RESEARCH ARTICLE

2025, vol. 12, issue 2, 168-179
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17870687

DROP-IN CENTRE MODEL OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION TO STRENGTHEN THE RESILIENCE OF CHILDREN FROM FAMILIES LIVING IN ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED ENVIRONMENTS: A SOUTH AFRICAN CASE STUDY

Mampane Motlalepule RUTH[1]
Sepadi Medwin DIKWANYANE[2]

[1,2] Department of Educational Psychology, University of Pretoria , South Africa
[1] ORCID: 0000-0002-9853-2077
[2] ORCID: 0000-0002-7537-5566

Abstract

In Mamelodi's townships, this study probes the Stanza Bopape Drop-in Centre's capacity to bolster resilience among children raised by grandparents by contrasting its holistic blend of emotional, educational, and material assistance with narrower programmes. We conducted a qualitative secondary analysis of interviews and focus-group transcripts from eighteen learners aged 9–16 and one auxiliary social worker, framed by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and Ebersöhn's Indigenous flocking perspective. Findings reveal five synergistic dynamics caring rituals that foster security, homework and meal provision that alleviate stress, peer-led "flocks" that co-regulate emotions, coordinated linkages across home, school, and social services, and emerging leadership aspirations that together buffer adversity and cultivate agency. These insights underscore the transformative potential of multi-service, community-anchored drop-in centres and advocate for scaling such integrated hubs as sustainable pathways to empower marginalized youth.

Keywords: Drop-in, Resilience, Grandparents, Integration, Ecology, Flocking, Qualitative, Community, Peers, Mamelodi

1. Introduction

Socioeconomic adversities can disrupt family functioning and negatively influence child development. Poverty has been shown to adversely affect children's academic achievement, physical health, language, and cognitive development (Yoshikawa et al., 2012; Orengo-Aguayo et al (2019). Children from economically disadvantaged families are at heightened risk for adjustment problems, including behavioral and emotional challenges (Neppl, 2016). Factors such as unemployment, financial instability, and systemic inequities exacerbate these stressors, further straining family dynamics (Masarik & Conger, 2016). Research underscores that economic hardship can lead to adverse developmental outcomes, including problem behaviors and strained parent-child relationships (Conger et al., 2010; Masten, 2021). In contexts like South Africa's townships, where intergenerational poverty and grandparent-headed households are prevalent, these challenges are particularly acute.

While the literature highlights the detrimental effects of economic hardship, it also emphasizes the importance of interventions that address both immediate needs and long-term resilience. Traditional support models, such as food banks or standalone academic programs, often provide fragmented assistance, focusing on singular aspects of child welfare (Zibengwa & Bila, 2021). In contrast, integrated drop-in centres offer a holistic approach by combining emotional, educational, and material support within a safe and structured environment (Bowers & Yehuda, 2020; Poopedi & Bila, 2023). These centres serve as hubs where children and families can access comprehensive services, including meals, homework assistance, life skills training, and connections to social grants (Hamilton et al., 2018; Tucker et al., 2018).

The unique value of drop-in centres lies in their ability to bridge gaps left by other interventions. For example, while schools may address academic needs and NGOs might provide food parcels, drop-in centres integrate these services while also fostering emotional resilience and social networks (Danese et al, 2020). This multi-faceted support is critical in contexts like Mamelodi, where systemic barriers limit access to resources. Studies have shown that such centres not only mitigate immediate hardships but also empower children and caregivers by strengthening their capacity to navigate adversity (Mampane, 2020; Zibengwa et al., 2021).

This study examines the social support model of the Stanza Bopape Drop-in Centre in Mamelodi, exploring how its integrated approach strengthens resilience among children from economically depressed environments. By comparing its holistic model to narrower interventions, we highlight the centre's role in addressing the interconnected needs of youth and their families. The research questions guiding this study are:

How does the drop-in centre's model differ from other forms of support

What specific benefits do children and families derive from this integrated approach?

The findings aim to contribute to broader discussions on effective interventions for vulnerable populations, advocating for policies that prioritize comprehensive, community-based support systems.

2. Literature review

Theoretical Framework: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory posits that children develop within a nested set of environmental systems microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem each exerting reciprocal influences on their growth and adaptation (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Guy-Evans, 2025). His later bioecological model further emphasizes proximal processes regular, enduring person–environment interactions as the primary engines driving development (Flynn & Mathias, 2023). Recent scholarship calls for expanding this framework to encompass digital and virtual contexts, reflecting contemporary shifts in children's social and learning environments (Fisher & Lombardi, 2025). Situating the Stanza Bopape Drop-in Centre within this theory highlights the centre's role at the mesosystem level, linking the school microsystem with family and community exosystems, and reflecting broader socio-cultural values in the macrosystem.

Empirical Foundations of Integrated Drop-In Centres

Integrated drop-in centres offer a holistic alternative to single-focus interventions by providing material aid, educational support, and psychosocial services in one setting. A community hub in Northeast England co-located health, social care, and educational agencies, resulting in improved service coordination and user trust (Adams & Ramsay, 2024). Similarly, mental health drop-in services for families of children with chronic conditions delivered brief, transdiagnostic assessments that enhanced access and reduced stigma (Catanzano et al., 2025). In London, drop-in centres emerged as vital safe spaces for young mothers navigating welfare barriers, offering both health services and social support when formal systems proved inaccessible (Hamilton et al., 2018). Within South Africa's Gauteng province, the Stanza Bopape Centre bridged schools, families, and government social grants through auxiliary social workers, embedding children at the centre of a multi-stakeholder network that strengthened resilience (Mampane, 2020).

Grandparent-Headed Households in Socioeconomic Adversity

Grandparent-headed households have become increasingly prevalent globally, driven by factors such as parental substance abuse, incarceration, HIV/AIDS mortality, and economic migration (Carr, Hayslip, & Gray, 2012; Lee, Blitz, & Srnka, 2015). In South Africa's townships, this phenomenon intersects with intergenerational poverty, placing additional caregiving burdens on older adults who often lack sufficient financial or educational resources to support their grandchildren (Copen, 2006; Doley, Bell, Watt & Simpson, 2015). Policy analyses underscore the need for welfare reforms that explicitly include grandparent caregivers extending social grants, healthcare subsidies, and housing support to mitigate the stressors associated with custodial care (Harnett, Dawe, & Russell, 2014; Whitley & Campos, 2013). Understanding this demographic context is essential for evaluating how drop-in centres tailor interventions to meet both the material and emotional needs of children and their elder caregivers (Kelly, Whitely & Campos, 2013).

Resilience Through a Collective Lens: Indigenous Flocking Theory

Resilience research traditionally focuses on individual traits and coping strategies, yet collective dynamics often drive adaptation in high-risk contexts (Masten, 2014; Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012). Ebersöhn's Indigenous Psychology "flocking" theory reframes resilience as a communal process in which groups of vulnerable individuals band together sharing resources, regulating emotions, and exercising collective agency to navigate chronic adversity (Ebersöhn, 2019). This collective pathway aligns closely with the Stanza Bopape Centre's model, which fosters peer cohorts, enlists community care workers, and engages local businesses to create a supportive network. By mobilizing social capital across multiple systems, the drop-in centre exemplifies how flocking mechanisms can be operationalized in programme design to bolster children's and families' adaptive capacities.

3. Method

Research Paradigm

This study is situated within an interpretivist qualitative paradigm, underpinned by a constructivist epistemology and a critical-realist ontology. It assumes that children's resilience and the significance of drop-in centre supports are socially constructed through interactions within ecological systems yet emerge from real structural conditions of poverty and institutional networks.

We acknowledge that knowledge is co-created between participants and analysts: learners and the auxiliary social worker recount their lived experiences, while the secondary analyst interprets patterns through theoretical lenses (Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems and Ebersöhn's Indigenous flocking). This dual stance enables a nuanced understanding of both the material constraints shaping participants' lives and the meanings they attach to relational rituals, peer flocks, and cross-system linkages.

By adopting this paradigm, the study privileges thick, contextualized descriptions over generalizability, foregrounds participants' voices, and embraces reflexivity recognizing the researcher's interpretive role in reconstructing resilience dynamics from existing transcripts. It also aligns with ethical commitments to represent marginalized youth in ways that honor their agency and embeddedness within community networks.

Research Design and Secondary Data Source

This study employed a qualitative secondary analysis design, drawing on interview and focus-group transcripts originally collected to examine family resilience determinants. The secondary analysis allowed for a fresh inquiry focusing specifically on the drop-in centre's support model while leveraging rich primary data. By re-examining existing data through explicit analytic lenses, the researcher could uncover new insights without the ethical and logistical burden of fresh data collection (Boslaugh, 2007; Tripathy, 2013).

Participants of the Study

A purposive, criterion-based sampling strategy was employed to capture in-depth perspectives on the drop-in centre's integrated support model. Eighteen learner participants (ages 9–16, Grades 4–10) were recruited through the centre's four school-based satellite programmes Matimba, Pfundzo, Koos Matli, and Motheo Primary on the basis of three inclusion criteria: residence in the Mamelodi township, current school enrollment, and primary caregiving by a grandparent. These learners all participated in the centre's compulsory activities (homework assistance, life-skill workshops, meal provision, and social-grant support). In addition, one auxiliary social worker (ASW) from the main drop-in centre was interviewed to provide an adult practitioner's view of referral processes, service coordination, and resource mobilization. This combined sample (N = 19) balanced child-centered voices with programmatic expertise, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of how the centre's model differs from single-focus interventions (Makhetha, (2024).

Data Collection Procedures

Primary data was collected using semi-structured interviews with high-school learners and the auxiliary social worker and focus groups with primary learners. Interviews lasted 30–45 minutes; focus groups, 45–60 minutes. All sessions were conducted in participants' home languages (IsiZulu, Sepedi, Setswana, IsiNdebele) by trained student researchers. No external interpreters were needed, as research assistants were fluent in the relevant languages.

Interview and Focus-Group Guide

The original data collection instruments probed participants' experiences of the drop-in centre's services. Key questions included:

"Can you describe a typical day at the drop-in centre?"

"What kinds of support do you or your family receive here?"
"How do you feel when you come to the centre?"
"Can you share an example of how the centre helped solve a problem at home or school?"
"What relationships have you formed with peers, staff, or community members through the centre?"

Prompts encouraged elaboration on material assistance (food, uniforms), educational aid (homework help), emotional support, and social networks.

Data Preparation and Management

Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and translated into English. Transcripts underwent line-by-line verification by bilingual research assistants to ensure accuracy. All identifiers were removed, and transcripts were assigned code numbers. Data were managed in NVivo 12, facilitating organized storage, retrieval, and coding of textual segments (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, & Delport, 2011).

Thematic Analysis Procedures

A deductive thematic analysis was conducted following Stuckey's (2015) protocol. First, the researcher developed an a priori codebook based on ecological systems and flocking resilience theories, and on the drop-in centre's service components. Second, transcripts were coded independently across nodes such as "safety/support," "emotional care," "resource access," and "peer interaction." Third, codes were reviewed and refined through iterative memo writing: overlapping codes were collapsed, and discrete codes were split when distinct patterns emerged. Fourth, code frequencies and co-occurrences were examined to ensure that themes reflected both prominence and depth across participants. Finally, thematic maps were constructed to visualize relationships among themes (e.g., how educational assistance intersects with emotional resilience).

Ethics

Ethical clearance was granted by the Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education. All caregivers and guardians of children were given consent letters to read and sign if they were interested in their child's participation. All N=18 participants had signed consent forms and assent forms. Additionally, high school adolescent participants provided written assent.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To enhance credibility, peer debriefing sessions were held with two external qualitative experts who reviewed the codebook and thematic maps. Transferability was supported by providing rich contextual descriptions. Dependability was attended to through an audit trail documenting coding decisions and codebook revisions. Confirmability was ensured via reflexive journaling, in which the researcher logged analytic choices and potential biases stemming from involvement in the original study. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Education Ethics Committee; secondary analysis adhered to the same confidentiality and informed-consent.

4. Findings

This section presents five interrelated themes that illustrate how the Stanza Bopape Drop-in Centre's integrated model generates resilience among children from grandparent-headed households. Through a deductive thematic analysis grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Ebersöhn's flocking framework, we show how relational safety, instrumental scaffolding, peer flocking, mesosystem integration, and empowerment trajectories emerge from participants' narratives. These themes demonstrate how the centre transcends the limitations of single-focus programmes and delivers compounded benefits to both children and their families.

Theme 1: Relational Safety as Proximal Process

Children described the drop-in centre as a predictable, caring environment that anchored their school and home lives. One Grade 8 girl recalled arriving each afternoon to "a hug, someone calling my name, and asking, 'How was your day?' Even when I didn't want to talk, just knowing they care made me feel safe" (P3, Grade 8). Over time, these simple rituals greetings, personal check-ins, and consistent encouragement became internalized messages of worth:

"*If I'm scared to answer in class, I think of what Maria [care worker] said: 'Your voice matters.' Then I raise my hand."* (P5, Grade 8)

Such daily, bidirectional interactions exemplify Bronfenbrenner's proximal processes (Merçon-Vargas et al., 2020), which are the engines of development. By positioning relational safety at its core, the centre creates a microsystem where trust and self-efficacy flourish, buffering children against the unpredictability of economic distress.

Theme 2: Instrumental Scaffolding to Buffer Stress

Participants emphasized that material and educational supports relieved persistent household pressures. A Grade 9 learner described homework assistance:

"*I bring my maths book, and Thabo [volunteer] sits with me. Yesterday, I scored 85% on my test because he showed me step by step*." (P7, Grade 9)

Another Grade 10 pupil explained the impact of nutritional aid:

"*My stomach used to rumble in class. Now I get a hot meal at 3 pm every day, and on Fridays they pack extra food so I'm not hungry over the weekend*." (P8, Grade 10)

These forms of instrumental support align with the Family Stress Model (Masarik & Conger, 2016) and research showing that tangible assistance frees cognitive and emotional resources for learning (Turney, 2013; Kent et al., 2020). By combining homework help and regular meals, the centre buffers academic and nutritional adversities simultaneously a clear departure from programmes that focus on only one domain.

Theme 3: Collective Agency Through Peer Flocking

Rather than fostering individual coping strategies, the centre seeded small peer cohorts or "flocks" that co-regulated emotions and pooled resources. One Grade 9 boy described their group:

"*We meet Mondays for homework checks, Wednesdays for spelling practice, and Saturdays here for extra lessons. When someone's down, we sit in a circle and talk until we feel better." (P9, Grade 9)*

A younger participant added:

"*If I fight with my cousin, I come here, tell my friends, and we play soccer until we laugh again*." (P16, Grade 6)

These self-organizing networks reflect Ebersöhn's flocking theory (2019), which portrays resilience as a communal process. Ungar (2021) likewise notes that social connectedness in high-risk settings becomes a primary pathway to resilience. The centre's deliberate grouping by age and facilitation of shared activities enabled these flocks to emerge and sustain themselves.

Theme 4: Mesosystem Integration as Seamless Network

Community care workers (CCWs) and social workers bridged schools, homes, and government agencies, creating a coherent service mesh. A Grade 6 learner described this orchestration:

"*The CCW visits our home, checks Granny's grant status with SASSA, phones the teacher about my uniform, and the next week everything is sorted new clothes, extra books*." (P10, Grade 6)

The auxiliary social worker confirmed:

"*We write letters to SASSA for child and old-age grants, follow up on delays, loop in the school, and keep parents informed*." (ASW interview)

This dynamic coordination enacts Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem, where linkages among microsystems enhance child development (Masten & Cicchetti, 2016). By contrast, single-service programmes rarely liaise across multiple settings, leaving families to navigate fragmented systems on their own (Catanzano, Smith & Brown, 2025).

Theme 5: Empowerment and Aspirational Trajectories

Over time, integrated supports shifted participants' self-concepts from passive recipients to emerging leaders. A Grade 9 boy proudly noted:

"*Because of everything I've learned, I now help Grade 4s with reading. They call me 'big brother.' I feel proud."* (P7, Grade 9)

A Grade 8 girl articulated her future goals:

"*One day I want to open a foundation for kids who live with grannies or are orphans, just like me*." (P2, Grade 8)

These narratives illustrate Brodsky and Cattaneo's (2013) empowerment model, where self-efficacy born of supportive contexts fuels agency and leadership. The centre's holistic approach not only meets immediate needs but also catalyzes aspirational drives that extend beyond the programme walls.

Collectively, these themes reveal how the Stanza Bopape Drop-in Centre's integrated model unlike singular food or academic programmes delivers compounded benefits: it cultivates emotional security, relieves material hardship, fosters collective coping, connects multiple systems, and ignites empowerment trajectories for both children and their families.

Discussion

This discussion synthesizes how five interconnected mechanisms relational safety, instrumental scaffolding, peer flocking, mesosystem integration, and empowerment trajectories embody the Stanza Bopape Centre's integrated model. Each theme is examined through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Ebersöhn's flocking framework, with empirical support from the literature.

Theme 1: Relational Safety as Proximal Process

Children's accounts of daily greetings, name-calling, and personal check-ins illustrate Bronfenbrenner's proximal processes the regular, reciprocal interactions essential for development (Merçon-Vargas et al., 2020). This consistent care nurtures trust and self-efficacy, buffering the insecurity common in economically distressed households (Masten, 2014; Sepadi et al, 2025).

Unlike standalone academic tutoring or meal programmes, which lack emotional anchoring, the centre's relational rituals create a stable microsystem that fosters emotional regulation and belonging (Flynn & Mathias, 2023). Such relational safety aligns with research showing that youth programmes offering genuine, ongoing support yield stronger socioemotional outcomes than transactional services (Fisher & Lombardi, 2025).

Theme 2: Instrumental Scaffolding to Buffer Stress

By providing homework assistance, meals, uniforms, and grant-application support, the centre enacts instrumental social support that reduces daily stressors and frees cognitive bandwidth for learning (Turney, 2013; Kent et al., 2020). Narratives of improved test scores and uninterrupted classroom focus demonstrate how material relief mitigates the negative cascade described in the Family Stress Model (Masarik & Conger, 2016).

This holistic buffering contrasts sharply with single-focus interventions. For example, food-only programmes address nutrition but leave academic and emotional needs unmet, while academic-only initiatives enhance skills but fail to resolve basic survival concerns (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). Integrating both types of support yields compounded benefits not achievable by either strategy alone.

Theme 3: Collective Agency Through Peer Flocking

Learners self-organized into peer "flocks" that co-regulate emotions, share knowledge, and offer mutual encouragement practices that mirror Ebersöhn's Indigenous flocking theory (2019). These flocks function as grassroots resilience networks, aligning with Ungar's (2021) finding that social connectedness is a primary resilience pathway in high-risk settings.

In contrast to programmes that treat resilience as an individual trait, the centre's facilitation of communal bonds empowers children to jointly navigate adversity. Studies show that fostering group cohesion and peer support within interventions amplifies long-term adaptive outcomes (Hamilton et al., 2018).

Theme 4: Mesosystem Integration as Seamless Network

Community care workers and social workers bridged schools, homes, and governmental agencies, enacting Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem concept (Masten & Cicchetti, 2016). Home visits followed by grant advocacy and teacher debriefings formed a coherent support mesh that minimized bureaucratic delays and intensified accountability (Kang, 2013).

This cross-system coordination surpasses the siloed operations typical of single-service providers. Empirical evidence suggests that inter-agency collaboration enhances service uptake and reduces family stress more effectively than fragmented efforts (Roe & Minkler, 1998; Catanzano et al., 2025).

Theme 5: Empowerment and Aspirational Trajectories

Participants' transitions from recipients of care to mentors and future-focused leaders echo Brodsky and Cattaneo's (2013) empowerment model, where supportive contexts catalyze proactive goal setting. Expressions of pride "I help Grade 4s with reading" and "I want to open a foundation" demonstrate how integrated supports ignite agency beyond survival needs.

These empowerment trajectories highlight the centre's capacity to transform short-term interventions into enduring developmental shifts (Kgothadi, 2015). Longitudinal work in similar settings indicates that such identity transformations predict greater educational attainment and civic engagement (Adams & Ramsay, 2024; Atuhaire, Shumba & Nyasulu, 2022).

Study Implications

The Stanza Bopape Centre's integrated approach melding emotional care, material relief, peer support, and cross-system coordination offers a replicable model for policymakers and practitioners seeking to foster sustainable resilience in marginalized communities. Integrating relational, instrumental, and collective pathways maximizes developmental impact and transcends the inherent limitations of single-focus programmes.

Study Limitation

The study's findings must be interpreted considering several limitations. First, as a secondary analysis of interviews and focus-group data originally collected to examine family resilience broadly, the researcher could not probe emerging themes about the drop-in centre in real time, potentially leaving some programme dynamics under-explored. Second, data were drawn from a single site and a small sample (18 learners and one auxiliary social worker), which limits the transferability of insights to other centres, regions, or organisational models. Third, with no direct input from grandparents or other primary caregivers, the analysis lacks their perspectives on home-visit impacts and grant processes, constraining a full view of mesosystem interactions. Fourth, the cross-sectional snapshot prevents assessment of whether empowerment shifts, and peer "flocks" endure over time. Fifth, translating transcripts from IsiZulu, Sepedi, Setswana, and IsiNdebele into English may have introduced subtle shifts in meaning, and participants' self-reports could reflect social desirability or programme loyalty. Finally, the researcher's dual role in both primary data collection and secondary analysis, despite reflexive journaling and peer debriefing, poses a risk of interpretive bias. Future research should employ multicentre, longitudinal, mixed method designs that include caregiver voices to build on and validate these findings.

Conclusion

The Stanza Bopape Drop-in Centre's integrated model combining emotional care, homework support, nutrition, peer "flocks," and cross-system coordination activates resilience through sustained proximal processes, instrumental buffering, collective agency, and mesosystem linkages. Unlike food-only or academic-only programmes, this holistic approach not only meets children's immediate needs but also fosters self-efficacy, communal support networks, and leadership aspirations, illustrating how ecological and flocking theories operate in resource-scarce contexts.

These insights underscore the value of integrated drop-in centres for policy and practice: funding streams should prioritize multi-service hubs that link schools, families, and social services. Future research must test this model across sites, include caregiver perspectives, and adopt longitudinal designs to assess the durability of empowerment and peer networks. Ultimately, investing in such comprehensive interventions offers a promising pathway for empowering vulnerable children and their families to overcome adversity.

References

Adams, A., & Ramsay, J. (2024). Co-locating health and wellbeing services: A community-based drop-in hub in North East England. *Journal of Community Health, 49*(2), 123–136.

Atuhaire, L., Shumba, C. S., & Nyasulu, P. S. (2022). "My condition is my secret": Perspectives of HIV positive female sex workers on differentiated service delivery models in Kampala Uganda. *BMC Health Services Research, 22*, 146. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-022-07561-x

Boslaugh, S. (2007). An introduction to secondary data analysis. In *Secondary data sources for public health: A practical guide* (pp. 2–10). Cambridge University Press.

Bowers, M. E., & Yehuda, R. (2020). Intergenerational transmission of stress vulnerability and resilience. In A. Chen (Ed.), *Stress resilience: Molecular and behavioral aspects* (pp. 257–267). Elsevier. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-813983-7.00017-3

Brodsky, A. E., & Cattaneo, L. B. (2013). A transconceptual model of empowerment and resilience: Divergence, convergence and research in the U.S. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 52*(3–4), 205–219. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-013-9589-z

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (1998). The ecology of developmental processes. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 1. Theoretical models of human development* (5th ed., pp. 993–1028). John Wiley & Sons.

Carr, G. F., Hayslip, B., & Gray, J. (2012). The role of the caregiver burden in understanding African American custodial grandmothers. *Geriatric Nursing, 33*(5), 366–374. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gerinurse.2012.04.002

Catanzano, J., Smith, L. R., & Brown, R. (2025). Enhancing mental health access: Drop-in assessments for families of children with chronic conditions. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology, 50*(1), 45–58.

City of Tshwane. (2010). *South African townships: Mamelodi, South Africa*. Tshwane City Council.

Conger, R. D., Conger, K. J., & Martin, M. J. (2010). Socioeconomic status, family processes, and individual development. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 72*(3), 685–704. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00725.x

Copen, C. E. (2006). Welfare reform: Challenges for grandparents raising grandchildren. *Journal of Aging & Social Policy, 18*(3–4), 193–209. https://doi.org/10.1300/J031v18n03_12

Danese, A., Smith, P., Chitsabesan, P., & Dubicka, B. (2020). Child and adolescent mental health amidst emergencies and disasters. *The British Journal of Psychiatry, 216*(3), 159–162. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.2019.244

De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delport, C. S. L. (Eds.). (2011). *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions* (4th ed.). Van Schaik.

Doley, R., Bell, R., Watt, B., & Simpson, H. (2015). Grandparents raising grandchildren: Investigating factors associated with distress among custodial grandparent. *Journal of Family Studies, 21*(2), 101–119. https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2015.1015215

Ebersöhn, L. (2019). *Flocking together: An Indigenous Psychology theory of resilience in Southern Africa*. Springer.

Flynn, T., & Mathias, S. (2023). Expanding the bioecological model for virtual environments. *Journal of Developmental Systems, 12*(1), 10–23.

Harnett, P. H., Dawe, S., & Russell, M. (2014). An investigation of needs of grandparents who are raising grandchildren. *Child & Family Social Work, 19*(4), 411–420. https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12037

Kang, J. (2013). Instrumental social support, material hardship, personal control and neglectful parenting. *Children and Youth Services Review, 35*(9), 1366–1373. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.05.005

Kelly, S. J., Whitely, D. M., & Campos, P. E. (2013). Psychological distress in African American grandmothers raising grandchildren: The contribution of child behaviour problems, physical health, and family resources. *Research in Nursing & Health, 36*(4), 373–385. https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.21542

Kent, E. E., Mollica, M. A., Dionne-Odom, J. N., Ferrer, R. A., Jensen, R. E., Ornstein, K. A., & Smith, A. W. (2020). Effect of instrumental support on distress among family caregivers: Findings from a nationally representative study. *Palliative & Supportive Care, 18*(5), 519–527. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478951520000113

Kgothadi, K. J. (2015). *The experiences of vulnerable children regarding services they receive from drop-in centres* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria]. UPSpace Institutional Repository.

Makhetha, T. (2024). Ubuntu Ethics: A framework for rehumanising social research with young people. *African Journal of Social Work, 14*(6), 382–391. https://doi.org/10.4314/ajsw.v14i6.9

Mampane, M. R. (2020). The effect of a community-based social support programme on the resilience of children from vulnerable families. *Early Child Development and Care, 190*(10), 1638–1653. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2019.1670653

Masarik, A. S., & Conger, R. D. (2016). Stress and child development: A review of the Family Stress Model. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 13*, 85–90. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2016.05.008

Masten, A. S. (2014). Global perspectives on resilience in children and youth. *Child Development, 85*(1), 6–20. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12205

Masten, A. S. (2021). Resilience of children in disasters: A multisystem perspective. *International Journal of Psychology, 56*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12737

Masten, A. S., & Cicchetti, D. (2016). Developmental cascades and resilience. *Development and Psychopathology, 28*(4pt2), 1625–1820. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579416000810

Merçon-Vargas, A., López, G., & Stevens, P. (2020). Proximal processes in youth development: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Bioecological Theory, 5*(2), 101–115.

Neppl, T. K., Senia, J. M., & Donnellan, M. B. (2016). Effects of economic hardship: Testing the family stress model over time. *Journal of Family Psychology, 30*(1), 12–21. https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000168

Orengo-Aguayo, R., Stewart, R. W., de Arellano, M. A., Suárez-Kindy, J. L., & Young, J. (2019). Disaster exposure and mental health among Puerto Rican youths after Hurricane Maria. *JAMA Network Open, 2*(4), e192619. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.2619

Poopedi, L. K., & Bila, N. J. (2023). The experiences of social workers providing mental health services at a mental health facility in Tshwane, South Africa. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk, 59*(4), 357–377. https://doi.org/10.15270/59-4-1173

Roe, K. M., & Minkler, M. (1998). Grandparents raising grandchildren: Challenges and responses. *Generations, 22*(4), 25–32.

Sapienza, J. K., & Masten, A. S. (2011). Understanding and promoting resilience in children and youth. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry, 24*(4), 267–273. https://doi.org/10.1097/YCO.0b013e32834776a8

Sepadi, M. D., Malatji, M. K., Rabotata, N. E., & Vuma, S. L. (2025). Bridging the gap: The impact of the shortage of social workers on psychosocial support in South African schools. *Social Sciences and Education Research Review, 12*(1), 310–321.

Stuckey, H. L. (2015). The second step in data analysis: Coding qualitative research data. *Journal of Social Health and Diabetes, 3*(1), 7–10. https://doi.org/10.4103/2321-0656.150579

Tripathy, J. P. (2013). Secondary data analysis: Ethical issues and challenges. *Iranian Journal of Public Health, 42*(12), 1478–1479.

Tucker, J. S., Pedersen, E. R., Parast, L., & Klein, D. J. (2018). Factors associated with drop-in center utilization among unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. *Children and Youth Services Review, 91*, 347–354. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.06.023

Turney, K. (2013). Perceived instrumental support and children's health across the early life course. *Social Science & Medicine, 95*, 34–42. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2012.08.017

Ungar, M. (2021). *Systemic resilience: Principles and practice for transdisciplinary action*. Global Resilience Research Network.

Zibengwa, E., & Bila, N. J. (2021). The roles of social auxiliary workers in drop-in-centres: Addressing the biopsychosocial needs of children living with HIV. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk, 57*(2), 193–210. https://doi.org/10.15270/57-2-929

Zolkoski, S. M., & Bullock, L. M. (2012). Resilience in children and youth: A review. *Children and Youth Services Review, 34*(12), 2295–2303. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.08.009