

Experiences, challenges and coping strategies of parents living with teenagers abusing chemical substances in Ramotse



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OUTLINE

- ❖ BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY
- ❖ RESEARCH QUESTION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES
- ❖ RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
- ❖ RESEARCH FINDINGS
- ❖ RECOMMENDATIONS
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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Substance abuse is a major problem affecting young people of all races, in particular teenagers, not only in South Africa but globally as well. Families are crucial, yet frequently forgotten role players in substance abuse recovery strategies and service provision (Copello & Templeton, 2012). In addition, Winters, Botzet, Dittel, Fahnhorst and Nicholson, (2015) posit that having someone abusing substances in the family can have a devastating impact on the family's life, by arousing complex emotions, fracturing family values and promoting family dysfunction.

The issue of not being enlightened about the signs and symptoms of substance abuse, as well as the dangers of teenager's abusing substances is a big challenge for most parents. Parents might also lack the knowledge of where to seek help as soon as they realise that their teenagers are abusing substances. Sometimes parents do not recognize the teenagers' changed behaviour and possible early symptoms of substance abuse, accepting that it is normal for teenagers to be rebellious, feel insecure and be emotionally easily altered.

BACKGROUND CONT.....

This acceptance of odd behaviour makes it difficult for parents to notice that their teenagers have already started abusing substances and by the time they realise this, the teenagers might already be addicted. Patel (2005), asserts that in South Africa family life is disrupted by amongst other things: poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to social services.

Substance abuse has a negative impact on families affecting them financially, physically and it also contributes to health-related problems. Although substance abuse among teenagers has been extensively researched, the challenges and coping strategies of parents have not received the same attention. Little has been documented on the experiences, challenges and coping strategies of parents living with teenagers abusing substances, even though the responsibility of treatment mostly falls on the them, (Hoeck & Van Hal, 2012).

RESEARCH QUESTION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- ❖ What are the experiences, challenges and coping strategies of parents who are living in the same household with the teenager that is abusing chemical substances?
- ❖ To develop an in-depth understanding of the experiences, challenges and coping strategies of parents in Ramotse who are living with teenagers abusing chemical substances.
- ❖ To explore and describe the experiences, challenges and coping strategies of parents living with teenagers abusing chemical substances in Ramotse, Hammanskraal.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- ❖ In order to answer the research questions, a qualitative research approach, using the explorative, descriptive, contextual and phenomenological designs was employed. Non-probability sampling techniques were used, namely purposive sampling and snowball sampling

- ❖ The theoretical framework that informed the study was ecological systems theory. This theory was employed to understand how parents interact with their teenagers who are abusing substances, the families and the community (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2016).
- **Population and sampling**
 - ✓ The population of this study comprised of all parents who are staying in Ramotse and living in the same house as their teenagers who are abusing chemical substances.
 - ✓ The proposed criterion of inclusion was parents residing in Ramotse and living in the same household with teenagers who are abusing substances; the teenagers should be aged between 13 and 19 years and should have been through the SANCA program for treatment. Semi-structured interviews, using the face-to-face interview method with 13 parents was employed.

RESEACH FINDINGS

- ❖ Theme 1: Parents discovered how their teenagers were abusing chemical substances in various ways.
- ❖ Theme 2: Parents experiences after discovering that their teenagers were abusing chemical substances
- ❖ Theme 3: Parents accounts on the challenges they face in dealing with teenagers' abusing chemical substances
- ❖ Theme 4: Parents employed different strategies in coping with teenagers' abusing chemical substances
- ❖ Theme 5: Parents employed different support mechanisms in dealing with teenagers' abusing chemical substances
- ❖ Theme 6: Parents provided different suggestions on how parents living with teenagers abusing chemical substances can be better supported
- ❖ Theme 7: Parents provided different recommendations on how parents living with teenagers abusing chemical substances can be better supported

RESEARCH FINDINGS CONT.....

THEME 3: PARENTS' ACCOUNTS OF THE CHALLENGES THEY FACE IN DEALING WITH TEENAGERS' ABUSING CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES

Sub-theme 3.1: Parents dealing with health challenges such as stress and anxiety

Sub-theme 3.2: Parents dealing with financial challenges due to compensating the community for stolen goods and endured medical costs.

Sub-theme 3.3: Parents dealing with community's reactions.

Sub-theme 3.4 Parents were dealing with conflict with their partner or spouse

Sub-theme 3.5: Parents had to deal with family and friends that distance themselves

Sub-theme 3.6: Parents felt vulnerable of being hurt or even being killed by their own children

Sub-theme 3.7: Parents had to deal with missing work often

RESEARCH FINDINGS CONT.....

THEME 6: PARENTS PROVIDED DIFFERENT SUGGESTIONS ON HOW PARENTS LIVING WITH TEENAGERS ABUSING CHEMICAL

Sub-theme 6.1: Parents suggested the reviving of the spirit of Ubuntu

Sub-theme 6.2: Parents need the communities to be mobilized into working together in fighting the drug lords and chemical substance abuse

Sub-theme 6.3: Parents suggested that communities needs to be educated about chemical substance abuse

Sub-theme 6.4 Parents need communities to be educated about chemical substance abuse to avoid stigma on the teenagers and their parents

Sub-theme 6.5: Parents suggested more frequent parent support group sessions

Sub-theme 6.6 Parents suggested that church leaders and church groups should be more informed about chemical substance abuse

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

- ❖ Based on the study it shows that limiting treatment and support to the teenagers who are abusing chemical substances is not sufficient to address all the challenges but there should be programs that will solely focus on the parents.
- ❖ Social workers need to develop suitable programs that will address the needs of parents with teenagers abusing chemical substances and their families, during all the stages of treatment of their teenagers.
- ❖ Universities should focus on providing relevant courses, including prevention and intervention that will keep social workers up-to-date with emerging knowledge.
- ❖ More funding should be injected into NGO's to provide services to parents living with teenagers abusing chemical substances.

CONCLUSION CONT...

Mary Robinson –Former president of Ireland

“We need a more holistic approach in which we take account of society's most vulnerable sectors. We shouldn't just do broad averaging of country statistics but rather we need to disaggregate the data to determine where the resources are most needed. In most cases, it's usually the reverse: those who are most marginalized, the minorities, rural and remote communities - get the least attention”

Thank you

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