

**INFLUENCE OF FAMILY RESILIENCE ON TEENAGERS ADAPTATION  
FOLLOWING PARENTAL DIVORCE IN POLOKWANE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTERS OF ARTS**

**IN**

**CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

in the

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

(Turfloop Campus)

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2011

## DEDICATION

In memory of my mother who passed away in 2000, I have conducted this research to extend knowledge of family strength. I also dedicate it to my father and siblings who have always been there for me all the way to the completion of my studies.

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that **INFLUENCE OF FAMILY RESILIENCE ON TEENAGERS ADAPTATION FOLLOWING PARENTAL DIVORCE IN POLOKWANE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.

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**Full names**

**Date**

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**Student number**

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**Signature**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I want to thank the following persons without whose contribution this work would not have been possible:

- ❖ My supervisor, Prof T-A.B Mashego, for her thought provoking supervision and further discussion of my work until I had the final product. Working with her has made this journey more rewarding at the end. I have benefited from her expertise.
- ❖ Prof Sodi and his family for their guidance and support. They kept encouraging me even when I had lost confidence in myself. Their support I will always treasure.
- ❖ Dr Moyo, for taking his time to add his skills into my work. His guidance shaped me in many ways.
- ❖ Takalani and Hangwi, for always being there to listen to my frustrations and supported me.
- ❖ Principals of the following schools, Capricorn High School, Northern Academy and Tom Naude Technical High School for allowing me to interfere with their academic programme to collecting data. Their staff, learners and parents were supportive and active in the process.
- ❖ My father Mr M. Zambezi for being there for me always. In times when I did not believe in myself he kept hoping for the best from me. He really made me strong when I was weak.
- ❖ My siblings Mike, Sure, Linna, Faith and Jean for supporting and encouraging me during tough times in my studies.

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to describe the influence of family resilience on teenagers' adaptation following parental divorce. Quantitative and qualitative, descriptive research was conducted to determine if there was a relationship between family resilience and teenagers' adaptation. Data collection was done using structured questionnaires. Affected teenagers, n=60 and their families (n=60), were sampled using a screening tool at three schools in Capricorn district in the Limpopo Province, South Africa. Data was collected using family resilience scales and coping scales: Ways of Coping (WCS). The data was analysed in line with ABCX-model to choose subscales that correlated significantly with adaptation scale of family resilience as potential resilience factors; and coping by avoidance, behavioral and cognitive strategies using (WCS). The study highlighted potential family resilience factors and specific ways of coping used by teenagers among families with teenagers following parental divorce. The findings have revealed that there are family characteristics which enable teenagers to cope following parental divorce. Teenagers who cope have been found to mostly use behavioural and cognitive strategies and less of avoidance strategies. Family resilience factors among the families of these teenagers were effective communication (Family Problem Solving and Communication-FPSC), family hardiness (Family Hardiness Index-FHI) and, the problem solving and behavioural strategies utilised by families in crisis situations (Family Crisis-Oriented personal Evaluation Scales-F-COPES). Further research should focus on longitudinal and context-specific that tracks family and teenagers' adaptation to stressful events as a process that unfolds over time and those that recognises bi-directional and, transactional influences among family. Also the influence of culture and spirituality on teenagers' ways of coping.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: Orientation of the study</b>	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the study	2
1.3 Statement of the problem	4
1.4 Research questions	4
1.5 Aim of the study	5
1.6 Objectives of the study	5
1.7 Hypotheses	5
1.8 Scope of the study	6
1.9 Significance of the study	6
1.10 Operational definitions	7
<b>CHAPTER 2: Theoretical Framework</b>	
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Family resilience	9
2.2.1 The ABCX model	10
2.2.1.1 Factor A: Family demands: stressor and hardships	10
2.2.1.2 Factor B: Family capabilities: resistance resources	10
2.2.1.3 Factor C: Family definition of the stressor	11
2.2.1.4 Factor X: Family Crisis	11
2.2.1.5 Adjustment to the Crisis	11
2.3 Salutogenic Approach	12
2.3.1 Well-being: Sense of coherence	12
2.3.2 Confident well-being	14
2.3.3 SAVVI/Y-Sensibilities, Abilities, Values, Vision, Integration, and You	14
2.4 Conclusion	16

## **CHAPTER 3: Literature Review**

3.1 Introduction	17
3.2 Impact of divorce on children	17
3.3 Polygamy	18
3.4 Divorce in African families	19
3.5 Divorce as a source of Trauma	21
3.5.1Cultural contextualization of divorce as a trauma	21
3.5.2 Protective factors in families following divorce	23
3.5.3 Coping strategies used in times of stress	24
3.6 Important factors for the development of resilience among teenagers	24
3.6.1 The school	24
3.6.2 Relationships	26
3.6.3 Personal characteristics	26
3.6.4 The family	28
3.6.5 Family emotional connectedness	29
3.6.6. Family communication	29
3.6.7 Family Organization	30
3.6.8 Learning in the family	30
3.6.9 Cultural resilience	31
3.6.10 Spirituality	31
3.6.11 Creativity	32
3.6.12 Summary	32

## **CHAPTER 4: Research Methodology**

4.1 Introduction	33
4.2 Research Design	33
4.3 Quantitative Data Collection	33
4.3.1 Sampling	33
4.3.2 Measuring Instruments	34
4.3.2.1Biographical Questionnaire	34
4.3.2.2 The Resilience Scales	34
4.3.2.3 Ways of Coping Scale (WCS)	38

4.3.3 Procedure	38
4.3.4 Data Analysis	39
4.4 Qualitative data collection method	40
4.4.1 Sampling	40
4.4.2 Procedure	40
4.4.3 Data Analysis	40
4.5 Ethical consideration	41
<b>CHAPTER 5: Findings</b>	
5.1 Introduction	42
5.2 Demographic Information	42
5.2.1 Gender of participants	43
5.2.2 Age of participants	44
5.2.3 Location of the family	44
5.2.4 Home language	44
5.2.5 Extended family	44
5.2.6 Annual income	45
5.2.7 Number of times Parent was married	45
5.3 FINDINGS; Quantitative Analysis	45
5.3.1 Teenagers coping following divorce	45
5.3.2 Potential resilience factors in the families of teenagers from divorced Families	46
5.3.2.1 Potential resilience factor for coping teenagers	47
a) F-COPES	47
b) FHI (Family Hardiness Index)	49
c) FPSC (Family Problem Solving and Communication)	50
5.3.2.2 Potential resilience factor for coping and non-coping teenagers	51
a) FPSC (Family Problem Solving and Communication)	51
b) SSI (Social Support Index)	52
5.3.2.3 Regression	54
5.3.3 Resilience factors and significant demographic data	55

5.3.3.1 Extended family	56
5.3.4 Summary of quantitative data	57
5.4 FINDINGS: Qualitative data analysis	57
5.4.1 Themes identified as family strength	57
5.4.1.1 Communication	57
5.4.1.2 Coherence	58
5.4.1.3 Spirituality	58
5.4.1.4 Social support	58
5.4.1.5 Professional support	59
5.4.1.6 Time together/shared activities	59
5.4.1.7 Affection	59
5.4.2 Summary of qualitative data	60
5.5 Integration of the findings from quantitative and qualitative data	61
5.6 Conclusion	62

## **CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY**

6.1 Introduction	63
6.2 Discussion	63
6.2.1 Coping strategies for teenagers in divorce family	63
6.2.2 Influential impact of family qualities on member's ability to cope	64
6.2.2.1 Family communication and coping ability	65
a) Findings with regards to coping teenagers	65
b) Findings with regard to non-coping teenagers	66
6.2.2.2 Family coherence and coping	67
6.2.2.3 Family and the use of social support	68
6.2.2.4 Summary	70

## **Chapter 7: THE CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE STUDY**

7.1 Introduction	72
7.2 Conclusion	72
7.3 Limitations of the study	73
7.4 Recommendations for further research	73

**8. REFERENCES**

**75**

**9. ANNEXURES**

9.1 Annexure A: Consent form

9.2 Annexure B: Letter to the Department of Education seeking consent

9.3 Annexure C: Screening form

9.4 Annexure D: Teenagers ways of Coping

9.5 Annexure E: Family resilience scales

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Demographic information of participants	42
Table 2. Frequencies and percentages of coping and non-coping teenagers within divorced families and their coping strategies on the WCS	46
Table 3. Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 and /Items on F-COPES and F-COPES Total	48
Table 4. Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 and/ FHI Total and FHI Items	49
Table 5. Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 and/ FPSC Total and FPSC Items for coping teenagers	51
Table 6: Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 and/ FPSC Total and FPSC Items for non-coping teenagers	52
Table 7. Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 and /SSI Total and SSI Items	53
Table 8. Regression Analysis; Best predictor variable of family resilience assisting in teenagers coping	54
Table 9. Summary Statistics for the Dependent Variable Family Adaptation (FACI8 Total score)	55
Table 10. Comparison of Family Adaptation Index 8 (FACI8) with the Extended Family-other people living with the family.	56
Table 11. Summary of the Average Frequency with which themes were mentioned by participants (N=60)	60

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

In South Africa, the effect of divorce has led to the transformation of stable and constant structures in teenagers' lives. The family is considered to be vital in the raising of children who are well socialised, mentally healthy and emotionally strong (Andrews & Morrison, 1997; Mboya, 1998). This leads to the family being viewed as one of society's most important pillars (Burman, 1996), with stable family life enhancing social stability. Exposure to changes in the structure of the family threatens the development of adolescents to the extent that some may succumb to the stresses they experience. This may develop emotional and behavioural disorders (Furstenberg, Morgan & Allison, 1987), while others may fight back and develop better ways of coping.

Teenagers from divorced families experience a lot of trauma in their lives. Rodgers and Pryor (1998) state that teenagers from divorced parents tend to grow up in households which are usually headed by a lone mother. Such children may have to contend with poorer housing and greater financial hardship. Eloeff (2003) found that these teenagers experience a sense of vulnerability as the family disintegrates, a grief reaction to the loss of the intact family, loss of the non-custodial parent, a feeling of intense anger at the disruption of the family, and strong feelings of powerlessness. The consequences of divorce impact on almost all aspects of the child's life, including the parent-child relationship, emotions and behaviour (they may develop anxiety and depression), psychological development, and coping skills (Furstenberg, et al., 1987).

Research has largely focused on the pathological impact of divorce (Boyden & Cooper, 2007), while little attention has been given to understanding the factors that help teenagers deal with the problems resulting from divorce. Despite the work of Nichols and Schwartz (2000) which indicated that the field of family therapy has

refocused attention from family deficits to family strengths, researchers know much about why people end up in detrimental and undesirable situations (Amato & Booth, 1996; Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994).

Usually poverty breeds poverty .Unfortunately, not much is known about why some people, in the face of adversity and against all odds, are able to develop into well-functioning and relatively healthy youth. This study focused on family and individual factors that help teenagers to fight back and develop better ways of coping in the middle of their adverse situations.

## **1.2              Background of the study**

The 1970s saw the increased attention on the concept of “resilience”. This has continued with other researchers such as Garmezy and Rutter (1983); Smith and Carlson (1997); Minnard (2001). Their emphasis was on what enables certain children who, despite exposure to adverse situations, have the ability to “bounce back” from trauma, being strengthened by the negative experience while others become pathological.

Initial research (Rutter, 1985, 1987) focused on personal qualities, such as "ego strengths," "hardiness," (Kobasa, 1979) "plasticity," and "survivorship" (Meichenbaum & Turk, 1982). Later research (Hawley 2000: Patterson 2002), expanded the perspective on resilience to include not only personal qualities, both inherent and learned, but also ecological factors as well.

From the literature reviewed, it would appear that “well-functioning” and “strong” has been replaced by the overarching concept of “resilience” (Dyer & McGuinness, 1996; McCubbin, McCubbin, Thompson, Han & Chad, 1997). Originally, investigations focused only on individual resilience. In South Africa, Strümpfer (1995) and Wissing and van Eeden (1997), in particular, studied the individual construct. Over time, family researchers began to investigate the construct within the family context and from the salutogenic paradigm (constructs, namely sense of coherence, self-efficacy and locus of control). Little research has been conducted on key processes in black families in South Africa (Smith, 2006).

Research has focused on helping to determine resilience-based treatment models (Hawley & De Haan, 1996: McCubbin & McCubbin 1988 & 1993a), as well as to elicit the various components of resilience that need to be elicited and strengthened during child development and crisis prevention training. This has been influenced by the disruption, adversity and unhappiness overshadowing the child's family relationships that had an impact on the child's values, attitudes, personalities and social skills.

Adults are free to marry whom they wish, and if one of the partners finds the relationship unsatisfactory, unhealthy, or unsafe, he or she is free to end the relationship through divorce. The Divorce Act 70 of 1979 removed most of the blame from divorce proceedings. Since 1979 South Africa has had, in effect, no-fault divorce. Until the 1970s divorce often carried a social stigma (Cronje, 1990), but since then it has become more acceptable in South African society. Many articles in Psychology literature commented on the relative harmlessness of divorce (Cronje, 1990). The changes around the perception on divorce has led to South Africans considering divorce as a right.

According to Statistics South Africa (2002), in South Africa as a whole, 83% of all registered divorces are from marriages lasting less than 20 years. The crude marriage rate for 2002 for registered marriages was 390 per 100 000 of the population. The crude marriage rates by province shows that Western Cape had the highest crude marriage rate (621 per 100 000 of the population). Gauteng had the second highest rate (556 per 100 000 of the population), followed by Free State (464 per 100 000 of the population) (Stats South Africa, 2002). Limpopo had the lowest rate (257 per 100 000 of the population). The low rate in Limpopo could be explained by the fact that unregistered customary and traditional marriages mostly occur in this largely rural province (Stats South Africa, 2002).

Divorce has a lot of effects on teenagers. Rodgers and Pryor (1998) state that adolescents are prone to responding to their parents' divorce with acute depression, suicidal ideation, and sometimes violent acting out episodes. Other effects of divorce stated by Eloeff (2003) include teenagers being thrust into poverty and poor housing, behavioural problems, becoming sexually active, pregnant, or parents at an early

age, leaving school/home when young, depressive symptoms, high levels of smoking and drinking, and drug abuse.

This research concentrated on exploring family and individual characteristics which could explain how teenagers cope following parental divorce.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

In 1999, there were 37 098 divorces officially recorded in South Africa – a rate of 83 per 100 000 of the population. Provincially, Gauteng had the highest crude rate for registered divorces, (181 per 100 000), while Limpopo had the lowest, (19 per 100 000). By 2003, the total number of divorces recorded throughout the country had dropped to 31 566, down from 37 098 in 1999 (Stats South Africa, 2002). This might have been due to informal handling of divorce and marriage, which resulted in some not being registered.

These statistics indicate that divorce is something common and it needs to be studied. Following the discovery by Hetherington and Kelly (2002) that 75% of the children of divorce did not end up having serious psychological, social, or academic problems. But 25% of the children from divorce did end up having such problems. Therefore the question is: which family factors contribute to the development of resilience in teenagers following parental divorce?

### **1.4 Research questions**

This problem led to the development of the following research questions:

- What makes teenagers to be resilient following parental divorce?
- Which strategies of coping do they engage in?
- What family qualities influence teenagers to develop adaptive patterns of functioning after being challenged by parental divorce?
- Which factors in the family's ability to recover from parental divorce helps a teenager to develop resilience?

- What protective factors within the family environment help teenagers to bounce back in the face of adverse events such as divorce?

### **1.5 Aim of the study**

The aim of this study was to investigate the family characteristics that play a critical role in promoting teenagers' ability to cope following parental divorce.

### **1.6 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study were:

- To explore how teenagers manage to cope following parental divorce;
- To investigate which family qualities enable teenagers to function well following parental divorce;
- To identify the specific resilience factors in families of teenagers who develop resilience following parental divorce; and
- To explore how a family contributes to their teenager overcoming problems following parental divorce.

### **1.7 Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were proposed:

- Teenagers do cope following parental divorce.
- Teenage coping following parental divorce is influenced by certain family resilient practices.
- There is a relationship between family resilience qualities and the development of coping strategies among teenagers within divorced families.
- Family resilience qualities that produce teenagers who develop adaptive coping strategies following parental divorce, differ according to certain demographics (ethnics groups, religion, age of caregiver, reliance on extended family, history of divorce).
- The degree of adaptability of a family influences teenagers to develop resilience.

## **1.8 Scope of the study**

This study was conducted in Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province in South Africa. The sample comprised of divorced families with teenage children of fourteen to nineteen years old. A variety of cultural groups were represented, although a majority of the sample comprised Sepedi speaking people.

## **1.9 Significance of the study**

Researchers have begun to move beyond exploring what causes maladjustment and psychopathology. Interest in investigating and studying resiliency is growing (Egeland, Carlson & Sroufe, 1993). Luthar, Cicchetti and Beaker (2000) state that society appears to be at the point where researchers, educators, and parents focus increasingly on positive psychology, protection and protective factors, optimism and confidence, and most of all, adjustment and resilience.

The family is a dynamic, ever changing institution, which reflects societal changes. Nowadays the family is subjected to extreme pressures such as increased parental divorce (Steyn, 1996), which have led to the worldwide decline in the quality of family life. Some of the teenagers have become victims of their situations and have broken down emotionally, socially and behaviourally. Others in the same situation, however, seem to have a unique strength and a desire to achieve better despite their problems.

In an era where the effects of parental divorce add to the developmental crises faced by teenagers, it is important to describe new and relevant factors that can contribute to the development of resilience in individual teenagers. Arrington and Wilson (2000) suggest that developmental trajectories that result in maladaptive outcomes for youth do not always arise because of behaviours that youth engage in or situations in which they find themselves due to their behaviour. Dryfoos (1990, 1996) calls attention to the fact that because of socioeconomic and cultural differences, youth are having experiences that directly affect their development. Their current situation places increased demand on adapting and dealing with stressors and at the same time developing as an individual. The development of such qualities would help teenagers to develop resilience.

There is limited research on the strength or positive aspects (resilience) in black families (Bozaleck, 1999). The development of more knowledge regarding the characteristics that protect teenagers and help them to return to the pre-crisis or higher levels of functioning, irrespective of economic or physical circumstances, would help to foster resilience in teenagers. This would help policy makers, parents and supportive organisations to invest energy and funds in the development of relevant qualities in teenagers. Developing resilient teenagers would create a firm foundation for breeding future leaders and parents for society.

## 1.10 Operational definitions

### ➤ Resilience

The term "**resilience**" is reserved for unpredicted or markedly successful adaptations to negative life events, trauma, stress, and other forms of risk. Understanding what helps some people to function well in the context of high adversity, may enable society to incorporate this knowledge into new practice strategies (Fraser, Richman & Galinsky, 1999). The term will be used in the same way in this study.

### ➤ Divorce

**Divorce** is the dissolution of marriage by the law of a court or by accepted custom (Collins English Dictionary, 2009). In the case of this study, divorce is the dissolution of marriage by law of a court or by accepted custom before the death of either spouse. For the purpose of this study, divorced families will also be families where there has been a separation of two adults resulting in the children living with a single parent with or without the extended family.

### ➤ Teenagers

A **teenager** is an adolescent or juvenile between the onset of puberty and maturity, which is generally accepted as the age between thirteen and nineteen years (The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language, 2009).

➤ **Family Resilience**

**Family resiliency** refers to the ability of families to withstand and rebound from crises and adversity. This entails adequate or more than adequate adaptation in the face of adversity (Walsh, 2002).

➤ **Family**

A family is a primary social group consisting of parents and their offspring, the principal function of which is provision for its members (Collins English Dictionary, 2009).

➤ **Adaptation**

Adaptation refers to the changes or modifications to suit new conditions or needs (Collins English Dictionary, 2009).

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a discussion of the two main constructs in this study, namely family resilience and teenagers' adaptation, as well as the various underlying theories. The chapter sets out to provide an indication of the importance of a strength-based approach in the adjustment and adaptation process following parental divorce. This strength-based approach is grounded in the Salutogenic approach and the ABCX model in developing teenagers' adaptation and family resilience.

Teenagers' adaptation is equal to teenagers' resilience, in the case of divorce this mean experiencing trauma then managing to bounce back to the pre-crisis point. Research has, in the past, largely focused on family deficits. However, this is being replaced by positive psychology which is focused on the need to identify the strength, resources and talents of the family and its members (Walsh, 1996).

#### **2.2 Family Resilience**

Family resilience is defined by Walsh (2002) as the ability to withstand and rebound from crisis and adversity. Families should be aided in indentifying their strength. This would enable them to trust their own competencies and capabilities (Silberberg, 2001). Researchers have developed theories and models which assist in understanding family resilience by contributing to family stress literature and current knowledge on resilience (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1996). One of these models was developed by McCubbin and McCubbin (1988) with the aim of explaining why, when faced with the same stressor, some families prevail, while others fail. This concept was first proposed by Koos (1946) and labeled the "roller coaster mode". The "roller coaster" was aimed at providing an initial framework for tracing a family's responses to stress.

Hill (1949) developed a similar model which focused on pre-crisis factors in families and examined the variability in families' adaptation to the stress which they experience.

### **2.2.1        The ABCX model**

The ABCX Model is composed of the following components: A (the event) which interacts with B (the family's crisis-meeting resources) and C (The definition the family gives to the event), in order to produce X (the crisis). A full discussion of the components of this model is done below.

#### **2.2.1.1      Factor A: Family demands: stressor and hardships**

McCubbin and Patterson (1983) defined a stressor as a life event or transition impacting upon the family unit. The stressor produces or has the potential of producing change in the family social system. This stressor usually comes with little or no preparation from the family (Hill, 1958). The stressor changes some parts of the family, which include roles, values, and interaction patterns (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). Managing the stressor demands the competencies of the family which may or may not be available. The family's ability to manage the stressor determines whether the family will experience a crisis or not (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).

#### **2.2.1.2      Factor B: Family capabilities: resistance resources**

Hill (1958) referred to resistance resources as crisis-meeting resources. The abilities or capabilities of the family which helps it to resist a stressor, in order to prevent a crisis can be referred to as protective factors. These factors include coherence, communication, support and spirituality. Hill (1958) stated that inadequately organised families are likely to be vulnerable to crisis because they usually fail to deal with it.

### **2.2.1.3 Factor C: Family definition of the stressor**

The perception of the family on the stressor is what encourage or discourages them in moving from the stressor event to crisis. If the family perceives a stressor as a challenge, they will not move into a crisis, but if they perceive a stressor as uncontrollable they will move into a crisis (Hill, 1958). Distress of the family depends on the perception of the family's ability to meet the demands of the stressor.

### **2.2.1.4 Factor X: Family Crisis**

Factor X is defined as a continuous variable indicating the amount of disorganisation in a family system (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983; Hill, 1958). Frequently experiencing the stressor and defining the stressor as a crisis makes other families to appear to be crisis prone. These families have a paucity of resistance resources and they fail to learn new ways of defining stressor events from past experience.

### **2.2.1.5 Adjustment to the crisis**

Adjustment to the crisis is the favourable outcome for families in crisis. This forms the final phase of Hill's ABCX Model of disorganisation. Family members may not perform their roles as expected, and conflicts may arise. When the lowest point of disorganisation is reached, families may enter a recovery phase. New routines and roles may be attempted and the family may start to orientate itself towards the future, subsequently entering a phase of reorganisation (Brown-Baatjies, Fouché & Greeff, 2008).

Hill (1958) identified several factors within families that are conducive to good adjustment to crisis. These include family adaptability, family integration, affectionate relations among family members, good marital adjustment of both partners, companionable relationships between parents and children, and previous successful experience with crises (Brown-Baatjies et al., 2008).

In summary this model took an approach to conceptualizing family stressors and process of adjustment to crisis. It looks at the specific factors in the family and how

they direct it into crisis or not. An understanding of this model helps to trace the stressor through the processing in order to avoid a crisis. This would make the lives of families and their members a satisfactory one.

## **2.3 Salutogenic Approach**

Antonovsky (1979) coined the term salutogenic model. This model focuses on the causes of global well-being rather than reasons for specific harmful and degenerative processes. Antonovsky (1979) advocates a holistic approach which emphasises the need to take note of all relevant perspectives such as the social or historical context of people, in order to understand the broader picture. Antonovsky (1998) suggested that the individual's cognition of and mode of response to the environment and to stress may be important in promoting good health. The salutogenic model highlights the strengths of individuals and their capacity for successful adjustment and tries to explain why certain people seem to preserve health and well-being and successfully cope with tension and the exposure to life's stresses and difficulties. It is this holistic slant that makes Salutogenesis relevant to a wide variety of fields including Human Capacity Development (HCD) (Kent, 2002).

### **2.3.1 Well-being: Sense of coherence**

Antonovsky (1979) developed the concept of sense of coherence (SOC) as central to his salutogenic model. This is a global orientation that expresses a general view of individuals regarding their internal and external environment. Antonovsky (1979) argued that the experience of well being constitutes a SOC. This results in the collective effect of resources and processes conducive to health. Resources brought together such as a supportive family and school would help teenagers to deal with their problems. Furthermore, the view is held, that there is a direct relationship between the strength of SOC and peoples' abilities to employ cognitive, affective and instrumental strategies likely to improve coping and, subsequently, well-being (Kent, 2002). Cognitive, affective and instrumental strategies will only be useful if used positively. More exposure and use sharpens or improves the problem-solving abilities.

Antonovsky (1979) identified three inherent prerequisites that determine a person's abilities to cope. These are:

- *Meaningfulness*: The convergence of developmental and multigenerational strains heightens the risk for dysfunction. Distress increases exponentially when current stressors reactivate painful issues from the past (Carter & McGoldrick, 1998). Unresolved conflicts and losses may surface when similar challenges are confronted by an individual. How an individual makes meaning of the current stressor will either reactivate painful issues or make them stronger. Different family qualities such as belief do help in meaning making.
- *Manageability*: The recognition of the resources required to meet the demands and a willingness to search them out. Resources are essential in meeting demands. There is need for teenagers to recognise the required resources such as support in solving their problems. Willingness gives them the energy to try out alternatives. In situations such as the divorce of parents and persistent stresses, family processes in dealing with adversity are crucial for coping and adaptation (McCubbin, McCubbin, McCubbin & Futrell, 1998; McCubbin, McCubbin, Thompson & Fromer, 1998). One family may be disabled, while another family rallies in response to similar life challenges. How a family confronts and manages a threatening experience (like divorce), reduces stress and effectively reorganises their lives, will influence adaptation for all members and their relationships.
- *Comprehensibility*: The conceptual perception of the world being understandable, meaningful, orderly and consistent rather than chaotic, random and unpredictable. Finding meaning and understanding in any situation gives order to life. This will help teenagers to bring solutions to their problems. It enables them to work on uncertainty in a better way.

Some researchers have suggested SOC as defining an overall ability to cope with life stress (Nilsson, Holmgren, Stegmayr & Wesrman, 2003). Stressful events such as parental divorce, are accompanied by multiple and significant changes, stress, and challenges in academic, social, and emotional areas. Cutrona (1982) suggests that these developmental challenges can be acutely stressful. Families can be helped to gain a sense of coherence (Antonovsky & Sourani, 1988) by recasting a

crisis as a shared challenge that is comprehensible, manageable and meaningful to tackle.

### **2.3.2 Confident well-being**

An individual will typically only attempt an activity for which he or she possesses acceptable levels of confidence. Confidence also has a direct impact on the conviction with which activities are executed. Confident individuals face their problems with hope of changing them to make their lives better. The impact of confidence which comes as a result of a healthy SOC, has a direct bearing on the quality of life of, as well as the quality of contribution, an individual can make in the contexts of organisations and society (Kent, 2002). The positive impact of confidence is that it will influence other peers to develop and face their challenges with more strength.

Symptoms of dysfunction coincide with stressful transitions or nodal events that pose new challenges and require boundary shifts and role redefinition (Walsh, 1983). Dysfunction may coincide with a stressful transition caused by parental divorce. A confident individual may begin to use support from the family to shift boundaries and redefine roles. Smith (2002) supports this model by noting that the result of a salutogenic brain is "... a self-perpetuating cycle for enhancing self-confidence and well-being."

### **2.3.3 Sensibilities, Abilities, Values, Vision, Integration, and You (SAVVI/Y)**

Factors that support and nurture the prerequisites of SOC include the phenomena of social support, spirituality, happiness, humour, and love. An acronym has been proposed to summarise the requirements of a SOC in a catch phrase that will be as memorable and as accessible as possible to a broad a range of HCD subjects. This acronym SAVVI/Y which standings for:

- **Sensibilities:** Making sense of and understanding life situations and contexts. Making sense brings what can be manipulated to an understanding and

realisation of the importance of how context allows an individual to solve the problem;

- **Abilities:** Acquiring and honing the relevant skills. Skills have to be acquired through learning or observing to make them available. Not all skills are important to every situation, but those that are relevant to cope with problems brought by divorce;
- **Values:** Appreciating virtues and integrity. Values are what direct how individuals will react in any situation. Better values will help to protect and reinforce the morality of teenagers in the middle of problems;
- **Vision:** Focusing on the most desirable outcome. Vision is important in order to reach a desired goal. In the event of problems, the vision is focused on a better outcome. Problems should be viewed as challenges to be overcome in life;
- **Integration:** Finding harmony in ever greater contexts. There is need to find a better way of integrating the current situation (problem) with the desired outcome (positive outcome).
- **You:** Making it your own personal reality and commitment. Whatever is planned should be adopted with commitment, in order to overcome the troubling situation.

Antonovsky suggests that unlike locus of control and problem oriented coping, SOC model is intended to be a construct that cuts across divisions of gender, social class and culture. It highlights the inadequacy of pathogenic explanatory ways and focuses on the adaptive coping mechanisms. Unlike other previous research on stress, this model presents health as a balance and recognises the optimal functioning requiring social stability, rewarding occupations and freedom from anxiety, stress and persecution (Holtzkamp, 2010).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter focused on positioning the research a theoretical framework. The Salutogenic approach concept of health or positive psychology is grounded in the Resilience Model of Stress, Adjustment and Adaptation which has gathered support from thorough research. This model suggests that recognition of family resilience and its healing nature maybe central points of intervention.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Not much has been studied on family resilience and its influence on teenagers' adaptation. Some researchers, however, have widely studied community, social and individual resilience in relation to different stressors. The explored areas include resilience in single parent families and when there is a death in the family (Greeff & Human, 2004); resilience after the birth of the first child with difficulties (Hartshome, 2002); resilience where parent and adolescence drug abuse are prevalent (Sandau-Beckler, DEval & De Rosa, 2002); and resilience in work and family conflict (Bass & Grzywacz, 2003).

Researchers have identified resilience characteristics that were present in families who overcame their adversity. Greeff (2000) revealed that pride in the family, trust in the family and loyalty towards each other within the family unit helped in managing developmental changes and crises successfully. This research will bring light to the way family resilience influences teenagers' adaptation following parental divorce.

#### **3.2 Impact of divorce on children**

The Family and Marriage Association of South Africa (FAMSA) states that divorce rates have reached unprecedented high levels in South Africa (one in every two couples married ends up in divorce). Teenagers involved often emerge with behavioural problems. Divorce leads to changes in family composition, family roles, family relationships and economic circumstances that involve far-reaching implications and adaptations for family members and can have a significant impact on family functioning (Thompson & Rudolph, 2000). In the face of such situations, some teenagers seem to have a strength which allows them to overcome the negative effects (behavioural problems). This research focuses on factors which may aid the development of resilience in the life of teenagers facing problems following parental divorce.

Research found out that a new era emerged in the 1970s. This is an era where the laws around divorce changed (Eloff, 2003). The fact that the stigma attached to divorce was minimised, increased the divorce rates situation. This resulted in great loss for children caught up in divorce. Divorce affected them physically (of the other parent) and economically (breadwinner is lost or no longer responsible). This resulted in trauma, depression and stress for the children. These teenagers were used as “paws and claws” in the battlefield of the divorce of their parents.

They may cope in a maladaptive way by ignoring the situation at home, while finding joy and energy in their peers. The stage of development at which the teenagers are, that is where they spend most of their time outside home contributing to this maladaptive way of coping with the situation at home. They also face developmental crisis as they struggle to understand the changes that will be taking place in their bodies. Conflict with parents and the effects of the divorce breaks them down. In such an environment, it is however interesting to find others managing to overcome all those pressures.

Bell (2001) argues that teenagers from divorced families are faced with behavioural, delinquent and moral order problems. This adds to their developmental crisis possibly leading to pathology. Suffering from traumatic stressors without getting help, can make a teenager become more prone to engaging in self-destructive behaviours such as drug abuse, school failure, unsafe sex, and violence.

### **3.3 Polygamy**

The most common form of polygamy in African families was polygyny (in terms of which a man may have more than one wife). Polygyny was a way of protecting a man from childlessness. It also ensured that there would be enough hands available to assist with all the work that needed to be done to sustain the family (Maforah, 1987). Divorce was extremely rare and was predominantly instituted by men, who were not eager to divorce their wives in any case, since a reduction in the number of their wives lowered their status (Chiwome, 1994). Many authors emphasize the importance of childbearing in African culture (cf. Kanjo, 1994; Maforah, 1987). In fact, having children was so important that a man could marry more than one wife to protect himself from becoming “childless” (Maforah, 1987). Failure to have children

was considered a legitimate cause for divorce (Kanjo, 1994) and having as many children as possible was highly desirable (Maforah, 1987). Many Muslim men usually prefer not to marry civilly because they are aware that this will strengthen their wives' position in the marriage. Given the imbalance of power at the time of entering into the marriage, the husband's preference usually overpowers that of the wife's (Ebrahim, 1996). This might have fuelled the rare divorce rates recorded among Muslim society.

Furthermore, the distinction between divorce and separation is even fuzzier despite divorce. In most African societies, dissolution of a marriage does not lead to formal procedures to mark such an event. In situations where the husband and wife have permanently separated (divorced), the husband may conduct rituals together with his ex-wife. However, the distinction between an abandoned wife and least-favoured wife (in a polygamous marriage) is not clear-cut. This is because the ex-wife can still build social solidarity with the family (Kanjo, 1994).

### **3.4 Divorce in African families**

Marriage in South Africa plays a central role in families. Historically, marriage is an institution that has been the basis of the family. Makiwane (2004) suggests that changes in the socio-political landscape in South Africa have resulted in changes in marital patterns. Since the democratic elections in South Africa in 1994, numerous political, social and economic changes have taken place (Stevens & Lockhat, 1997). The changes include an increase in pressures on family systems (Berard, Sennett, & Nazeema, 1998).

Clark, Cole and Gable (2007) stated that the so called traditional family has undergone various changes in recent decades. These changes have progressed to such an extent that it is difficult for individuals, families and social institutions to keep up (Brommel, Bylund & Galvin, 2004). Marriage, divorce, widowhood and childbearing patterns have changed dramatically since the 1950s (Grochowski & Karraker, 2006). This has altered the composition of the family. Marriage is less permanent and couples are more likely to divorce (Skolnick & Skolnick, 1997). Greater diversity and complexity in family forms and functioning has become the

norm over traditional families (Cowan & Cowan, 2003). This calls for recognising the adversity in families today and addressing the complexity of their needs.

Key to the process of marriage is *ilobolo*, an age-old African custom that entailed a gift in the form of cattle from the bridegroom's to the bride's family. Traditionally, this gift was paid in the form of cattle as a symbol of commitment. Over the years, this custom has changed. *Illobolo* is now often paid in the form of cash; the amount has been appreciating and is sometimes linked to the bride's educational status. This commercialization of *illobolo* has created a dilemma for many couples, and in extreme situations it has resulted in divorce (Chiwome, 1994; Siqwana-Ndulo, 1998).

In most African societies, marriage involves a series of negotiations that take place over some time and is, therefore, not a single event. This suggests that a lot of people are involved in the process. Time is taken to make sure that all cultural aspects have been followed so as to avoid angering the ancestors. This makes it difficult to divorce as a lot of people have to be consulted. It also takes time for the people involved to grant a divorce as a lot of solutions are tried first. This makes divorce an unusual event that makes it more traumatic in such societies. The lengthy divorce processes have resulted in few divorce cases in societies which are more cultural based than others. An example is the lowest rates of divorce being found in Limpopo province. A 181,2 crude rates for divorces were registered in Gauteng and 19,2 - the lowest - in Limpopo. "Whites had the highest divorce rate of 329,5, while Africans had the lowest, 20,6." (StatsSA, 2004).

Radical changes in the circumstances surrounding family life and the consequent new arrangements to accommodate the increasing demands placed on parents and teenagers, leads to difficulty in maintaining balance after divorce. Without appropriate role models or literature, teenagers are at risk of maladaptation following the divorce of their parents. This study seeks to provide an understanding on the influence of family resilience to teenagers' adaptation following parental divorce so as to aid researchers, clinicians and health professionals to design effective and appropriate intervention programmes.

### **3.5        Divorce as a source of trauma**

Parental divorce affects teenagers in varying degrees as there is a sudden or gradual change to the family system as a unit. The normal structure of the family is disrupted, leading to a threat in the developing teenagers. This problem adds to their developmental level challenges, thus resulting in psychological, social and occupational problems which are discussed below. Children 'blaming' one or other parent for the divorce and consequent poor relationship with that parent.

#### **3.5.1      Cultural contextualisation of divorce as trauma**

Negative socio-economic factors can be a consequence of divorce (Gladding, 2002). In African communities, the father is usually the breadwinner and the mother is a housewife. If that family experiences divorce, then the children mostly go with the mother who will be unemployed. This will result in the children facing trauma due to lack of economic support from the father. The children suffer as they lack a father figure. Discipline is mostly compromised. Statistics South Africa (2005) reports that only 12% of all 18 to 24-year-old young adults are employed. The teenagers in this age group will experience more financial pressure as some will be planning or already starting their own families. In this aspect, boys are more pressured because they are the ones who, if they marry, become breadwinners.

Divorce affects the social network of teenagers with their extended families. Usually a grudge develops between the divorced couples leading to the development of problems for children with respect to the choice of a parent to live with. The disruption of parent-child relationships, for example the lack of a father, deprives the child, not only of a role model, but also of one of the most important, enduring relationships of his or her life. Losing contact with one parent (usually the father) or troubled relationships with either parent or step-parents is common. In the African context, the child remains a child. Being financially dependent on the parent makes that individual wait for the parent's approval in all issues.

Choosing from tertiary education options, dealing with an unwanted pregnancy, raising a child, choosing an occupation or coping with poverty and unemployment are all typical challenges for the young [South African] adult (James & Gilliland, 2001). Usually, traditional knowledge is passed from aunt, uncle or grandmother or

grandfather. But urbanisation has destroyed the proximity of these people. The youth are now faced with more challenges of experimenting with problems which could have been made easier by receiving advice from their elders. The extended family of the parent living with the children may be far away. This affects the compensatory function of the extended family (Chiwome, 1994; Siqwana-Ndulo, 1998).

A poor sense of self, pressure to move out of the family home and customary pressures to marry, can lead to frustration, anger, loneliness and depression (Cavanaugh, 1997; Gladding, 2002). Poor sense of self may be due to lack of stimulation and education from the extended family. This takes away all the courage and confidence which is necessary to protect the teenagers in the community. The financial situation in the family forces the individual to move out and try something better. The parent feels that the teenager is now an adult and should start to help financially. Thus the teenager is made responsible before he or she is financially able. All this leads to trauma in the form of frustration, anger, loneliness and depression.

Frequent changes in residence, diminished financial resources, social stigmatisation and parental depression often accompany a series of adjustments and losses (Thompson & Amato, 1999; Neuman, 1998). Social stigmatisation in the community is fuelled by how the African society views divorce. The divorced mother of the children is despised and the children are scorned and called names at the hands of the community (Chiwome, 1994). Changes in residence may affect the socialisation of teenagers and the essence of their culture may be lost as they interact with other cultures. These teenagers become confused and may fail to form a stable personal identity (Siqwana-Ndulo, 1998).

Becvar and Becvar (1996) view these unexpected crises as challenges that necessitate a change in the original family structure, in order for the family to return to full functionality. It is in this family that the teenager is found and everything which affects the family affects him/her. The power of reuniting the family is in the hands of the parents. The teenager who still has to overcome all these stressors becomes a victim of a situation.

### **3.5.2 Protective Factors in families following divorce**

The extended family is an important aspect in the African context. It shields the children and other family members from the adverse situations which they might face. Mostly, when a parent dies or is lost through divorce, the aunt, uncle, or grandparent replaces that lost figure. Life continues in a relatively normal way as the duties of the lost parent are taken over by the responsible relative (Chiwome, 1994). This context brings back a mother or father figure into an individual's life and helps the child to develop and face the stress of the world.

Polygamy is part of the African culture. This is where a man marries more than one wife. The women usually bring up their children together and help them to develop. The women are all mothers to the children and live together as a happy family. If one mother is not a responsible woman, then the other woman may help all the children in their development to enable them to face life stressors (Chiwome, 1994). When a woman comes from a polygamous family, this might imply that she has a lot of siblings to help her in the time of divorce. The result will be less stress being experienced by the children and they will be able to develop better (Siqwana-Ndulo, 1998).

Traditional ceremonies help to bring people together and give them an opportunity to forget their problems. The building of social solidarity leads to the sharing of problems and better solutions will be developed. Knowledge of how things should be done is passed from generation to generation. This knowledge will help people to cope in times of strife; and encouraging words will give them hope to proceed with life (Chiwome, 1994).

Similar protective factors have been found among resilient children across diverse populations and circumstances (Luthar, 1991; Wang & Gordon, 1994; Winfield, 1994). Among these are a supportive family that facilitates coping efforts; a warm, supportive social environment that reinforces coping attempts; high self-esteem and self-control; an internal locus of control; and the presence of educational and occupational opportunities (Rhodes & Brown, 1991; Rutter, 1987).

### **3.5.3 Coping strategies used in times of stress**

**Support Strategies** maintain that teachers can have considerable influence on the effect divorce has on their students (Sammons, 2000). Because the teachers and students spend much time together, teachers can observe behaviors and give clues regarding struggles to parents and professional counselors. Teachers help shape strategies that enable children to thrive (Sammons, 2000).

**Support Strategies** provides practical suggestions for teachers to offer support to children from divorced families. She focuses on “sensitizing” teachers to common situations that children may face (Diamond, 1985). She assumes that some children are not living with both natural parents; then identify those students (Diamond, 1985). Recognize that certain class projects may cause embarrassment. Take advantage of opportunities to legitimize differences (Diamond, 1985).

**Support Strategies** took a slightly different approach by asking individuals who had experienced the divorce of their parents when they were children how teachers could help children through divorce. Barr suggested that let students know you are available to talk about any problem (Barr, 1982).

## **3.6        Important factors for the development of resilience among teenagers**

### **3.6.1       The School**

Gilligan (2002) emphasises the importance of encouraging resilience and positive qualities such as self-esteem in young people who have been abused. He points out ways in which this can be achieved, in particular through the child's relationship with a teacher. Emerging studies of resilient individuals remarked on the crucial influence of significant relationships with caring adults and mentors, such as coaches or teachers, who supported the efforts of children at risk, by believing in their potential, and encouraging them to make the most of their lives (Walsh, 1996). The narrow focus on parental pathology blinded many to the resources that could be found and strengthened in family relational networks, even where a parent is seriously impaired when in a divorced family. In such situations, attention is focused on building extra-familial resources. The result is that the family is dismissed as hopelessly

dysfunctional. In contrast, those coping fairly well might have some qualities which could help teenagers to adapt in the middle of divorce as their adversity. This research aims to help identify those qualities which can help teenagers to adapt following the adversity of parental divorce.

Minnard (2001) suggests the school as the most notable social context for child development where a variety of opportunities are provided for the staff to nurture the children in their care. Effective nurturing of teenagers results in better coping skills and good behaviour being acquired. Some resilient teenagers had a favourite teacher who had become a role model, friend, and confidant for them (Werner and Smith, 1992). Better teachers become a cornerstone in the shaping of the teenager in terms of coping skills and achievement in life. Resilient adolescents remember one or two teachers who made a difference in their lives (Krovetz, 1999). Positive and social outcomes in teenagers are often realised in schools that are characterised by climates of caring, participation and high expectations for all students (Benard, 1995).

The family resilience approach engages distressed families with respect and compassion for their struggles-affirms their reparative potential and seeks to bring out their best (Luthar, Cicchetti & Beaker, 2000). Distressed families have the potential to bring up teenagers who can adapt better to their stressors and life in general. Families report that through weathering a crisis together, their relationships were enriched and more loving than they might have been otherwise (Stinnett & DeFrain, 1985). This point to members of the family discovering untapped resources and abilities they had not recognised before. These unrecognised resources are what this research aims to show expose how they help teenagers in their adaptation process.

Other studies have shown that poor Black children can achieve academically and that more such children, given their natural abilities and intelligence levels, should be having academic success but are not (Edmonds, 1979). As Barbarin (1993), Freiberg (1993), Rutter (1987), and Werner (1989) maintain, many Black children learn and succeed in school despite circumstances that include a low socio-economic status, minimal teacher expectations, and inadequate representation of their successes. These studies suggest that the difference between success and

failure for these young people, both inside and outside of school, often boils down to the presence or absence of factors associated with a specific character trait: resilience (Freiberg, 1993; Wang & Gordon, 1994). Those traits within the family which are influential to teenagers' adaptation are important to this study.

### **3.6.2 Relationships**

Brook, Brook, Gordon, Whiteman and Cohen (1990) found that individual protective factors (e.g., adolescent conventionality, parent-child attachment) could offset risk factors (e.g., peer drug use) and enhance other protective factors, resulting in less adolescent marijuana use. Protective factors will help by occupying the individual with better issues which build his/her qualities. These qualities would help in decision-making when faced with tough situations.

Bernard (1995) further identified caring and support, high expectations, and youth participation and involvement as important protective factors within the family, school, and community domains. Many protective factors help in developing sociability which results in the sharing of ideas and correction of misconceptions. Greeff and van der Merwe (2004) state that support of the extended family, friends, religion, open communication amongst family members, and work and financial security are factors which promote resilience. This research will assess the influence of support as a factor to family resilience and its effects on the adaptation of teenagers.

### **3.6.3 Personal characteristics**

In a more general sense, research on resilient children has found social competence (Werner & Smith, 1982; Austin & Prendergast, 1991; Demos, 1989), problem-solving skills (Rutter, 1984), an internal locus of control (Garmezy, 1991; Werner & Smith, 1982), and a sense of purpose and future (Bernard, 1991) to be particularly important protective attributes. Positive individual qualities help to build confidence and trust of self which in turn helps one face problems in life.

Children who may be doing well in one area, such as school achievement, may demonstrate problems in other areas, such as depression (Luthar, Doernberger & Zigler, 1993). Resilience is currently conceptualized as a dynamic process consisting of a series of ongoing, reciprocal transactions between the child and the environment

(Luthar & Zelazo, 2003; Masten, 2001). Child attributes that have been found to be associated with positive outcomes include intelligence, emotion regulation, temperament, coping strategies, locus of control, attention, and genetic influences (Masten & Powell, 2003). Child IQ has consistently been found to predict a range of positive outcomes, including academic achievement, prosocial behaviour, and peer social competence (Masten, Hubbard, Gest, Tellegen, Garmezy & Ramirez, 1999).

Research on older children has also focused on internal attributes such as locus of control, appraisal, coping skills, finding associations with a range of positive outcomes, including social competence, school grades, and internalising and externalizing symptomatology (Cauce Stewart, Rodriguez, Cochran & Ginzler, 2003; Lin, Sandler, Ayers, Wolchik & Luecken, 2004). It is crucial to note that this conceptualisation rejects the notion of resilience as a personal or individual trait as they can be influenced by environmental factors. Individual research has been widely studied and there is need to know the influence of other factors such as family resilience on teenagers' adaptation.

Buckner, Mezzacappa and Beardslee (2003) found that resilient youths were notably different from non-resilient youths in terms of having greater self-regulatory skills and self-esteem, as well as in receiving more active parental monitoring. Waaktaar, Christie, Borge and Torgersen (2004) reported that young people with stressful background experiences demonstrated resilience when they had positive peer relations, self-efficacy, creativity, and coherence.

An increase in perceived self-efficacy appears to be one of the main processes leading to resilience among teenagers (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004). One unique approach to the impact of the family on a child's resiliency was put forward by Kim-Cohen, Moffitt, Capsi, and Taylor (2004). They found that children's behavioral and cognitive resilience to poverty was influenced by their genetic makeup. This suggests that children themselves are agents in rising above their experience of poverty. For example, they found that children with a genetic disposition to be friendly, sociable, and outgoing had the most resilience against poverty. But they also give credit to the child's family environment and access to quality educational and recreational opportunities, such as schools, sports teams, churches, and Boys and Girls clubs (Cove, Eiseman, and Popkin, 2005). This research seeks to discover

the influence of those family environments' which have been given credit for influencing teenagers' adaptation following parental divorce.

### **3.6.4      The family**

The impact of positive parental upbringing of children exposed to socio-economic deprivation has been supported by Ungar (2004) as a basis for youth resiliency. These include close relationships, and a mother's warmth toward her child, and a stimulating home environment, among others (Kim-Cohen et al., 2004). Another important characteristic of resilient children is having at least one significant adult in their lives (Winfield, 1994). The response to the open question emphasises the importance of intra-family support (Barnard, 1994; Hawley and De Haan, 1996; Gordon Rouse et al., 2000), and family support (Barnard, 1994; Garvin et al., 1993) as resilience factors, or strengths that helped families through the stressful times such as divorce. This research investigates if family support is part of family resilience which helps teenagers to adapt following parental divorce.

When family systems are broken down, the chances of attaining normal development are severely impaired. In extreme instances, such as the Romanian orphanages where children were denied basic care and nurturance, the developmental consequences are stark and undeniable (Beckett, Maughan, Rutter, Castle, Colvert & Groothues, 2006; MacLean, 2003). The absence of a close parent-child relationship is linked to negative outcomes across all socio-economic levels (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005). In contrast, Masten (2001) argues that if the caregiving system is functional, this can help children to overcome considerable adversity. High quality relationships with at least one parent, characterised by high levels of warmth and openness and low levels of conflict are associated with positive outcomes across levels of risk and stages of development (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005; Owens & Shaw, 2003). Kim-Cohen and others (2004) states that warm, responsive parenting styles are associated with positive child adjustment across social, emotional, and academic domains.

Various researchers (Gordon Rouse & Trickett, 2000; Hawley, 2000; Hawley & De Haan, 1996; Garvin, Kalter & Hansell, 1993; Rutter, 1987) support the value of social

support as a factor that promotes family resilience. Children appeared to attach more value to this than the parents. This research will answer if family support is part of family resilience which helps teenagers to adapt following parental divorce.

### **3.6.5 Family Emotional Connectedness**

Family members value spending time with each other both to celebrate good times and to provide emotional support, approval, and reassurance in bad times (Orthner et al., 2004; Wiley, Warren, & Montanelli, 2002). They engage in open, emotional sharing (Conger & Conger, 2002), clear communication, and collaborative problem-solving (Cox & Davis, 1999). As a result, children in these families are taught how to express themselves emotionally, how to calm themselves when stressed, how to resolve conflicts and engage in collaborative problem-solving. Families sustain emotional connections with each other through the promotion of shared family rituals, family celebrations, spiritual connections, and traditions (Crosnoe et al., 2002; McCubbin & McCubbin, 1996; Orthner, Sampei & Williamson, 2004). Families of successful students have frequent nurturing conversations in which children receive affirming messages about their strengths and uniqueness (Conger & Conger, 2002). Moreover, family members view each other as capable, competent, and basically healthy in mind, body, and spirit (Orthner et al., 2004; Wiley et al., 2002). Parents recognize and respect the individual strengths of each child and convey positive verbal and nonverbal (symbolic) evaluations about the child (Edin & Lein, 1997; Seccombe, 2002). This research will explore the notion of if family supports to see if it is a part of family resilience which helps teenagers to adapt following parental divorce.

### **3.6.6 Family Communication**

Adults attempt to clarify, ambiguous situations to children, explain their own expectations or feelings in terms that the children can understand, and encourage children to express their own fears and feelings and to have a voice in family decision-making and problem-solving (Conger & Conger, 2002). A spirit of family togetherness and support is nurtured in the families of successful students through positive communication and shared problem-solving and conflict management (Conger & Conger, 2002). Researchers (Orthner et al., 2004; Seccombe, 2002) have

consistently observed that, even when facing difficult financial circumstances, resilient families exhibit confidence in their ability to problem-solve, and to pull together and depend on each other. This research will try to establish if family support is part of family resilience which helps teenagers to adapt following parental divorce.

### **3.6.7 Family Organisation**

Parents assume an active leadership role in forging a strong caregiver alliance within the family, in developing cooperative relationships with and between their children, and in developing a strong social support network with extended family and community members (Conger & Conger, 2002). There are distinctly different role expectations and power differentials for parents and for children in the families of successful students (Conger & Conger, 2002; Edin & Lein, 1997; Furstenberg et al., 1999). When interpersonal connections in a neighborhood are strong, parents are more likely to get their children into organised programmes and, in general, to feel safe about being part of the community (Conger & Conger, 2002; Furstenberg, Cook, Eccles, Elder & Sameroff, 1999). Moreover, this sense of safety and belonging significantly enhances the parents' perceptions of efficacy and, in turn, their parenting practices (Jackson, 2000). This research investigates if family support is part of family resilience which helps teenagers to adapt following parental divorce.

### **3.6.8 Learning in the family**

Not only do parents engage in frequent conversations with their children about their current school performance and monitor their children's performance, parents also organise and delegate tasks and duties in the home to teach specific academic and interpersonal skills (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Sui-Chu & Williams, 1996; Wigfield et al., 1998). The families of high-achieving students expect to be actively involved in their children's learning (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Sui-Chu & Williams; 1996; Wigfield et al., 1998). With younger children, parents often use learning activities that involve sensory simulation, learning by rote, sorting, classifying, and memorising. Routine leadership role enactment enables the child to develop greater skill in accepting and meeting adult expectations, while learning to adjust to a more expansive variety of role responsibilities (Conger & Conger, 2002; Crosnoe et al., 2002). Walsh (1998)

emphasised the need to examine what families do well, what works for them, and what their "healthy intentions" are.

### **3.6.9 Cultural Resilience**

Culture influences how people understand and cope with stress (Lopez, Prosser, Edwards, Magyar-Moe, Neufeld & Rasmussen, 2002) and adversity. In Africa there is a cultural notion that men do not cry which helps them to strengthen the family in times of trouble. However, this puts pressure on them to come up with ways of dealing with a problem. Resilience, like most behaviours, is culturally learned. Cultural resilience (Elsass, 1992) is a host of values and practices that promote coping mechanisms and adaptive reactions to trauma within a cultural context. Factors in promoting ethnic minority cultural resilience include connection, cultural adaptation, spirituality, generativity, and creativity. Both Smith (1999) and McCubbin et al. (1996) further claim that family resilience can differ according to the cultural context of the family.

### **3.6.10 Spirituality**

According to Masten (1994), spirituality predicts resilience and this happens by helping individuals to discern when to give up on things that they cannot control (Werner & Smith, 1992). Giving up in such issues helps to channel that energy to what they can control, thus yielding better results. Divine will, the spiritual understanding that things happen for a reason, as well as cultural beliefs in destiny, fate, and karma help many ethnic minorities accept that which cannot be changed (Richards & Bergin, 2000).

The response to Walsh's to the open question in 1998 emphasises the importance of faith (Walsh, 1998) as a resilience factor, or strength that helps families through the stressful times such as divorce.

A spiritual orientation helps people of color cope with trauma by addressing questions regarding the meaning of life, loss of hope, victimisation, and demoralization. Spirituality brings unconditionally acceptance and hope for a better future to come which may energise people in times of problems. Indeed, engaging in spiritual ceremonies increases and reaffirms ethnic identity and increases resilience

among many native Americans (Mehl-Medrona, 2003). Finding meaning in adversity and espousing a sense of purpose to survival, facilitates resilience (Kay, 1998).

### **3.6.11 Creativity**

Most ethnic minority groups have used creativity as a resilient response (Elsass, 1992). This is a way of changing the meaning of the problems by viewing them differently. Humour, another resilience strategy, identifies the comedy in the tragedy (Kumpfer, 1999). Fun may be drawn from the problem and this reduces its impact on an individual. Ethnic minorities have historically used humour to cope with oppression and adversity (Dorison & Boskin, 1988). This makes humour an adaptive coping mechanism. In the face of limited options, creativity changes the situation and develops strength and hope in an individual. Bell (2001) suggests that minimizing the effects of trauma can encourage resiliency. This calls for supporting the transformation of traumatic helpless into learned helpfulness. Such a shift facilitates the need and ability to help others, to be altruistic towards others, and the development of compassion with detachment.

### **3.6.12 Summary**

In summary, the concept of resilience has been the subject of a number of studies over the last few decades. Researchers have focused on children of violent communities, as well as families in crises. In an attempt to provide additional information, this research will focus entirely on how teenagers in divorced families develop resilience. Data that is mostly not age specific has been provided. But with more age group specific data, it would help people to develop resilience strategies in better ways. There is need for more conclusive findings and more thorough methodologies to be developed. New approaches have to be adopted, and more longitudinal studies must be performed.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The chapter focuses on the research methodology used in the study. This includes the research design, sampling strategies, instruments used and the procedures followed in data collection and analysis.

#### **4.2 Research Design**

A correlational study, exploratory in nature was envisaged. Triangulation of methods that included quantitative and qualitative approaches was used. The research explored those factors which help teenagers to cope following problems such as parental divorce in families. The use of Triangulation of methods was used to ensure the validity of findings from the different methodologies. This approach enabled the exploration and examination of differences between teenagers as they encountered crises. Existing instruments developed by McCubbin, Thompson and McCubbin. (1996) were used.

#### **4.3 Quantitative data collection method**

##### **4.3.1 Sampling**

The researcher approached three high schools in Polokwane and requested them to allow him to administer questionnaires to learners between the ages of 14 and 19 years. All but one school agreed to participate, and permission for the study was also obtained from the parents and the Limpopo Education Department. The one school that refused did so on the basis that research placed too much of a burden on the learners during the period closer to exam preparation and that they had many activities in their calendar. Some parents refused to consent, while others accepted. All children were also offered the opportunity to provide informed consent. None refused.

A random sample of 60 was selected from the selected group. This was done by listing the names of learners from the selected group on a paper and numbering them. Each learner was informed what number he/she was allocated. The final list had numbers only and the researcher pulled out (60) sixty numbers without the researcher seeing whose name he/she was picking. The same sampling procedure included an invitation of a parent for each learner participant. The parent of each sampled learner was invited to participate in the study. At the end of the sampling procedure there were two groups, one with 60 learners and the other with 60 parents who were selected to participate.

Lastly they were given consent forms to give to their parents to grant permission for both the learner and the parent to participate in the study. After four days, the parents consent forms were collected by the researcher. Those who agreed to participate were given the Family Resilience Scales and WCS. The parents were requested to take part in the qualitative part of the study. Children who wanted to seek help for any matter raised by the questionnaire were invited to remain behind after completing the questionnaire, so that the researcher could explain issues which were not clear to them.

#### **4.3.2 Measuring Instruments**

##### **4.3.2.1 Biographical Questionnaire**

The parent of each teenager completed a biographical questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to collect information on location of parent, marital status and duration of current marriage, number of times of marriage, family composition, employment, education, income and home language of parents. Teenagers' biographical questionnaire on the screening form included gender, age, location, whom the teenager lives with, and the parent's marital status.

##### **4.3.2.2 The Resilience Scales**

The following questionnaires were used: Family Hardiness Index (FHI), Social Support Index (SSI), Relative and Friend Support (RFS), F-COPES, Family Time and Routine Index (FTRI), Family Problem Solving Communication (FPSC) and the FACI8. All these instruments had been used in various study populations in South

Africa (Walters, 2009). These questionnaires are discussed below.

➤ *The Family Hardiness Index (FHI)*

The FHI was developed by McCubbin, and others (1996), was used to measure the internal strengths and durability of the family unit. This scale consists of 20 items, with three subscales (commitment, challenge and control), which require participants to assess, on a 4-point Likert rating scale, the degree (False, Mostly false, Mostly true, True, or Not applicable) to which each statement describes their current family situation. The internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the FHI is .82, and the validity coefficients range from .20 to .23 with regard to criterion indices of family satisfaction, time and routines, and flexibility (McCubbin et al., 1996).

➤ *The Social Support Index (SSI)*

The SSI was developed by McCubbin, Patterson and Glynn (1996), was used to evaluate the degree to which families are integrated into the community and view the community as a source of support. The community is seen as a source of emotional support (such as recognition and affirmation), esteem support (affection), and network support (relationships with relatives) (McCubbin, McCubbin, & Thompson 1993b). This scale consists of 17 statements that are rated on a five-point scale of agreement, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The SSI has an internal reliability of .82 (Cronbach's alpha), a test-retest reliability of .83, and a validity coefficient (correlation with criterion of family wellbeing) of .40 (McCubbin et al., 1996).

➤ *The Relative and Friend Support Index (RFS)*

The RFS was developed by McCubbin, Larsen and Olson (1996), was used to measure the degree to which families use the support of relatives and friends as a coping strategy to manage stressors and strains (McCubbin et al., 1996). This scale consists of eight items relating to sharing problems or seeking advice from neighbours or relatives, each requiring a response on a 5-point Likert rating scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". This scale has an internal reliability of .82 (Cronbach's alpha) and a validity coefficient (correlation with the

original F-COPES) of .99 (McCubbin et al., 1996).

➤ *The Family Crises Oriented Personal Evaluation Scales (F-COPES)*

The F-COPES was used to identify the problem-solving and behavioural strategies utilised by families in crisis situations (Olson McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxen & Wilson, 1985). This measuring instrument focuses on two levels of interaction, namely: (1) individual to family system, that is, the way in which the family manages crises and problems internally amongst family members; and (2) family to social environment, that is, the way in which the family manages problems outside its boundaries, but which still have an influence on the family as a unit. F-COPES consists of 30 5-point Likert-type items. High scores are an indication of effective positive coping behaviour.

The scale consists of five subscales that are again divided into two dimensions, namely: (1) internal coping strategies of the family; and (2) external coping strategies of the family. Internal coping strategies of the family define the way in which crises are managed by using support resources inside the nuclear family system. External strategies refer to the active behaviour that a family adopts to elicit support resources outside the nuclear family system (Olson, David, Candyce, Russell, Douglas & Sprenkle, 1989).

The internal strategies are: (1) reformulating or redefining the problem in terms of the meaning it has for the family (positive, negative, or neutral) (Cronbach Alpha =.64); and (2) passive appreciation (Cronbach Alpha =.66) – the family's tendency to do nothing about crisis situations. This avoidance response is based on a lack of confidence in own potential to change the outcome.

The external strategies are: (1) use of social support, for example, friends (Cronbach Alpha =.74), family members (Cronbach Alpha =.86) and neighbours (Cronbach Alpha =.79); (2) the search for religious support (Cronbach Alpha =.87); and (3) the mobilisation of the family to get and accept help (for example professional help and the use of community resources) (Cronbach Alpha =.70). A test-retest reliability coefficient of .71 was obtained after five weeks, and an internal reliability coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) of .77 was obtained for the total scale (Reis & Heppner, 1993).

The construct reliability of the questionnaire was proven with a factor analysis and a varimax rotation of the axes. Five factors were isolated, with the factor loadings of the items being between .36 and .74. All five factors had Eigen-values larger than one (Olson et al., 1989).

➤ *The Family Time and Routine Index (FTRI)*

The FTRI was developed by McCubbin, Thompson and McCubbin (1996) to assess the type of activities and routines families use and maintain and the value they place upon these practices. The FTRI is a 30 item scale consisting of the following eight subscales: Parent-child togetherness, couple togetherness, child routines, Meals together, family time together, family chores routines, relatives connection routines, and family management routines. A respondent assesses the degree to which each statement (False, Mostly false, Mostly true, True) describes their family behaviour. The overall internal reliability is .88 (Cronbach's alpha) and validity was confirmed through significant correlations with various criterion indices of family strengths (McCubbin et al., 1996).

➤ *The Family Problem Solving Communication (FPSC)*

The FPSC index was developed by McCubbin, Thompson and McCubbin (1996) to assess the two dominant communication patterns in families during hardships and catastrophes. The FPSC is a 10-item instrument with a four-point Likert scale (False, Mostly false, Mostly true, True). The two subscales are Incendiary, and Affirming communication. The alpha reliability of the subscales are .78 (Incendiary) and .86 (Affirming), and the alpha coefficient for the total scale is .89. The validity of the scale was confirmed in several large studies of families under stress, within various ethnic groups (McCubbin et al. 1996).

➤ *The Family Attachment and Changeability Index 8 (FACI8)*

The FACI8 was adapted from the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (Olson et al., 1989) by McCubbin, Thompson and Elver as a measure of family functioning which would be ethnically sensitive. The FACI8 consists of 16 items (6-point Likert scale) measuring the family's level of Attachment (cohesion)

and Changeability (flexibility). Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for the subscales vary between .75 and .80. Validity was established by determining the FACI8's relationship to a treatment programme's successful outcome (McCubbin et al., 1996).

#### **4.3.2.3 Ways of Coping Scale (WCS)**

WCS is a revised version of Coping Strategies Procedures, developed by Billings and Moos (1981). In the revised version, there are 32-item measures of three types of coping, namely: active behavioural strategies (13 items). This scale describes simulation and contemplation about a variety of possible behavioural alternatives by comparing their imagined effectiveness. It includes brainstorming, analysing problems and resources, and generating hypothetical plans of action. Active cognitive strategies have a total of 11 items. This scale is aimed at regulating temporary emotional distress by disclosing to others one's feelings, evoking empathy and seeking companionship from one's social network. It is emotional self-regulation with the assistance of significant others. Avoidance strategies are made up of 08 items. Avoidance Coping eludes action in a demanding situation by delaying (Holahan & Moos, 1981).

Each item is rated on a three-point scale, ranging from 'not at all' (0), to 'regularly' (3). The score for each set of coping strategies is the sum of the scores for the items indicative of that strategy. Studies conducted, established the validity of each set of coping items as follows: Cronbach's alpha of 0.62 for active cognitive-coping, 0.74 for active-behavioral coping, and 0.60 for avoidance coping. These statistics reflects a psychometrically acceptable internal consistency (Billings & Moos, 1981).

#### **4.3.3 Procedure**

Participants were chosen from schools where English is the medium of communication within Polokwane in Limpopo Province. This helped the researcher to ensure a better understanding of the scales and interview questions used which led to valid responses being provided.

The researcher, a student in Masters of Arts in Clinical Psychology, administered the screening form in school classrooms under conditions that allowed anonymity of

subjects. Teachers were not present during data collection. The researcher got 100 teenagers from randomly selected institutions in the Capricorn district that were screened through the administration of a biographical questionnaire. The teenagers were numbered from 1 to 100 and the researcher used systematic random sampling to select 60 names out of hundred teenagers coming from divorced parents for the study. Then learners used numbers on the forms and after selecting the forms with learners from divorced parents. Each time a learner was selected, their parent was selected too.

Screening of teenagers between the ages of 14-19 and all from divorced families was done. Biographical questions were asked to identify the appropriate group. The convenient sampling method was used to choose the sample with required qualities.

#### **4.3.4 Data Analysis**

Data was analysed using correlation coefficients. Correlation coefficients were calculated in order to identify any possible relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable (Family Adaptation) (Howell, 1999). Potential associations were shown in the form of tables with the mean values, degree of freedom value, the p value and at times the standard deviation value.

In the correlation tables the r value where there was a significant relationship was marked with an asterik (\*) varying with number, whether it was p=.010 or p=.050, depending on the level of correlation. Those values which have not been marked showed a weak relationship which was not statistically significant. The study focused on the significant values which helped to relate the factors to family adaptation and teenagers' ways of coping.

Family resilience scales regression was conducted to identify clusters of variables most associated with family adaptation (Walters 2009). All predictors were compared with Family Adaptation to assess for significance (contribution) value of the t-test for each predictor.

## **4.4 Qualitative data collection method**

### **4.4.1 Sampling**

The qualitative section consisted of open-ended questions about how families went about solving problems in their homes and what they regarded as strengths to withstand difficult times in their families. Sixty parents who took part in the study had to do the extra part on the open-ended questions for the qualitative section. The parents who participated were engaged using the same numbers as those of their children since the answers were to be done alongside quantitative data obtained about the same family. The sample was developed depending on those parents who were willing to respond to the open-ended questions.

### **4.4.2 Procedure**

The parents who participated in the study were asked open-ended questions and they responded in writing. The open-ended questions were used to obtain information about how families deal with their problems and what the families regarded as strengths to help them cope in their lives. For analysis purposes, this information was captured verbatim from questionnaires.

### **4.4.3 Data analysis**

For qualitative data, content analysis was used. Content analysis is “the subjective interpretation of the content of the text of data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, 1278). This was used to analyse the factors of strength which were written by the parents of the teenagers. Content analysis was used because it allowed for the re-examination of contemporary theory and revealed areas of behaviour of which our knowledge might be sparse. This might stimulate hypotheses for future studies (LaRossa & LaRossa, 1981). In this study the researcher decided upon the coding units after reading the data provided by the participants.

#### **4.5 Ethical considerations**

The participants were informed about the aims of the study, procedures which were to be followed, and any risks which they might face, and their right to give consent to participation. The researcher sought permission from the authorities in the institution first, and then letters were sent to parents and guardians of the teenagers to obtain their consent.

Participants were informed that they would not be forced to participate and that they were free to withdraw at any time if they felt uncomfortable. Confidentiality of the data which was provided by the participants was assured, and they were also assured that their data would not be disclosed unless they give consent.

Debriefing was provided at the end of each period when learners had finished responding to the scales used. It helped them to work on any reaction to the content of the scales which the learners were exposed to. There were no cases during the screening process which showed serious disturbance that would have warranted referral to the hospital.

## CHAPTER 5

## FINDINGS

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of data collected for this study. Demographical details of participants are discussed, followed by hypothesis testing and interpretation of the findings obtained from the quantitative and qualitative analysis. This chapter concludes with final remarks about the study results.

### 5.2 Demographic Information

Demographic factors of the participants are presented in this section. Frequencies and percentages about participants' gender, age and others are presented.

Table 1. Demographic information of participants

Variable		Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>GENDER</b>			
Gender of Teenagers	Male	30	50
	Female	30	50
Gender of parents	Male	20	33
	Female	40	67
<b>AGE</b>			
Age of Teenagers	14 - 16	40	67
	17-19	20	33
	Total	60	100
Age of parents	40-49	44	75
	50-59	15	25
	Total	59	100
<b>LOCATION</b>			
	City	21	42
	Township	31	52
	Village	4	6
	Total	56	100

<b>Variable</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Home Language</b>	Sepedi	20	33
	Tsonga	5	8
	Venda	12	20
	English	4	7
	Zulu	3	5
	Afrikaans	7	12
	Other	9	15
	Total	60	100
<b>Extended Family</b>	Grand parent	3	5
	Uncle	2	3
	Aunt	5	8
	Cousin	2	3
	Stepsibling	1	2
	None	21	35
	Unknown	26	43
	Total	60	100
<b>Annual Income</b>	R41 000-R60 000	6	10
	R61 000-R80 000	7	12
	R81 000-R100 000	17	28
	R101 000-or more	30	50
	Total	60	100
<b>Marriage times</b>	Once	24	41
	Twice	33	56
	Three or more	2	3
	Total	59	100
<b>Parent's marriage</b>	Once	24	41
	Twice	33	56
	Three or more	2	3
	Total	59	100

### 5.2.1        Gender of participants

60 questionnaires were completed by the teenagers and the other sixty were completed by their parents. Table 1 above shows that there were 30 males and 30 females among the teenagers who took part in this study. For the parent participants, 20 were males and 40 were females.

### **5.2.2 Age of participants**

Table 1 above shows that there were 60 teenagers ranging from (14-19) years and 60 parents (60) ranging from (40-59) years. 67% of the teenagers (n=40) were between 14-16 years, and 33% of the teenagers (n=20) were between (17-19) years. 75% of the parents (n=44) were between (40-49) years and 25% of the parents (n=15) were between (50-59) years.

### **5.2.3 Location of the family**

From table 1 above, 33% of the participants (n=21) of each group (parents and teenagers) live in the city with 52% (n=31) participants living in the township and 6% of the participants (n=4) living in the village.

### **5.2.4 Home language**

As shown in table 1 above, 33% of the participants (n=20) spoke Sepedi, 20% spoke Venda (n=12), 12% spoke Afrikaans (n=7), 8% spoke Tsonga (n=5), 7% spoke English (n=4), 5% spoke Zulu (n=3) and 15% spoke Other languages (n=9).

### **5.2.5 Extended Family**

Table 1 above shows that, 43% of the participants lived with an unknown family composition (n=26). 35% of the participants did not live with extended family (n=21). 8% of the participants lived with an aunt (n=5). 5% of the participants lived with a grandparent (n=3). 3% of the participants lived with uncle (n=2) and 3% of the participants lived with cousin (n=2) and 2% of the participants lived with step-sibling (n=1).

### **5.2.6            Annual Income of parents**

According to table 1 above, 50% of the participants had an annual family income of R101 000 and above (n=30). 28% had an annual family income between R81 000 and R100 000 (n=17). 12% had an annual family income between R61 000 and R80 000 (n=7). 10% had an annual family income between R41 000 and R60 000 (n=6).

### **5.2.7            Number of times parent was married**

As shown in table 1 above, 41% of the parents married once (n=24), 56% of the parents married twice (n=33), and 3% of the parents married three or more times (n=2).

## **5.3    FINDINGS : QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS**

The following section describes the findings using quantitative analysis of data. The findings are organised into three sections, namely teenage coping following divorce, resilience factors in the families of teenagers from divorced families, and comparison of resilience factors for coping and non-coping teenagers.

### **5.3.1            Teenagers coping following divorce**

The hypothesis tested in this section was: ‘teenagers do cope following parental divorce’. The participants’ level of coping was measured using Ways of Coping (WCS) which has three subscales that indicate strategies of coping viz, Cognitive, Behavioural and Avoidance. Below is a table that outlines the descriptive statistics focusing on the participants’ ways of coping.

Table 2: Frequencies and percentages of coping and non-coping teenagers within divorced families and their coping strategies on the WCS (Ways of Coping Scale)

COPING STRATEGIES								
	Cognitive		Behavioural		Avoidance		WCS	
Participants	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Coping	49	82%	50	83%	13	22%	50	83%
Non-Coping	11	18%	10	17%	47%	78%	10	17%
Total	60	100%	60	100%	60	100%	60	100%

In the table above, ways of coping for the coping and non-coping categories of teenagers in divorced families indicated that fifty participants (83%) coped, whilst ten participants (17%) failed to cope with their situation. This means that more participants (83%) in the study cope with their situation following the divorce of their parents.

Indications further show that for the coping participants, there was more use of Behavioural coping strategies (83%), followed by Cognitive strategies for coping (82%) and lastly the Avoidance method of coping (22%).

For the non-coping teenagers there was more use of the Avoidance strategy of coping (78%) followed by the Cognitive strategy (18%) and lastly the Behavioural strategy of coping (17%).

These results suggest that more teenagers cope following divorce in families. Those teenagers categorised as coping use Behavioural and Cognitive coping strategies more than the Avoidance strategies for coping. Teenagers that are categorised as non-coping use more Avoidance strategies of coping than the other two strategies of coping.

### **5.3.2 Potential Resilience Factors in the families of teenagers from divorced families**

According to the ABCX model, resilient factors are those factors that correlate significantly with adaptation scales (FACI8). In finding out the potential resilience

factors to make teenagers cope or not cope with the situation within divorced families, the Pearson moment correlation was applied using the ABCX model. The significant factors following the correlation between resilience and the FAC18, were for the coping teenagers, found to be F-Copes, FPSC and FHI; and for the non-coping teenagers SSI and FPSC.

### **5.3.2.1 Potential resilience factors for coping teenagers**

#### **a) F-COPES (Family Crises Oriented Personal Evaluation Scales)**

Pearson's product moment correlation was used and the results of F-COPES and its items listed below indicated a significant relationship between the teenagers' coping and family resilience for teenagers that are found to be coping. F-COPES scale has shown a positive correlation with FACI8 ( $r=0.444$ ,  $p<0.005$ ) in relation to teenagers found to be coping as measured by WCS. F-Copes consist of 32 items. Items which showed significant correlation within the scale were items 3, 7, 11, 14, 19, 23 and 30 listed below. (See table 3 below).

Item 3: 'Knowing we have the power to solve major problems.' ( $r=0.362$ ,  $p<0.022$ ).

Item 7: 'Knowing that we have the strength within our own family to resolve our problems.'

( $r=0.496$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

Item 11: 'Facing the problems "head-on" and trying to get a solution right away.' ( $r=0.383$ ,  $p<0.015$ ).

Item 14: 'Attending church services.' ( $r=0.324$ ,  $p<0.041$ ).

Item 19: 'Accepting that difficulties occur unexpectedly.' ( $0.385$ ,  $p<0.014$ ).

Item 23: 'Participating in church activities.' ( $0.395$ ,  $p<0.012$ ).

Item 30: 'Having faith in God.' ( $r=0.321$ ,  $p<0.044$ ).

The table below shows that divorced families with teenagers found to be coping use problem-solving strategies, as a way to help them bounce back or cope following parental divorce. Divorced families with teenagers who are found not to be coping fail to use problem-solving strategies. This could be as a result of the teenagers' failure to cope following parental divorce.

Table 3. Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 and /Items on F-COPES and F-COPES Total.

<b>Potential resilience items</b>	<b>Coping</b>	
	<b>r</b>	<b>p value</b>
3. Knowing we have the power to solve major problems.	0.362*	0.022
7. Knowing that we have the strength within our own family to resolve our problems.	0.496**	0.001
11. Facing the problems “head-on” and trying to get a solution right away.	0.383**	0.015
14. Attending church services.	0.325*	0.041
19. Accepting that difficulties occur unexpectedly.	0.385**	0.014
23. Participating in church activities.	0.395**	0.012
30. Having faith in God.	0.321*	0.044
<b>F-COPES total</b>	<b>0.444*</b>	<b>0.005</b>

significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). p<0.05 \*.

The table above shows that teenagers who cope come from families marked by a presence of possible resilience factors of F-COPES and some of its items as noted above. F-COPES is a scale that identifies the family's ability to engage in problem-solving and use behavioural strategies when in a crisis situation. This scale is focused on two levels of interaction. First is the Individual to Family system, which is the way in which the family manages crises internally amongst family members. Second is the Family to Social environment, which is the way the family manages problems outside boundaries, but which still have an influence on the family as a unit. The result suggests that teenagers who cope are backed by their families' potential to deal with the environment as indicated by what F-COPES stand for viz, the power to solve problems, accepting that difficulties can occur unexpectedly and so on.

**b) FHI (Family Hardiness Index)**

Pearson's product moment correlation was used and the results of FHI and its items listed below indicated a significant relationship between the teenagers' ability to cope and family resilience for teenagers that were found to be coping. The FHI scale showed a positive correlation with FACI8 ( $r=0.489$ ,  $p<0.002$ ) in relation to teenagers found to be coping as measured by WCS. FHI consists of 20 items and the items that showed significant correlation included 10, 17 and 18 within the scale. (See table 4 below).

Item 10: 'Life seems dull and meaningless' ( $r=0.336$ ,  $p<0.037$ ).

Item 17: 'Being active and learning new things are encouraged.' ( $r=0.354$ ,  $p<0.025$ ).

Item 18: 'We work together to solve problems.' ( $r=0.370$ ,  $p<0.019$ ).

The table below shows that divorced families with teenagers found to be coping use hardness. As a resource to mediate the effects of stress in families and in turn facilitate family adjustment and coping as a way to help them bounce back or cope following parental divorce. Divorced families with teenagers who are found not to be coping failed to use hardness as a resource to mediate the effects of stress in families and in turn facilitate family adjustment and coping as a way to help them bounce back or cope. This could result in their teenagers' failure to cope following parental divorce.

Table 4: Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 and/ FHI Total and FHI Items.

<b>Potential resilience factors</b>	<b>Coping</b>	
	<b>r</b>	<b>p Value</b>
10. Life seems dull and meaningless.	0.336*	0.037
17. Being active and learning new things are encouraged.	0.354*	0.025
18. We work together to solve problems.	0.370*	0.019
<b>FHI total</b>	<b>0.489**</b>	<b>0.002</b>

Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  $p<0.05$  \*.

FHI as a resilience factor possessed by the families of teenagers has been used to indicate its relevance to the coping on these teenagers. The table above shows that teenagers who cope came from resilient families as marked by a presence of possible resilience factors and items of FHI. The FHI and its items measure how hardiness is used as a resource to mediate the effects of stress in families and in turn facilitate family adjustment and coping. The result suggests that the teenagers who cope are backed by their families' potential to deal with the environment as indicated by what FHI stands for, viz, the power of hardiness to solve problems, working together to solve problems and so on.

**c) FPSC (Family Problem Solving and Communication)**

Pearson's product moment correlation was used and the results of FPSC and the items listed below indicated a significant relationship between the teenagers' coping and family resilience for teenagers found to be coping.

FPSC and its items listed below have shown a positive correlation with FACI8 ( $r=0.492$ ,  $p<0.002$ ) in relation to teenagers found to be coping as measured by WCS. FPSC consist of 10 items. Items that showed significant correlation were item 2 and 9. (see table 5 below).

Item 2: 'We are respectful of each other's feelings' ( $r=0.493$ ,  $p<0.002$ ).

Item 7: 'We make matters more difficult by fighting and bring up old matters.' ( $r=0.346$ ,  $p<0.033$ ).

Item 9: 'We work to be calm and talk things through.' ( $r=0.430$ ,  $p<0.007$ ).

The table below shows that divorced families with teenagers found to be coping use support and calmness in communication, as a way to help them bounce back. This might be helping their teenagers to cope.

Table 5: Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 and/ FPSC Total and FPSC Items for coping teenagers.

<b>Potential resilience factors</b>	<b>Coping</b>	
	<b>r</b>	<b>p value</b>
2. We are respectful of each other's feelings.	0.493**	0.002
7. We make matters more difficult by fighting and bring up old matters.	0.346*	0.033
9. We work to be calm and talk things through.	0.430**	0.007
<b>FPSC total</b>	<b>0.492*</b>	<b>0.002</b>

Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). p<0.05 \*

FPSC as a resilience factor possessed by the families of teenagers has been used to indicate its relevance to the coping of these teenagers. The table above shows that teenagers who are found to be coping and those found not to be coping were coming from resilient families as marked by a presence of FPSC and its items as a possible resilience factor. The FPSC assesses the two communication patterns in families during hardships and catastrophes. The two patterns of communication are incendiary and affirming. The result suggests that teenagers who cope are backed by the potential of their families to deal with the environment as indicated by what FPSC stand for, that is, the use of affirming and incendiary communication to solve problems, calmness and talking things through, and so on.

### 5.3.2.2 Potential resilience factor for non-coping teenagers

#### a) FPSC (Family Problem Solving and Communication)

Pearson's product moment correlation was used and the results of FPSC listed below indicated a significant relationship between teenagers' coping and family resilience for teenagers found not to be coping.

FPSC as a factor has shown a positive correlation with FACI8 ( $r=0.670$ ,  $p<0.034$ ) in relation to teenagers found not to be coping as measures by WCS.

Divorced families with teenagers who are found not to be coping use support and calmness in communication as a way to help them bounce back in turn facilitate family adjustment and coping. This does not show a positive effect as the teenagers fail to cope following parental divorce. The absence of specific significant factors may explain why the teenagers fail to adapt although their families are resilient.

Table 6: Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 and/ FPSC Total and FPSC Items for non coping teenagers.

Potential resilience factors	Non Coping	
FPSC total	0.670**	0.034

Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). p<0.05 \*

The result suggests that teenagers who are not coping are backed by their family's families' potential to deal with the environment as indicated by what FPSC stand for, namely, the use of affirming and incendiary communication to solve problems, calmness and talking things through to mention but a few.

### b) SSI (Social Support Index)

Pearson's product moment correlation was used and the SSI results and the items listed below indicate a significant relationship between the teenagers' coping and family resilience for teenagers found to be coping. However, the SSI results and its items indicate an insignificant relationship between teenagers' coping and family resilience for teenagers who were found not to be coping.

The SSI scale showed a positive correlation with FACI8 ( $r=0.645$ ,  $p<0.044$ ) in relation to the failure to cope by of teenagers as measured by WCS. SSI consists of 17 items. Item 9 in the scale showed significant correlation. (See table 6 below).

Item 9: 'There are times when the family members do things that make other members unhappy.' ( $r=0.638$ ,  $p<0.047$ ).

The table below shows that divorced families with teenagers found to be coping use community as a provider of emotional support (recognition and affirmation), esteem

support (affection), and network support (relationships with relatives), as a way to help them bounce back. This might be helping the teenagers to cope.

Table 7. Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 and /SSI Total and SSI Items.

<b>Potential resilience factors</b>	<b>Coping</b>	<b>Non Coping</b>	
	<b>r</b>	<b>p value</b>	
9. There are times when the family members do things that make other members unhappy.	0.638*	0.047	
<b>SSI total</b>	<b>0.645**</b>	<b>0.044</b>	

Significant at the 0.05 (2-tailed). p<0.05 \*.

SSI as a resilience factor possessed by the families of teenagers has been used to indicate its relevance to the non-coping teenagers. The table above shows that teenagers that are found not to be coping come from resilient families as marked by a presence of SSI and its items as a possible resilience factor. The SSI is used to evaluate the degree to which families are integrated into the community and view the community as a source of support, in that the community can provide emotional support such as recognition and affirmation, esteem support (affection), and network support (relationships with relatives). Divorced families with teenagers who are found not to be coping fail to use the community as a provider of emotional support, esteem support, and network support to help them bounce back or adapt. This may result in their teenagers' failure to cope following parental divorce. This absence of the specific significant SSI factor and its items may explain why their teenagers fail to adapt although their families are resilient.

The factors that emerged for teenagers that cope were F-COPES, FPSC and FHI. Resilience factors associated with teenagers within divorced families who fail to cope with the situation were SSI and FPSC. FPSC was the only family resilience factor which was present in both groups.

### **5.3.2.3 Regression**

A linear regression analysis was conducted on the data, in order to identify the combination of independent variables which could best predict the level of family adaptation.

The effect of FHI ( $p>0.343$ ) is insignificant and its coefficient is positive ( $B=0.272$ ). This would indicate that family hardness is not related to predicting family resilience which enhances teenagers' coping. The effect of SSI ( $p>0.094$ ) is insignificant and its coefficient is positive ( $B=0.150$ ). This would indicate that family hardness is not related to predicting family resilience which enhances teenagers coping. The effect of F-COPES ( $p>0.937$ ) is insignificant and its coefficient is negative ( $B= -0.010$ ). This would indicate that family hardness is not related to predicting family resilience which enhances teenagers coping. A view of the p values listed in the last column of table 7, shows that the four B values used to describe this model differ significantly while 3 'p' values differed insignificantly differing from zero ( $p>0.05$ ). This indicates the significant contributions of the one independent variable ( $p<0.05$ ) and three insignificant contributions of other independent variables to predicting family resilience.

Table 8: Regression Analysis; Best predictor variable of family resilience assisting in teenagers' coping

<b>Variable</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p Value</b>
FPSC-Total	0.794	3.003	0.004
FHI-Total	0.272	1.706	0.094
SSI-Total	0.150	0.958	0.343
F-COPES	-0.010	-0.079	0.937

Table 9 below R value ( $R= 0.58$ ) shows a large positive correlation presence between the true and estimated FACI8 scores as accounted for by the independent variables listed in Table 6. An evaluation of  $R^2$  value (0.34) shows that the FPSC

total account for approximately 34% of the variation in FAC18 scores. The p values indicate a positive relationship ( $p<0.000$ ) of FPSC the best predictor of family resilience which predicts teenagers coping.

Table 9: Summary Statistics for the Dependent Variable Family Adaptation (FACI8 Total score)

STATISTIC	VALUE
Multiple R	0.58
Multiple R <sup>2</sup>	0.34
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.28
F	6.149
P	0.000
Std. error of estimate	8.386

These results imply that the use of communication in problem solving is the best predictor of family resilience. This is a quality of families which predicts teenagers coping.

According to table 8 above, the four independent variables were used to predict family resilience which enhances teenagers' coping. The direction of their relationship was noted. FPSC ( $p<0.004$ ), with a positive coefficient ( $B=0.794$ ) was identified as the best predictors of family resilience. This would indicate that effective communication patterns are related to predicting family resilience which enhances teenagers coping.

### 5.3.3 Resilience factors and significant demographic data

To find out the association between family resilience and demographic factors, the following factors were used; age of the parent, location where family lives, home language, family annual income, parent's educational level, number of times the parent was married, length of first marriage and members of the extended family

living with the family. Only one factor, the extended family, had a significant relationship with family resilience. The finding of the significant factor is presented below.

### **5.3.3.1 Extended family**

Family Adaptation Index 8 (FACI8) was used to measure family resilience according to extended family-other people living with the teenager's family following the divorce. Mean comparison and Anova test were used to analyse the data obtained from the parent.

Table 9 below indicates the possible differences which were identified between family adaptation (FACI8 scores) with the different extended family, other people living with the teenager's family. The results showed a significant relationship between family resilience and the extended family ( $F=2.554$ ,  $df=5$ ,  $p>0.050$ ). Although all the different extended family groups showed resilience, there was an indication of differences noted as follows: Families which lived with step-siblings were more adaptable ( $\bar{X}=38.50$ ), followed by families that lived with grandparents ( $\bar{X}=33.00$ ) and with uncles ( $\bar{X}=29.75$ ). The least adaptable were those families where teenagers lived with aunts ( $\bar{X}=26.70$ ) and those living with cousins ( $\bar{X}=20.50$ ).

Table 10: Comparison of Family Adaptation Index 8 (FACI8) with the Extended Family-other people living with the family.

FAMILY COMPOSITION	MEAN $\bar{X}$	N	% of TOTAL N	df	F (Degree of Freedom)	p VALUE
Grandparent(s)	33.00	3	8.8	5	2.554	0.050
Uncle(s)	29.75	2	5.9			
Aunt (s)	26.70	5	14.7			
Cousin(s)	20.50	2	5.9			
Step-sibling(s)	38.50	1	2.9			
None	28.83	21	61.8			
Total	28.74	34	100.0			

### **5.3.4 Summary of Quantitative data**

The statistics showed a number of significant findings regarding FACI8 and resilience factors, and FACI8 and the significant demographic variables. F-Copes, FPSC and FHI are possible family resilience factors which seem to influence coping teenagers' adaptation. FPSC and SSI are possible family resilience factors found among teenagers which seem to fail to influence teenagers' ability to cope. The extended family was the only demographic variable which was significant. Different family strengths were found to be present in separate extended family groups and factors helping the families and teenagers to cope. Those found to be coping use avoidance strategies most and behavioural strategies least. Those found not to be coping use active behavioural strategies mostly and avoidance strategies least. These and other findings are discussed further in the next chapter.

## **5.4 FINDINGS : Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative section of this study involved the participants being asked to answer the question: "In your own words, what are the most important factors, or strengths, which have helped your family lately?" Sixty participants responded to the question and their responses were subjected to thematic content analysis. The data was examined and coded to reveal the themes or strengths expressed in their ideas for both resilient and non-resilient families of teenagers.

### **5.4.1 Themes identified as family strength**

#### **5.4.1.1 Communication**

Table 10 below shows that communication as a family strength had the greatest influence on teenagers' coping (42%). Most families viewed communication as an important factor for constructive conflict management and problem solving. This was expressed in the statement from one of the participants as follows:

*"We first talk about the problem, / what caused that problem and how we can solve it."*

Another said:

*"In case of arguments we try to reach a compromise or resolve the problem strategically."*

#### **5.4.1.2 Coherence**

Coherence as a family strength was another factor which influenced teenager's coping (28%). Families found strength in self-reliance, using optimism to make a difference, and working through problems rather than giving up. This was expressed in one statement from the participant as follows:

*"Talk about how we can solve the problems. After that we look at the solution and put it into action and if it is not working we consult professionals."*

Another said:

*"We have faith that everything will turn out best. We can count on each other."*

#### **5.4.1.3 Spirituality**

Spirituality as a family strength was the third strongest factor influencing teenagers' coping (25%). Most participants believed in strength from a higher power, spiritual resources of faith, rituals and prayers. This was expressed in a statement by one of the participants as:

*"Going to the graveside of a family member whom we lost helps us a lot because we actually believe that going there regularly helps us spiritually."*

Another said:

*"Going to church and praying about our problems helps us."*

#### **5.4.1.4 Social support**

Social support as a family strength was the fourth strongest factor influencing teenagers' coping (18%). Most families believed in that they gain strength from being there for each other. This was expressed in a statement from one of the participants as:

*“We support each other and stand by each other.”*

Another said:

*“Accepting the weaknesses of each other.”*

#### **5.4.1.5 Professional support**

Professional support as a family strength was the fifth strongest factor influencing teenagers' coping (12%). Most families got strength from consulting people who are trained and qualified such as the Social Worker, Psychologist and others to assist those facing a crisis. This was expressed in a statement from a participant as follows:

*“We consult other specialists or professionals such as Social workers or Psychologist.”*

Another said:

*“Go for professional help.”*

#### **5.4.1.6 Time together/shared activities**

Time together/shared activities as a family strength was another factor influencing teenagers' coping (10 %). The sharing of activities gives members a sense of belonging. This was expressed in a statement from one of the participants as:

*“Being focused and having family meetings to address issues that are not going well.”*

Another said:

*“Having meals together, watching television.”*

#### **5.4.1.7 Affection**

The least family strength factor influencing teenagers' coping was affection (7%). Some families got strength from showing love, care, concern and interests in each other. This was expressed in a statement from one of the participant as:

*“Making sure everyone at home knows we are there for the person in need.”*

Another said:

*“Encouraging each other as a family to love one another and be there for each other even if things are not going well.”*

The table below provides a summary of identified themes, as well as their prevalence within the sample.

Table 11: Summary of the Average Frequency with which themes were mentioned by participants (N=60)

<u>Identified theme</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
Affection	60	4	7
Time together/shared activities	60	6	10
Professional Support	60	7	12
Coherence	60	17	28
Social Support	60	11	18
Communication	60	25	42
<u>Spirituality</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>25</u>

#### **5.4.2        Summary of Qualitative data**

To summarise the qualitative findings, it can be said that the participants predominantly perceived the following factors as strengths (in descending order, from the greatest): Communication, coherence, spirituality and social support. The families most frequently reported talking about their problems and reach a compromise during arguments while resolving them (Communication).

Families have reported counting on each other while believing that all will be fine and trying other alternatives when there is no progress (Coherence). There has been report on trusting a higher spiritual being, praying and attending church as being

helpful in their coping (Spirituality). The families mentioned accepting others' weakness and standing by each other as ways that assist them to cope (Social Support).

Families stated seeking alternative help from Psychologists and others helpful factor in their situation (Professional support). Families also mentioned having family meeting to deal with pressing issues and having meals together as helpful in their problems (Time together/shared activities). Families viewed encouraging each other to love even when all is not well as helpful in their situations (Affection).

## **5.5 Integration of the findings from Quantitative, and Qualitative data**

Quantitative data has shown that the extended family is a significant factor in coping. This was supported by the Social support factor in qualitative data. Being there for each other means family members supporting each other. The presence of the extended family means stronger social support. Affection, which is a factor in qualitative data, is part of the process of showing social support, especially in self-reliant families as the love from within the family makes them stronger. Family hardiness (FHI) is part of social support and makes the family stronger and self-reliant. It is surprising that SSI which measures social support was found to be insignificant among teenagers who cope. This might be due to the fact that it measures the use of other factors such as community resources, which seem to be insignificant for self-reliant families.

Quantitative data presented Family communication patterns (FPSC) as an important factor. This is supported by qualitative data on communication which puts weight on talking about problems and reaching a compromise when faced with arguments. The patterns of communication are filled with warmth and listening as a way to resolve problems. Communication patterns help in problem-solving which is found in F-COPES of the quantitative data. Qualitative data states that families talk about their problems and compromise when faced with arguments. They look for alternatives from professionals and they also believe in supernatural beings.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter presented and interpreted the quantitative and qualitative data. This was done in accordance with the hypotheses which were previously stated. These results are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

# **CHAPTER 6**

## **DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses and integrates results reported in the previous chapter with existing research and theories. The aim of the study was to establish the factors of family resilience which could influence teenagers' adaptation following parental divorce. The focus was on the ability of teenagers and families' ability to transform and grow in the face of adversity, specifically parental divorce. These results are discussed and compared with findings from previous studies.

### **6.2 Discussion**

The notion 'poverty breeds poverty' if applied to this study could mean that a family that is not resilient when faced with parental divorce will produce teenagers that who are not resilient. However the study by Hetherington and Kelly (2002) brings a new perspective to the issue and this perception is supported by the results of this study. A significantly high number of teenagers from divorced families still manage to cope. This discussion covers the following points; Coping strategies for teenagers in divorced families; coping as a conduct that is inherent in family qualities; and the role of resilient factors of support and coherence in sustaining teenagers in divorced families.

#### **6.2.1 Coping strategies for teenagers in divorced family**

Teenagers use different ways of coping to deal with their stressful situations. The most interesting finding is that teenagers do cope following parental divorce. These results substantiate the hypothesis in this study that "Teenagers do cope following parental divorce."

The results in this study indicate that teenagers use behavioural and cognitive strategies mostly for coping and avoidance strategies the least. This is similar to the finding in a study by Shiffman (1984) who found that engaging in temptation-coping, especially when a combination of cognitive and behavioural responses is used, increases the effectiveness of former smokers' attempts to manage relapse crises.

There was no significant difference between the teenagers' demographic backgrounds and their choice of coping strategy. This is an indication that the method of coping chosen is universal among teenagers and such choice does not differ among teenagers with different backgrounds.

The Behavioural coping strategy is in line with what could be expected of teenagers. Using behavioural methods could be associated with "acting out" behaviour that is typical of teenagers' way of dealing with challenges. Such choice of strategy could be used in an effort to master, tolerate and reduce the external and internal demands caused by the divorce of their parents. Teenagers are known to 'act out' when faced with problems.

More functional families would have the needed qualities to assist teenagers to develop self-sufficiency as they work through discovering who they are and acting out to deal with the challenges brought by the divorce of their parents. The Behavioural strategy for coping, if controlled by the environment in which the teenager finds him/herself, can help teenagers adapt in the long run. The problem comes with acting out that happens within a family that lacks strong qualities. The present study aimed to look at possible associations between strong family qualities and the ability to cope for teenagers in divorced families. The argument is that with strong qualities, teenagers that tend to "act out" can be cushioned and, thus, still manage to cope in adverse situations.

Non-coping teenagers, in this study, mostly used avoidance coping strategies in dealing with the problems of parental divorce. Such choice of a coping strategy is characterised by fear and engaging defence mechanisms of avoidance (Freud, 1966; Brewin and Andrews, 2000). This might have an indirect relationship to strong family qualities associated with resilience.

#### **6.2.2 Influential impact of family qualities on member's ability to cope**

Researchers and clinical practitioners have long sought to understand why it is that some individuals and families, faced with serious threats and challenges to their well-being, manage to cope well, while others faced with similar circumstances do not manage to do so (Kalil, 2003). Resilient families have specific qualities that enable

them to bounce back from adversity, thus providing greater chances for their children to cope. Family qualities which assist family members to cope were highlighted in this study. These included the ability of families to communicate, family hardiness, coherence, ability to use social support and adherence to belief systems. The discussion will outline differences in the family patterns within divorced families that enhance coping in some individuals whilst inhibiting coping in others.

#### **6.2.2.1 Family communication and coping ability**

##### **a) Findings with regards to coping teenagers**

Communication is characterised by being open and honest, thus allowing for affection and collaborative problem-solving (Grochowski & Karraker, 2006). Teenagers who were found to be coping came from families characterised by the ability to engage in effective communication, hardiness and problem-solving. These factors were identified through the resilient factors of F-COPES, FHI and FPSC. This means that such families use some form of hardiness (FHI), effective communication patterns (FPSC), problem-solving and behavioural strategies during crises. Communication is seen as central to the adaptive functioning of a family and helps towards successful adaptation through shared meaning, gained through the family message system (Brommel, Bylund & Galvin, 2004).

Families of teenagers found to be coping in this study used the following items to be able to communicate better; First one is that they 'are respectful of each other's feelings.' Second is that they, 'work to be calm and talk things through.' These results substantiate the hypothesis that 'Teenage coping following parental divorce is influenced by certain family resilient practices.' In this case, effective communication comes out as a practice that contributes to family resilience.

The indication in this study that coping is related to effective communication is consistent with the findings in studies that highlighted diminishing conflict between parents and timely appropriate parenting by the non-custodial parent as protective factors enhancing resilience (Eldar-Avidan, Haj-Yahia & Greenbaum, 2008; Kelly & Emery, 2003). Among families with individuals affected by schizophrenia, close affirmative relationships through effective communication have been identified by

Rutter, Pickles, Murray and Eaves (2001) as part of factors that protect the child from developing maladaptive behavioural patterns.

The amount of organisation in the family is the product of communication patterns in family systems. Effective communication assists families to learn to define stressors in new ways which make them less vulnerable. Families that perceive stressors as challenges get courage from such a perception to face and deal with them. This kind of perception strengthens the family's ability to meet the demands of given stressors (Hill, 1958). Effective communication also assists people to shift attention from their problems and talk about other issues, thereby reducing the pressure of the stressor.

**b) Findings with regards to non-coping teenagers**

Contrary to the coping participants in this study, families of teenagers found not to be coping indicated adaptability with regards to the subscale FPSC (total) and showed no significant correlation of FPSC items with the scale of adaptability. This could mean that teenagers who were found not to be coping were unable to benefit from the communication used in the families or that the way the family communicated inadequate; or that communication was of a nature that did not bring full family functionality as it is the case with the classification of families that inhibit communication of members in schizophrenic families where double bind messages are the main pattern of communication (Gibney, 2006, Haley, 1963). In such situations, although families are resilient, poor or inadequate communication patterns may inhibit growth in the teenagers which would have afforded them the opportunity to be strong and independent to cope with the demands of their environment.

Communication is seen as central to the adaptive functioning of families and it helps towards successful adaptation. Failure to have shared meaning, because of a poor family message system could affect the way children in that family cope. Lack of effective communication also affects problem-solving skills which could impact on the development of coping strategies among teenagers exposed to such environments. Werner's (1989) longitudinal study of Hawaiian youth alluded to a "balancing act" between the dual presence of risk and protection. In Werner's argument, the individual's ability to cope is seen in the way he/she manages the balance between risks, stressful life events and protective factors. This suggests that the presence of a resilience factor alone is not enough to allow an individual to live a

better life. These findings were supported by the results of this study, which revealed communication patterns in the families which did not enhance the teenagers' coping.

The non-coping teenagers came from families which indicated FPSC and SSI as family qualities that enhance family resilience. This means that their families had some communication patterns (FPSC) which they could use during crises although these may not have been strong enough to sustain the teenagers. It is clear that the greater association for this non-coping group was found between in the family resilience in the teenagers homes which result from the use of support by significant others and not as a result of being self-reliant. Such coping strategies are bound to be controlled by the continuous availability of that support.

#### **6.2.2.2 Family coherence and coping**

Some families perceive that strength from within the family can help them to look inward. They believe in working together in order to deal with their problems. This is an indication of high family coherence.

Family Hardiness Index (FHI) is the internal strength and durability of the family unit which makes families become more self-reliant and dependent on their family members, thus forming a very coherent family unit. Such commitment to family members strengthens resilience, and thus allowing families to adjust to hardships and work together towards confronting challenges as a united front (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1996).

In this study, FHI indicated a strong statistically significant positive correlation between internal strengths and the durability of the family unit and adaptation.

Families that manage to nurture a spirit of togetherness and support are able to become self-sufficient as they deal with crises. They encourage members to express their own fears and feelings and allow them to have a voice in family decision-making and problem-solving processes. This allows them to show confidence in resolving their problems and depending on each other. The results of this study are consistent with Olson's (1993) argument, which posits that balanced families can

simultaneously support connections between family members and autonomy of individual family members. This simultaneity facilitates healthy family functioning.

Coherence enhances self-confidence and self-reliance and serves as a means of optimism to bring significant changes in improving oneself and one's world (Siliman, 1995). Families can be helped to gain a sense of coherence by recasting a crisis as a shared challenge that is comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful to tackle (Antonovsky & Sourani, 1988). Family processes in dealing with adversity are crucial for coping and adaptation. In times of crises, one family may be disabled, whereas in similar life challenges another family may rally around the vulnerable family member.

The way a family confronts and manages a threatening or disruptive experience, determines its ability to buffer stress, effectively reorganise, and reinvest in life pursuits which will influence adaptation for all members and their relationships (McCubbin, McCubbin, McCubbin & Futrell, 1998; McCubbin, McCubbin, Thompson, & Fromer, 1998). The cornerstone of this discussion therefore is that it takes a certain type of family to prevail following divorce. The qualities of the families children are born in, determines how they can bounce back following divorce. Cohesion of families seems to play a very important role in helping teenagers survive the adversity of divorce.

The results of this study are consistent with the findings that families with a strong sense of coherence adapt more readily after a crisis and achieve better reorganisation after the crisis period (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1993; Hawley, 2000). The re-organisation and adaptation would mean that teenagers who come from families with such a strong sense of coherence are expected to cope well and move on with their lives post –divorce.

#### **6.2.2.3 Family and the use of social support**

Social support has been seen to enhance the family's well-being and alleviation of stress to allow for successful family adaptation (Aguirre, Meyers & Varkey, 2002). In their study McCubbin and McCubbin (1996) described social support and economic stability, among others, as crucial parts of family resilience.

Research in the past has indicated that the use of social support especially in the case of mental illness as well as the case of family crisis following natural disaster such as floods makes individuals and families less vulnerable to crisis (Freedy & Smith, 2000). Social support has a role in promoting family recovery from a crisis which has been evidenced in the case of divorce and multi-problem families (Burns & Freedman, 1976; Colletta, 1979; Desrochers & Hilton, 2000).

An ecosystemic view of divorce places each unique experience in context and assists in regarding the multiplicity of factors. These factors which promote resilience include extended family system, as well as communities, formal and informal support services, attitudes and mores (Lee, 2006).

Family composition which includes extended family members living with the family has shown a statistically significant relationship between support from extended family members and family resilience. In this study, social support was not a strong family resilient factor in determining teenagers' coping in this study. This could be mainly because resilient families develop self-sufficiency which results in less reliance on social support.

The non-coping teenagers, however, seemed to come from families that still depended on social support. These results are consistent with studies that found that an increase in self-reliance was associated with a decrease in dependency on support by significant others (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1996; Walsh, 2003; Walters, 2009). Rutter (1987) elaborated on the interactive quality of protective factors, arguing that their impact is evident only in combination with a risk factor and only when the supportive resource is actually engaged. The mere presence or availability of a protective factor therefore is not enough.

In the case of non-coping teenagers, the opposite occurs as social support is needed at a time when an individual is still growing towards self-sufficiency. Support is important during times when an individual is still growing and needs others to depend upon. The presence of support from the community helps the family to be resilient as they depend on social support to function well. Social support has been seen to enhance family well-being and alleviation of stress to enable successful family adaptation (Aguirre et al., 2002).

#### **6.2.2.4**

#### **Summary**

In the qualitative section of the study, four themes emerged when families were asked how they cope with divorce. The themes included effective communication, family coherence, family support and belief systems.

In the quantitative section, teenagers who cope have families which use the following resilience factors that indicate some form of hardness (FHI): effective communication patterns (FPSC); problem-solving; and behavioural strategies. These factors lead to family resilience which aids teenagers to cope after parental divorce.

Non-coping teenagers came from families which indicated need for support from the community (SSI), and effective communication patterns (FPSC) during the crisis. These families have become dependent on social support to survive and overcome their crises. The support which they receive does not help them towards growth and independence, which could be used to resolve their problems. Their teenagers inherit the dependency syndrome which leads to their failure to cope with their problems. The families of coping teenagers, are, on the contrary, more independent and do not depend on social support to survive and overcome their crises. It would appear that they use minimal support to become strong and develop in the areas of effective communication which are used to resolve their problem. Coping teenagers inherit the independence which helps them to cope better with their problems.

In terms of non-coping teenagers, it is crucial to take note of the argument by Hawley and DeHaan (1996) that identification of risk and vulnerability factors is necessary, in order to understand how earlier behaviours link to current maladaptive behaviours. This would demonstrate how patterns of resilience are (or are not) demonstrated over time.

There are four noteworthy aspects in this study. When integrating findings from the qualitative and quantitative sections four noteworthy aspects emerged in this study. The four themes which were identified from the qualitative data were effective communication, family coherence, and family support and belief systems. These also emerged from the quantitative data.

Such similarity in the significant data and the themes show the validity of the findings. The theme of effective communication was tapped in Family Problem

Solving and Communication (FPSC). Coherence as a theme was tapped in FHI. The social support theme was partially tapped in the F-COPES. The theme of belief system was tapped in F-COPES.

The common point of convergence for both the qualitative and quantitative data highlighted the important family qualities that influence coping in difficult times for family members. The main themes included effective communication, family coherence, support and adherence to certain beliefs in the family.

## **Chapter 7**

### **THE CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the conclusion, limitations of the study, and recommendation for further research.

#### **7.2 Conclusion**

The study indicated the following qualities FPSC, FHI and F-COPES as associated with family adaptation or resilience and teenagers' coping. FPSC and SSI were family qualities which were associated with family resilience among non-coping teenagers.

The differences and similarities which were found indicate the unique qualities that help families to adapt and to remain functional during crises.

The similarities indicate the universality of those factors in helping families to adapt and remain functional during crises. These qualities which were identified could be integrated into family and individual therapy to assist families to develop smooth functioning and a sense of well-being.

The importance of family communication in conveying support and care constitute what can be regarded as a protective factor during crises situations. Such a factor and its impact could be discussed within families and be further adopted to strengthen positive patterns in families. Strategies from these studies could be used to assist single parent and individual family members to adapt and improve their level of functioning.

The study revealed the way teenagers cope. These included cognitive strategies, behavioural strategies and limited use of avoidance strategies. Teenagers who cope use more of the former than their non-coping counterparts who use more avoidance.

The differences and similarities noted for coping/non-coping teenagers along different languages groups indicate the uniqueness of individuals, while on the other hand they indicate the universality of those strategies mentioned above in assisting people to adapt in the middle of a crisis such as parental divorce. Strategies from these formulations could be used to assist teenagers from divorced parents to help them adapt and improve their level of functioning.

### **7.3 Limitations of the study**

Participants in this study included teenagers from one district of the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Therefore, the sample was not representative of the heterogeneous population of South African. The generalisability of the results is, therefore, limited due to the lack of representativity of the existing diverse groupings in South Africa (for example people on Indian origin).

Key aspects of family resilience which include conflict, adaptability, cohesion and communication are thought to be best measured via expensive and time-consuming observational techniques (Krysan, Moore & Zill, 1990). It was not possible to run long term observational techniques in the present study and, thus, this limited the results to findings emerging from the use of short term methodologies which are not ideal in measuring such factors.

The original sample was supposed to consist of more than 104 parents and 104 learners. This was not possible because some parents refused to take part in the study and some schools were not willing to let their learners participate because of the activities on their calendars. The sample size was thus affected. This resulted in a small number which affects the ability to generalise.

### **7.4 Recommendations for further research**

As suggested by Kalil (2003), research that is longitudinal and context-specific, that tracks family adaptation to stressful events as a process that unfolds over time and that recognises bi-directional, transactional influences among family members is needed. There is need for research is needed that will track teenagers' ways of

coping to with adverse events as a process that unfolds over time and that recognises bi-directional, transactional influences among teenagers. There is need to learn how to best foster adaptation in teenagers. Research in the field of family resilience needs a stronger focus on the dynamic and developmental aspects of family life and would benefit from more experimental evaluations (Kalil, 2003).

Further studies should look at factors which assist teenagers to develop better ways of coping so as to assist those in adverse conditions. Experimental programmes aimed at improving teenager adaptation needs to be suggested and studied further, for the so as to come up with a design of interventions to assist teenagers with difficulties. The influence of culture and spirituality on teenagers' ways of coping is also crucial.

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## 9.1 Annexure A: Consent form

## **INFORMED CONSENT**

My name is Percy Taruvinga studying Masters of Arts in Clinical Psychology at University of Limpopo Turfloop Campus. I am conducting a study around to understand the influence of family resilience on teenagers following parental divorce on teenagers' adaptation in Polokwane Limpopo Province. The aim of the study is to investigate the family characteristics which appear to play a critical role in promoting teenager's ability to cope with parental divorce. The participants will include single parent of teenagers between the ages 14 and 19. All the information that is gathered in the survey will be treated with utmost confidentiality and you will not be identified by name. You will be asked to fill in the biographical information and respond to Family Hardiness Index (FHI), Social Support Index (SSI), Relative and Friend Support (RFS), F-COPES, Family Time and Routine Index (FTRI), Family Problem solving Communication (FPSC), and the FAC18. The longest scale has about 35 items on a 4-point likert rating scale, the degree (False, Mostly False, Mostly true, True, or Not applicable) to which each statement describes their current family situation. Teenagers will respond to the Ways of Coping Scale (WCS).

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at anytime, but your participation will be highly appreciated.

May you please sign the consent form?

---

## **CONSENT FORM**

I have had the details of the study explained to me. I understand that all information gathered will be held in confidence. I am aware that I may withdraw from the study at anytime.

Signed (Participant).....

Signed (Researcher).....

Date.....

Thank you for allowing your child and accepting to be part of the study!!!!!!

**9.2 Annexure B: Letter to the Department of Education seeking  
consent**



University of Limpopo Turfloop campus  
Department of psychology  
Private Bag X6110  
Sovenga  
0727

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Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: Application to request for your permission to conduct data collection on a Research, for Masters in Clinical Psychology, from the school learners in Capricorn District, in Limpopo province.**

My name is Percy Taruvinga studying Masters of Arts in Clinical Psychology at University of Limpopo Turfloop Campus. I am conducting a study around to understand the **"influence of family resilience on teenagers following parental divorce on teenagers' adaptation in Limpopo Province"**. The aim of the study is to investigate the family characteristics which appear to play a critical role in promoting teenager's ability to cope following parental divorce. The participants will include single parent of teenagers between ages 14 and 19. All the information that is gathered in the survey will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and you will not be identified by name. Parents will be requested to fill in the biographical information and respond to Family Hardiness Index (FHI), Social Support Index (SSI), Relative and Friend Support (RFS), F-COPES, Family Time and Routine Index (FTRI), Family Problem Solving Communication (FP SC) and the FACI8. The longest scale has about 35 items on a 4-point Likert rating scale, the degree (False, Mostly false, Mostly true, True, or Not applicable) to which each

statement describes their current family situation. Teenagers (Learners) will respond to the ways of coping scale (WCS).

The researcher will seek permission from the institution authorities first, and then letters will be sent to the parents and guardians of the teenagers to obtain their consent.

Participants will be informed that they will not be forced to participate and that they are free to withdraw at any time if they feel uncomfortable.

I hope that you will respond positively to my kind request which will help schools and the Department of Education too.

Contacts: email: [Percytaz@gmail.com](mailto:Percytaz@gmail.com) Cell: 0798445063

Yours faithfully

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Mr Percy Taruvinga

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#### **Consent form**

I have had the details of the study explained to me. I understand that all the information gathered will be held in strict confidence. I am aware that I may withdraw from the study at anytime.

Signed (Representative).....

Signed (researcher).....

Date.....

Thank you for allowing your child and accepting to be part of this study.

### 9.3 Annexure C: Screening form

## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

**1. Name.....**

Please cross the box which best describes your answer.

**2.**

Gender	Male	Female

**3.**

Age	
14 (Fourteen)	
15 (Fifteen)	
16 (Sixteen)	
17 (Seventeen)	
18 (Eighteen)	
19 (Nineteen)	
Other Specify	

**3.**

What is your home language?	Sepedi	Venda	Afrikaans	Tsonga	Other, Specify

**4.**

Where do you stay?	City	Town	Township	Village	Other, specify

**5.**

Who do you live with?	Parents (mother and father)	Father	Mother	Grandparent(s) grandmother, grandfather or both	Other, specify

**6.**

Parents marital status	Married	Widowed	Never married	Divorced	Remarried	Other, specify

**Thank you again for your co-operation!!!**

#### 9.4 Annexure D: Teenagers ways of Coping



University of Limpopo Turfloop campus

Department of psychology

Private Bag X6110

Sovenga

0727

## **Ways of Coping Scale (WCS)**

### **Instructions**

Tick under appropriate response

<b>Active – Cognitive Strategies</b>			
	Not at all	Sometimes	Regularly
Prayed for guidance and/or strength			
Prepared for the worst			
Tried to see the positive side of the situation			
Considered several alternatives for handling the problem			
Drew on my past experiences			
Took things a day at a time			
Tried to step back from the situation and be more objective			

Went over the situation in my mind to try to understand it			
Told myself things that helped me feel better			
Made a promise to myself that things would be different next time			
Accepted it, nothing could be done			

<b>Active – Behavioural Strategies</b>			
	Not at all	Sometimes	Regularly
Tried to find out more about the situation			
Talked with spouse or other relative about the problem			
Talked with friend about the problem			
Talked with professional person (e.g. doctor, lawyer, clergy)			
Got busy with other things to keep my mind off the problem			
Made a plan of action and followed it			
Tried not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch			
Got away from things for a while			
I knew what had to be done and tried harder to			

make things work			
Let my feelings out somehow			
Sought help from persons or groups with similar experiences			
Bargained or compromised to get something positive from the situation			
Tried to reduce tension by exercising more			
<b>Avoidance Strategies</b>			
Took it out on other people when I felt angry or depressed			
Kept my feelings to myself			
Avoided being with people in general			
Refused to believe that it happened			
Tried to reduce tension by drinking more			
Tried to reduce tension by eating more			
Tried to reduce tension by smoking more			
Tried to reduce tension by taking more tranquilizing drugs			

## 9.5 Annexure E: Family resilience scales



University of Limpopo Turfloop campus

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### **Family Resilience Research Project**

#### **The following questionnaires are included:**

Biographical questionnaire (which includes semi-structured interview)

Family Hardiness Index (FHI)

Social Support Index (SSI)

Relative and Friend Support (RFS)

F-COPES

Family Time and Routine Index

Family Problem Solving Communication

FACI8

## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

All information in this questionnaire is strictly confidential and your information will be anonymously processed.

Please cross the box most appropriate to you, or complete the statement in the space provided:

1. Living in.....(Town or city)

2. Marital status (please tick the box which best describes your current status and fill in the number of years)

How many times had you been married? ..... And your partner? .....

For how long have you been married to your current partner? ..... Years

3. Family composition (Clearly indicate which child will complete the questionnaires)

	Self	Spouse	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5
Age							
Gender							

Is there anyone else who lives permanently with you in your home?

No

Yes  Please give

details.....

4. Job, Education, Income and Home Language

Please give some detail about **your** job (e.g. Temporary/permanent? Nature of work?)

.....

.....  
Please give a short description of **your partner's** work (e.g. Temporary/permanent? Nature of work?) .....

.....  
**What is the highest level of education received by:**

**Youself**  Primary school  High school  Diploma

Degree

Other.....

Your  Primary school  High school  Diploma

Degree

Partner  Other.....

**What is your family's estimated gross income per year?**

Less than R20 000  R21 000 - R40 000  R41 000 - R60 000

R61 000 - R80 000  R81 000 - R100 000  R101 000 or more

**What is your home language?**

Xhosa

(specify).....

**5. In your own words, what are the most important factors, or strengths, which have helped your family lately?**

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Thank you again for your co-operation!

**SSI**

Please rate the following statements as they apply to your family	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Official use
<i>1. If I had an emergency, even people I do not know in this community would be willing to help</i>						
<i>2. I feel good about myself when I sacrifice and give time and energy to members of my family</i>						
<i>3. The things I do for members of my family and they do for me make me feel part of this very important group</i>						
<i>4. People here know they can get help from the community if they are in trouble</i>						
<i>5. I have friends who let me know they value who I am and what I can do</i>						
<i>6. People can depend on each other in this community</i>						
<i>7. Members of my family seldom listen to my problems or concerns; I usually feel criticised</i>						
<i>8. My friends in this community are a part of my everyday activities.</i>						
<i>9. There are times when family members do things that make other members unhappy</i>						
<i>10. I need to be very careful how much I do for my friends because they take advantage of me.</i>						
<i>11. Living in this community gives me a secure feeling</i>						
<i>12. The members of my family make an effort to show their love and affection for me.</i>						

<i>13. There is a feeling in this community that people should not get too friendly with each other</i>						
<i>14. This is not a very good community to bring children up in</i>						
<i>15. I feel secure that I am as important to my friends as they are to me</i>						
<i>16. I have some very close friends outside the family who I know really care for me and love me</i>						
<i>17. Member(s) of my family do not seem to understand me; I feel taken for granted</i>						

## RFS

DIRECTIONS: Decide for your family whether you: STRONGLY DISAGREE; DISAGREE; are NEUTRAL;

AGREE;

or STRONGLY AGREE with the statements listed below. Indicate your choice in the appropriate space.

We cope with family problems by:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Official use
<b>1. Sharing our Sharing with relatives</b>						
<b>2. Seeking advice from relatives</b>						
<b>3. Doing things with relatives (get togethers)</b>						
<b>4. Seeking encouragement and support from friends</b>						
<b>5. Seeking information and advice from people faced with the same or similar problems</b>						
<b>6. Sharing concerns with close friends</b>						
<b>7. Sharing problems with neighbours</b>						
<b>8. Asking relatives how they feel about the problems we face</b>						

## FPSC

<i>When our family struggles with problems or conflicts which upset us, I would describe my family in the following way:</i>	False	Mostly False	Mostly True	True
1. We yell and scream at each other	0	1	2	3
2. We are respectful of each others' feelings	0	1	2	3
3. We talk things through till we reach a resolution	0	1	2	3
4. We work hard to be sure family members are not hurt, emotionally or physically	0	1	2	3
5. We walk away from conflicts without much satisfaction	0	1	2	3
6. We share with each other how much we care for one	0	1	2	3

another				
7. We make matters more difficult by fighting and bring up old matters	0	1	2	3
8. We take time to hear what each other has to say or feel	0	1	2	3
9. We work to be calm and talk things through	0	1	2	3
10. We get upset, but we try to end our conflicts on a positive note	0	1	2	3

# FHI

**DIRECTIONS:** Please read each statement below and decide to what degree each describes your family.

Is the statement **FALSE**, **MOSTLY FALSE**, **MOSTLY TRUE**, **TRUE**, or **NOT APPLICABLE** about your family? Please indicate your choice in the appropriate space.

IN OUR FAMILY....	False	Mostly False	Mostly True	True	Not Applicable	Official use
1. Trouble results from mistakes we make						
2. It is not wise to plan ahead and hope because things do not turn out anyway						
3. Our work and efforts are not appreciated no matter how hard we try and work						
4. In the long run, the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good things that happen						
5. We have a sense of being strong even when we face big problems						
6. Many times I feel I can trust that even in difficult times that things will work out						
7. While we don't always agree, we can count on each other to stand by us in times of need						
8. We do not feel we can survive if another problem hits us						
9. We believe that things will work out for the better if we work together as a family						
10. Life seems dull and meaningless						
11. We strive together and help each other no matter what						
12. When our family plans activities we try new and exciting things						

<b>13. We listen to each others' problems, hurts and fears</b>						
<b>14. We tend to do the same things over and over .... It's boring</b>						
<b>15. We seem to encourage each other to try new things and experiences</b>						
<b>16. It is better to stay at home than go out and do things with others</b>						
<b>17. Being active and learning new things are encouraged</b>						
<b>18. We work together to solve problems</b>						
<b>19. Most of the unhappy things that happen are due to bad luck</b>						
<b>20. We realise our lives are controlled by accidents and luck</b>						

## F-COPES

### DIRECTIONS

First, read the list of "Response Choices" one at a time.

Second, decide how well each statement describes your attitudes and behavior in response to problems or difficulties. If the statement describes your response very well, then select the number 5 indicating that you STRONGLY AGREE; if the statement does not describe your response at all, then select the number 1 indicating that you STRONGLY DISAGREE; if the statement describes your response to some degree, then select a number 2, 3 or 4 to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement about your response.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Moderately disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

### WHEN WE FACE PROBLEMS OR DIFFICULTIES IN OUR FAMILY, WE RESPOND BY:

- 1. Sharing our difficulties with relatives
- 2. Seeking encouragement and support from friends
- 3. Knowing we have the power to solve major problems
- 4. Seeking information and advice from persons in other families who have faced the same or similar problems
- 5. Seeking advice from relatives (grandparents, etc.)
- 6. Seeking assistance from community agencies and programs designed to help families in our situation
- 7. Knowing that we have the strength within our own family to solve our problems
- 8. Receiving gifts and favors from neighbours (e.g. food, taking in mail, etc.)
- 9. Seeking information and advice from the family doctor
- 10. Asking neighbours for favors and assistance
- 11. Facing the problems "head-on" and trying to get a solution right away
- 12. Watching television
- 13. Showing that we are strong
- 14. Attending church services
- 15. Accepting stressful events as a fact of life
- 16. Sharing concerns with close friends
- 17. Knowing luck plays a big part in how well we are able to solve family problems
- 18. Exercising with friends to stay fit and reduce tension
- 19. Accepting that difficulties occur unexpectedly
- 20. Doing things with relatives (get-together, dinners, etc.)
- 21. Seeking professional counseling and help for family difficulties
- 22. Believing we can handle our own problems
- 23. Participating in church activities
- 24. Defining the family problem in a more positive way so that we do not become too discouraged
- 25. Asking relatives how they feel about problems we face

- 26. Feeling that no matter what we do to prepare, we will have difficulty handling problems  
 — 27. Seeking advice from a minister  
 — 28. Believing if we wait long enough, the problem will go away  
 — 29. Sharing problems with neighbours  
 — 30. Having faith in God  
 — 31. Apease the ancestors  
 — 32. Seek advice and help from a traditional healer

## **FAMILY FUNCTIONING** **FACI8**

### ***Instructions***

Decide how well each statement describes what is happening in your family. In the column headed **Now**, circle the number which best describes how often each thing is happening right now.

<b>In my family...</b>	<b>Now</b>				
	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Half the time</b>	<b>More than half</b>	<b>Always</b>
1. In our family it is easy for everyone to express his/her opinion.	1	2	3	4	5
2. It is easier to discuss problems with people outside the family than with other family members.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Each family member has input in major family decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Family members discuss problems and feel good about the solutions.	1	2	3	4	5

5. In our family everyone goes his/her own way.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Family members consult other family members on their decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
7. We have difficulty thinking of things to do as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Discipline is fair in our family.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Family members feel closer to people outside the family than to other family members.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Our family tries new ways of dealing with problems.	1	2	3	4	5
11. In our family, everyone shares responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
12. It is difficult to get a rule changed in our family.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Family members avoid each other at home.	1	2	3	4	5
14. When problems arise, we compromise.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Family members are afraid to say what is on their minds.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Family members pair up rather than do things as a total family.	1	2	3	4	5

# FTRI

## **Instructions**

**First**, read the following statements and decide to what extent each of the routines listed below is false or true about your family: **False (0), Mostly False (1), Mostly True (2), True (3)**. Please circle the number (0, 1, 2, 3) which best expresses your family experiences.

**Second**, determine the importance of each routine to keeping your family together and strong: **NI = Not Important, SI = Somewhat Important, VI = Very Important**. Please circle the letters (NI, SI, or VI), which best express how important the routines are to your family. If you do not have children, relatives, teenagers, etc., please circle NA = Not Applicable.

Routines					How Important is it to keep the Family Together and United			
	False False	Mostly True	Mostly True	True	<i>Important to family</i>			
					Not applicable	Somewhat applicable	Very applicable	NA
1. Parent(s) have some time each day for just talking with the children	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
2. Working parent has a regular play time with the children after coming from work	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
3. Working parent takes care of the children some time almost every day	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
4. Non-working parent and children do something together outside the home almost every day (e.g., shopping, walking, etc.)	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
5. Family has a quiet time each evening when everyone talks or plays quietly	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA

6. Family goes some place special together each week	0      1      2      3	NI      SI      VI      NA
7. Family has a certain family time each week when they do things together at home	0      1      2      3	NI      SI      VI      NA
8. Parent(s) read or tell stories to the children almost every day	0      1      2      3	NI      SI      VI      NA
9. Each child has some time each day for playing alone	0      1      2      3	NI      SI      VI      NA
10. Children/teens play with friends daily	0      1      2      3	NI      SI      VI      NA
11. Parents have a certain hobby or sport they do together regularly	0      1      2      3	NI      SI      VI      NA
12. Parents have time with each other quiet often	0      1      2      3	NI      SI      VI      NA
13. Parents go out together one or more times a week	0      1      2      3	NI      SI      VI      NA
14. Parents often spend time with teenagers for private talks	0      1      2      3	NI      SI      VI      NA

Routines					How Important to keeping the Family Together and United			
	False False	Mostly True	Mostly True	True	<i>Important to family</i>		Not applicable	
15. Children have special things they do or ask for each night at bedtime (e.g. story, good-night kiss, hug, etc.)	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
16. Children go to bed at the same time almost every night	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
17. Family eats at about the same time each night	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
18. Whole family eats one meal together daily	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
19. At least one parent talks to his or her parents regularly	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
20. Family have regular visits with the relatives	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
21. Children/teens spend time with grandparent(s) quite often	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
22. We talk with/ write to relatives usually once a week	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
23. Family checks in or out with each other when someone leaves or comes home	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
24. Working parent(s) comes home from work at	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA

the same time each day								
25. Family has certain things they almost always do to greet each other at the end of the day	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
26. We express caring and affection for each other daily	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
27. Parent(s) have certain things they almost always do each time the children get out of line	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
28. Parents discuss new rules for children/teenagers with them quite often	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
29. Children do regular household chores	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
30. Mothers do regular household chores	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
31. Fathers do regular household chores	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA
32. Teenagers do regular household chores	0	1	2	3	NI	SI	VI	NA