



Centre for health Systems Research & Development

<https://www.ufs.ac.za/humanities/departments-and-divisions/centre-for-health-systems-research-development-home>

A qualitative exploration of resilience in pre-adolescent AIDS orphans living in a residential care facility

CITATION

Pienaar A, Swanepoel Z, Van Rensburg H & Heunis C. 2011. A qualitative exploration of resilience in pre-adolescent AIDS orphans living in a residential care facility. *Journal of the Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS (SAHARA-J)*, 8(3): 128-137. DOI: 10.1080/17290376.2011.9724995

ABSTRACT

This article presents the findings of a study among a small group of South African AIDS orphans living in a residential care facility, Lebone Land. The research was conducted between June and September 2006. A qualitative, exploratory study consisting of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with eight children and seven key informants aimed to identify and investigate developmental assets operating in the children's lives to help them cope amid exposure to adversities. The findings indicate that the developmental assets that facilitate coping and foster resilience in these children relate to four main components: external stressors and challenges, external supports, inner strengths and interpersonal and problem-solving skills. Emerging key themes relate to the experience of illness, death, poverty and violence, as well as the important roles of morality, social values, resistance skills, religion and faith in assisting these children in defining their purpose in life. To this end, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, goal-setting, problem-solving ability and self-efficacy are fundamental in the children's attainment of their future projections. Therefore, qualities such as optimism, perseverance and hope seem to permeate the children's process of recovery. Strong networks of support, particularly friendships with other children, also seem to contribute to developing and sustaining resilience.