

**GUIDELINES FOR A PROGRAMME TO FACILITATE  
CONSTRUCTIVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS  
BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR PARENTS**

by

**LEBESE JOHANNES MOLELI**

**A Mini-dissertation**

**submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree**

**MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS**



**FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND NURSING**

at the

**RAND AFRIKAANS UNIVERSITY**

**Supervisor: Prof CPH Myburgh**  
**Co-supervisor: Prof Marie Poggenpoel**

**November 2000**

**THIS RESEARCH IS DEDICATED  
TO ALL FAMILIES**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their valuable inspirational contribution and support in this research:

Praise and Honour to my Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ for the wisdom, knowledge and understanding that He granted me during this era.

Professor Marie Poggenpoel and Professor Myburgh for their outstanding guidance and wonderful words of encouragement and support throughout the course.

My best friend and colleague, Khosi, for her comfort and encouragement to finish this course.

The St. Endas school principal and staff for giving me the opportunity to do this research with the adolescents at the school.

The authorities at the Dyambu Juvenile Centre, for allowing me to do the research with the adolescents at the centre.

All the adolescents who participated and committed their time and effort in this research for its success.

Dr Van der Merwe for his support and belief in my work as I progressed through the course.

*COD Typing* (RAU campus) for the typing and editing of this dissertation.

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study in this research was based on the exploration and description of adolescents' experiences on their needs and problems in interpersonal relationships with their parents. The main aim was to understand the feelings, perceptions and thoughts of adolescents and the way they felt about their parents' feelings, perceptions and thoughts of them. The research method that was followed was qualitative, explorative and descriptive. Data was gathered through observation, video taping, the taking of photographs and field notes, and also through activities such as workshops, group discussions, interviews and role-plays.

The theoretical framework was done on interpersonal relationships and also experiential learning through observation, conversations, group discussions, interviews and role-plays. The most important part was the description of the guidelines and principles for a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents. The concluding chapter describes how successful the study has been and the limitations experienced. It also contains recommendations for the relevant institutions of study on providing solutions to the problems discovered in the study.

The most interesting part in this research indicates that parents have difficulties in handling their adolescents in a number of ways. During interview sessions with both the focus group and individuals, it is clear that once the children reach the adolescent stage, they turn to think, perceive and do things in a more independent approach, forgetting that they are still under the guidance and responsibility of their parents.

At the same time parents tend to be harsh and respond to their adolescents in a way that encourages them to be stubborn and hard-headed, thereby negatively affecting the constructive interaction between parents and adolescents.

The situation analysis of this study has led to the development of guidelines and principles that will guide a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships. The focus of the guidelines and principles is on the initiation of a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships. The focus of the guidelines is based on the structure that reflects the description of how adolescents should relate, interact and also communicate constructively with their parents. It also describes how parents should, on the other hand, respond to the feelings, perceptions and thoughts of their adolescents in a more constructive manner.



## KAKARETSO YA DITABA

Morero wa phuputso thutong ena o itshetlehile tlhwredisisong le tlhalosong biophihlelong ba batjha ditlhokong le qakeng tseo ba kopanang le tsona kopanong le batswadi ba bona. Sepheo ke hore re utlwisise maikutlo, tebello le kgopolo ya batjha bana maelana le seo ba nahanang hore batswadi ba bona ba ikutlwa, le ho lebella esita le ho nahana jwang ka bona. Phuputso ena e tla latela boleng, tlhwedisiso le tlhalosiso ya boema ba ditaba. Data e tla bokelletswa ka mokgwa wa kelohloko, ho tshwara meqoqo le batjha. Tshebediso ya di video camera le se nka ditshwantsho kapa dinepe, esita le ho ngola tse qoquweng le diketsahalo tse tla nkang sebaka bosebeletsong. Dihlopha di tla kopana ho buisana ka sehlooho sa ditaba, dipuisano pakeng tsa mofuputsi le batjha ka dihlopha le bongwe di tla tshwarwa le karolo-padadi moo batjha ba tla bontsha ka mokgwa oo ho etsahalang ka teng pakeng tsa bona le batswadi.

Kgopolo kapa tsebo-popeho e entswe sehloohong sa ditaba tsa phuputso ena, le boiphihlelo ba mofuputsi thutong ena ka kelohloko le dipuisano dihlopheng tsa batjha le dikarolong-papading tse entsweng ke batjha. Karola ya bohlokwa ke ya tlhaloso ya tsamaiso-kakaretso le motheo bakeng sa ho thehwa hwa lenaneo le tla thusa bakeng sa dikamano tse haheileng/bopehileng pakeng tsa batjha le phethelo ya phomello phuputsong ya thuto ena, e boele e bontshe tshitiso peelong ya moedi, esita le dikgothaletso bakeng sa mekgatlo ya ho ithuta e tsamaelanang le thuto e entsweng ho fana ka tharollo qakeng e sibollotsweng phuputsong ya thuto ena.

Tjheseho ya bohlokwa phuputsong ena, ke ponahalo ya bothata ka moo batswadi ba tshwarang bana ba bona ka ditsela tse fapaneng ka teng. Ho ile ha hlaka ka nako ya dipuisano le dihlopha; esita le bana ke bonngwe hore ka nako eo ba kenang boemong bona ba kgolo ba bontsha tsela ya boikemelo ho ya ka moo ba nahanang, ba shebang le ho etsa dintho ka teng, ba le bale hore ba ntse ba le tlasa taitaiso le boikarabelo ba batswadi.

Ka yona nako ena batswadi le bona ba bontsha kgalefo e matla ho bana e be sena se kgothaletsa bana ho ba manganga le ho ba hlooho dithata bakeng sa ho utlwa le ho mamela batswadi ba bona. Sena se ama tsela ya ho kopana e phethehileng pakeng tsa bana le batswadi.

Tlhophollo ya boemo thutong ena, e kgothaletsa ntshetsopele le tshibollo ya tsamaiso le motheo tse tla tataisa lenaneo ntlafatsong ya phethahalo ho kopaneng dikamanong pakeng tsa bana le batswadi. Tsepamiso ya tsamaiso e itshetlehile hodima popeho e tla hlahisa tlhaloso ya hore bana ba amana le ho kopana esita le ho buisana ka tsela e phethehileng jwang le batswadi la bona. Le ho bontsha hape hore ka lehlakoreng le leng batswadi ba tshwanela ho arabela maikutlo, tjhebelo le menahano ya bana ka tsela le mokgwa o phethehileng.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   | <b>PAGE</b> |
|---|-------------|
| <b>CHAPTER ONE: RATIONALE AND OVERVIEW</b>  | <b>1</b>    |
| 1.1 RATIONALE   | 1           |
| 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT   | 3           |
| 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS  | 3           |
| 1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVE   | 4           |
| 1.5 PARADIGM  | 4           |
| 1.5.1 Meta-theoretical assumptions  | 4           |
| 1.5.2 Theoretical assumptions   | 5           |
| 1.5.3 Methodological assumptions  | 5           |
| 1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS  | 6           |
| 1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS   | 7           |
| 1.7.1 Interpersonal relationships   | 7           |
| 1.7.2 Interpersonal interaction   | 8           |
| 1.7.3 Interpersonal communication   | 8           |
| 1.7.4 Communication   | 8           |
| 1.7.5 Trust   | 9           |
| 1.7.6 Family system   | 9           |
| 1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD  | 10          |
| 1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS  | 10          |
| 1.10 PLAN OF STUDY  | 11          |
| <b>CHAPTER TWO : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>   | <b>12</b>   |
| 2.1 INTRODUCTION  | 12          |
| 2.2 RESEARCH RATIONALE  | 12          |
| 2.3 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH   | 12          |
| 2.4 RESEARCH DESIGN   | 12          |
| 2.4.1 Qualitative   | 13          |
| 2.4.2 Explorative   | 13          |
| 2.4.3 Descriptive   | 14          |
| 2.4.4 Contextual  | 14          |
| 2.5 RESEARCH METHOD   | 15          |
| 2.5.1 Phase 1: Exploration and description on adolescents' experience of needs and problems in interpersonal relationships with their parents | 15          |
| 2.5.2 Population  | 16          |
| 2.5.3 Sampling  | 17          |
| 2.5.3.1 Sampling method   | 17          |
| 2.5.3.2 Role of the researcher  | 17          |
| 2.5.3.3 The role of the researcher as an interviewer  | 18          |
| 2.5.4 Data gathering  | 19          |
| 2.5.5 Data analysis   | 20          |



|  |  |           |
|--|--|-----------|
| 2.5.6  | Phase 2: Description of guidelines and principles for a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents | 21        |
| 2.5.6.1  | Approach to programme development  | 22        |
| 2.5.6.2  | Data gathering   | 22        |
| 2.6  | <b>ETHICAL MEASURES</b>  | 22        |
| 2.6.1  | Competency of the researcher   | 23        |
| 2.6.2  | Relationship with participants   | 23        |
| 2.6.3  | Protection of human rights   | 24        |
| 2.6.4  | Rights of participants   | 24        |
| 2.6.5  | Informed consent   | 24        |
| 2.6.5.1  | Fair treatment   | 25        |
| 2.6.5.2  | Privacy  | 25        |
| 2.6.5.3  | Confidentiality and anonymity  | 25        |
| 2.6.5.4  | Procedures that will be followed   | 25        |
| 2.7  | <b>TRUSTWORTHINESS</b>   | 26        |
| 2.7.1  | Credibility  | 27        |
| 2.7.1.1  | Criteria   | 27        |
| 2.7.1.2  | Application  | 27        |
| 2.7.1.3  | Triangulation  | 27        |
| 2.7.1.4  | Peer group discussion  | 28        |
| 2.7.1.5  | Reference adequacy   | 28        |
| 2.7.1.6  | Member checking  | 28        |
| 2.7.1.7  | Interviewing techniques  | 28        |
| 2.7.2  | Transferability  | 28        |
| 2.7.2.1  | Dense description  | 28        |
| 2.7.3  | Dependability  | 28        |
| 2.7.3.1  | Dependability audit  | 29        |
| 2.7.3.2  | Coding/recoding procedure  | 29        |
| 2.7.3.3  | Triangulation  | 29        |
| 2.7.3.4  | Dense description  | 29        |
| 2.7.3.5  | Peer group discussion  | 29        |
| 2.7.3.6  | Consistency  | 30        |
| 2.7.4  | Confirmability   | 30        |
| 2.7.4.1  | The audit trail  | 30        |
| 2.7.4.2  | Confirmability audit   | 30        |
| 2.7.4.3  | Triangulation  | 30        |
| 2.7.4.4  | Peer group discussion  | 30        |
| 2.8  | <b>CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>  | 30        |
| <b>CHAPTER THREE : EXPLORATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM AND NEEDS IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR PARENTS</b> |  | <b>31</b> |
| 3.1  | <b>INTRODUCTION</b>  | <b>31</b> |

|  |  |           |
|--|--|-----------|
| 3.2  | <b>RELATIONSHIPS BASED ON THE NEEDS AND PROBLEMS ADOLESCENTS EXPERIENCE</b>                    | 33        |
| 3.2.1  | Formulation and observation of the group discussions   | 35        |
| 3.2.2  | Facilitation of smaller group discussions  | 36        |
| 3.2.3  | Report back from smaller group discussions   | 36        |
| 3.2.4  | Tools used to gather data in the situational analysis  | 36        |
| 3.2.5  | “Expectations” (the revealers)   | 37        |
| 3.2.6  | “Influences” (Khoza’s group)   | 37        |
| 3.2.7  | “Morals and values” (6 packs)  | 38        |
| 3.2.8  | Role-play observation  | 38        |
| 3.2.9  | Focus group and individual interviews  | 38        |
| 3.2.10   | First individual interviewed   | 39        |
| 3.2.11   | Second individual interviewed  | 39        |
| 3.2.12   | Third individual interviewed   | 40        |
| 3.3  | <b>ROLE-PLAYS ON DESTRUCTIVE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AMONG ADOLESCENTS</b>        | 42        |
| 3.3.1  | Role-plays on destructive interpersonal communication patterns among adolescents               | 42        |
| 3.3.1.1  | Adolescents presenting with destructive communication patterns due to lack of parental support | 43        |
| 3.3.1.2  | The power struggle between adolescents and parents   | 48        |
| 3.3.1.3  | Adolescents failure to listen to their parents   | 49        |
| 3.4  | <b>CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>   | 50        |
| <b>CHAPTER FOUR: DESCRIPTION OF GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROGRAMME TO FACILITATE CONSTRUCTIVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR PARENTS</b> |  | <b>51</b> |
| 4.1  | <b>INTRODUCTION</b>  | 51        |
| 4.2  | <b>COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAMME</b>   | 52        |
| 4.2.1  | Relationships as a component   | 52        |
| 4.2.2  | Interpersonal relationships as a component   | 54        |
| 4.2.3  | Interpersonal interaction as a component   | 54        |
| 4.2.4  | Interpersonal communication as a component   | 55        |
| 4.2.5  | Guidelines on the approach to programme development  | 56        |
| 4.2.5.1  | Objectives   | 56        |
| 4.2.5.2  | Experiential learning  | 57        |
| 4.2.5.3  | Role of the facilitator  | 58        |
| 4.2.5.4  | Therapeutic measures   | 59        |
| 4.3  | <b>CONCLUSION</b>  | 59        |
| <b>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>   |  |           |
| 5.1  | <b>CONCLUSION</b>  | 61        |
| 5.2  | <b>LIMITATIONS</b>   | 61        |

|                   |                        |           |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| 5.3               | RECOMMENDATIONS        | 63        |
| 5.3.1             | Educational guidance   | 63        |
| 5.3.2             | Education and research | 63        |
| <b>REFERENCES</b> |                        | <b>65</b> |



# CHAPTER ONE: RATIONALE AND OVERVIEW

## 1.1 RATIONALE

There seems to be only one definite statement one can make about coping with adolescents – “and that is that adolescents should be accepted and appreciated as individuals in their own right and their differences from their parents and each other tolerated and encouraged” (Fenwick & Smith, 1993:8). Adolescents develop most satisfactorily if they are loved and accepted for what they are, not for what their parents’ expectations are of them.

Constructive interpersonal relationships seem to be a problem in the lives of adolescents. Unhealthy interpersonal communication highly affects the constructive interaction between adolescents and their parents. As a major vehicle in building constructive interpersonal relationships, interpersonal communication is mostly affected.

According to Grobler, Myburgh and Poggenpoel (1999:35), “.... adolescents have the ability to formulate constructive, healthy interpersonal communication skills if they are given the opportunity and are facilitated correctly”. Successful interpersonal relationships depend on effective interpersonal communication. Adolescents show ineffective interpersonal communication patterns (Grobler, Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 1999:35).

Parents also have to learn to play a more indirect role. They can advise, suggest guidelines, impose sanctions, but increasingly it is the adolescent who decides whether to accept, follow, or obey them. It has to be crystal clear that the family, as a unit, is the centre of the child’s world and the main source of emotional support.

One believes that adolescents have the ability to build and maintain successful interpersonal communication skills and are also great company, providing constant stimulation and continual challenge.

Growing up is a normal process. What makes it difficult is the ineffective interaction of adolescents with those around them. Adolescents' sources of support, such as their families, members of the community and especially the peer group, play a significant role during this phase. It appears that in most families there is a high level of conflict between parents and adolescents. The unsuccessful interpersonal communication appears to play a major role in adolescent daily interaction. According to Hilliard (1957:16) "Communication with an adolescent is a frail thing ..... it is done subtly, by creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence in the home and giving the child an opportunity to chat without interruptions or distractions. Families with better parent-adolescent communication are closer and showing healthy, constructive interpersonal communication is important in all aspects of family life. It is important that family members share their thoughts, feelings and attitudes. Adolescents who are unable to share or disclose these thoughts to parents can become frustrated and unhappy.

It appears that in many instances the adolescents' word has to be adhered to by the authority and their actions have to be tolerated and accepted, in spite of them being unhealthy and potentially disastrous. One may assume that this happens as adolescents think that they are grown-up enough to make certain decisions on their own and that they are in full control of their actions and can finally take responsibility. On the other hand, adolescents' thoughts, feelings and perceptions make it difficult for healthy constructive interpersonal communication between themselves and their parents.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

While working with the adolescents on an adolescent/parent relationship workshop at secondary school level, I realised that a large number of adolescents present destructive interpersonal relationships with their parents in various ways. These interpersonal relationship problems relate to their sources of support, for example, their parents, friends, brothers, sisters, teachers and other people who are important to them. Since successful interpersonal relationships are necessary to successfully complete the developmental phase of an adolescent, these relationships must be maintained by adolescents in order to ensure continued support (Grobler, Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 1999:35).

One may point out that adolescents' thoughts, feelings and perceptions of things and other people affect constructive interpersonal relationships and it makes their lives difficult and uncontrollable as more seems to be at stake, and the potential for disaster is much greater. Therefore, there is a need for the creation of guidelines and principles for a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents.

## **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What are the problems and needs adolescents experience in their interpersonal relationships with their parents?
- What could be done to promote constructive, interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents?

## **1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVE**

The main focus of this research is to explore and describe the experience of adolescents with regard to their needs and problems in their interpersonal relationships with their parents. Therefore, the aim of this study is to describe guidelines and principles for a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents.

## **1.5 PARADIGM**

In the approach to this study, the researcher acknowledges the complexity of the phenomenon 'everyday interpersonal relationships of adolescents with their parents' and believes that the holistic approach to the study is best suited in studying the phenomenon. Again, the researcher has a strong belief in his own qualities and those of the participants in generating scientific knowledge on the phenomenon for advanced educational guidance counsellors to assist families, especially parents, to mobilise resources that are available to facilitate and encourage constructive interpersonal relationships among adolescents.

According to the researcher, the paradigm focuses on all the dimensions of the adolescent as a whole person, i.e. body, mind and soul, in his internal and external environment. The researcher believes that adolescents do not live as entities, but form part of the family and the community. Therefore, when communication skills and facilitation skills are provided, consideration must be given to the needs and problems that adolescents and their parents experience as individuals and family members to build a happy community.

### **1.5.1 Meta-theoretical assumptions**

Meta-theoretically, the researcher believes that as families and adolescents come from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, adolescents' interpersonal

relationships should be treated and handled differently, depending on the racial and cultural differences of specific families and individual parents. The researcher believes that adolescents should always strive to attain their quest for wholeness. Adolescents are capable of making choices on how to relate to their parents in their daily encounters with them. The researcher believes that constructive interpersonal relationships can be used synonymously with this wholeness and that they depend on effective interpersonal communication.

### **1.5.2 Theoretical assumptions**

According to Siphepho (1999:46) engagement in risky lifestyles entails situations in which adolescents become involved in dangerous activities, without thinking of the possible serious consequences that they may encounter.

Following Grobler, Myburgh and Poggenpoel (1999:36), interpersonal relationships with adolescents' sources of support, such as families, members of the community, and especially peer group, must be maintained by adolescents during their adolescence in order to ensure continued support. This, however, requires constructive interpersonal communication skills.

Grobler, Myburgh and Poggenpoel (1999:40) state that adolescents have the ability to formulate constructive interpersonal communication skills if they are given the opportunity and are facilitated correctly.

### **1.5.3 Methodological assumptions**

Methodological assumptions are based on a functional approach, which Botes (1991:19) describes in her research model. This functional approach acknowledges the fact that the knowledge generated in this research project should be utilised and applied in educational practices with adolescents and their parents and also to other settings where adolescents are involved, for example,



home, school, youth centres and churches. This functional approach will be utilised in the derivation of the findings and results of adolescents' activities based on their everyday life.

Guba's (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:39-43 & 209-307) measures of ensuring trustworthiness will be adhered to, to provide rigor in applying the theory generative of qualitative research design.

## 1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

**Adolescence** - simply refers to the process of growing up - the period of transition between childhood and adulthood (Herbert, 1987:4). It is also defined as a period of transition between the world of the child and the world of the adult (Laycock, 1970:64).

**Communication** - the act of imparting information or conveying a message (Tulloch, 1991:287). According to Barnard (1985:2), communication should involve the free, unimpeded, mutual flow of messages from one family member to another, particularly from parent to child and vice versa.

One can therefore say that communication is a *people process*, and it enables better interpersonal contact and understanding of each other as individuals. Finally, communication can be seen as both a language process and a people process.

**Interaction** - reciprocal action or influence (Tulloch, 1991:793). One can add by implication that interaction binds the family unit together and encourages self-evaluation by the manner in which the child is treated and perceived by other family members.

**Constructive relationship** - Constructive relationships are not a luxury, they are a necessity. We have to reach out to others. Constructive relationships are the key to our personal development and identity, meaning in, and quality of life. We are conceived within relationships, are born into relationships, and live our lives within relationships. Therefore, we are required to cooperate with others in our families, communities and social settings (Johnson, 1997:2-6-7).

**Interpersonal** - an occurrence between persons (Tulloch, 1991:798). One sees it as contact, personal or through language, communicating and also signs.

**Parent** - a person who had borne offspring; a father or mother (Tulloch, 1991:1104).

**Destructive** - harmful to health and dangerous to life (Tulloch, 1991:1710).

**Family** - refers to a set of parents and children, or of relations, living together or not, the members of a household (Tulloch, 1991:535)

## 1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

### 1.7.1 Interpersonal relationships

Interpersonal relationships is the other avenue commonly explored in understanding interpersonal events which emphasises the importance of interpersonal relations as the source of social understanding (Anastasiow, 1982:25).

According to Johnson (1997:6) interpersonal relationships are essential for our personal well being in many ways, by helping us to grow and develop cognitively and socially, to build a positive and coherent personal identity, and also to feel that we are in touch with reality.

### **1.7.2 Interpersonal interaction**

Relationships are built on interdependence and that interdependence results in interaction. All interaction is based on a cycle of perceiving what the other person is doing, deciding how to respond, taking action, and perceiving the other person's response. After perceiving what the other person has done, you decide how to respond and then take action, while at the same time continuing to perceive how the other person is reacting to what you are doing (Johnson, 1997:3).

### **1.7.3 Interpersonal communication**

Following Johnson (1997:106) interpersonal communication can be broadly defined as any verbal or non-verbal behaviour that is perceived by another person. All behaviour conveys some message and is, therefore, a form of communication. He adds by saying that it is commonly defined as a message sent by a person to a receiver, with a conscious intent of affecting the receiver's behaviour. From the above definitions it is clear that constructive interpersonal communication reflects our mutual goals.

### **1.7.4 Communication**

Communication is the foundation for all interpersonal relationships and our daily lives are filled with one communication experience after another. Through communication, we reach some understanding of each other, learn to like, influence, trust each other, begin and end relationships, and learn more about ourselves and how others perceive us. Communication among people is a process in which everyone receives, sends, interprets and infers all at the same time, and there is no beginning and no end. All communication involves people

sending one another symbols to which certain meanings are attached (Johnson, 99:105-106).

Communication is an essential tool for accomplishing change. It is a task that is often used poorly or thoughtlessly to the degree that it confuses people. It makes them angry ... in the process worsening their fears and making them resistant to change. Poor or absent communication is one of the greatest obstacles in the effort to establish constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents. If there are no events or actions of which parents feel comfortable talking, there is no communication (D' APrix, 1996:3).

### **1.7.5 Trust**

According to Johnson (1997:74) trust is an aspect of relationships that constantly changes and varies. Everything individuals do, increases or decreases the trust level in their relationships. The actions of both parties of people are important in establishing and maintaining trust. In order to build constructive relationships, you must learn to create a climate of trust that reduces your own and other people's fears of betrayal and rejection and promote the hope of acceptance, support and confirmation.

### **1.7.6 Family system**

From Haley (1980) and Minuchin (1974), the family system defines a unit of organisation, or structure, that includes members, each of whom is constantly evolving and changing (Anastasiow, 1982:27).

## **1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD**

The research design consists of a qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual design. Data will be collected by observing adolescents in their daily encounter with others, conducting interviews, facilitating group discussion and, more importantly, through role-play. Video and photo cameras will be used in gathering data and field notes will be taken.

The researcher will use two groups of adolescents. The first group will be selected from the school and will be used as a pilot group. The second group will be selected from the Juvenile Centre in Krugersdorp and used for interviews to compare to what extent destructive interpersonal relationships can be disastrous. The focus group and individual interviews will be conducted with the second group from the Juvenile Centre.

The observations, group discussions and role-plays will, as a pilot group, be done with the group of adolescents selected from the school for the research study, based on results of the situation analysis for a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships.

## **1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical measures will be of the utmost importance in terms of openness and confidentiality by protecting the rights of the participants. Appropriate steps and measures to ensure full protection of the rights of the research participants will be strictly undertaken in this research. The researcher's effort to protect the research participants' rights and decisions will be done in an effort to adhere to the ethics of research (Burns & Grove, 1993:94-108).

## 1.10 PLAN OF STUDY

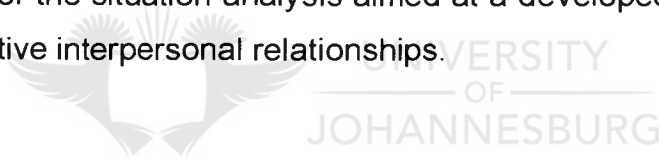
The following chapters in the plan of study will be structured as follows:

**CHAPTER TWO** discusses the research methodology of the study;

**CHAPTER THREE** focuses on the exploration and description of the needs and problems of adolescents' experiences in their interpersonal relationships with their parents;

**CHAPTER FOUR** pays attention to the guidelines and principles for a program to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents; and

**CHAPTER FIVE** contains the conclusion, limitations of the study, and recommendations for the situation analysis aimed at a developed programme for promoting constructive interpersonal relationships.



## **CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, a main focus will be on a description of the research rationale, purpose, research design and method.

### **2.2 RESEARCH RATIONALE**

Destructive interpersonal relationships seem to be a problem in the life of adolescents. These destructive interpersonal relationships greatly affect the smooth interaction between adolescents and their parents, as communication is a major instrument in building constructive relationships.

### **2.3 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of this research is to explore and describe adolescents' experiences of needs and problems in interpersonal relationships with their parents in their families by means of group discussions, interviews and role-plays. Secondly, to describe guidelines and principles for a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal communication relationships so as to enable adolescents' to master their daily encounters with their parents.

### **2.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design is a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem (Mouton, 1996:107). Therefore, the research design in this study is qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual.

### **2.4.1 Qualitative**

According to Burns and Grove (1993:27) a qualitative design is an approach in research that focuses on understanding the phenomenon as a whole. Qualitative research attempts to discover the depth and complexity of a phenomenon within this holistic framework. Following Denzin and Lincoln (1994:2) the main focus in this research is on the unhealthy communication patterns of adolescents in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret their role-plays in terms of the meaning that destructive communication patterns bring them.

Adolescents will do their role-plays in an attempt to reflect destructive communication patterns in a qualitative research observation process. The researcher stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, of how participants make sense of their lives and experience their structure of the world (Cresswell, 1994:145).

The researcher will observe and listen comprehensively and encourage participants to act and do their role-plays in their own language (Talbot, 1995:476). Kvale (1996:1), says, "if you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk with them?"

### **2.4.2 Explorative**

In this research, the main focus is based on exploring adolescents' unhealthy communication patterns in their families. According to Polit and Hungler (1993:19), qualitative researchers engage in explorative studies to get a richer understanding of the phenomenon of interest.

Following Holloway and Wheeler (1996:4) in this study, the researcher follows the "emic" perspective to uncover the meanings that destructive interpersonal



relationships of adolescents in their families give to their experiences and the way in which they interpret them.

According to Mouton and Marais (1990:49), the researcher departs from a position of 'not knowing' and is willing to explore this relatively unknown area of the role-plays on unhealthy communication patterns of adolescents in their families.

### **2.4.3 Descriptive**

Qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning and understanding, gained through words (Cresswell, 1994:145).

In this research, destructive communication patterns of adolescents in their families will be described through role-plays, in a qualitative and explorative observation process. The main aim of this is to obtain uninterpreted descriptions, as participants will describe as precisely as possible what they experience and feel, and how they will react (Kvale, 1996:32).

The researcher will gather descriptions of the relevant themes of the participants' role-plays that are as rich and pre-suppositionless as possible since, according to Kvale (1996:32-333) "... the deliberate naiveté and absence of presuppositions advocated here implies an openness to new unexpected phenomenon". The researcher will therefore develop an awareness of the lived experiences, without forcing prior expectations or knowledge in the process (Brink, 1993:35-36).

### **2.4.4 Contextual**

This research is contextual in nature. According to Mouton and Marais (1985 in Mouton, 1996:133), contextual research studies phenomena, because of their intrinsic and immediate contextual significance. Following Mouton (1996:133),

the primary aim of the researcher is to produce an extensive description of role-plays on destructive communication patterns of adolescents in their specific context.

Attention to the social context will be taken into consideration in that the researcher will know what surrounds the focus of the study. Again, the researcher will take into consideration the time at which the research is being done, and the setting, with the specific socio-political system in which the participants find themselves, relating to their group discussions, role-plays, and events. Actions and meaning are shaped by the unique circumstances in which they occur (Neuman, 1997:331).

## **2.5 RESEARCH METHOD**

This research will follow the following steps:

### **2.5.1 Phase 1: Exploration and description of adolescents' experiences of needs and problems in interpersonal relationships with their parents.**

In this phase, the researcher identified the need for the exploration of destructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents. He will identify with these adolescents by observing them daily in a classroom situation and also through conversation with them.

Therefore, the researcher will undergo experiential learning to understand the destructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents.

After a prolonged experiential observation and daily conversations and interaction with adolescents at school, the researcher will organise a group of adolescents as a pilot group to run a workshop on destructive interpersonal

relationships. This workshop will help the researcher in describing guidelines and principles for a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents.

The workshop will continue for five days. The group of adolescents will meet with the researcher. The researcher will introduce the topic on “relationships”. The large group will discuss this topic and add their ideas and experiences. Thereafter, the large group will split into three smaller groups to discuss agreed upon sub-topics, which resulted from the discussions of the large group. They will be asked to report back on their findings and explorations of their ideas from the smaller groups and to recommend solutions.

Interviews will be conducted by the researcher in a juvenile centre on the West Rand. In order to better understand problems, and the extent to which these problems are destructive of adolescents’ interpersonal relationships with their parents, one large group of adolescent boys and three individuals from the centre will be interviewed



The description of the guidelines and principles for a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents will be based on therapeutic measures and facilitative strategies.

### **2.5.2 Population**

According to Talbot (1995:241), a population is a group whose members possess specific attributes that the researcher is interested in studying. Following Lincoln and Guba (1985:297) the target population, is the population to which the researcher wishes to transfer the findings in adolescents with unhealthy interpersonal relationships. The population to which the researcher has access and on which he will focus during the research study, will be part of the target population (Brink, 1993:132).

### **2.5.3 Sampling**

Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population (Polit & Hungler, 1993:654). Purposive sampling will be used for this research study. Selection of the participants will be based solely on grade level and age. The researcher will purposively select a sample of adolescents from the school community that he believes will yield the most comprehensive understanding of the study (Rubin & Babbie, 1993:369).

#### **2.5.3.1 Sampling method**

For this research, a purposive sample of adolescents from the school community and the Juvenile Centre will be obtained. Participants who will be chosen are those best representing the phenomenon to be studied (Talbot, 1995:255).

- **Sampling Criteria**

This will involve groups of adolescents from the group discussions, who will reflect characteristics of unhealthy interpersonal relationships, and are experiencing such relationships with their parents and who can also demonstrate those relationships through role-plays.

#### **2.5.3.2 Role of the researcher**

According to Cresswell (1994:147), qualitative research is interpretative research, and as such, the biases, values and judgements of the researcher will be minimised through the use of peer examiners. Ethical measures will be maintained throughout the research project as discussed under paragraph 2.6. The researcher will further seek permission to carry out the study through personal meetings with the school and centre authorities.

### **2.5.3.3 The role of the researcher as an interviewer**

As an experienced interviewer, the researcher is skilled in qualitative research methods and will conduct the interviews.

- The interviewer will ensure that the respondents' answers are accurately representative of their experiences.
- The interviewer will address the nervousness of interviewees by reassuring them of their competence, and that he is interested and sees value in what they have to say.
- The interviewer will show understanding throughout the interview by encouraging the participants to be frank and open and to provide answers in depth (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:365).
- The interviewer will act naturally while participating to ensure a positive interview relationship. He will guide the conversation not only in terms of questions asked and the flow of the topic at hand, but also in terms of emotional tone and the intensity of the interaction.
- The researcher, as an experienced interviewer, will act as a facilitator to guide the conversation of others, thus moving the focus away from an over talkative person and encouraging the interviewees being more talkative.
- The interviewer will indicate to the interviewees when the interview is to be concluded (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:366).

#### 2.5.4 Data gathering

The focus of this qualitative research is on the experienced world of destructive interpersonal relationships in relation to adolescents and their parents. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to describe and explore adolescents' experiences of their needs and problems in their interpersonal relationships with their parents and, furthermore, to suggest guidelines to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents (Kvale, 1996:29).

In this research study, life experiences are the central themes in the approach to destructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents. In accordance with Kvale (1996:29-30), the researcher will seek to describe and explore the meaning that life experiences have on destructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents. This will be done through role-plays, focus group interviews and individual interviews.

During the individual in depth interviews at the juvenile centre, the researcher's first question will reflect life experiences on the theme of the interviews "as this will help the researcher to anticipate how the interview questions will actually work in practice, and also how the participants will understand them and how they are likely to respond". Open-ended questions will be asked in order to retain focus and to allow participants to express their experiences and perspectives in their own words.

The central question will be "Talk about your day-to-day interpersonal relationship with your parents". Further questions will flow from the participants' response.

According to Talbot (1995:479), field notes are detailed recordings of information collected in the field of study, which the researcher will write as part of the data

collection process. Therefore, notes will be taken and kept by the researcher during observation of group discussions and role-plays. All interviews will be videotaped and later transcribed verbatim.

The role-plays will also play a very important part in this study, as they should reflect the real situation of adolescents' experiences on unhealthy interpersonal communication patterns in their daily encounters with their parents.

### **2.5.5 Data analysis**

Following Cresswell (1994:153); Maxwell, (1996:77) and Talbot (1995:479), data analysis in qualitative research is an ongoing process that occurs simultaneously with data gathering.

In this regard, the interviews will be transcribed verbatim and the written field notes will serve as material for the subsequent interpretation of meaning (Kvale, 1996:27).

According to De Vos (1998:271), the first basic analytical step is open coding. During open coding, data is broken down into segments, closely examined and compared for similarities and differences. Questions about life experiences as reflected in the data will emerge at this stage.

For data analysis, Tesch (1990 *in* Cresswell, 1994:155) will be used as a method of choice. Therefore, the following eight steps will be considered:

- I. Setting a sense of the whole by carefully reading through all the transcriptions and jotting down some ideas as they came to mind.

- II. One document, the shortest and most interesting, will be chosen and the researcher will peruse it, thinking about its underlying meaning. Thoughts will also be written in the margin.
- III. Having completed all the documents, the researcher will then list all necessary topics, group similar ones together and arrange them into major topics and unique topics.
- IV. The researcher will then take the list and consult with the data. Topics will be abbreviated as codes written next to the appropriate segments of the text.
- V. The most descriptive wording for the topics will be found and turned into categories. Topics that appear to relate to each other will then be grouped together. Lines may also be drawn between categories to show interrelationships.
- VI. A final decision on the abbreviated categories will be made and codes also will be alphabetised.
- VII. Data material belonging to each category will be gathered and thereafter a preliminary analysis will be done.
- VIII. All existing data will be transcribed. The transcribed data will be given to an independent coder who is a specialist in Educational Guidance.



### **2.5.6 Phase 2: Description of guidelines and principles for a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents**

This phase will focus on providing guidelines and principles based on constructive interpersonal relationship skills. This phase should be seen from the perspective that it also provides and describes guidelines on therapeutic measures to be used in programmes to promote constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents.

In this phase a clear picture on constructive interpersonal relationships will be provided in the form of a sketch. Thereafter a description of the operational definitions used in approaching the promotion of constructive interpersonal relationships towards programmes will be developed.

#### **2.5.6.1 Approach to programme development**

The guidelines on the approach to programme development will be based on objectives, experiential learning, the role of facilitator and the therapeutic measures.

#### **2.5.6.2 Data gathering**

Data to formulate guidelines and principles for a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships will be gathered through available theories on constructive interpersonal relationships. This data, as well as data collected from experiential knowledge and from the results obtained from phase 1 of the situation analysis, will be used for a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships.

## **2.6 ETHICAL MEASURES**

Ethical issues need to be considered in all research methods. Therefore, according to Holloway and Wheeler (1996:39-50), the researcher will apply the principles that protect the participants in the research from any kind of harm or risk.

The following aspects will be covered:

### **2.6.1 Competency of the researcher**

Following De Vos (1998:30), the researcher has ensured that he is competent and adequately skilled to undertake this research after having studied research methodology and interpersonal facilitation skills. Moreover, two professors experienced in qualitative research and also highly recognised nationally and internationally will supervise this research.

### **2.6.2 Relationship with participants**

The researcher will present himself in a way that will evoke the least resistance from the participants. In line with De Vos (1998:301), the participants will be informed of the particulars that attest to the researcher's credentials, in order to reassure them that they will be working with a bona fide researcher.

Following De Vos (1998:302), the aim of the proposed investigation, as well as the envisaged use of the results, will be clearly set out.

The following will be discussed with the participants: practical aspects of the research, such as the use of a video camera, photo camera and tape recorder to record the activities, as well as the advantages thereof; role-play; group

discussion; interview venue and the time that can be devoted to all activities (De Vos, 1998:302).

Permission to videotape and take photographs of the activities, in order to ensure accurate recall, will be obtained from the participants.

Most importantly, the researcher will make available his name; address and contact telephone numbers to the participants, should they wish to make any changes or have questions or queries about the research process.

### **2.6.3 Protection of human rights**

The rights of participants must be protected to the fullest possible extent (Brink & Wood, 1978:184). To ensure this, the researcher will follow the Bill of Rights of South Africa (The Constitution of Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996:7)

### **2.6.4 Rights of participants**

Participants with unhealthy communication patterns may feel discomfort, insecure and fearful and may be harmed psychologically during research. This may cause them to withdraw from the project. To prevent this, informed consent will be sought from participants and this thoroughly documented, to make monitoring of the above aspect possible.

### **2.6.5 Informed consent**

According to Neuman (1997:450) it is not enough to get permission from the participants. They also need to know in what they are being asked to participate, so that they can make an informed decision. At this stage, the participants will be informed of fair treatment, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, the

procedures to be followed, the type of participation expected from them and the sample selection.

#### **2.6.5.1 Fair treatment**

The participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from or remain in the study, should they so wish. The researcher will not collect more data than is necessary to reach the objectives of the study.

#### **2.6.5.2 Privacy**

The researcher will assure the participants of their right to behave, to think and to speak without the researcher's interference, and also that there is no possibility of their private thoughts being used to embarrass or demean them later.

#### **2.6.5.3 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Participants will be assured that their individual identities will not be linked or attached to the information that they provide and that information will not, under any circumstances, be divulged publicly. Should it happen that their anonymity is threatened, all research records will be destroyed.

#### **2.6.5.4 Procedures that will be followed**

Participants will be given information about all the research procedures, the depth of the group discussions and interviews, the use of video and photo cameras, field notes, the evaluation questionnaires, and also be informed that the interviews will last for thirty minutes.

- **The type of contribution expected from participants**

Participants will be informed that they are expected to give as much information as possible during their large and small group discussions. They will be asked to portray their real-life situations in their families when doing role-plays and should answer the researcher's questions as honestly as possible during the interviews.

- **Sample selection**

All participants will be made aware that they have been selected purposively to partake in the research as they have met the research criteria and are also likely to provide the researcher with the most comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being studied. A pilot group of boys and girls (between the ages of 17-20) from the school, who can express their feelings, emotions and thoughts about what they have experienced in destructive interpersonal relationships with their parents, will be the participants.

- **Gaining access**



Permission to conduct research will be sought from the school principal and management committee in the identified community (school), as well as from the juvenile centre authorities (including the centre's social worker) of the juvenile centre in which adolescents, reflecting destructive interpersonal communication patterns, are found,.

## **2.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Trustworthiness will be established by using Guba's model (Guba & Lincoln, 1985:290) for trustworthiness of qualitative research for the validity and reliability of the research, in order to persuade and assure the audience that the findings thereof are worth listening to attentively and are worthy of confidence.

Following this model, trustworthiness has four criteria, and must all be applied by using research strategies. Using the strategy of credibility, truth-value will be ensured. Transferability will ensure applicability dependability will ensure consistency and confirmability will ensure neutrality.

### 2.7.1 Credibility

The criteria will be obtained by presenting accurate descriptions and interpretations of participants in destructive interpersonal relationships; group discussions; interviews and role-plays in their families, so that participants can recognise the results.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:301), techniques make it more likely that credible findings and interpretations will be dealt with in the following pattern:

2.7.1.1 **Criteria** - Prolonged field experience and observation

2.7.1.2 **Application** - As a researcher, I will spend time during the initial phase of the workshop attempting to get as informed as possible and to play games of any kind to gain participants' confidence, to videotape and observe as a non-participant and to take field notes. The literature review, data analysis and a description of the findings by the researcher, will follow.

2.7.1.3 **Triangulation** -The researcher will use two different groups for phase one of the research, and three individuals in an interview in step one. Videotaped recordings and written dialogues will be made, field notes taken and a literature review will be performed during phase one of the research.

- 2.7.1.4 **Peer group discussion** - The researcher will discuss analytically with colleagues and the two professors, the findings of the steps followed during this research
- 2.7.1.5 **Reference adequacy** - During phase one of this study, written dialogues and field notes of group discussions and role-plays will be provided.
- 2.7.1.6 **Member checking** – This will be done in step one of the research, according to the evaluation questionnaire, which will be completed by respondents, and group discussion recording.
- 2.7.1.7 **Interviewing techniques** - Open-ended questions will be asked.

## 2.7.2 Transferability

According to De Vos (1998:349), research meets these criteria when the findings fit well into a context outside of the study situation, and is determined by the degree of similarity or goodness that fit between the two contexts. The researcher will therefore, employ the following strategy of :

- 2.7.2.1 **Dense description** - Complete description of the methodology through verbal quotes from role-plays and dialogues, selection from literature control and dense description of the findings on the two phases.

## 2.7.3 Dependability

According to Robson (1993 *in* Holloway & Wheeler, 1996:58), a qualitative research study that establishes credibility will also be dependable. The ways in which this study will be proven to be dependable is through the dense description

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985:301) of role-plays on destructive interpersonal relationships of adolescents and their parents.

- 2.7.3.1 **Dependability audit** - This process of the research study will be audited continuously by two research supervisors and professors in the same field of study, who will perform external checks on every step of the research. The product of the study, encompassing new data, findings, interpretation and recommendations, will also be examined to attest to those interpretations and recommendations that are supported by the data and are internally coherent.
- 2.7.3.2 **Coding/recoding procedure** - After data collection, the researcher and the independent coder will each analyse, discuss and reach consensus on the data obtained from the group discussions, interviews and role-plays. For this research, the independent coder will be an experienced, qualitative researcher and an expert education specialist.
- 2.7.3.3 **Triangulation** - Two groups will be used. One from the school environment and two from the juvenile centre. Three individuals will be interviewed. Dialogues, role-plays and field notes of phase one.
- 2.7.3.4 **Dense description** - Data gathering will be done through group participation discussions and the analysis and interpretation of the processes of the research.
- 2.7.3.5 **Peer group discussion** – An analytic discussion of the findings will be done by the researcher, with colleagues, the two professors and one doctor of education.



2.7.3.6 **Consistency** - Guidelines on the operationalisation of the interpersonal relationships approaches written on the findings of step one.

## 2.7.4 Confirmability

According to Holloway and Wheeler (1996:168), the gathered data is linked to their source, so that the reader can establish that the conclusions and interpretations arise directly from them. The following pattern will be followed to ensure confirmability:

2.7.4.1 **The audit trail** - All records stemming from this research study will be kept so that the sequence of events can be followed.

2.7.4.2 **Confirmability audit** – An M Ed adolescent panel, two professors and one doctor of education will be part of the audit team.

2.7.4.3 **Triangulation** - The use of three groups, one from the school environment and two from the Juvenile centre. Three individuals interviewed, dialogues, role-plays, field notes on phase one.

2.7.4.4 **Peer group discussion** - The analytic discussion on step one findings by the researcher and MEd. adolescent colleagues, two professors and one doctor from the Department of Education.

## 2.8 CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions, limitations and recommendations of this research will be based on the findings of this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: EXPLORATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEMS AND NEEDS IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR PARENTS**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Having joined St. Endas Secondary school in Joubert Park, Hillbrow, as a part-time teacher in January 1999, I attended the first parents meeting. At the meeting, both parents and teachers expressed concern for the poor performance of pupils and all hinted on pupils being negligent, ignorant, stubborn, lazy and unwilling to do their school work. These concerns were based on the previous year's results.

During our second parents meeting of the school term, teachers were concerned about the absenteeism, drunken behaviour and other forms of misconduct of learners, especially those in the adolescent stage. This was becoming a serious concern to both parents and teachers and was having a serious impact on these adolescents' futures.

The study of this research is based on parents' concern about the way in which their adolescents performed at school, both academically and socially. Their main concern was that their adolescents did not seem to relate well to them and that they cannot "get through" to them, and are therefore, unable to understand their difficulties.

From the above background, I, as researcher, started observing some adolescents and also had informal talks with a few of them, in an effort to understand their relationships with their parents. It became crystal clear that

As a masters student in adolescent guidance programme development, implementation and evaluation, this problem became my problem. I was touched and made it my responsibility to find the reason for parents' concern about their adolescents.

During July 1999, just before the school closed for the winter holidays, I spoke to the school principal and explained to him how the situation had touched me and that I saw the problem as part of my vocation. I was also willing to look into the whole matter by doing a research project on it and by presenting a workshop, on relationships between parents and their adolescents, to a group of adolescents at the school

The principal gave me permission to conduct the workshop. Thereafter, I met with the school guidance teacher and other staff members, explained the whole issue at hand, and invited them to observe the workshop. Unfortunately, they could not participate in the whole process. As a concerned guidance councillor, however, I conducted the whole process with a group of adolescents, selected purposively. During the workshop, the group and I discovered that the main problem was communication. There appeared to be bad communication patterns used by adolescents, bad communication patterns used by parents, or there was no communication at all, because of the unavailability of parents or parents access to their adolescents in getting them to adhere to their school work difficulties, or to their general problems as adolescents. This is where I, as a masters student in adolescent guidance, became involved and felt it necessary to devise a programme dealing with communication problems facing these adolescents and to improve their communication skills. For me to understand the seriousness of the destructive impact that these interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents could have on the adolescent, I visited the **Dyambu Juvenile Centre**, one of the juvenile centres in Krugersdorp. This is a centre for adolescent boys convicted of very serious crimes, for example,

rape, robbery, hijacking, and so forth. I conducted two group interviews as well as individual interviews with those adolescents and videotaped and photographed the proceedings.

### **3.2 RELATIONSHIPS BASED ON THE NEEDS AND PROBLEMS THAT ADOLESCENTS EXPERIENCE**

A group of adolescents was purposefully selected from students in grades 10-12. The group consisted of 15 adolescents, aged between 17 and 20. The group was well presented.

Before the process started, I enquired from the group whether they would be willing to allow their parents to either participate or observe the proceedings. They did not feel comfortable about this and, as managers of their own lives, I had to adhere to their choices and decisions.

At the start of the program we all introduced ourselves, giving names, grades and whereabouts. In an effort create a feeling of closeness and to perform as a team as much as possible, an icebreaking activity was undertaken. The group introduced a game called "**Atamela kwene**" where we all stood in a big circle and started singing and tapping each other's hands.

We decided as a group on how we were going to run the program. Days, times and ground rules that would direct us and keep us on the right track were agreed upon. We met twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, during a 30-minute break-time. Because of time constraints, participants would be permitted to bring their food with them and eat while participating.

As a facilitator, I introduced the topic '*building healthy relationships*'. As a team, we brainstormed on our understanding of interpersonal relationships. Members of the group then noted concepts that have an impact on interpersonal

As a facilitator, I introduced the topic '*building healthy relationships*'. As a team, we brainstormed on our understanding of interpersonal relationships. Members of the group then noted concepts that have an impact on interpersonal relationships, such as *communication, love, trust, respect, feelings and emotions, lust, friendship and bonding*.

After talking about these concepts, we further discussed three types of relationships; namely: *family relationships, parental relationships and peer group relationships*.

We discussed these concepts in detail during the first session of our program to try and understand which relationships affect us as adolescents, as well as how they affect us. In our second session, we as a group, decided to look into parental relationships, as these appear to be the relationships that have a more direct impact on, and serious implications for adolescents. We then focused on the following:

- Problems experienced
- Expectations
- Influences
- Morals and values.



In this session we broke up into three smaller groups, where each group had the task to tackle these four aspects relating to parental relationships. Each group was expected to report back on their feelings and discussions. During the feedback process in the third session, it became clear that communication is a core issue; and that there is a lack of communication between adolescents and their parents, or in some cases, there is no communication at all. Another problem may be the communication patterns that the adolescents reflected on. Adolescents reflected thereon that they like *jolling*, going to clubs and parties, drinking and smoking. To them the problem was that their parents do not talk to

them or tell them what they expect from them. According to the adolescents, this is when they become afraid of their parents, perceiving their parents to be bad listeners and overprotective. As a result this causes them to listen and take advice from outsiders.

These adolescents claim that they do not communicate whatever problems they have to their parents, as their parents are not friendly, do not intermingle with them, and thus do not promote any interaction.

During this report back session, each group appointed their own speaker to present the group's feed back. Each group chose to deal with their aspects in detail, for example, "expectations", each group's speaker pointed out in the following way: Adolescents see their parents as hostile and as denying them their independence.

Rutter et al, (1985:65) states three levels of parenting that hamper parent-adolescent relationships. Firstly, authoritarian parenting, as characterised by firmly enforced rules and ethics decided on by parents, without acceptance of children's demands and without bargaining or discussion. Secondly, indulgent permissive parenting, as characterised by lack of controls and restrictions and an acceptance of children's demands. Lastly, indifferent, uninvolved neglecting parenting leads to a wide variety of problems, including aggression, low self-esteem, low levels of self-control and disturbed parent-child relationships.

### **3.2.1 Formulation and observation of the group discussions**

The researcher used, as a pilot group, a group of adolescents, aged from 17 to 20, from a secondary school in Hillbrow, and specifically those in grades 11 and 12. This process was a purposeful selection of the participating group. In the initial stage of the program, and in an effort to create a conducive working environment and feeling of trust to enhance a harmonious relationship with the

participants, the researcher introduced himself to the group. The researcher introduced the topic during the first session of the program and, as the observer, allowed for general discussion.

### **3.2.2 Facilitation of small group discussions**

After the general discussions, the large group, together with the researcher, formulated sub-topics for discussion in the smaller groups of five participants, in the second session. Three groups were involved in these discussions. As a facilitator, the researcher moved around among the groups, to help them focus on their different sub-topics and to make sure that they did not lose sight of the main topic. This kept them in line with the objective of the program. The researcher encouraged free expression of feelings and thoughts from the groups and also highlighted the importance of openness and honesty between themselves and their parents.

### **3.2.3 Report back from smaller group discussions**

The report back process took up two sessions of the program to allow the different groups enough time to report and to respond to questions asked by other groups. Each group had an adolescent reporting back and one acted as the scribe, documenting what was discussed. The presentations took 10 minutes each. Five minutes was allowed for additional information from group members and five minutes was left for responses or questions from other groups.

### **3.2.4 Tools used to gather data in the situation analysis**

The researcher discussed and obtained the permission of participants on the program to use the following tools to gather enough data for data analysis purposes: video recordings, the taking of photographs, the use of flipcharts and the taking of field notes. In this regard the researcher guaranteed the

participants' confidentiality on any sensitive information gathered during interviews.

### **3.2.5 "Expectations"(the revealers)**

The participants pointed out that parents set very high and unattainable goals for them to achieve, and seem to forget that they are different individuals with different views of life and with different needs. This group hinted that their parents forget that the challenges that adolescents are required to meet today, differ from what they, as parents, experienced during their youth. In addition, their parents also liked to force them into things in which they have no interest. Their parents do this indirectly, and do not sit and talk to them or explain why they want their children to be that which *they* want. This creates a lot of misunderstanding between these adolescents and their parents.

### **3.2.6 "Influences"(Khoza's group)**

According to this group, influences are very important to parents. They always want their adolescents to display certain actions, behaviour, feelings and thoughts that they portray, without considering that their adolescents are different individuals living in a far different world. These adolescents pointed out that they are only aware of this when they are in the wrong, which is when their parents will pass such comments such as "you don't act and think like us as your parents. You act the same way as that stubborn uncle of yours". The way this is communicated to them already causes and promotes "don't care feelings", aversion and antagonism. Therefore, according to this group, revenge and aggression initiate and maintain the power struggle. In this event, these adolescents passively show both revenge and aggression. Carlson Mareus – (Newhall & Miller, 1990:622-623) state that verbalisations, resulting from rage, lead to rage becoming aggression. It showed the group that feelings and



thoughts at some stage are communicated wrongly and, therefore, this causes adolescents to develop bad communication patterns.

### **3.2.7 "Morals and values"(6 packs)**

The speaker of this group highlighted to the other groups that there are parents who set very high standards of morals and values in accordance with how they were raised during their adolescence. Others will, on the other hand, display very poor and low standards of morals and values. This confuses the adolescents and this confusion leads these adolescents to resorting to picking up or copying external standard morals and values from neighbouring communities, families and from friends. Sometimes, according to this group, parents set such high standards of morals and values, which they themselves do not live up to, but expect their adolescents to live up to. This is not possible for the adolescents.

### **3.2.8 Role-play observation**

During this session, the researcher encouraged, facilitated as well as observed the role-plays of adolescents on destructive interpersonal communication problems, as one of the many important factors having a direct negative impact on constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents. The role-plays reflected how adolescents react and respond to their parents in their daily encounters and interaction with them.

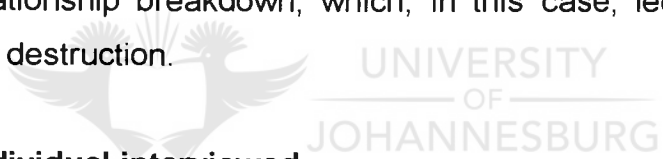
### **3.2.9 Focus group and individual interviews**

The researcher visited one of the juvenile centres in Krugersdorp. The researcher identified this centre to ascertain to what extent destructive interpersonal relationships are disastrous. The researcher approached authorities for permission to conduct research on the interpersonal relationships of adolescents with their parents. The researcher met two groups of adolescent

boys. This meeting was handled in the form of a focus group interview during the first session of the process and proceeded with three individual interviews during the second session. During the initial stage, the researcher did the introductions to create a harmonious relationship with both the focus groups and the individuals.

### **3.2.10 First individual interviewed**

Bongani Nyathi, aged 17, was the first boy the researcher interviewed. Bongani originally came from KwaZulu Natal and lived in Meadowlands, Soweto, with his brother. He attended school at Damelin. Bongani was suspected of car hijacking with his uncle. In this session, I could pick up from the conversation that the boy's life is at stake because of parent absenteeism in his life. His parents could not act as parent figures to him, and never made any contact by mail or telephone. This signifies the problem of adolescent-parent interpersonal communication relationship breakdown, which, in this case, led the life of an adolescent boy into destruction.



### **3.2.11 Second individual interviewed**

The second interview was with Santos Mokobane, aged 17, who lived with his aunt and brother in Soweto. Santos' mother is a nurse and she lives in Leondale. The boy is from a very good family background. He was caught in a jewellery shop robbery in Hyde Park with three of his friends, who were, unfortunately, killed at the scene of the robbery. They had already killed the owner of the shop as well as his wife and child, before they themselves were shot. Santos tried to escape, but was too late as police had already surrounded the area. He then gave himself up to the police. Santos attended school at St. Endas in Joubert Park/Hillbrow, where I am currently doing my research.

This situation is very touching and degrading for the parents who are there, but not for their adolescents to talk to them, and to know them and the problems pertaining to their stage. There is therefore a need to establish a model of communication that will benefit both the adolescents and their parents.

### **3.2.12 Third individual interviewed**

The researcher interviewed Tshepiso Ngidi, aged 18, next. Tshepiso lives in Tladi, Soweto with his granny. His mother lived elsewhere and he had no father. He therefore saw himself as the father figure with a family to support. Tshepiso and his two friends were also caught while robbing a jewellery shop in Roodepoort. Fortunately, they were caught before they could cause trouble or steal anything. This indicates that the lack of parents' availability and communication with their adolescents can lead to frustration and unhappiness, and also make adolescents' lives very difficult, uncontrollable and almost disastrous.

At the end of all the feedback the group wanted to understand the core problem of all these experiences. We asked ourselves the question: "*What are the main factors of communication?*" As a big group we then decided that listening and hearing as well as speaking either verbally or non-verbally were the main factors of communication.

In the fourth session we focused on the question "*Do I listen and hear?*" We looked at this question in the following way:

- *Do I let the speaker express his/her thoughts without interrupting?*
- *Do I listen and read the message between the lines?*
- *Do I try to locate and remember the most important facts?*
- *Do I feed the main facts back to the conversationalist?*

After we had asked ourselves these questions, it became clear that of the aspects, with which the individual groups dealt during the previous sessions, there were components reflected that appeared to have a very serious impact on interpersonal communication relationships between adolescents and their parents. The large group therefore decided that the best way to understand all the action and processes, and to be able to draw conclusions, would be to resort to role-plays to try and demonstrate the communication pattern problems of both adolescents and their parents. This would be done in line with answering the four questions the group formulated in this session.

For me, as a researcher to understand the serious after-effects of the interpersonal communication relationships between adolescents and their parents, I further consulted with the juvenile centre in Krugersdorp, a centre that accommodates mostly boys convicted of very serious crimes.

During my first visit I met with the authorities, a social worker and one of the directors, Mr Peter Sadie and the boy's supervisor. In a short introductory meeting, I first met with the director and explained my mission and later met with the social worker, to get the social and psychological background of the boys at the centre. Lastly, I met with the boys' supervisor who orientated me around the centre and the boys.

During my second visit, I agreed with the centre authorities to meet with two groups of boys and three individual boys for interviews.

During this session, I met with the first group aged between 11-19 years. We introduced ourselves individually, giving names, saying where we came from and gave our reasons for being there. This was a very interesting session as one could pick up clearly that the adolescents resorted to committing crime mostly due to parental negligence. It was clear in a number of individual cases that, as the boys introduced themselves, there was hardly a time of adolescent/parent

communication in the way of guidance or advice. All these can be seen in a video recording made of these processes. This session took an hour, and it was very releasing and interesting to both the group and I. It was agreed upon by the group that whatever was communicated during these sessions would remain confidential, and may only be shown to my supervisors.

After an hour, and in the same session, I met with another group of boys, aged 12-20 years. The process was the same as that with the first group. We also reached an agreement of confidentiality, as most of the boys had committed very serious crimes. The most important aspect about these sessions with the two groups was to see how relieved the boys were after having talked about their problems and grievances and also how they showed a sense of taking responsibility for their actions. But the main core of their actions was family attached, either with one or both parents.

My last session mainly focused on three individual interviews, each of which took 30 minutes. During this session ground rules were laid down and openness was encouraged. Confidentiality, the most important aspect, was guaranteed to each individual. During the ice-breaking part of the session, the boys were asked about their hobbies, interests and backgrounds.

### **3.3 ROLE-PLAYS ON DESTRUCTIVE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AMONG ADOLESCENTS**

#### **3.3.1 Role-plays on destructive interpersonal communication patterns among adolescents as one of the many important factors, which have a direct negative impact on constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents.**

The researcher requested the adolescents to demonstrate certain destructive communication patterns that they normally experience in their daily encounters

with their parents and to reflect on their reactions and responses. The role-plays were done from an understanding based on the following three perspectives:

- Adolescents presented with destructive communication patterns because of a lack of support from their parents;
- A power struggle exists between the adolescents and their parents;
- The adolescents fail to listen to their parents.

These three perspectives will be discussed as results in detail. The researcher will refer to supporting literature and quote certain portions of the transcribed video recordings and written dialogues.

#### **3.3.1.1 Adolescents presenting with destructive communication patterns due to lack of parental support**

The destructive communication patterns in this research entail the way in which adolescents communicate with their parents. This appears to be unfavourable and does not enhance constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents, and is also destructive to the adolescents' whole being. Such communication problems are evident through the current nature of interpersonal relationships that exist between adolescents and their parents. Stubbornness and aggression are the most prevailing responses that they get from their adolescents, parents say.

The first adolescent expressed her parents' fears as follows about their interaction with others in terms of being influenced, which, according to the parents, may encourage the adolescent to rebel against them as parents:

*“Parents have fears about the adolescent’s life because the parents do not know what happens in the adolescent’s life. Who is this person with my child? Is he a good person? Should I allow my child to associate with him? Is he not going to make my child listen to me and also take my advice if I tell her to move away from this person?”*

The second adolescent responds by pointing out that adolescents do not want to listen to what their parents tell them, and that adolescents behave as if parents know nothing about their lives.

*“The problem today with the adolescents is that they do not want to be told .... adolescents behave as if their parents don’t know anything about life and also never experienced whatever it is they are experiencing. Surely, something must be done to help adolescents failing to listen to their parents.”*

The third adolescent expresses the need for parents to be closer and available to them so that others do not misguide them

*“My parents are almost not available at times when I need their help. They always come home late and leave very early. When they are at home on weekends, I don’t feel the bond between me and them and they normally don’t spend time with me. My opinion is that parents must come close to adolescents at this stage so that adolescents are not misguided.”*

The fourth adolescent stresses the fact that parents’ fail to help them develop properly, and then blame them when they do something wrong.

*“I normally pour water when I cook cabbage to make it have gravy, here comes my mom to shout at me and tell me that it is not healthy, I must learn to cook food properly, but she never showed me. I feel that*

*sometimes parents do not help adolescents to grow properly. They only blame it to adolescents after they have done something wrong.”*

The fifth adolescent stresses the need for smooth and harmonious communication that must be encouraged between adolescents and their parents.

*“I feel that sometimes parents have certain feelings towards adolescents, but I still insist that parents must understand the situations that sometimes adolescents find themselves in and at the end parents must try and harmonise the communication flow. It is very important in my opinion that communication between adolescents and parents become smooth.”*

The sixth adolescent states that parents should approach their adolescents appropriately. She stresses that good communication between parents and their adolescents is crucial and that they must communicate with each other in good faith.

*“My mother talks to me like I’m a stranger, when she wants to find something that she wants me to keep. She will say: Where the hell have you kept that ..... And this will drive me mad ..... That’s why I say that the way of approach is vital in enhancing good communication between parents and adolescents. Parents and adolescents are supposed to be good friends.”*

Rice (1992:82) states that: “..... when family influence declines, entertainment heroes and peers become increasingly important as models, especially in influencing verbal expressions ..... clothing and basic social values.” This quotation confirms what adverse effects ineffective communication patterns in the family have on the adolescent’s life. This is shown in the results where adolescents voice their concerns that bad influence is destructive of adolescents’ family life.



According to Perko and Kreigh (1990:130) “..... communication concerns the type and patterns of dialogue that takes place either on an ..... or interpersonal level. Openness and honesty promote objectivity, in turn, lends clarity to the issue, legitimacy to the power, and provides an opportunity to creatively address and satisfy the presenting need.”

This quotation supports the results in this research as adolescents stated that poor communication seems to exist between parents and their adolescents. This ineffective communication pattern often lead to problems, such as stubbornness and aggression.

♦ **Stubbornness** - In this research, stubbornness reflects a situation in which adolescents’ behaviour towards their parents is impolite and this is encouraged by parents’ over-protection. One adolescent states that parents’ over-protection of their adolescents makes adolescents stubborn.

*“Sometimes, I hate when my parents watch every move I make ..... you know what I just close my ears and do whatever it feels okay to me and sometimes just ignore what my mom say and go with my friends.”*

This adolescent feels that the more overprotective parents are, the more stubborn adolescents become. The more parents say no, the more adolescents push for their rights,

♦ **Aggression** – According to Wells and Miller (1993:74) aggression reflects a situation in which adolescents easily pick a quarrel with their parents for any reason. Adolescents feel that, because of ineffective communication patterns, they do not have a voice in their families and that their perceptions, feelings and thoughts are not considered or attended to by their parents.

One adolescent said that adolescent's aggression, due to lack of effective communication, results in poor relationships between parents and adolescents.

*"The poor relationship that exists between me and my parents is due to lack of good communication between us and it makes me move away from my parents. As a young person, it makes me become more aggressive towards them. My parents always say that I am very impatient and also do not tolerate situations. I think my parents need to understand me as an adolescent in this stage that I am in."*

Another adolescent emphasizes the fact that poor dialogue between parents and adolescents often leads to adolescents' aggressiveness and defiance of their parents.

*"I believe that our life as adolescents is full of problems, sometimes we don't want to take our parents advice, we just want to do what we want at that given time. If they tell us that something is wrong, we tell them that it is our time, our right and our bodies, therefore, they must not worry. We are always pressing for our own rights even if they are wrong."*

According to Rice (1992:101), parents and adolescents affect one another. Adolescents are influenced by the quality of support and communication from their parents, and parents are affected by their relationship with their adolescents and the way adolescents behave toward them. This is relevant to the findings of this research as parents are concerned about the poor relationship that seems to exist between them as parents and their adolescents.

### 3.3.1.2 The power struggle between adolescents and parents

The adolescents' search for autonomy and independence and their hard-headedness, is behaviour that initiates and maintains this interpersonal communication pattern.

According to Critelli (1987:223-224) "dominant remarks lead to dominant reactions. In their search for autonomy and independence, the adolescents participating in this research use dominant remarks which lead to dominant reactions, resulting in a power struggle with the parents. Examples of how this information features in this research are: *"Dad, I am 18 and I do what I want to do"* and *"OK, but still the fact remains I will decide on what I want to wear, and also don't forget that taste differs, so?"*

Dinkmeyer and McKay (1990:11) state that hard-headedness is part of the adolescent's strive for autonomy. Examples of how this information features in this research are: *"I look normal mother, and I'm leaving now,"* and *"No, I am taking the car tonight, do you hear me? Finished!!"* Non-verbal interpersonal communication hints that accompany the above examples are interruptions of the parents to give their own opinions as well as voice intensification.

**Feelings** that initiate and maintain the power struggle are "don't care feelings." The researcher will clarify implied feelings displayed during the role-plays with the adolescents, after the recording thereof. The adolescents experience "don't care feelings" because they feel that their parents do not listen to their opinions. An example of how this statement features in this research is: *"It doesn't matter."* Non-verbally, adolescents display their don't care feelings by pulling up their shoulders, by rolling their eyes and by looking away from their parents.

**Thoughts** of conflicting values that the adolescents seem to have, keep the power struggle with their parents alive. Okun (1992:67) stresses that if you are

aware of your own values, you are less likely to impose them indirectly on others and that confusion about values usually results in interpersonal difficulties. A verbal example of how this statement features in this research is: *"What do you think of me, Father?"*

### 3.3.1.3 Adolescents failure to listen to their parents

Following Van der Merwe (1993:11), the inability to listen causes ineffective interpersonal communication. The adolescents try to clarify problems with their parents, but fail because they do not listen to their parents.

**Feelings** of uncertainty and concern also reflect a pattern of failing to listen, in that nothing is clarified, only implied. The more questions that parents put to the adolescents in the research, the shorter the answers become, and this further concerns parents. Verbal examples of how the above information features in this research are: Mother: *"Who will take you there?"* Adolescent: *"Mandoza"* Mother: *"Mandoza who?"* Adolescent: *"Mbombolo."*

**Thoughts** that initiate and maintain the circular pattern of failing to listen are the adolescents' use of their own special language and making use of short sentences. Examples of adolescents' own language use are: "Ho lokile" "OK", "borotho kan ontong" "bread in the oven", "Mtjotjo" "alright". "teletele" "she is fat", "Diawa" "fun". Now verbally, it seems as if this "own language use" gives adolescents some kind of autonomy and the feeling of independence. The non-verbal behaviour that accompanies the use of short sentences, is that there are very few periods of silence between these short sentences. Beaumont's, (1995:109-132) research confirms the above.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter of the research reflects on how the adolescents responded and committed themselves to making this research a success by their generous participation in the large group and smaller group discussions, the focus group interviews, individual interviews and role-plays. The adolescents gave all the necessary information that the researcher needed to gather enough data for the situational analysis, which is aimed at programme development.

The researcher and the adolescents were faced with a few hiccups in terms of time constraints. As the sessions were done during 30-minute school breaks, there was not enough time for group discussions and role-plays. The researcher suggests that situational analysis workshops on adolescents' interpersonal relationships with parents not only affects parents and families, but also schools. It is, therefore, proper that the school work on providing special policies on allowing time, especially to those participating in such workshops, as this will benefit the adolescents, their parents, and the school, in terms of the positive results that will result from this kind of research. The researcher believes that this kind of research will help adolescents to grow physically, mentally, spiritually and socially, and that their performance at school will improve so that they can become the most important persons in society in general.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DESCRIPTION OF GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES FOR A PROGRAMME TO FACILITATE CONSTRUCTIVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR PARENTS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will describe the guidelines and principles under the relationship components through the structure given in figure 4.1, and the role of the facilitator, as well as therapeutic measures that can be undertaken towards developing a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents.

The main focus of this chapter is to provide a basis for guidelines and principles for the development of a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships and also to provide and describe guidelines on therapeutic measures to be used in developing programmes intended to promote constructive interpersonal relationships.

The description of the guidelines and principles will be discussed in terms of a well formulated and tabled sketch based on the most important components in promoting constructive interpersonal relationship skills and the facilitation thereof. A detailed discussion of the guidelines on the approach to programme development in this chapter is based mostly on what the objectives of the programme should be, experiential learning of the phenomena, the role of the facilitator in the programme developed and the therapeutic measures to be used in the programme for its success.

For me, as a researcher, to be able to describe guidelines and principles, I used my research findings from phase 1 and consulted literature to understand more about

relationships, interpersonal relationships and communication as a major component in relationships, especially focussing on adolescents and their parents.

Bowlby (1969) in Rutter et al, (1985:49) propose that it may be that children need loving relationships with their parents, in order to develop appropriate social behaviour later. Hence, that it is the difficulties in social behaviour that underly the conduct disturbances associated with family discord.

As Hinde (1980) puts it in Rutter et al, (1985:48) “the family consists of a network of relationships; the behaviour of one individual to another is affected by the relationships of each with others.”

According to Laycock (1970:19) parents should accept independence and encourage maturation, for example, foster independence. The adolescent must feel genuinely accepted. He stresses that an understanding adult will be tolerant when hostility as well as affection is found in the relationship the adolescent wants with him.

## **4.2 COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAMME**

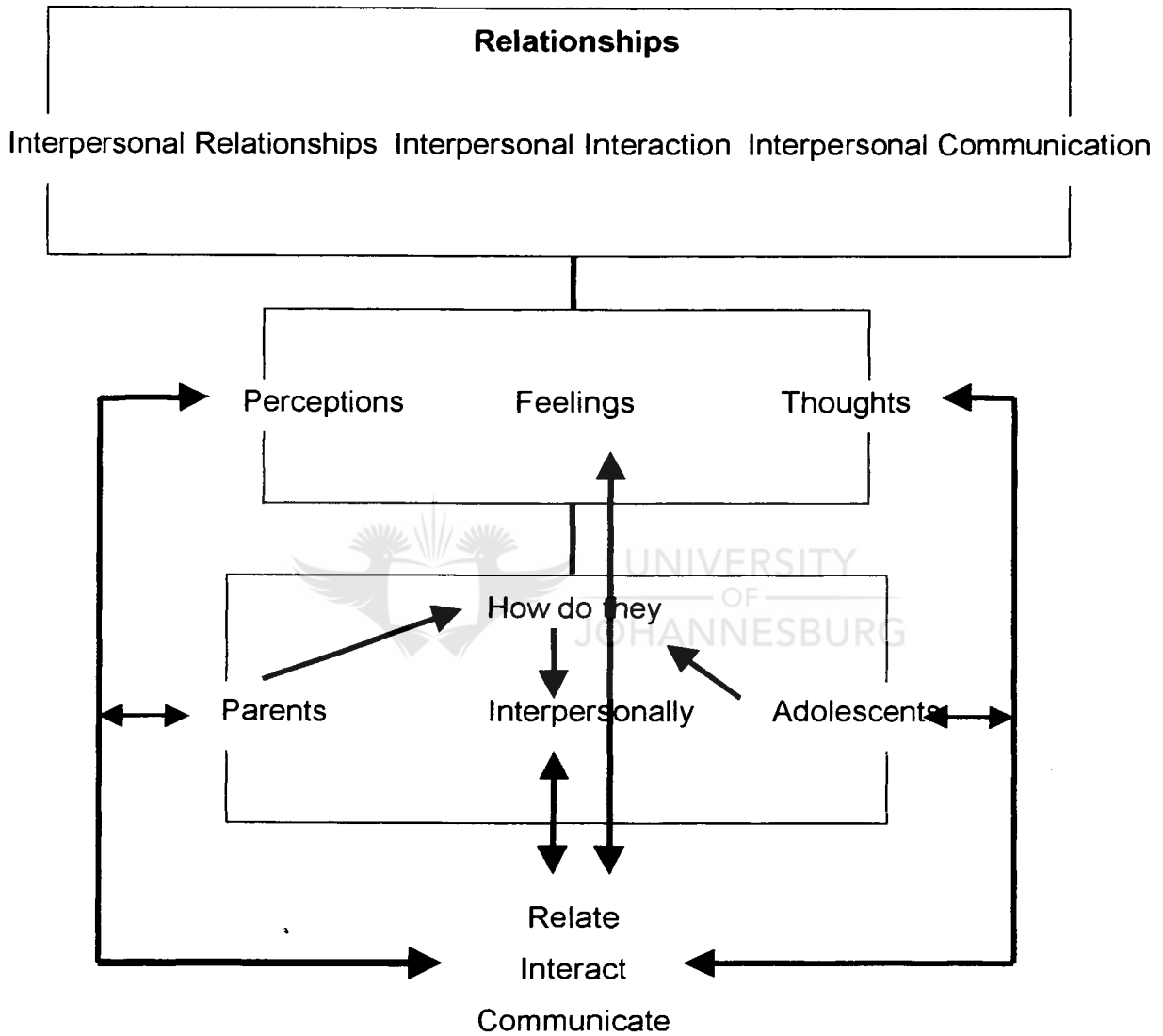
It was clear from the theoretical background that the main focus of the guidelines and principle for a programme to be developed was based on these three components in relationships: interpersonal relationship, interpersonal interaction and interpersonal communication. Their extensive description also shows how they can be used in programmes to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships. Refer to figure 4.1.

### **4.2.1 Relationships as a component**

According to Johnson (1997:6) relationships are not a luxury, they are a necessity in that we have to reach out to others. He extends this by saying that relationships are the key to our personal development and identity, productivity and career success, a

meaning in quality of life, physical health, psychological health, coping with stress, self-actualisation and humanness.

**FIGURE 4.1 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS AND PARENTS**



In this situational analysis process, adolescents were drawn to an understanding of the importance that role relationships play in their entire life and also in their daily interactions with others, especially their parents.



Following Laycock (1970:28), learning to live with, and to trust one's deeper impulses, was one of the important lessons a helping relationship could provide. Initiating, developing and maintaining caring and committed relationships is the most important activity in our lives (Johnson, 1997:2).

#### **4.2.2 Interpersonal relationship as a component**

According to Anastasiow (1982:25), interpersonal relations are, as the source of social understanding, the other avenue commonly explored in understanding interpersonal events. He extends this by adding that interpersonal understanding within the framework of the development perspective taking during adolescence, that parent-child relationships necessarily involve the co-ordination of the parents' viewpoints with those of the adolescent. The goal of the interaction is dialectical change, not prescription.

Interpersonal relationships are essential for our personal well-being in many ways, helping us to grow and develop cognitively and socially, to build a positive and coherent personal identity, and to feel we are firmly in touch with reality (Johnson, 1997:6).

According to Johnson (1997:16) many, if not most of life's problems, have their origin in interpersonal relationships. Such problem behaviour is avoided when one has high quality relationships with parents and peers and is committed to a set of values based on caring about oneself and others.

From the above statement, I believe that interpersonal skills are a valuable package of ones ability to interact effectively interpersonally.

#### **4.2.3 Interpersonal interaction as a component**

Following Johnson (1997:3), people reach out to others as they have goals they wish to pursue and this requires the participation of other people as well as themselves. He stresses the point that relationships are built on interdependence and that

interdependence results in interaction. All interaction is based on a cycle of perceiving what the other person is doing, deciding how to respond, taking action, and perceiving the other person's response. After perceiving what the other person has done, you decide how to respond and then take action, while at the same time continuing to perceive how the other person is reacting to what you are doing.

As a researcher, my understanding is that everything the other person does will affect your perceptions and feelings about that other person and the relationship. Interacting with others, for example, is a dynamic process. It must also be understood that the interaction is constantly shifting and changing as you and the other person respond and reach out to each other.

#### **4.2.4 Interpersonal communication as a component**

According to Johnson (1997:105), to live is to communicate! All life communicates in some way. He stresses that communication is the foundation for all interpersonal relationships, and that our daily lives are filled with one communication experience after another. Through communication, we reach some understanding of each other, learn to like, influence, and trust each other, begin and end relationships, and also learn more about ourselves and how others perceive us. Through communication, we learn to understand others as individuals and help others to understand us.

Johnson (1997:106) continues by commonly defining interpersonal communication as a message sent by a person to a receiver, with a conscious intent of affecting the receiver's behaviour. In his opinion, interpersonal communication reflects our mutual need to establish contact, and from our efforts, to achieve mutual goals. The very process of communication, exchanging messages is to achieve understanding of each other's perceptions, ideas and experiences and makes people interdependent (Hodge et al., 1981:84)

Therefore, it is clear that it takes two to communicate, and also that through the very act of communicating with another person, we begin or maintain a relationship.

## **4.2.5 Guidelines on the approach to programme development**

### **4.2.5.1 Objectives**

- The development of the programme should enable the adolescents and parents after going through the programme to be able to:
  - clarify who they are, where they come from and where they are going;
  - constructively cope with interpersonal relationships;
  - identify their own personal style of communication with themselves and others;
  - identify and constructively manage possible conflict situations;
  - demonstrate facilitative interpersonal skills;
  - manage difficult interpersonal situations.
- The objective of the programme should make a person aware of what makes, builds or destroys constructive interpersonal relationships.
- The format of the programme can be structured in a way that shows self-disclosure and that relationships begin when two people reach out to each other and identify common goals, interests, activities and values.
- Being open with you and being open to you enhances an open relationship, which will promote constructive interpersonal relationships.
- The researcher can also draw mind maps that will show the importance of openness in order to promote constructive interpersonal relationships.

- The exercises to teach and encourage adolescents and parents to communicate constructively interpersonally, can be developed in a programme.
- A programme that is successful is a programme that provides helpful listening and responding skills, constructive interpersonal conflict skills, constructive problem solving skills, constructive communication skills and constructive interpersonal skills.
- A well planned and developed programme helps adolescents and parents in building and maintaining trust; being trusting and trustworthy, building interpersonal trust and trusting appropriately.
- A helpful programme for adolescents and parents is structured and developed in line with the norms and values of the same background.

#### **4.2.5.2 Experiential learning**

According to Johnson (1997:21) we all learn from our experiences. Many things about relating to other people can be learned only by experience.

Experiential learning is based on three assumptions:

- People learn best when they are personally involved in the learning experience.
- Knowledge has to be discovered if it is to mean anything or make a difference in behaviour.
- Commitment to learning is highest when people are free to set their own learning goals and actively pursue them within a given framework.

The plan in the programme where adolescents and parents can learn interpersonal skills through experiences as well as through reading, is seen as one of the most successful programmes.

Reading about how to communicate is not enough to make you skilful in communicating with others. A programme that provides exercises that requires adolescents and parents to practice and experience good communication skills, is the best therapeutic programme to promote constructive interpersonal relationships.

#### **4.2.5.3 Role of the facilitator**

The role of the facilitator is:

- To identify attitudes that adolescents and parents find positive or negative in their daily interaction.
- To focus on those attitudes that both adolescents and parents can change.
- To encourage attitudes that are necessary for facilitative interaction.
- To identify the influence that morals and values have on building and maintaining constructive interpersonal relationships
- To identify different types of body language in terms of which body language turns the other person either off or on during interaction.
- To highlight the importance of listening to oneself and others in interaction, to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships.
- To reflect types of communication that are invitational during interaction between adolescents and parents and that will help them build and maintain constructive interpersonal relationships.

#### **4.2.5.4 Therapeutic measures**

The developed programme is therapeutic when its activities and exercises help to develop and bring positive change and build and maintain constructive interpersonal relationships in the lives of both adolescents and their parents.

The following components are seen as therapeutic measures in a developed programme:

- constructive interpersonal skills;
- constructive communication skills;
- interpersonal effectiveness;
- facilitative interaction;
- constructive conflict management skills;
- development of appropriate trust.

#### **4.3 CONCLUSION**



From the situation analysis, one must understand that when you interact with another person, you have no choice but to make some impact, stimulate some ideas, arouse some impressions and observations, or trigger some feelings and reactions. It also has to be understood that your interpersonal effectiveness depends upon your ability to communicate clearly what you want to communicate, to create the impression you wish, and to influence the other person in the way you intend.

Many individuals lack basic interpersonal skills, such as correctly identifying the emotions of others and appropriately resolving a conflict.

According to Johnson (1997:18) some people communicate well, some poorly. He also adds that ideas, perceptions, feelings and attitudes all have to be communicated accurately and unambiguously. He mentions that interpersonal skills are the sum total

of your ability to interact effectively with other people. Whenever you interact with other people, whether they are friends, family members ... interpersonal skills are a necessity.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 CONCLUSION**

A number of factors were found during this research that contribute either directly or indirectly to, and affect the constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents. These negative factors include lack of support from parents, stubbornness and aggression, the existence of power struggles and adolescents' failure to listen. The researcher realises that it is of the utmost importance, having discussed the adolescents who are highly affected by this situation and to thereafter provide guidelines and suggestions for adolescents to maintain a positive approach towards developing healthy and constructive interpersonal relationships with their parents. This study was aimed at enhancing/promoting constructive interpersonal relationships between adolescents and their parents, and at this stage, the researcher agrees that from the results obtained from the findings, the objective of this research has successfully been achieved.

The researcher identified the need for this study through the daily observation of how adolescents react towards parents and adults in general. Thereafter, the research methodology was followed in formalising the authenticity of the study by the formulation of the problem statement, data gathering, the analysis and the description of the guidelines for a programme to facilitate constructive interpersonal relationships to establish whether the objective of the research was achieved or not.



## 5.2 LIMITATIONS

In this research, the researcher wishes to bring to attention some of the stumbling blocks in the situation analysis for guidelines aimed at developing the programme.

It was difficult to get some of the adolescents to participate in the workshop, because of restraints imposed by schoolwork and the realisation of the demands of the situation analysis for guidelines aimed at developing the programme. It was necessary to take up adolescents' school break time and sometimes remain after school for some time.

It was a major problem for the adolescents to have their parents involved in the situation analysis for guidelines aimed at developing the programme and it is therefore difficult to say that the role-plays are always a true reflection of how parents handle the situation with adolescents.

The educators, especially the guidance teachers, were reluctant to attend workshops where adolescents are involved. At times, even though adolescents agreed to video recording, their actions did not appear as natural as when the researchers were just observing and writing notes, or during activities which were not being video recorded. Some of the adolescents regarded the situation analysis for guidelines aimed at developing the programme as a joke, even though the seriousness and importance of their participation in the workshop was explained to them.

Time was the most serious obstacle to the situation analysis for guidelines aimed at developing the programme. Break times were short and resulted in the situation analysis for guidelines aimed at developing the programme to be prolonged for longer than planned. This disturbed the adolescents, especially those in grade 12, as some of them could not attend sessions, forcing us to

postpone activities to times when everyone was available in an effort to involve all the adolescents in their different activities as a team.

The researcher had to borrow the video camera and camera and the flipchart stand. It was sometimes difficult to continue with the workshop as the videotape and the flipchart stand were sometimes taken for use and brought back at a later stage. This affected the school activities of the adolescents and it took a great deal of motivation and encouragement to get them back into the situation analysis for guidelines aimed at developing the programme.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations made in this chapter are based on the findings and results of the research and can be applied in Educational Guidance, Education and Research and Psychology of Education.

#### **5.3.1 Educational guidance**

It is proper and worthwhile for the Education Department to improve the syllabus on School Guidance to include interpersonal communication and interpersonal relationship skills for adolescents, as well as a broad approach on communication and relationships, to teach adolescents to handle situations they encounter in real-life situations. This calls on the Department to provide training and workshops for educators on how to facilitate adolescents with interpersonal communication and interpersonal relationship problems during their adolescence, and how to enhance constructive communication patterns and harmonious relationships.

### 5.3.2 Education and research

As a researcher in education, there is very little research on adolescents' constructive interpersonal relationships and this is mostly based on communication patterns. Therefore, the recommendation is that institutions of higher learning develop courses for students, especially post-graduate students, to encourage them to register and pursue degrees focusing on the development and maintenance of constructive interpersonal relationships of adolescents with parents, peers, partners and others. Relationships play a very crucial part in the life of adolescents and others, especially when they are constructive.

The researcher concludes by highlighting that the lives of adolescents need proper positive guidance and facilitation by both parents and educators in order to enhance the development of adolescents with constructive interpersonal relationships.



## REFERENCES

- ANASTASIOW, J 1982: The adolescent parent. London: Paul H Brookes Publishing Co.
- BARNARD, MC 1985: Gesinskommunikasie. Roeping en riglyne. 33(3). September 1985:2-5
- BEAUMONT, SL 1995: Adolescent girl's conversations with mothers and friends: A matter of style. Discourse Process. 20 (1): 109-132, Jul/Aug.
- BOTES, AC 1991: A functional approach in nursing. Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University.
- BRINK, H 1993: Validity and reliability in qualitative research. Curationis. 16(2): 33-38.
- BRINK PJ AND WOOD MJ 1978: Basic steps in planning. From question to proposal. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Boston: Jones and Bartlett Publishing Inc.
- BURNS, N & GROVE, SK 1993: The practice of research, conduct, critique and utilisation. Philadelphia: Sage.
- CARLSON, M, MAREUS-NEWHALL, A & MILLER, N 1990: Effects of situational aggressive cues: A quantitative review. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58: 622-633.
- CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFICA, Act 108 of 1996.
- CRESSWELL, J 1994: Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches. London: Sage.

- CRITELLI, JW 1987: Personal growth and effective behaviour. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- D' APRIX, 1996: Communicating for change. USA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- DENZIN, NK & LINCOLN, YS 1994: Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- DE VOS, AS 1998: Research at grass roots. A primer for the caring professions. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- DINKMEYER, D & MCKAY, GD 1990: Parenting teenagers. Circle Pines, Minnesota: American Guidance Service.
- FENWICK, E & SMIT, T 1993: Adolescence: The survival guide for parents and teenagers. London: Butter and Tanner Ltd.
- GROBLER, S; MYBURGH, CPH & POGGENPOEL, M 1999. Adolescents interpersonal communication patterns. 35 (1) 36-39. Rand Afrikaans University.
- GUBA, EG & LINCOLN, YS 1985: Naturalistic enquiry. California: Sage.
- HERBERT, M 1987: Living with teenagers. New York: Basil Blackwell Inc.
- HILLIARD, M 1957: Problems of adolescents. London: MacMillan & Co Ltd.
- HODGE, B; MALCOLM, I & COURTS, DC 1981. Communication and the teacher: Language and communication for teachers. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.

HOLLOWAY, I & WHEELER, S 1996: Qualitative research for nurses. London: Blackwell Science.

JOHNSON, DW 1997: Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualisation (6<sup>th</sup> ed). USA: Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data.

KVALE, S 1996: Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing. London: Sage Publications.

LAYCOCK, AL 1970: Adolescence and social work. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul Ltd.

MAXWELL, JA 1996: Qualitative research design: An interactive approach. London: Sage Publications.

MOUTON, J 1996: Understanding social research. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

MOUTON, J & MARAIS, HC 1990: Basic concepts in methodology of social sciences. RSA: Human Science Research Council.

NEUMAN, WL 1997: Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

OKUN, BF 1992: Effective helping, interviewing and counselling techniques. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. California: Cole Publishing Company.

PERKO, E & KREIGH, Z 1998: Psychiatric and mental health nursing. A committee to care and concern. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Connecticut: Appleton & Lange.

- POLIT, DF & HUNGLER, BP 1993: Study guide for essentials of nursing research: Methods, appraisal and utilisation. New York: Human Analytics Inc.
- RICE, F 1992: The adolescent development, relationships and culture. Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.
- RUTTER, M 1985: Child and adolescent psychiatry: Modern approaches. California: Blakewell Scientific Publications.
- RUBIN, A & BABBIE, E 1993: Research methods for social work. Pacific Groove: Brookes/Cole.
- SIPHEPHO, JS 1999: The promotion of mental health of adolescents in a township in Swaziland. Psychiatric nursing: Rand Afrikaans University.
- TALBOT, LT 1995: Principles and practice of nursing research. St Louis: Mosby Co.
- TULLOCH, HS 1991: Complete words finder. New York: Readers Digest Association Ltd.
- VAN DER MERWE, MP 1993: Uitnodigende kommunikasie in die onderwys. Johannesburg; Rand Afrikaanse Universiteit (D.Ed – proefskrif).
- WELLS, D & MILLER, MJ 1993: Adolescent affective aggression: An intervention model. Adolescence, 28 (112) 781-791, Winter.