh It's not nice, you can get a bit aggressive and so on. But you just know how to do this and handle this. So I take my time and be calm and so on. But on the end of the day [sigh], you will always be remembered by: “this police lady arrested my daddy” [pause] and [pause] that is also not nice to hear, because that is how that child is going to remember me. And I prefer that the child remembers me by something positive, and not something that negative. But it needs to be done. And it's difficult.”

Similarly, Colleen mentioned that she cares greatly for children, but her profession requires her to do the right thing by carrying out her duties. She mentioned:

“I see everything that is happening, but I have to deal with the situation; I have to act as a professional and still carry out my duties. You see, that's the thing, you still have to keep on with your duties. By being emotional, you won't do anything. You won't.”

Policewomen involved in these cases often find themselves torn between their duty to enforce the law and their natural inclination to care for and protect children. This finding aligns with Brady's (2017) research in which it was found that the police often have to fulfil two roles that can occasionally conflict – apprehending the criminal and protecting the child. However, no prior literature demonstrates this conflict policewoman may face when determining whether to immediately remove a child from a dangerous situation or work with child protective services to try and keep the child within the family while addressing the underlying issues. Striking the right balance is challenging and requires careful assessment of each situation. This finding also demonstrates Hershkowitz et al.'s (2014) view that policewomen might need a certain skill in these cases. Based on the policewomen's experiences, this skill of balancing emotions and fulfilling their professional duty remains important in their everyday job as a policewoman policing child abuse cases.

5.2.2 The long-term impact of policing child abuse

Policing child abuse as a woman has far-reaching and profound long-term impacts, not only on the individuals directly involved in the cases but also on the officers themselves. Women officers who dedicate themselves to combating child abuse face unique challenges and experiences that shape their professional and personal lives. From bearing witness to the harrowing accounts of abuse to navigating the intricacies of investigations and supporting victims, these officers often find themselves immersed in a world of immense emotional labour. The long-term effects of this may take a toll on their mental and emotional well-being. Accordingly, the superordinate theme of the long-term impact of policing child abuse has been divided into the following three subordinate themes: (1) *the conflict of professionalism and emotional reactions*, (2) *raising their own children*, as well as (3) *vicarious trauma*.

5.2.2.1 The Conflict of Professionalism and Emotional Reactions. Child abuse cases can be emotionally distressing and triggering for law enforcement officers, including policewomen. Witnessing the suffering of children or the severity of abuse can evoke strong emotional reactions such as sadness, anger, or even feelings of helplessness. Policewomen, like any other human beings, naturally experience empathy and compassion, especially towards vulnerable victims like children. These emotions can make it difficult to remain completely detached and can influence their reactions. For instance, Anya mentioned that she always has to do the right thing in any circumstance, despite her own emotions. Specifically stated:

“Because I have been dealing with abuse because of my professionalism, it is my profession to deal with certain cases of abuse. I don’t only deal with abuse, but I’ve have been affected because it is something I have dealt with in my career. Not once. Not twice. But a recurring offence. It makes me angry. It makes me sad. If I could, I would climb in a car and go fetch him. But, our laws do not allow us to take the law in our own hands. That is what makes me angry.”

Regarding this conflict of acting professionally despite their own emotional reactions, Bea mentioned the following of her experience:

“To respond to things like this, you need to only think with your brain and not your heart, but it is impossible. So it doesn't matter when I attend a case with a child abuse, I have a case at the moment. It's very bad. It is so bad that, you know, you get emotional, you get emotional and then you see the heartbreak of the child and you need to address the problem.”

She also mentioned the following:

“So it has a big impact on me on the way you see things on the way you do things the way you think, because I have to handle the victim. And on the other hand is the suspect. And on this side, you have the family. I mean, I'm just giving an example this child is being abused by a father, who is married to the mother. So you have the child, which is the victim, you have the father, that is a suspect, you have the mother that is also a victim. So you need to address all of this. And it has a big influence on the way that I do things. The way that I make decisions. So it's having a big impact. Because I try to do the right thing.”

Acting professionally requires officers to maintain objectivity and impartiality in their work. Maintaining a level of detachment in child abuse cases is crucial to conducting a thorough and unbiased investigation and ensuring justice is served. Officers are trained to cope with stressful and traumatic situations, but child abuse cases can present unique challenges due to their emotional nature. Finding the right balance between showing empathy and maintaining professionalism is essential for their well-being and ability to perform their duties effectively. Emotions can cloud judgment and impact decision-making during the legal process. To ensure a fair trial and protect the rights of all involved parties, officers must focus on collecting evidence and presenting facts accurately. Colleen stated that she had to put her emotions aside in order to follow the correct protocol to ensure that the victim had access to professional services. She specifically mentioned:

“It was very difficult, it was emotionally but as times went on I thought: “If I keep on being emotional, how will be of assistance for other children?” Because I would be dealing with the situation while being emotional. I must balance myself so that I can do what is expected of me. I have to keep these emotions inside me and I cannot act on those emotions. You know, as a woman, I am a mother, I care deeply for children, and I see all of these bad things happening to kids. I see everything that is happening, but I have to deal with the situation, I have to act as a professional and still carry out my duties. You see, that’s the thing, you still have to keep on with your duties. By being emotional, you won’t do anything. You won’t.”

This finding of attempting to balance one’s emotional reactions and fulfilling one’s role as a policewoman resonates with the views of Bozga et al. (2021) as it was established that due to the pressures of maintaining an apathetic response to suffering and aggressive behaviour while still striving to demonstrate compassion for the victims of child abuse, police officers may suffer from considerable psychological discomfort. When this function conflicts with the organisation's larger objectives and expectations, the situation might become much worse, according to Oxburgh et al. (2014). Indeed, these conflicting expectations can impact the progress of a successful investigation.

5.2.2.2 Raising Their Own Children. Policing child abuse exposes officers, including policewomen, to distressing and emotionally charged situations. The emotional toll of dealing with such cases can affect their mood and well-being at home, potentially impacting their interactions with their own children. In addition, policing child abuse cases can heighten a parent's awareness of potential dangers to children. As a result, policewomen may become more protective of their children, sometimes overly cautious, which can impact a child's sense of independence and freedom. Anya reflected on her own experiences of raising children, and she mentioned the following:

“I have my own children, so it makes me be so protective. Not even my own, my friends’ children, any person that I share a personal relationship with. I am very protective when it comes to children, very. Because I have been dealing with abuse because of my professionalism, it is my profession to deal with certain cases of abuse.”

Policing child abuse cases may expose policewomen to explicit details and disturbing information about abuse, which can inadvertently influence their communication with their children about sensitive topics. It is important to find the right balance between age-appropriate discussions and protecting their children from unnecessary distress. Bea also mentioned that policing child abuse cases has a definitive effect on the way she raises her own children:

“You know, you cannot answer in saying that it does not have any influence on how I’m bringing up my children, for an example. I am in this environment where I see what kind of things is being done to children. So much so that when I go home, I make very sure that I don’t even complain to my children. I don’t scream; I don’t fight; I don’t do anything. I just love them. Support them. Protect them. I don’t do anything wrong with my children just because of the fact that you see what this specific child went through in his own home.”

She also mentioned how it influenced the way she raised her only son:

“Because you have seen this, this is what this kind of things is doing to a child. So you try to do it right by your own children. Oh, I only have children. I’m not married or so. I’ve got my parents, I’ve got sisters. So I really do need to do things right. Let me give you an example about my son; I have a son. And I think I was tougher on him than on my girls. Because you cannot abuse a woman, it is not acceptable. So, I was

tough on my son, really. But I can say with certainty he will never abuse a woman, never. So yes, it has an impact on my whole being.”

Colleen expressed that being involved with these types of crimes has an impact on the way she raises not only her children but all children who are entrusted into her care:

“I have seen what people can do to children, so I raise my child in a strict manner. I always want to know where my child is. After this incident, I was more focused. I was more focused on the safety of my child. Not just my child. Any child. I was running a child protection programme. In that one, I was focusing on the issue. If ever I see another child on the street, I must feel that that child is mine. If that child needs help, I must go all out. Not to focus on the fact that it is not my child, I won’t help her. And I was running the project on it, and even now, we are busy with the child protection week, and that is my initiative.”

Police work can expose officers to traumatic events and high-stress situations. As a mother, witnessing and dealing with distressing incidents can be emotionally overwhelming, making it difficult to compartmentalise and separate work emotions from family life. Policing is inherently risky, and police mothers may experience additional anxiety about their own safety while also worrying about providing a safe environment for their children. The above findings resonate with the views of Agocs et al. (2015) in that a policewoman’s life can undoubtedly become significantly more stressful and difficult if they are a police officer and a mother simultaneously. It can be difficult to mentally and physically juggle the demands of motherhood with those of a police officer, who frequently deal with stressful situations and unpredictable work schedules. Motherhood requires constant care, attention, and emotional support for the children.

5.2.2.3 Vicarious Trauma. Constant exposure to traumatic cases can lead to secondary trauma, where law enforcement officers experience emotional distress due to their work. Policewomen, like their male counterparts, are susceptible to this phenomenon, which can further complicate their emotional reactions. For instance, Anya explained that *“it is emotionally traumatising” for her to be involved in these types of cases*. Similarly, Bea expressed the following regarding her experiences:

“So it's very difficult, it's really it's very difficult, but I am very blessed to have this calmness coming from God if I attend to scenes like this, especially if we can talk about child abuse and in regard to the sexual offenses act, then it is also very, very difficult. It's heartbreaking to see what the children is going through.”

Bea also stated the following about the traumatic nature of policing child abuse cases as a policewoman:

“You must just deal with this because I must come back to this office tomorrow, and what's going to bring the day of tomorrow? So, I am fortunate that I can deal with these things as I can deal with it; because you cannot come back to this office with the brokenness of yesterday because you do not know what tomorrow or the next week is going to bring to you. So I am dealing with these things as it comes, and that is my way.”

Police officers dealing with child abuse cases may encounter multiple traumatic incidents over time, increasing the likelihood of exposure to distressing situations that can affect their emotional well-being. For instance, Colleen had to go for counselling and expressed:

“Yes, I did use support service. I went for counselling. I went for counselling. It helped me. A lot. It helped me a lot, and that is why I am still around. In fact, if I didn't go for that counselling, it was going to be more difficult.”

Over time, the accumulation of exposure to multiple child abuse cases may wear down an officer's emotional resilience, making them more susceptible to vicarious trauma. Bea specifically elaborated on her experience of vicarious trauma:

“And there are times [long pause], uhm, there are times when you just can handle all of these things. Then you just need to go the medical route once in a while. I can't remember when but my colleague passed away here close to the station. It is about six

or seven years ago and now you must know you have a whole lot of things that you must handle here at your desk, in your office, and then one of your members pass away. Now you go to that crime scene, you do this whole crime scene, and because of that I went the medical route by going to a psychiatric facility, just to find my way a bit and I think that was the best thing that I have done for myself. Because of all the things that you must handle. So yes, I'm really a person that will recommend that. If you feel that things are not good anymore, look at yourself. Go and do this whole psychiatric places for a while. Just find yourself. And I think that is the best thing you can do for yourself because they have these programmes and things to equip yourself with how to handle trauma and stress and blah blah blah. So I'm also very positive about things like that. There is no shame in things like that. Not at all. I mean, we are being exposed to all these things. Not everybody is being exposed to. And yeah, so you are not, you are just a human being and you must handle a whole lot of things. It is not nice. I remember the first day of lockdown in 2020, 27th of March. We were the only people in the road. I mean there is no vehicle. There is no life. There is nothing there. I mean, how do you handle that? And I mean that was just "Wow". And we are being exposed to this. And we have lost members. You are too scared to go to a complaint because what do find there? "Please stay there I'm positive with COVID, and yeah. Now, I must go back home and my children are there. So, it is definitely having an impact."

Policing child abuse cases involves witnessing and investigating distressing and traumatic events that children have endured. The emotional intensity of these experiences can take a toll on the well-being of police officers, including policewomen. Policewomen may be more likely to empathise and identify with child victims, especially if they are mothers themselves or have personal experiences with abuse. This heightened empathy can make them more susceptible to experiencing vicarious trauma. This finding aligns with Powell and Guadagno's (2013) speculation that police personnel might be more susceptible to the cumulative impact of trauma or vicarious traumatisation. It also aligns with the findings of Wright et al. (2006), which found that seeing abused and battered children is one of the most stressful police job experiences.

5.2.3 Sources of Strength

In the challenging and emotionally demanding field of policing child abuse, women officers often find incredible strength and resilience. As they navigate through the distressing and heart-wrenching situations encountered in their work, these dedicated professionals draw upon their unique perspectives and strengths to bring comfort, support, and justice to the victims and their families. Despite the inherent emotional labour involved, the police women demonstrate exceptional fortitude and compassion, inspiring hope and profoundly impacting the lives of those affected by child abuse. Through their unwavering commitment and determination, they serve as beacons of strength, providing a vital pillar of support within their communities and shining a light on the path towards healing and justice. The following discussion highlights participants' answers and my interpretation of their experiences regarding the sources of their strength. It includes a discussion of (1) *collaboration with other units*, (2) *policewomen's families as sources of strength*, as well as (3) *faith as a source of strength*.

5.2.3.1 Collaboration with Other Units. Child abuse investigations often require a multidisciplinary approach due to the complex nature of the cases. Collaborating with other units, such as forensic experts, medical professionals, social workers, and mental health professionals, allows investigators to tap into their specialised knowledge and skills. This collaboration enhances the overall expertise and effectiveness of the investigative team. Anya reflects on her experience collaborating with other units by stating that the following is mostly involved in child cases: *“social workers, it's our psychologists, FCS our sexual unit, as well as umm shelters”*. Colleen also mentioned that collaboration is a great source of strength for the police; she expressed the following:

“As we have got our family violence officers, they are the ones who are dealing directly with the child. That officer will then write a statement what he or she was told by the child. So we are mainly dealing with the parents and not the child. The family violence unit are the ones who are dealing with the child.”

Child abuse investigations may involve gathering and analysing various types of evidence, conducting interviews, and coordinating support services for victims. Collaborating with other units allows investigators to access additional resources, such as forensic laboratories, specialised equipment, databases, and funding sources. This shared resource

pool strengthens the investigative capacity and improves the chances of a successful outcome. Investigating child abuse cases can be emotionally demanding and psychologically challenging. Collaborating with other units fosters a sense of support, camaraderie, and shared purpose. Investigators can lean on one another for emotional support, share experiences, and debrief challenging cases. This support network can help alleviate the stress and isolation often associated with this line of work, promoting resilience and well-being. Bea reflects on her experience of collaboration with other units in the following way:

“I mean, my phone is working 24 hours, seven days a week. So I'm known in the community by doing this. I mean, the security officers phone me “we have this case, what can we do?” Can you advise us?” I have a lot of NGOs that I work with. Even then, we work with the social workers, we have a relation, I have a relationship with the social workers. And it took time. I mean, it took time to come there, where I can just pick up the phone a social worker and say: “We have this problem. Can you help us? Yes, let us do this or that”. So it took some time. But I am there where I can say they can phone, the people in the community know that I'm the one doing this. And I help where I can.”

Collaboration with other units and agencies is a significant strength for child abuse investigators. Child abuse cases are often complex and multifaceted, requiring expertise and resources from various disciplines to ensure a comprehensive and effective response. This finding aligns with Herbert and Bromfield's (2017) finding that one area of collaboration between law enforcement and child protective services is support among the agencies. Child abuse investigators can conduct more thorough and comprehensive investigations by pooling resources and sharing information. This helps build stronger cases against perpetrators and ensures the child's best interests are served, which was central to the experiences of the policewomen as it means efficiency in catching the criminal and bringing about justice to the victims.

5.2.3.2 Policewomen's Families as Sources of Strength. The support and pride of an officer's family can be a powerful motivator. Knowing that their loved ones believe in the importance of their work and are proud of their efforts can instill a sense of purpose and dedication in the investigator. It can be a constant reminder of the significance of their role in protecting vulnerable children and seeking justice. This motivation can fuel the investigator's drive to overcome challenges and persist in their work. As an example of this motivation, Anya mentioned specifically:

“So, for me it is easy because I have my own children. So, it is easy for me to go down to a child's level. Even before I had my children, it was easy for me because I think as a woman, you have a motherly instinct. It comes naturally. If you see a child cry you just want to get help them. If you close your eyes and you're a baby cry, you want to go look for the baby. Really. Sometimes, it is my instinct kicking in to care for that child. Even though it's not your own. And, I think personally, my work gives me the opportunity to help those that cannot protect themselves. Like, I wish I had that voice when I was a young girl, I wish I had someone like me to explain to me like, to my friends, or to whoever who might be going through these things, “It's okay, you know?” And now I'm that person that I wanted. I think I've warped into the person that I needed as a child for my friends, my family, my community.”

Anya also mentioned, apart from her children, her partner is a great source of strength by stating the following:

“My partner is a police officer as well. So that's the nice thing about it, I speak to him, I vent everything on him. I vent it. Sometimes, I am shouting things at him that he has no clue about: “Listen here, the perpetrator did this and that”. I tell him because he has the same confidentiality because we are in the same career pattern. I cannot go tell somebody else because some people like to gossip. Other people like other people's stuff and I am trying to protect this child. Privacy, you know? So, I can't be telling people from outside, things that are happening within my work. My work is protected, it is confidential. People tell me confidential things, even if it is not agreed. It is an oath I have taken: It is confidentiality. I can't go “They opened up a case to that guy” It is unlawful to do so. So I am very disciplined. It is either right way, wrong way. There is no in between or maybe in my world.”

Despite the challenging experiences of policing child abuse cases, their children may also be good motivators for policewomen to fulfil their duty. For example, Bea expressed the following:

“My children are also very good motivators, because I can sit them I don't need to discuss anything with him but they know “Mommy's not feeling nice” and just to be in their presence also helps me a lot and just talk about their day and how was your day and okay Mama's not feeling well tonight. I just need some time, it's fine mommy and go and rest and I have some tea and then it is prayer time and cry time and then I go on.”

Similarly, Colleen mentioned that as a mother, she cares deeply for children, which also motivates her to fulfil her duty as a policewoman. She specifically stated:

“You know, as a woman, I am a mother, I care deeply for children, and I see all of these bad things happening to kids. I see everything that is happening, but I have to deal with the situation; I have to act as a professional and still carry out my duties.”

Although previous literature demonstrates that being a police officer and a mother simultaneously can add significant stress and challenges to a policewoman's life, as asserted by Agocs et al. (2015), the current research found that the policewoman's family may actually serve as a source of motivation. The support and understanding they receive from their families can play a crucial role in helping investigators stay resilient and dedicated to their important mission. It is important to note that child abuse investigators often encounter challenging and distressing situations, which can affect not only them but also their families. However, the support and understanding of their families can be a powerful source of motivation for child abuse investigators. The knowledge that their work positively impacts the lives of vulnerable children, coupled with the emotional support from their families, can help investigators stay dedicated and resilient in their vital role of protecting and advocating for child victims.

5.2.3.3 Faith as a Source of Strength. Investigating child abuse can be emotionally challenging and distressing. Faith can provide investigators with a sense of resilience and inner strength, enabling them to cope with their work's difficult and disturbing aspects. It offers solace, hope, and a belief in the possibility of healing and restoration. Anya mentions early in the interview that her faith and religion played a major part in being able to cope with the emotionally demanding task of policing child abuse cases; she states:

“I think for me, my religion played a big part in all of this. Because I couldn’t have done this without a more spiritual aspect. Because I had to keep faith, I had to be motivated, I had to have hope you know. I had to be driven, you cannot not be driven and do this mentally, emotionally, it’s a challenge.”

Bea mentioned that she receives inner strength and a sense of calmness from her faith. She expressed:

“It is just I’m a believer in God. And I believe that I have this talent. It doesn’t matter at which scene I am. It’s as if I’m getting this calmness. I don’t get hysterical and scream, and go on, I’m very calm. And I do it specifically, I handle it specifically, the way I need to handle it, and not any case is the same. I cannot compare this case to that case, saying that I did the same things, it is always different. Your circumstances under which this thing is happening is always different. And it’s difficult, it is very difficult to see a child in so much pain and then you must address the father or the mother or the brother or the sister or the uncle, grandpa, grandmother whoever. So it is very difficult, I believe that I have this gift from God and that is why I’m still sitting here.”

In the same way, Colleen mentioned that her faith provides her with a great source of strength and resilience. She expressed the following regarding her faith as a coping mechanism:

“I pray a lot. A lot. That is the other thing that also keeps me in this office and gives me strength. It makes me strong. God keeps me strong so I pray to Him every day. You know, you deal with all this bad stuff on a daily basis and you have to keep it to yourself. So when I get home, I often just start to cry and then I pray and then I can go on. I get this feeling of closeness from praying as if someone is listening to me and He helps me to cope every day. In my mind I tell myself: “If it was not for Him, I would not be here”. He chose me to be here so that I can help people that are in need. He

chose me over all these other people to be in this office. You know? He put me here. I believe that. There is a reason for everything and that is the reason why I am in this office. 20 years, two decades in this specific office. And I never got any special training. I never done anything like that to be in this office. Through Him I go through it every day, and I can keep carrying on. You know, another thing is that when I'm done at the end of the day at this office, I don't take these things with me. When I get home I'm a parent, I'm a housewife. To my kids, to my husband, I am there for them. They don't have to know about all the details of my day. I have to be there for them. I cannot put everything onto them. But, in the mornings, when my kids are at school and my husband goes to work and I put on my uniform, I am a policewoman, an officer in the line of duty who is there to offer my services to those who cross my path. So, what I am trying to see is that I am here with a purpose, a higher purpose. I am not here for myself, if it was then I would be gone a long time ago. And that is what other officers must understand as well, we are not here by ourselves, it is because of Him. He chose us."

Faith can give investigators a strong sense of purpose and a conviction that their work is meaningful and important. It can fuel their determination to uncover the truth, hold perpetrators accountable, and ensure the safety and welfare of vulnerable children. This sense of purpose can sustain them through the challenges they may encounter. For instance, Anya mentions that praying helps her in her daily life as a policewoman:

"No, I don't use the support services provided. I think praying helps me. My religion helps me not to go mentally unstable or have an emotional breakdown because you need to vent."

In the same way, Bea mentioned that her faith gives her a sense of purpose and that it is why she does this work of policing child abuse. She reflected on her experiences in the following way:

"As I said, I'm a child of God and I believe that if I wasn't. I would not sit here. I really strongly believe that. I believe that is the will of God that I am here. And I also believe that I'm getting the protection and wisdom from God to do these things. The correct way. Really, I strongly believe that. But it is not easy. I must emphasise that. It is not easy. I'm also just a woman. I am also just a mother. A caregiver. I'm just that."

Like the other two participants, Colleen mentioned that her faith and religion also provide her with a purpose amidst this challenging role as a protector of vulnerable children. She stated:

“It is something very close to my heart. Very close to my heart. It is difficult to put into words, but I feel that I have a responsibility to protect those vulnerable children. That is what keeps me going. It is very difficult to work in this office, but I do believe that God put me here for a reason, and that is the reason: to help those vulnerable who need someone they can trust, you know?”

Faith can serve as a healthy coping mechanism for the women police officers in the study, providing emotional support and resilience in the face of the challenging and distressing nature of their work. This finding demonstrates that faith and religion can counter the negative effects of stress, as identified by Queiros et al. (2020), including an increase in sickness and absence from work, poor work performance, job dissatisfaction, a reduction in motivation, a reduction in one's ability to perform complex task as well as the use of unhealthy coping mechanisms. In this study, faith served as a positive coping mechanism. In fact, faith may help these women see the bigger picture and transcend the boundaries of their immediate work environment. This broader perspective may enhance their understanding of the significance of their role in the lives of the children they serve.

5.3. Summary

The present chapter offered an overview of the analytic outcomes derived from the current study. This research study aimed to investigate and understand the lived experiences of three policewomen involved in policing child abuse cases within the context of South Africa. In alignment with the research question and overarching objective, this chapter delved into the superordinate and underlying subordinate themes that emerged through the analysis of collected data. The primary goal of this chapter was to provide insights into each participant's distinct encounters and perspectives concerning the policing of child abuse, subsequently interlinking these findings with existing literature. In this manner, the chapter uncovered the thematic outcomes that have emerged from the data collection and analysis procedures.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, a summary and review of the research findings are provided to bring the investigation to a close. The main objective of this chapter is to provide an integrated understanding of the study's outcomes, including a condensed discussion of the key findings, the limitations identified, the contributions made by the research, and the suggestions proposed by the study. Ultimately, this chapter encapsulates how the study effectively addressed the research question and fulfilled its overarching aim.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings

This research study focused on understanding the experiences of policewomen involved in policing child abuse cases, emphasising their lived accounts and the meanings they attach to these experiences. The analysis revealed several key themes through an IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis) methodology:

Policing child abuse cases was found to be emotionally laborious for policewomen. They often dealt with physically and emotionally distressing cases involving minors, which could be emotionally disturbing and evoke various reactions. This emotional labor was exacerbated by a challenging work environment with high child abuse case rates and limited resources. Policewomen were frequently required to display empathy and compassion when interacting with traumatized children and their families. This balancing act often led to inner turmoil, as they needed to set aside personal emotions to fulfill their professional duty. The emotional discomfort was especially evident in cases where children needed to be removed from abusive caregivers. Policing child abuse cases could have a significant long-term impact on the emotional well-being of policewomen. Witnessing the suffering of abused children could lead to strong emotional reactions, potentially making it challenging to remain impartial. Finding the right balance between professionalism and empathy was crucial for successful case investigations. Policing child abuse cases had emotional, psychological, and practical effects on policewomen, impacting their personal lives and potentially their children's upbringing. Exposure to distressing situations could lead to feelings of anger, sadness, helplessness, and frustration, which might spill over into personal life. Separating work-related stress from home life could be challenging. Policing child abuse cases could lead to vicarious trauma in police investigators. The emotional intensity of the cases, coupled with the need to establish rapport with victims, could result in investigators internalizing the

emotions and trauma of those they were trying to help. Cumulative exposure to trauma from multiple cases could increase the risk of developing vicarious trauma.

On the positive side, several sources of strength were identified among policewomen involved in these cases:

Collaborating with professionals from different units provided access to diverse skills, insights, and emotional support. It helped alleviate the sense of isolation and fostered learning and skill development. Policewomen found support and understanding from their families, helping them cope with the emotional challenges and stress of their work. Open communication with loved ones and engaging in activities together were crucial for maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Faith served as a significant source of strength, offering comfort, solace, and hope during challenging times. Prayer and moments of reflection helped investigators process their emotions, seek guidance, and find tranquility amidst the turmoil of their work.

In summary, the study revealed the emotional challenges and toll of policing child abuse cases for policewomen, along with the potential for long-term impact. However, it also highlighted sources of strength, including collaboration, family support, and faith, which played essential roles in helping these policewomen cope with the demands of their emotionally challenging work.

6.3 Recommendations

This study has shed light on the complex experiences of policewomen involved in child abuse cases. The study revealed the emotional toll policing child abuse cases can have on policewomen. These findings underscore the importance of prioritising policewomen's mental and emotional well-being by providing access to counselling, mental health resources, and peer support programmes. Policewomen highlighted the need for a strong support network. It could be beneficial for police organisations to acknowledge the emotional demands of this work and further promote an environment where policewomen feel comfortable seeking and receiving emotional support from colleagues and supervisors. In addition, understanding the coping strategies employed by policewomen may inform training programmes. Incorporating stress management, emotional regulation, and self-care techniques in training may equip policewomen with effective tools to manage the emotional challenges of child abuse cases.

The study revealed that maintaining a healthy work-life balance is challenging for policewomen in this field. It may be beneficial for police organisations to implement flexible scheduling, encourage time off, and foster a culture that respects officers' need for personal time to prevent burnout. Furthermore, the findings indicate a need for specialised training that prepares policewomen for the unique emotional and ethical challenges of child abuse cases. Training could also focus on trauma-informed practices, empathy-building, and communication skills when dealing with victims and their families. This can include debriefing sessions after challenging cases and sensitivity to re-traumatisation during investigations. Based on my interpretations, these recommendations may lead to a more supportive and empathetic environment for policewomen working on child abuse cases. This, in turn, can lead to improved overall well-being, job satisfaction, and effectiveness in addressing these challenging cases.

While this study has provided insights into policewomen's experiences in child abuse cases, further research is warranted to deepen understanding and inform future practices. A longitudinal study could track the long-term impact of such experiences on policewomen's mental health and well-being. Additionally, a comparative study could explore potential differences in experiences and coping strategies between policewomen and their male counterparts in similar roles. Given the focus of this study on policewomen, a parallel qualitative study could focus on male officers in child abuse units. This would offer insights into their experiences, emotional responses, and how they perceive and support their female colleagues. Such research endeavours would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play and help refine the strategies to improve the overall experience of policewomen involved in child abuse cases.

6.4 Strengths of the Study

The inherent limitations in the study mentioned below may be contrasted by possible contributions this research study has sought to make. The clear scarcity of qualitative research on policewomen's experiences and interpretations of policing child abuse cases was identified and discussed. Thus, this study made a clear epistemological contribution to bridge the dearth of international and local qualitative and idiographic research relating to qualitative accounts of policing child abuse cases as experienced from the policewomen's perspective. The study addresses a significant gap in the existing literature by exploring policewomen's

experiences and interpretations of policing child abuse cases. This research contributes to the field by providing valuable insights into an area that has been underrepresented in qualitative research. The study's approach to capturing the lived experiences, feelings, and perceptions of policewomen regarding child abuse cases is a strength. This phenomenological and idiographic exploration can provide rich and detailed accounts, allowing for a deeper understanding of the subject matter. This study has, therefore, contributed to the lived experiential and phenomenological accounts of policewomen's experiences, feelings, and perceptions regarding policing child abuse cases. By giving voice to the experiences and perspectives of policewomen in child abuse cases, the study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of their roles and challenges. This study may also serve as a foundation for future qualitative research in this field, encouraging further exploration and building on the knowledge base regarding the experiences of policewomen in child abuse cases.

6.5 Limitations

An IPA methodology rooted in interpretivism was assumed in the study while exploring the lived experiences and meaning-making processes of policewomen who police child abuse cases. Even though the chosen theoretical framework and methodology (IPA) allowed me to give voice to and amplify participants' accounts and interpretations of their lived experiences of policing child abuse, some limitations remain. Exploring lived realities reflects efforts at making sense of the meanings participants assign to phenomena (Smith et al., 2009). As such, IPA usually reflects a unique combination of experiences specific to a certain sample and may not necessarily reflect the experience of a specific phenomenon for all members of a population (Frechette et al., 2020). It, therefore, remains idiographic, subjectively interpreted and lacks generalisability even though generalisability was not the aim of the research (Nizza et al., 2021). The findings are thus not necessarily generalisable or constituent of any 'absolute' or 'objective truth' and may, therefore, not represent all South African policewomen's experiences and meanings regarding the policing of child abuse. However, this exploration may have identified a need to establish representative accounts of officers, given the nature of their experiences.

Another limitation inherent in this study is the omission of a reflexive research journal. Even though I aimed to include the reflexive journal as an appendix, I could not get the chance to include the contents of this journal as I ideally would have wanted to and as

initially planned. Including this content in an appendix for inclusion was not possible and as a result it was omitted due to time constraints. It was decided to prioritise the accounts and experiences of the policewomen, rather than including supplementary material such as a reflexive journal. In addition, due to time constraints, it was difficult to meet with the participants after writing the dissertation to check whether my interpretations capture their experiences. However, I have sent a summary of my interpretations and findings to the participants to provide them with the opportunity to read my interpretations of their experiences. However, despite these limitations, I have strived to construct a compelling and unfolding narrative. I also aimed to develop a vigorous experiential account with a specific focus on participants' experiences by close analytic reading as well as attending to convergence and divergence in the participants' accounts (Nizza et al., 2021).

Lastly, the IPA methodology draws on the researchers' insights and interpretations of participants' interpretations (Smith et al., 2009). Hence, the participants' intended meaning(s) may be obscured by how I chose to reflect on the participants' lived experiences within the context of this study (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, researchers may be tempted to emphasise their own opinions instead of purposively engaging with the participants' experiences and amplifying their voices (Frechette et al., 2020).

6.6 Conclusions

This study gave an overview of the main difficulties policewomen face policing child abuse cases and how these experts handle these difficulties daily. In an attempt to answer the research question, namely, "How do policewomen experience policing child abuse cases?" several findings were made. Firstly, policing these child abuse cases is experienced as an emotionally taxing job with high rates of offending and limited resources. During these challenges, women often have to show empathy and compassion. They often have to do the uncomfortable job of catching the criminal while still caring for the victim. This may not be easy for women as they see the heartbreak in the child victim. Policewomen are often in the uncomfortable position of acting professionally and fulfilling their duties despite experiencing intense emotional reactions in the case. Apart from the effect on themselves, policing child abuse cases may also affect how policewomen raise their own children. The emotional and psychological challenges that policewomen face when working on child abuse cases can lead to the development of vicarious trauma.

Apart from the challenges mentioned, the policewomen also experienced sources of strength in their work, such as strength from collaborating with other units, strength from their families, and the positive influence of faith in their daily lives. Although the study's sample was small, the findings were generally in line with the body of international literature involving professionals who handle complaints of child abuse (Bozga, 2020; Burns & Buchanan, 2020; Craddock & Telesco, 2021). This alignment with existing research suggests that the experiences and challenges identified within the study are not isolated but reflect broader trends and common themes that professionals in various contexts encounter when dealing with child abuse cases. Moreover, this alignment with international literature reinforces the urgency of addressing the emotional toll that handling child abuse cases can have on professionals. It underscores that the emotional challenges, potential for vicarious trauma, and the need for comprehensive support systems are concerns shared by professionals across different cultural and organisational settings. By delving into the experiences of policewomen in child abuse cases, the study has provided a foundation for informed strategies that can better support these officers, safeguard their mental well-being, and ultimately improve their effectiveness in addressing one of society's most sensitive and critical challenges.

To conclude, after analysis and interpretation of the policewomen's accounts of policing child abuse cases, I found that these women often experience great challenges in their daily work as they aim to protect children and bring about justice. It became apparent that policewomen involved in policing child abuse cases have to deal with these cases on a frequent basis, to such an extent that it may be difficult to quantify how many cases they have attended to. They also have to respond to these cases in a very challenging environment with limited resources and high rates of recidivism which brings about a variety of emotional responses in the women. Despite their emotional reactions, they have to remain impartial in the face of suffering in order for them to fulfil their duty and to act professional. Seeing all the suffering caused to child victims affect not only the policewomen personally, but also in the way that they raise their own children. They often become overprotective of their children and worry for their safety. However, their children and families might serve as motivation for them and a means of coping with a demanding job. It was also found that faith as well as professional help such as counselling played an important role in the way in which these women cope. This research not only deepened understanding of the challenges and coping mechanisms of women officers in this context but also shed light on the broader societal implications of their work on personal lives and relationships.

References

- Agocs, T., Langan, D. & Sanders, C. B. (2015). Police mothers at home. *Gender & Society*, 29(2), 265-289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243214551157>
- Ahern, E. C., Sadler, L. H., Lamb, M.E. & Gariglietti, G. (2017). Wellbeing of professionals working with suspected victims of child sexual exploitation. *Child Abuse Review*, 26(2), 130–140. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2439>
- Alharahsheh, H. H. & Pius, A. (2020). A review of key paradigms: Positivism VS interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 1-2. <https://doi.org/10.36348/gajhss.2020.v02i03.001>
- Artz, L., Burton, P., Ward, C.L., Leoschut, L., Phyfer, J., Lloyd, S., Kassanje, R. & Le Mottee, C. (2016, May). *Sexual victimisation of children in South Africa*. SaferSpaces. <https://www.saferspaces.org.za/resources/entry/sexual-victimisation-of-children-in-south-africa-final-report>
- Aspers, P. & Corte, U. (2019). What is qualitative in qualitative research. *Qualitative Sociology*, 42(2), 139-160. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7>
- Badoe, E. (2017). A critical review of child abuse and its management in Africa. *African Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 7, 32-35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.afjem.2017.09.002>
- Bendall, C. (2010). The domestic violence epidemic in South Africa: Legal and practical remedies. *Women's Studies*, 39(2), 100-118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00497870903459275>
- Bezuidenhout, C. (2020). *A Southern African perspective on fundamental criminology* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education South Africa.

- Bindler, A. & Hjalmarrsson, R. (2021). The impact of the first professional police forces on crime. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 19(6), 3063–3103.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/jeea/jvab011>
- Blasbalg, U., Hershkowitz, I. & Karni-Visel, Y. (2018). Support, reluctance, and production in child abuse investigative interviews. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 24(4), 518-527. <https://doi.org/10.1037/law0000183>
- Bozga, A., McDowall, A. & Brown, J. (2021). “Little red sandals”: Female police officers’ lived experience of investigating sexual violence. *Policing*, 44(1), 1-23.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-02-2020-0029>
- Brady, P. Q. (2017). Crimes against caring: Exploring the risk of secondary traumatic stress, burnout, and compassion satisfaction among child exploitation investigators. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 32(4), 305-318. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11896-016-9223-8>
- Breetzke, G. D. (2010). A socio-structural analysis of crime in the city of Tshwane, South Africa. *South African Journal of Science*, 106(11), 1-7.
<https://doi.org/10.4102/sajs.v106i11/12.223>
- Brodeur, V. (2018). *Female law enforcement officer’s experiences of workplace harassment* [Master’s dissertation, California State University, San Bernardino]. CSUSB Scholarworks. <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/621/>
- Burns, C. & Buchanan, M. (2020). Factors that influence the decision to seek help in a police population. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(18), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17186891>
- Capps, J. (2023, March 21). *The pragmatic theory of truth*.
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth-pragmatic/>

- Carminati, L. (2018). Generalizability in qualitative research: A tale of two traditions. *Qualitative Health Research*, 28(13), 2094-2101.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732318788379>
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. (2023). *Trauma*. <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/trauma>
- Chen, P. F. & Wu, L. (2022). Impact of job demands on police stress response- The roles of basic psychological needs and job autonomy. *BMC Public Health*, 22(1), 1-10.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-14758-6>
- Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2019, April). *Long-term consequences of child abuse and neglect*. https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/long_term_consequences.pdf
- Christensen, L., Johnson, R. & Turner, L. (2015). *Research methods, design and analysis* (12th ed.). Pearson Education Ltd.
http://students.aiu.edu/submissions/profiles/resources/onlineBook/c9w8W6_Research_Methods_Design_and_Analysis_Global_Edition.pdf
- Craddock, T. B. & Telesco, G. (2022). Police stress and deleterious outcomes: Efforts towards improving police mental health. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 37(1), 173-182. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11896-021-09488-1>
- Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (4th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Edwards, F. (2019). Family surveillance: Police and the reporting of child abuse and neglect. *The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 5(1), 50-70.
<https://doi.org/10.7758/rsf.2019.5.1.03>

- Englander, M. (2012). The interview: Data collection in descriptive phenomenological human scientific research. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 43*(1), 13-35.
<https://doi.org/10.1163/156916212x632943>
- Etikan, I. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics, 5*(1), 1-4.
<https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- Ettinger, T. R. (2022). Children's needs during disclosures of abuse. *SN Social Sciences, 2*(7), 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-022-00397-6>
- Foley, J. & Massey, K. L. D. (2020). The 'cost' of caring in policing: From burnout to PTSD in police officers in England and Wales. *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles, 94*(3), 298-315. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032258x20917442>
- Frechette, J., Bitzas, V., Aubry, M., Kilpatrick, K. & Lavoie-Tremblay, M. (2020). Capturing lived experience: Methodological considerations for Interpretive Phenomenological Inquiry. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 19*. 1-12.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920907254>
- Gonzales, D., Mirabal, A. B., McCall, J. D. & Doerr, C. (2023, July 4). *Child abuse and neglect (Nursing)*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK568689/>
- Gupta, U. (2013). Informed consent in clinical research: Revisiting few concepts and areas. *Perspectives in Clinical Research, 4*(1), 26-32. <https://doi.10.4103/2229-3485.106373>
- Herbert, J. L. & Bromfield, L. (2019). Better together? A review of evidence for multi-disciplinary teams responding to physical and sexual child abuse. *Trauma Violence Abuse, 20*(2), 214-228. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838017697268>
- Hesketh, I. & Tehrani, N. (2018). Psychological trauma risk management in the UK police service. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice, 13*(4), 1-5.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/police/pay083>.

- Hovey, A., Rye, B. J., George, E., Scott, S. & Chambers, L. (2023). Impact of children's presence on police responses to domestic violence call situations. *Child Maltreatment*, 28(3), 476-487. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10775595221147315>
- Hsiao, C., Fry, D., Ward, C. L., Ganz, G., Casey, T., Zheng, X. & Fang, X. (2018). Violence against children in South Africa: The cost of inaction to society and the economy. *BMJ Global Health*, 3(1), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2017-000573>
- Junjie, M. & Yingxin, M. (2022). The discussions of positivism and interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 10-14. <https://doi.org/10.36348/gajhss.2022.v04i01.002>
- Kalu, F. A. & Bwalya, J. (2017). What makes qualitative research good research? An exploratory analysis of critical elements. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, 5(2), 43-56. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijssr.v5i2.10711>
- Khan, S. N. (2014). Qualitative research method - Phenomenology. *Asian Social Science*, 10(21), 298-310. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v10n21p298>
- Kivunja, C. & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 6(5), 26-41. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n5p26>
- Kubala, K. (2022, July 15). *What is secondary trauma?*. PsychCentral <https://psychcentral.com/health/secondary-trauma>
- Kulkarni, S., Bell, H., Hartman, J. L. & Herman-Smith, R. L. (2013). Exploring individual and organizational factors contributing to compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout in domestic violence service providers. *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research*, 4(2), 114-130. <https://doi.org/10.5243/jsswr.2013.8>

- Levey, E. J., Apter, G. & Harrison, A. M. (2017). The global problem of child maltreatment: Perspectives on mechanisms of influence and illness presentation. *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, 10(1), 90-96.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17542863.2016.1264440>
- Maceachern, A. D., Jindal-Snape, D., & Jackson, S. (2011). Child abuse investigation: Police officers and secondary traumatic stress. *International Journal of Occupational Safety and Ergonomics*, 17(4), 329-339. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10803548.2011.11076898>
- Martin, D., Kelly, L., Jackson, S. & Byszko, S. (2017). Policing child abuse: Challenges and opportunities for specialist units. *Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice*, 3(2), 132-141. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jcrpp-01-2017-0009>
- McCarthy, D. J. (2013). Gendering 'Soft' policing: Multi-agency working, female cops, and the fluidities of police culture/s. *Policing and Society*, 23(2), 261-278,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2012.703199>
- Medjedovic, I. (2011). Secondary analysis of qualitative interview data: Objections and experiences. *Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 12(3), 1-16. <https://doi.10.0114-fqs11304104>.
- Merriam Webster. (2023, July 19). *Policewoman*. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policewoman>
- Millar, A., Saxton, M., Øverlien, C. & Elliffe, R. (2021). Police officers do not need more training; but different training. Policing domestic violence and abuse involving children: A rapid review. *Journal of Family Violence*, 37(7), 1071-1088.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-021-00325-x>
- Miller, A. R. & Segal, C. (2019). Do female officers improve law enforcement quality? Effects on crime reporting and domestic violence. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 86(5), 2220-2247. <https://doi.org/10.1093/restud/rdy051>

- Mohajan, H. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, 7(1), 23-48.
<https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/85654/>
- Monday, U. T. (2020). Impacts of interview as research instrument of data collection in social sciences. *Journal of Digital Art & Humanities*, 1(1), 15-24.
https://doi.org/10.33847/2712-8148.1.1_2
- Montague, J., Phillips, E., Holland, F. & Archer, S. (2020). Expanding hermeneutic horizons: Working as multiple researchers and with multiple participants. *Research Methods in Medicine & Health Sciences*, 1(1), 25-30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2632084320947571>
- Moore, G., Buckley, K., Howarth., E. Burn, A., Copeland, L., Evans, R. & Ware, L. (2021). Police referrals for domestic abuse before and during the first COVID-19 lockdown: An analysis of routine data from one specialist service in South Wales. *Journal of Public Health*, 44(2), 252-259. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdab343>
- Mushwana, M. R. V., Govender, I. & Nel, K. (2019). Stress and coping mechanisms of officers of the South African Police Service based in Tzaneen, Limpopo province, South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychiatry*, 25, 1-7.
<https://doi.org/10.4102/sajpsychoiatry.v25i0.1342>
- Naderifar, M., Goli, H., & Ghaljaie, F. (2017). Snowball sampling: A purposeful method of sampling in qualitative research. *Strides in Development of Medical Education*, 14, 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.5812/sdme.67670>
- Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T. & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 8(2), 90-97.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2>
- Nickerson, C. (2023, May 24). *Interpretivism paradigm & research philosophy*. SimplySociology. <https://simplysociology.com/interpretivism-paradigm.html>

- Nizza, I. E., Farr, J. & Smith, J. A. (2021). Achieving excellence in interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): Four markers of high quality. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18(3), 369–386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1854404>
- Nowich, M., Kringen, A. L. & Hunt, G. (2018). “They can’t search her”: How gender imbalances in the police force contribute to perceptions of procedural unfairness. *Feminist Criminology*, 13(3), 260-286. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085117753669>
- Oxburgh, G., Ost, J., Morris, P. & Cherryman, J. (2014). The impact of question type and empathy on police interviews with suspects of homicide, filicide and child sexual abuse. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 21(6), 903-917. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13218719.2014.918078>
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P. Duan, N. & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(5), 533-544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Paul, A. & Adamo, M. (2014). Non-accidental trauma in pediatric patients: a review of epidemiology, pathophysiology, diagnosis and treatment. *Translational Pediatrics*, 3(3), 195-207. <https://doi.org/10.3978/j.issn.2224-4336.2014.06.01>
- Pervin, N. & Mokhtar, M. (2022). The interpretivist research paradigm: A subjective notion of a social context. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 11(2), 419-428. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v11-i2/12938>
- Pham, L. (2018, April 13). *A review of key paradigms: Positivism, interpretivism and critical enquiry*. ResearchGate.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324486854_A_Review_of_key_paradigms_positivism_interpretivism_and_critical_inquiry

Police Chiefs' Association of Santa Clara County. (2023, April 17). *Santa Clara county child abuse protocol for law enforcement*.

<https://countyda.sccgov.org/sites/g/files/exjcpb1121/files/documents/Child%20Abuse%20Protocol%20%282023%29.pdf>

Powell, M. B. & Guadagno, B. (2013). An examination of the limitations in investigative interviewers' use of open-ended questions. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 15(3), 382-395. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13218710802101621>

Queiros, C., Passos, F., Bartolo, A., Marques, A. J., da Silva, C. F. & Pereira, A. (2020).

Burnout and stress measurement in police officers: Literature review and a study with the operational police stress questionnaire. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1-23.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00587>

Redmond, T., Conway, P., Bailey, S., Lee, P. & Lundrigan, S. (2023). How we can protect the protectors: Learning from police officers and staff involved in child sexual abuse and exploitation investigations. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1-16.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1152446>

Retief, R. & Green, S. (2015). Some challenges of policing domestic violence. *Social Work*, 51(1), 135-147. <https://doi.org/10.15270/51-1-432>

Retief, R. T. (2013). *Police officers' experiences of policing domestic violence in the Western Cape Province* [Master's dissertation, University of Stellenbosch]. Sun Scholar.

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/37420539.pdf>

SAPS. (2021, November 11). *SAPS hosts mental health and suicide summit in a bid to destigmatize health issues within the SAPS*.

<https://www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/msspeechdetail.php?nid=36272>

- Saunders, M. & Townsend, K. (2016). Reporting and justifying the number of interview participants in organisation and workplace research. *British Journal of Management*, 27, 836-852. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12182>
- Schut, R. A., Sorenson, S. B. & Gelles, R. J. (2020). Police response to violence and conflict between parents and their minor children. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35(2), 117-129. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-019-00088-6>
- Shelley, T. O. C., Morabito, M. S. & Tobin-Gurley, J. (2011). Gendered institutions and gender roles: understanding the experiences of women in policing. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 24(4), 351-367. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1478601x.2011.625698>
- Shen, A. & Schulz, D. M. (2022). Trajectory of women's advancement in policing: A comparative study between China and the United States. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 11(4), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.2334>
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2015). Interpretative phenomenological analysis as a useful methodology for research on the lived experience of pain. *British Journal of Pain*, 9(1), 41-42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2049463714541642>
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P. & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretive phenomenological analysis: Theory, method, and research*. Sage Publications.
- Strydom, M., Schiller, U. & Orme, J. (2020). The Current Landscape of Child Protection Services in South Africa: A Systematic Review. *Social Work*, 56(4), 383-402. <https://doi.org/10.15270/56-4-881>
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2023, March 17). *Understanding child trauma*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/child-trauma/understanding-child-trauma>

- Surmiak, A. (2018). Confidentiality in qualitative research involving vulnerable participants: Researchers' perspectives. *Qualitative Social Research, 19*(3), 1-26.
<https://doi.10.17169/fqs-19.3.3099>
- Thanh, N. & Le Thanh, T. (2015). The interconnection between interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methods in education. *American Journal of Educational Science, 1*(2), 24-27. <https://www.studocu.com/co/document/instituto-nacional-de-educacion-media-diversificada-manuel-murillo-toro/comunicacion-social/the-interconnection-between-interpretivist-paradigm-and-qualitative-methods-in-education/34430119>
- Veldman, J., Meeussen, L., Van Laar, C. & Phalet, K. (2017). Women (do not) belong here: Gender-work identity conflict among female police officers. *Frontiers in Psychology, 8*, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00130>
- Violanti, J. M., Fekedulegn, D., Hartley, T. A., Charles, L. E., Andrew, M. E., Ma, C. C. & Burchfiel, C. M. (2016). Highly rated and most frequent stressors among police officers: Gender differences. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 41*(4), 645-662.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-016-9342-x>
- Warren, C. & Karner, T. (2015). *Discovering qualitative methods: Field research, interviews and analysis*. Roxbury Publishing Company.
- Wassermann, A., Meiring, D. & Becker, J. R. (2018). Stress and coping of police officers in the South African Police Service. *South African Journal of Psychology, 49*(1), 97-108. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246318763059>
- Weber, M. C. (2018, August 20). *Investigating medical child abuse*. FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. <https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/investigating-medical-child-abuse>

- WHO (2020, June 18). *Global status report on preventing violence against children*.
<https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/violence-prevention/global-status-report-on-violence-against-children-2020>
- WHO (2022, November 29). *Violence against children*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-children>
- WHO (2022, September 19). *Child maltreatment*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/child-maltreatment>
- Williams, M. (2016). Police social work in South Africa. *Social Work*, 52(1), 130-143.
<https://doi.org/10.15270/52-1-483>
- Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Wilson, A. A. (2016). *Female police officers' perceptions and experience with marginalization: A phenomenological study* [Doctoral Thesis, Walden University]. ScholarWorks. <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/2948/>
- Wright, R., Powell, M. B. & Ridge, D. (2006). Child abuse investigation: An in-depth analysis of how police officers perceive and cope with daily work challenges. *Policing: An International Journal*, 29(3), 498-512.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/13639510610684728>
- Young, M., Koortzen, P. & Oosthuizen, R. M. (2012). Exploring the meaning of trauma in the South African Police Service: A systems psychodynamic perspective. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 38(2), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v38i2.1004>

Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF POLICEWOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF POLICING CHILD ABUSE

Hello my name is Armand Luijk, I am currently a Master student at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria. You are being invited to take part in my research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take some time to read the following information carefully, which will explain the details of this research project. Please feel free to ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

- The purpose of this study is to find out how women police officers experience the policing of child abuse cases. Little is known about how policewomen experience the policing of child abuse despite having to conduct child abuse investigations. Therefore, I have decided to conduct a study on the experiences of policewomen with regards to the policing of child abuse.
- The overall aim of this study is to discover how policewomen experience the policing of child abuse.

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

- You will be invited to participate because you are a female police officer with experience in policing child abuse.
- You have also complied with the following:
 - You are competent in English;
 - You are a female police officer;
 - You have experience in policing child abuse;
 - You have completed SAPS training and you are an active police member.
- You will be excluded if you are not proficient in English, a male police officer, if you do not have any experience in policing a child abuse case, or if you are not an active police officer.



WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

- You will be expected to participate in an interview with me. The interview may be conducted in-person where you are stationed or through an online videoconference.
- During this interview, I will ask you questions about your experience in dealing with child abuse cases. In this time, you will be provided with the opportunity to be open and honest about your experiences. This interview will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes of your time.
- Permission to record the interview will be asked. You will also be provided with the opportunity to ask questions regarding uncertainties or to express your feelings resulting from the interview.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

- Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason, if you decide not to take part in the study without negative consequences or being penalized.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

- Anonymity will be ensured by keeping the identity of the research participant confidential and will not be associated with any data. Anonymity will further be ensured by ensuring that the participant's names and stations will not be revealed. Furthermore, collected data will not be disclosed to any unauthorised persons. Confidentiality will be ensured by assigning code names/numbers to each participant, and that will be used in all research notes and documents. Findings from this data will be disseminated through conferences and publications. Reporting of findings will be anonymous, only the researchers of this study will have access to the information.
- ❖ Please note participant information will be kept confidential, except in cases where the researcher is legally obliged to report incidents such as abuse and suicide risk.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

- Direct benefits for you as a participant will be insight into your subjective experiences as a female police officer. It will therefore provide you with the opportunity to share your experiences.



- The indirect benefits will be insight into the experiences of a female police officer as well as improved understanding of the needs for both the female officers and the victims of child abuse.

WHAT ARE THE ANTICIPATED RISKS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

- The risks in this study are minimal and no physical risks are anticipated, however, speaking about personal experiences of child abuse may cause unwanted emotions or feelings. Measures to minimize these risks are referral to a counsellor from Employee Health and Wellness (EHW) of the SAPS if these unwanted emotions or feelings causes personal distress. A referral may also may be made to the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) for counselling, free of charge.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT SOME FORM OF DISCOMFORT OCCUR AS A RESULT OF TAKING PART IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

- Should you have the need for further discussions after the interviews, an opportunity will be arranged for you.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

- Electronic information will be stored for period of 15 years. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable.
- Participant information in hard copies of raw data be will locked in the cabinet and electronic data will be kept in a file that is password protected in the Department of Psychology

WHAT WILL THE RESEARCH DATA BE USED FOR?

Data gathered from the participant would be used for research purposes that include;

- Dissertation, article publication, national and international conference presentations;
- For administration purpose or policy briefs;
- For further research to inform secondary data analysis.

WILL I BE PAID TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

- No, you will not be paid to take part in this study but refreshments may be provided.
- Travel expenses will be paid for the participants who have to travel to the site of the interview. This means there will be no costs involved to you if you take part in this study.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL



This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria. Ethical approval number is **HUM003/0421**. A copy of the approval letter can be provided to you on request.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

The findings of the research study will be shared with you by **Armand Luijk** after one year or two years of completing the study.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE CONCERN, COMPLAINT OR ANYTHING I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE STUDY?

If you have questions about this study or you have experienced adverse effects as a result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided below. If you have questions regarding the rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the researcher, please contact the supervisor, and contact details are below

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and in advance for participating in this study.

Researcher

Name...Armand Luijk.....
Contact number...0848217861.....
Email address...armandlijk5@gmail.com.....

Supervisor

Name...Sulaiyman Philander.....
Contact number...012 420 3041.....
Email address...sulaiyman.philander@up.ac.za.....

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form



THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS REGARDING THE POLICING OF CHILD ABUSE {HUM003/0421}

WRITTEN CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without			
I understand that information collected during the study will not be linked to my identity and I give permission to the researchers			
I understand that this study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance from Research Ethics Committee Faculty of			
I understand who will have access to personal information and how the information will be stored with a clear understanding			
I give consent that data gathered may be used for dissertation, article publication, conference presentations and writing policy			
I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.			
I consent to being audio recorded.			

Departmental Research Committee (ResCom)
University of Pretoria, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Psychology
Humanities Building, Lynnwood Road, Hatfield, 0083, South Africa
Private Bag X20, Hatfield 0028, South Africa
Email: psychology.rescom@up.ac.za
Website: www.up.ac.za/psychology

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Departement Sielkunde
Lefapha la Bomotheo
Kgoro ya Saekolotši

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE
I consent to have my audio recordings be used in research outputs such as publication of articles, thesis and conferences as long as my identity is protected.			
I give permission to be quoted directly in the research publication whilst remaining anonymous.			
I have sufficient opportunity to ask questions and I agree to take part in the above study.			

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature

Appendix C: Permission From the Faculty Ethics Committee



Faculty of Humanities

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo



15 November 2021

Dear Mr A Lwijk

Project Title: An interpretative phenomenological study of policewomen's experiences of policing child abuse
Researcher: Mr A Lwijk
Supervisor(s): Mr S Philander
Department: Psychology
Reference number: 14008841 (HUM003/0421)
Degree: Masters

I have pleasure in informing you that the above application was **approved** by the Research Ethics Committee on 15 November 2021. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely,

Prof Karen Harris
Chair: Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: tracey.andrew@up.ac.za

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof KL Harris (Chair); Mr A Bizos; Dr A-M de Beer; Dr A dos Santos; Dr P Gutura; Ms KT Govinder Andrew; Dr E Johnson; Dr D Krige; Prof D Maree; Mr A Mohamed; Dr I Noomé; Dr J Okeke; Dr C Puttergill; Prof D Reyburn; Prof M Soer; Prof E Taljard; Ms D Mokalapa

Room 7-27, Humanities Building, University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20, Hatfield 0028, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)12 420 4853 | Fax +27 (0)12 420 4501 | Email pghumanities@up.ac.za | www.up.ac.za/faculty-of-humanities

Appendix D: Permission From SAPS

South African Police Service



Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie

Privaatsak Private Bag X94	Pretoria 0001	Faks No. Fax No.	(012) 393 2128
-------------------------------	------------------	---------------------	----------------

Your reference/U verwysing:

My reference/My verwysing: 3/34/2

THE HEAD: RESEARCH
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE
PRETORIA
0001

Enquiries/Navrae: Lt Col Joubert
AC Thenga
Tel: (012) 393 3118
Email: JoubertG@saps.gov.za



A Luijk
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS REGARDING THE POLICING OF CHILD ABUSE: UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER: A LUIJK

The above subject matter refers.

You are hereby granted approval for your research study on the above mentioned topic in terms of National Instruction 1 of 2006.


Further arrangements regarding the research study may be made with the following office:

The Provincial Commissioner: Gauteng:

- **Contact Person:** Lt Col Ruthnam
- **Contact Details:** (011) 547 9131
- **Email Address :** RuthnamKeith@saps.gov.za

- **Contact Person:** SAC Mphatse
- **Contact Details:** (011) 547 9129
- **Email Address:** MphatseB@saps.gov.za

Kindly adhere to paragraph 6 of our attached letter signed on the **2021-09-01** with the same above reference number.


MAJOR GENERAL
THE HEAD: RESEARCH
DR PR VUMA

DATE: 2021-10-04

Appendix E: Permission to Conduct Research in SAPS

SUID-AFRIKAANSE POLISIEDIENS  SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

Privaatsak/Private Bag X 94

Verwysing/Reference:	3/34/2
Navrae/Enquiries:	Lt Col Joubert AC Thenga
Telefoon/Telephone:	(012) 393 3118
Email Address:	JoubertG@saps.gov.za

**THE HEAD: RESEARCH
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE
PRETORIA
0001**

The Provincial Commissioner
GAUTENG

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: THE EXPERIENCES OF
FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS REGARDING THE POLICING OF CHILD ABUSE:
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER: A LUIJK**

1. The above subject matter refers.
2. The researcher, A Luijk, is conducting a study titled: The experiences of female police officers regarding the policing of child abuse, with the aim ***to explore how women police officers experience the policing of child abuse.***
3. The researchers are requesting permission to interview a maximum of six (6) female police members with experience in the policing of child abuse in the following policing areas: Mamelodi, Akasia, Villeria Sunnyside, Eersterust and Garsfontein.
4. The proposal was perused according to National Instruction 1 of 2006. This office recommends that permission be granted for the research study, subject to the final approval and further arrangements by the office of the Provincial Commissioner: Gauteng.
5. We hereby request the final approval by your office if you concur with our recommendation. Your office is also at liberty to set terms and conditions to the researcher to ensure that compliance standards are adhered to during the research process and that research has impact to the organisation.
6. If approval is granted by your office, this office will obtain a signed undertaking from researcher prior to the commencement of the research which will include your terms and conditions if there are any and the following:
 - 6.1. The research will be conducted at his/her exclusive cost.

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS REGARDING THE POLICING OF CHILD ABUSE: UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER: A LUIJK

- 6.2 The researcher will conduct the research without the disruption of the duties of members of the Service and where it is necessary for the research goals, research procedures or research instruments to disrupt the duties of a member, prior arrangements must be made with the commander of such member.
- 6.3 The researcher should bear in mind that participation in the interviews must be on a voluntary basis.
- 6.4 The information will at all times be treated as strictly confidential.
- 6.5 The researcher will provide an annotated copy of the research work to the Service.
- 6.6 The researcher will ensure that research report / publication complies with all conditions for the approval of research.
7. If approval is granted by your office, for smooth coordination of research process between your office and the researcher, the following information is kindly requested to be forwarded to our office:
 - **Contact person:** Rank, Initials and Surname.
 - **Contact details:** Office telephone number and email address.
8. A copy of the approval (if granted) and signed undertaking as per paragraph 6 supra to be provided to this office within 21 days after receipt of this letter.
9. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.


MAJOR GENERAL
THE HEAD: RESEARCH
DR PR VUMA

DATE: 2021-09-01

Appendix F: SAPS Undertaking

UNDERTAKING

I, Armand Luijk..... (Name and surname)
Hereby indemnify the South African Police Service (SAPS) against any claims for any loss or damage caused by or to any equipment used during the research and against any claims for any loss or damage or any other moneys for which the Service may be held liable as a consequence of its involvement in the project.

I further undertake to conduct the research without any unreasonable disruption to the duties of the members of the Service, where it is necessary for the research goals, research procedure or research instruments to disrupt the duties of a members, prior arrangements must be made in good time with the commander of such employee;

I undertake–

- not to divulge information received from any employee of the SAPS or any person with whom I conducted an interview, and that the information will at all times be treated as strictly confidential;
- that the research will be performed at my exclusive cost, that I will provide all equipment of whatsoever nature used to conduct the research;
- will pay fees or comply with further procedures in the SAPS, such as fees or procedures applicable to obtain access to a record of the SAPS; and
- to donate an annotated copy of the research work to the SAPS.

Signed: _____



Date: _____

05/05/2021

Place: _____

Pretoria

Appendix G: Interview Guide



Potential interview questions to ask the participants

Build rapport with the participant by asking how they are feeling at present and about the interview. Reiterate that all information will remain confidential and that they may withdraw at any point if they feel uncomfortable. Also, reiterate that I am only interested in their personal experiences of policing child abuse. Ask the participant whether they have any questions before the commencement of the interview.

Demographic information

1. Station
2. Rank
3. Age
4. Race
5. Approximate number of child abuse incidents investigated thus far?

Potential interview questions

1. Can you please tell me about how you became a police officer?
FOLLOW UP QUESTION: Why did you choose to become a police officer?
2. Are you often assigned to child abuse cases?
PROMPT: Why / Why not
3. Can you please describe your experience of responding to a child abuse complaint that stands out in your memory?
(Reassure the participant that they do not need to reveal any identifying information regarding any of the parties concerned.)
4. Why did you choose to discuss this particular incident?
5. How has this incident affected your life?
PROMPT: What kind of impact has it had on your life?
6. What do you do when you arrive at the scene where the alleged abuse took place?
7. How do you feel when you arrive at the scene where the alleged abuse took place?
8. How do you typically react towards the child?
9. How do you typically react towards the suspect?

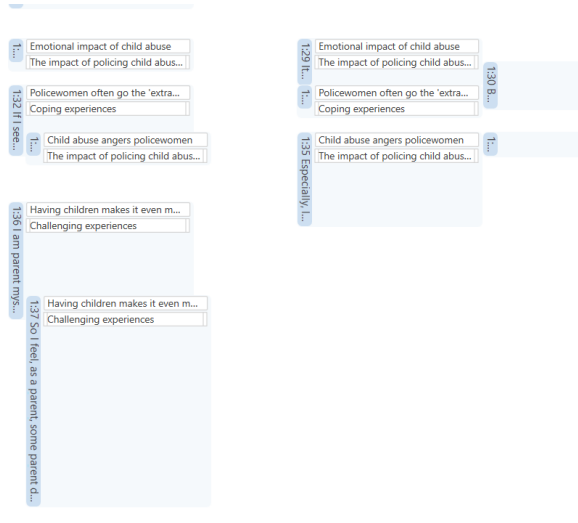
10. Can you please describe what you are feeling while dealing with the case?
11. How do you feel when you are dealing with the child?
12. How do you feel when you are dealing with the suspect?
13. How do you feel after you have dealt with the case?
14. Does responding to child abuse affect your relationships with your loved ones in any way?
15. Do you think that dealing with child abuse hinders your ability to carry out your duties in any way?

FOLLOW UP: Do you make use of any support services to cope with the effects of dealing with child abuse investigations (if the participant answered yes).

Appendix H: Raw Data Example

7 Interviewer: And do you think your religion helps you in your day-to-day?

8 Participant 1: It does, child abuse, for me, even though you say "it doesn't impact me" it does. It might not impact you immediately for you to recognise it because you go fully professional. But as soon as you get that time to sit down and reflect on what has happened, you would go your extra mile. Sometimes I use my personal resources to do my work. If I see this child needs clothes. I'll physically go out and find clothes for this child. If I see this child is hungry, I physically go and look for food. It's like you take it personally. As a woman, I take it personally. I take it personally that I have to calm myself down because it angers me. Sometimes I direct my anger at the parents. Especially, like a sexual abuse case. I am a firm believer that your child needs not to be left alone by a person that you do not know. You can't leave your child roaming in the streets and then you do not know where they are. You need to know where your child is at all times. You need to know the friends. I am parent myself. I don't physically play with my child but I do a spot check on him. What I normally do when he plays outside, I don't call him, I just walk. I want to see what games they are playing, I want to listen what language they are using. So, I try not to be seen so that I can know what my child is doing what I am not around him. If my child leaves the street to the shop. "You cannot walk yourself to the shop". You know, "you need to walk with someone because if something does happen to you, I need know where to start looking. So I feel, as a parent, some parent don't have the time. I think you should make your children a priority. Even though you are working retail you know? There are some parents that work retail hours and they don't have that time to go and look at their children. Some parents are working seven days a week. Some are working night shifts. Sometimes, I'm wrong in blaming them but sometimes I'm not. It's like a 50/50. I feel I have this open relationship with my child, I call it no secrets. "How was your day? What happened?" I need to interview my own child to find out what has happened. Is there any difference between the playing, who is he playing with. I even need to educate him. Especially when I bathe him. I have a boy, a son, "I'm the only person who is allowed to touch you when I am bathing you." "If somebody touches you on your private parts it is wrong" I have to educate my child. Especially with me being an officer, I have to educate him because he is by an age where knows im a boy, I stand and pee, the girls sit and pee. So he already knows the difference. Boys have boy parts and girls have girl parts. Girls and boys don't play together in certain cases, you know? I think I have tried to educate my child so that I don't make him feel uncomfortable but I also would like him to be aware if somebody is something is doing to him he needs to tell me. Even



Appendix I: All Codes

Project: Dissertation

Report created by Armand Luijk on 2023/07/07

Code Report

All (46) codes

○ Alcohol and drugs are often seen in cases of child abuse.

2 Quotations:

2:48 ¶ 58 in Interview transcript - participant 2

Mostly alcohol. “Mom and dad was drunk” I mean that is words that I hear. “Mom and dad was drunk”. So yes, the answer is definitely yes. In a lot of those cases, alcohol abuse is the problem. And in society this is big problem. We are living in this time and I can say again, we are not used to all the trauma and all the stress that this world has to give. We are not used to handle all of these things. I’m not saying by drinking is the correct thing to do now, I just don’t think that people know how to handle all the stress, how to handle all of this trauma, how to handle COVID-19. I mean, we are not made for this. So yes, alcohol abuse is a big problem and then in cases there is drug abuse. And with this ruling on the marihuana makes it very difficult. Because as an adult, you can use these things in the privacy of your own home. So if I have a talk on drugs and I ask the children in grade eight. “Do you know of these things?” All of them will put up their hand. “Yes, we know”. So it’s not something that is being done in secret, it is all over. So yes, it’s true.

2:49 ¶ 60 in Interview transcript - participant 2

If we talk about alcohol abuse, there is always neglect. Because they just don’t care. “Why must I care now?” So yes, neglect, the child is not clean, the room is dirty, the clothes are dirty, there is not food in the bag, the books are not covered. Those simple things. Lot of them. In some of these cases, so yes definitely neglect. You know, “do I have time? I’m coming from work”. What do I do? “Dad goes to the fridge and gets his beer”. I don’t make myself a cup of tea and say: “please bring your homework so I can look at your homework” “Is your homework done?” And if not, it’s a whole lot of nonsense. So yes, the way I do things and the way you do things are very different. So yes, we must start by the parents. To change this whole dynamic around child abuse.

○ Almost a daily occurrence

2 Quotations:

2:6 ¶ 6 in Interview transcript - participant 2

It happens. I don't want to say every day but its daily on average. I mean, there's not a day that goes by that I do not talk to a school.

2:54 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 2

But in years, it's about 18 years of experience, doing children cases, on a daily basis.

○ Being able to save children makes policewomen proud.

1 Quotations:

3:7 ¶ 6 in Interview transcript - participant 3

Uhhhh, after I arrested the perpetrator, I felt very proud, you know? Proud that I was able to save the life of one girl. Because of this guy, if we don't arrest him, he will continue doing it. At the end of the day, maybe he was going to hunt for this girl, and kill this innocent girl because that girl was revealing information about him to the police. So ya, I felt very proud to be able to put this guy in jail because who knows? He could have done this to other children.

○ Challenging environment

7 Quotations:

1:2 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

You deal with so much, you don't remember because it's not just child abuse, it is an entire broad theme.

1:9 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Because, as an officer, sometimes, we are not equipped with social working skills to be able to delegate the conversation in the right way.

1:24 ¶ 6 in Interview transcript - participant 1

It's up 5oclock, 4oclock, busy, it's mostly a disciplinarian, its changing the mindset that you have from the outside world to become the person that you need to become when you deal with the work that is there.

1:26 ¶ 6 in Interview transcript - participant 1

It took me a year. It's a long time to apply for a job and I was working by another job so I had to make space for the disappointment

1:49 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 1

This, um, lady walked into the CSC with her son and I think he was the age of five and you know when someone some walks in, you can see there is a difference between a casual walk and I need help. Sometimes your body language. Some of the people that walk into the police station, their body language screams at you what you need to do, you know? You can see in a person's expression, even before they start talking you can identify it. I call it body language response. I look at you and I try to figure out what is going on here so that I know how to deal with it. And she came in and she said to me: "I need help". It's a common question to get asked especially if you are frontline but when I asked her what was wrong she said "my child". And then I said, "Okay, I need to move this person away from the public at front". Because obviously we have those social distancing lines there up front but I can't say people don't eavesdrop. Sometimes the person there can hear what the person here is trying to say to me so I need to take them out of that general environment for them to feel a bit more comfortable. So I moved them to the far end of the CSC and I said okay what was wrong.

1:58 ¶ 18 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Sometimes, if we find them because you know, victims sometimes notify the offenders or the perpetrators: "Now I am going to open a case" so they are notifying them. So they are giving them information that they actually don't need. So when we go look for them they are not at the address given because they know they have done something

1:76 ¶ 30 in Interview transcript - participant 1

. I think more information needs to be spread. You can't just say 16 days of activism, is it only 16 days where GBV happen? It is during the whole year. So these things need to be promoted the entire time. Same as child abuse cases. Information needs to be giving all the time. And it is not at the moment. Most people don't even know that the majority of children are in danger

○ Child abuse angers policewomen

5 Quotations:

1:33 ¶ 8 in Interview transcript - participant 1

I take it personally that I have to calm myself down because it angers me.

1:35 ¶ 8 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Especially, like a sexual abuse case. I am a firm believer that your child needs not to be left alone by a person that you do not know. You can't leave your child roaming in the streets and then you do not know where they are. You need to know where your child is at all times. You need to know the friends.

2:28 ¶ 34 in Interview transcript - participant 2

Aaaaag, It's very difficult, because this is somebody that the child know and trust and love. So it's very difficult. It's very, very difficult. But it needs to be done. And that is how we protect the children is by doing that things. So yes, it's not. Ooooooh It's not

nice, you can get a bit aggressive and so on. But you just know how to do this and handle this. So I take my time and be calm and so on.

3:8 ¶ 8 in Interview transcript - participant 3

I was angry. The first time I met him I was very angry. “How can you do that to a young girl?” She was supposed to be at school, focusing on her education. Her life was disrupted because of this guy. If it was not for him, she would still be at home, focusing on her studies. Doing stuff that a normal eleven year old does, but now she must become an adult quickly sleeping with old men on the street, and what is she gaining? Only the drugs that are destroying her life in order to keep her on working. To keep her on being a sex slave. It was hard. It was difficult.

3:11 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 3

You know the anger it was there. I was feeling that I can get this person now, the perpetrator. I was so angry that he did it to this innocent child, I felt obligated to catch him because I did not want to see the sadness on that girl’s face on any other child’s face.

○ Child abuse cases impact policewomen in the way they raise their own children.

2 Quotations:

2:31 ¶ 38 in Interview transcript - participant 2

You know, you cannot answer in saying that it does not have any influence on how I’m bringing up my children, for an example. I am in this environment where I see what kind of things is being done to children. So much so that when I go home, I make very sure that I don’t even complain to my children. I don’t scream, I don’t fight, I don’t do anything. I just love them. Support them. Protect them. I don’t do anything wrong with my children, just because of the fact that you see what this specific child went through in his own home. So it definitely has an impact on me in the way that I do things in the way that I see things in the way that I handle specific things.

2:36 ¶ 46 in Interview transcript - participant 2

Oh, I only have children. I’m not married or so. I’ve got my parents, I’ve got sisters. So I really do need to do things right. Let me give you an example about my son, I have a son. And I think I was tougher on him than on my girls. Because you cannot abuse a woman, it is not acceptable. So, I was tough on my son, really. But I can say with certainty, he will never abuse a woman, never.

○ Child abuse is prevalent

0 Quotations

○ **Children might get upset with policewomen as the officer often have to arrest their relative or family friend.**

1 Quotations:

2:29 ¶ 34 in Interview transcript - participant 2

But on the end of the day [sigh], you will always be remembered by: “this police lady arrested my daddy” [pause] and [pause] that is also not nice to hear, because that is how that child is going to remember me. And I prefer that the child remembers me by something positive, and not something that negative. But it needs to be done. And it's difficult.

○ **Collaboration with other units**

13 Quotations:

1:8 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

, it's not only us, so there's other branches as well. It's social workers, it's our psychologists, FCS our sexual unit, as well as umm shelters. So, there's a lots of hands within this branch to assist this child.

1:10 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

So we do need someone who is experienced to first interview the abused, to find out what type of abuse it is for us to be able to identify what criminal offence it is.

1:40 ¶ 10 in Interview transcript - participant 1

We have a trauma unit here, so if somebody walks into the police station, we have standby social workers.

1:41 ¶ 10 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Most of our trauma consists of abuse. So, we have to have the necessary people available to assist these people. So, we personally at SAPS don't have social workers, but it is a stakeholder being outsourced. I think it is community safety that we working hand in hand with.

1:42 ¶ 12 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Yes, that is how we are able to open up our cases. So, if, for instance, let me give you an example. If a child walks into the station and the child comes with someone and the person says, “my child has been molested” or “something isn't right here because every time I speak to my child this child is crying or something”. So what I do, underage children need to be interviewed with a guardian because underage children cannot sign for themselves, unless. You use your own discretion. If you see this child is afraid to speak in front of this specific adult, you separate them. You have the power to separate them. Especially if it is a girl, females with females. I don't think a girl child will be comfortable explaining their molestation, or rape or sexual assault

or sexual abuse to a male officer. Mostly, males are the perpetrators. You don't females that perpetrate. Some of them, you can't say there isn't but it is not normal.

1:50 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 1

She came to the station the next, she came to tell the story, so what I immediately did, before I could even speak because the mother is telling me this. So I don't immediately open a case. I don't do anything before I speak to the victim. I do not touch any paperwork unless it's the victim. You cannot report a case on behalf of someone else, because hear-say is not admissible in court. It doesn't work. It's a broken telephone. That story will never be the same. The way you interpret it and the way that person was telling you, its two different stories. So I always try to interview the child himself or herself. And then I managed to remove the front, I took them to the social workers immediately before I could even speak to the child. Normally parents want to say the say, but the social workers spoke to the mother and explained what has happened. And then the child was interviewed by the social worker in front of the parent.

1:52 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 1

What the social workers do, they call child sexual unit and they specifically deal with that. That is their field of expertise, so even before we touch that docket, or listen to that story. We need to call the people that deal with it on a daily basis, so when those investigators come, they say we need to take that child to the hospital so that they can perform a medical examination. The social workers are here already for the emotional and mental counselling.

1:55 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Sometimes, what we do as an officer, we can open those dockets. The detectives knows exactly what needs to be in there and how it needs to be written for it to be going to trial, you know? I rather take that extra precaution that somebody helps me in that before I miswrite something and the case gets thrown out because of a mistake you made, you know. So your English is very important, your grammar, not to twist what that person has been telling you, because the truth stays the truth. If you tell something now and you ask them in two weeks or three weeks and they are going to tell you same story if it is the truth. But if it is not the truth, the story will completely change, you know? So, that's why I say for me to be able to do my work, I need to branch out to other organisations and other stakeholders to assist me to do my work properly.

1:78 ¶ 30 in Interview transcript - participant 1

I think our departments need to have an interacting system. More collaboration. Sexual predators need to be published and notified. They need to be known. Know you have to protect people's privacy in such a way. I need resources and we need to grow especially technology-wise. We have resources, finances, but it's not being interchanged so that it can benefit the right persons. We have wonderful laws and acts but it needs to be put into action.

2:39 ¶ 48 in Interview transcript - participant 2

And you must know, to do things like this, you need to know the community. I cannot just phone and make an appointment. I can go now and say, "Sir, we need to

talk, there this problem. For example, if I go to school, I can go and sit with the principal. And, you know, we have an open door policy, they can phone me any time of the day. Anybody from the community for that matter. I mean, my phone is working 24 hours, seven days a week. So I'm known in the community by doing this. I mean, the security officers phone me "we have this case, what can we do?" Can you advise us?"

2:40 ¶ 48 in Interview transcript - participant 2

I have a lot of NGOs that I work with. Even then, we work with the social workers, we have a relation, I have a relationship with the social workers. And it took time. I mean, it took time to come there, where I can just pick up the phone a social worker and say: "We have this problem. Can you help us? Yes, let us do this or that". So it took some time. But I am there where I can say they can phone, the people in the community know that I'm the one doing this. And I help where I can.

2:47 ¶ 56 in Interview transcript - participant 2

Luckily we have a community policing forum (CPF) and they are community members and we work hand in hand with them. And between them and the community and the police, they are the people that talk on behalf of the police and talk on behalf of the community. So that is also very good to have a relationship with them. Because if you need to do something in the community, we do it through them and then hopefully it will be successful. We had projects with the CPF, but like I said, the community is difficult to reach as they just don't want to get involved. But we must keep on trying. We must keep on trying.

3:2 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 3

As we have got our family violence officers, they are the ones who are dealing directly with the child. That officer will then write a statement what he or she was told by the child. So we are mainly dealing with the parents and not the child. The family violence unit are the ones who are dealing with the child.

○ Concealment of abuse makes it challenging to identify abuse

2 Quotations:

1:17 ¶ 4 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Because as officers we are not with children every single day. If a child walks in now, I won't be able to identify if there's abuse, because I don't know this child's background to be able to identify the abuse.

1:38 ¶ 8 in Interview transcript - participant 1

So I think as a parent you need to educate your child because as a police officer there is what I've noticed. The lack of communication between parent and child. There is where the abuse goes on so long that it damages this child. Because there is no form of communication.

○ **Conflict between acting professional and emotional reactions in these cases**

3 Quotations:

2:10 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 2

It is not nice. I must be very honest with you. To respond to things like this, you need to only think with your brain and not your heart, but it is impossible.

3:15 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 3

I must balance myself so that I can do what is expected of me. I have to keep these emotions inside me and I cannot act on those emotions. You know, as a woman, I am a mother, I care deeply for children, and I see all of these bad things happening to kids. I see everything that is happening, but I have to deal with the situation, I have to act as a professional and still carry out my duties. You see, that's the thing, you still have to keep on with your duties. By being emotional, you won't do anything. You won't.

3:17 ¶ 18 in Interview transcript - participant 3

So you must really balance that things, you know? You have got this child in front of you that you need to help but you are also dealing with your own emotions on the inside. If you are showing all of these emotions, she will feel "It is true that I am a victim of this abuse". She must feel that I am being supported on this issue, but if you are over-emotional and overly comforting on that thing, she will feel depressed as well. She won't cope with the situation. And she will also not open up and tell me details about the case. You need to have her trust.

○ **Difficult to quantify number of cases dealt with because of the high amount offending**

5 Quotations:

1:1 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Within my work or career, I have lost count. I have lost count.

1:3 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

There specific things that stand out in my brain, but I won't be able to tell you. It's over the hundreds.

1:4 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

The 200s. The 500s. Every day, there five abuses that, unless, children are comfortable or if the guardians are comfortable in bringing them to the station.

2:3 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 2

I've been in the Social Crime Prevention Office for about 18 years now. And being in the Social Crime Prevention Office, you specialize in the two Children's Acts. Children in need of care and protection, and children in conflict with the law. So any case regarding a child is coming to my office, so much so that the client service center will phone me and tell me that I must attend this case of a child. So in numbers, I cannot tell you, I can really not answer in numbers. But in years, it's about 18 years of experience, doing children cases, on a daily basis.

3:1 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 3

I have attended several cases of child abuse. It is difficult to say how much. As I indicated earlier, we are not dealing with the child, but the concerned party will come to the police station and give a statement.

○ Distrust in the police

2 Quotations:

1:6 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

There's this thing of a broken telephone. Somebody has an experience with SAPS and people have this idea, when they walk into the station, they have this idea

3:25 ¶ 30 in Interview transcript - participant 3

You know, a lot of people don't think of the police as the first persons to ask for help when they need it. People had a bad image of us but we can provide so much assistance in an event of crime. You know, a lot of people don't trust us but there is a lot of help in the police. It doesn't help to complain, complain, complain but you never come to the police, never open a case. We are not limited to one unit. The police has got lots of categories inside. It is not only our duty to arrest. You know there is still some people out there who don't even know about this office. We are trying by all means to bring the message to them that the police is not only here to arrest, but if you come here we will be able to help you as far as we are able to and I think the communities need to know this.

○ Emotional impact of child abuse

14 Quotations:

1:28 ¶ 8 in Interview transcript - participant 1

It does, child abuse, for me, even though you say "it doesn't impact me" It does

1:29 ¶ 8 in Interview transcript - participant 1

It might not impact you immediately for you to recognise it because you go fully professional.

1:51 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 1

When they interviewed him, the social worker, I didn't feel anger at that time, I felt I need to help this child. This child just started with grade one. It was the first day of school. I was excited because my child went to school, I was excited because new books, everything, now this is happening. I think it happened the day before he went to his first day of grade one.

1:54 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 1

So, what stood for me on that case, he knew it was wrong, but he knew this man because everybody used to call him "uncle", "hello uncle" they walked past with his friends, they come, they are walking past, playing in the streets. IT is somebody that he knows, that he's familiar that has done this to him.

1:60 ¶ 20 in Interview transcript - participant 1

It is emotionally traumatizing

1:65 ¶ 22 in Interview transcript - participant 1

I think as a police officer, my job is to read people's body language. Once that person is arrested, you will see no sense of remorse. It's like they are blank. And they deny it all the time. All the time. "You need proof first".

1:67 ¶ 24 in Interview transcript - participant 1

No, it actually motivates and drives me to do even more, better in what I have done in this case. Maybe there is something. I always evaluate myself. Is there something I could have done differently? Maybe I should go with the child. Fetch the perpetrator. "Go lock him up". That's where the emotion comes in. So I am always reviewing myself to see if there something I could have done better.

2:10 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 2

It is not nice. I must be very honest with you. To respond to things like this, you need to only think with your brain and not your heart, but it is impossible.

2:11 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 2

So it doesn't matter when I attend a case with a child abuse, I have a case at the moment. It's very bad. It is so bad that, you know, you get emotional, you get emotional and then you see the heartbreak of the child and you need to address the problem.

2:15 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 2

It's still very bad. I, I always get emotional if I do things like this, but you need to keep your head straight and do the right thing. Because I am a police official, and I'm always doing everything in the best interest of the child.

2:18 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 2

And it's difficult, it is very difficult to see a child in so much pain and then you must address the father or the mother or the brother or the sister or the uncle, grandpa, grandmother whoever.

2:20 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 2

But being calm at the scene is a different story from going home, take out the uniform, get a cup of tea and just cry it out. Because that happens always. It's very bad, you know you it has an emotional impact on you as a person, because I don't see a child with just a blue mark on his face or an arm that is broken or what. You see the heartbreak of this child and that is very bad. You know they always cry, they always cry if they explained to you what happened or this suspect did this or that.

2:30 ¶ 36 in Interview transcript - participant 2

It's very difficult. You are heartbroken. Why must this child going through this much pain? So much sadness, I mean, it is a child. I'm not talking about an adult that can handle these things, you're talking about the child that do not need to handle all of this emotions and stress and trauma. But they handle this and we usually have also the monami trauma troopers that we work with to come and give emotional support to the learners, the children or the family or whoever. So, then you also sit a little bit just talk to them. They also have a good impact.

3:6 ¶ 4 in Interview transcript - participant 3

It was a very difficult case for me. To attend to that little girl. It was emotional. It was emotionally tough on me because I put myself in the shoes of the child. How is she going through it? At her age? How is it going to be in the future of this young girl? But we managed to help her and we also eventually caught the perpetrator.

○ Emotional impact of child abuse does not stop policewomen from carrying out their duties

1 Quotations:

3:20 ¶ 22 in Interview transcript - participant 3

You know as I said it is emotionally difficult to be dealing with these types of crime but I do not think it would stop me from doing my work. I don't deal with the child often, but with the parents so it does get difficult to comfort them as well. So no, I do not think it would stop me from doing what I need to do. I would keep on doing my job for as long as it takes.

○ Faith and religion as a source of strength or coping

11 Quotations:

1:27 ¶ 6 in Interview transcript - participant 1

I think for me, my religion played a big part in all of this. Because I couldn't have done this without a more spiritual aspect. Because I had to keep faith, I had to be motivated, I had to have hope you know. I had to be driven, you cannot not be driven and do this mentally, emotionally, it's a challenge.

1:68 ¶ 26 in Interview transcript - participant 1

No, I don't use EHW> I think praying helps me. My religion helps me not to go mentally unstable or have an emotional breakdown because you need to vent. My partner is a police officer as well. So that's the nice thing about it, I speak to him, I vent everything on him. I vent it. Sometimes, I am shouting things at him that he has no clue about: "Listen here, the uncle did this and that". I tell him because he has the same confidentiality because we are in the same career pattern. I cannot go tell somebody else because some people like to gossip. Other people like other people's stuff and I am trying to protect this child. Privacy, you know? So, I can't be telling people from outside, things that are happening within my work. My work is protected, it is confidential. People tell me confidential things, even it is not agreed. It is an oath I have taken: It is confidentiality. I can't go "They opened up a case to that guy" It is unlawful to do so. So I am very disciplined. It is either right way, wrong way. There is no in between or maybe in my world.

2:16 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 2

It's not that difficult. It is just I'm a believer in God. And I believe that I have this talent. It doesn't matter on which crime scene I am. It's as if I'm getting this calmness. I don't get hysterical and scream, and go on, I'm very calm.

2:19 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 2

So it is very difficult, I believe that I have this gift from God and that is why I'm still sitting here

2:21 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 2

And you talk about a child, how must the child word these things to you? Because they do not have the sentences that we have. So it's very difficult it's really it's very difficult but I am very blessed to have this calmness coming from God if I attend to scenes like this especially if we can talk about child abuse and in regard to the sexual offenses act, then it is also very, very difficult. It's heartbreaking to see what the children is going through

2:50 ¶ 62 in Interview transcript - participant 2

: I pray a lot and I cry a lot and when I'm done with that I watch a movie [laughter]. Yeah, but it was not that ease. It wasn't that easy. Im just fortunate to be here with so much experience that I can say "I'm here".

2:52 ¶ 64 in Interview transcript - participant 2

No, I can do it because of my calmness. I can the correct thing at the correct time. At that moment and then I need to unpack my emotions for a while and then I'll be ready for tomorrow. So no, I cannot say that [sigh] you get tired. The only thing I do is listen to complaints every day. Nobody is coming into my office and tells me something positive. They come into my office with a whole lot of negative things. But that is my work and with the experience that I have. I have learned to handle this. Not all of my colleagues can handle this. I mean, you can go to anybody in this office and ask if they want my job. They will tell you no. They will just say no I don't want that job. But for me, no, I can do this and I can do it. But for somebody else it might not be that simple.

2:53 ¶ 66 in Interview transcript - participant 2

As I said, I'm a child of God and I believe that if I wasn't. I would not sit here. I really strongly believe that. I believe that is the will of God that I am here. And I also believe that I'm getting the protection and wisdom from God to do these things. The correct way. Really, I strongly believe that. But it is not easy. I must emphasise that. It is not easy. I'm also just a woman. I am also just a mother. A caregiver. I'm just that. And sometimes, it gets too much. Really, and then you just take a break for a day and go and do something totally different and then the next day we will go on. But yeah, it's not easy. But, my faith is the only thing that carries me through the day. Really, otherwise I will go mad. I mean you see all of these things. You are being exposed to all of these things. It is not easy. And that is really all I wanted to say. Thank you.

3:19 ¶ 20 in Interview transcript - participant 3

It is very difficult to work in this office but I do believe that God put me here for a reason and that is the reason: to help those vulnerable who need someone they can trust, you know?

3:22 ¶ 26 in Interview transcript - participant 3

I pray a lot. A lot. That is the other thing that also keeps me in this office and gives me strength. It makes me strong. God keeps me strong so I pray to Him every day. You know, you deal with all this bad stuff on a daily basis and you have to keep it to yourself. So when I get home, I often just start to cry and then I pray and then I can go on. I get this feeling of closeness from praying as if someone is listening to me and He helps me to cope every day. In my mind I tell myself: "If it was not Him, I would not be here". He chose me to be here so that I can help people that are in need. He chose me over all these other people to be in this office. You know? He put me here. I believe that. There is a reason for everything and that is the reason why I am in this office. I have been in this office since 2002. 20 years, two decades in this specific office. And I never got any special training. I never done anything like that to be in this office. Through Him I go through it every day, and I can keep carrying on.

3:24 ¶ 26 in Interview transcript - participant 3

So, what I am trying to see is that I am here with a purpose, a higher purpose. I am not here for myself, if it was then I would be gone a long time ago. And that is what other officers must understand as well, we are not here by ourselves, it is because of Him. He chose us.

○ Gender perceptions affect policewomen's work

2 Quotations:

1:73 ¶ 30 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Male officers would refer most child abuse cases to you. I am more dominating than a lot of males. I don't take any bullshit. No. I don't care who you are because I have given myself that opportunity not to be classified as a policewoman. Im not a policewoman. Im a police officer. My gender has got nothing to do with my work. It

is not because you are a woman. It's not what they teach us at basic training we all get basic training. It becomes that you a policewoman when it comes to certain things, you know? Social crimes, abuse. A lot of policemen get more recognition than the women. Im very active, you know? Sometimes, people treat you the way allow then to treat you. You need to let people know what is your boundaries, especially in an organisation.

1:74 ¶ 30 in Interview transcript - participant 1

I don't just do these cases because people assign it to me. If a child is more comfortable I will not even question it. But if you think I must attend to this because I am a woman, NO! You don't allow people to dictate. We are all officers here, we all know the law and the right procedure. We are all supposed to be able to do the work. Female or male. The most males have this idea because our females are allowing them to think that way. I fight for what is right. I fight for myself on a daily basis. They know me. They know me. All of them, they know me. I stand up for myself.

○ Had to use professional services in dealing with the trauma

1 Quotations:

3:21 ¶ 24 in Interview transcript - participant 3

Yes I did use support service. I went for counselling. I went for counselling at the EHW. It helped me. A lot. It helped me a lot, and that is why I am still around. In fact, if I didn't go for that counselling it was going to be more difficult.

○ Having children makes it even more difficult for policewomen

9 Quotations:

1:36 ¶ 8 in Interview transcript - participant 1

I am parent myself. I don't physically play with my child but I do a spot check on him. What I normally do when he plays outside, I don't call him, I just walk. I want to see what games they are playing, I want to listen what language they are using. So, I try not to be seen so that I can know what my child is doing what I am not around him. If my child leaves the street to the shop. "You cannot walk yourself to the shop". You know, "you need to walk with someone because if something does happen to you, I need know where to start looking.

1:37 ¶ 8 in Interview transcript - participant 1

So I feel, as a parent, some parent don't have the time. I think you should make your children a priority. Even though you are working retail you know? There are some parents that work retail hours and they don't have that time to go and look at their children. Some parents are working seven days a week. Some are working night shifts. Sometimes, I'm wrong in blaming them but sometimes I'm not. It's like a

50/50. I feel I have this open relationship with my child, I call it no secrets. “How was your day? What happened?” I need to interview my own child to find out what has happened. Is there any difference between the playing, who is he playing with. I even need to educate him. Especially when I bathe him. I have a boy, a son, “I’m the only person who is allowed to touch you when I am bathing you.” “If somebody touches you on your private parts it is wrong” I have to educate my child. Especially with me being an officer, I have to educate him because he is by an age where knows Im a boy, I stand and pee, the girls sit and pee. So he already knows the difference. Boys have boy parts and girls have girl parts. Girls and boys don’t play together in certain cases, you know?

1:47 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 1

So, for me it is easy because I have my own children. So, it is easy for me to go down to a child’s level. Even before I had my children, it was easy for me because I think as a woman, you have a motherly instinct. It comes naturally. If you see a child cry you just want to get help them. If you close your eyes and you’re a baby cry, you want to go look for the baby. Really. Sometimes, it is my instinct kicking in to care for that child. Even though it’s not your own. And, I think personally, my work gives me the opportunity to help those that cannot protect themselves.

1:61 ¶ 20 in Interview transcript - participant 1

I have my own children so it makes me be so protective. Not even my own, my friends’ children, any person that I share a personal relationship with. I am very protective when it comes to children, very. Because I have been dealing with abuse because of my professionalism, it is my profession to deal with certain cases of abuse.

1:69 ¶ 28 in Interview transcript - participant 1

: It does. I want to know where my children are all the time. I know my child goes to school at a certain time and when he comes home. Exactly when the transport arrives and I know it takes 45 minutes to get to school. I really know that because I have driven my child myself. Im like that. I want to know where my child is all the time. I know his school starts at 7:20. I know that he’s in school up to 13:45. I know the school won’t allow anybody to fetch him without my permission.

1:70 ¶ 28 in Interview transcript - participant 1

That’s why I say it has impacted to a place where I have, financially, I have made the means possible to provide the best for my child so that I can be content where Im sitting here and I know he’s safe. I have this satisfaction that I know if something is going on in the school, I will have evidence. At least there is some form of protection there and that is what gives comfort.

1:71 ¶ 28 in Interview transcript - participant 1

I know where he plays, where he stays, who’s the parents. I know everything because of my work. Because of my work. I have gone K9, special forces on my child’s movement. It has made me emotionally protective of my own because if my child does something and I’m noticing it.

3:9 ¶ 10 in Interview transcript - participant 3

Yes, and that it is also what made it more difficult, because I thought about my child. If something happened to my child. How could I handle this issue?

3:10 ¶ 12 in Interview transcript - participant 3

It impacted our relationship in a way that I am often worried about the safety of my child. I need to keep my child safe at all times. I have seen what people can do to children so I raise my child in a strict manner. I always want to know where my child is. After this incident I was more focused. I was more focused on the safety of my child. Not just my child. Any child. I was running a programme: “My child is your child, your child is mine”. In that one I was focusing on the issue. If ever I see another child on the street, I must feel that that child is mine. If that child needs help, I must go all out. Not to focus on the fact that it is not my child, I won’t help her. And I was running the project on it and even now we are busy with the child protection week and that is my initiative.

○ Having the trust of children motivates children.

2 Quotations:

2:33 ¶ 38 in Interview transcript - participant 2

Because you have seen this, this is what this kind of things is doing to a child. So you try to do it right by your own children. And I'm known in the community you know, I can go in any shopping mall, I can go in any anywhere. Always “Hallo tannie”. And I’m always like “How are you my dear? Are you well?” So in that way, it is also very nice. If you have that something positive so the children know this is the “tannie”. And that was also really nice, you know, just to have that positive and all those things where children look up to you and trust you. And all those things make up for the heartbreak. Really I must be very honest with you. If you have a case and it's difficult and so on and you just go to a school and you just talk to the children. You feel better. You feel better.

2:34 ¶ 39 – 40 in Interview transcript - participant 2

So it's kind of rewarding?

Participant 2: Yeah, very much, very much so. Yes.

○ Imported comment

2 Quotations:

2:1 ¶ 36 in Interview transcript - participant 2

trauma

2:2 ¶ 62 in Interview transcript - participant 2

Ek het by die onluste gewerk

○ **Lack of involvement from the community makes policing child abuse difficult**

3 Quotations:

2:42 ¶ 52 in Interview transcript - participant 2

And I must be honest with you, even if we are living next to each other, “I don't want to get involved in your things. I don't want to” and that is what we also get. They will phone: “I know about this child being abused. But please do not mention my name.” How do you want me to help this child? If you don't want to come forward? What must I do now? So please come and see me. Let us see how we can assist this child. And there were cases where the people don't want to get involved and then I take the school route so that I can see to it that the child is safe.

2:45 ¶ 54 in Interview transcript - participant 2

So there's a lot of challenges and a lot of things we need to put in place and it's going to take time but we need to do it. We cannot change society but we can educate. It is about educating the right people. I mean I'm this old, how are you going to change me? This is the way I do things. If it is wrong or right, it doesn't matter, that is the way I do things. SO then we go the child and show them it is the way and then hopefully we can break the cycle. I mean, it is not that easy. You are just one person that wants to make a difference in society. And it is like I've said: “I don't want to get involved”. I have exhibitions at the shopping malls. People don't even stop and ask “What is this?” They just pass because they see the police sign and just pass. So people don't want to get involved but they can complain very well.

2:46 ¶ 56 in Interview transcript - participant 2

Ag, I just think they don't want to know anything. I don't know. But yes, there definitely is. So much so, that I have specific cases where they just don't want to phone the police. You know, “what's the use? They are not going to help me”. But then I sit, take the statement, complete the docket to the best of my ability. Put everything in the docket and see if something will happen. But ja, they don't want to get involved.

○ **Limited resources make policework difficult**

2 Quotations:

1:59 ¶ 18 in Interview transcript - participant 1

So it is very difficult sometimes because normally what I try to find out: “did you speak to this person?” “Yes, I went to go curse at him”, the parent. “You should've just came here before you went to do the emotional thing” because now you are alerting this person and it is making our work difficult because if we don't find at their address, that's why it takes so long for them to be arrested, because they are being notified and we don't have these systems like overseas to track the offenders.

We don't have the resources because we are still living in a third world country, you know? Our technology advances is not like America or UK. It's not like CSI, you know?

1:75 ¶ 30 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Additionally, I would just like to say I would like more shelters. As an officer, I would like to see more resources being put into children being abused. I would like our trauma centers to be more child-friendly. I need resources from outside to able to give them that space. I need our schools to also make them known about the services that are here. Sometimes people have a problem but they don't know where to go to. Children may have a problem but they don't know where to go to

○ Mostly mothers report child crimes

1 Quotations:

1:16 ¶ 4 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Most mothers come to report it because mothers are more aware of their children's' day to day emotional states, you know your child, you know when this child is at his or hers happiest, you can figure out that tone already, and you can notice when something is wrong with your child immediately. If you are an attentive parent. It comes to the parent being attentive.

○ Motivation for becoming a police officer

3 Quotations:

1:19 ¶ 6 in Interview transcript - participant 1

It wasn't my calling, but sometimes the things that we want are not the things that are healthy for us. I think it was my path to go on you know?

2:7 ¶ 8 in Interview transcript - participant 2

My father was a policeman. He was a detective. I'm not a detective. So you grew up in this house, you know? Father is talking. He worked for very long at murder and robbery. So I, I just from small, I wanted to be a policewoman.

2:9 ¶ 8 in Interview transcript - participant 2

So I grew up in a police house. My uncle, my mother's brother, is also a policeman. His wife is a police woman. So I just grew up in this and I always had the love for the police. I wanted to be a police lady since the time that I can think.

○ Motivation for dealing with child crimes

8 Quotations:

1:39 ¶ 10 in Interview transcript - participant 1

I think, I think my spirit, my aura attracts it, because I am always, I am in the vicinity.

1:43 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Yeah, I've got that motherly instinct

1:44 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 1

So, for me it is easier to put a child at comfort and say "it is fine now, you can speak to me". I think most of the older officers have the comfortability, they have worked out their comfortability levels and to make this child feel a certain way. We always the child "would you like to speak me or would you like to speak to someone else?" They would tell you. I think the only way you are going to make someone comfortable is you give them their comfort zone. I don't think somebody will speak to you about something that is hurtful if they don't feel safe.

1:45 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 1

So I think mostly as a police officer, most children draw to me because it's my uniform. Some of them feel safe when they see me. Only with the physical appearance, feel safe when they see me. When they start talking, it goes deeper, it goes deeper, it goes deeper

1:48 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Like, I wish I had that voice when I was a young girl, I wish I had someone like me to explain to me like, to my friends, or to whoever who might be going through these things, "It's okay, you know?" And now I'm that person that I wanted. I think I've warped into the person that I needed as a child for my friends, my family, my community.

2:8 ¶ 8 in Interview transcript - participant 2

I'm in the police now and I was never a detective. I'm not interested in that side of the police. I am interested in this side of the police.

3:18 ¶ 20 in Interview transcript - participant 3

It is something very close to my heart. Very close to my heart. It is difficult to put into words but I feel that I have a responsibility to protect those vulnerable children. That is what keeps me going.

3:19 ¶ 20 in Interview transcript - participant 3

It is very difficult to work in this office but I do believe that God put me here for a reason and that is the reason: to help those vulnerable who need someone they can trust, you know?

○ Officers need to follow certain protocols

3 Quotations:

1:7 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

they don't know the behind the scenes. For us to do our work, we need to follow certain protocols. Some people are impatient, they don't wait for the necessary help. They stand up and they leave. Some of them want immediate assistance, but you work as a station, we work hand-in-hand with other units dealing with child abuse

2:17 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 2

And I do it specifically, I handle it specifically, the way I need to handle it, and not any case is the same. I cannot compare this case to that case, saying that I did the same things, it is always different. Your circumstances under which this thing is happening is always different.

2:52 ¶ 64 in Interview transcript - participant 2

No, I can do it because of my calmness. I can the correct thing at the correct time. At that moment and then I need to unpack my emotions for a while and then I'll be ready for tomorrow. So no, I cannot say that [sigh] you get tired. The only thing I do is listen to complaints every day. Nobody is coming into my office and tells me something positive. They come into my office with a whole lot of negative things. But that is my work and with the experience that I have. I have learned to handle this. Not all of my colleagues can handle this. I mean, you can go to anybody in this office and ask if they want my job. They will tell you no. They will just say no I don't want that job. But for me, no, I can do this and I can do it. But for somebody else it might not be that simple.

○ One has to be sensitive when working with child victims

8 Quotations:

1:13 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

But you have to be careful you know, with small children, you don't want to make them aware of certain, you still want them to be a child, you know. You don't want them to be aware of what is going on outside. But it's like a balance, you need to find a balance so that you don't damage this child's idea of what it is to be free and happy and loved. You don't want them to think when they look at a person, you know "is this person going to do something to me?"

1:46 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 1

You can't be too disciplined with children. Go straight into the story, what happened. No, you start the interview "What is your name? How old are you? What is your friend's name"? You start at their level, you need to go down to children's level. You can't just start "what happened?" No, no, no, no. A child abuse case needs to be sensitized. It needs to be sensitized. So that you can build the trust with that child so that they can give you all the information for you to be able to make them feel safe. To take them out of that abusive environment. To get the necessary help for them to be able for them to not have to go through this abuse again

1:66 ¶ 22 in Interview transcript - participant 1

You don't drill a child like the way we drill an adult, but you will see when a child is being told to lie. You see the difference. You ask this child: "what did the uncle do?" "No, the uncle did this". Then you leave this child, then you go back and you ask the child the same question. Sometimes, memory gets suppressed, you must figure out if it is a lie. You need to be able to decipher information. I call it decipher because sometimes the parents influence their children as well. Some children would lie for their parents. Especially when it comes to custody, when it comes to SASSA grants. You need to find the truth.

2:21 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 2

And you talk about a child, how must the child word these things to you? Because they do not have the sentences that we have. So it's very difficult it's really it's very difficult but I am very blessed to have this calmness coming from God if I attend to scenes like this especially if we can talk about child abuse and in regard to the sexual offenses act, then it is also very, very difficult. It's heartbreaking to see what the children is going through

2:27 ¶ 28 in Interview transcript - participant 2

No, it doesn't work like that. No, it can work like that. But I do not prefer that. I go rather to the school or to the house or wherever. The police is, the police station is not a place for a child to see. I prefer that because they get scared and then it is more difficult for me to take a statement for an example. So I do that where the child is comfortable. And it's usually by the school or even by the church if needed, or otherwise by the house, but not at the police station.

3:13 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 3

I had to be careful to not ask her all these questions, you know? "Why did leave your house?" "How could you trust this man?". I had to be there to assist this young child. It happened, I could only be there for support. She could not feel judgement from my side. Whatever was in her mind, it had happened and I had to help this child to the best of my abilities. Not to put more things on her, you know, worry and stress about the reason why the crime occurred. Not to do more damage than what had been done already. I had to support her in order for us to solve the issues, to bring justice. I did not want to stress her out unnecessary because she came to us looking for help. She was crying for help, so what does it help if you are crossing your arms like that. What does all the questions help? She needed help and not more judgement.

3:16 ¶ 18 in Interview transcript - participant 3

I did have contact with the child. First, it was difficult, but as time goes on it gets better as the child learns that you are a person that they can trust. You know, a child needs to trust you. If you are acting in that way, you know, all stressed and emotional, also she becomes like that in a way.

3:17 ¶ 18 in Interview transcript - participant 3

So you must really balance that things, you know? You have got this child in front of you that you need to help but you are also dealing with your own emotions on the inside. If you are showing all of these emotions, she will feel "It is true that I am a

victim of this abuse”. She must feel that I am being supported on this issue, but if you are over-emotional and overly comforting on that thing, she will feel depressed as well. She wot cope with the situation. And she will also not open up and tell me details about the case. You need to have her trust.

○ Policewomen believe that in order to reduce child abuse, we not start with the parents.

2 Quotations:

2:41 ¶ 50 in Interview transcript - participant 2

: Must I answer you honestly, or, can I lie? Honestly. I don't know how you want to do this. But we must start with the parents. Our parents of today is not parents of 20 years back, really. And I can say that based on the fact that you can do anything at a school where a child is involved. And I need to phone you a few times, just to come to the school to address this problem. So how we are going to protect our children, we must start by the parents, we must start by addressing the parents. You get parents that are involved in the children's life it is true, but why is a child like that? Why must a child experience abused by a parent? Why does a parent do things like that? So you must start by addressing the parents to keep our children safe. And that is not an easy task. To be very honest with you. That is very difficult. I have no idea how to do this. But it can be done. And that is why I always talk to the parents when I have any kind of child case. Because where else do we go? Where do you start? Where do you start with this? You need to start at home. You need to start at home not at school, not at church at home. And that's very difficult. I mean, I had projects during the years you won't see the parents from the school coming to attend, you won't see them. You will see some of them by a sport or a cultural event or so. But they're just not there. They are just not there. Go to school, drop them off at school they cannot wait to go out of the school yard. So we must start by the parents, that is my personal opinion, we need to address the parents, I don't know if it will be by law or by what. But we need to address the parents, the parents must be responsible for the upbringing of the children, and not the school, not the school, because that is the parents' way of seeing things this these days: “you must teach my child manners”. It's not you as a mother and the father is responsible. And then I must be honest with you, you have a lot of single parents. And that's also having a big impact on the way that the child is doing things, the way he or she is seeing things and the way things go, it is because of single parents.

2:44 ¶ 54 in Interview transcript - participant 2

In a country where things are totally out of hand, how do we protect our children? How do we protect our children? And how can we protect the children if the parents are not involved? And you must know, every child needs a father and a mother, if they are together or not. At school they only have one teacher for 30 children. And I'm just making that statement to tell you that the Department of Education is having a whole lot of challenges when it comes to children. Really. Because, there's 30 children in a class and I'm the only teacher there. I'm coming from my home, you are coming from your home. I must handle this 30 children in a specific way, but you do your things in a specific way, I do things my way and he is doing his own things.

So it is difficult for them to handle all of this children and now you have these children who is not disciplined, who is being traumatized and you have a child who is just not there. So now, they address all of these things and that is also impacting the children. Now this child who is not receiving discipline assaulted that child. Okay, “now we have this child who is the victim, but now why did this child assault that child”. Now you go back to the “suspect” and if you go to their house: “Mom and day; they always fight, under the influence, blah blah blah”. But they are all sitting in class with this one teacher and how many things can a teacher handle except for teaching the children this subject. Now they need to address this, they need to work with emotions, they work with that and whaw whaw whaw. So it is very difficult. I think the Department of Education have a lot of challenges because that is where most of these cases are coming from – it’s from the school. Because a school is a safe environment for a child. I cannot talk to my mother, I cannot talk to my father. I come to school and tell my friend. The friend goes and tells the teacher. That is the way a child needs help. It’s a cry for help that.

○ **Policewomen experience that the perpetrator is usually someone that the child victim knows.**

1 Quotations:

2:12 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 2

And that is also very difficult. Because a child is being abused, mostly, by people that he or she knows, it is not a stranger that is coming into the house and abuse these children.

○ **Policewomen feel responsible for protecting children**

3 Quotations:

2:32 ¶ 38 in Interview transcript - participant 2

It has an impact on, I can go and have a safety talk and tell these children come forward, so that we can help you because at the end of the day, we need to help the children. And that is very important. So it a big impact on me on the way you see things on the way you do things the way you think, because I have to handle the victim. And on the other hand is the suspect. And on this side, you have the family. I mean, I’m just giving an example this child is being abused by a father, who is married to the mother. So you have the child, which is the victim, you have the father, that is a suspect, you have the mother that is also a victim. So you need to address all of this. And it has a big influence on the way that I do things. The way that I make decisions. So it’s having a big impact. Because I try to do the right thing.

2:38 ¶ 48 in Interview transcript - participant 2

: Ja, Ja! It is my duty. I need to do that! Yes. Otherwise, I will not sit here and it is my choice by sitting here. As I said, I don't apply for promotion or things like that. I

don't, I mean, I'm a Warrant Officer, I think for 23 years now, and in this office about 18. So I love my work, I love doing this, I don't need I don't want to do anything else

3:18 ¶ 20 in Interview transcript - participant 3

It is something very close to my heart. Very close to my heart. It is difficult to put into words but I feel that I have a responsibility to protect those vulnerable children. That is what keeps me going.

○ Policewomen have to balance the demands of their jobs of protecting children and the demands of being a mother and a wife.

3 Quotations:

2:20 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 2

But being calm at the scene is a different story from going home, take out the uniform, get a cup of tea and just cry it out. Because that happens always. It's very bad, you know you it has an emotional impact on you as a person, because I don't see a child with just a blue mark on his face or an arm that is broken or what. You see the heartbreak of this child and that is very bad. You know they always cry, they always cry if they explained to you what happened or this suspect did this or that.

2:22 ¶ 18 in Interview transcript - participant 2

You must just deal with this because I must come back to this office tomorrow and what's going to bring the day of tomorrow. So, I am fortunate that I can deal with these things as I can deal with it because you cannot come back to this office with the brokenness of yesterday because you do not know what tomorrow or the next week is going to bring to you.

3:23 ¶ 26 in Interview transcript - participant 3

You know, another thing is that when I'm done at the end of the day at this office, I don't take these things with me. When I get home I'm a parent, I'm a housewife. To my kids, to my husband, I am there for them. They don't have to know about all the details of my day. I have to be there for them. I cannot put everything onto them. But, in the mornings, when my kids are at school and my husband goes to work and I put on my uniform, I am a policewoman, an officer in the line of duty who is there to offer my services to those who cross my path.

○ Policewomen have to support children and make them feel heard instead of questioning them.

1 Quotations:

3:13 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 3

I had to be careful to not ask her all these questions, you know? “Why did you leave your house?” “How could you trust this man?”. I had to be there to assist this young child. It happened, I could only be there for support. She could not feel judgement from my side. Whatever was in her mind, it had happened and I had to help this child to the best of my abilities. Not to put more things on her, you know, worry and stress about the reason why the crime occurred. Not to do more damage than what had been done already. I had to support her in order for us to solve the issues, to bring justice. I did not want to stress her out unnecessarily because she came to us looking for help. She was crying for help, so what does it help if you are crossing your arms like that. What does all the questions help? She needed help and not more judgement.

○ **Policewomen often go the 'extra mile'**

4 Quotations:

1:31 ¶ 8 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Sometimes I use my personal resources to do my work.

1:32 ¶ 8 in Interview transcript - participant 1

If I see this child needs clothes. I'll physically go out and find clothes for this child. If I see this child is hungry, I physically go and look for food. It's like you take it personally. As a woman, I take it personally.

1:56 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Normally what I do is, I go back to trauma, that's my own personal thing I go, and I ask them what has happened to the case of the underage child, just for my emotional comfortability, just to find out if the person was helped, you know? It's not something that you have to do, you are not obliged, it's not compulsory, but personally I take my time just to find out if the child is being looked after. Just to go the extra mile.

3:3 ¶ 4 in Interview transcript - participant 3

I worked on this case until I had a certain suspect.

○ **Policewomen often have to deal with child abuse cases despite the emotional impact**

1 Quotations:

3:14 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 3

It was very difficult, it was emotionally but as times went on I thought: “If I keep on being emotional, how will be of assistance for other children?” Because I would be dealing with the situation while being emotional.

○ **Preference to deal with their emotions without seeking counselling or other help.**

1 Quotations:

2:25 ¶ 20 in Interview transcript - participant 2

No, I have a lot of respect for them, really I do, I work with them as necessary, but I find my way, not by their office, but by my privacy of my own room, doing my own thing, but they are there, yes. And they are in rendering a very good service to the police, really.

○ **Reluctance from children to report**

1 Quotations:

1:11 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

The sad thing about is, I think children are afraid to come out because sometimes, the abuser is a person who they know. It is someone in their personal spaces. I think most children feel betrayed because a person who you are loving is busy doing these stuff. I think, most of the children that I've interviewed are in disbelief, they still can't, they know it's wrong because their body is telling them it is wrong but they are busy struggling with it in their mind against their body. It is a fight with internal. So there's this conflict to still trust this person but they know something is not right.

○ **Reoffending criminals anger policewomen**

3 Quotations:

1:14 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

I don't think me as child, playing in the street, I was looking at people that way. You weren't expecting the bad guy to do something bad to you. But in our country and especially in our community there are people who take advantage of vulnerable children's innocence. Because sometime these perpetrators redo these things. Redo it [pause]. And I think there's where the frustration comes in. the re-offense

1:57 ¶ 16 in Interview transcript - participant 1

. It was less than a week, two weeks, the person did it again. [Pause] The person did it again. [Pause, tick with pen]. The person did it again. There is where my anger, that's where I got angry. Like? "Go fetch the man, go lock the man up, or something, or something, do something".

1:64 ¶ 22 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Child abuse. It is wrong to abuse a child, mentally, emotional. There are laws for that. Children's act is also in there but you get the constitution, protecting the perpetrators. You got a right to an attorney. You get a right to medical, legal things. I need to treat a perpetrator like a customer because it is our constitution. That is where my anger and frustration comes in. Sometimes they are very arrogant. They have this conceded thing about them. People who have done, especially sexual abuse cases, or child abuse cases, they think they have done nothing wrong. They are not very remorseful because they have this sick side of them that have been identified. Now it's like a frenzy, they are enjoying the adventure and the attention. The whole time it was quiet, but now they are thriving from all the attention.

○ Schools play an important role in the protection of children

6 Quotations:

1:12 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

And there comes the schools as well. I think when the schools educate the children in what is right and what is wrong, it is easy for them to identify that.

1:18 ¶ 4 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Sometimes the teachers can identify the abuse as well. Most of the time we get schools calling us saying that this child has gone through an abuse. The teachers are sometimes also our eyes outside to identify where the abuse is coming from.

2:4 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 2

In that, I can also say that I am the safety coordinator of the 24 schools in our policing area. And 24 schools is a lot of children. And anything concerning a child at the school that is brought to my attention. And that is also where you have to deal with cases like this child abuse cases, because it is reported firstly, by the school, the school have an obligation to report this to the police.

2:5 ¶ 4 in Interview transcript - participant 2

And I've got a lot of those cases mostly the case this is coming from there. Because of the school. It's not the parents that report, it is the school.

2:13 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 2

In my experience, I have safety talks with schools. And in that specific moment, if I talk about that (child abuse). You can see who are the children who are being abused, because they will just burst out in tears. And I have that a lot of times. And then you address it from there.

2:14 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 2

Most of the schools have these ladies that is caring for them, social workers. So then we address it from there, it is still very hard.

○ **Seeing all the hurt motivates policewomen to make a positive impact in the community.**

1 Quotations:

2:37 ¶ 46 in Interview transcript - participant 2

So yes, it has an impact on my whole being. Because I tried to do the right thing every day, every day, every day, I do my utmost best not to fight with anybody from the office, wherever I go, just to be a positive impact on everybody. Because of the fact that you see this sadness and bad things happening. We try to make a difference by being good and being positive.

○ **Seeing the effects of abuse on children saddens policewomen.**

2 Quotations:

2:11 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 2

So it doesn't matter when I attend a case with a child abuse, I have a case at the moment. It's very bad. It is so bad that, you know, you get emotional, you get emotional and then you see the heartbreak of the child and you need to address the problem.

3:12 ¶ 14 in Interview transcript - participant 3

You know, I was also sad for what had happened to the life of this young girl. A crime has been committed, her life will never be the same again.

○ **Sometimes demands of the job motivate policewomen to seek professional psychiatric help.**

1 Quotations:

2:51 ¶ 62 in Interview transcript - participant 2

And there are times [long pause], uhm, there are times when you just can handle all of these things. Then you just need to go the medical route once in a while. I can't remember when but my colleague passed away here close to the station. It is about six or seven years ago and now you must know you have a whole lot of things that you must handle here at your desk, in your office, and then one of your members pass away. Now you go to that crime scene, you do this whole crime scene, and because of that I went the medical route by going to a psychiatric facility, just to find my way a bit and I think that was the best thing that I have done for myself. Because of all the things that you must handle. So yes, I'm really a person that will recommend that. If you feel that things are not good anymore, look at yourself. Go and do this whole psychiatric places for a while. Just find yourself. And I think that is

the best thing you can do for yourself because they have these programmes and things to equip yourself with how to handle trauma and stress and blah blah blah. So I'm also very positive about things like that. There is no shame in things like that. Not at all. I mean, we are being exposed to all these things. Not everybody is being exposed to. My father was the one telling me that in Afrikaans: "Ek het by die onluste gewerk". And yeah, so you are not, you are just a human being and you must handle a whole lot of things. It is not nice. I remember the first day of lockdown in 2020, 27th of March. We were the only people in the road. I mean there is no vehicle. There is no life. There is nothing there. I mean, how do you handle that? And I mean that was just "Wow". And we are being exposed to this. And we have lost members. You are too scared to go to a complaint because what do find there? "Please stay there I'm positive with COVID, and yeah. Now, I must go back home and my children are there. So, it is definitely having an impact.

○ The way in which the Criminal Justice System is structured, police work is challenging

5 Quotations:

1:15 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Because our justice system is not taking the priority that it needs to take to deal with this sufficiently. You know, as police officers, we do administration for the court, we do admin that's what I always tell people. We do admin. We do administration. We do intervention but when we come to a place first line, the first respondents – we do admin. Then it goes to second line, it starts to become an investigation, after investigation; court.

1:62 ¶ 20 in Interview transcript - participant 1

I don't only deal with abuse but I've have been affected because it is something I have dealt with in my career. Not once. Not twice. But a recurring offence. It makes me angry. It makes me sad. If I could, I would climb in a car and go fetch him. But, our laws do not allow us to take the law in our own hands. That is what makes me angry. Because criminals have more rights than civilians. So it makes me feel kind of powerless because if the laws are tightened it allows me to enforce the necessary law or the necessary procedure for me to go do the right thing.

1:63 ¶ 22 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Yes, to provide more protection for the victim. I 100% think so. The constitution contradicts our criminal procedure act. Our laws contradict each other. That's why there are so many loopholes within the system.

1:72 ¶ 30 in Interview transcript - participant 1

Maybe Im the only officer that gets this emotional about child abuse. We all deal with things differently. We don't even have the same finger print, obviously we don't have same emotional reactions. I just think the only way that we can protect our children is if our laws are to be changed. Crimes against children needs to be made a priority like murder. It should be put as a priority.

2:43 ¶ 54 in Interview transcript - participant 2

There's a lot of acts protecting these people. It is true. It is true. And I think if our justice system, make a point of this, to sentence a perpetrator of child abuse for a long time, 10, 15 years to jail. And not just one, go through the system and put all of them away, then I think it will make an impact on the other people outside. Because I don't think it is nice to sit in the jail for 10 years. So yes, yes, indeed, I think the justice system must be made stronger when it comes to sentencing. Especially, child sex offender. Yeah, they must be strong. I don't know how to put this in a nice English words, but they must be strict on sentencing and specific laws. You know, severe sentence. Yeah. And that will also make a statement. And then you must remember we are talking about different kinds of children in different kinds of cultures, religion, and things like that. The way you bring up your children, and the way that I bring up my children is two different things. And that is also having an impact on society in general. You coming from there, I'm coming from here, we're going to one school. The way you do things and the way I do things is two different things. And that is also having an impact on things like this. Luckily we do have the sex offender registry and people that is involved with children need to do a police clearance every six months. Teachers in particular do it every year. But then unfortunately, we also have stuff like the POPI act that is supposed to protect personal privacies, so it is very difficult, a very difficult environment to protect children in. And these things is, I don't want to say unnecessary, but it makes our job very difficult. Because now I need to go through a process to get information. And I need information now. So yes, the POPI act is making things very difficult, especially for the police, really, because we need information, we work on information, that's crucial, I need the address of this child's father that is not staying with the mother. Now the POPI act say this and that, I don't care, I need the information, just to give you an example. So yeah, it is very difficult. It is a challenging environment to raise children

○ Their children are also a source of motivation.

1 Quotations:

2:24 ¶ 18 in Interview transcript - participant 2

My children are also very good motivators, because I can sit them I don't need to discuss anything with him but they know "Mommy's not feeling nice" and just to be in their presence also helps me a lot and just talk about their day and how was your day and okay Mama's not feeling well tonight. I just need some time, it's fine mommy and go and rest and I have some tea in the make this prayer time and cry time and then I go on.

○ Their experience make it easier for them to deal with child abuse cases.

2 Quotations:

2:26 ¶ 22 in Interview transcript - participant 2

Yes, yeah, and my experience taught me that, my experience, I must be honest with you, I have experience in this. And that is why I can honestly tell you, this is my way. The young members is not that, it's not that easy for them. So for me personally, that is my way. But for members that is attending to these cases, we see to it that they go to the EHW.

2:35 ¶ 44 in Interview transcript - participant 2

So I have a lot of experience. And it's good. I believe that experience is teaching us every day. Yeah. So much so that I can say with certainty that all the cases is been referred to me from wherever. And I handle it as it comes.

○ Underreporting of cases makes it even more difficult

1 Quotations:

1:5 ¶ 2 in Interview transcript - participant 1

That's what we know of. What about the cases that we don't know of? These cases never get reported.

Appendix J: Editor's Certificate

REGCOR

ENTERPRISES PTY LTD

(2015/375453/07)

Date: 29/08/2023

Dear Sir/Madam

This letter is to certify that I, Sarah Louise Cornelius, of Regcor Enterprises Pty Ltd, have completed the initial editing of the dissertation titled *An interpretative phenomenological study of policewomen's experiences of policing child abuse* by ARMAND LUIJK.

I have ten years of experience in the field, having worked on multiple doctorates. Currently, I am a member of the Professional Editor's Guild (PEG).

All recommendations and errors have been noted in the comments. Any changes or lack of corrections done to the document after editing does not reflect the editing services provided. The onus is on the student to ensure the document is fully corrected before final submission, even if that requires multiple edits.

Kind Regards

Sarah Louise Cornelius

Professional Editor's Guild

Associate Member

Membership number: COR003

Regcor Enterprises Pty Ltd

Registration no: 2015/375453/07

Contact no: 0768156437

Email: sarah@regcor.co.za

Appendix K: Declaration of Originality

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The Department of Psychology places great emphasis upon integrity and ethical conduct in the preparation of all written work submitted for academic evaluation.

Academics teach you about referencing techniques and how to avoid plagiarism; it is your responsibility to act on this knowledge. If you are at any stage uncertain as to what is required, you should speak to your lecturer before any written work is submitted.

You are guilty of plagiarism if you copy something from another author's work (e.g. a book, an article or a website) without acknowledging the source and pass it off as your own. In effect you are stealing something that belongs to someone else. This is not only the case when you copy work word-for-word (verbatim) but also when you submit someone else's work in a slightly altered form (paraphrase) or use a line of argument without acknowledging it.

Students who commit plagiarism will not be given any credit for plagiarised work. The matter may also be referred to the Disciplinary Committee (Students) for a ruling. Plagiarism is regarded as a serious contravention of the University's rules and can lead to expulsion from the University.

The declaration which follows must accompany all written work submitted while you are a student of the Department of Psychology. No written work will be accepted unless the declaration has been completed and submitted.

Full names and surname of student: Armand Luijk

Student number: 14008841

Topic of work: An interpretative phenomenological study of policewomen's experiences of policing child abuse.

Declaration

1. I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this Dissertation (e.g. essay, report, project, assignment, dissertation, thesis, etc) is my own original work. Where other people's work has been used (either from a printed source, Internet or any other source), this has been properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with departmental requirements.



SIGNATURE

30/08/2023

DATE

Appendix L: Turnitin Digital Receipt



Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

Submission author: A (Armand) Luijk
Assignment title: Chapter 2
Submission title: FINAL DISSERTATION FOR TURNITIN.docx
File name: FINAL DISSERTATION_FOR_TURNITIN.docx
File size: 137.08K
Page count: 86
Word count: 32,468
Character count: 164,787
Submission date: 31-Aug-2023 10:02AM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID: 2154862722

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

One of the most common kinds of violence to which police officers must respond is child abuse. Typically, this abuse occurs in the home, which is meant to be a safe haven for children physically and emotionally. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2022), one billion youngsters worldwide are exposed to domestic abuse. Often hidden from public view, child abuse places children in much higher danger in their homes, where they should feel safe. This abuse remains concealed from those who could assist the children, such as the police. This is problematic because police officers strive to protect children and combat abuse, but these cases often remain concealed and difficult to address. In general, the police play a vital role in assisting child abuse victims whose cases end up in the justice system where the child has become a victim of abuse, maltreatment or neglect. Child abuse and the investigation thereof are reported to be associated with high levels of trauma for both the victims and the investigators (Hovey et al., 2023). Thus, police officers who are in charge of investigating a child abuse case are at high risk of developing stress and trauma due to their involvement in the investigation and the sensitive nature of these types of cases.

Police personnel frequently encounter situations involving child abuse because of their visibility in the community (Schul et al., 2020). For instance, they might be summoned to incidences of major physical harm to children, domestic violence, or child mortality. This means that officers may uncover instances of abuse while investigating other crimes, as child abuse is so often concealed from the eye of the public. During drug or other arrests, police officers may also see evidence of harm to a child. In child abuse cases, law enforcement's duties include determining if a crime was committed, finding and detaining the suspected criminal, filing the appropriate charges, and taking the children away from their homes when their immediate safety is at risk (Weber, 2018). The initial law enforcement response is typically provided by the patrol officer and occasionally by a detective or investigator with expertise in investigating child abuse and neglect (Police Chiefs' Association of Santa Clara County, 2023).

In the past ten years, the field of child protection has grown, which has increased the amount of police personnel employed in divisions that specialise in conducting child abuse investigations

Appendix M: Plagiarism Report

FINAL DISSERTATION FOR TURNITIN.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

9%	8%	3%	4%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to University of Pretoria Student Paper	1%
2	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	1%
3	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	1%
4	scholar.sun.ac.za Internet Source	1%
5	www.pure.ed.ac.uk Internet Source	1%
6	www.emeraldinsight.com Internet Source	1%
7	eprints.lse.ac.uk Internet Source	<1%
8	Alison D. MacEachern, Divya Jindal-Snape, Sharon Jackson. "Child Abuse Investigation: Police Officers and Secondary Traumatic Stress", International Journal of Occupational Safety and Ergonomics, 2015 Publication	<1%

9	www.scielo.org.za Internet Source	<1 %
10	Submitted to Laureate Higher Education Group Student Paper	<1 %
11	www.defencweb.co.za Internet Source	<1 %
12	nsuworks.nova.edu Internet Source	<1 %
13	digitalcommons.odu.edu Internet Source	<1 %
14	www.researchgate.net Internet Source	<1 %
15	salford-repository.worktribe.com Internet Source	<1 %
16	www.westerncape.gov.za Internet Source	<1 %
17	www.iiste.org Internet Source	<1 %
18	www.essayediting.co.uk Internet Source	<1 %
19	repository.uwl.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %

scholarworks.waldenu.edu

20	Internet Source	<1 %
21	vital.seals.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1 %
22	Submitted to Coventry University Student Paper	<1 %
23	Submitted to Tata Institute of Social Sciences Student Paper	<1 %
24	Submitted to Liverpool John Moores University Student Paper	<1 %
25	Submitted to Mary Immaculate College Student Paper	<1 %
26	Submitted to EDMC Student Paper	<1 %
27	Submitted to Saint Leo University Student Paper	<1 %
28	www.saferspaces.org.za Internet Source	<1 %
29	docu.tips Internet Source	<1 %
30	fisherpub.sjf.edu Internet Source	<1 %
31	Submitted to Nepal Open University Student Paper	<1 %

		<1 %
32	Submitted to University of South Africa (UNISA) Student Paper	<1 %
33	cual.openrepository.com Internet Source	<1 %
34	eduinfoafrica.files.wordpress.com Internet Source	<1 %
35	Submitted to Chester College of Higher Education Student Paper	<1 %
36	Submitted to Kenyatta University Student Paper	<1 %
37	Sharon Sibanda, Benny Motileng. "A Psychoanalytic Lens: Unmasked Layers of the Self among Post-Graduate Psychology Students in Surviving the COVID-19 Lockdown", Psychology, 2023 Publication	<1 %
38	Submitted to Tarleton State University Student Paper	<1 %
39	repository.uel.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
40	Submitted to The University of Manchester Student Paper	<1 %

41	cgi.temp.pedermassor.se.php54.levonline.com	<1 %
Internet Source		
42	digitalcommons.ciis.edu	<1 %
Internet Source		
43	repository.nwu.ac.za	<1 %
Internet Source		
44	uir.unisa.ac.za	<1 %
Internet Source		
45	qmro.qmul.ac.uk	<1 %
Internet Source		
46	Submitted to Fresno Pacific University	<1 %
Student Paper		
47	eprints.lancs.ac.uk	<1 %
Internet Source		
48	Submitted to Argosy University	<1 %
Student Paper		

Exclude quotes On

Exclude matches < 10 words

Exclude bibliography On