

**IMPACT OF THE VICTIM EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME ON  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE CAPRICORN DISTRICT OF  
LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

**BY**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

DVA – Domestic Violence Act

IPV – Intimate Partner Violence

NGO's – Non Governmental Organisations

NCPS – National Crime Prevention Strategy

VEP – Victim Empowerment Programme

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the study was to establish the effectiveness of the Victim Empowerment Program in assisting victims of domestic violence (adults and children), to deal with the effects of violence, and also to recommend possible adjustments. The study also assessed the impact that counselling and therapeutic interventions (at VEP centres) can have on victims of domestic violence.

The study further investigated whether victims of domestic violence heal completely after receiving counselling and trauma debriefing at identified victim support centres.

Two questionnaires were used to gather data, a structured questionnaire was filled in by personnel attached to identified victim support centres and the other questionnaire was used to interview victims who received services at above-mentioned victim support centres. Qualitative analysis was used to analyse data.

The study shows that the services offered at the victim support centres in a way alleviate the effects of violence and enable victims to recover, though not immediately. These services also encourage victims to cooperate with the criminal justice system in prosecution of the suspected offender. The length of recovery process depends on the extent of pain and emotional suffering, and the type of domestic violence that victims had been subjected to.

## DECLARATION

I declare that the mini dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo for the degree of Masters of Public Administration has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this university or any another university, that it is my own work in design and execution and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

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Mogotsi, M.K (Ms)

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Date



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Crime has at least two elements, namely the suspect and the victim. The society has the tendency of ignoring the plight of victims of crime, especially domestic violence. As a result; the victims experience extensive emotional trauma and distress. The Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) aims to assist victims of crime to understand, contain and manage distress caused by effects of crime incidents. By doing this, the programme aims to restore the person's confidence in society and themselves, and to encourage the victim and their close family members to utilise available victim support resources.

The National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996:65) document which was adopted by the SAPS in 2000 indicates that "The development of interventions and modifications in the criminal justice process are aimed at the empowerment of victims by:

- Addressing the negative effects of criminal activity on victims, through programmes which mediate these effects and provide support and skills to address them.
- Providing a meaningful role for the victim in the justice programme.
- Making the criminal justice system more sensitive and service oriented towards victims.
- Enhancing the accessibility of the criminal justice system to victims".

Victim support is an important part of any victim empowerment programme. Community-based victim support relies on mobilising volunteers from the community to provide essential services that assist the victim. Some of the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) are unsure that volunteers have basic skills to provide immediate support, information and counseling to victims. The VEP course comprises a range of sessions including trauma counseling, counseling rape victims, dealing with domestic violence and child abuse.

The (VEP), a pillar of the National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996), is one of the most important interventions that are a golden thread aimed to transform victims of violence and crime into empowered survivors. Its first political champion, Minister Fraser Moleketi, stated

in 1998 that her dream was to “receive a letter from a victim stating that s/he has been empowered by the system” (Camerer and Kotze, 1998:10). She pointed out that only on receipt of such a letter would she know that the Victim Empowerment Program is making a difference.

## **1.2 Background**

This study aims to assess the achievement of the above stated dream. At its core, the study plans to evaluate whether victims of domestic violence who received services from victim empowerment centres located in the Capricorn District Municipality can actually write such a letter to the current National Minister and Limpopo Provincial Member of the Executive Committee both responsible Social Development? In doing this, the study will, within an explorative approach, analyse domestic violence victimisation trends, assess the effectiveness of the therapeutic services provided to victims at the VEP centres located at the Capricorn District Municipality. It also plans to examine accessibility of these centres and marketing strategies utilised to encourage victims of domestic violence to break the silence.

## **1.3 Statement of the problem**

The Victim Empowerment Program (VEP) is one of the priority programmes that evolved from the National Crime Prevention Strategy that the South African Cabinet adopted in 1996. The programmes aim to acknowledge and address the lack of sufficient recognition and services for victims of crime in South Africa (Camerer and Kotze, 1998:1). The program’s original vision is a “South Africa where the interests of the victims of crime are acknowledged and where there is balance between victims, communities and offender is restored (Camerer and Kotze, 1998:2). This programme with relevant governance structures has been cascaded to provinces, district and local municipal levels. Provincial governance structures coordinate the implementation process. Government and Non-Governmental Organizations are implementing the VEP program using a multidisciplinary approach at district and local municipal level.

In its conceptualization, the designers of the VEP are of the opinion that the provision of therapeutic and other related services to all victims of violence and crime will, amongst others, alleviate the effect of violence and enable victims to recover; reduce secondary

victimization; encourage cooperation with the criminal justice system, and reinforce socially desirable behaviour.

It is, however not known if services received by victims of domestic violence from centres operating in Capricorn District Municipality enable them to achieve the abovementioned outcomes. The lack of empirical data demonstrating the achievement of the above outcomes has policy, social and public financial implications. At the policy level, data outlining policy impact is lacking. At the social level, there is a risk that these programs may be causing greater harm to victims of domestic violence. At the public financial level, there is a risk that there is no benefit realised from public funds utilised to implement the services. This implies that public funds have been wasted.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

1. Does the Victim Empowerment Program alleviate the effects of domestic violence by providing short-term and long-term recovery of victims?
2. Do victims of crime recover completely after receiving therapy at victim support centres?
3. How does victim support play a role in ameliorating victims' distress and in improving their mental health in both short term and long term?
4. Is the decision to report a case influenced by the seriousness of the offence or by the attitude of the victim?
5. What are the factors that sustain victims' willingness to cooperate with the criminal justice system in prosecution of the suspected offender?
6. What are the social norms of reporting domestic violence crime to the police?

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

This study aims to:

- i. To establish the effectiveness of the Victim Empowerment Programme in assisting victims of domestic violence (adults and children), deal with the effects of violence and to recommend possible adjustments.

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

- i. To assess the impact that the counselling and therapeutic interventions (at VEP centres) can have on victims of domestic violence.
- ii. To investigate whether victims of domestic violence heal completely after receiving counselling and trauma debriefing at identified victim support centers.
- iii. To contribute to improvement of implementation of the Victim Empowerment Programme at victim support centers at identified police stations in Capricorn District.

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

This study will generate data on the outcomes or result of victim empowerment services offered by centers operating in Capricorn District Municipality. Such data are, to the best of knowledge of the researcher non-existent or inaccessible. The data and findings of the study will contribute to the creation of a comprehensive understanding of the effect and impact of victim empowerment on domestic violence. The findings will be utilised to inform policy, and enhance the implementation of the VEP services in Capricorn District Municipality.

The researcher plans to make the research findings available to VEP centres so that they are able to utilise these findings to improve services provided to victims of domestic violence.

## **1.8 Definition of concepts**

### **1.8.1 Victim**

The Department of Social Development (2009:2) describes a victim as "... any person who has suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of his or her fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws".

### **1.8.2 Empowerment**

The Department of Social Development (2009) asserts that empowerment may be defined as having (or taking) control, having a say, or being listened to, being recognised and respected as an individual and having the choices one makes respected by others (moving from victim to survivor).

### **1.8.3 Impact**

Hornby *et al.* (1986:424) describes an impact as "force exerted against one object when striking another, strong impression or effect".

### **1.8.4 Victim empowerment programme (VEP)**

According to the Department of Social Development (2009:3) "Victim empowerment is an approach to facilitating access to a range of services for all people who have individually or collectively suffered harm, trauma, or material loss through violence, crime, natural disaster, human accident, or through socio-economic conditions. It is the process of promoting the resourcefulness of victims of crime and violence by providing opportunities to access services available to them, as well as to use and build their own capacity and support networks and to act on their own choices".

### **1.8.5 Domestic violence**

Joda *et al.* (2007) as quoted by Esere *et al.* (2009:1) describe domestic violence as "... violence within the home. It is carried out mostly against women and children. These acts include rape, (forced sex); physical abuse; verbal abuse; incest; Female Genital Cutting (FGT); denial of food; denial of time for relaxation; forced marriage and child marriage".

## **1.9 Outline of research report**

The report is structured in the following manner:

### **Chapter 1**

Introduction and general orientation

The chapter outlines the background of the study, statement of the problem and research questions. It indicates the aim and objectives of the study, significance of the study and definition of concepts.

### **Chapter 2**

Literature review

The review of the literature gives the background and expected benefits of the Victim Empowerment Program as well as the impact of domestic violence. The analysis of literature broadens the scope of the problem and finds central issues discussed that are related to domestic violence.

### **Chapter 3**

Research methodology

This chapter outlines among other things, research design, study area, population, sampling methods, sampling techniques, delimitation of the study and ethical considerations.

### **Chapter 4**

Presentation, analysis and interpretation of data

The chapter presents, analyzes and interpret data gathered from respondents. The technique to be applied is data filtering.

### **Chapter 5**

This chapter concludes the study and gives recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the existing literature that represents the most authoritative scholarship on the research problem that the researcher identified with and is relevant to the research topic. The researcher highlights issues relating to domestic violence and the victim support services available at various victim support centres.

#### 2.2 The Victim Empowerment Programme

##### 2.2.1 The origin of the Victim Empowerment Programme

According to Rauch (2005) the initiative to develop a National Crime Prevention Strategy began in early February 1995 as a response to President Mandela's address at opening of Parliament, which raised concerns about crime". In his speech, the President stated that the situation in which South Africa continued to be engulfed by the crime wave could not be tolerated. Murder, crimes against women and children, drug trafficking, armed robbery, fraud and theft were examples of crimes that were mentioned in the speech. The president also indicated that instructions had already gone out to the Minister of Safety and Security, the National Commissioner of the Police Service and the security organs as a whole to take all the necessary measures to bring down the levels of crime.

In addition, Rauch (2005: 1) further writes that "In May 1995, an inter-departmental strategy team composed largely by civilian officials began the process of drafting a long-term crime prevention strategy, which would become known as the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS). The intention was that the long-term strategy would tackle the root causes of crime, in parallel to the Police's Community Safety Plan, which would deliver more responses to crime which had already been committed or planned."

The National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996:66) states that "The development of the victim empowerment programme is integrally linked to the re-engineering of the criminal justice

system, and recommendations developed here will require implementation as part of comprehensive changes in the system". The victim empowerment programme is implemented by providing victims with facilities that create a friendly environment for statements to be taken, and ensuring that victims have full understanding and information about their rights. Facilities may be located at police stations, government hospitals or be privately owned by NGOs at suitable venues.

Furthermore, the Victim Empowerment Programme Tenth Anniversary Conference Report (2008:14) indicates that:

"The National Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) was established as a key feature of the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), which was proposed to address the factors that contribute to the high levels of crime in South Africa. The Victim Empowerment Programme focuses on promoting a victim centered approach to crime prevention. VEP is also based on a partnership between national, provincial, and local government departments and civil society organizations, volunteers, business sector, academic and research institutions".

The Department of Social Development (2004:9) also point out:

"Victim empowerment and support refers to a philosophy of care and assistance and to a specific approach by service providers (independent of which state department or sector they represent) in delivering services that are available. The crux is that these service providers are not (necessarily) expected to perform additional tasks, but rather that they firstly do what they claim to be doing, and then secondly, do it with the client's needs (i.e with 'client service') in mind".

The Victim Empowerment Programme is therefore a victim centered approach which focuses on the victims of crime and violence, especially women and children, although male victims are also accommodated and catered for at victim support centers. Camerer (1997:48) confirms this by indicating that "Victim empowerment refers to the processes whereby victims of crime are empowered to overcome the extremely harmful effects of criminal victimization through the necessary material, medical, psychological and social assistance provided by government and voluntary means".

### **2.2.2 Implementation of the Victim Empowerment Programme**

The Victim Empowerment Programme is meant to alleviate the effects of trauma through the provision of counseling, and management of adult and child survivors of crime, but there are challenges that are facing the program at the same time. The Victim Empowerment Programme website (2002:4) of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) lists the following challenges of the programme:

- i. An ongoing challenge for the Program is to engage constructively with government program to help ensure improved service delivery on the ground. Roles and responsibilities need clarification, both between and within the state sectors as well as between the state and the civil society. Only then can notions of partnership, which form the basic premise of victim empowerment, be realized.
- ii. An additional challenge is finding ways to include the volunteer staff more meaningfully in every aspect of the program's extensive work, and to develop them as ambassadors of victim empowerment in their own communities.
- iii. The secondary victimization that occurs within the Criminal Justice System needs to be carefully monitored and challenged at every stage from reporting a case throughout the court process and associated support systems.
- iv. There is a need to shift from policy to practice. This is apparent from the high levels of interpersonal, group and community violence in South Africa. Balancing the needs of victims, communities and offenders within the restorative justice framework remains a priority for the program.

Much as the services of the Victim Empowerment Program are acknowledged and appreciated, there seems to be still much that has to be done, so that all relevant role-players can know their responsibilities. Victims of crime, especially domestic violence need to be treated with dignity and respect so that their pride and dignity can be restored.

### **2.2.3 The basic rights of victims**

The Department of Social Development (2004) asserts that it is of utmost importance that the internationally accepted basic victims' rights as agreed upon by the United Nations and found in the South African Victim's Charter be entrenched.

- The right to be treated with respect and dignity
- The right to information
- The right to legal advice
- The right to protection and
- The right to compensation.

#### **2.2.4 Services offered at victims support centres and/or shelters**

Kirkwood (1993:49) maintains that “Abused women experience anxiety about their physical and emotional safety and a sense that their bodies and selves are in danger of damage or destruction. The threat and occurrence of actual attacks bring with them an intense terror of pain and the potential for physical damage or death”. This is precisely the reason why victims of crime, especially domestic violence and rape need the service of a suitably qualified person, for example, a social worker, to help them deal with what has happened to them.

Most of the police stations in Limpopo Province have victim support facilities. Sometimes victims blame themselves for what happened to them, especially victims of rape. A suitably qualified person would be able to offer such a victim trauma debriefing and counselling so that eventually they are able to deal with emotional and physical pain that they experienced.

Mawby and Walklate (1994:105) indicate that “Victims of crime may ask for, and receive, help from a variety of sources. Many state-based, private sector, or voluntary agencies providing help for a range of clients for example include within this clientele those who suffer physical injury, financial loss or psychological problems”. The police have a task of assisting victims of crime with taking statements, making investigations and ensuring that perpetrators are arrested. Counseling and provision of temporary shelter should follow the statement taking process while the victim recovers, and this is where services of Victim Empowerment Program come in.

In addition, Postmus and Merrit (2009:313) maintain that “research is also needed to fully comprehend not only individual knowledge, beliefs, and behavior but also to understand the organisational and contextual factors that might influence those beliefs and behaviour”. People must learn how best to respond to families experiencing domestic violence by keeping the entire family safe and by holding perpetrators accountable for their actions.

Moe (1995) supports this idea by indicating that sometimes victims have suffered so much emotional damage that family and friends find it difficult to help them because the pain is too much to bear. At such a time victims may want the assistance of an objective person such as a therapist or counselor who can bring a professional point of view to the problem”. It is important for the victim to disclose all the information to the counselor or therapist, and for the therapist to hold what the victims says in confidence, because the victim would definitely feel vulnerable and worthless, therefore the service offered at victim support centres should make victims feel better by providing them with both emotional and physical healing.

Bennet *et al.* (2004) also support the idea by maintaining that noting that shelters are a critical feature for battered women. They offer safe refuge for women and their children, providing time for women to reflect on their predicament to begin to rebuild their lives.

According to Moe (1995:57) there are important things that a client (victim of crime) should remember when consulting a therapist. These are:

- i. The therapist sets the rules for therapy, but the client is free to ask questions about the rules.
- ii. The client is working towards a goal, that of healing him/herself. The therapy is there to assist the client in making his/her own recovery.
- iii. He/she should be sure to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth to the therapist, for he/she is there for healing.

The victim of crime should feel safe enough to be able to tell the truth about what happened, hence there is a need for victim support centres that are comfortable, secure and client friendly, so that the victim can feel at home and able to have a fruitful discussion with the therapist.

According to Ellsberg (2006) violence against women and children is a serious health and development concern. It is also a violation of women's human rights. Violence against women has a negative effect on women's sexual and reproductive health. This problem is also likely to affect the children.

On the other hand, Warner and Braen (1982:300) maintain that "The police are always concerned about apprehension of the assailant, and they want contact with the victim as soon as possible. The routine of questions, identifications, descriptions, and repeated re-telling of the episode can be a source of great anxiety and discomfort to the victim, no matter how open and uncomplicated her story". The reaction of the police to reported crimes might result in the victim not disclosing all the information or eventually withdrawing the case because of fear of secondary victimization. It is important for the police, especially those responsible for statement taking to undergo training in victim support and counseling, so that they can empathize with the victims upon their arrival at the police station.

It is also important for victims to be as open and honest as possible when reporting cases, so that they can get the necessary assistance. Ellsberg (2006:329) states that "Providers are often frustrated in working with survivors of violence, either because they feel powerless to "fix" the problem or because women are "non-compliant" and do not follow their advice to the

letter. Despite this, it is important that providers reframe their notion of a “successful” intervention, as interviews with survivors stress how the right words can be a powerful catalyst for change.

Apparently some of the victims have a fear of losing their partners when they report them to the police, because they (the partners) are bread winners in the family. Hoyle (2008) asserts that “If a woman makes efforts to remove her violent partner from the home and reduce the chances of him returning or having access to her at all, she may well reduce the risk of victimization, but she might significantly increase other risks, such as poverty, losing contact with her children, losing her home, etc. Many victims of intimate abuse weigh up the different, often competing risks in making decisions about managing the violence in their lives. They may choose to remain in a violent relationship despite the risk of personal safety because at that particular stage in their life they place a high value on the rewards associated with the relationship.”

In addition, Ellsberg (2006:328) states that “Unfortunately, women who are experiencing violence rarely reveal their situation spontaneously, as they may be ashamed to admit what is happening or fear that the provider will not believe them, or worse, blame them for their violence. In settings where mandatory notification laws are enforced, women fear telling a provider about violence will lead to police involvement and possible reprisal on the part of the abuser”.

Bennet *et al.* (2004) maintain that programs for victims of domestic violence are an integral part of community approaches to prevention of violence. Evaluation of these programs, however, is both recent and limited in scope. As in many social service programs in which resources for assessment are limited, providing direct services takes priority over assessment of the efficacy of those services. Much as programs for victims are offering important services in communities, it is equally important for them to be evaluated at some point so as to establish if there are gaps that need to be filled in and to address any challenges that may arise.

According to Gondolf (1988) “If managed effectively, shelter life may encourage women to assert themselves in new ways, clarify issues and fears, and collaborate with other women in need. In the process, the intimidating isolation that so many battered women experience is broken and an internal fortitude released.” Shelter life should be encouraged for all victims of domestic violence, especially women and children. This is

where they would get counseling and temporary overnight accommodation when necessary, as well as basic necessities like food and other amenities.

### **2.3 Types of abuse**

The NTPFES – Police website indicates that domestic violence is a crime, and constitutes various forms of abuse, i.e. physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological (emotional or verbal) abuse, social abuse, financial abuse and cultural abuse. The following explanation of different types of abuse is given:

#### **2.3.1 Physical abuse**

This is the actual or attempted use of any physical force upon another. This includes a slap across the face to its extreme form – causing a permanent injury or the death of a person. Physical abuse should not be condoned even in its “mildest form”. It can often be used by an offender as a method of control and punishment.

#### **2.3.2 Sexual abuse**

It is any coercive or unwanted sexual activity, which includes forcing a person to engage in any sexual act against their will, demeaning and humiliating sexual comments or jokes, threatening physical harm should the person not comply with the request.

#### **2.3.3 Psychological – Emotional and/or verbal abuse**

This is verbal and emotional abuse, destroying a person’s self esteem and self-confidence, leaving them feeling worthless, humiliated, guilty and degraded. This also includes physical harm and intimidatory behaviour.

#### **2.3.4 Social abuse**

This is enforced social isolation or social control over a victim from family, friends and support networks.

#### **2.3.5 Financial abuse**

This is where a victim has no control or access over money. For example the offender places restriction over how much money is available for everyday expenses or the other person is forced to rely on their partner financially, as they have no economic independence. They are unable to escape the situation and end up staying with the abusive partner.

### 2.3.6 Cultural abuse

This is where a person does not allow another person to practise a religion of their choice or to participate in cultural activities.

### 2.4 Domestic violence in detail

Murphy *et al.* (1998:263) assert that “Domestic violence is a widespread crime that has devastating social and public health costs. Population surveys suggest that about 40% of married and cohabiting women in the U.S. experience serious physical violence from a male partner each year”. It is unfortunate that some of the domestic violence cases are not reported due to fear of labeling and secondary victimization, hence it is important that communities should be informed of their rights and available services that they can resort to when they experience domestic violence in their households.

Hoyle (2008) maintains that responses to domestic violence now similarly seek to reduce the risk of further violence by victims to agree with ‘safety plans’. Typically these may include arrangements to hide from the violent partner and to establish a support network.

Furthermore, in some instances domestic violence offenders may repeat the offence if and when charges are not laid against them. This may be done to the same victim or a different person all together. Murphy *et al.* (1998) supports this view by asserting that clinical experience suggests that some offenders may attack the victim’s family members, friends or other relatives.

Murphy *et al.* cited an example of domestic violence in the U.S, and Esere *et al.* (2009) shed some light on experiences of victims of domestic violence in Nigeria by indicating that violence is a regular part of most women in Nigeria, especially at homes intended to nurture the psychological upliftment and development of its members. Domestic violence refers to violence within the home. It is carried against women and children. Domestic violence seems to affect women in most countries and it becomes a serious challenge in instances whereby rape of a woman by her husband is not regarded as a criminal offence.

Esere *et al.* (2009) further maintain that rape within marriage (forced or coerced sexual intercourse between wife and husband) is not recognized as crime by the Nigerian Law. At best, a husband who forces his wife to have sex may be found guilty of assault, wounding or grievous harm depending on the degree and effect of force he used on his

wife. But this is usually limited to situations where the couple have separated (they are not living together or co-habiting). It is sad to note that women in some parts of the world are subjected to abuse and humiliation by their spouses and the laws of their specific countries does not protect them. If the law of a country does not protect its citizens, then it is unlikely that the citizens would acknowledge, appreciate and value each other's human rights.

According to Eseré *et al.* (2009) dismissive attitudes within the police and an inaccessible justice system compound the failures of the state to protect women's rights. The criminal justice system and the police provide little protection for the victims and often dismiss domestic violence as a family matter and fail to investigate or press charges.

Furthermore, Cook and Dickens (2009) maintain that intimate partner violence (IPV), once known as "wife-battery" or more generally as a form of "domestic violence", sadly appears universal, and not specific to a region, culture, religion, ethnicity or, for instance income level. Violence can be only verbal or psychological, but it is usually also physical, but not necessarily sexual and perversely, appears greater when women are vulnerable through pregnancy.

Camerer (1996) asserts that in South Africa, criminal procedure focuses on apprehending the offender rather than consoling the victim. Deterrence rather than restitution is the pivot of the South African justice system, and of all the role players, the victim tends to be the most marginalized. If an offender is arrested, the case is conducted as a matter between the state and the accused; in effect, the state 'steals' the conflict from the victim, to render a crime that has been committed a crime against the state. Even though this was the case in South Africa before the establishment of the victim empowerment programme, one gets to understand the frustration and emotional suffering of the victims of crime, hence there was a need for VEP.

Domestic violence is indeed a ruthless act, which may leave victims with emotional scars that may last for a long time if left untreated. Cook and Dickens (2009:72) state that "Violence may cause bruises, abrasions, and cuts, but its extremes include hospitalization, death and suicide". It is therefore important for victims of domestic violence to know their rights and services available for them, and avoid staying in violent relationships just because of the rewards that they get from the abusers.

## **2.5 How victims of Domestic Violence are protected**

States globally uses three main approaches to prevent and reduce Domestic Violence. These responses are included in legislations enacted or strategies designed to prevent and react to incidences of Domestic Violence. The responses are criminalization of domestic violence, use of protection orders to prevent offenders from harming victims and victim support to enable victims' recovery from trauma.

The South African government enacted the Domestic Violence Act no 116 of 1998 (DVA) to provide for the above two responses to domestic violence. South Africa is not alone in this legalistic approach to Domestic Violence prevention and reacting. According to the Citizens Advice Bureaux website, "The Domestic Violence Act of 1995 significantly broadens the scope of who can apply for legal protection from domestic violence. It sends a clear message that domestic violence is unacceptable and people have the right to be protected from violence in their families and close personal relationships".

## **2.6 Criminalization of Domestic Violence**

Victims of domestic violence can utilize both criminal and civil response and select one response to gain protection from domestic violence.

### **2.6.1 Use of Protection orders**

There are many forms of domestic violence, and some of the cases are not reported because fear of secondary victimization or fear of losing the breadwinner when he is arrested. Individuals who find themselves in abusive circumstances may apply for a Protection Order, and may ask for the order to cover other people who are at the risk from the violent person and their associates because of their relationship with them, e.g. children, new partners, neighbors, friends and family.

A Protection Order is an order made by the court to put conditions on a violent person to protect the applicant from domestic violence. If the protection order is breached, the police can arrest the violent person and hold him/her for twenty-four hours before releasing them on bail. If charged with a breach the violent person will have to appear in a criminal court, and if convicted, a relevant fine will be charged. If the behavior continues after the fine, the jail sentence will be effected.

## **2.7 Detailed research questions**

The following questions were formulated by the researcher after the literature review:

1. Does the Victim Empowerment Program provide victims with facilities that create a friendly environment for statements to be taken, and ensuring that victims have full understanding of their rights?
2. Does the Victim Empowerment Programme empower victims to overcome the extremely harmful effects of criminal victimization through the necessary material, medical, psychological and social assistance provided by government and voluntary means?
3. Do the criminal justice system and the police prioritize domestic violence cases and protect victims' rights?
4. Does the police attitude towards victims of crime have an effect on the victims' willingness to cooperate with the criminal justice system in prosecution of the suspected offender?
5. Are victims of domestic violence treated with respect and dignity at victim support centers; so that their pride and dignity can be restored?
6. How can the government address the challenge of including the volunteer staff more meaningfully in the Victim Empowerment Programme's extensive work and ensure that they are retained at the victim support centres?

## **2.8 Conclusion**

The Victim Empowerment Programme was established with the aim of offering services to victims of crime i.e. the vulnerable, the poor and the marginalized. It is aimed at helping individuals to cope with an impact of the victimization processes. It has an element of restorative justice in it, and tries to prevent crime and violence. It also tries to provide an environment where victims are able to lay charges without fear of intimidation, and provide them with information to enable them to track the status of their cases.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter delineates the research design and methodology that was followed in the research process in order to explore the research problem that was identified in Chapter One. The chapter also gives details of the research design, target group, sampling method, and size of the population. The chapter also includes the instruments that were used to gather data, as well as the challenges that the researcher faced in the process.

#### 3.2 Research design

According to Bryanard & Hanekom (1997) there are two methodologies for collecting data, namely: quantitative and qualitative methods. Both methods use specific techniques to collect data, *inter alia*, literature reviews, interview, questionnaires and direct observations. Instrument such as attitude and rating scales have been developed to measure reliability of data collection. In turn, the reliability and validity of measuring instruments have to be tested.

For the purpose of this study, the qualitative method was used. Welman and Kruger (2001) maintain that qualitative methodology refers to research, which produces descriptive data, generally people's own written or spoken words. Qualitative research is not concerned with the methods and techniques to obtain appropriate data for investigating the research hypothesis, as in the case of quantitative research. Qualitative data are based on meanings expressed through words and other symbols or metaphors.

Mouton (2001) states that research design is a plan or blueprint of how the researcher intends to conduct the investigation. The study applied both descriptive and explanatory research because descriptive research seeks an explanation of what is going on, whereas explanatory research is used find to find out why something is happening.

### **3.3 Study area**

The study was conducted at five police stations within the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province, namely Mankweng, Matlala, Seshego, Lebowakgomo, and Polokwane.

### **3.4 Population**

The target group for this study was victims of domestic violence who received trauma debriefing and counseling at victim support centers of police stations in the Capricorn district. The victims comprised both women and children who were physically, sexually or emotionally abused. Volunteers and social workers who offer trauma debriefing and counseling of victims at victim support centers and police station VEP coordinators were also interviewed because they interact with victims on a daily basis.

### **3.5 Sampling method**

The study applied the stratified random sampling method. According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) the principle of stratified random sampling is to divide a population into different groups called strata, so that each element of the population belongs to one and only one stratum.

Capricorn District has five local municipalities namely Polokwane, Lepelle Nkumpi, Aganang, Blouberg and Molemole. The researcher ensured that respondents were identified from five police stations that serve at least three local municipalities within the district. The challenge was that police stations clusters are not aligned to the municipal boundaries because police stations are divided into clusters while municipalities are divided into specific district boundaries. In order to overcome that challenge the researcher selected police stations that operate in the boundaries of the abovementioned five local municipalities.

The strata were drawn from a sample of 30 volunteers, social workers and police stations' VEP coordinators attached to Mankweng, Matlala, Seshego, Lebowakgomo and Polokwane police stations. A sample of 10 victims of domestic violence who received counseling and trauma debriefing at these police stations and 5 police stations VEP coordinators, who are full-time SAPS members also formed the sample.

### **3.6 Data collection method**

#### **3.6.1 Structured self administered questionnaires**

Ranjit (1999) states that a questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by the respondents. In a questionnaire respondents read the questions, interpret what is expected and then write down the answers. Questionnaires were distributed to social workers, volunteers and police station VEP coordinators, and they were to be completed and submitted to the researcher on the same day. Ranjit (1999) further states that in the case of questionnaire, as there is no one to explain the meaning, it is important that questions are easy and clear to understand. The researcher used simple understandable language to avoid ambiguity.

#### **3.6.1 The interviews**

According to Behr (1988) an interview is a direct method of obtaining information in a face to face situation. A structured questionnaire was utilized to conduct interviews with victims of domestic violence who received counseling and trauma debriefing at identified police stations. The duration of interviews depended on the respondent's willingness to share information. Interviews lasted for approximately twenty five to thirty minutes, and questions that respondents did not understand or misinterpreted were rephrased and made more relevant to the research at hand.

### **3.7 Data analysis method**

Mouton (2001) asserts that analysis involves 'breaking up' the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships. The aim of analysis was to understand the various constitutive elements of one's data through the inspection of relationships between concepts, constructs or variables, and to see whether there is any pattern or trends that can be identified or isolated, or to establish themes in the data. The researcher was determined and select from the collected data what exactly was required with regard to victims counseled at victim empowerment centres at identified police stations, the social workers as well as police stations VEP coordinators.

### **3.8 Delimitation or demarcation of the study**

The envisaged research study was conducted at five victim empowerment centers serving five police stations operating within the boundaries of the Capricorn District Municipality, in Limpopo Province. Data were collected only from victims of and experts on domestic violence. Other victims are excluded from this study.

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

This research subscribed strictly to existing and known research ethics. Permission to conduct the research project was requested and granted by police station Commissioners. The purpose, benefits of the study was outlined in the go-ahead letter that was obtained from the researcher's institution. The researcher also informed the respondents of the purpose of the study by a letter preceding the questionnaire and the interview questions. The researcher assured the respondents that she would respect their wishes to remain anonymous, ensure that their privacy is not violated and guarantee their confidentiality. That is why there are no names mentioned anywhere in the study outcome.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

The interviews were conducted with victims of domestic violence, volunteers, social workers and police stations' VEP coordinators empowered and gave perception into the trauma experienced by victims of domestic violence the challenges faced by victim supporters. The difficulties that were encountered were that some of the victims were in the healing process therefore were not free to share information. In some cases the researcher did not get information from the questionnaires as anticipated that is why in this case the researcher conducted some of the interviews while administering questionnaires.

Though some of the respondents received questionnaires at their workstations, some did not find time to fill in therefore requested an extra day to work on them. The researcher had to visit some of the respondents at their homes to either interview them or request them to complete the questionnaires. The researcher had to conduct telephone interviews with some respondents, as it was not easy to meet them in person.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher analyses the collected data. The first part of the chapter deals with responses from social workers, volunteers and police stations VEP coordinators, while the second part deals with responses from the victims the were counselled at identified victim support centres. The qualitative analysis is used for the purpose of this research.

#### 4.2 Responses by personnel attached to victim support centers

The following is the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire responses. A total number of 30 respondents completed the questionnaires.

##### 1. Services at victim support centres assist victims of domestic violence to feel better

Figure 4.2.1

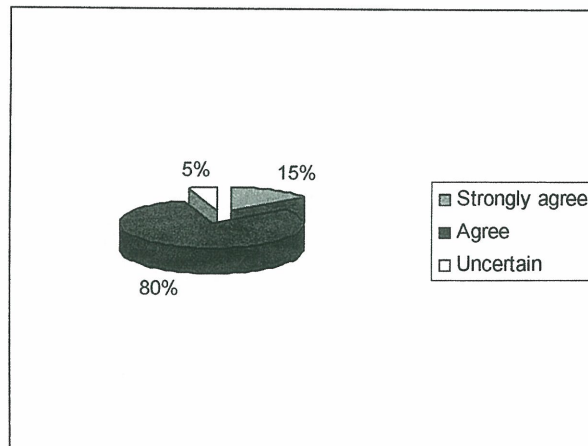


Figure 4.2.1 represents responses in percentages. Respondents were required to indicate if they strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree or were uncertain if the services offered at victim support centers assist victims to feel better. The results show that twenty-four out of thirty respondents (80%) of the respondents agreed that the

services at victim support centres assist victims of domestic violence to feel better, four respondents (15%) strongly agreed and only two respondents (5%) were uncertain. The conclusion drawn there is that the services offered at victim support centers do make victims of domestic violence feel better.

## 2. Services received at victim support centres assist victims to accept what happened to them

Figure 4.2.2

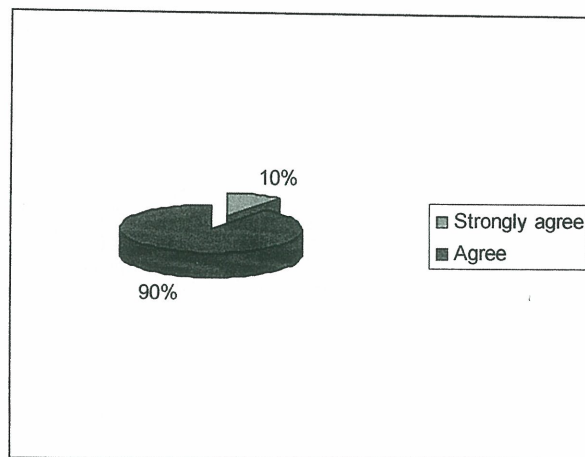


Figure 4.2.2 represents the responses in percentages. Twenty-seven respondents (90%) of the respondents strongly agree that victims accept what happened to them after being assisted at victim support centres and three respondents (10%) agree that the services offered do make them accept what happened to them. At this point the conclusion drawn is that the services offered as a good course that brings about emotional change in the victims of domestic violence, but subsequent questions assist the researcher to draw informed conclusions.

## 3. Victims of domestic violence recover completely after receiving trauma debriefing at victim support centres

Figure 4.2.3

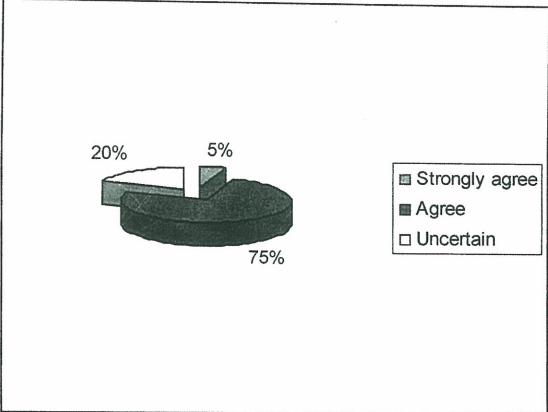


Figure 4.2.3 represents responses on whether victims of domestic violence recover completely after receiving services at the centers. Six respondents (20%) of thirty respondents are not sure whether victims recover completely after receiving trauma debriefing, twenty-three respondents (75%) agrees that they recover completely and only one respondent (5%) strongly agrees that they do recover completely. Although the majority of respondents agree that the victims recover completely after receiving trauma debriefing at the victim support centers, they all indicated that healing was not immediate. The attitude of respondents and their willingness to be assisted was mentioned as factors that contribute to the healing process. The researcher therefore notes the victims' attitude towards the services offered at victim support centres as an important element of their healing process.

**4. Victims of domestic violence recover completely after receiving counseling at victim support centres**

Figure 4.2.4

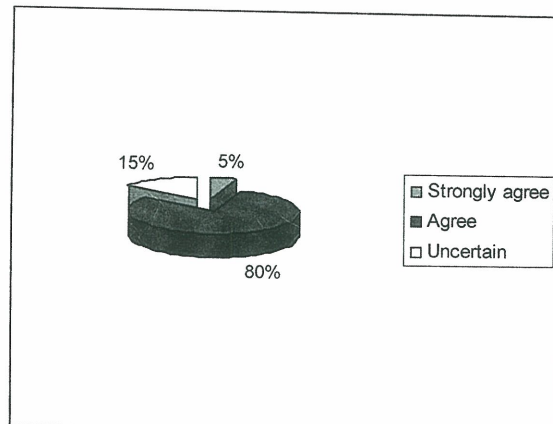


Figure 4.2.4 represents responses in terms of victims' recovery after receiving counseling at victim support centers. four respondents (15%) of respondents are not sure whether victims recover completely after receiving counseling, 1 respondent (5%) strongly agrees that they recover completely and twenty-four respondents (80%) agree that they do recover completely. The researcher therefore acknowledges that trauma debriefing and counseling are two sides of the same coin, and that victims of domestic violence need both, for emotional and psychological healing to take place.

#### 5. Victim support programs assist victims of domestic violence to deal with distress in the short run

Figure 4.2.5

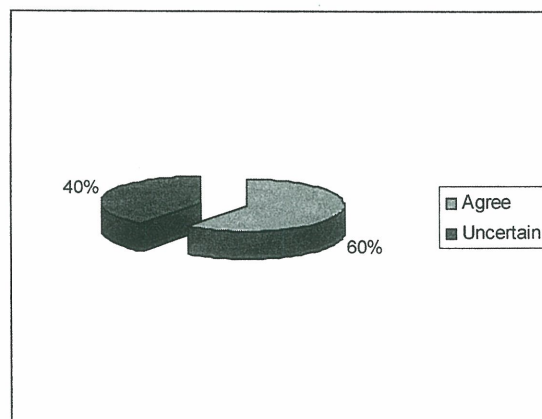


Figure 4.2.5 represents responses to whether victim support programmes assist domestic violence victim's deal with distress in the short run. Eighteen respondents (60%) of the respondents agree that victim support programs assist victims to deal with

distress in the short run and twelve respondents (40%) are uncertain. The researcher is tempted to link the response with responses to the last two responses and conclude the services offered at victim support centers do not help them deal with distress in the short term.

#### 6. Victim support programs assist victims of domestic violence to deal with distress in the long run

Figure 4.2.6

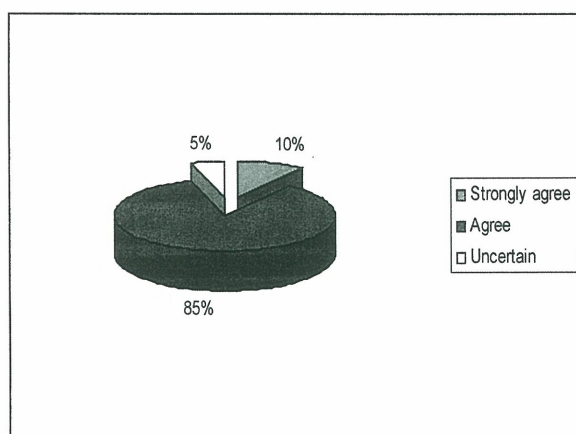


Figure 4.2.6 represents responses to the question whether victims manage to deal with distress in the long run. Twenty-five respondents (85%) of the thirty respondents agree that victim support programs assist victims to deal with distress in a long run and three respondents (10%) strongly agree while two respondents (5%) do not agree are uncertain. The responses indicate that victims need time to deal with distress, healing doesn't take place immediately.

#### 7. Victims of domestic violence report victimization to the police freely

Figure 4.2.7

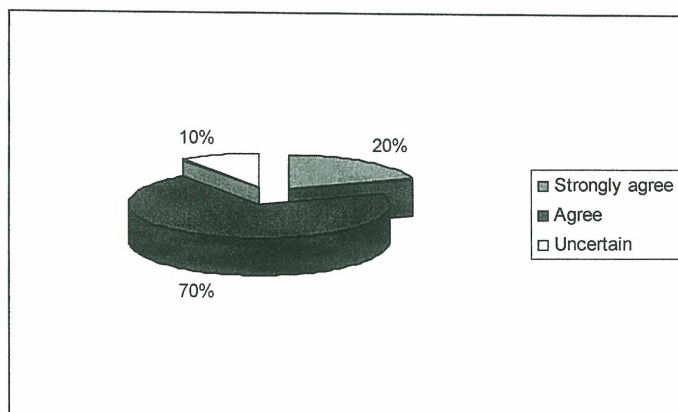


Figure 4.2.7 represents the victims' reporting of victimization to the police. Twenty-one respondents (70%) of the respondents agree that victims of domestic violence report cases freely while three respondents (10%) are uncertain and 6 respondents (20%) strongly agree that victims report freely. Only a small percentage is not certain of whether victims report victimization freely or not, therefore the majority of victims that report victimization to the police do so freely.

**8. Are victims of domestic violence coerced (forced) to report victimization to the police?**

Figure 4.2.8

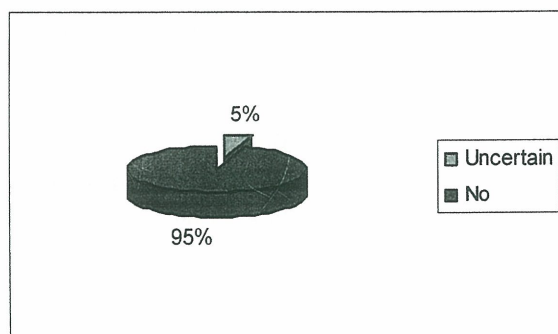


Figure 4.2.8 represents responses on whether victims of domestic violence are forced to report cases to the police or they do so freely. Twenty-eight respondents (95%) do not agree that victims are coerced to report cases while two respondents (5%) are uncertain. It therefore means that the majority of victims volunteer to report cases to the police; they are not forced.

**9. Victims of domestic violence provide follow-up sessions (after care) after the first consultation**

Figure 4.2.9

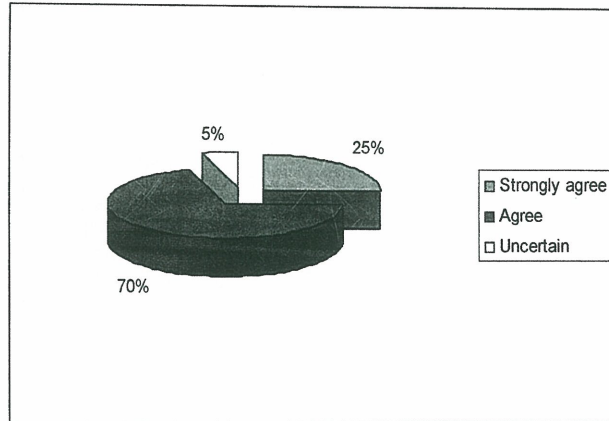


Figure 4.2.9 represents responses regarding victims' follow-up sessions after the first consultation at the victim support centres. Twenty-one respondents (70%) of the thirty respondents agree that follow-up sessions are provided to victims after the first consultation, 25% disagree and 5% are uncertain. The researcher is convinced that follow-up sessions are conducted, but upon probing further it does not come out clear if follow-up sessions are conducted until both the victim and the victim supporters are convinced that he or she has recovered fully.

**10. Victim support centers provide feedback on progress made by criminal justice agencies on reported cases of domestic violence**

Figure 4.2.10

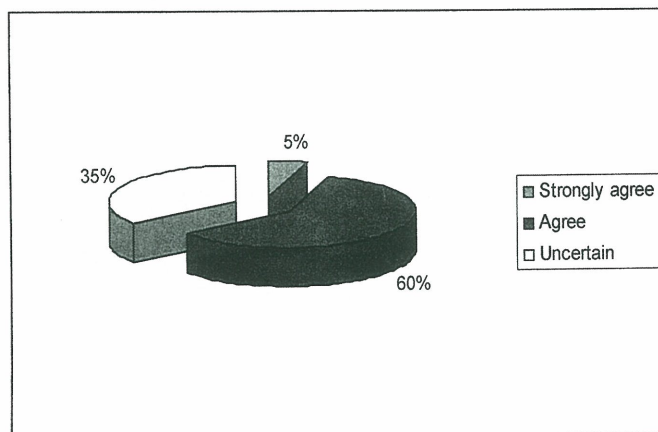


Figure 4.2.10 represents responses on whether the criminal justice system agencies provide feedback on progress made in terms of reported cases. Eighteen respondents (60%) of the 30 respondents agree that the criminal justice agencies give feedback on the progress made by the criminal justice system, eleven (35%) are uncertain and one responded (5%) strongly agree. Victim support centres do not provide feedback on the progress made by criminal justice system, this is the responsibility of the police.

**11. Criminal justice system practitioners prioritize domestic violence cases**

Figure 4.2.11

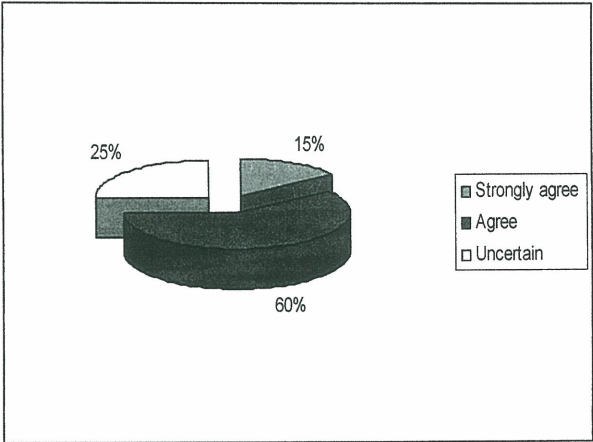


Figure 4.2.11 represents responses to whether the criminal justice system prioritizes domestic violence cases. Eighteen respondents (60%) the 30 respondents agree that domestic violence cases are prioritized, five respondents (15%) strongly agree and seven respondents (25%) are uncertain. The criminal justice system prioritizes domestic violence cases, except in a few rare circumstances.

**12. Domestic violence cases are sensitive and need to be treated in a private Environment**

Figure 4.2.12

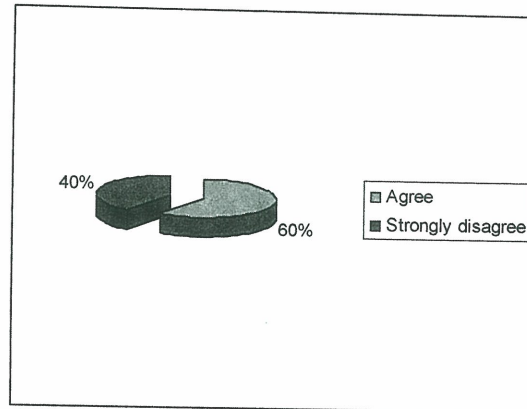


Figure 4.2.12 depicts responses to the question whether domestic violence cases need to be treated in a private environment because of their sensitiveness. Eighteen respondents (60%) of all respondents strongly agree that domestic violence cases are sensitive and need to be treated privately and twelve respondents (40%) agree that these cases are indeed sensitive and need to be treated in a private environment. It therefore means that almost all personnel that work with victims of domestic violence understand the nature of these cases and handle them accordingly.

**13. Services offered encourage victims to cooperate with criminal justice practitioners in terms of statement taking and court appearances**

Figure 4.2.13

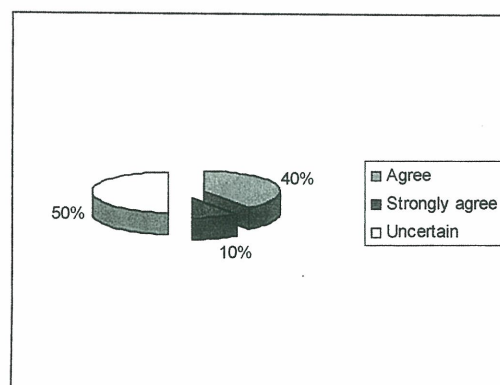




Figure 4.2.13 represents responses to the question whether services offered at victim support centres encourage victims of domestic violence to cooperate with the criminal justice practitioners. Fifteen respondents (50%) are not sure if the services offered to victims of domestic violence encourage the victims of domestic violence to cooperate with criminal justice practitioners, twelve respondents (40%) strongly agree and three respondents (10%) agree. The conclusion is that the victim support practitioners pay more attention to emotional healing of the victims of domestic violence to ensuring that they cooperate with criminal justice practitioners.

**14. Anything that needs to be changed in order to improve victim support services at the centers**

Figure 4.2.14

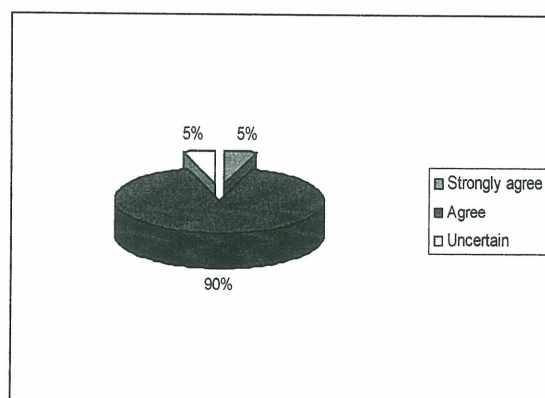


Figure 4.2.14 depicts responses to the question whether there is anything that needs to be changed in the victim support services at the centres. Twenty-eight respondents (90%) agree that the victim support system needs some changes here and there, one respondent (5%) are not sure and another one respondent (5%) strongly agree that changes are needed. One can therefore presume that victim support services are appreciated and the victim supporters are enthusiastic and dedicated to their work. The few changes that were suggested were in terms of resources and further training of victim supporters, which therefore means that the government need to provide personnel attached to the centres with the necessary training.

### **4.3 Responses by victims of domestic violence who receives trauma debriefing and counseling at victim support centers.**

The interviews conducted were based on annexure 2 and the interviewees responded as follows:

#### **4.3.1 Victims emotional state prior and after receiving services at the centers**

The majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the services they received at victim support centers made them feel better and they acknowledged that there was a difference in their emotional state after receiving trauma debriefing and counseling at victim support center, as compared to the way they were before receiving such services. A few respondents agreed that the services they received made them feel better. When one compares these responses with the responses of the personnel on the same issue, one is tempted to assume that the services offered at victim support centres do have an impact on the victims of domestic violence's emotional state after receiving assistance.

#### **4.3.2 Victims acceptance of what had happened to them**

Almost all the respondents indicated that although they could not change what happened to them, the services rendered to them assisted them to accept what had happened to them. From these responses, it was clear that most of the respondents were in a state of denial before receiving assistance at the victim support centers, but after the sessions they then learned to accept what had happened because that was not reversible.

#### **4.3.3 Emotional healing of victims of crime**

Half of the respondents stated that they had emotionally healed completely while the other half claimed that they were still in the healing process. From the responses of almost all the respondents, they regretted what had happened and would not like to go through the same experience again. They all admitted that they would never forget what had happened to them. The challenge that some of the respondents faced was that some of them had to go back to the same people who victimized them and they were not

sure if the same behavior would not be repeated, although most of the offenders were either released on bail or serving sentences at correctional services.

#### **4.3.4 Counselling received at victim support centers**

The majority of the victims strongly agreed that counselling is an important element of victim support and indicated that they would recommend it to anyone who might be emotionally or physically abused. They further indicated that the offenders also needed counselling of some sort because some of them abuse their partners intentionally while some of them think that it culturally right to abuse partners, in or outside marriage.

#### **4.3.5 Experience of victims after the first consultation session**

Most of the victims strongly agreed that they felt immediate relief after the first counseling session. Only a few respondents felt that relief was achieved after some time, maybe a week or two. What they all liked though was the fact that the victim supporters managed empathize with them and that made them feel better.

#### **4.3.6 Follow-up sessions provided by the centres**

The respondents felt that there was a need for follow-up sessions, but that depended on the extent of abuse that the victim experienced. For example in the case of verbal or financial abuse, follow up sessions were not really necessary, but in the case of physical and sexual abuse, follow-up sessions were necessary. The victims further indicated that perhaps it would be ideal to have both the victim and the offender in the same counseling session, especially for less traumatic offences like verbal abuse and cultural abuse.

#### **4.3.7 Reporting of domestic violence cases to the police**

Almost all the respondents agreed that they reported cases freely, but one or two respondents said that they were advised, not forced by family members or friends to report cases at the police stations. These respondents tolerated abuse for a long time and some of them either were not aware of their rights or believed their partners would change as the time went on, but change never occurred.

#### **4.3.8 Feedback from the police about the progress the cases**

About half of the respondents claimed that they received feedback about the progress of their cases from the police and the other half claimed that they did not get regular feedback about the progress of their cases, but at least acknowledged that they were reminded of the court dates.

#### **4.3.9 Treatment of victims of domestic violence by the police**

Only a few respondents claimed that they were treated unfairly by the police while the majority claimed that they were treated fairly by the police. Respondents that claimed they were treated unfairly indicated that they were not given a chance to write their own statements and that they were not sure whether the police would capture what they were saying correctly. The challenge in this situation was the question of language. The victim and the police officer did not speak the same language and this made the respondent rather weary and unsettled.

#### **4.3.10 Treated victim supporters at the victim support centres**

All the respondents felt that they were treated with dignity and respect by the victim supporters, but only one of the respondents felt that even though treatment was fair, she wished to stay at the centre for longer and that was not allowed. She was accommodated at the centre for two days, and she felt that was not enough.

#### **4.3.11 How victims felt about the services offered at the centres**

Almost all the victims were satisfied with the services offered at victim support centers and indicated that they would not like to recommend anything. They were satisfied with the counseling sessions, debriefing sessions and the time allocated to them by the victim supporters, at the victim support centers.

#### **4.3.12 Cooperation with the criminal justice practitioners in victims of domestic violence**

Some of the respondents indicated that the fact that they reported the cases to the police and did not withdraw them at a later stage meant that they were willing to cooperate with criminal justice practitioners. They did not have to be encouraged or motivated by anyone to cooperate. At the same time some of them said that they were encouraged by the attitude of the victim supporters to cooperate with criminal justice practitioners.

#### **4.3.13 What needs to be changed, in order to improve victim support services at the centre**

Most of the victims that were interviewed maintained that all they needed at the centers was service, not equipment or luxury, therefore they did not recommend any thing, but one of them however stated that perhaps the government should consider establishing more centres so that victims who can no longer stay with their spouses and had no where to go could stay at such centers permanently. Another victim would have liked to receive follow-up sessions at her household because she stayed rather far from the police station.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher draws conclusions of the study and makes recommendations against issues that were raised. Issues that need further research are also identified. The study investigated the effectiveness of the Victim Empowerment Programme on Domestic Violence in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province. The study looked at the impact or effectiveness of the Victim Empowerment Programme on domestic violence; hence the respondents were identified at victim support centres.

The researcher included information on how and where the Victim Empowerment Programme was initiated and what its purpose was, and further went on to define what domestic violence is and what needs to be done when it takes place. The study further investigated how the personnel who are attached to the victim support units at identified police stations find the programme and what they think of its functionality. Volunteers that received trauma debriefing at identified police stations were also interviewed. The objective was to establish if the programme was assisting the affected victims and what the possible challenges were.

The main conclusions were drawn in chapter five and recommendations were made against issues that were raised, with the view of providing the victim support programme with possible mechanisms or strategies of improving services at victim support centres. The study summarizes all the discussions above, linking the aims and objectives of the study, collected data and reviewed literature. Issues for further research are also identified.

#### 5.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions have been made by the researcher:

- i. The Victim Empowerment Programme alleviates the effects of domestic violence by providing long-term recovery of victims. The victims go through a healing process and

it takes quite a while for them to be emotionally and psychologically healed, but they cannot forget what has happened to them.

- ii. The length of the recovery process depends on the extent of pain and emotional suffering, and the type of domestic violence that victims had been subjected to.
- iii. Most of the victims of domestic violence report the cases to the police voluntarily, although some do not disclose all the information because of fear of forfeiting material and financial benefits from the partner or spouse when he is detained.
- iv. There is no indication that the Victim Empowerment Programme is causing harm to victims of domestic violence, and public funds are not wasted in this initiative.

The recommendations are intended to benefit the entire Victim Empowerment Programme, and not only identified victim support centers at identified police stations only. Some of the raised issues may be specific to a particular victim support centre, and not necessarily to all the identified ones.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the critical issues raised, the following recommendations are made to contribute to improvement of services offered at victim support centres:

- i. The victims of crime are treated with respect and in absolute privacy, but little is done about the perpetrator or the offender, who may in many instances, be a partner, a spouse or any person related to the victim of domestic violence. The fact that this person may be arrested or convicted is appreciated, but the researcher is of the opinion that he also needs counseling of some sort because the victim may have to go back to him or her at the end of the day. The recommendation here is that dual counseling is needed for the victim and the perpetrator, especially if the two parties are related. This would possibly alleviate a vicious cycle of abuse.
- ii. The services offered at the victim support centres in a way alleviate the effect of violence and enable victims to recover, though not immediately and they do

encourage cooperation with the criminal justice system. This is good, but the after-care services seem to be inadequate in the sense that they are not continuous. The recommendation is an introduction of on-going review sessions with the affected victims at the centre until such time that the social workers and volunteers feel satisfied that the victim has “healed” completely. In this way, they would also be able to identify signs of further abuse or violence at home.

- iii. Victim support rooms and centers need to have standardised requirements in terms of equipment and resources. If one centre is better than the other then services that are offered will also differ. If these are meant to accommodate affected victims overnight when there is a need, then the recommendation is that all victim support centres should have overnight facilities, so that they do not cause more harm to the victim. The victim should feel as comfortable as possible. This may not be achieved overnight, but the provision of comfortable overnight facilities is a strong recommendation.
- iv. The issues of volunteers need to be reviewed so that there should be consistency and stability at the victim support centers. The fact that they offer a voluntary service puts the facility at a risk of losing such valuable people at a later stage when they get job offers elsewhere. The recommendation is that volunteers need to be trained and employed so as to guarantee their attachment to the centre.
- v. Domestic violence is broad but in the researcher’s opinion most victims are women and children, especially girls. There is a need for a study into the root causes of domestic violence because the Victim Empowerment Programme addresses the after or side effects of, amongst other things, domestic violence. The study into the root causes of domestic violence is recommended, as well as vigilant public education by social cluster departments to discourage the occurrence of domestic violence.
- vi. Lastly, domestic violence needs to be fought against vehemently by the government through educational programmes in electronic and print media. Domestic violence breaks the family structure, and once this happens, the nation as a whole is

weakened. South Africa needs a strong nation, and it has to start with a happy family where there is no violence.

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<http://www.csvr.org.za.projects/vep.htm>

Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation website, 2010)

<http://www.cab.org.nz/information/Domestic Violence Act.html>

(Citizens Advice Bureau website, 2008)

For office use by the researcher only				
Questionnaire Code				
Institution	Date	Month	Year	Interview no

**A. Introduction**

Good day, I am Mercy Mogotsi, a registered Masters degree student at the University of Limpopo (Turffloep Campus). I am conducting a research to understand the impact of victim empowerment services on victims of domestic violence. This research is conducted to fulfill the requirements for a **Masters in Public Administration** degree offered by the University of Limpopo (Turffloep Campus). I plan to utilise the findings to inform the VEP Policy implementation approaches of the Limpopo Provincial Government, Capricorn District and relevant organizations.

You were identified as an important **stakeholder** who can assist me with expert opinion and valuable information on the impact of VEP services on victims of domestic violence. To ensure that the information I collect is structured; I have prepared a standard questionnaire, which I will use to interview you. I do not believe that there is one correct answer and will therefore appreciate your honest opinion to the questions follow below.

The information you share with me will be transcribed, analysed and integrated into a chapter of the Master’s degree report.

This interview is bound by research ethics. I will therefore require you to consent to this interview and to allow me to quote what you say to me in my research report. I will respect your decision and choice should you wish to remain anonymous. I will guarantee your privacy and will remain sensitive to your needs throughout the interview.

Are there any questions you would like to ask before we begin?


Do you consent to this interviewed?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Can I quote you in my report?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**B. PERSONAL INFORMATION**

1.1. Name and Surname

1.2. What is your Telephone number?

Fax numbers?

Email address?

1.3. What is your current job title?

1.4. How long have you worked in this field of Victim Empowerment Programme and Domestic Violence?

### C. Standard Questions

This box contains instructions on how to complete this questionnaire. I humbly request you to respond to all the questions. Your response to each question is two-fold. I would like you to:

- a) Firstly, mark one of the five categories with an X. For example if you agree with the statement, mark it with an X as demonstrated below.

1	Strongly disagree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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- b) Secondly, I request that you to explain your choice. If you marked Agree with an X, for example, you would need to please explain why you agree with the statement.

1. Services received at victim support centres assist the victims of domestic violence to **feel better**.

1	Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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Please explain your response:

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2. Services received at victim support centres assist the victims of domestic violence to **accept** what happened to them.

1	Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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Please explain your response:

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3. Victims of domestic violence recover completely after receiving trauma debriefing at VEP centres.

1	Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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Please explain your response:

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4. Victims of domestic violence recover completely after receiving counselling at VEP centres.

1	Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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Please explain your response:

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5. Victim support programme assists victims of domestic violence to deal with distress in the short run.

1	Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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Please explain your response:

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6. Victim support programme assists victims of domestic violence to deal with distress in the long run.

1	Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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Please explain your response:

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7. Victims of domestic violence report the victimisation to the police (SAPS) freely.

1	Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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Please explain your response:

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8. Victims of domestic violence are they coerced (forced) to report the victimisation to the Police (SAPS).

1	Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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Please explain your response:

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9. Victim support centres provide follow-up sessions (after care) after the first consultation session.

1	Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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Please explain your response:

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10. Victim support centres provide feedback on progress made by criminal justice agencies on reported domestic violence cases.

1	Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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Please explain your response:

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11. Criminal justice system practitioners prioritise domestic violence cases.

1	Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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Please explain your response:

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12. Domestic violence cases are very sensitive and the victims deserve to be treated with respect, in a private environment. Do victims support centres comply with this requirement?

1	Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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Please explain your response:

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13. Services offered at the centre motivate or encourage victims of domestic violence to cooperate with the criminal justice practitioners in terms of statement taking and court appearance.

1	Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	Uncertain	4	Agree	5	Strongly agree
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Please explain your response:

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14. In your opinion, is there anything that needs to be changed, in order to improve victim support services at the centre?

Please explain your response:

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15. Is there an issue that is not covered by the questions above that you think is important for this research? If yes, can you please explain it to me?

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**Thank you very much for your time and for responding to above questions. If there is an issue that I require clarified, can I approach you again.**

Yes	
No	

For office use by the researcher only Questionnaire Code				
Site code (PTA)	Date	Month	Year	Interview no

## Self Administered Questionnaire

### A. Introduction

Good day, I am Mercy Mogotsi, a registered masters degree student at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus). I am conducting a research to understand the impact of Victim Empowerment Services on victims of domestic violence. This research is conducted to fulfill the requirements for a **Masters in Public Administration** offered by the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus). I plan to utilise the findings to inform the VEP Policy implementation approaches of the Limpopo Provincial Government, Capricorn District and relevant organisations.

You were identified as an important **stakeholder** who can assist me with expert opinion and valuable information on the impact of VEP services on victims of Domestic Violence. To ensure that the information I collect is structured; I have prepared a standard questionnaire, which I will use to interview you. I do not believe that there is one correct answer and will therefore appreciate your honest opinion to the questions follow below.

The information you share with me will be transcribed, analysed and integrated into a chapter of the Master's Degree report.

This interview is bound by research ethics. No one, including me will know your details. You will remain anonymous, and I respectfully ask you not to write your name on this questionnaire. I undertake to guarantee your privacy and to sensitively manage the information you provide me.

**Instruction on how to complete this questionnaire:**  
**Please respond to all questions provided as honestly as possible. Fold your questionnaire into two and place it in the box provided.**

I thank you in advance

**B. Questions**

1. Did the service you received at the victim support centre assist you to feel better? Please explain.

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2. Did the service you received at the victim support centre assist you to and to accept what happened to you? Please explain.

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3. At this stage would you say you have healed completely? Yes / No

3.1. If "yes", please explain.

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3.2. If "no", do you still need more counselling sessions at this centre? Please explain.

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4. Did you receive counselling services at this centre? Yes / no

4.1. If "no", please explain the type of service you received at this centre.

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4.2. If "yes", briefly explain to me your emotional state before you received counseling services at this centre.

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4.3. Please explain your emotional state after you received counselling at this centre.

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**5. Relief from Crime**

5.1. Did you feel immediate relief after the first consultation? If "yes" , please explain your answer. If "no" also explain your answer.

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5.2. Did you need more counselling at a later stage? ? If "yes" , please explain your answer. If "no" also explain your answer.

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6. Were follow-up sessions (after care) provided by the centre after your first consultation? Please explain.

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7. Did you report your case to the police freely or were you coerced / forced or advised to report? Please explain.

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8. Did you ever get feedback from the police about the progress of the case? Please explain.

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9. Do you feel that you were treated fairly and with respect by the police? Please explain

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10. Do you feel that you were treated fairly and with respect by victim supporters at the centre? Please explain.

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11. Are you satisfied with the service that you received at this victim support centre? Please explain your response.

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12. Did the service offered at the centre motivate or encourage you to cooperate with the criminal justice practitioners in terms of statement taking and court appearance? Please explain.

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13. In your opinion, what needs to be changed, in order to improve victim support services at the centre?

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14. Is there an issue that is not covered by the questions above that you think is important for this research? If "yes", can you please explain.

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**Thank you very much for your time and for responding to the above questions.**

## CONSISTENCY MATRIX

The purpose of this research is to determine the impact of the Victim Empowerment Programme on Domestic Violence in Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.					
Sub-problem	Hypothesis/Propositions/Research questions	Source of theory	Source of data	Type of data	Analysis
<p>The first sub-problem is to establish if the Victim Empowerment Programme alleviates the effects of domestic violence by providing short-term and long-term recovery of victims?</p>	<p>Research question 1: Does the Victim Empowerment Programme alleviate the effects of domestic violence by providing short-term and long-term recovery of victims?</p>	<p>(The National Crime Prevention Strategy 1996; Camerer and Kotze, 1998; Department of Social Development 2004; Moe 1995; Victim Empowerment Program website 2002; The Domestic Violence Act of 1995)</p>	<p>Secondary Data including websites  One on one interview with victims of domestic violence, social workers, volunteers and police station VEP coordinators.</p>	<p>Primary and secondary</p>	<p>Interpretative analysis and in-depth interviews</p>
<p>The second sub-problem is to determine if victims of crime recover completely after receiving therapy at victim support centers?</p>	<p>Research question 2: Do victims of crime recover completely after receiving therapy at victim support centers?</p>	<p>(Camerer L. 1997; Gondolf 1988; The National Crime Prevention Strategy 1996; Department of Social Development et al 2009)</p>	<p>Secondary Data including websites  One on one interview with victims of domestic violence, social workers, volunteers and police station VEP coordinators.</p>	<p>Primary and secondary</p>	<p>Interpretative analysis and in-depth interviews</p>

<p>The third sub-problem is to establish how the victim support plays a role in ameliorating victims' distress and improving their mental health in both short and long runs?</p>	<p>Research question 3: How does the victim support play a role in ameliorating victims' distress and improving their mental health in both short and long runs?</p>	<p>(Camerer and Kotze 1998; The Domestic Violence Act of 1995; Cook and Dickens 2009; The National Crime Prevention Strategy 1996; Ellsberg 2006)</p>	<p>Secondary Data including websites One on one interview with victims of domestic violence, social workers, volunteers and police station VEP coordinators.</p>	<p>Primary and secondary</p>	<p>Interpretative analysis and in-depth interviews</p>
<p>The fourth sub-problem is to establish if the decision to report a case is influenced by the seriousness of the offence or by the attitude of the victim?</p>	<p>Research question 4: Is the decision to report a case influenced by the seriousness of the offence or by the attitude of the victim?</p>	<p>(Moe 1995; Warner and Braen 1982; Esere M. O. et al 2009; Camerer L. 1996; The National Crime Prevention Strategy 1996)</p>	<p>Secondary Data including websites One on one interview with victims of domestic violence, social workers, volunteers and police station VEP coordinators.</p>	<p>Primary and secondary</p>	<p>Interpretative analysis and in-depth interviews</p>
<p>The fifth sub-problem is to establish the factors that sustain victims' willingness to cooperate with the criminal justice system in prosecution of the</p>	<p>Research question 5: What are the factors that sustain victims' willingness to cooperate with the criminal justice system in prosecution of the suspected offender?</p>	<p>(Ellsberg 2006; Warner and Braen 1982; The Domestic Violence Act of 1995; The National Crime Prevention Strategy 1996; Cook and Dickens 2009)</p>	<p>Secondary Data including websites One on one interview with victims of domestic violence, social workers, volunteers and police station VEP coordinators.</p>	<p>Primary and secondary Primary and secondary</p>	<p>Interpretative analysis and in-depth interviews</p>

suspected offender?	The sixth sub problem is to determine the social norms of reporting domestic violence crime to the police?		Research question 6: What are the social norms of reporting domestic violence crime to the police?		(The Domestic Violence Act of 1995; Camerer 1996; Esere <i>et al.</i> 2009; The Victim Empowerment Programme website 2002)		Secondary Data including websites One on one interview with victims of domestic violence, social workers, volunteers and police station VEP coordinators.		Interpretative analysis and in-depth interviews
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