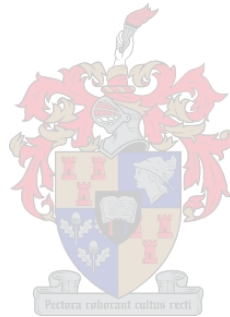


**THE UTILISATION OF GROUP WORK BY SOCIAL  
WORKERS AT NGOs IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES**

by

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Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Social Work in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of  
Stellenbosch

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MARCH 2015

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## ABSTRACT

Social workers that render child protection services are, according to The White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry of Welfare and Population Development, 1997) and the Integrated Service Delivery Model (Department of Social Development, 2006), required to render family preservation services through mainly preventive services and early intervention services. This implies that during the implementation of family preservation services, the social worker should focus on preventing the unnecessary alternative placement of children through immediate intervention that defuses the crisis situation, stabilizes the family, and teaches family members new problem-resolution skills, so they can avoid future crisis.

A social work intervention method that could effectively enhance family preservation services is group work. Social workers rendering family preservation services, however make limited use of group work. Various studies done with regards to group work showed a definite decrease in the utilisation of group work by social workers at child and family welfare organisations, possible reasons for the decrease in the utilisation of group work were noted but no definite conclusions were drawn. Therefore a gap exists within research on the view of social workers with regards to the utilisation of group work during the rendering of family preservation services. The research study therefore investigated the perspective of social workers on the utilisation of group work during implementation of family preservation services.

A combined quantitative and qualitative research methodology was used to involve social workers employed at non-governmental organizations in the Western Cape Metropole area in the study that was based on both an explorative and descriptive research design. For the aim of the research study, the researcher used purposeful non-probability sampling. Twenty social workers that met the inclusion criteria of the research study were selected according to their willingness to participate. A semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect the data during the empirical investigation and a pilot study was implemented to test the measuring instrument with two participants.

A literature study aimed at describing the role and function of the social worker with regards the implementation of family preservation services as well the nature of group work when rendering family preservation services was completed. Thereafter an empirical investigation was done and the results from the empirical investigation were purposefully processed and analysed. Through processing and analysing the results the researcher was able to conclude with certain conclusions

and recommendations with regards to the utilisation of group work during the implementation of family preservation services.

The most important conclusion resulting from the research study indicate that child and family welfare organisations are struggling to effectively utilise the group work method during the implementation of family preservation services. The research study therefore recommends that social workers should receive thorough in-service training with regards to the possible ways of utilising the group work method more effectively during the delivery of family preservation services. Furthermore it is recommended that appropriate group work programmes be developed that are specifically aimed at family preservation services, in order to ensure that group work is effectively utilised by social workers when implementing family preservation services.

## OPSOMMING

Maatskaplike werkers wat kinderbeskermingsdienste lewer word, volgens die Witskrif vir Maatskaplike Welsyn (Ministry of Welfare and Population Development, 1997) en die Geïntegreerde Diensleweringmodel (Department of Social Development, 2006), vereis om gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste te lewer deur hoofsaaklik te fokus op voorkomende dienste en vroeë intervensie dienste. Dit beteken dat tydens die implementering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste moet die maatskaplike werker fokus op die voorkoming van die onnodige alternatiewe plasing van kinders deur middel van onmiddellike ingryping wat die krisis situasie ontloot, die familie stabiliseer, en familieledede nuwe probleemoplossings vaardighede aanleer ten einde toekomstige krisisse te verhoed.

‘n Maatskaplike werk intervensie metode wat effektief kan bydra tot die bevordering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste is groepwerk. Maatskaplike werkers wat gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste lewer maak egter beperkte gebruik van groepwerk. Verskeie studies wat gedoen is met betrekking tot groepwerk in maatskaplike werk dui ‘n definitiewe afname in die benutting van groepwerk deur maatskaplike werkers by kinder- en gesinsorg welsynsorganisasies aan, moontlike redes vir die afname in die benutting van groepwerk is opgemerk, maar geen definitiewe gevolgtrekkings is gemaak nie. Dus bestaan daar ‘n definitiewe gaping in navorsing rondom die sienings van maatskaplike werkers rakende die benutting van groepwerk in die lewering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste. Daarom is die perspektief van maatskaplike werkers rakende die benutting van groepwerk tydens die implementering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste in die navorsingstudie ondersoek.

‘n Gesamentlike kwantitatiewe en kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodologie is gebruik om maatskaplike werkers in diens by nie-regeringsorganisasies in die Wes-Kaap Metropool area in die navorsingstudie, gebasseer op ‘n verkennende en beskrywende navorsingontwerp, te betrek. Vir die doel van die navorsingstudie het die navorser gebruik gemaak van ‘n doelgerigte nie-waarskynlikheids steekproefneming. Twintig maatskaplike werkers wat aan die insluitingskriteria van die navorsingstudie voldoen het is dus volgens hul bereidwilligheid om deel te neem gekies. Tydens die empiriese ondersoek is ‘n semi-gestruktureerde onderhoudskedule gebruik om die data in te samel en ‘n loodsstudie is geïmplementeer om die meetinstrument met twee deelnemers te toets.

‘n Literatuurstudie wat daarop gemik was om die rol en funksie van die maatskaplike werker te beskryf met betrekking tot die implementering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste asook die aard

van groep werk tydens die lewering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste is voltooi. Daarna is 'n empiriese ondersoek gedoen en die resultate van die empiriese ondersoek is doelbewus verwerk en ontleed. Deur verwerking en ontleding van die resultate was die navorser daartoe in staat om sekere gevolgtrekkings en aanbevelings met betrekking tot die benutting van groepwerk tydens die implementering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste te maak.

Die belangrikste gevolgtrekking uit die navorsingstudie dui daarop dat kinder en gesinswelsynsorganisasies sukkel om effektief gebruik te maak van die groepwerk metode tydens die implementering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste. Die navorsingstudie beveel dus aan dat maatskaplike werkers deeglike in-diens opleiding ontvang met betrekking tot die moontlike maniere waarop die groepwerk metode meer effektief tydens die lewering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste benut kan word. Verder word daar aanbeveel dat toepaslike groepwerk programme spesifiek gemik op gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste ontwikkel word ten einde te verseker dat groepwerk effektief benut word deur maatskaplike werkers tydens die implementering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste.

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## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

### 1.1 PRELIMINARY STUDY AND RATIONALE

Since 1994 the new South African democratic government (1994) has commenced a process of reconstruction and development (Patel, Schmid & Hochfeld, 2012:212). According to Drower (2002:7) this process aims to acknowledge the country's unique African roots and heritage, while incorporating the valuable contributions and traditions of its diverse population. This comes after a traumatic South African history that is widely acknowledged and well documented (Asmal, Asmal & Roberts, 1997; Abdullah, 2013:1-3; Drower, 2002:8-9; Magubane, 1994; Potgieter, 1998:24; Villa-Vicencio, 2000). A history characterized by oppression, marginalization and inequality that revolved around an apartheid regime that lasted from 1948 to 1994 (Abdullah, 2013:2; Gray & Lombard, 2008:132).

According to various authors (Abdullah, 2013:2; Cohen, 1993; Drower, 2002:8; Potgieter, 1998:24), South Africa experienced challenges in developing a plan of action to address the transformation to a truly democratic society. This is due to its history and a combination of current intensified circumstances of social inequality, unemployment, poverty, violence and the persistent lack of effective service delivery to the majority of South Africans.

Therefore, according to Drower (2002:11), during 1994 and 1998 the Ministry for Welfare and Population Development developed a comprehensive programme of policy initiatives based on a developmental service delivery approach and underpinned this with legislative changes that took place after the post-Apartheid government was elected in 1994. Gray and Lombard (2008) state that during this time there was a growing need to understand how this new shift to developmental service delivery should be implemented amongst all sectors of social welfare.

In a response to this need the Ministry for Welfare and Population Development published The White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry of Welfare and Population Development, 1997:7) in 1997, as a development policy for social welfare (Abdullah, 2013:4; Gray & Lombard, 2008). This policy embraces a social welfare system that is built on service



delivery that is more participatory, justified, equitable and appropriate (Ministry of Welfare and Population Development, 1997:10; Patel, 2005; Patel *et al.*, 2012:212).

According to the White Paper (Ministry of Welfare and Population Development, 1997:7) and various authors (Green & Nieman, 2003:161; Lombard, 2003:224-239; Midgley, 1995:3-21) the goal of developmental social welfare is to build a society that upholds the welfare rights of all South Africans regardless of their gender, race, culture, language, religion, class, disability, geographical location or sexual orientation. In order to achieve the goal of the developmental approach to social welfare, the White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry of Welfare and Population Development, 1997:11) notes a shift from the previous primarily residual approach to a developmental approach. This according to various authors (Drower, 2002:11; Midgley & Tang, 2001:247) entails moving from an approach characterized by social services that were fragmented, specialized, remedial and focused on the individual, to a developmental approach that as mentioned above, is focused on the sustained holistic improvement of the well-being of the individual, family, community and South African society.

Multiple studies, including an exploratory study by Forward (2003) into the perceptions of social workers regarding the social development approach, have noted that social workers are having trouble adjusting to this shift. This is mostly due to an overwhelming amount of statutory work (Dlangamandla, 2010:4; Midgley, 1995:20; Rankin, 1997:189) that has been defined as “services”, whereas the primary definition of “services” should be one-on-one care in the best interest of the child (Collins & Jordan, 2006:12).

The challenge most social workers therefore face is how to incorporate social development as an approach by addressing socio-economic issues into their programmes, while still focusing on statutory service delivery (Abdullah, 2013:2; Lombard, 2008:155). Statutory services include, but are not limited to, services where it is the responsibility of the social worker to act in the best interest of the child. According to The Children’s Act, 38 of 2005 in certain circumstances acting in the best interest of the child may lead to the removal of children from the care of their biological families through a statutory intervention process bound by the Children’s Court (The Children’s Act, 38 of 2005). These services fall under child protection services, and are provided by child and family welfare organisations like most Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with an aim to reduce child abuse and neglect while protecting the child and maintaining the family unit (Ministry of Welfare and Population

Development, 1997). Child protection services are focused on family-centred interventions, referred to within the literature as “family support services” and “family preservation services” (Katz & Hetherington, 2006; McCowskey & Meezan, 1998; Statham, 2000). For the aim of the research study the focus was on family preservation services that are rendered to families in crisis and at serious risk of child abuse and neglect, to prevent statutory services (Chaffin, Bonner & Hill, 2001; McCowskey & Meezan, 1998).

According to the Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM) (Department of Social Development, 2006:10), a document that provides a framework for developmental social services in South Africa, NGOs providing family preservation services need to focus on both building the capacity for change within families and promoting sustainable development in communities through their services. The ISDM (Department of Social Development, 2006:18-22) refers to several levels of intervention, including early intervention services (Non-Statutory). According to the ISDM (Department of Social Development, 2006:18-22), services delivered at the early intervention level make use of developmental and therapeutic programmes to ensure that those who have been identified as being at risk are assisted before they require statutory services, more intensive intervention or placement in alternative care. Core early intervention services are further classified into five broad categories, namely: promotion and prevention, rehabilitation, protection, continuing care, and mental health and addiction services.

The above makes it clear that family preservation services are on an early intervention level and fall into the category of protection services, since protection services are aimed at preventing the abuse, neglect and abandonment of children (Department of Social Development, 2006:18-22). Increasing numbers of children are being exposed to child abuse and neglect globally (Adams, 2005; Watson, 2005), yet family welfare organisations that are focused on child protection services are finding themselves under-resourced and unable to meet the demands associated with this increase (DePanfilis & Zuravin, 2002; McCowskey & Meezan, 1998). According to Abdullah (2013:2) the conditions of inadequate human resources and the growing demands for child protection services have had a profound effect on the professional practice of social workers, posing critical challenges to them in achieving both the goals of social workers and the democratic ideals of the country.

Patel *et al.* (2012:212) explains that in order to meet the demands of rendering child protection services social workers need to be multi-skilled. According to Midgley (1995:25)

this means that various intervention strategies should be utilised, including group work. The reason being that group work is built on social development aspects, including “social-, economic-, political-, cultural-, environmental- and personal or spiritual development” (Ife, 1995:132). This is opposed to casework, which focuses only on changing the individual and not directly affecting changes within the community (Lombard, 1996:167; Midgley, 1995:25; Potgieter, 1998:117).

According to Kurland and Salmon (2005:3-16), Shulman (1992:1-16) suggested two unique elements in group work that may play a role in leading the social work profession to the paradigm shift of developmental social work. The first element is the mutual aid element of group work, which sees the client as having the inherent capacity to help themselves and others. Mutual aid has helped social workers to see the strength in communal action and creating a safe environment where clients can contribute to each other’s healing. Furthermore mutual aid is an early element in group work that can help social workers to understand the strength perspective’s role in shifting towards developmental service delivery. The second element refers to the fact that group work has been proven as a valuable method in working with oppressed and vulnerable populations (e.g. sexual abuse survivors and AIDS patients). Therefore according to Abdullah (2013:12), in theory, group work as a social work method may prove helpful if implemented in other interventions of social welfare, like child protection services.

Research around group work, in the context of child protection, reveals that group work allows for cost effective interventions to be implemented while simultaneously meeting the high demand for child protection services (Howing, Wodarski, Gaudin & Kurtz, 1989; Silovsky & Hembree-Kigin, 1994). According to various authors (Gaudin, Wodarski, Arkinson & Avery 1990-1991; Marziali, Damianakis, Smith & Trocmé, 2006) group work provides the parents of abused and neglected children with education on parenting and opportunities for social skills enhancement and the development of social support networks. For adult perpetrators of abuse that were involved with group therapy, research found consistently less child maltreatment behaviour than those perpetrators who did not participate in this intervention (O’Reilly, Wilkes, Luck & Jackson, 2009:83).

A study by O’Reilly *et al.* (2009:83) into the efficacy of family preservation services on reducing child abuse and neglect revealed that traditional interventions of home visiting and individual sessions demonstrated more inconsistency in efficacy than family preservation

services did in the form of group work. According to Marziali *et al.* (2006:408) and acknowledged by O'Reilly *et al.* (2009:83) after a family's involvement in group work during the implementation of family preservation services increases in parent-initiated contact with child and family welfare workers, other family members and community resources were demonstrated. Therefore according to O'Reilly *et al.* (2009:85) it can be conceded that group work is an effective intervention method and boasts a clear advantage that can be implemented during the rendering of family preservation services.

The majority of research around the utilisation of group work in reducing or preventing child abuse and neglect are experimental designs such as pre- and post-test studies (Garrett, 2005; Golub, Espinosa, Damon & Card, 1987; Hack, Osachuk & De Luca, 1994) and comparative studies (Andrews, 2001; Cohen & Mannarino, 1996; Steynberg, 2006; Toseland & McClive-Reed, 2009). Thus further qualitative research on the social workers experience of using group work when rendering family preservation services is needed, as well as research with a more contemporary view in the utilisation of group work while rendering family preservation services.

According to Marziali *et al.* (2006) another area of note is that much of the research on family preservation services are in the United Kingdom and the United States of America (Midgley, 1995; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2009). However, more countries have followed this research topic closely and have since started similar studies in their own countries. In South Africa, family preservation research is growing and the field of family preservation services is receiving more attention (De Villiers, 2008; Strydom, 2008). Furthermore the majority of research around the effectiveness of group work during family-centred interventions for child abuse and neglect was published in the 1980s and 1990s (Cohn & Daro, 1987).

South African research on the utilisation of group work is limited. Although various studies exist these studies are focused on the utilisation of group work during other areas of social work, such as alcohol dependency and foster care. Moreover studies relevant to the utilisation of group work in South Africa are outdated and limited research exists with regards to the utilisation of group work during family preservation services. There is clearly a need for more recent and context specific research to be implemented in this area. These gaps in research and the positive role group work has to play in family preservation services, as discussed, provided the necessary motivation for the study.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Social workers that render child protection services are, according to The White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry of Welfare and Population Development, 1997) and the Integrated Service Delivery Model (Department of Social Development, 2006:18-22), expected to focus their attention on family preservation services rather than statutory services, since this leads to the rendering of social developmental services. Billups (2003:17) also indicates that integrating social services to be developmental is possible by combining child protection services with family preservation services as well as community development on a mezzo (e.g. group work) level. It was determined earlier in this chapter that group work can be utilised as an advantage in rendering effective family preservation services. Various authors (Brunk, Henggeler & Whelan, 1987; Gaudin *et al.*, 1990-1991; Golub *et al.*, 1987; Iwaniec, 1997; Marziali *et al.*, 2006) acknowledge the advantages of utilising group work during the implementation of family preservation services by stating that clear increase in parents' social skills, parenting skills and problem-solving abilities are noted as well as a reduction in child abuse and maltreatment behaviour.

Thus the question remains: Why do social workers, working in family preservation services, then refrain from doing group work (Kammerman, 2011:244; Toseland & McClive-Reed, 2009:7; Toseland & Rivas, 2001:ix; Trevithick, 2005:100)? Research done by Trevithick (2005:100) showed a definite decrease in group work being done by social workers in child and family welfare settings, various possible reasons were noted but no definite conclusions were drawn. This decrease is also acknowledged by other authors (Kammerman, 2011:244; Toseland & McClive-Reed, 2009:7) whom all state that social workers working in child and family welfare organisations are doing very limited group work. A study done by Gutman and Shennar-Golan (2012:140) into the education of students in regards to group work revealed that there is a necessity for empirical research into social workers' perceptions on group work, how they experience the use of group work and the challenges experienced. This need for research based on the experiences of social workers is also noted by Kammerman (2011:234) who states that much that is written about group work describes the theoretical successes of group work and more research is needed into the obstacles encountered when utilising group work in order to ensure effective service delivery.

It is clear that there is a definite gap in research about the implementation of the group work method, and how social workers view the role this social work method has to play in the

rendering of family preservation services within a developmental approach (Marziali *et al.*, 2006; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2009:83). This gap in research and the need to determine how group work is utilised by social workers is the problem that was researched in the research study.

### **1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH STUDY**

#### **1.3.1 Aim of the research study**

The aim of the research study was to gain a better understanding of how social workers within NGOs utilise group work as part of the implementation of family preservation services.

#### **1.3.2 Research objectives**

In order for the research aim to be achieved the following objectives were formulated:

- To describe the role and function of the social worker employed within the NGO sector, with regards the implementation of family preservation services;
- To explain the nature of group work with the focus on family preservation services;
- To investigate how social workers at NGOs utilise group work in the implementation of family preservation services;
- To conclude with conclusions and recommendations on how group work can be used by social workers to provide family preservation services within the context of child protection services.

### **1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

In order to realise the aim of the research study a careful literature study was done. The research approach, including research design, research method and method of data analysis for this study, are discussed below.

#### **1.4.1 Research approach**

According to Fouché and De Vos (2011:90) a research approach is influenced by the topic being researched taking into consideration two approaches, namely a quantitative or qualitative approach. For the aim of the research study a combined qualitative and

quantitative approach (Creswell, 2009:28) was appropriate. Fouché and De Vos (2011:90) use literature by Monette, Sullivan and DeJong (2008:87) to describe that at the base a qualitative research study revolves around data in the form of descriptions and narratives, while quantitative research uses numbers to measure data.

A quantitative research approach is described as the measurement of objective facts where the researcher has a detached attitude and a value-free stance (Creswell, 2009:27; Fouché & De Vos, 2011:91). In De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2011:92), Kreuger and Neuman (2006:16) stated that this focus on variables relies on scientific reliability and statistical analysis as the method used to analyse findings. Grinnell and Unrau (2005:82) believe that when a precise understanding of one aspect of a predefined social problem is needed a quantitative approach is most effective. Thus, in relation to this study a quantitative approach helped the researcher comprehend the specific understanding and knowledge of the participants, with regards to the implementation of the group work method during family preservation services.

In contrast to this is a qualitative approach. Here the researcher aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a social problem through interactive interviews with participants that have direct contact with said problem (Brynard & Hanekom, 1997:29; Creswell, 2009:26; De Vos *et al.*, 2011:91). For the research study the qualitative data therefore led the researcher to a thorough study regarding the perceptions of social workers with reference to the use of group work during family preservation services.

To ensure that all available data was included and the aim and objectives of the research study was fulfilled, a combination of the two approaches was used.

#### **1.4.2 Research design**

Research design, as defined in the New Dictionary of Social Work (1995:53), explains how data will be gathered effectively to ensure that the aim of the research study can be realised. Fouché and Delport (2011:142) quote Blaikie (2000:21) when describing the research design as a justification for the technical decisions made during the research study and state that the process is similar to “...the activities of an architect designing a building”.

For the aim of the research study an exploratory design (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006:43; Creswell, 2009:26) was used. This is when a researcher attempts to measure and



analyse collected data in order to develop insight into a specific situation (Delpport & Fouché, 2011:441). This design was of particular help as the researcher attempted to use the exploratory design that is quantitative to study the social problem, and developed a better understanding of social workers knowledge of group work.

Since a void is recognised in the literature regarding the implementation of group work in family preservation services the use of an exploratory study can attempt to collect new data. To build on this new data it is also necessary to create an understanding of social workers experience or perceptions of group work in the rendering of family preservation services (Fouché & Delpport, 2011:65). The researcher therefore also used a descriptive design (Bless *et al.*, 2006:43; Creswell, 2009:26; Delpport & Fouché, 2011:441) that was both quantitative and qualitative in nature to describe the utilisation of group work during the implementation of family preservation services and the obstacles experienced by social workers when utilising this social work method during the delivery of family preservation services.

### **1.4.3 Research methods**

In order to provide in the aim and objectives of this study a literature review and an empirical study was done. The literature review provided the necessary information to orientate the researcher about previous studies on the topic, while the empirical study researched the specific perceptions and knowledge of participants with regards to the implementation of group work during family preservation services. The literature study, sample, population and inclusion criteria for the aim of this study are discussed below.

#### ***1.4.3.1 Literature study***

A literature study was done to contribute towards a thorough understanding of the nature, scope and meaning of the problem that was identified (Fouché & Delpport, 2011:134). According to Denscombe (2002:54) in Fouché and Delpport (2011:133) “newly published works need to be considered; new sources are discovered; different things become relevant as the research progresses”. It also contributes towards ensuring that no duplicate research is done and that the proposed research topic is also recognised by other authors as filling a void (Fouché & Delpport, 2011:134-135; Grinnell & Unrau, 2005:46).

The researcher therefore did a literature study to review relevant policies and documents that pertain to family preservation services and group work as a social work method utilised



during the rendering of family preservation services. Articles and books, either on the Internet or the University of Stellenbosch's J.S. Gericke Library, was examined. Through this process of studying literature the researcher formed a better understanding of group work theory and its theoretical role during family preservation services.

#### **1.4.3.2 Sampling**

Since it is impossible to communicate and collect the necessary information from the whole population a subset of the population was used. This subset of people has similar characteristics to the overall population, but is much smaller and called the sample (Bless *et al.*, 2006:98; De Vos *et al.*, 2011:48). The sample therefore has all the attributes of the population and findings from the sample can be generalised to the population from which it is drawn (Bless *et al.*, 2006:86).

According to Strydom (2011:228) there are two major groups of sampling procedures, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. The researcher decided on a non-probability sampling, due to the fact that every element of the population in the sample is unknown (Bless *et al.*, 2006:100). In non-probability sampling according to Strydom (2011:231-234) the different types are: accidental sampling, purposive sampling, quota sampling, dimensional sampling, target sampling and snowball sampling.

The purposive sampling method was used for the aim of the research study, since the researcher determined the sample. The researcher was therefore responsible for deciding on the characteristics, age, race, culture and socio-economic status of all the respondents involved in the research study (Bless *et al.*, 2006:106; De Vos *et al.*, 2011:232). The sample will be part of the population and comply with the inclusion criteria (Bless *et al.*, 2006:98).

#### **1.4.3.3 Population**

The population of a study is the entire set of people who are the focus of the research study and about whom the researcher wants to determine some characteristics. A population represents all possible persons who meet the necessary criteria to form part of the research study (Bless *et al.*, 2006:98). The population for the research study was all social workers that render family preservation services. The participants were therefore all social workers rendering social work services at a child and family welfare organisation in the Western Cape and Metropolitan area. The study was done from the social workers point of view, which

meant that the social worker had some experience in the delivery of family preservation services and group work. There are currently 26 child and family welfare organisations in the Western Cape Metropole, with an extensive source of social workers that are all possible participants. For the aim of the research study the provincial managers of all the organisations were contacted telephonically in order to gain permission to complete the research study. The provincial managers of seven child and family welfare organisations in the Western Cape Metropole area gave their permission for the empirical investigation. Thereafter the researcher provided the provincial managers with the necessary information and informed consent documentation to send to their social workers. Upon agreeing to partake in the research study social workers were asked to complete the informed consent documentation and the researcher contacted the participants telephonically to arrange a research interview. Research interviews were conducted with twenty social workers that complied with the inclusion criteria.

#### **1.4.3.4 Inclusion criteria**

When a sample is drawn, the sample must include all the elements of the population under investigation (Bless *et al.*, 2006). It was therefore necessary to determine the inclusion criteria for this study in order to be certain that participants were representative of the entire population.

The inclusion criteria for the study were:

- The participant must be a social worker with at least six months working experience, currently working for a child and family welfare organisation in the Western Cape, South Africa;
- The participant must either currently be working in family preservation services or have extensive experience working with children at risk of abuse in South Africa.

#### **1.4.4 Data collection methods**

In this study data collected was primary data, since it was collected by the researcher herself for the specific study alone and collected from the participants themselves (Bless *et al.*, 2006:111). The semi-structured interview schedule, as the research instrument, and the method of data-analysis will be discussed more thoroughly below.

#### **1.4.4.1 Research instrument**

For the aim of this study the researcher used a semi-structured interview schedule (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:351), consisting of predetermined qualitative and quantitative questions. These questions were used to determine the views of social workers on the group work method utilised during family preservation services. Existing literature on the group work method and family preservation services was used to develop the semi-structured interview schedule in order to gather the most information from participants.

The interview was guided rather than directed by the semi-structured interview schedule, and questions consisted of both closed and open-ended questions (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:351-352). The participants were seen as the experts on the research subject and therefore shared closely in the direction of the interview (Greeff, 2011:353). Bless *et al.* (2006:119) refers to some advantages of the semi-structured interview schedule, including that it inhibits major misunderstandings or wrong interpretations of the questions.

#### **1.4.4.2 Pilot study**

A pilot study, as defined by Barker (2003:327-328), is a procedure that pre-tests and validates a measuring instrument by administering it to a portion of participants from the intended test population. The pilot study therefore consists of carrying out all aspects of the data-collection process on small scale (Grinnell & Unrau, 2005:336; Monette, Sullivan & DeJong, 2005:9; Strydom, 2011:237).

The pilot study helps researchers orientate themselves to the research they have planned (Strydom, 2011:236) and determine if the research instrument is effective, suitable, reliable, and valid. This is also to ensure that all the possible precautions were taken to avoid any problems that might arise during the research study (Bless *et al.*, 2006:184; Sarantakos, 2000:291). Thus, in the research study a pilot study was done with a purposive selection of two participants that meet the inclusion criteria, in order to test the effectiveness, suitability, reliability and validity of the research instrument. The necessary changes, identified through the pilot study, were dealt with accordingly in order to ensure a valid and effective study.

### **1.4.4.3 Method of data analysis**

To detect consistent trends within the data, the researcher conducted a data analysis. The data was used to generalise findings from the sample to the larger population (Bless et al., 2006:163). The data analysis, as stated by Mouton (2011:108), help the researcher to understand the elements of the data by breaking up the data into manageable themes, trends and relationships.

Quantitative data was presented in tables and figures. The researcher grouped the qualitative data according to the different questions in the semi-structured interview schedule. Emerging themes, sub-themes and categories were established by reading and colour coding the participants' responses. Thereafter responses that supported a subtheme or category were clustered together, counted and converted into percentages in order to determine the frequency of similar responses and identify presiding trends within a specific theme. Themes, subthemes, categories and narratives were presented in tables.

### **1.4.4.4 Method of data verification**

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011:172) criteria for a research study should be established to ensure that the quality of researched data can be verified. Such criteria should refer to the validity and reliability of a research study. Validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measuring instrument adequately reflects the true meaning of the concept which is supposed to be studied. Furthermore a research study should be reliable, according to De Vos *et al.* (2011:172) this means that when a research instrument is used to research the same concept twice the results should be the same. De Vos *et al.* (2011:172) refer to the norms of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability in order to assess the validity and reliability of a qualitative study.

- **Credibility**

De Vos *et al.* (2011:177) state that an indication of the credibility of a research study is the accurate identification and description of the subject within the parameters of the population and theoretical framework of the research study. In the research study the researcher added to the credibility of the research study by setting out a theoretical framework (Chapters 2 and 3) for the research study and stating the parameters of the population (Chapter 4).

- Transferability

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011:177) transferability refers to whether the results from the empirical investigation could be transferred to other settings and populations. The researcher added to the transferability of the research study by clearly describing the research methodology of the research study and utilising the theoretical framework to guide the method of data collection and data analysis.

- Dependability

Dependability refers to the fact that the researcher attempted to account for the changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for the study (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:177). In the research study the researcher ensured that the dependability of the research study by ensuring that the collected data was presented in a logical, organized and systematic way, findings from the empirical investigation were therefore well documented. Furthermore both international and national research articles on the research topic was utilised which allowed for a dependable research study.

- Conformability

The conformability of a research implies that the study's findings could be confirmed by findings in another study (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:177). To add to the conformability of the research study the researcher made use of literature control in chapter five in order to ensure that findings from the research study conformed to previous research on the same research topic.

## **1.5 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

For the aim of this study the following key concepts are important to classify:

### **1.5.1 Social work services**

Social work services, according to The Dictionary of Social Work (1995:60), are defined as “programmes designed to help people solve social problems and promote their social functioning”. Potgieter (1998:119) described the term as a service where the primary focus is on empowering individuals by building a helping relationship between the client and the social worker.

According to the researcher this term refers to all services provided by social workers to their client system where the aim is to improve social functioning.

### **1.5.2 Group work**

Toseland and Rivas (2001:3) provide a definition of social group work as an intervention by stating that:

“Social group work entails the deliberate use of intervention strategies and group processes to accomplish individual, group and community goals using the value base and ethical practice principles of the social work profession.”

They go on to define group work as being goal-directed and aimed at meeting socio-economic needs and accomplishing certain tasks, depending on the type of group (e.g. treatment or task group), where activity is directed to individual members of a group and to the group as a whole within a system of service delivery (Konopka, 1963:20; Toseland & Rivas, 2001:12).

The researcher agrees with the above-mentioned definition, therefore believing that group work is a social work intervention method aimed at empowering individuals through the use of collective learning, experience, treatment or development.

### **1.5.3 Family preservation services**

According to O'Reilly *et al.* (2009:83) family preservation services are aimed at families who are at serious risk of child abuse and neglect. The goal of family preservation services is to reduce future child neglect and abuse. While ensuring that those who have been identified as being at risk are assisted before they require statutory services, more intensive intervention or placement in alternative care (Chaffin *et al.*, 2001; McCoswkey & Meezan, 1998; Tracy, 1995). For the aim of this study the above-mentioned definition was used.

## **1.6 ETHICAL ISSUES**

Research should be based on mutual trust, acceptance, cooperation, promises and well-accepted conventions and expectations between all parties involved in a research study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:529-531; Strydom, 2011:113). Strydom (2011:114) offers the following definition:

“Ethics is a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students” (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:114).

The seriousness of ethical concerns is evident in the various codes of ethics created and published by professional associations whose members engage in research (Babbie, 2007:71). Therefore the researcher submitted the research proposal to the Departmental Ethics Screening Committee (DESC) to obtain ethical clearance and approval for the study. The researcher remained within the procedures and protocols indicated within the research proposal, particularly with regards to any undertakings that was made in terms of the confidentiality of the information, obtained through the research study.

In agreement with the above, the researcher considered the following ethical issues pertaining to this study as derived from Strydom (2011:115-127):

- Avoidance of harm

The fundamental ethical rule of social research is that it must bring no harm, whether physical or emotional, to participants (Babbie, 2007:27; Creswell, 2009:64; Strydom 2011:115). By considering this the researcher kept personal information of participants anonymous (Babbie, 2007:63).

- Voluntary participation

According to Strydom (2011:116) participants should at all times be aware that participation is voluntary and that they can at any point in time choose to not partake in the research study (Rubin & Babbie, 2005:71). The researcher therefore informed all participants, before the study began, that they had a choice in taking part in this research study and could at any point discontinue their participation.

- Informed consent

The researcher had, before the study commences, received written informed consent from all participants. The participants was asked to sign two copies, which was explained to them in a language they understand, the one copy was given to the participant and the other kept in a secure file.

- Violation of privacy / anonymity / confidentiality

Every participant has the right to privacy and decides when, where, to whom and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs and behaviour will be revealed (Strydom, 2011:119). The researcher therefore safeguarded the privacy and identity of respondents and at all times act in a sensitive way towards the privacy of all participants. This was accomplished by obtaining details from respondents in such a way that respondents remain anonymous and no organisation's names are identified. Collected data was kept in a secure cabinet and safeguarded against improper access.

- Actions and competence of researchers

The researcher is ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation (Strydom, 2011:123). The researcher completed a theoretical module on research methodology through which the researcher learned the necessary research skills and was therefore competent to undertake the study. Furthermore, the research study was undertaken under the careful guidance of an experienced supervisor. If an unexpected emergency situation was therefore revealed during the research it was immediately reported to the supervisor and the Department Chair for further guidance.

- Publication of findings

According to Strydom (2011:126) the true value of research findings lies in their successful introduction to the public through written format. Researchers are responsible for compiling information from the research study into a report that accurately and objectively conveys research findings (Strydom, 2011:126). The researcher therefore compiled a report, reflecting accurately and objectively, all the data obtained from respondents.

## **1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Within the context of the research, the researcher identified the following possible limitations of the study:

- The research study was only completed at child and family welfare organisations and can therefore pose to be a limited view of the research problem, since all involved participants render services in the same field and similar contexts.



## 1.8 PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The research study consists of six chapters.

**Chapter 1** consists of the study motivation, the problem statement, the aim and objectives for the study as well as the research design and methodology. In this chapter a general orientation of the study was provided, including a discussion of important key concepts, the necessary ethical issues and limitations of the study.

**Chapter 2** is based on a review of relevant policies and legislation with regards to family preservation services in South Africa.

**Chapter 3** provides the theoretical background of the group work method and discusses the positive impact it can have on service rendering by social workers in family preservation services.

**Chapter 4** consists of the empirical study, where findings are presented and discussed. The focus is on the processing and analysing of data and reporting results.

**Chapter 5** concludes with conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER 2

# THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF SOCIAL WORKERS AT NGOs WITH REGARDS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The family unit is the basic social unit of our culture (Blankenhorn, Bayme & Elshtain, 1990). Authors such as Lerwick (2003:9), De Villiers (2008:1) as well as Ismail, Taliep and Suffla (2012:1) are in agreement when they state that the family is society's primary institution for raising children and passing on the values of society, while simultaneously providing welfare and security to all its members. According to Collins and Jordan (2006:11); De Villiers (2008:16) and Ismail, Taliep and Suffla (2012:1) the family therefore has the potential to provide the necessary resources children need throughout their life cycle to develop into responsible, autonomous and healthy adults who will become contributing members of society.

Due to the important role that family plays in society, the country of South Africa and child and family welfare organisations have a duty to protect the country's children, particularly children who are vulnerable due to their circumstances (Streak & Poggenpoel, 2005:3). Yet, across the world (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2009) and in South Africa (Ismail *et al.*, 2012:1; Loffell, 2008:83; Meintjies & Van Niekerk, 2005:3) child and family welfare organisations are under-resourced and unable to provide the necessary child protection services. This is due to a global and local increase in families being exposed to abuse and neglect. According to various authors (Loffell, 2008:82; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2009:83), family preservation services is the model employed by social workers at child and family welfare organisations to address the above-mentioned challenges.

Child and family welfare organisations are therefore, in accordance with South African legislation and policy documents, tasked to address the challenges in protecting the child and maintaining the family unit by reducing child abuse and neglect through family preservation services (Ismail *et al.*, 2012:1; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2009:83; Strydom, 2012:435). In the following chapter the first objective of the research study will be achieved, namely to provide an overview on the role and function of the South African social worker with regards to family

preservation services. This will be done through the examination of family preservation services and appropriate policy and legislative documents, as they pertain to family preservation services.

## **2.2 SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY AND LEGISLATION WITH REGARDS TO CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES WITHIN FAMILY PRESERVATION**

According to South African policy and legislation documents, the South African Government is committed to the promotion of family life and services aimed at the survival, protection and development of all South Africa families (Ministry for Welfare & Population Development, 1997:63; Republic of South Africa, 2005:33). The White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:3,6) regard the family as a potentially powerful agent for political, economic, cultural and social changes. The family is seen as a potent vehicle for the care and development of children. It further states that the current challenge in South Africa is that the family must become the driving force in the development of policies, and that legislation and policy development must enhance the role of the family. In the following section an overview of such international and national policies and legislation will be provided as they pertain to the preservation of the South African family unit.

### **2.2.1 International framework for child and youth care policies and legislations**

In the following section an overview of international policies and legislations with regards to social work intervention with at risk families will be discussed.

#### ***2.2.1.1 The United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child***

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereafter referred to as The Convention) is a universally agreed upon set of non-negotiable standards and obligations dealing with the needs and rights of children worldwide (UNICEF, 2013). It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 after world leaders determined that a separate convention for children was needed. By agreeing to undertake the obligations of The Convention, the national government has committed to protecting and ensuring children's rights. Thus when South Africa signed this treaty on the 29th of January 1993 they agreed

before the international community to develop and undertake all actions and policies in light of the best interests of the child.

The Convention acknowledges that every child has certain basic rights, including the right to be raised by his or her parents within a family or cultural grouping, and to have a relationship with both parents, even if they are separated. These rights are founded on respect for dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability and therefore apply to all humans. According to The Convention these rights are interdependent and cannot be ensured without – or at the expense of - other rights.

In The Convention there are 54 articles that set out the basic human rights that children everywhere have. These are divided into four groups, namely, survival rights (adequate living standards), developmental rights, protection rights and participation rights (United Nations, 1989). Rossouw (2009:22) states that by acceding to The Convention and adopting its goals for children and youth, South Africa strengthened their commitment to give high priority to children's issues.

According to Article 19 of the Convention, government must protect the child from all forms of physical and mental violence through implementing appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures in their respective country. Article 2.1 of The Convention states that this must be done without bias and irrespective of the child's or the child's parents'/guardians' ethnic group, colour, gender, mother language, religious conviction, political affiliation, social origin, property, disability or other standing. The Convention also states that all governments bound by The Convention must develop the necessary service delivery plan to address issues related to children in their country. These plans must be in line with the framework provided by The Convention and a progress report must be submitted every five years in order to hold all governments accountable to this commitment (United Nations, 1989).

Having signed The Convention the South African Government then embarked on a process of domestic law reform in order to bring domestic legislation in line with these international commitments, as well as to try and ensure an equal dispensation to all South African children. An African based document, which is based on The Convention, is the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare on the African Child.

### ***2.2.1.2 The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child***

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (hereafter referred to as The Charter) was adopted July 1990 by the South African government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Rossouw, 2009:22). In relation with The Convention on the Right of the Child, The African Charter on Rights and the Welfare of the child state that government should take social, educational and administrative measures to protect a child from all forms of abuse and/or neglect.

The Charter recognizes a child's unique and privileged place in the African society, as well as the child's need for protection and the entitlement to freedom of expression, thought, religion and conscience (African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990). Rossouw (2009:22) states that although The Charter is based on the provided guideline of The Convention on the Right of the Child, it is specifically applicable to children in South Africa since it reiterates the African culture and issues experienced by people living in South Africa, such as female circumcision, a child's responsibility to their family and community and the role of the family in the rearing of their children.

The Charter offers more advanced protection to children as well as an appreciation for the influence of indigenous cultures on ensuring that South African children's rights are realised. Like The Convention on the Right of the Child, the Children's Charter is a comprehensive instrument that sets out rights and defines universal principles and norms for the status of children.

The Charter therefore focuses on all the rights as set out in The South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996:1243), a national legislative document that is based on the generally accepted democratic principles of this country. Furthermore, framework provided by The Convention on the Right of the Child is contained in the Bill of Rights as set forth in Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution.

### **2.2.2 National framework for child and youth care policies and legislation**

In order to understand the impact that the above-mentioned international policy and legislative framework has on South Africa, a closer examination of South African policies and legislations are provided.

### ***2.2.2.1 The South African Constitution***

The South African Constitution (hereafter referred to as The Constitution) represents a national agreement on the shape of government, its powers and limitations. The Constitution is the South African law against which other legislative documents are tested, if any law or behaviour is in conflict with the Constitution it is invalid. All South African policies should, therefore, be directed by the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996:1243).

Children's rights, as contained in Section 28 of the Constitution of South Africa include, but are not limited to, the right to (1) health services, (2) basic nutrition, (3) social services, (4) protection, (5) family and parental care, (6) appropriate alternative care if needed and (7) education (Republic of South Africa, 1996:1255). Section 28(2) enshrines the principle that a child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child. Thus in summary, the Constitution covers a range of areas that focus on the well being of the child.

In order to ensure that the children's rights are adhered to, provision is made in the Constitution for several instruments of delivery and protection, such as the White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Welfare & Population Development, 1997). An overview of the White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Welfare & Population Development, 1997) is provided in the following section.

### ***2.2.2.2 The White Paper for Social Welfare***

The White Paper for Social Welfare is the first social welfare policy that was developed and based on the South African Constitution (Ministry for Welfare & Population Development, 1997). The White Paper on Social Welfare was developed as the guiding policy for all welfare provisions in South Africa, with Chapter 2 highlighting in particular the status of children and the need to adopt a preventative and developmental approach to the well being of children.

Furthermore, according to Streak and Poggenpoel (2005:10), the White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Welfare & Population Development, 1997) explains why the Apartheid welfare system was in dire need of transformation. The White Paper for Social Welfare notes that the welfare policy framework was weak. With no national consensus on exactly how the social welfare sector would support the development objectives and the then-existing system was characterised by insufficient and sparse access to services. Moreover service delivery

was fragmented and founded on an inappropriate welfare paradigm. In addition, the social welfare system was constrained by a lack of sustainable funding, low levels of participation and an unequal partnership between government and civil society organisations (Ministry for Welfare & Population Development, 1997:6).

The White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Welfare & Population Development, 1997:4,7,9) defines “social welfare” as:

“an integrated and comprehensive system of social services, facilities, programmes and social security to promote social development, social justice and the social functioning of people”.

It describes the role of the social welfare system as helping to improve the well-being of individuals, families and communities and creating a caring, just society that respects human rights.

The vision put forward in the White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Welfare & Population Development, 1997:9) is the creation of “a welfare system that facilitates the development of human capacity and self-reliance within a caring and enabling socio-economic environment”. The mission of the social welfare strategy is “to serve and build a self-reliant nation in partnership with all stakeholders through an integrated social welfare system which maximizes its existing potential, and which is equitable, sustainable, accessible, people-centred and developmental”.

With regards to family preservation the call is for child and family welfare services to be delivered as part of a comprehensive package of services to at-risk families. Here the aim is “to preserve and strengthen families so that they can provide a suitable environment for the physical, emotional and social development of all their members” (Ministry for Welfare & Population Development, 1997:54). Aside from the White Paper for Social Welfare another South African policy document applicable to family preservation services is the White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:5), which is discussed in the following section.

### **2.2.2.3 *The White Paper on Families***

The White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012) is a South African policy that sets out the necessary guidelines for the promotion of family life, strengthening

the family as a system and the role of government, as well as professionals, in the promotion of healthy household environments to enable the family's positive development. The motivation behind the development of this policy was the non-existence of any policy framework that was directed at promoting family life and the strengthening families in South Africa.

The White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:11) defines the **“South African family”** as:

“a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, adoption or cohabitation, characterised by a common residence (household) or not, interacting and communicating with one another in their respective family roles, maintaining a common culture and governed by family rules.”

Different **types of South African families**, are identified by the White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:16) as: the nuclear family, that consists of two parents and at least one child; a skip-generation family, with grandparents-parent-grandchildren; a single unmarried parent with at least one child; a single married parent, with an absent spouse parenting at least one child; child-headed households, where all the members of the family are children; married families consisting of just a husband and wife and a married couple with adopted children.

Although finding one appropriate definition for the South African family is challenging, due to the wide variety of families observed in South Africa, the above mentioned definition encompasses most South African families. To better describe the South African family, **different functions** of South African families are reviewed (Republic of South Africa, 2011:73). The functions of families vary between different societies and there is no central function that all societies grant to the family.

In South Africa a family displays four systematic features, namely: intimate interdependence, selective boundary maintenance, ability to adapt to change and maintain their identity over time and performance of family tasks. The tasks (Republic of South Africa, 2011:27) within families include for example the socialisation and education of its members; the physical maintenance of its members; the motivation of family members to perform roles inside and outside of the family; the acquisition of new family members through procreation or adoption; and the launching of young members from the family when mature.



As the White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:5) states that human beings have lived in families from the beginning of time and moreover the **family has always been the pillar of society** as it influences the way that society is structured, organised and functions. The family has been and will continue to be the principal institution in society, since it plays an important role in the nurturing and caring, socialisation and reproduction of its members. When individual family members eventually leave the family unit to enter other social settings, such as a school or workplace, the family would have already prepared them for the transition by transmitting on them society's values, norms and morals.

The former can, however, only take place when a family has the capacity to execute the transmission of society's roles and responsibilities to family members. According to the White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:5), a strong family has the necessary capabilities to successfully prepare its family members for the transition to another social setting.

**Strong families** are defined by The White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:5) as families that have access to a variety of resources. These resources range from emotional and material to spiritual resources and enable the families to meet the needs of their members and effectively deal with conflict, stress and/or a crisis. The family demonstrates commitment to family members that results in each individual family member feeling valued, recognised and appreciated. Another characteristic of a strong family is the ability of its members to complement each other and spend time together, therefore sharing experiences. Finally, a strong family has routines, rituals or traditions that enhance family stability and are unique to their family unit.

According to The White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Welfare & Population Development, 1997:60) the family life in South Africa is, however under a great deal of pressure due to a lack of food, a lack of security, high unemployment rates, high prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse, a lack of preparation for family life, parenting problems and communication and relationship problems. Furthermore, stress is placed on families in South Africa by violence, divorce, remarriage, lack of support systems and family disintegration. All these factors can place South African families at-risk and lead to the breakdown of the family unit.

Thus according to the White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:21), **at-risk families** require the protection and delivery of intensive intervention

services by social workers. The aim of such services should firstly be on enhancing the socialising, caring, loving, supporting and nurturing capabilities of all South African families in order to enable families to contribute effectively to the development of South Africa. Secondly, social workers at child and family welfare organisations should empower family members to be part of the labour market and other developmental opportunities available in South Africa. And thirdly, the capacities of South African families should be improved to enable them to effectively interact with the community they are a part of in order to make meaningful contributions towards a sense of community, social cohesion and human solidarity in South Africa.

The White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:10), with the help of the South African Government and in partnership with various stakeholders, calls for the **embracing of a people-centred approach to service delivery** in order to build healthy relationships in South Africa. Furthermore, the White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:19) recognises the need to have a holistic approach towards the family since current interventions are mostly based on individuals. This means that an integrated and coordinated approach must be implemented to address the needs of children, while simultaneously recognising that they are also members of families. According to the White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:5), in order to strengthen families and family life, the focus on families should be promoted throughout services delivery in South Africa. Moreover the White Paper on Families calls on families to fulfil their central role and responsibility in the nation's pursuit of building a better South Africa through developmental strategies.

The White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:21) thus places the family as the imperative focus point in the development of South Africa. It (Department of Social Development, 2012:42) further states that services aimed at preserving the family should be the focus of child and family welfare services. The alternative placement of children in a shelter, family foster home or group home should therefore be the last resort for children in need of care and protection and programmes should aim to re-integrate children back into the family. If, however, a child is determined to be in need of care and protection the necessary social service delivery guidelines are provided by The Children's Act 38 of 2005, which will be discussed in the following section.

#### ***2.2.2.4 The Children's Act 38 of 2005***

The Children's Act 38 of 2005 (2005:2) was developed due to the need to bring into effect South African children's constitutional rights and the country's commitments to global treaties. The Children's Act (2005:2) sets out principles relating to the care and protection of children, it defines parental responsibilities and parental rights and it provides legislation regarding children's courts. The objectives of The Children's Act 38 of 2005 are to provide social services to children in order to protect them from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation and ensure their best interests are of principal importance. The best interest of a child is referred to in Chapter 1 Section 7 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, which will be discussed below.

##### *(a) Chapter 1 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005*

According to Chapter 1 Section 7 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, certain factors must be taken into consideration when rendering services in the best interest of a child. These factors include, for example, the nature of the parent-child relationship, the likely effect on the child if any change to the child's circumstances may take place, the needs of the child to remain in contact with their family and remain in the care of their family. It may also include the child's age, gender, background and other relevant characteristics such as: the child's physical and emotional security, any chronic illnesses or disabilities, the need for the child to be brought up within a stable family environment and the need to protect the child from any physical or psychological harm.

It is important to note that, according to Chapter 1 Section 1 of The Children's Act 38 of 2005 a child refers to a person under the age of 18 years. Section 151(8) of The Children's Act 38 of 2005 emphasises that the best interests of the child must be the determining factor in any decision regarding whether a child in need of care and protection should be removed and placed in alternative care. All relevant facts must for this purpose be taken into account, including the safety and well being of the child as the first priority. The Children's Act 38 of 2005 places a strong focus on the protection and development of the family as first line of service delivery (The Children's Act 38 of 2005:28).

The Children's Act states that the family is the best place for children to develop. In cases of abuse and neglect, intervention should be focused on the wellbeing of the children, be that by removing the children from their parental care or by returning the children to the family.

There are certain circumstances, according to Section 150(1) of The Children's Act 38 of 2005, which substantiate the statutory removal of children from their family home.

Chapter 9 of The Children's Act 38 of 2005 states that in order for children to be removed from their family home and placed in alternative care they have to be declared in need of care. Section 150 (1) of The Children's Act 38 of 2005 provides the necessary guidelines that help to determine if a child is in need of care and protection.

*(b) Chapter 9 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005*

According to Section 150 (1) of The Children's Act 38 of 2005, the guidelines to determine whether a child is in need of care and protection state that a child is in need of care and protection when the child -

- a) Has been abandoned and is without any visible means of support,
- b) Displays behaviour which cannot be controlled by the parent or care-giver,
- c) Lives or works on the streets or begs for a living,
- d) Is addicted to a dependence-producing substance and is without any support to obtain treatment for such dependency,
- e) Has been exploited or lives in circumstances that expose the child to exploitation,
- f) Lives in or is exposed to circumstances which may seriously harm that child's physical, mental or social well-being,
- g) May be at risk if returned to the custody of the parent, guardian or care-giver of the child as there is reason to believe that he or she will live in or be exposed to circumstances which may seriously harm the physical, mental or social well-being of the child,
- h) Is in a state of physical or mental neglect, or
- i) Is being maltreated, abused, deliberately neglected or degraded by a parent, a care-giver, a person who has parental responsibilities and rights or a family member of the child or by a person under whose control the child is.

According to Section 155 of The Children's Act 38 of 2005 if there are sufficient grounds for believing that a child is in need of care and protection this child may be referred to a social worker for investigation. Therefore the social workers, directed by The Children's Act 38 of 2005, are the primary facilitators in the process of statutory intervention. During the investigation the social worker must determine whether a child is in need of care and

protection, as set out in Section 150(1) of The Children's Act 38 of 2005. If the child is indeed found to be in need of care and protection, that child must be brought before the children's court where a court order will be made in the best interest of the child (Section 155(5) of The Children's Act 38 of 2005).

After the investigation the social worker will complete a report for the children's court, providing the necessary information that will enable the court to determine whether the child is indeed in need of care, and provide suggestions regarding the kind of care suitable for the child (Section 155 of The Children's Act 38 of 2005). The decision to remove children from the care of their biological parents remains the responsibility of the children's court of South Africa, although the social worker's report will play a paramount role in determining the decision of the children's court (Section 155(9) of The Children's Act 38 of 2005). According to Section 156(1) of The Children's Act 38 of 2005, a children's court may order that the child be placed in alternative care, such as foster care or a child and youth care centre.

In South Africa alternative care is usually with a foster parent who, by the order of the children's court, is the legal custodian of the foster child. This will hold until a court hearing can determine that the circumstances that led to the removal of the children are resolved and the children can be placed back into the care of their biological parents (De Villiers, 2008:1). Moaisi (2003:2) defines foster care as a time-limited planned statutory alternative care for children who cannot be cared for by their biological parents. According to De Villiers (2008:1), children in foster care are financially maintained by the government through the aid of a foster care grant, with a corresponding duty on the part of the biological parents to contribute towards the children's maintenance.

The Children's Act 38 of 2005 is therefore essential in helping social workers understand their role in the procedures to be taken during cases of child abuse and neglect, and how to generally protect the children of South Africa.

From the discussion above with regards to the various South African policy documents and legislations, it is the social worker's role at child and family welfare organisations to preserve the family unit by focusing on preventative and early intervention services. According to The White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Welfare & Population Development, 1997:63), the aim of child and family welfare services are therefore to preserve and strengthen South African families to enable them to provide a stable environment for the emotional, physical

and social development of all their family members. A range of social services should therefore be made available to all at-risk families to promote and strengthen family life; this is known as family preservation services and will be discussed in the following section.

## **2.3 FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES**

In the following section family preservation services will be discussed with attention given to the development of family preservation services, the definition of family preservation services, the goal of family preservation services as well as the intervention level at which family preservation services are provided.

### **2.3.1 The development of family preservation services**

Family preservation services developed during the 1980s in the United States when due to a global increase in child abuse and neglect rates and growing numbers of children in the foster care system a re-examination of the child and family welfare services rendered by social workers took place (Chaffin, Bonner & Hill, 2001:1269; Lietz, 2009:1337; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2009:82; Tracy, 1995:973; Ungar, 2013:110). According to Tracy (1995) and Fernandez (2007:1369) research during this re-examination revealed that children were often placed in alternative care by default due to a lack of available support services. Furthermore, few efforts were made to include the children's biological family during intervention or after alternative placement took place; biological parents were often viewed as contributing towards the problem rather than being part of the solution. This led to family reunification plans often being unsuccessful and families experiencing more failures and consequently children often experienced multiple placements with placements being unstable and providing little permanence.

Coupled with the rising costs of alternative care and social workers often being under-resourced and unable to meet the needs of at-risk families, child and family welfare organisations started searching for alternative intervention methods (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2009:82). Instead of intervention taking place, families experienced a crisis and consequently became involved with child and family welfare organisations when their family members were placed in alternative care. Thus the child and family welfare system began to promote a family-centered early intervention approach that was designed to support and strengthen at-risk families.

The rising reports of child abuse and neglect led to the development of family preservation services. A need for more preventative and early intervention programmes was recognised, and the dissatisfaction with more traditional child and family welfare services with a focus on on “rescuing” rather than “preventing” (Al, Stams, Bek, Damen, Asscher & Van der Laan, 2012:1473; O’Reilly *et al.*, 2009:82), was identified. Family preservation services will be defined in the following section.

### **2.3.2 Defining family preservation services**

Family preservation services, according to policy documents, can be defined as those essential child protection services rendered to at risk families in order to prevent the unnecessary alternative placement of children. This is done through immediate intervention that defuses the crisis situation, stabilizes the family and teaches family members new problem-resolution skills, so they can avoid future crises (Department of Social Development, 2012:38; Department of Social Development, 2004:9,32,33). According to Landman (2005:30) the motivation behind family preservation services is that the statutory removal of children from the care of their biological parents has various disruptive effects and that the best option is to try and support the biological family to prevent the removal of the child.

According to the Department of Social Development (2004:73), Tracy (1995:973) and Dagenais, Be’gin, Bouchard and Fortin (2004:250), family preservation services are thus built on the view that children should remain safely in their biological family homes where they have the opportunity to develop in their own biological family environment, while services aimed at preventing alternative placement are being delivered to their family.

The goal of service delivery is therefore no longer to find alternative placements for children, but rather to empower at-risk families to effectively care for their family members (Department of Social Development, 2012:38). In order to understand family preservation services it is important to understand at-risk families. A brief discussion on at-risk families, as defined by South African literature and policy documents follows.

### **2.3.3 Defining at risk families**

At-risk families can be defined as families without visible support systems, these families cannot function effectively due to various challenges and are therefore exposed to



circumstances that do not empower them and are detrimental to their development (Landy & Menna, 2006:xvi). Landy and Menna (2006:xvi) state that at-risk families are often families without protective factors or visible means of support. These at-risk families are often labelled as resistant, uncooperative and chaotic and little hope resides in service providers that these families can change. Furthermore at-risk families often receive services from inexperienced professionals and because adequate services are unavailable these at-risk families are seen as beyond help. Consequently at-risk families are resistant and most likely to drop out of programs or attend them sporadically, which may lead to professionals closing files quickly and at-risk families not receiving the services they need.

According to the White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:47) there are various challenges that South African families face and if one or more of these challenges are visible within a family, the family may be viewed as at-risk. These challenges include: substance abuse and other forms of anti-social behaviour, poor parenting skills, domestic violence, disunity amongst family members, families that faces imminent danger of disintegration, ineffective communication patterns amongst family members, poor interpersonal relationships, irresponsible behaviour by family members or caregivers, mistrust and poor conflict management, the family experiences a lack of community support and weak role clarification amongst family members.

Furthermore the White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:22) states that South African families are under threat and are unable to socialize, nurture, care and protect their members effectively due to various other societal forces. These forces are identified as: high levels of poverty and inequality, teenage pregnancies and unwanted pregnancies, the absent father experienced by many families in South Africa, high unemployment (particularly among young people), crime, chronic illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, illiteracy among South Africans, gender inequalities, domestic violence and high numbers of orphaned and vulnerable children.

The above-mentioned challenges and societal forces are therefore major influences in the weakening of the South African family structure (Department of Social Development, 2012:22). Research by the South African Institute of Race Relations in 2009 indeed confirmed the vulnerable nature of South African families. The South African Institute of Race Relations found in 2011 that the family life, in the conventional sense, did not exist for many South African children. Almost 25 per cent of the South African children were growing



up without their biological parents (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2011:6). It was envisioned that the White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:5) would therefore provide guidelines and strategies for promoting family life and strengthening families in order to attain certain levels of well-being and prevent the breakup of the family. As previously mentioned the goal of service delivery is therefore to empower at-risk families to function effectively. The following section contains a brief discussion of the goals of family preservation services.

#### **2.3.4 Goal of family preservation services**

The goal of family preservation services is to help prevent the alternative placement of children by making services available to at-risk families when they first enter the child and family welfare system (McArthur & Thomson, 2011:71). According to Tracy (1995:973), families referred for family preservation services often experience multiple and complex problems such as child abuse, child neglect, alcohol and other drug abuse and anti-social behaviour. According to some authors (Al *et al.*, 2012:1472; Dagenais *et al.*, 2004:250; Mullins, Cheung & Lietz, 2012:265; Tracy, 1995:973), family preservation services therefore have five primary goals: (1) to enable children to remain safely in their own families, (2) to maintain and strengthen family bonds, (3) to stabilize the crisis situation that precipitated the need for placement, (4) to increase the family's coping skills and competencies and (5) to facilitate the family's use of appropriate formal and informal community resources.

Social welfare services in South Africa are, according to the ISDM (Department of Social Development, 2006:11), rendered on a continuum of different intervention levels, level one is prevention, level two is early intervention, level three is statutory intervention and level four is reconstruction. It is stated that the focus of all social welfare services should mostly be on the prevention and early intervention levels (Department of Social Development, 2006:18). Thus, in accordance with policy documents (Department of Social Development, 2006:29; Ministry for Welfare & Population Development, 1997:62) and legislation (Article 143-149 of The Children's Act 38 of 2005), family preservation services should be rendered on the levels of prevention and early intervention in order to avoid the removal and alternative placement of South African children. An overview of prevention and early intervention services with regards to family preservation services will be provided in the following section.

### **2.3.5 Prevention and early intervention with regards to family preservation services**

Prevention (level one), according to South African policy documents, refers to services that are aimed at strengthening and building the capacity and self-reliance of all South African families. At the prevention level the family is functioning adequately but there is a possibility of the family becoming at-risk at a later stage (Department of Social Development, 2006:11). The Children's Amendment Act 41 of 2007 Section 143(1) states that prevention programs should therefore address problems that may or are bound to occur in the family environment which, if not attended to, may lead to statutory intervention. Matthias (2004:173); De Villiers (2008:22) and Holzer, Higgins, Bromfield and Higgins (2006:3) state that prevention services with regards to family preservation services are therefore support services directed at the general population with the goal of preventing the occurrence of child abuse and neglect. According to the White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Welfare & Population Development, 1997:81) prevention is aimed at enhancing awareness, information and education programmes for the public.

Early intervention services (level two) are provided to families that have been identified by child and family welfare organisations as being at-risk of having their child removed (Department of Social Development, 2006:11; Children's Amendment Act 41 of 2007 Section 143(2):54). According to McArthur and Thomson (2011:71) early interventions address family risk factors and build protective factors, such as healthy social relationships and support systems, and are regarded as a key strategy for promoting the well-being of children, families and communities. Furthermore the Children's Amendment Act 41 of 2007, Section 144(3) states that prevention and early intervention programmes must involve and promote the participation of families, parents, care-givers and children in identifying and seeking solutions to their problems.

The Children's Amendment Act 41 of 2007 Section 144(1) states that the aim of prevention and early intervention programmes, with regards to family preservation services, should be: to preserve a child's family structure, to enable the development of appropriate parenting skills and the capacity of parents and care-givers to safeguard the well-being and best interests of their children, to promote appropriate interpersonal relationships within the family, to provide psychological, rehabilitation and therapeutic programmes for children, to prevent the neglect, exploitation, abuse or inadequate supervision of children and preventing

other failures in the family environment to meet children's needs, prevent the reoccurrence of problems in the family environment that may harm or adversely affect their development, divert children away from the child and youth care system and the criminal justice system, and avoid the removal of a child from the family environment.

The above-mentioned prevention and early intervention programmes may include: providing assistance to obtain the basic necessities of life, empowering families to obtain such necessities for themselves, providing families with information to enable them to access services, supporting and assisting families with a chronically ill or terminally ill family member, early childhood development, and promoting the well-being of children and the realisation of their full potential (Children's Amendment Act 41 of 2007 Section 144(2)).

A study by Michalopoulos, Ahn, Swan and O'Connor (2012:660) in the United States of America found that social workers rendering family preservation services encounter various obstacles to service delivery. Social workers stated that they struggled to render efficient work due to limited available resources. These resources include community projects that at-risk families can be referred to in order to reduce the isolation of the family, or groups, in communities that would benefit at-risk families by teaching them effective parenting skills. Furthermore social workers expressed their concern with the high expectations placed on them and the negative effect that has on delivering good quality family preservation services. The high expectations would include the pressure they experience with regards to high statutory caseloads, and a lack of staff to render these statutory services.

Family preservation services can be divided into three broad services. These different types of family preservation services will be discussed in the following section as they relate to the South African child and family welfare context and the levels of prevention and early intervention.

## **2.4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES**

Family preservation services can be divided into three different types of services, namely family support services, family-centered services and intensive family preservation services (Holzer *et al.*, 2006; McArthur & Thomson, 2011:71; Pecora, Fraser, Nelson, McCroskey & Meezan, 1995:xix; Tracy, 1995:974). Social welfare services are rendered using three primary methods of intervention, namely case work, group work and community work or community development (Department of Social Development, 2006:15). In the following

section the three broad categories of family preservation services will be discussed in accordance with the method of social work that can best be applied in that category.

### **2.4.1 Family support services**

Family support services are community-based services available to all families coping with normal everyday stresses with the aim of alleviating stress, promoting positive parenting, enhancing parent-child interactions, supporting and strengthening the family's social relationships and enabling families to use community resources in order to prevent child abuse and neglect (Chaffin *et al.*, 2001:1270; Kelleher & Johnson, 2004:297; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2009:83). Family support services are therefore preventative in nature and should be available to all South African families.

A lack of family support services can both be the cause and effect of family problems (Marziali *et al.*, 2006:402). According to Nephawe (2011:51) and Ruffolo, Evans and Lukens (2003:441), there is therefore a strong belief that families are resilient and capable of change if supported by a strong support network. This is acknowledged by Kelleher and Johnson (2004:297), who state that if a family's problems are viewed from an ecological perspective, child abuse and neglect is seen as the effect of the interactions between the parents' available resources, their abilities, experiences and the social environment that surrounds the family. Therefore Marziali *et al.* (2006:402) and Al *et al.* (2012:1472) state that family support services aim to connect at risk families with external resources that support these families and provide them with the capacity to improve the family's wellbeing.

A social work method through which family support services can be implemented is community work, since community work is a joint, planned action taken by a community and social welfare practitioner to promote the social functioning of the whole community (Integrated Service Delivery Model, Department of Social Development, 2006:15). During community work, social workers serve as change agents that aim to first develop and work with community groups and organisations, secondly to plan and develop appropriate intervention programs and third to implement, administrate and evaluate these programmes (Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, Gottfried & Larsen, 2006:14). According to Kelleher and Johnson (2004:298), family support services would typically offer a variety of services to families including information sharing, practical assistance, psychological counselling, education, child and family advocacy and personal and family development. Community

work can therefore serve as an effective social work method through which the above-mentioned services can be provided to all South African families.

Family support services may, at times, overlap with family-centred services, due to the preventative nature of both types of family preservation services, as well as the fact that both family support services and family centred services can be implemented through group work. The difference is that although family support services are available to all families in the community, family-centred services are specifically targeted to provide services to at risk families.

#### **2.4.2 Family-centred services**

Family-centred services are provided to at risk families where the aim is to reduce child abuse and neglect, address family violence, provide parent training, reduce parental substance abuse and build the protective factors within the family to enable them to become self-reliant (Ruffolo *et al.*, 2003:438). Furthermore Ruffolo *et al.* (2003:426) state that family-centred services are primarily focused on delivering services to at risk families, rather than exclusively to a child. Thus, according to Nephawe (2011:51), family-centred services acknowledge that a child is essentially a member of a family and should be seen in the context of their family unit. This means that intervention should be directed by the family members and aimed at family members developing and enhancing their own resources and capabilities to address problems. According to Holzer *et al.* (2006:8) the risk of child abuse and neglect is higher when parents lack the necessary child rearing capacities, social support and knowledge of child development. It is therefore important that interventions aimed at providing a child with a safe and supportive family environment should promote caring, consistent and positive parenting.

According to Michalopoulos *et al.* (2012:656) family-centred services prioritise family strengths, perspectives and involvement in order to render effective service delivery. Furthermore Ruffolo *et al.* (2003:438,441) state that family-centred services emphasise assessment of child and family needs, as well as the coordination of services in order to meet needs and build resilience in the family. Therefore family-centred services are primarily rendered through the implementation of casework and psycho-education groups.

According to Holzer *et al.* (2006:8) psycho-education groups provide the opportunity for parents to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes in order to better understand their

children's needs and enhance their own self-confidence. Furthermore Holzer *et al.* (2006:9) state that psycho-educational groups are viewed as an essential component of early intervention services rendered to at-risk families. This is due to the fact that psycho-educational groups with at risk families are focused on behaviour managing techniques, problem solving approaches and the development of personal coping skills. A review of family preservation services by Rodrigo, Byrne and Alvarez (2012:90) found that the social group work method, when provided to at-risk families, could be implemented as a sustainable intervention to prevent child abuse and neglect.

It is stated that groups should focus on eliminating the impact of risk factors and promoting protective factors in the community, the neighbourhood and in the family. This can be achieved through the promotion of positive parenting. Positive parenting refers to parental behaviour that is nurturing, empowering, non-violent and provides recognition and guidance. Positive parenting may involve the setting of boundaries in order to ensure the fulfilment of the best interest of the child and the optimal development of the child (Rodrigo *et al.*, 2012:91). Holzer *et al.* (2006:8) and Bell (2007:57) also mention that they view positive parenting as an effective early intervention strategy for at risk families.

A group work approach to family preservation services would entail that the social worker understands the parents need for social support in order to adequately perform their parenting task. The need for social support is especially important for families that are at-risk due to low educational background, poverty, lack of social support systems and substance abuse (Rodrigo *et al.*, 2012:91). According to Lewandowski and Pierce (2004:143), family-centred interventions are successful when the family is seen as the experts with regards to their needs and problems. The family are therefore collaborators in terms of intervention goal-setting and the mobilization of solutions. It is found that successful family-centred interventions are action orientated, empowering to the parents, culturally sensitive and carried out through the collaborative efforts with families.

Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:93) state that family-centred services are advocated to prevent the unnecessary placement of children in alternative care. They consist of interventions provided by social workers wherein the group work method could be seen as an appropriate method to effectively provide services to at-risk families, specifically parents.

### 2.4.3 Intensive family preservation services

Intensive family preservation services are intended for the highest at-risk family, where prevention and early intervention strategies have failed and the family is at imminent risk of having their children placed in alternative care (Kirk & Griffith, 2004:5). According to O'Reily *et al.* (2009:83), intensive family preservation services are aimed at families in crisis and at serious risk of child abuse and neglect. Therefore Berry, Cash and Brook (2000:191), Kirk and Griffith (2004:5) and McCowskey and Meezan (1998:62) state that intensive family preservation services are brief, intensive services for high-risk families in crisis with the goal of preventing removal of a child from the family home.

These services consist of short-term services (0-3 months) available to families that are in crisis due to the threatening removal of their children as a result of possible child abuse and/or neglect (Bagdasaryan, 2004:617; Berry *et al.*, 2000:191; Dagenais *et al.*, 2004:250; Strydom, 2012:438; Tracy, 1995:974). It is found in literature (Al *et al.*, 2012:1472; Bagdasaryan, 2004:617; Berry *et al.*, 2000:191; Dagenais *et al.*, 2004:250; Strydom, 2012:438; Tracy, 1995:974) that these services are facilitated by a social worker with a small caseload (about 2-6 families), who is available to the family 24 hours a day, with intervention mainly consisting of home visits or concrete services. Strydom (2012:438); Van Puyenbroeck, Loots, Grietens, Jacquet, Vanderfaellie and Escudero (2009:222); Bagdasaryan (2004:617); Lietz (2009:1337) and Al *et al.* (2012:1472) state that services mostly consist of a combination of educational services, counselling, help offered with financial problems, finding work, practical training and helping a family deal with a crisis situation in order to enhance their family functioning. According to Dagenais *et al.* (2004:250), intensive family preservation services have three objectives: namely to ensure the safety of the child, to improve the family's functioning and to try and prevent the alternative placement of a family member, which is viewed as the last resort. The social work method that could be viewed as most appropriate to implement with regards to intensive family preservation services may be casework.

According to the Integrated Service Delivery Model (Department of Social Development, 2006:15) casework utilises a variety of skills, techniques and other aids to facilitate a clients' participation in efforts to improve their social functioning. Due to the intense nature of service delivery to families at serious risk of statutory intervention, services are individualised and therefore effectively rendered through the social casework method.



Casework, as defined by Hepworth *et al.* (2006:14), is designed as a direct or clinical practice where social workers deliver services to individuals in a direct one-to-one consultation session.

For the aim of this study the focus will be on the delivery of family-centred services through group work, since Abdullah (2013:12) found group work proved to be an effective social work method if implemented in family preservation services.

## **2.1. SUMMARY**

It can be concluded that in South Africa the White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997:66) recognises the importance of the family as the fundamental unit of care, support and socialisation of society's members and therefore provides for the strengthening of family life in all its varied forms. Services pertaining to families in South Africa should therefore focus on prevention and early intervention in order to increase positive family functioning, before the removal of family members becomes necessary.

In this chapter the first objective of the research study was therefore reached by describing the role and function of the social worker with regards to family preservation services. The next chapter will focus on the second objective for this research study, which is to explain the need and nature for the employment of group work within the South African welfare context with the focus on family preservation services. Specific attention will be given to the successful use of the group work method during family preservation services.



## **CHAPTER 3**

# **THE UTILISATION OF GROUP WORK BY SOCIAL WORKERS AT NGOs IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

Social work with groups has long since been considered a part of the three key methods in social work practice, alongside casework and community work. Also referred to as mezzo (meso) social work, group work is a social work intervention method rendered to a multiperson client system with the aim to develop a planned change effort that meets the needs of the group as well as its individual group members (Berg-Weger, 2010:243). Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:89) state that in the area of child protection social workers still make limited use of group work as a social work intervention method.

This is unfortunate since Kurland (2007:12) states that in forming a group, the social worker makes the statement that every member in the group has something to offer others, thereby adding value to the person's existence and focusing on the strengths this individual has to offer to the group. According to Landy and Menna (2006:xvi) this is important to family preservation services as at-risk families may be stigmatised and viewed as resistant, uncooperative and chaotic while little hope resides in service providers that these families can change. Services rendered to at-risk families are therefore often fragmented and do not benefit the family, this is due to professionals closing client files quickly because at-risk families are resistant and drop out of programs or attend them sporadically. Multiple authors (Clements, 2008:329; Gutman & Shennar-Golan, 2012:138; Kurland, 2007:12) acknowledge that group work is a positive and optimistic way of working with a client system, therefore at-risk families may benefit tremendously through their involvement in a group.

Drumm (2006:18) refers to group work as a powerful method within the social work profession that is built on a specific theoretical framework and skill base. Clements (2008:330) acknowledges this but also states that group work can only be a powerful social work intervention if it is led by a knowledgeable, skilful and experienced social worker. It is

therefore important to ensure that group work is understood and that social workers are knowledgeable about this social work method.

In the following chapter the second objective of the study will be achieved, namely to discuss the group work method with regards to family preservation services. Attention will be given to the historical development of group work, different models of group work, types of groups, theoretical frameworks of group work, the role of the social worker in the context of group work, the advantages to utilising group work during family preservation services and the group work process.

## **3.2. DEVELOPMENT OF GROUP WORK**

Group work developed as a social work method in Great Britain and the United States through the international exchange of ideas during the Settlement Movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Glisson, Dulmus & Sowers, 2012:42; Seabury, Seabury & Garvin, 2011:403; Toseland & McClive-Reed, 2009:5). Glisson *et al.* (2012:45-46) states that the first Settlement House, Toynbee Hall in Whitechapel London, was based on the idea that is still paramount in many groups and community based initiatives of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that research into social problems and education is needed to improve the social functioning of local communities. Thereafter the Oxford House was created in 1884 and the Passmore Edwards House soon followed. As it grew, the Settlement Movement was initialised which gave many resources and opportunities to the poor. A closer look at the historical development of group work will follow where after the different models of group work will be identified and discussed with relevance to family preservation services.

### **3.2.1. History and development of group work**

Toseland and Rivas (2001:49) state that although group work is believed to have historically developed much later than casework, group work agencies only started a few years after casework agencies. Both casework and group work began in England and the United States, although casework began in charity organisations and group work grew mainly in English and American settlement houses.

According to literature (Berg-Weger, 2010:244; Toseland & Rivas, 2001:48), charity organisations focused on diagnosing and treating the problems of the poor, whereas settlement houses offered the poor the opportunity to gather together in groups and share their

views, receive mutual support and bring about social change. Seabury *et al.* (2011:402) acknowledge Toseland and Rivas (2001:48) when they state that group work of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century offered opportunities to participants with regards to socialisation, recreation, education and community involvement.

Through this philosophical approach the Settlement Movement and group work contrasted with the Charity Organisation Society (COS), with both fighting for supremacy as the social work method used at that time. The COS, which advocated for the individualistic form of interventions to alleviate poverty, won. Consequently it developed into the social work method known as casework and set the standard of individualistic and fragmented social work that still continues to be a strong tradition in social worker interventions today (Glisson *et al.* 2012:45).

The interest in social group work developed from the people who had led recreation groups, socialisations groups and adult education groups in settlement houses (Toseland & Rivas, 2001:49). According to Berg-Weger (2010:244-245) it was not until the 1930s that the term *group work* was first used, and group work was recognised as a professional social work method of intervention. This was greatly due to the Great Depression of the 1930s that inadvertently contributed to the growing use of social group work, as social workers were forced to mobilise support groups to help people cope with the devastation of the Depression.

Professionals continued to debate social group work's place within the social work practice. Controversy existed on whether social group work was a social work method, a recreational activity or a completely separate profession. Glisson *et al.* (2012:47) state that the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s saw the burgeoning of social group work initiatives. According to Berg-Weger (2010:245) in the 1960s the social work profession started viewing social group work as part of the social work practice, promoting the development of a similar skill set to casework for group work. By the 1970s social workers were facilitating a number of experimental social work groups.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many theorists focused on understanding and theorizing group work processes, analysis mostly came from the United States (Glisson *et al.*, 2012:47). According to Berg-Weger (2010:245), interest in incorporating social group work into social work practice continued to grow over the next 20 years. Group work became an integral part

in addressing the challenges and issues of client systems on individual, family, organisational and community levels.

The value in equipping all social workers with the knowledge and skills needed to facilitate a social work group is recognised by the social work profession. As a result, social work students are already introduced to group work theory and practice in their coursework and field experience while studying (Berg-Weger, 2010:245). Glisson *et al.* (2012:50) believes that the need for knowledge among practitioners has become even greater in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is because group work knowledge and skills have become necessary in dealing with the current complexities of social work practices in a globalising world with the internationalisation of social problems such as lack of housing, abuse poverty and crime.

According to Berg-Weger (2010:245), and acknowledged by Glisson *et al.* (2012:42), social group work has evolved into a social work method that can meet the multiple demands of the social work profession. This is due to its diversity and flexibility that can be implemented in a wide range of settings with a diverse population, using a variety of practice approaches at the individual, group and community levels. It is important to understand what group work is in order to reap the advantages of this method in social work, therefore group work will be defined below.

### **3.2.2. Definition of social group work**

Social group work can be defined as a social work method that uses the group work experience and group work process to help individuals grow, change and develop their own strengths and skills (Nicholas, Rautenbach & Maistry, 2010:122, Stevenson, 2006:195). According to Johnson and Yanca (2007:341) and acknowledged by Healy (2012:137), a group is a system of clients, or a multi-client system, that experiences common needs or interests with whom the social worker will work as a whole to address these common needs or interests through face-to-face interactions and a shared commonality. Authors (Dominelli, 2012:41; Hepworth *et al.*, 2006:283; Johnson & Yanca, 2007:341) state that social group work is rooted in the social interactions that occur between individuals when they come together to achieve particular goals associated with their social functioning. Therefore group work is also goal directed and in the following section the goals of a group and individual goals will be discussed as they pertain to family preservation goals.

### 3.2.3. Goal of a group

The social worker and group members agree upon the goal of a group regarding why the group is taking place, it provides the group with direction and can help to measure the group work progress (Collins, 2004:28). According to Johnson & Yanca (2007:341) and Nicholas *et al.* (2010:126) group work can have multiple goals.

Firstly a possible group work goal is **the need for preventative services**, for example assisting group members to solve their problems in order to prevent statutory intervention. Authors (Al *et al.*, 2012:1472; Dagenais *et al.*, 2004:250; Mullins *et al.*, 2012:265; Tracy, 1995:973) state that with regards to family preservation services the ultimate goal is to prevent the removal of family members from their home through providing preventative services that will enable children to remain safely in their own families. This goal of family preservation is therefore possible to reach through group work.

A second possible goal of group work is **the need for growth or skill development** in order to improve the social functioning of group members by helping them acquire a certain skill, such as anger management (Johnson & Yanca, 2007:341; Nicholas *et al.* 2010:126). With regards to skills development, authors (Al *et al.*, 2012:1472, Dagenais *et al.*, 2004:250; Mullins *et al.*, 2012:265; Tracy, 1995:973) state that family preservation services aim to increase the family's coping skills and competencies, in order to improve their social functioning. Group work could thus be utilised to develop the skills of family members.

Thirdly a group goal may be **the need for support**, this is done by developing a space for group members to comfortably share their feelings. This will in turn also contribute to effectively achieving a fourth goal of group work, namely **the need for counselling** (Johnson & Yanca, 2007:341; Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:126). With regards to family preservation it is important for family members to build networks while maintaining and strengthening family bonds, which can only be achieved through counselling. According to Tracy (1995:973), Al *et al.* (2012:1472), Dagenais *et al.* (2004:250) and Mullins *et al.* (2012:265) group work can be an effective way of also achieving these family preservation goals.

Nicholas *et al.* (2010:126) and Seabury *et al.* (2011:452) state that in every group there are group goals as a whole as well as individual group member's goals, but these individual goals should all link to the ultimate group goal. Individual goals will be discussed in the following section.

### 3.2.4. Individual goals

Berg-Weger (2010:243) and Healy (2012:137) state that group work is more than the achievement of the group's goal, since it is also focused on addressing individual needs. Individual goals can include firstly **the need for personal behaviour changes** (Berg-Weger, 2010:243; Healy, 2012:137). With regards to family preservation Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:93) state that the goal of making personal behaviour changes would contribute to the goal of stabilising the crisis situation that precipitated the need for alternative placement, such as helping family members realising their own negative behaviours, for example in parenting and/or communication.

Secondly Berg-Weger (2010:243) and Healy (2012:137) state that an individual goal can include **the need for information or education**. Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:93) found that during the delivery of family preservation services it is sometimes necessary for social workers to educate parents on more effective parenting skills.

Thirdly, an individual member may be **in need of support** (Berg-Weger, 2010:243; Healy, 2012:137), which is in agreement with the delivery of family preservation services (Rodrigo *et al.*, 2012:93), as families often need to receive support in parenting methods, career choices or personal relationships.

Lastly, a possible goal of an individual group member may be **the need to reduce isolation** (Berg-Weger, 2010:243; Healy, 2012:137). The goal to reduce isolation is also a possible goal of family preservation services since Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:93) state that during family preservation services the goal is also to help families identify and use both formal and informal resources in their communities in order to reduce isolation. It is clear from the above-mentioned discussion that there are multiple advantages to using group work in order to achieve the goals of family preservation services.

According to Nicholas *et al.* (2010:126), and acknowledged by Glisson *et al.* (2012:51), the ultimate efficacy of the group work process is directly linked to the accomplishment of both the individual and group goals. Furthermore authors (Berg-Weger, 2010:243; Seabury *et al.*, 2011:452) state that group work is based on the concept that the goal of the group is achieved due to the group members' interactions with one another and the on going and changing group elements. It is therefore important that the social worker understands the group work elements and the influence they have on the group functioning. Before the elements of group

work can be discussed, the different models of group work that have developed since group work became part of the social work profession in the 1960s should be identified.

### **3.3. MODELS OF GROUP WORK**

Certain group work models as identified by Sheafor and Horejsi (2010:80) are discussed below.

#### **3.3.1. Reciprocal model**

The reciprocal model of group work is focused on the dysfunctional behaviour of group members and the aim is to utilise the group work context as a method for changing the dysfunctional behaviour in individuals. Group members are often exposed to the disapproval of society and may be physically or mentally handicapped, isolated or alienated by society or are legal offenders or emotionally disturbed persons. This model is considered as a more clinical model that seeks to improve the social functioning of individuals through the group work experience. The key role of the social worker is therefore on providing expertise and therefore the social worker is the main facilitator of the group (Verma, 2014:212).

#### **3.3.2. Remedial or mediating model**

According to Verma (2014:233) the remedial model was introduced by Schwartz (1996) and is characterised by the resolution of conflict where the aim is directed towards reciprocal transactions between two parties. In the remedial model the different parties are significant components of the group and the role of the social worker is facilitative, relying on the power of the mutual aid system within the group. The remedial model for group work can be utilised when the aim of the group is to mediate a conversation between various parties that are in conflict with one another.

#### **3.3.3. Developmental model**

Verma (2014:236;237) states that the developmental model is based on the interactions amongst group members and their social environments. This model of group work is popular to use during family preservation services since the focus is on utilising the group to improve the situation between individual group members and their social environments, such as their family. It can be said that the developmental model is a compromise between the reciprocal and the remedial models with a bigger focus on developing the skills, knowledge and



capacities of a group member. According to Sheafor and Horejsi (2010:113) the developmental model is the preferred model to utilise when the focus is on promoting normal growth and development. It is also effective with the teaching of new skills in order to cope with problems or correcting dysfunctional behaviours, which is the focus of family preservation services.

### **3.3.4. Social goal model**

The social goal model is focused on social change, where social action is the desired outcome. The group is therefore concerned with democracy, enhancing personal functioning and social power within the social context. The social worker's role is that of enabler (Verma, 2014:237).

It is also important to understand that different types of groups exist, these types of groups will be identified and discussed as they pertain to family preservation services.

## **3.4. DIFFERENT TYPES OF GROUPS**

According to Berg-Weger (2010:246) different group work types include psycho-therapeutic groups, counselling groups, behaviour change groups, self-help groups, support groups, psycho-education groups and social action groups. Healy (2012:140) states that a wide variety of goals are fulfilled through utilising the group work method, most often the goal is for change to occur - the specific change required depends on the type of group. The different types of groups applicable to family preservation services will be discussed below.

### **3.4.1. Psychotherapeutic groups**

Psychotherapeutic groups are focused on the promotion of personal change through clients' understanding of themselves. Psychotherapeutic groups are usually offered together with individual counselling to clients. The group context provides a client with the unique opportunity to generate insight into their self through engagement with others that are experiencing a similar personal crisis, change or journey (Glisson *et al.*, 2012:52; Healy, 2012:141). According to Johnson and Yanca (2007:341) psychotherapeutic groups are for group members that have the need to overcome a major difficulty in social functioning.

Keeping the above-mentioned definition of psychotherapeutic groups in mind, it is apparent that this type of group can be effectively implemented in family preservation services due to



the focus it places on people in a personal crisis needing to undergo a personal change. Lewis (2005:501) states that an example of a psychotherapeutic group, when rendering family preservation services, can include a group with parents that are experiencing problems related to their social functioning, such as poor parenting choices or anti-social behaviour. A parenting group that is psychotherapeutic in nature was found to improve the functioning of the family as positive changes occurred with regards to important parenting techniques and practices. Family members identified that they understood their roles as parents better and could cope more effectively with normal life stressors.

### **3.4.2. Counselling groups**

Counselling groups are focused on exploring and learning from people that are in similar situations, i.e. group members have a common interest in the group (Healy, 2012:141). According to Johnson and Yanca (2007:341), a counselling group is defined as a group that aims to guide group members who are faced with important decisions or difficult problems. Healy (2012:141) states that in a counselling group the social worker plays an overt role focused on facilitating group members through a process of personal and group explorations, while a strong element of peer support also takes place.

According to Goodson, Layzer, St. Pierre, Bernstein and Lopez (2000:8) a counselling group, when rendering family preservation services, will focus on filling the gap between behaviour and knowledge through modelling desired behaviours in group work sessions. A counselling group during the delivery of family preservation services may be a counselling group for couples or a group with young mothers who find it difficult to care for their children.

### **3.4.3. Support groups**

Healy (2012:142) states that the focus in a support group is to enhance the capacities of members that are experiencing a similar challenge through supporting one another. Peer knowledge and assistance can enable members to manage and grow from the support they receive through a shared experience or challenge. Therefore, support groups have become increasingly common in social work.

According to Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:91) the need for social support is especially crucial to at-risk families where the task of parenting can only be successful if social support is available to the family. Landy and Menna (2006:253) state that for at-risk families a strong link exists

between the at-risk families' support systems (such as extended family, community members or friends) and the at-risk families' sense of competence and parenting behaviours.

Thus enhancing a parent's social support system can benefit the at-risk family. This can be done through involving the parents in a parenting group since involvement in a group helps parents identify with other parents and find support from parents in similar situation. For example, in family preservation services, a young parent's support group can be effective in enabling these parents to accept their youth parenting status. The support group also benefits them by exposing them to alternative parenting approaches through the social engagement of the group. The benefit of groups in exposing group members to other social systems is acknowledged by authors Berg-Weger (2010:243) and Dominelli (2012:41) who state that group work has offered social workers a way of moving beyond casework and linking individual clients with their social surroundings and available social systems in their communities.

#### **3.4.4. Psychoeducational groups**

The goal of a psychoeducational group is to develop group members' knowledge and skills to address a challenge or opportunity they may be facing (Glisson *et al.*, 2012:54; Healy, 2012:142). According to Holzer *et al.* (2006:9) psychoeducational groups, such as parenting groups, are an essential component of early intervention services rendered to at-risk families. Similarly, Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:91) found that parenting groups based on strengths of the family and psychoeducational goals had positive results and provided an important source of social support to at-risk families. Psychoeducation groups were successful with at-risk families as increases were noted in parental knowledge about child development and effective disciplining, as well as increases in parental confidence and the parent's capacity to handle everyday stresses.

According to Holzer *et al.* (2006:11) the most successful groups during family preservation services made use of a combination of parent education strategies, such as parental skill training, child development information, providing concrete services, medical assistance employment programs, behaviour skills training and therapeutic interventions. When an educational group is utilised during family preservation services, although the focus is on educating parents, Wilson, Ruch, Lymbery and Cooper (2008:488) note that it is also

important that a parallel group is run with the children in the family to ensure that the whole family is involved in service delivery.

Healy (2012:143) states that the type of group that a social worker uses can be any of the above-mentioned groups, or a combination of groups can also be used. Firstly, for example, a counselling group may also provide support to its members. Hepworth *et al.* (2006:283) states that whatever the type of group a social worker facilitates, it is important that the social worker firstly creates a group that can effectively achieve the group work goal. Secondly, the social worker should accurately assess the individual and group elements. Thirdly the social worker should intervene, when necessary, to modify the group work process in order to ensure that the group achieves its goals. Wilson, Ruch, Lymbery and Cooper (2008:488) found that the successful outcome of groups with at-risk families was higher if groups had a clear theoretical foundation and utilised an appropriate model for change. A discussion on the theoretical framework of group work will follow.

### **3.5. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF GROUP WORK**

The following section will explore the theoretical framework of group work with regards to the group work elements and pragmatics as they relate to family preservation, as well as the roles of a social worker during group work.

#### **3.5.1. Group elements**

Toseland and Rivas (2001:69) state that group elements are the result of forces that take place in a group due to the group member's interactions. According to Dominelli (2012:41), group elements can facilitate openness within the group by enabling group members to share their experiences, which is helpful for engaging people who may be challenging to work with on an individual level. This is especially relevant to groups implemented during family preservation services, Wilson *et al.* (2008:488) states that many at-risk families find the prospect of attending a group challenging since they lack confidence or have few social skills and may be difficult to engage with. Hepworth *et al.* (2006:283) states that the social worker must therefore skilfully determine the group's structure and composition by considering the following group work elements.

##### **3.5.1.1. Formation of a group**

The formation of a group is based on the careful considerations of the social worker about demographic characteristics of the group, which are influenced by the shared needs and requirements of the group (Glisson *et al.*, 2012:9; Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:127). According to Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:96) when utilising group work during the implementation of family preservation services, the social worker would complete a thorough assessment of the family and conduct home visits to determine the family's needs in order to address these expectations in group work.

When forming a group the social worker should consider if the group would be homogeneous or heterogeneous. **Homogeneity** refers to the personal characteristics that group members have in common such as level of education, culture, gender and age. **Heterogeneity**, in contrast, refers to a group where group members have a variety of different personal characteristics, such as different coping mechanisms, skills, life experiences and support.

Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:96) states that it is best to utilise a heterogeneous group during the implementation of family preservation services since it exposes group members to a rich variety of experiences from fellow group members, as well as creates an environment where knowledge is shared. It is also important to note the strength in forming a group with mixed levels of risk behaviour. By using mixed levels it allows families not to feel stigmatised and can ensure higher participation rates. Thus, a group may include parents that have drug related problems and parents with no drug related problems, or a group with parents that have no extended family and parents that have extended families. Furthermore, Nicholas *et al.* (2010:127) states that heterogeneity is helpful to group members since it exposes them to different coping skills and effective strategies that group members in similar situations have found useful to solve their problems.

Glisson *et al.* (2012:9) also believes that it is important to promote group participation during the early stages of a heterogeneous group, this will lead to diverse group members participating and sharing information which will help mediate the impact of heterogeneity in the group. If a heterogeneous group is utilised Nicholas *et al.* (2010:127) warns that it is the responsibility of the social worker to ensure that group members have enough characteristics in common to facilitate the group work process successfully, since a group with group members that have nothing in common can be unsuccessful in forming a bond between group members.

### 3.5.1.2. *Size of the group*

Authors Nicholas *et al.* (2010:128) and Seabury *et al.* (2011:421) state that the type and ultimate goal of the group heavily influences the size of it. Therefore it is the role of the social worker to carefully assess the advantages and disadvantages of the different group sizes. A group should be small enough to still allow the accomplishment of tasks, while big enough to ensure that group members have a satisfying group experience. According to Nicholas *et al.* (2010:127) and Becker (2005:34) the optimal group size is between five and seven members, with a maximum number of up to 10 group members.

A greater intimacy is created amongst group members of a small group, thus when the goal of the group is to help members share their feelings, a small group may be less threatening and enable group members to share easily. A negative aspect of a small group is that fewer ideas tend to be offered since fewer people are involved, whereas in a larger group more ideas, skills and resources may be available to group members.

Group members in a **larger group** have more opportunities for development, since they come in contact with additional role models. Although negatively, larger groups are more likely to form subgroups, have anonymity present, experience conflict and other communications problems. Consensus may be made more difficult, coordinating the leadership of the group may be challenging and group members may be lost within the group because they are quieter or less likely to share feelings (Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:129). When Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:98) conducted a descriptive analysis of group work with at-risk families they found that the size of the group had little influence on the success of the group, what mattered was whether the social worker had enough experience with both small and large groups.

### 3.5.1.3. *Open or closed membership*

Nicholas *et al.* (2010:129) states that open groups allow group members to join the group after the initial formation, while a closed group begins and ends with the same membership. With regards to **open groups** the social worker's biggest challenge is to ensure that the group is open to new group members and that alliances do not inhibit a new group member from participating in the group activities. The social worker should therefore ensure that group development and cohesiveness is not negatively affected by the continued changes in membership, this also means that changes in membership should not be too frequent or

extensive. Open groups are positive due to the fact that they allow for new ideas and new resources to enter the group.

In contrast, Nicholas *et al.* (2010:129) and Healy (2012:138) state that group members that form part of a **closed group** have a greater sense of cohesion, since roles and norms are stable and higher levels of motivation may be present amongst group members. The behaviour of the group may be more predictable, an increased sense of cooperation may be present and planning for the group is easier. The authors warn that a closed group can also be negative since a lack of new ideas may lead to conformity in a group, this is where group members start to form similar opinions and group development is inhibited.

#### ***3.5.1.4. Duration of group and frequency of group work sessions***

The **duration of group work** sessions depends on the goal of the group and the capabilities of the group work members (Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:130). Healy (2012:138) states that psychoeducational groups tend to be time-limited since they are focused on addressing a specific issue, while support groups tend to be open-ended because they focus on providing support for an extended period of time. Holzer *et al.* (2006:11) determined that with regards to family preservation services the duration of a group might be longer rather than shorter, with an average group running for between four to six weeks.

With regards to the **frequency of group sessions**, groups focused on psychoeducation may typically have weekly group sessions. Support group sessions tend to be regular in order to ensure that group members maintain their connection to the group and the content of the group (Healy, 2012:138; Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:131). Although, group work sessions should not be too close together, since group members should have the opportunity to consolidate what they have learned from the session (Healy, 2012:138). Thus the type of group utilised during family preservation services will determine the frequency of the group work sessions.

#### ***3.5.1.5. Duration and time of group work sessions***

The duration and time of each group work session is another important factor that the social worker should consider (Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:131). Seabury *et al.* (2011:421) and Healy (2012:138) state that the **duration of a group work session** needs to be long enough to ensure that each group member has the opportunity to participate in group work activities, but not so long that group members start to view the group work sessions as a burden. Healy

(2012:138) and Nicholas *et al.* (2010:131) state that most social group work sessions are between 1,5 and 2 hours, with 3 hours being the outer limit for most group work sessions.

Another important factor to note about the **time of group work meetings** is whether the group work meeting will take place during the day or night. According to Nicholas *et al.* (2010:131) and acknowledged by Seabury *et al.* (2011:421) this is influenced by the availability of the social worker and the group members. For example, some group members may prefer to come during the evenings so as not to miss work while others do not want to be away from home during the evenings. Nicholas *et al.* (2010:131) further states that the social worker should therefore prepare for considerable negotiations to determine the time of day that the meeting will take place, negotiations should also take place in order to ensure that participation in the group is high enough to achieve group work goals. According to Michalopoulos *et al.* (2012:660) social workers may encounter some obstacles with regards to determining an appropriate time to hold a group work session due to a lack of resources, such as transport, available to clientele. This lack of resources may affect the success of service delivery to at-risk families and inhibit social workers abilities to do their job effectively.

#### **3.5.1.6. Place of meetings**

The place of the meeting refers to the physical setting where the group meetings will take place, for example a classroom, boardroom or hall. According to Michalopoulos *et al.* (2012:660) social workers encounter certain obstacles when trying to utilise the group work method. An example of such an obstacle may be a lack of resources available to the social worker, such as appropriate venues, when rendering group work during family preservation services. Authors (Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:131, Seabury *et al.*, 2011:436) state that a proper meeting space refers to a room that is the right size, has appropriate lighting and is comfortable.

The **size of the room** should be carefully determined in advance since it may influence the interactions of the group members and the functioning of the group. A small room can be used to create closeness amongst group members, but a room that is too small can cause anxiety to those who may feel prematurely pressured to form intimate relationships with other group members. Therefore, a small room can lead to group members feeling discomfort



and developing negative behaviour patterns within the group. Yet if the room is too big it can create too much space between group members and group interactions can become limited.

Furthermore the importance of **comfortable seating** should also not be overlooked, nor should the arrangement of furniture. For example, the most effective way of ensuring that contact amongst group members is promoted is to arrange the seating in a circle. Another consideration should be that the **meeting place's lightning** is of a good standard and therefore free of distractions.

Seabury *et al.* (2011:436-437) further states that the place of the meeting not only refers to the physical setting of the group, but also the **way in which group members arrange themselves** in the available space. For example, group members feeling isolated may choose to sit on the outside of the group work circle, this may indicate a physical and emotional removal of the group members from the group. Therefore, if more chairs are available than there are members, the social worker has the opportunity to observe where each group member decides to sit. This may provide the social worker with knowledge about the group member roles as well as subgroups that may be forming within the group. During family preservation services, the above-mentioned elements should also be considered, since the places that a family member chooses to sit may provide valuable information to the social worker with regards to their attitude and emotional state.

### **3.5.2. Group pragmatics**

Group pragmatics refers to client concerns such as the time of the meetings, the travel expenses they might incur, and potential childcare or the language the meeting will be conducted in. Groups may sometimes be formed based on agency considerations, i.e. agency goals, room availability, and social worker availability. Although such considerations are important, they should not form the basis of group development. It is important that certain group pragmatics are considered before a group starts since a group that is formed around the needs and circumstances of the client system is more likely to be successful in terms of group attendance and group performance (Glisson *et al.*, 2012:7,8). Possible group pragmatics will be discussed below.

#### **3.5.2.1. Motivation issues**



If a group member's needs are not compatible with the group's goals then they will also be less motivated to attend the group work meetings. The social worker may need to use motivational enhancements, such as free meals, if motivational issues fluctuate. If during the rendering of family preservation services it occurs that a family is not motivated to attend a group, it can become the social worker's role to make the family understand the benefits of group work for that family. This can be done through building a close relationship with families and trying to make them realise that the social worker is trying to prevent the alternative placement of a child and therefore they can trust him/her (Glisson *et al.*, 2012:7, Michalopoulos *et al.*, 2012:661).

In a study completed by Michalopoulos *et al.* (2012:661) it was found that social workers experienced difficulty when engaging in at-risk families due to resistance from the family during family preservation services. Participants revealed that keeping families engaged was a constant struggle due to the duality of the relationship, which refers to the social worker being both the family's support system and the agency that has the authority to remove children. This duality in the relationship causes a level of distrust that influences the family's motivation to interact with the social worker. The study also revealed that such a challenge was resolved through honesty and understanding. Being honest with the family about what is needed from them, as well as the consequences if the necessary changes are not made, helps a family to be engaged since they understand their role. Family preservation services rely on the commitment of the family in order for the outcomes to be positive for a child and family. However, such a commitment can be a long-term commitment and when other life stress issues are experienced the social worker will be challenged to keep the family involved.

#### **3.5.2.2. *Life stress issues***

Life stress issues refer to the life situations that group members may experience that inhibit parents from attending group meetings in the evenings, such as having children at home that need supervision or having a full time job that doesn't allow for attendance to group meetings during the day (Glisson *et al.*, 2012:8). Michalopoulos *et al.* (2012:662) revealed in their study that it is important for the social worker rendering family preservation services to understand the developmental stage and needs of the family and involve each family member in the intervention process.

#### **3.5.2.3. *Pattern of life issues***

Pattern of life issues are times during the day, week, month or year that may make it difficult for group members to attend the group. Examples of this are when families with young children find it difficult to attend sessions over school holidays. It is important that the social worker acknowledges these patterns and develops a programme that works around them. This could, for example, be done by setting up all the dates of the group work meetings beforehand so group members are aware of the group work meetings in advance and can plan around them (Glisson *et al.*, 2012:8).

#### **3.5.2.4. Cultural issues**

Cultural issues refer to language, values and other culture-related barriers that may inhibit certain group work activities. Although a group can function with certain cultural issues present, the social worker and the group members should acknowledge and understand these issues beforehand, in order to ensure that the group work process is positive and successful (Glisson *et al.*, 2012:8). Due to the important services rendered during family preservation services, it may be of great importance that all group members understand the language spoken during group work sessions. The social worker may therefore need to determine if all group members understand and are comfortable with a certain language before the group work process starts. Other roles of the social work when utilising the group work method will be examined in the following section.

### **3.6. THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL WORKER IN GROUP WORK**

According to Lang (2004:38) and Healy (2012:137) the social workers role is to facilitate the group work process. This role can range from a formal leadership role where the social worker is responsible for establishing the structure and overall content of the group, to an informal role where the social worker only manages the group work process, but the group members establish the structure and content of the group work process. According to Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:98) with regards to utilising group work when rendering family preservation, groups are more successful if the social worker works in collaboration with the family and avoids lecturing or a top-down approach.

Lang (2004:41) states that in order for social workers to ensure that they work in collaboration with the group they should be orientated and attuned to the group. This means that they should simultaneously recognise the needs and problems of individual members, as well as the interpersonal and interactional engagement of group members, for example

through determining if subgroups are visible. Furthermore it's important that the social worker constantly evaluates the functioning of the group as an entity, the group work program content and process. Consequently considerable demand is placed on the social worker to be aware of, sensitive to and understanding of all that takes place in the group, to ensure that the appropriate intervention can be provided as the group's needs arise.

The social worker is therefore required to be flexible, open and able to surrender control to benefit the group. The social worker's role should not be overwhelming since the group can function without intervention at times, and as the group work process develops the social worker's role is allocated when and where needed at various stages of the process (Drumm, 2006:20). According to Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:96,98) it is important that social workers continue to build on their knowledge and expertise in order to ensure that they can effectively render services to at-risk families through group work, attending workshops or other professional development programmes can do this. The success rates of groups were higher when social workers were younger, since they still had early professional motivation.

As previously stated in this chapter the utilisation of group work when implementing family preservation services holds various advantages for the social worker, a closer discussion of these advantages will commence in the following section.

### **3.7. ADVANTAGES TO UTILISING THE GROUP WORK METHOD WHEN RENDERING FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES**

An examination by Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:95:97) into family preservation services revealed multiple advantages for social workers when they implemented group work as an intervention strategy for at-risk families. It is stated that groups are sustainable and benefit at-risk families. This is only if social workers saw the group work method as a resourceful planning method for intervention with families, or as services not merely applicable to prevention but also intervention with high risk families and/or a method of professional observation of a family. It is important that the social worker has the right attitude and motivation to run a group with at-risk families.

Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:89) further states that in the area of child protection social workers still make limited use of group work as a social work intervention method. Social workers thus need to comprehend the multiple advantages to utilising group work during the rendering of family preservation services in order to ensure that group work is used more regularly.

Swanepoel (2009:85) and Healy (2012:139) both state that group work is especially relevant when the social workers aim is to provide education, reduce isolation, promote social action and build support, which can be directly linked to the aim of family preservation services. According to Healy (2012:139) group work can provide group members with the opportunity to learn from fellow participants who are in similar situations or are experiencing similar issues. Furthermore groups offer group members a safe place to practice new skills and receive the necessary motivation and direction to make positive changes in their lives. According to Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:91) the outcomes for at-risk families when professionals utilise group work during the rendering of family preservation services include: increases in parental knowledge, positive disciplining strategies, increases in parental confidence, reduction in isolation, the development of practical skills to deal with everyday stressors and an overall decrease in at risk behaviours in families.

Drumm (2006:20) states that group work does not only benefit and enhance the social functioning of individual participants, but if conscientiously practiced by social workers this social work method can also enhance the participating organisation's functionality. Healy (2012:139) acknowledges that the group work method is one of the most important methods used by a social worker, while according to Berg-Weger (2010:244) the essential strength of group work is that together as a group more can be accomplished, whether the desired change is on an individual or community level.

Healy (2012:139) and Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:95:97) both acknowledges that group work can be an efficient and effective practice, since it allows the social worker to facilitate a greater number of people within a shorter amount of time than is possible with one-to-one casework. According to Clements (2008:330) due to high caseloads a demand has grown for short-term, cost-effective treatment, therefore group work has become an increasingly important aspect of the social work practice. This is especially relevant in family preservation services as it was stated in the previous chapter that South African child and family welfare organisations are under-resourced and unable to provide the necessary child protection services due to a global and local increase in families being exposed to abuse and neglect (Ismail, Taliep & Suffla, 2012:1; Loffell, 2008:83; Meintjies & Van Niekerk, 2005:3). Thus, due to the various advantages mentioned, it is important that social workers start to utilise the group work method more often when rendering family preservation services.

In the following section, specific attention will be given to the group work process.

## 3.8 THE GROUP WORK PROCESS

The group work process is the totality of the dynamic interaction that is purposefully and consciously driven by a qualified social worker and takes place in order to enhance growth and change in-group members (Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:132). Authors Meneses, Ortega, Navarro and de Quijano (2008) and Glisson *et al.* (2012:23) state that the group work process occurs due to group development. Group development refers to the subtle changes that occur in group elements during the different group stages. The group will make the necessary changes in order for an optimal level of “groupness” to be created where group members can grow and change their behaviour or social functioning.

According to Toseland and Rivas (2009) there are a wide variety of theories available on the stages of group development. Healy (2012:144) acknowledges this, but adds that most theories draw attention to the changing group dynamics that occur at different stages in the life of the group and that group leaders have differing responsibilities across these stages.

Healy (2012:144) states that the most influential of these theories are the five-stage model of group development initially articulated by Tuckman (1965) and later elaborated on by Tuckman and Jensen (1977). Furthermore according to Healy (2012:144) the influence of this five-stage model of Tuckman and Jensen (1977) has streamlined the work of social workers into a practical model for group work intervention. By recognising the different challenges that are likely to emerge as the group develops, the social worker can be prepared and use the challenges as opportunities to respond to members in a constructive way. Therefore leading the group members through the developmental challenges and creating an environment where change can occur.

### 3.8.1 Beginning phase

The beginning phase of a group consists of the preforming and forming stages (Healy, 2012:144).

#### 3.8.1.1 *Preforming stage*

During the preforming stage the tasks involve establishing the initial goals of the group, determining the formation of the group and developing a group work contract (Healy, 2012:144, Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:139, Berg-Weger, 2010:258). In some situations the group members will be involved during the preforming and forming stages, taking some of the

responsibility and performing some of the required tasks. Although in most cases the social worker will take on a formal and active leadership role especially if the group is a new initiative. With regards to family preservation services it is often best for the social worker to do the latter and take a formal leadership role in the beginning in order to ensure that the group develops effectively, to the benefit of all group members. This is acknowledged by Berg-Weger (2010:254), who states that when the social worker has the opportunity to determine group membership it may help ease the process of engagement by attending to factors that influence group dynamics.

Berg-Weger (2010:253) also states that tasks involved in the preforming stage are necessary for a group to be successful as it contributes to the cohesion of the group, enabling the quick execution of group work tasks and attendance by group members. According to authors Berg-Weger (2010:258) and Nicholas *et al.* (2010:138) the social worker works in collaboration with the group members to create the group and individual goals, using specific measurable tasks and reachable outcomes. This can be done by weighing the advantages and disadvantages within the group while identifying possible barriers to achieving the goals, providing links between individual and group goals and identifying appropriate resources available to the group.

As previously mentioned, Nicholas *et al.* (2010:139) states that a group work contract is also developed during this stage of the group work process. This ensures that there is a clear understanding by both the social worker and group members about the group goals, the time line of the group as well as the rules that will guide the group work process. Furthermore, a group work contract is a form or agreement between the social worker and the group members that helps keep parties accountable. It is designed to clarify the needs, expectations and role of each member involved in the group. This is acknowledged by Berg-Weger (2010:258) who states that by developing a group work contract or agreement, group members are able to make a commitment not only to the group, but also to themselves to fully participate in the group work process.

According to Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:93) social workers planning a family preservation group, such as a support group or psychoeducation group, will carefully assess their caseload during this phase and determine the families that may best benefit from the involvement in a group. As previously mentioned, the family should be motivated to change and participate as well as be available for service delivery. Furthermore, the families should be assessed with regards to

their needs and possible individual goals. This is in order to determine if enough common variables exist between families in order for a group to be of advantage to the development of the families.

Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:93) further state that a continuum of at-risk families should be considered, rather than focusing only on families in certain situations in order to avoid stigmatisation and lack of social integration of at-risk families. A typical family preservation group would include low-income families that exhibit poor, inconsistent and unresponsive parenting practices, lack personal empowerment, inadequate supervision of children and neglect their basic needs, as well as families who lack effective managing skills.

### **3.8.1.2 Forming stage**

The forming stage starts during the initial engagement of group members, when the key tasks are to develop relationships among group members and the group leader, while orientating group members about the group goal and the necessary tasks involved in reaching these goals (Berg-Weger, 2010:255, Healy, 2012:144). According to Healy (2012:144), group members may have several doubts about the groups goal, what their role in the group will be and whether they belong in the group. The doubts of group members are acknowledged by Nicholas *et al.* (2010:138) who states that when group members come together for the first time a group does not yet exist, it is the primary task of the social worker to ensure, during the beginning phase, that the group members find commonalities and form a bond that is beneficial for all group members. For example, during the beginning phase of a support group, group members may tend to speak to the social worker, it is important that the social worker motivates group members to speak to the group and react to what other group members are saying, thereby establishing relationships between group members.

In family preservation services the family's input and involvement in the process is prioritised, therefore family preservation diverges from traditional practice and places greater emphasis on the engagement of the family in order to facilitate positive outcomes (Michalopoulos *et al.*, 2012:662).

### **3.8.2 Middle phase**

The middle phase of the group work process consists of the storming, norming and performing stages of group work. In the middle phase the work involved in achieving the goals of the group occurs, yet this phase is also often characterised by conflict (Healy,



2012:145). According to Stevenson (2006:203) creating group cohesiveness, establishing relationships and trust among group members, increasing intimacy and encouraging risk-taking are a few of the tasks of the social worker during the middle phase.

### **3.8.2.1 Storming stage**

During the storming stage conflict amongst the group members becomes apparent and they start to test out relationships and challenge each other within the group sessions. In some instances group members will also seek dominance within the group, this is a natural part of the group work process, since group members who go through the storming stage determine their role, status and place in the group (Berg-Weger, 2010:260; Healy, 2012:145, Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:140). According to Nicholas *et al.* (2010:140) the middle phase is characterised by the development of social interaction patterns within the group, where group members are starting to explore their own life situations and their subsequent involvement in the group work process.

The middle phase may provide the greatest challenge for the social worker and group members since this phase involves changing group member's attitudes and behaviours as well as completing tasks (Berg-Weger, 2012:258). Seabury *et al.* (2011:469) and Berg-Weger (2012:258) state that although conflicts may be negative, such as violent or abusive interactions, it is mostly a positive element of the group work process. Healy (2012:145) acknowledges this and adds that it is within conflict that the social worker has the opportunity to understand and address the sources of conflict.

According to Nicholas *et al.* (2010:140) another aspect of this phase is resistance, and some members may still be resistant to the group work process. It is important that the social worker enhances positive motivation and reduces the occurrence of resistance. Indications of this may be group members arriving late for meetings, being silent, arguing to prove other members wrong, expressing subtle insults or being openly hostile.

Berg-Weger (2012:260) states that during the middle phase the group work process may also be disrupted by group members creating obstacles, such as talking too much, not fulfilling tasks and obligations or being overly critical. It is the social worker's responsibility to ensure that disruptions are monitored and addressed, either during the group work session or afterwards by suggesting alternative ways of interacting with group members or modelling appropriate behaviours during the group work session. Nicholas *et al.* (2010:140) states that



if all goes well during the storming stage, the group will develop strong group characteristics. The group members will have stronger relationships, be motivated to continue working together, accept each other and develop a group cohesion. This creates the opportunity for group members to start developing group norms, thereby starting the norming stage.

### **3.8.2.2 Norming stage**

The norming stage refers to the development of the group's norms. This involves the expectations about the roles of group members and appropriate behaviour during group work (Healy, 2012:146; Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:133). Seabury *et al.* (2011:427) state that some group norms may be verbalised during the beginning phase of the group, such as common ground rules, such as no smoking, develop into group norms. Group norms develop over time with the help of interactions amongst group members, such as not interrupting when others speak. Furthermore, authors Healy (2012:146), Nicholas *et al.* (2010:133) and Glisson *et al.* (2012:19) state that the social worker has an important role to play in ensuring that group norms that block the achievement of group goals are challenged.

According to Glisson *et al.* (2012:19) norms influence group member's behaviours and increase the stability, predictability and security of the group that will ensure that group members' focus on reaching group work goals. The norming and performing stages are therefore complimentary. Healy (2012:146) acknowledges the complimentary relationship between the norming and performing stage by stating that a stable foundation of norms, developed in the norming stage, leads to a motivated group that will perform the necessary tasks to the benefit of the group, in the performing stage.

### **3.8.2.3 Performing stage**

The performing stage refers to the working stage of the group process. During this stage the group is cohesive and the focus is on achieving the goal of the group by engaging in the process of mutual aid (Healy, 2012:147; Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:141). According to Drumm (2006:21), mutual aid refers to the group members ability to articulate and conceptualise their own needs, as well as recognising and responding to the needs of other group members. Mutual aid enables group members to see commonalities with other group members, while empowering participants to listen and interact with other group members. This will create an environment where group members can support and assist one another with their personal goals. Previously established goals and tasks are accomplished in this stage. Nicholas *et al.*

(2010:141) states that this is done by facilitating group dynamics, while helping group members overcome the obstacles to their goals.

The social worker should strive to facilitate and encourage positive group work interactions, high morale and commitment from all group members. The group is now less dependent on the social worker and struggles less against the social worker's authority.

For example, according to Healy (2012:147), during this stage the social worker may need to provide the group with stimulating activities that challenge and develop the growing capacities of the group. The group members may also start to take more responsibility for leadership roles, such as preparing activities that focus on actively contributing to the learning of others in the group. Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:93) states that the content of a family preservation group would be based on approaches with regards to parental knowledge and skills, attachment, communication and conflicts, life transitions or family stress. Due to the low education level and diverse backgrounds of at-risk families, activities would include case studies, videos, games or group discussions. According to Berg-Weger (2010:258), as the social worker and the group members progress they engage in on-going evaluations to determine if group and individual goals need to be revised.

### **3.8.3 Ending phase**

The ending phase (also referred to as the adjourning, termination, final or closure phase) of the group occurs when the group has either achieved its goal or when closure of the group is imposed by external events, such as the loss of funding. Regardless of the reason for the closure of the group, this stage provides an opportunity for the group members to reflect on the experience of the group, what they have learned and to transition out of the group in a positive way. This phase includes the evaluation and termination of the group work process (Healy, 2012:147, Berg-Weger, 2010:261-262).

#### **3.8.3.1 Evaluation stage**

During the evaluation stage all group members should take an active part in evaluating their role and the changes that occurred during the group work sessions, this will enable group members and the social worker to review what was learned and the changes that occurred as a result of this learning experience (Berg-Weger, 2010:261, Healy, 2012:160, Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:143). According to Healy (2012:147) tasks carried out in this stage are usually led by

the social worker and entail the formal evaluation of the group process and achievements, as well as providing constructive feedback on the progress that each member has made. According to Berg-Weger (2010:261) evaluation at the group work level can be more complicated if compared to individual level, this is because individual and group goals need to be evaluated, as well as evaluating the group work process. In a more structured group, such as a behaviour-change group, the process of evaluation may be more formal, whereas with a support group that is on going, open evaluation may take place in a regular and more informal way.

Evaluation should be part of the group work process from the beginning and should take place on a regular basis, but the closing evaluation serves a variety of different functions. It provides the group members and the social worker with the opportunity to determine if their personal and group goals were achieved. If personal and group changes took place it can be determined if future intervention is needed and what the general impact of the group was on the lives of all members involved. If the group or personal goals were not achieved it can determine why they weren't (Berg-Weger, 2010:261). In addition to evaluating the group the ending phase also involves the termination of the group process, if it is determined that the group will end.

### **3.8.3.2 Termination stage**

The termination stage involves the ending of the group as an entity. (Healy, 2012:163; Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:142). According to Nicholas *et al.* (2010:143) there are several ways to determine if a group is in the termination stage. These include when the aims of the group are met, when group members start to discuss the changes that have occurred in their lives or when the structure of the group sessions are more lenient. As well as when spontaneity takes place more regularly, attendance is lower and group members are more inclined to build relationships outside the group.

Authors Berg-Weger (2010:262), Healy (2012:163) and Johnson and Yanca (2007:341) state that the termination stage may occur for the individual member or for the group as a whole. This is dependent on whether the group is time limited, based on a specific goal or whether the group is open-ended. For example, if the group is a support group that is ongoing, when a member has fulfilled their goal they will leave the group. Although this process of termination may involve the whole group, it is not the termination of the group but the

termination of one group member's participation in the group. During the termination stage the role of the social worker is to help facilitate the closure, resolve any group member's remaining unresolved feelings of conflict, make plans to maintain the changes that were made during the group and reducing the cohesion of the group (Berg-Weger, 2010:262, Healy, 2012:163; Nicholas *et al.*, 2010:143).

### **3.9 SUMMARY**

In this chapter the second objective of the research study was achieved by discussing the need and nature for the employment of group work within the South African context, with the focus on family preservation services. This was done by providing an outline of the group work method in social work practice. Specific attention was given to the historical development of group work, the definition of group work and the goals of group work. Furthermore the different models and types of groups were discussed, as well as the theoretical framework of group work and the role of the social worker when utilising the group work method. Finally, the various advantages of utilising group work during the implementation of family preservation services and the group work process itself were discussed.

During this chapter the researcher argued that the group work method, as a means to enhance family preservation services, has multiple advantages since the group work method itself provides the client system with an environment where change can occur and group members can learn from each other. The next chapter will focus on the third objective for the research study, which is to investigate the utilisation of group work during family preservation services.

## **CHAPTER 4**

# **EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF HOW SOCIAL WORKERS AT NGOs UTILISE GROUP WORK IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the results from the empirical investigation, with regards to the utilisation of group work during the implementation of family preservation services, will be outlined. According to the aim and objectives of the research study, the social workers role with regards to family preservation services as well as the need and nature of group work within family preservation services, was investigated. In order to fulfil the third objective of the research study, this chapter will focus on analysing the data obtained through the empirical investigation and present it as a narrative with figures and tables.

This chapter will start with a description of the empirical investigation, thereafter the results from the empirical investigation will be divided into three main sections: identifying particulars of respondents, family preservation services and the utilisation of group work during family preservation services.

### **4.2 EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

The empirical investigation was conducted in the way it was outlined in chapter one of the research study. The research approach, including the research design, research method and method of data analysis for the research study will be discussed below.

#### **4.2.1 Research approach**

For the aim of the research study, the research approach is based on a combination of both a qualitative and quantitative approach. Creswell (2009:27) states that a quantitative approach will help the researcher measure objective facts and a qualitative approach will enable the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of a social problem. Therefore a combination of the qualitative and quantitative research approaches enabled the researcher to develop a clear perception of the utilisation of group work during the implementation of family preservation services.

### **4.2.2 Research design**

The research design of the research study consisted of an exploratory design and descriptive design (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006:43; Creswell, 2009:26). The exploratory design has enabled the researcher to measure and analyse collected data from a quantitative approach in order to develop insight into a specific situation. According to the aim of the research study it is also important that the social workers meaning, experience and perception of group work when rendering family preservation services be described. Therefore descriptive research design was also utilised in order for the researcher to effectively describe the implementation of the group work method by social workers during the implementation of family preservation services.

### **4.2.3 Research method**

In the following section the research method that consisted of a careful literature study that contributed towards understanding family preservation services and the utilisation of group work during family preservation services will be discussed. Thereafter a purposive sample was determined by the researcher from the available population, and the inclusion criteria for this sample will also be discussed.

#### ***4.2.3.1 Literature study***

Fouché and Delport (2011:133) highlight the importance of a literature study by stating that it contributes towards understanding the nature, scope and meaning of an identified problem. A careful literature study was completed by the researcher whereby various resources were studied in order to develop a clear insight into the utilisation of group work during the implementation of family preservation services. The literature study enabled the researcher to acquire and establish a theoretical framework for this research study.

#### ***4.2.3.2 Sampling***

The sampling of a research study is defined by Bless *et al.* (2006:86,98) and De Vos *et al.* (2011:48) as a subset of people that have similar characteristics to the population, but is a much smaller group. Generalisation can therefore be drawn from findings within the sample to the overall population. For the aim of the research study a purposive sampling method was utilised since the researcher was responsible for determining the characteristics, age, race,

culture and socioeconomic status of all respondents involved in this research study. The sample is part of the population and complies with the inclusion criteria discussed below.

#### **4.2.3.3 Population**

According to Bless *et al.* (2006:98) the population of a study is the set of people who are the focus of the research study. The population for the research study was all social workers that render family preservation services. The participants were therefore all social workers rendering social work services at a child and family welfare organisation in the Western Cape Metropolitan area. For the aim of the research study the provincial managers of all the organisations were contacted telephonically in order to gain permission to complete the research study. The provincial managers of seven child and family welfare organisations in the Western Cape Metropole area gave their permission for the empirical investigation. Thereafter the researcher provided the provincial managers with the necessary information and informed consent documentation to send to their social workers. Upon agreeing to partake in the research study social workers were asked to complete the informed consent documentation and the researcher contacted the participants telephonically to arrange a research interview. Research interviews were conducted with twenty social workers that complied with the inclusion criteria.

#### **4.2.3.4 Inclusion criteria**

For the aim of the research study the following inclusion criteria were determined to ensure that that the sample is representative of the population:

- The participant must be a social worker with at least six months working experience, currently working for a child and family welfare organisation in the Western Cape, South Africa,
- The participant must either currently be working in family preservation services or have extensive experience working with children at risk of abuse in South Africa.

#### **4.2.4 Data collection methods**

The data for this research study was collected through a semi-structured interview schedule during separate interviews with twenty respondents. This enabled the researcher to collect both qualitative and quantitative data since the semi-structured interview schedule consisted

of both open and closed questions. The researcher did a literature study beforehand in order to determine the compilation of the semi-structured interview schedule. The results of the investigation were captured, coded and presented in tables, figures and narrative style. Themes and subthemes were identified in order to determine relevant patterns in the collected data.

#### **4.2.5 Data analysis**

The aim of the data analysis is to help the researcher understand the various elements of the data by breaking it up into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships (Mouton, 2011:108). The researcher constructed a semi-structured interview schedule based on literature from chapters two and three, the findings of the research was then coded and represented by means of figures and tables. This enabled the researcher to identify consistent and relevant patterns within the data. The data from the research study will consequently be discussed in the following section.

### **4.3 RESULTS FROM THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

The following section will focus on analysing the results of the empirical investigation, obtained through the completion of a semi-structured interview schedule. These results are analysed and the analysed results are presented in a narrative style, accompanied by tables and figures.

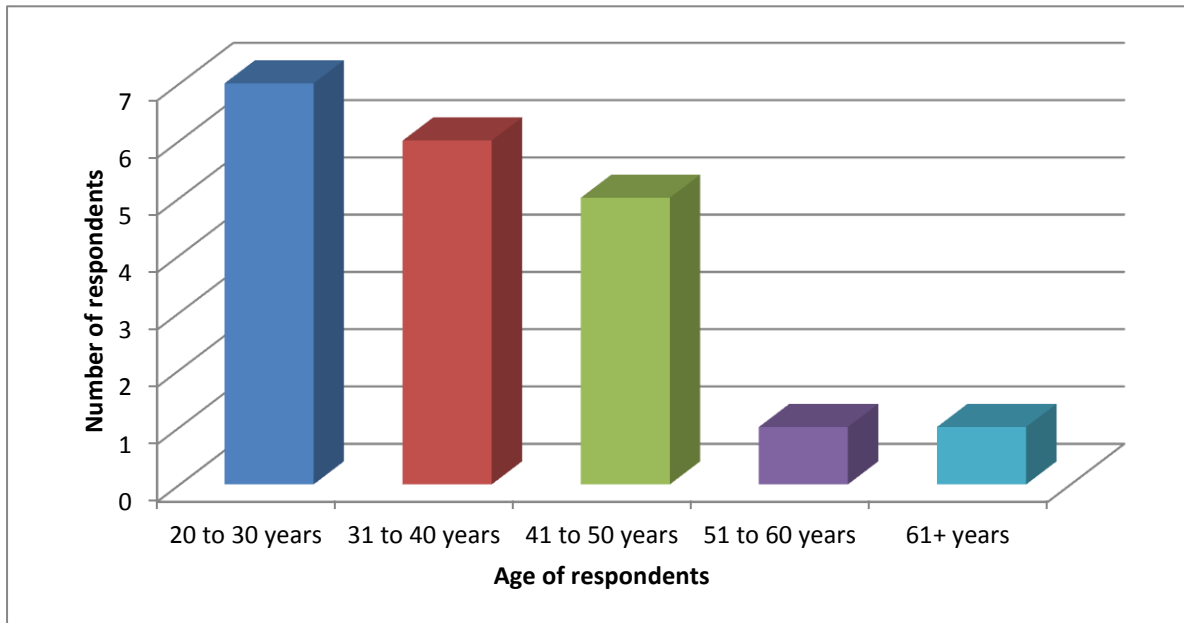
#### **4.3.1 Identifying particulars of respondents**

The identifying particulars of the respondents will be presented in terms of the age of respondents, the years of working experience the respondents have, the length of time they have worked at their current organisation, their highest qualification in social work and any other in-service training the respondents have received. The data will be considered in order to gain knowledge and insight into the research sample.

##### ***4.3.1.1 Age of respondent***

The respondents were asked to indicate their age. The results obtained are shown in Figure 4.1.





N = 20

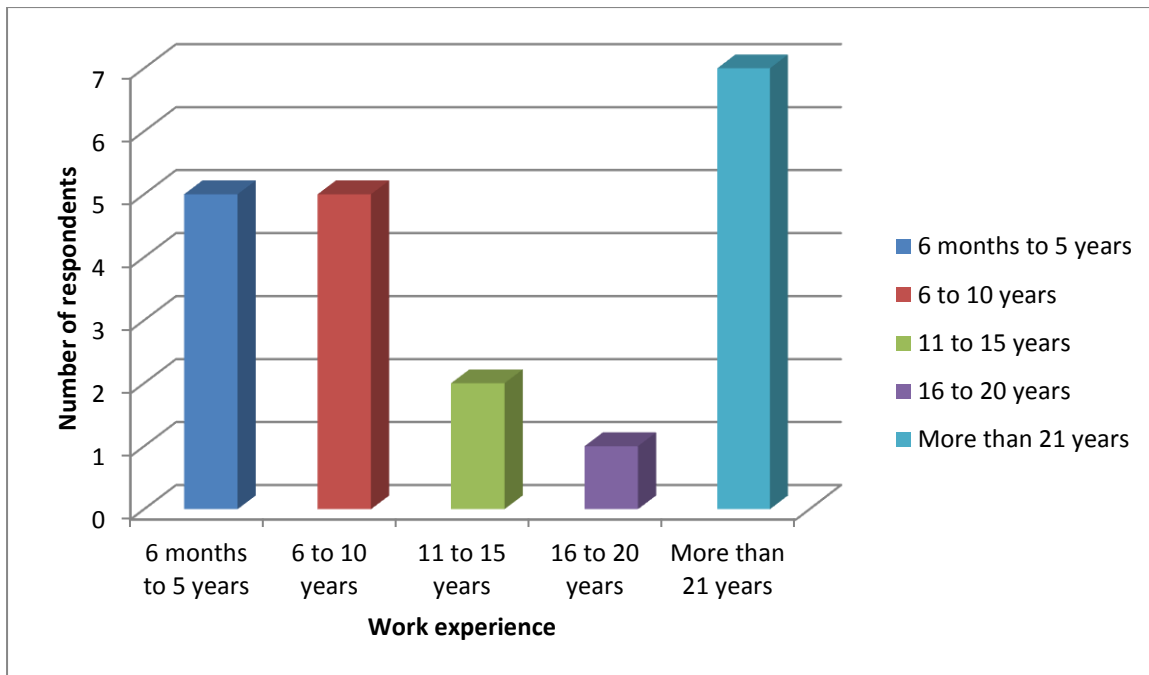
**Figure 4.1: Age of respondents**

From Figure 4.1 it is clear that the majority of respondents (7 = 43%) are between **twenty to thirty** years of age. This is followed by six respondents (6 = 27%) that are between the ages of **thirty-one and forty** and five respondents (5 = 20%) that are between **forty-one to fifty** years of age. The minority of respondents (1 = 5%) were between **fifty-one and sixty years** of age and only one respondent (1 = 5%) was above the age of **sixty-one years**.

The respondents in the research study can therefore be classified as either young adults and/or social workers in middle adulthood. This means that family preservation services rendered in the Western Cape by child and family welfare organisations are primarily rendered by social workers either in young or middle adulthood.

#### **4.3.1.2 Years of experience**

Respondents were asked to provide an indication of the number of years that they have been practicing social work. The results are shown in Figure 4.2.



N = 20

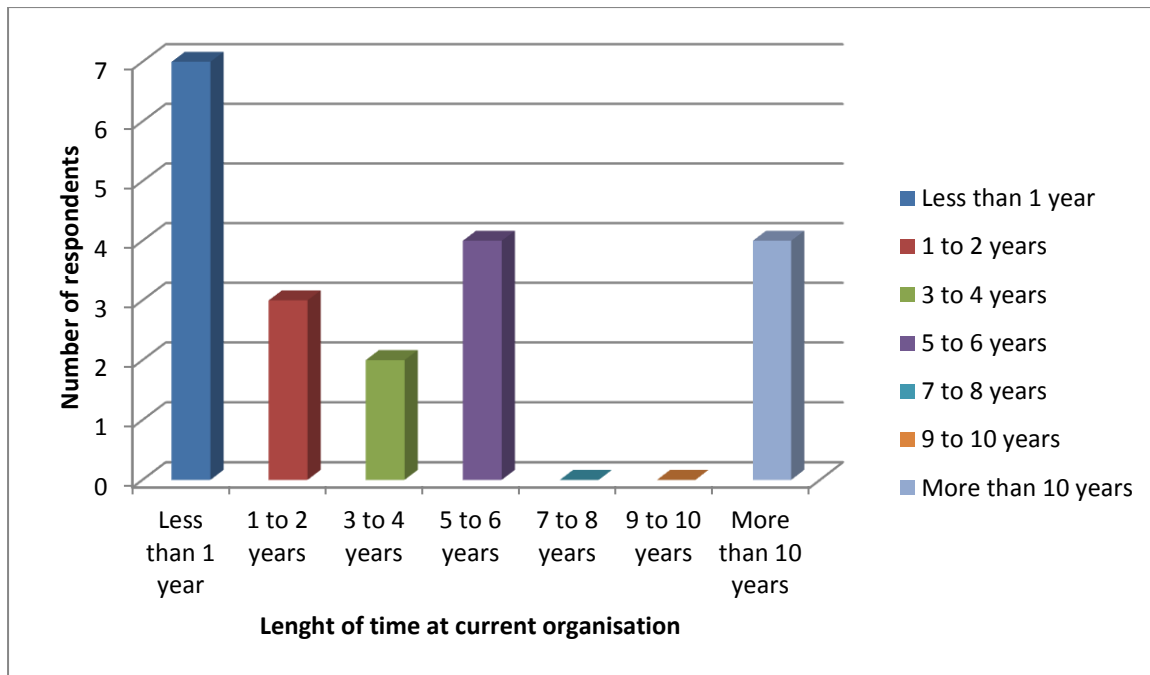
**Figure 4.2: Years of experience**

Figure 4.2 shows that five respondents (5 = 25%) indicated that they have been working as a social worker for between **six months and five years** and five respondents (5 = 25%) indicated that they have between **six and ten years** of work experience as a social worker. Two respondents (2 = 10%) fall in the category of **eleven to fifteen years** and only one respondent (1 = 5%) indicated **sixteen to twenty years** of working experience. Lastly, seven respondents (7 = 35%) indicated that they have more than twenty-one years of work experience.

The finding is therefore that the years of experience of the respondents in this research study is quite balanced since respondents with less working experience together with respondents with more work experience were all part of the research study. This enhances the research study since a balanced view from different respondents with varying years of experience could be collected.

#### **4.3.1.3 Length of time at current organisation**

Respondents were asked to indicate the length of time that they have been employed by their current organisation. The data obtained is depicted in Figure 4.3.



N = 20

**Figure 4.3 Length of time at current organisation**

According to Figure 4.3 seven respondents (7 = 35%) have been working for their organisation for **less than one year** and three respondents (3 = 15%) indicated that they have been with their organisation for between **one and two years**. Two respondents (2 = 10%) indicated **three to four years** as the length of time they have been working at their current organisation and four respondents (4 = 20%) have been working at their organisation for between **five and six years**. It is noticeable from Figure 4.3 that no respondents (0 = 0%) indicated between either **7 and 8 years** or **9 and 10 years**, while four respondents (4 = 20%) indicated that they have been with their organisation **for more than ten years**.

The finding is that the majority of respondents (16 = 80%) indicated that they have been with their current organisation between 0 and six years. It can be inferred therefore that although most respondents have more than a year of working experience the respondents of this research study have limited work experience in their current organisation. Furthermore, despite earlier findings in this chapter that some respondents do have more than 21 years of work experience, it is found that the majority of respondents have been with their organisations for less than one year. Thus it seems that respondents change organisations often and do not stay at one organisation for long periods.

#### 4.3.1.4 *Highest qualification in social work*

The respondents were requested to indicate the highest qualification that they have achieved in social work. The information that was collected is presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Highest qualification in social work**

<b>Highest qualification in social work</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Diploma in Social Work	2	10
B. Social Work	1	5
B.A. Social Work (3 years)	1	5
B.A. Social Work (4 years)	10	50
B. Social Work (4 years)	1	5
B.Diac. Social Work	2	10
Honours B.A. Social Work	0	0
M.A. Social Work	3	15
D.Phil. Social Work	0	0

N = 20

According to Table 4.1 the majority of respondents (10 = 50%) indicated that their highest qualification in social work is a **B.A. Social Work (4 years)** degree. Three respondents (15%) indicated that their highest qualification is **M.A. social work**. Furthermore an equal amount of respondents (2 = 10%) indicated their highest qualification in social work as a **Diploma in social work** or **B.Diac social work**, respectfully. From the results it is clear that no respondents (0 = 0%) have an **Honours B.A. social work** or **D.Phil social work** qualification. It appears that the majority of respondents therefore have a four-year degree in social work as their highest qualification.

#### 4.3.1.5 *Other in-service training relevant to family preservation services and group work*

The participants were requested to indicate other in-service training that they have that is relevant to family preservation services or group work. The results are indicated in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Other in-service training relevant to family preservation services and group work**

<b>In-service training relevant to family preservation services and group work*</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>No other relevant in-service training</b>	9	45%
<b>In-service training relevant to family preservation</b>		
Risk Assessment	3	15%
Strength perspective	2	10%
Binding theory	1	5%
Trauma counselling	1	5%
Children's Act	7	35%
<b>In-service training relevant to group work</b>		
Experiential group work	4	20%
Parenting guidance	2	10%
Mediation	3	15%

N = 20

\*Participants could provide more than one answer.

From Table 4.2 it is apparent that almost half of the participants (9 = 45%) do not possess any other in-service training relevant to group work or family preservation services. Three respondents (3 = 15%) indicated that they attended in-service training with regards to **risk assessment** while two respondents (2 = 10%) stated that they received in-service training with regards to the **strength perspective**. One respondent (1 = 5%) attended a course about the **binding theory**, another one respondent (1 = 5%) did a course focused on **trauma counselling** and seven respondents (7 = 35%) indicated that they received training on the **Children's Act**. The majority of respondents (14 = 70%) therefore have other in-service training relevant to family preservation services.

Other in-service training relevant to group work was found to be less common, with four respondents (4 = 20%) indicating that they have training in **experiential group work**, three respondents (3 = 15%) indicating that they were part of in-service training related to **mediation** and only two respondents (2 = 10%) attended a course with regards to **parenting guidance**. Thus, although the majority of respondents did receive other in-service training

relevant to family preservation services, they did not complete any other in-service training relevant to group work.

The finding that most of the respondents are not provided with other in-service training in group work is relevant since authors Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:96) state that it is important that social workers continue to grow their knowledge and expertise in order to ensure that they can effectively render services to at-risk families through group work, this can be done by attending workshops or other professional development programmes. The lack of in-service training for respondents with regards to the utilisation of group work during the implementation of family preservation services may therefore lead to respondents struggling, in their services to at risk families, to effectively incorporate group work.

### **4.3.2 Family preservation services**

The views of participants were obtained, with regards to the guidelines set out in South African policy documents, regarding the delivery of family preservation services. These are services delivered to at risk families to prevent the removal of children, and the social work intervention method utilised most often when rendering family preservation services.

#### ***4.3.2.1 Views of participants on the implementation of family preservation services with regards to policy documents***

The views of participants were obtained on how the requirements set out in The White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997) and the Integrated Service Delivery Model (Department of Social Development, 2006) guide their service delivery. The narratives of participants were divided into sub-themes and categories, which are presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3 Views of participants on the implementation of family preservation services with regards to policy documents**

<b>THEME: Views of participants on the implementation of family preservation services with regards to policy documents</b>		
<b>SUB-THEME:</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>NARRATIVES FROM PARTICIPANTS</b>
1. Difficult to implement family preservation services	1. Lack of resources	<p>“... but it is very difficult because <u>we don’t have resources</u>.” [<i>“... maar dit is baie moeilik want ons het nie hulpbronne nie.”</i>]</p> <p>“With frustration... because <u>there aren’t resources</u>.” [<i>“Met frustrasie... omdat daar nie bronne is nie.”</i>]</p>
	2. Workloads are too heavy	<p>“And the <u>workload</u> makes it so that I cannot... always effectively render those services.” [<i>“En die werklading maak dit van so dat ek nie... effektief daai diens kan lewer nie.”</i>]</p> <p>“You know you have to do it... even plan for it, but you half <u>don’t get to it</u>.” [<i>“Jy weet jy moet dit doen maar dit... jy beplan dit selfs maar jy kom half nie baie daar uit nie.”</i>]</p>
	3. Low participation from families	<p>“... it’s difficult... parents <u>don’t participate</u>...” [<i>“... dis moeilik... ouers gee nie samewerking nie...”</i>]</p> <p>“... they <u>aren’t interested</u>...” [<i>“... hulle stel nie belang nie...”</i>]</p> <p>“It’s difficult... the people... <u>aren’t interested</u>...” [<i>“Dit is moeilik... die mense... stel nie belang nie...”</i>]</p>
2. Family preservation services are implemented	1. Prevent removal of children	<p>“I’m a reasonable advocate for <u>not removing a child unnecessarily</u> from the family system.” [<i>“Ek is ‘n redelike voorstaander dat ‘n kind nie onnodig verwyder moet word uit die gesinsisteem nie.”</i>]</p> <p>“Well it is very important for me to try and keep the family together <u>rather than removing children left and right</u>.” [<i>“Wel dit is vir my baie belangriker om eerder te probeer om die gesin bymekaar te hou as wat jy net kinders links en regs verwyder.”</i>]</p> <p>“Yes, it is a big focus...mmm what we... we</p>

<b>THEME: Views of participants on the implementation of family preservation services with regards to policy documents</b>		
<b>SUB-THEME:</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>NARRATIVES FROM PARTICIPANTS</b>
		concentrate on... mmm we <u>aren't so quick on removing children...</u> ["Ja, dit is 'n groot fokus mm, wat ons, ons op konsentreer mmm, ons is nie so gou daarop om kinders te verwyder nie..."]
		"... that it should be the <u>last option with regards to removal...</u> " ["... dit die laaste opsie moet wees wat verwydering betref..."]
	2. Educate parents and improve parenting skills	<p>"... must do groups with the parents... <u>to improve parenting skills...</u>" ["...met die ouers moet groepe hou...ouerskapsvaardighede verbeter..."]</p> <p>"...everything focuses on <u>parenting support...</u>" ["... alles fokus op ouerleiding..."]</p> <p>"... to <u>teach skills</u> to parents..." ["... om ouers vaardighede aan te leer..."]</p>
	3. Focus is on working with the family system	<p>"We must now <u>first work inside the family</u> and see whether we can't help the family so that the child can stay within the family." ["Ons moet nou eers binne die gesin werk en kyk of ons nie die gesin kan help sodat die kind binne die gesin bly nie."]</p> <p>"...we focus on the <u>strengthening of the family...</u>" ["... ons fokus op die versterking van die gesin..."]</p> <p>"... but to first <u>work with the family...</u>" ["... maar eers met die gesin te werk..."]</p> <p>"... we concentrate on... <u>first working with the family...</u>" ["... ons op konsentreer... maar om eerder eers met die gesin te werk..."]</p>



(a) *Difficult to implement family preservation services*

The first sub-theme that emerged is the fact that seven participants (7 = 35%) indicated that it is difficult to render family preservation services according to the guidelines in South African policy documents. Three categories were identified in this sub-theme.

With regards to the first category, it is the view of three participants (3 = 15%) that family preservation services are difficult to render due to a **lack of resources**. This view is acknowledged by various South African authors, such as Loffell (2005:83), Ismail, Taliep and Suffla (2012:1), Strydom (2008:300) and Meintjies and Van Niekerk (2005:3) who state that child and family welfare organisations are under-resourced and unable to provide the necessary child protection services, such as family preservation services. A study by American authors Michalopoulos *et al.* (2012:660) found that social workers rendering family preservation services stated that they struggled to render efficient work due to limited resources available. Thus social workers in South African encounter the same struggle from a lack of resources in communities and therefore have difficulty rendering family preservation services. Furthermore the lack of resources in communities is unfortunate since Marziali *et al.* (2006:402) found that a lack of resources in communities can be the cause and effect of family problems.

The second category that was identified refers to the views of four participants (4 = 20%). They state that their **workloads are too heavy** and they are therefore unable to effectively render family preservation services. According to participants, when they finally receive a case it is already too late for prevention or early intervention. This view corresponds with other South African literature that states that many families do not receive preventative services, such as family preservation services, due to the limited time available for social workers to render services in relation to their high workloads (De Villiers, 2008:22; Kleijn, 2004:46,93; Strydom, 2008:211; Strydom, 2012:445). The negative effect of heavy workloads on the rendering of family preservation services was also found in the United States of America in a study done by Michalopoulos *et al.* (2012:660), social workers expressed their concern with the high workloads and the negative effect that has on delivering good quality family preservation services.

The third category revolves around the fact that three participants (3 = 15%) view family preservation services as difficult to render, according to the guidelines provided in various

South African policy documents, such as The White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997) and the Integrated Service Delivery Model (Department of Social Development, 2006), due to **low participation from families**. The view of participants that families involved in family preservation services are uncooperative is confirmed by Landy and Menna (2006:xvi) who found that social workers in the United States of America experience family preservation services as difficult to implement due to families being resistant, uncooperative, chaotic and little hope residing with social workers that these families can change.

*(b) Family preservation services are implemented*

The second sub-theme identified, according to Table 4.3, is the view that great emphasis is placed on the rendering of family preservation services. This is a majority view since fifteen participants (15 = 75%) indicated that they place great emphasis on the rendering of family preservation services. Four different categories were identified in this sub-theme and these categories correlate with the aim and content of family preservation services.

The first category refers to nine participants (9 = 45%) who indicated that their focus is to **prevent the removal of children**. According to participants the aim of family preservation services are therefore to keep the family together and prevent the alternative placement of children. This view corresponds with the literature since Tracy (1995:973) and Dagenais *et al.* (2004:250) state that family preservation services are built on the rationale that the unnecessary alternative placement of children should be prevented while services aimed at preventing alternative placement are being rendered to their family. Furthermore this view is confirmed in The White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:38) and the ISDM (Department of Social Development, 2006:9,33) where it is stated that family preservation services are those essential child protection services rendered to at-risk families in order to prevent the unnecessary placement of children.

The second category identified is the fact that according to five participants (5 = 25%) when rendering family preservation services the focus is to **educate the family and improve parenting skills**. Participants indicated that it was important to include the biological parents in services that would enhance their parenting. This could entail including the families in parenting groups or support groups, where the focus would be on teaching parents new parenting skills. The view that family preservation services should focus on educating at-risk

families are acknowledged by Tracy (1995:973) and Dagenais *et al.* (2004:250) who state that family preservation services are focused on children remaining safely in their biological family homes where they have the opportunity to develop in their own biological family environment, while services aimed at improving the skills and knowledge of family members are provided to their family.

Furthermore this view that participants see services aimed at educating the family as essential corresponds with the aim and content of family preservation services since various South African policy documents, such as The White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:38) and the ISDM (Department of Social Development, 2006:9,33), state that family preservation services should focus on educating family members and therefore teaching new problem-resolution and parenting skills.

The third category identified states that according to eight participants (8 = 40%), when delivering family preservation services, the **focus is on working with the family system**. According to participants services rendered to the family system provide family members with the opportunity to address individual problems, such as drug abuse, domestic violence or poverty. This view that services are aimed at strengthening the family is acknowledged by literature since various authors (Dagenais *et al.*, 2004:250; Tracy, 1995:973) state that family preservation services should focus on the family as a whole and services should be rendered to ensure that all family members receive the required intervention to ensure that children can remain safely within their own biological family homes.

Furthermore The White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:38) and the ISDM (Department of Social Development, 2006:9,33) state that family preservation services are those services that prevent the unnecessary alternative placement of children through immediate intervention that defuses the crisis situation, this can be done by helping family members enter the necessary rehabilitation centres or helping a family member complete all the necessary forms in order to apply for a job.

#### 4.3.2.2 Views of participants on the type of services delivered to at-risk families to prevent the removal of children

The participants were asked to discuss the type of services they provide to at-risk families in order to prevent the removal of children. The narratives of participants were divided into sub-themes and categories. The data is summarised in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4 Views of participants on the type of services delivered to at-risk families to prevent the removal of children**

<b>THEME: Views of participants on the type of services delivered to at-risk families to prevent the removal of children</b>		
<b>SUB-THEME:</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>NARRATIVES FROM PARTICIPANTS</b>
1. Services aimed at prevention	1. Utilisation of community based programs	<p>“We have volunteers... that <u>keep an eye on the children’s</u> safety for us...” [<i>“Ons het ook vrywilligers...wat vir ons ‘n ogie hou or al die kinders se veiligheid...”</i>]</p> <p>“We focus on <u>awareness programs.</u>” [<i>“Ons fokus op bewusmakingsprogramme.”</i>]</p>
2. Services aimed at early intervention	1. Investigation through risk assessment	<p>“...mmm <u>we assess</u>... we look at the risks...” [<i>“...mmm ons assesseer... ons kyk na die risiko’s...”</i>]</p> <p>“Okay we have the <u>risk assessment</u> that we do... basically we do home visits, to investigate...” [<i>“Okay ons het mos nou die Risk Assessment wat ons dan nou doen... basies gaan ons mos tuisbesoek doen, ondersoek in te stel...”</i>]</p> <p>“So the first step is then to do <u>risk assessment.</u>” [<i>“So die eerste stap is dan ‘n risiko assessering.”</i>]</p>
	2. Include the whole family and extended family members in intervention	<p>“... yes and you have to try to <u>involve the family resources</u> as much as possible...” [<i>“... ja en jy probeer maar soveel as moontlik van die familie bronne te betrek...”</i>]</p> <p>“So a person should try and get the whole family together to, to <u>work on those things [problems] [inside the family].</u>...” [<i>“So mens moet die hele gesin bymekaar probeer kry om, om daai dinge [problem] uit te werk [in die gesin]...”</i>]</p>

THEME: Views of participants on the type of services delivered to at-risk families to prevent the removal of children		
SUB-THEME:	CATEGORY	NARRATIVES FROM PARTICIPANTS
	3. Services through the casework method	<p>“Mostly a lot of <u>individual interviews</u>.” [<i>“Meestal baie individuele onderhoude.”</i>]</p> <p>“<u>Individual intervention</u>... to eliminate everyone’s problems...” [<i>“Individuele intervensie... om almal se probleme te elimineer...”</i>]</p>
	4. Increase parenting skills through inclusion in parenting groups	<p>“... support services, and we have the <u>parental groups</u> and we have our ECP program.” [<i>“... ondersteuningsdienste, en ons het die parental groups en ons het ons ECP program.”</i>]</p> <p>“... focused a lot on insight development, <u>focused a lot... to change the parents thoughts on parenting</u>.” [<i>“... baie gefokus op insig ontwikkeling, baie gefokus... om die ouers se denke oor opvoeding te verander.”</i>]</p> <p>“So firstly we would <u>place the parents in the parenting group</u>... just so to educate them...”</p>
	5. Facilitate the family’s use of community resources	<p>“She can also <u>refer them to the necessary help inside the community</u>.” [<i>“Sy kan vir hulle ook verwys na die nodige hulp binne in die gemeenskap...”</i>]</p> <p>“So you try to refer as much as you can... <u>to resources</u>...” [<i>“So jy probeer maar te verwys so veel as wat jy moontlik kan... na bronne toe...”</i>]</p>

(a) *Services aimed at prevention*

The first sub-theme that was identified refers to participants (4 = 20%) that stated that the type of services rendered to at-risk families were preventative services. In this sub-theme one category was identified and was the view that the type of services rendered to at-risk families were preventative and mostly rendered through **the utilisation of community-based programs**. Only four participants (4 = 20%) are of the view that preventative services are the type of services available to at-risk families when rendering family preservation services, which is unfortunate due to the emphasis that is placed on preventative services by the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:81).

Furthermore according to literature (Matthias, 2004:173, De Villiers, 2008:22 & Holzer et al., 2006:3) and the Integrated Service Delivery Model (Department of Social Development, 2006:15) family preservation services directed at the general population through community work enables social workers to do preventative work ensuring that all families receive the necessary support. The fact that only four respondents (4 = 20%) indicated that they render prevention services as part of family preservation services is detrimental to South African communities. This is supported by evidence that Marziali *et al.* (2003:441) found in a study, completed in Canada, indicating that the lack of available support services to families given by the implementation of community based programs, were both the cause and effect of family problems in Canada.

The finding that the minority of participants utilise community based programs as part of the type of services rendered to at-risk families does however correspond with findings earlier in this chapter that communities lack available resources in order to render these preventative services. Therefore services delivered to at-risk families through community-based programmes would be limited due to the lack of resources available in communities.

*(b) Services aimed at early intervention*

The second sub-theme identified refers to services rendered to at-risk families by sixteen participants (16 = 80%) on the level of early intervention. In this sub-theme five categories were identified. The first category refers to the fact that nine participants (9 = 45%) render services to at-risk families by means of an **investigation through risk assessment**. The view of participants is that the type of services rendered to at-risk families would include doing a risk assessment. According to participants an investigation through risk assessment aims to determine the children's safety and whether they can remain safely in their family. The view that an investigation into the circumstances of the children should be included in family preservation services correlates with legislation. It is stated in Section 155 of The Children's Act that it is the responsibility of the social worker to determine through comprehensive investigation whether a child is in need of care and protection and consequently whether that child should be placed in alternative care.

In the second category, eight participants (8 = 40%) mentioned that services are aimed at **including the whole family and extended family members in intervention**. The view that the type of services delivered to at-risk families should focus on the family as a whole and

render services to all family members with the specific aim of helping families make use of resources inside their family correlates with literature and the goal of family preservation services. Al *et al.* (2012:1472), Dagenais *et al.* (2004:250) and Mullins *et al.* (2012:265) state that a primary goal of family preservation services is maintaining and strengthening family bonds and therefore services include the whole family and extended family to help families use resources within the family.

The third category refers to eight participants (8 = 40%) and their view that their services are **services rendered through the casework method** and individual interviews. Casework refers to services, such as individual interviews, aimed at addressing individual needs within the family, such as alcohol abuse or unemployment and is consistent with the third primary goal of family preservation services. This view that family preservation services are rendered through casework corresponds with literature since various authors (Al *et al.*, 2012:1472, Dagenais *et al.*, 2004:250; Mullins *et al.*, 2012:265) state that the goal of family preservation services is to stabilise the crisis situation using individual interviews to focus on specific stressors experienced by the family and contributing to the crisis situation.

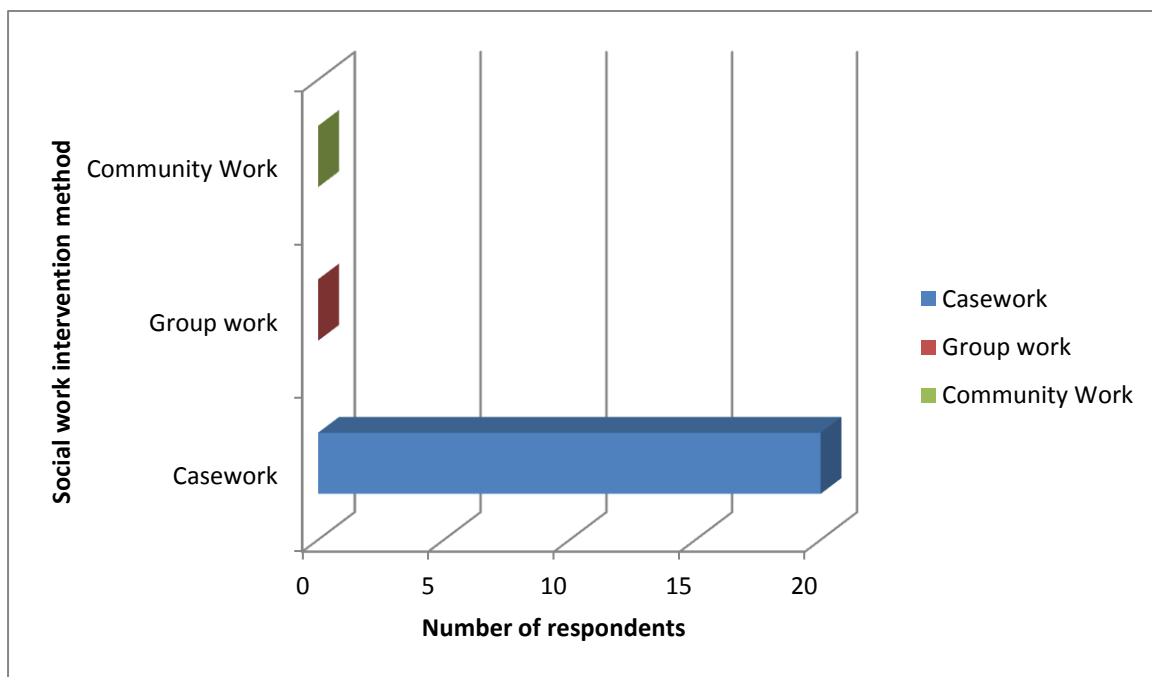
In the fourth category the focus is on sixteen participants (16 = 80%) that indicated that they focus on **increasing parenting skills through inclusion in parenting groups**. In this category the view of participants was that the type of services that are delivered to at-risk families aims to increase parenting skills through involving parents in parenting groups. This view of participants, that the skills and competencies of the family can be increased through involvement in parenting groups is in agreement with literature since authors, Al *et al.* (2012:1472), Dagenais *et al.* (2004:250) and Mullins *et al.* (2012:265), state that the goal of family preservation services is also to increase the family's coping skills and competencies.

The last category states that the view of two participants (2 = 10%), with regards to the type of services delivered to at-risk families, is focused on **facilitating the family's use of community resources**. The view that participants would utilise resources inside the family's own community to render family preservation services corresponds with literature and the goal of family preservation services. Al *et al.* (2012:1472), Dagenais *et al.* (2004:250) and Mullins *et al.* (2012:265) state that another possible goal of family preservation services is to facilitate the family's use of appropriate formal and informal community resources.

The conclusion can therefore be made that the majority of participants view these types of services rendered to at-risk families as early intervention services. According to participants, the focus of service delivery is on completing a risk assessment with the family and including the family and extended family members in the intervention. Individual interviews with family members, increasing parenting skills through inclusion in parenting groups and facilitating the family's use of community resources are means to achieve family preservation. This view correlates with the definition and five goals of family preservation services as identified by Al *et al.* (2012:1472), Dagenais *et al.* (2004:250) and Mullins *et al.* (2012:265).

#### 4.3.2.3 *Social work intervention method utilised when rendering family preservation services*

The respondents were asked to identify the social work intervention method that they utilise most often during family preservation services. The results are indicated in Figure 4.4.



N = 20

**Figure 4.4: Social work intervention method utilised when rendering family preservation services**



In Figure 4.4 it is shown that the social work intervention method utilised most often by respondents when rendering family preservation services is casework. All the respondents (20 = 100%) indicated that casework is their preferred method to utilise when implementing family preservation services. This finding correlates with literature as authors Trevithick (2005:100) and Kammerman (2011:244) state that social workers working in child and family welfare organisations refrain from utilising the group work method during the implementation of family preservation services, often working individually with family members through casework.

Earlier in this chapter it was determined that in-service training completed by respondents with regards to group work was limited. Thus it is possible that respondents do not have the necessary knowledge about the advantages of utilising this social work intervention method when rendering family preservation services. This could mean that respondents do not feel comfortable or equipped enough to implement this social work method and could therefore explain why respondents refrain from utilising the group work method.

### **4.3.3 Utilisation of group work in the implementation of family preservation services**

The following section will focus on the empirical research results regarding the utilisation of group work during family preservation services. The views of participants were obtained with regards to how group work is utilised when implementing family preservation services. Taking into account the type of group utilised, the group work model utilised, the advantages of group work and the obstacles encountered when utilising group work during the implementation of family preservation services.

#### ***4.3.3.1 Views of participants on how group work is utilised as an intervention strategy during the delivery of family preservation services***

The participants were asked to indicate how they utilise the group work method during family preservation services. The sub-themes and categories that emerged as well as the narratives of participants are shown in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5 Views of participants on how group work is utilised as an intervention strategy during the delivery of family preservation services**

<b>THEME: Views of participants on how group work is utilised as an intervention strategy during the delivery of family preservation services</b>		
<b>SUB-THEME:</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>NARRATIVES FROM PARTICIPANTS</b>
1. Do not utilise group work during the delivery of family preservation services	1. Only foster care workers utilise group work	<p>“We do not do the groups... That is... <u>with foster care.</u>” [<i>“Ons doen nie die groepe nie... Dis by die... pleegsorg.”</i>]</p> <p>“... No... I did however do group work with <u>foster children and my foster parents.</u>” [<i>“... Nee... ek het wel groepwerk gedoen met pleegkinders en my pleegouers.”</i>]</p> <p>“... the <u>foster care</u> section do have foster parenting groups with their foster parents.” [<i>“... die pleegsorg afdeling het wel met hulle pleegouers baie pleegouergroepe.”</i>]</p>
	2. Would rather utilise group work when implementing reunification services	<p>“... group work for me comes in more... as a <u>condition for reunification with a child,</u> to then commit this family to attend group work sessions...” [<i>“... groepwerk kom vir my baie meer in ... as voorwaarde vir die terugplasing van die kind, om dan hierdie gesin te commit om groepwerksessies by te woon...”</i>]</p> <p>“... it is maybe more of an option <u>when the child has already been removed...</u>” [<i>“... dit is dalk meer ‘n opsie as die kind klaar verwyder is...”</i>]</p> <p>“... not necessarily... as a prevention method... you can utilise it <u>as part of the... statutory process...</u>” [<i>“...nie noodwendig... as ‘n voorkomings maatreël... jy kan hom benut as deel van die... statutêre proses...”</i>]</p>
2. Utilises parenting groups	1. Implement parent guidance programmes	<p>“...we have a <u>parenting guidance programme...</u> and we involve all parents.” [<i>“...ons het ‘n ouerleidingsprogram... en ons betrek alle ouers.”</i>]</p> <p>We have <u>parenting guidance programmes</u> that we present.” [<i>“Ons het ouerskapleidings programme wat ons aanbied.”</i>]</p> <p>“... the only one is the <u>parenting guidance groups.</u>” [<i>“... die enigste ene is die ouerleidingsgroepe.”</i>]</p>

<b>THEME: Views of participants on how group work is utilised as an intervention strategy during the delivery of family preservation services</b>		
<b>SUB-THEME:</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>NARRATIVES FROM PARTICIPANTS</b>
	2. Determine the needs of family members	<p>“...we could then easily find out <u>what the needs are...</u>” [<i>“... kon ‘n mens dan maklik uitvind wat is die behoeftes”</i>]</p> <p>“... this way a person could <u>determine what the needs are...</u>” [<i>“... so kon ‘n mens dan uitvind wat is die behoeftes...”</i>]</p>
	3. To provide information	<p>“... to <u>give them that information...</u>” [<i>“... om daai inligting vir hulle deur te gee...”</i>]</p> <p>“... it is very important for the mother to <u>obtain more information.</u>” [<i>“... dit is baie belangrik vir die ma’s om meer inligting te kry...”</i>]</p>
	4. To develop the skills and knowledge of families	<p>“... actually with parenting <u>skills</u> it is very important...” [<i>“... eintlik by parenting skills is dit belangrik...”</i>]</p> <p>“...with regards to that... to <u>provide them with new skills.</u>” [<i>“... om nuwe vaardighede rondom dit... aan te leer vir hulle.”</i>]</p>

(a) *Do not utilise group work during the delivery of family preservation services*

According to Table 4.5 the first sub-theme that emerged was that almost half of the participants (9 = 45%) do not utilise the group work method. Two categories were identified.

The first category states that two participants (2 = 10%) do not utilise the group work method during family preservation services because their view is that **only foster care workers utilise group work**. This view corresponds with the findings earlier in this chapter where it was determined that respondents rather utilise casework than the group work method, this highlights the fact that a strong tradition remains within social work to render intervention mainly through casework services. This tradition of individualistic services coincides with literature since Glisson *et al.* (2012:45) found that casework still remains a strong tradition in social work interventions and services are often individualistic and fragmented.

Group work cannot be viewed as only limited to one type of social work service, such as foster care services. Due to the nature as well as cost and time advantages of utilising group

work during family preservation services group work is a social intervention method that should be applied more often. This is acknowledged by various authors (Clements, 2008:330; Ismail *et al.*, 2012:1; Loffell, 2008:83; Meintjies & Van Niekerk, 2005:3) who state that group work has become an increasingly important aspect of the services that are necessary in a world where a growing demand is placed on child and family welfare organisations.

The second category refers to the view of seven participants (7 = 35%) that they **would rather utilise group work when implementing reunification services**. The view that participants would rather utilise group work during family reunification services could be linked to the view, determined earlier in this chapter, that family preservation services are difficult to render due to low participation from families. Participants could view group work as easier to implement when families have some incentive to participate, which is the case with family reunification services where parents want their children placed back in their care and are therefore more motivated to participate in service delivery. These are also the families that are easier to deliver services to since they are the families that are viewed as more hopeful to change as they seek out service delivery, in contrast at-risk families are viewed as resistant to service delivery and less hopeful to change unless statutory intervention takes place.

The struggles of low participation and motivational issues are in accordance with literature and are acknowledged by various authors (Landy & Menna, 2006:xvi; Michalopoulos *et al.*, 2012:661) who state that social workers encounter at-risk families as resistant and uncooperative during service delivery and that it is challenging for said families to deal with the duality of the professional relationship, since the social worker is both the support for at-risk families to improve as well as part of the organisation that has the authority and mandate to remove their children. This dual relationship causes a level of distrust in social workers amongst at-risk families that permeates to the intervention and overall participation of at-risk families.

*(b) Utilises parenting groups*

The second sub-theme refers to the majority of participants (11 = 55%) that do utilise group work during family preservation services through the implementation of parenting groups. Four categories were identified.

The first category that was identified states that four participants (4 = 20%) utilise parenting groups as a means to **implement parent guidance programmes** where all at-risk families are supported and services are non-threatening. This view, that parenting groups provide the opportunity to provide guidance to at-risk families, is in agreement with literature since various others (Al *et al.*, 2012:1472; Dagenais, *et al.*, 2004:250; Mullins *et al.*, 2012:265; Tracy, 1995:973) refer to group work as an opportunity to provide the necessary support services. This is done through providing a safe place where group members can feel comfortable enough to share their feelings, which according to Berg-Weger (2010:243) and Healy (2012:137) will in turn ensure reduction in isolation for the family and bring them in contact with other families and resources in their communities. The reduction in isolation is especially important for at-risk families since Landy and Menna (2006:xvi) state that at-risk families are without any visible support systems. Therefore intervention with at-risk families should be aimed at reducing isolation and providing them with the necessary support.

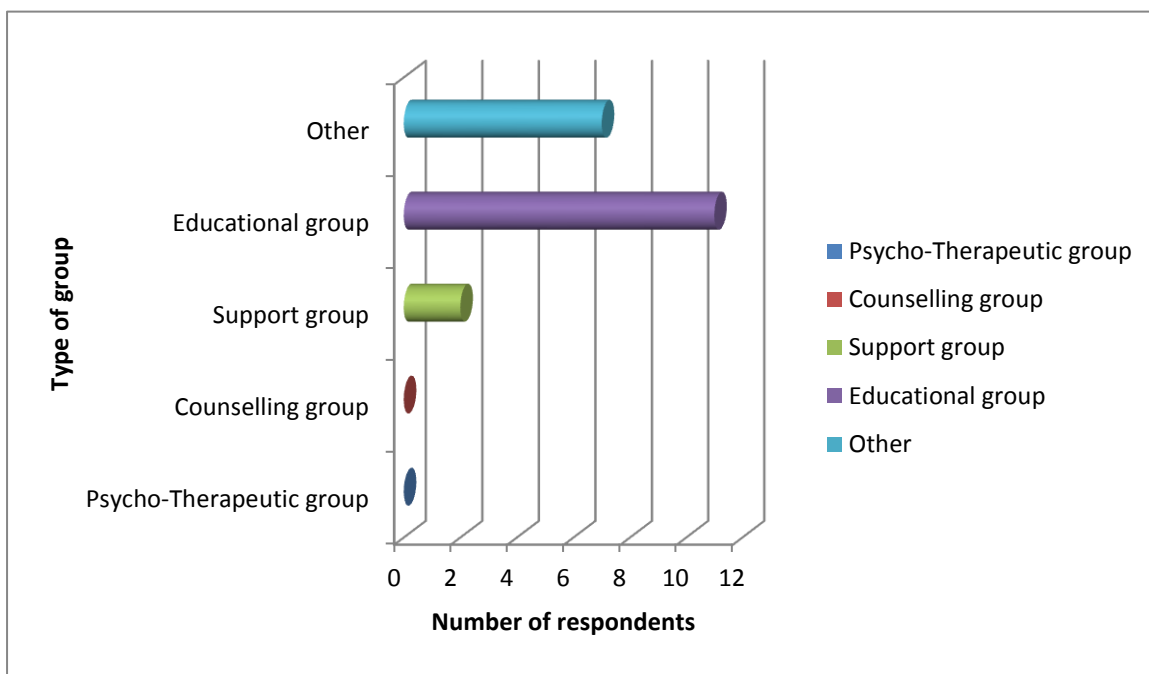
The second category refers to the fact that three participants (3 = 15%) utilise parenting groups as a planning activity with the at-risk family to **determine the needs of family members**. The view of participants is that group work provides them with the opportunity to enhance their professional functionality since they can determine the needs of multiple families in one session and therefore accomplish more in less time. This view coincides with literature since Healy (2012:139) and Berg-Weger (2010:243) state that if social workers conscientiously practice group work they can enhance their functionality by rendering services to a greater number of people within a shorter amount of time than is possible with casework.

The third category that emerged refers to one participant (1 = 5%) that was of the view that utilising parenting groups is an effective social work method **to provide information** to family members. According to this, participant families lack a wide variety of information, such as the regulations of the Children's Act, basic parenting information or other information with regards to school fees and identification documents. It is therefore necessary for social workers to provide the necessary information to families and an effective way of doing this, according to participants, is parenting groups. The view stating that group work provides an opportunity for social workers to provide information to group members is acknowledged by Berg-Weger (2010:243) and Healy (2012:137) when they state that a possible goal of group work is to provide much needed information.

The last category is the view of three participants (3 = 15%) that the utilisations of parenting groups provide the opportunity **to develop the skills and knowledge of families**. The participants are of the opinion that services to at-risk families should include the development of their skills and knowledge. The White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012:20) acknowledges this and states that at-risk families often exhibit poor parenting skills, ineffective communication patterns amongst family members and poor conflict management. The view of participants that parenting groups provide families with opportunities to develop skills and knowledge is acknowledged by various authors (Al *et al.*, 2012:1472; Dagenais, *et al.*, 2004:250; Mullins *et al.*, 2012:265; Tracy, 1995:973) who state that a goal of group work is to provide an opportunity to group members to grow or develop the necessary skills and knowledge to improve their social functioning.

#### 4.3.3.2 *Type of group utilised in the implementation of family preservation services*

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of group they utilise most often with regards to the utilisation of the group work method during family preservation services. The results are presented in Figure 4.5.



N = 20

**Figure 4.5: Type of group utilised in the implementation of family preservation services**

It is noticeable from Figure 4.5 that eleven respondents (11 = 55%) indicated that the **psycho-educational group** was most often utilised during the rendering of family preservation services. Seven respondents (7 = 35%) indicated **other** as their preferred type of group since they preferred to utilise a combination of different types of groups in order to be able to attend to a wider variety of group member needs. Two respondents (2 = 10%) indicated that a **support group** was their preferred type of group to utilise during the implementation of family preservation services. Whereupon, it can be concluded that no respondents (0 = 0%) indicated that they utilised a counselling or psychotherapeutic group.

Firstly the fact that no respondents (0 = 0%) utilise **psychotherapeutic groups** is unfortunate since a psychotherapeutic group provides social workers with the opportunity to promote personal change in clients' understanding of themselves. Psychotherapeutic groups push clients to generate insight into themselves through engagement with others that are experiencing a similar personal crisis, change or journey (Glisson *et al.*, 2012:52; Healy, 2012:141). Furthermore according to Lewis (2005:501) and O'Reily *et al.* (2010:83) psychotherapeutic groups, when rendered to at-risk families, were found to improve the functioning of the family since positive changes occurred with regards to the implementation of family preservation services important parenting techniques and practices. Family members identified that they understood their roles as parents better and could cope more effectively with normal life stressors.

Secondly it is also unfortunate that no respondents (0 = 0%) indicated that they utilise **counselling groups**. According to Goodson, Layzer, Pierre, Bernstein and Lopez (2000:8) when a counselling group is utilised during the rendering of family preservation, at-risk families are provided with the opportunity to understand and learn more about their behaviour and subsequent ways of changing their behaviour, this could be parenting behaviours or behaviour with regards to relationships. The lack of therapeutic and counselling groups can be linked to the earlier findings of this chapter that respondents lack other in-service training in group work. This could contribute to the non-existence of therapeutic and counselling groups since social workers do not have access to in-service training that would have prepared them for utilising a therapeutic or counselling group. Thus it may be that respondents cannot make the link between utilising group work and the possible successful outcome with regards to family preservation services.

Two respondents (2 = 10%) indicated that a **support group** was their preferred type of group to utilise during family preservation services. The fact that only a few respondents indicated that they utilise the support group when rendering family preservation services is in contrast with literature, since Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:91) found that the need for social support is especially crucial to at-risk families where the task of parenting can only be successful if social support is available to the family. Furthermore, Landy and Menna (2006:253) state that for at-risk families a strong link exists between the at-risk family's support systems (such as extended family, community members or friends) and the at-risk family's sense of competence and parenting behaviours.

The lack of respondents to identify the support group as the preferred group work type may be due to the fact that these participants indicated the 'other or mixed group' as their preferred type of group to utilise when rendering family preservation services, where support services were included in this type of group.

Seven respondents (7 = 35%) indicated **other** as their preferred type of group work during family preservation services since they preferred to utilise a combination of different types of groups in order to be able to attend to a wider variety of group member needs. The view that a combination group is an appropriate group type to utilise during family preservation services is interesting and acknowledged in literature by Healy (2012:143), who states that the type of group a social worker utilises can be a combination of group types, or a certain group type can evolve into another type of group. Furthermore Holzer, Higgins, Bromfield, Richardson and Higgins (2006:11) determined that the most successful groups during family preservation services were based on a combination of providing parent education strategies, concrete services and therapeutic interventions.

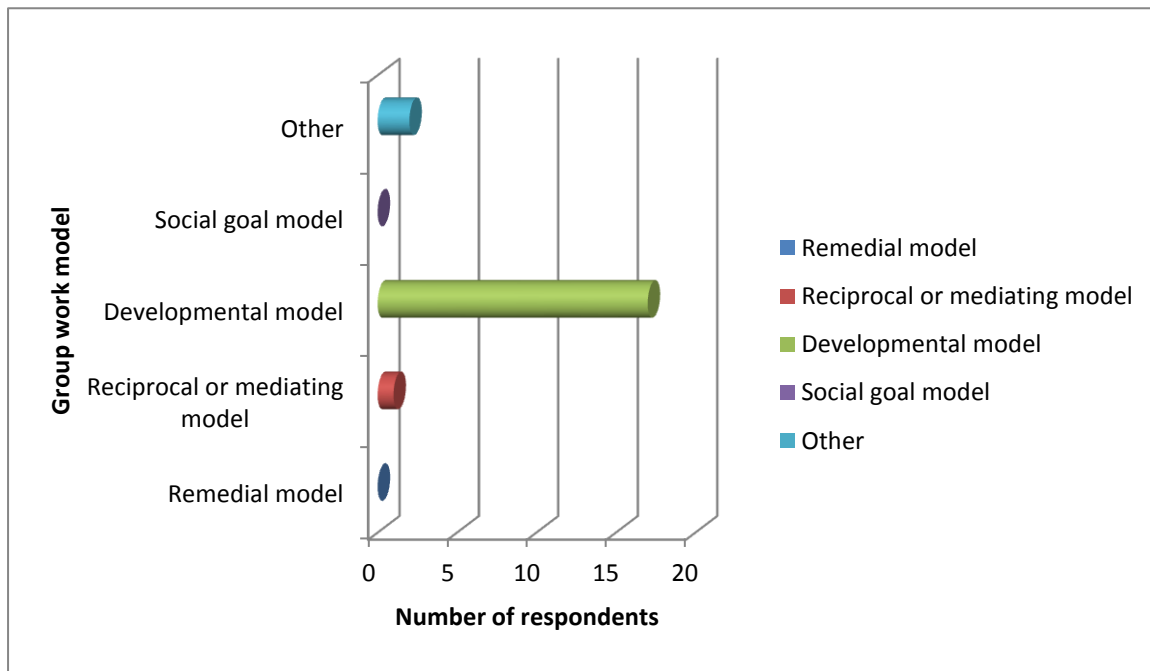
The majority of respondents (11 = 55%) indicated that they utilise the **psycho-educational group** most often when implementing family preservation services. This coincides with the finding earlier in this chapter that participants utilise parenting groups as a method of intervention with at-risk families. These parenting groups were focused on the development of the family's skills and knowledge as well as providing guidance and information to family members, thus the type of group was a psycho-educational group. According to Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:91) psycho-educational groups with at-risk families showed successful increases in parental knowledge, confidence and capabilities. It is therefore important that psycho-educational groups, groups determined to be successful, are utilised by social workers.



Furthermore the finding that educational groups are utilised most often by respondents coincides with literature since Holzer, Higgins, Bromfield, Richardson and Higgins (2006:9) found the psycho-educational group to be an essential component of early intervention services rendered to at-risk families.

#### 4.3.3.3 *Group work model utilised in the implementation of family preservation services*

Respondents were asked to indicate the group work model they found most useful when utilising the group work method during family preservation services. The results are shown in Figure 4.6.



N = 20

**Figure 4.6** Group work model utilised in the implementation of family preservation services

Figure 4.6 shows that one respondent (1 = 5%) indicated that the *reciprocal or mediating model* was the preferred group work model to utilise during family preservation services. No respondents (0 = 0%) felt that the *remedial* or *social goals model* was applicable. And two respondents (2 = 10%) indicated *other* specifying that they felt a combined group work model worked best since this enabled them to focus on a wider variety of group needs and not bind them to a certain model of group work. The majority of respondents (17 = 85%)

therefore indicated the *developmental model* was their preferred group work model to utilise during family preservation services.

The fact that no respondents (0 = 0%) indicated that the **reciprocal model** is their preferred group work model to use when rendering family preservation services through group work is understandable since the reciprocal model, although identified as a possible group work model by Verma (2014:212), is considered to be more a clinical model that seeks to improve dysfunctional behaviour. This group work model is best utilised with physically or mentally handicapped or alienated members of society, which is not the case with at-risk families. Therefore the finding that no respondents utilise the reciprocal model is in accordance with findings in literature.

One respondent (1 = 5%) indicated that the preferred group work model to utilise when implementing group work during the rendering of family preservation services is **the remedial or mediating model**. This finding coincides with the finding earlier in this chapter that respondents do have some other in-service training with regards to group work, including mediation. Thus the reason why one respondent utilised the mediating model is that it was due to the in-service training received, but since only one respondent (1 = 5%) utilises the mediating model it is not a majority view of respondents.

The majority view is in fact that seventeen respondents (17 = 85%) found **the developmental model** as the most appropriate group work model to utilise during the rendering of family preservation services. This finding is acknowledged by Sheafor and Horejsi (2010:113) who state that the developmental model is the preferred model to utilise when the focus is on promoting normal growth and development as well as the teaching of new skills in order to cope with problems or correcting dysfunctional behaviours, which is the focus of family preservation services.

#### ***4.3.3.4 Utilising group work in the implementation of family preservation services***

The respondents were asked if they, when implementing the group work method during family preservation services, run separate groups for family members and if they refer family members for groups outside the organisation. The findings are presented in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Utilising group work in the implementation for family preservation services**

<b>Utilising group work in the implementation for family preservation services</b>	Yes	No
Separate groups for family members	18 = 90%	2 = 10%
Refer family members to groups outside the organisation	9 = 45%	11 = 55%

N = 20

As indicated in Table 4.6 above most of the respondents (18 = 90%) indicated that they hold **separate groups** with family members. Only two respondents (2 = 10%) indicated that they, as far as possible, prefer to involve the whole family in group work sessions. The fact that the majority of the respondents prefer to hold separate groups with family members coincides with the fact that respondents indicated the type of group that they prefer to utilise is the educational group, since intervention would mostly be of an educational nature and thus revolving around educating the parents and not necessarily the children. The finding that the majority of respondents (18 = 90%) run separate groups for family members corresponds with literature. This is since Wilson, Ruch, Lymbery and Cooper (2008:488) found that it is important for the success of service delivery that when an educational group is presented to parents, a parallel group is also held with the children in the family in order to ensure that the whole at-risk family is included in service delivery.

Table 4.2 indicates that the reaction of respondents is quite mixed with regards to referring family members to groups outside the organisation. Although nine respondents (9 = 45%) did indicate that they **refer family members to groups outside the organisation** on a regular basis, eleven respondents (11 = 55%) indicated that they **do not refer family members to outside groups**. The lack of referrals, with regards to family members, to groups outside the organisation may be linked to a previous finding in this chapter that stated child and family welfare organisations struggle with a lack of resources in their communities.

The inference that can be made is that whether a respondent refers family members to outside groups or not is based on the area in which they render services. This is since respondents in areas with more resources outside their organisation referred family members on a regular basis, but respondents with no resources in their community had no choice but to hold the groups inside their organisation. This finding correlates with the finding earlier in this chapter that child and welfare organisations struggle to render effective family preservation services

due to a lack of available community based programmes or groups that at-risk families can be referred to. Furthermore, the finding that participants encounter the obstacle of a lack of resources, such as educational groups or support groups in communities is acknowledged by South African author, Strydom (2008:300), who states that communities in South African are under-resourced and social workers struggle to find appropriate community resources to refer families to.

#### ***4.3.3.5 Advantages of group work in the implementation of family preservation services***

The respondents were asked to indicate from a list of possible advantages to utilising group work during family preservation services, the two advantages they agreed with the most. The results are presented in Figure 4.7.

**Table 4.7 Advantages of group work during the implementation of family preservation services**

<b>The advantages of group work during the implementation of family preservation services</b>	f	%
Group work provides the social worker with the opportunity to identify at-risk families in their caseload and effectively involve them in service delivery, by collaborating with clients to identify family needs, develop appropriate goals and identify possible community resources.	10	50%
Group work is a positive and optimistic way of working with at-risk families, by providing them with a safe place to practice new skills and receive the necessary motivation and direction to make a positive change in their lives.	15	75%
Group work is a more cost and time effective social work intervention method to enhance family preservation services.	7	35%
Group work is especially relevant in family preservation services where the social worker's aim is to provide clients with education, reduce isolation, promote social action and build support.	8	40%

N = 20

\* Respondents had to choose two advantages

According to Table 4.7, fifteen respondents (15 = 75%) agreed that group work is a positive and optimistic way of working with at-risk families while ten respondents (10 = 50%) felt that group work provides the social worker with the opportunity to identify at-risk families in their caseload and effectively involve them in services delivery. Furthermore, eight respondents (8 = 40%) agreed that group work is especially relevant when rendering family

preservation services and seven respondents (7 = 35%) said that they also felt that group work is a cost and time effective social work intervention method to enhance family preservation services.

The majority of respondents (15 = 75%) therefore view **group work as a positive and optimistic way of working with at-risk families**. The views of these respondents are that group work provides at-risk families with a safe place to practice new skills and receive the necessary motivation and direction to make positive changes in their lives. This view is acknowledged by various authors (Clements, 2008:329; Gutman & Shennar-Golan, 2012:138; Kurland, 2007:12) who state that in forming a group a social worker makes the statement that every member has something to offer the group, thereby adding value to the person's existence through focusing optimistically and positively on the strengths of group members services to at-risk families.

Ten respondents (10 = 50%) indicated that they view group work as an advantage since group work **provides the social worker with the opportunity to identify at-risk families in their caseload and effectively involve them in service delivery**. The views of respondents are therefore that group work provides a way of collaborating with at-risk families to identify family needs, develop appropriate goals and identify possible community resources. This enables the family to participate completely during service delivery and ensures that service delivery is family-orientated. This view that group work provides the respondents with the opportunity to identify at-risk families in their caseload and effectively involve them in service delivery is acknowledged by various authors (Drumm, 2006:20; Healy, 2012:139; Rodrigo *et al.*, 2012:95,97; Swanepoel, 2009:85). These authors state that group work is especially relevant to family preservation services since they enable social workers to deliver services to hard to reach clients, such as at-risk families. It has been determined earlier in this chapter that respondents struggle with low participation rates from at-risk families when rendering family preservation services and according to Rodrigo *et al.* (2012:95,97), group work is the best method to utilise in order to ensure that at-risk families participate in intervention.

According to Table 4.7 eight respondents (8 = 40%) indicated that they view group work as an advantage since it is **especially relevant in family preservation services**. The views of respondents are that the goals of group work can be linked to the aim of family preservation services and therefore the aim of family preservation services can be achieved through group

work. These goals are providing at-risk families with education, reducing the isolation of at-risk family members, promoting social action amongst at-risk families and building support networks for at-risk families. This view that group work can effectively achieve the goals of family preservation services and is therefore especially relevant to family preservation services. This coincides with literature since authors (Healy, 2012:139; Rodrigo *et al.*, 2012:95,97; Swanepoel, 2009:85) state that group work, when utilised during the implementation of family preservation services, provides at-risk families with increases in parental knowledge, positive disciplining strategies, parental confidence the development of practical skills to deal with everyday stressors, a reduction in isolation and an overall decrease in at risk behaviours in families.

Finally, the minority of respondents (7 = 35%), although not by far, indicated that they view group work as an advantage since it is a **more cost and time effective social work intervention method to enhance family preservation services**. The view of respondents is therefore that group work enhances their functionality and this is acknowledged by authors (Berg-Weger, 2010:244; Drumm, 2006:20; Healy, 2012:139) who refer to the fact that, if conscientiously practiced by social workers, group work can ensure that social workers facilitate intervention with a greater number of people within a shorter amount of time than is possible with casework.

Therefore although it was determined earlier in this chapter that respondents seldom utilise the group work method during family preservation services, these respondents do understand and view group work as an advantageous when utilised during the rendering of family preservation services. The conclusion that may be made is that respondents acknowledge that group work holds multiple advantages that can enhance family preservation services, but it seems like respondents encounter various obstacles when utilising the group work method during the rendering of family preservation services.

#### ***4.3.3.6 Obstacles encountered when utilising the group work method in the implementation of family preservation services***

The respondents were provided with a list of possible obstacles to utilising the group work method during family preservation services, they then had to indicate two obstacles they agreed with. The results are shown in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Obstacles encountered when utilising the group work method in the implementation of family preservation services**

<b>Obstacles encountered when utilising the group work method in the implementation of family preservation services</b>	f	%
Motivational Issues: e.g. resistance from group members, high levels of distrust among group members and/or the social worker, group goals are not compliant with individual group member goals.	13	65%
Life Stress Issues: e.g. difficulty with developmental stages of group members, such as parents of young children who are unable to attend group meetings, problems with engaging teenagers.	13	65%
Pattern of Life Issues: e.g. certain times of the day, week, month or year impacting on group meetings.	9	45%
Cultural Issues: e.g. difficulty related to the language, values and/or other culture related barriers of group members.	5	25%

N = 20

\* Respondents had to choose two obstacles

According to Table 4.8 thirteen respondents (13 = 65%) indicated that motivational issues were common obstacles they encountered when utilising group work, another thirteen respondents (13 = 65%) indicated life stress issues as an obstacle most found when utilising the group work method. Nine respondents (9 = 45%) indicated pattern of life issues as a possible obstacle, while cultural issues were only indicated by five respondents (5 = 25%) as an obstacle they encounter frequently when utilising the group work method while implementing family preservation services.

Thirteen respondents indicated **motivational issues** (13 = 65%) as the biggest obstacle they encounter when utilising group work during family preservation services, this view correlates with literature since Michalopoulos *et al.* (2012:661) also found that social workers described their services to at-risk families as challenging due to resistance from the family. According to respondents, when utilising group work during the rendering of family preservation services group members are not motivated and attend group work sessions sporadically. It was already determined earlier in this chapter that respondents struggle with low participation rates from at-risk families. The conclusion can therefore be made that low participation from at-risk families can be linked to the motivational issues experienced by respondents when implementing group work during the delivery of family preservation services.

**Life stress issues** were indicated by thirteen respondents (13 = 65%) as an obstacle encountered when rendering family preservation services through group work. According to

respondents at-risk families struggle to attend group sessions due to the daily life struggles that cause stress to the at-risk families, such as having young children to care for and thus being unable to attend group work sessions on a regular basis. The views of respondents are that at-risk families may have life stress issues that provide obstacles for respondents with regards to the utilisation of group work during family preservation services is acknowledged by Michalopoulos *et al.* (2012:662) and therefore in accordance with literature. A study done by Michalopoulos *et al.* (2012:662) revealed that social workers should understand the developmental phases of the at-risk family and therefore plan intervention according to the life stress issues that the at-risk family may be experiencing.

Nine respondents (9 = 45%) indicated that **pattern of life issues** provided them with an obstacle to utilising the group work method during family preservation services. According to respondents at-risk families are unavailable to attend group work sessions during the week or within working hours. This is due to the fact that at-risk families are heavily dependent on the income they receive and cannot miss any work. Respondents indicate that group work sessions need to be held on Saturdays or after hours. This view that pattern of life issues may arise when utilising the group work method during family preservation services is acknowledged in literature when Glisson, Dulmus and Sowers (2012:8) state that at-risk families may be unable to attend group work sessions due to the fact that there are times of the day, week, month or year that it may be difficult for them to participate in intervention.

Although in a lesser sense, since only five respondents (5 = 25%) view **cultural issues** as an obstacle to utilising group work during family preservation services, it is rather interesting. According to respondents at-risk families in their caseload differ tremendously and it is difficult to form a group with at-risk families from such vast backgrounds. Respondents are therefore left with no choice but to intervene through casework with these individual families.

#### ***4.3.3.7 Obstacles encountered in the organisation when utilising the group work method in the implementation of family preservation services***

The fact that there are various obstacles in child and family welfare organisations when utilising the group work method during family preservation services were explored during the empirical investigation. The results are summarised in Table 4.9.



**Table 4.9 Obstacles encountered in the organisation when utilising the group work method in the implementation of family preservation services**

<b>THEME: Views of participants on how group work is utilised as an intervention strategy during the delivery of family preservation services</b>	
<b>SUB-THEME</b>	<b>NARRATIVES FROM PARTICIPANTS</b>
1. Lack of space or appropriate venue	<p>“... so <u>space</u> is actually our biggest problem.” [<i>“...so spasie is ons grootste probleem eintlik.”</i>]</p> <p>“... it is a big problem to find an appropriate <u>venue</u> or place to present group sessions...” <i>...is ‘n groot probleem om ‘n geskikte lokaal of plek te kry om die groepsessies aan te bied... ”</i></p> <p>“... with us there is currently the fact that we don’t really have a <u>venue</u>...” [<i>“... by ons is daar op hierdie stadium die feit dat ons nie regtig ‘n lokaal het nie...”</i>]</p>
2. Lack of time available	<p>“Definitely... the high statutory... pressure and, and <u>time</u>.” [<i>“Definitief... die hoë statutêre... druk en, en tyd.”</i>]</p> <p>“... it is also <u>time</u> consuming.” [<i>“... dis ook tydrawend.”</i>]</p>
3. Lack of transport for clients	<p>“...<u>transport</u> is a major issue.” [<i>“... vervoer is ‘n major issue.”</i>]</p> <p>“... some of the clients are quite far away and <u>not everyone has transport</u>...” [<i>“... Van die kliënte is ‘n hele ent weg en almal het nie vervoer nie...”</i>]</p>
4. Lack of personnel	<p>“... physically we are <u>understaffed</u> so that is a huge issue at the moment.”</p> <p>“... currently with the... the <u>shortage of... personnel</u>.” [<i>“... tans met die... die tekort aan... personeel.”</i>]</p>

According to Table 4.9 four sub-themes emerged.

*(a) A lack of space or appropriate venue*

The first sub-theme refers to the fact that eight participants (8 = 40%), almost half the sample indicated that they encounter **a lack of space or appropriate venue** to effectively render their group work sessions. Thus, the majority of participants view the lack of an appropriate venue for group work sessions as their biggest obstacle. This view is acknowledged in literature since Michalopoulos *et al.* (2012:660) determined that social workers encounter a lack of resources, such as appropriate venues when rendering group work during family preservation services. The lack of appropriate venues to present group work sessions during

family preservation services is of great importance to the success of group work. Nicholas *et al.* (2010:131) and Seabury *et al.* (2011:436) found that the meeting space should be carefully determined in advance since the size of the room may influence the interactions of the group members and the functioning of the group. A venue that is too small can cause anxiety amongst group members who may feel prematurely pressured to form intimate relationships amongst group members, which can lead to group members feeling discomfort and developing negative behaviour patterns within the group.

*(b) A lack of time*

The second sub-theme refers to seven participants (7 = 35%) that stated that **a lack of time** available to both the social worker and the client does present an obstacle. The view of participants is that they do not have time available to plan and implement group work, since they experience high caseloads with demanding statutory obligations. This view is therefore in accordance with the view determined earlier in this chapter that social workers are experiencing heavy caseloads and are unable to effectively render family preservation services. Michalopoulos *et al.* (2012:660) acknowledge the view that social workers experience a lack of available time and also state that high expectations are placed on social workers and this leads to sacrifices with regards to the quality of services. This is unfortunate since group work is also promoted as a social work intervention method that is time efficient. The deduction that is made is that although group work is time efficient, it's only time efficient if priority is placed on developing appropriate programs.

*(c) The lack of transport*

A third sub-theme identified is that six participants (6 = 30%) indicated that **the lack of transport** heavily influences their utilisation of the group work method during family preservation services. The participants viewed the lack of transport available to families as an obstacle when utilising the group work method since families cannot attend group work sessions on a constant basis. The lack of transport is acknowledged by Michalopoulos *et al.* (2012:660) when they determined that the lack of resources, such as transport affected the success of service delivery to at-risk families and inhibited social workers ability to do their job effectively.

(d) *Lack of personnel*

The last sub-theme that emerged is that five participants (5 = 25%) indicated that a **lack of personnel** and understaffed child and family welfare organisations was another obstacle they experienced when utilising the group work method during family preservation services. Various authors note this (Ismail *et al.*, 2012:1; Loffell, 2005:83; Meintjies & Van Niekerk, 2005:3; Michalopoulos *et al.*, 2012:660) by stating that child and family welfare organisations are under-resourced and understaffed.

#### 4.4 SUMMARY

An empirical investigation into the utilisation of group work during the implementation of family preservation services was conducted and the analyses of the empirical findings, as gathered through a semi-structured interview schedule, were presented in this chapter. The third objective of the research study was therefore reached by determining the identifying particulars of respondents to ensure that the respondents comply with the requirements of this research study. Thereafter the respondents viewpoints on family preservation services were investigated to determine how respondents utilise family preservation services during their service delivery to at-risk families and finally the utilisation of group work to enhance family preservation were investigated.

In this chapter a successful investigation into the utilisation of group work during family preservation services was conducted. The findings of the empirical investigation was controlled and confirmed by the findings from the literature study. The conclusion and recommendations with regards to this research study will be the focus of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The investigation into the use of group work during family preservation services originated from an identified gap in literature, as well as a definite decrease in the use of group work by social workers at child and family welfare organisations. The first objective of the research study was to describe the role and function of the social worker employed within the NGO sector, with particular focus on child protection services in the context of family preservation services. This objective was achieved through the presentation of the role and function of the social worker when rendering family preservation services according to the requirements of South African policies and legislation, as set out in chapter 2.

The second objective of the research study was to explain the need and nature for the utilisation of group work within the South African welfare context, with particular focus on family preservation services. This objective was fulfilled in chapter 3 of this study. During this chapter, the group work method was also discussed, as it relates to the South African welfare system, focusing on the use of group work when delivering family preservation services.

In chapter 4 the third objective of the research study was achieved through the investigation of group work used by social workers during the implementation of family preservation. Data was collected by means of a semi-structured interview with twenty participants and the findings of these interviews were presented in chapter 4.

The aim of this chapter is to present the conclusion drawn from the empirical investigation and to make appropriate recommendations. These recommendations will provide guidelines for social workers on how to enhance the group work method during family preservation services. This chapter therefore meets the final objective of this study, to conclude the exploration with conclusions and recommendations on how group work can be used by social workers to provide family preservation services within the context of child protection services. The conclusion and recommendations are related to and fulfil the aim and objectives of the research study.

## 5.2 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations of this research study are based on the grounds of a literature study and an empirical investigation. The conclusions and recommendations are completed in conjunction with the aim and achievement of the objectives of the research study. The outline of the conclusions and recommendations are provided according to the format of the empirical investigation (chapter 4) and the format of the semi-structured interview schedule. The conclusions and recommendations are summarised in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: Conclusions and recommendations relating to the objectives of this study**

OBJECTIVE	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
<p><b>Objective 1:</b> To describe the role and function of the social worker employed within the NGO sector, with regards to child protection services within the context of family preservation services.</p>	<p>5.2.1 Identifying particulars</p> <p>5.2.1.1 Other in-service training relevant to family preservation services and group work</p> <p>5.2.2 Family preservation services</p> <p>5.2.2.1 Implementation of family preservation services with regards to policy documents</p> <p>5.2.2.2 Type of services delivered to at-risk families to prevent the removal of children</p> <p>5.2.2.3 Social work intervention method utilised when rendering family preservation services</p>
<p><b>Objective 2:</b> To explain the need and nature for the utilisation of group work within the South African welfare context focusing on family preservation services</p>	<p>5.2.3 Utilisation of group work in the implementation of family preservation services</p> <p>5.2.3.1 Type of group utilised in the implementation of family preservation services</p> <p>5.2.3.2 Group work model utilised in the implementation of family preservation services</p> <p>5.2.3.3 Advantages of group work in the implementation of family preservation services</p> <p>5.2.3.4 Obstacles encountered when utilising the group work method in the implementation of family preservation services</p> <p>5.2.3.5 Obstacles encountered in the organisation when utilising the group work method in the implementation of family preservation services</p>

### 5.2.1 Identifying particulars

The inclusion criteria for this research study stated that respondents must be social workers with at least six months working experience, currently working for a child and family welfare organisation in the Western Cape, South Africa. Furthermore, respondents must either currently be working in family preservation services or have extensive experience working with children at risk of abuse in South Africa. All the respondents that participated in this research study complied with the above mentioned criteria.

The majority of respondents that took part in the research study were between the ages of twenty and fifty and are thus classified as being either young adults and/or social workers in middle adulthood. These respondents have been working as social workers for less than ten years and have mostly only been with their organisation for between 6 months and six years.

The **conclusion** is therefore that most respondents have more than a year of working experience, although the majority of respondents are young social workers and these respondents have limited work experience in their current organisation.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Considerations should be given to the selection of social workers that are still young and professionally motivated to facilitate groups during the delivery of family preservation services. The professional motivation of young social workers would benefit the implementation of family preservation services through group work and this professional motivation could transcend to other social workers that have been doing social work for more years.

#### **5.2.1.1 *Other in-service training relevant to family preservation services and group work***

Almost half of participants do not possess any other in-service training relevant to group work or family preservation services. The rest of the participants indicated that they attended in-service training with regards to risk assessment, the strength perspective, the binding theory, trauma counselling and the Children's Act. The majority of participants therefore have other in-service training relevant to family preservation services.

With regards to other in-service training relevance to group work was found to be less common, with only a few participants that indicated that they have training in experiential group work, mediation and parenting guidance. Thus although the majority of participants did receive other in-service training relevant to family preservation services, they did not complete any other in-service training relevant to group work.

The **conclusion** is that after completing their university education, limited opportunities exist for social workers to participate in further in-service training with regards family preservation services and group work. This could lead to social workers who struggle to identify the ways that group work can be utilised during family preservation services.

### **Recommendations:**

- Child and family welfare organisations should focus on providing training to social workers that specifically focus on the possible ways that group work can be utilised during family preservation services.
- Social workers should be exposed to continuous training and mentoring to improve their skills and experience with regards to the utilisation of group work and the rendering of family preservation services.

## **5.2.2 Family preservation services**

The implementation of family preservation services was researched with relation the requirements set out in South African policy and legislation documents, the types of services rendered to at-risk families and the social intervention method utilised to deliver family preservation services.

### ***5.2.2.1 Implementation of family preservation services with regards to policy documents***

The majority of participants expressed that they place great emphasis on the rendering of family preservation services according to the requirements set out in various South African policy documents, such as The White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997) and the Integrated Service Delivery Model (Department of Social Development, 2006). These family preservation services were focused on preventing the alternative placement of children, educating the family, improving parenting skills and

strengthening the family system through addressing individual family member's needs. The minority of participants acknowledged that they struggle to implement family preservation services due to a variety of factors, such as a lack of resources both in the community and their organisations as well as workloads that are too heavy, leading to high statutory obligations for social workers.

According to the majority of participants, the essential value that family preservation services have to offer during the delivery of child protection services is acknowledged, and therefore aims to provide these services according to the requirements set out in South African policies and legislation.

In **conclusion**, the implementation of family preservation services, according to the requirements of South African policy and legislative documents, is achievable and social workers should render family preservation services that aim to prevent the alternative placement of children. A considerable number of participants did indicate that it is not possible to render family preservation services according to the requirements of South African policy and legislative documents.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Child and welfare organisations should provide the necessary support to social workers in order to ensure that they have manageable caseloads and are not overwhelmed by statutory interventions.
- Child and family welfare organisations should establish forums consisting of all stakeholders (police, courts, social workers, other departments and organisations rendering services to families) to evaluate and discuss obstacles regarding the implementation of family preservation services.
- Social workers should, when implementing family preservation services, continue to consider the requirements as set out in various South African policy and legislation documents.

#### ***5.2.2.2 Type of services delivered to at-risk families to prevent the removal of children***

According to most of the participants the type of services that they render to at-risk families include: conducting a risk assessment to determine whether a child can remain safely with



their family, delivering services to the family as a whole in order to ensure that resources within the family are utilised, addressing individual family member needs through casework, increasing parenting skills by including parents in parenting groups and facilitating the family's use of community resources. Therefore according to the participants of the research study the type of services rendered to at-risk families are mostly rendered on the level of early intervention.

According to the minority of participants type of services rendered to at-risk families would focus on including at-risk families in community-based programmes therefore services rendered to at-risk families would be rendered on the level of prevention..

The **conclusion** is that the types of services rendered to at-risk families by social workers are mainly rendered on the level of early intervention. Consequently, prevention programmes are lacking which may result in a further lack of available resources to at-risk families in their communities. Furthermore social workers view family preservation services as difficult to render due to at-risk families being uncooperative and resistant which leads to them feeling stigmatised and less motivated to attend intervention services.

### **Recommendations:**

- Social workers should focus on rendering services to at-risk families on both the level of early intervention and prevention.
- Social workers should when rendering family preservation services develop community-based programmes as the first line of service delivery in order to ensure that at-risk families can be connected to resources within their communities. These resources can ensure that at-risk families find the support and education they need, before statutory intervention by a social workers is deemed necessary.
- Social workers should develop prevention and awareness programmes in the community that focus on: educating parents with regards to their parenting responsibilities and duties towards their children and providing support to all families in order to ensure that families utilise support networks within their communities in order to decrease family isolation and child abuse and neglect.
- Social workers should conduct thorough assessments with the at-risk families in order to ensure that appropriate intervention plans are formulated for each family member and the

needs and problems of the family are effectively addressed. This may lead to at-risk families being less resistant and more cooperative towards service delivery.

- Social workers should be trained on how to effectively work with resistant at-risk families during the implementation of family preservation service.

### ***5.2.2.3 Social work intervention method utilised when rendering family preservation services***

In order to gain insight into the delivery of family preservation services, respondents were asked to indicate the social work intervention method they utilise most often when rendering family preservation services. All respondents indicated that the preferred intervention method to utilise is casework.

The **conclusion** is that casework is most often utilised by social workers when rendering family preservation services. The reason that social workers refrain from utilising other social intervention methods, such as group work, may be due to the fact that social workers have limited in-service training with regards to the possibilities of utilising group work during family preservation services.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Child and family welfare organisations in their TPA (Transfer Payment Agreement) should make provisions for opportunities that enable social workers to render family preservation services through group work.
- Child and family welfare organisations should provide opportunities to social workers to be exposed to regular in-service training with regards to group work in order to ensure that social workers are better skilled and equipped to utilise group work during the implementation of family preservation services.
- Social workers should focus on equipping themselves with the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to effectively utilise group work during the rendering of family preservation services.

### 5.2.3 Utilisation of group work in the implementation of family preservation services

Regarding the utilisation of group work in the implementation of family preservation services, the views of participants were considered with regards to the type and model of group work utilised most often. The advantages to utilising group work during the delivery of family preservation services and the obstacles encountered when rendering family preservation services were discussed.

#### 5.2.3.1 *Type of group utilised in the implementation of family preservation services*

When considering the different types of groups to utilise during the implementation of family preservation services the majority of respondents indicated that they utilise the educational group. According to participants the educational group focuses on the development of the family's skills and knowledge as well as providing guidance and information to family members.

No respondents indicated that they utilise therapeutic or counselling groups and only two respondents utilise the support group most often when rendering family preservation services. The lack of groups that are therapeutic, counselling or supportive in nature is unfortunate since these groups, when rendered to at-risk families, was found to improve the parenting techniques and practices of families, as well as help families understand their roles as parents better and learn improved ways of coping more effectively with normal life stressors. The lack of therapeutic, counselling and support groups can be linked to the fact that it was stated earlier in this chapter that respondents lack other in-service training with regards to group work, which could contribute to the non-existence of therapeutic, counselling and support groups.

The **conclusion** can be made that the most used group by social workers is the psycho-educational group, since this group work type can be linked to the services that social workers render mostly to at-risk families, which includes education with regards to parenting skills or competencies.

**Recommendations:**

- Social workers should strive to build their knowledge and understanding of the different types of groups that may be appropriate to utilise when rendering family preservation services.
- Social workers should place greater emphasis on the planning of the group and develop a clear goal for the group that links to a specific type of group. The effective planning of a group can lead to more appropriate service delivery that may ensure higher participation rates.
- Social workers should facilitate and develop more than one type of group during the implementation of family preservation services in order to broaden their experience and skills with regards to different group work types to address the diverse needs of at-risk families.
- Social workers from different child and family welfare organisations should hold forums where they can discuss and consult with each other regarding the best practices for intervention with at-risk families, such as what type of group work is best for what the at-risk family needs.

**5.2.3.2 *Group work model utilised in the implementation of family preservation services***

The respondents reflected a relatively poor knowledge of group work models since they struggled to identify a group work model that they utilise during the delivery of family preservation services. According to the majority of respondents the group work model utilised most often during the rendering of family preservation services is the developmental model. Although this model does meet the aim of family preservation services other models may also be appropriate, such as the remedial model. This may demonstrate that social workers lack knowledge of other appropriate group work models to utilise during the delivery of family preservation services. Furthermore the lack of knowledge may lead to a lack of clear planning since social workers refrain from researching other group work models that may be more appropriate to address the needs and problems of the at-risk family.

In **conclusion**, social workers base the utilisation of group work during family preservation services on the developmental model.

**Recommendations:**

- Child and family welfare organisations delivering family preservation services through group work should share their best practices and successes with each other to strengthen the practices of family preservation services so that high quality programmes are implemented.
- Social workers should build their knowledge with regards to the different group work models appropriate to utilise during the implementation of family preservation services, other than the developmental model, through continuous research on group work models in order to better address the diverse needs of at-risk families.

***5.2.3.3 Advantages of group work in the implementation of family preservation services***

Most of the respondents indicated that one of the most important advantages of group work is a positive and optimistic way of working with at-risk families, other respondents also felt that group work provides the social worker with the opportunity to identify at-risk families in their caseload and effectively involve them in services delivery. Group work is especially relevant when rendering family preservation services and group work is a cost and time effective social work intervention method to enhance family preservation services.

Consequently the **conclusion** is that although it was determined that respondents seldom utilise the group work method during family preservation services, these respondents do understand and view group work as advantageous when utilised during the rendering of family preservation services. The deduction that can thus be made is that respondents acknowledge that group work has multiple advantages that can enhance family preservation services, but they encounter various obstacles when utilising the group work method during the rendering of family preservation services. Furthermore it was determined earlier in this research study that social workers do not make the link between group work and family preservation services due to a lack of in-service training and they therefore need guidance to utilise group work when delivering family preservation services.

**Recommendations:**

- Social workers should strive towards utilising group work when rendering family preservation services since various advantages exist from utilising this social work intervention method with at-risk families.

**5.2.3.4 *Obstacles encountered when utilising the group work method in the implementation of family preservation services***

Most respondents felt that motivational issues and life stress issues were common obstacles they encountered when utilising group work during the implementation of family preservation services. Other obstacles encountered refer to pattern of life and cultural issues. These obstacles inhibit social workers from effectively rendering family preservation services through group work. According to respondents the biggest obstacle was related to the motivation of the at-risk family. At-risk families were characterised as challenging to render services to due to resistance from the family.

The **conclusion** that can be made is that social workers at child and family welfare organisations face various obstacles with regards to the utilisation of the group work method during the rendering of family preservation services. These obstacles mostly rest on the fact that at-risk families are resistant to services delivery and uncooperative when it comes to participating in group work. This obstacle is well documented and always encountered when rendering services to at-risk families, which means that it will not change and social workers should strive to work through motivation and participation issues with at-risk families.

**Recommendations:**

- Social workers should continue to carefully assess their caseloads and determine what families would participate in and benefit the most from service delivery. These are the families that can be helped and are ultimately helped if they are involved in family preservation services.
- Social workers should continue to build professional relationships with at-risk families in their community in order to address the motivational issues found when utilising group work during family preservation services. By building a relationship with at-risk families the social worker will help the family understand that although social workers have the authority to remove children from the care of the family if the need arises, they are also

advocates for the family that strive to ensure that the alternative placement of children is the last option during service delivery.

- Social workers should continue to focus on identifying the advantages of attending a group with families in order to help at-risk families understand that participation during a group may be one way that they can prevent their children from being placed in alternative care. By being honest and open with the family, social workers inhibit at-risk families from being alienated by service delivery and may therefore lead to higher motivation to participate in service delivery.
- Social workers should continue to plan groups effectively by having a clear goal, process, formation and understanding of the group. This can ensure that groups run smoothly and at-risk families are motivated to participate.
- Social workers should continue to spend sufficient time preparing all the family members involved to become familiar with the at-risk family's dynamics and unresolved family issues before a group commences. Careful preparation and assessment of the at-risk family before a group commences may ensure that family members are more motivated to participate in services delivery since they feel valued and acknowledged as individuals.

#### ***5.2.3.5 Obstacles encountered in the organisation when utilising the group work method in the implementation of family preservation services***

Participants indicated various obstacles that they encounter in their respective organisations when utilising the group work method in the implementation of family preservation services, these included: a lack of space or appropriate venue, a lack of time available that suites both the social worker and the family, a lack of personnel, a lack of resources in the organisations and a lack of transport. These obstacles are obstacles encountered in all child and welfare organisations and whilst they are very well documented they are not likely to change. The important thing is that social workers learn to work around these obstacles.

The **conclusion** is therefore that social workers do encounter various obstacles that inhibit them from utilising the group work method when rendering family preservation services. The obstacles within the organisations are not going to change, but they are surmountable, and social workers and their respective child and family welfare organisations should strive to overcome these obstacles in order to render more effective services.

**Recommendations** with regards to obstacles encountered within the organisation:

- The South African government should make more funds available for the provision of adequate resources to implement the minimum requirements for family preservation services as set out in various South African policy and legislation documents.
- Child and family welfare organisations should do their utmost to ensure that the necessary resources are made available to social workers in order for social workers to be able to include group work in their service delivery. Examples of these are funds, venues, time and personnel.
- Child and family welfare organisations should strive to develop effective group work programmes, specifically aimed at family preservation services. If social workers had a guide or manual on ways of utilising group work during family preservation services they could directly implement these programmes, saving time for the social worker and leading to social workers being able to render more effective group work sessions since they will have more time available.
- Social workers should be made aware of other possible venues for presenting groups, such as client homes or a public park. Such venues may further enhance family preservation services since families will be able to attend services more regularly as the venue is in their community, possibly exposing families to other families in their communities without being stigmatised which could lead to families being more motivated to participate and form support networks.
- Social workers should strive to raise awareness in communities regarding the family preservation services and resources available in communities in order to ensure that at-risk families do not feel stigmatised but rather part of services that are available to all families.
- Social workers should further strive to raise awareness in communities with regards to family preservation services in order to change the perceptions of utilising family preservation services from negative to positive and encourage all families to become involved in such interventions.

### **5.3 FURTHER RESEARCH**

In light of the results from the empirical investigation with regards to the utilisation of group work during the implementation of family preservation services, it is suggested that further research focus on the development of an effective group work program to utilise during the



rendering of family preservation services. This may increase the utilisation of group work by social workers when delivering family preservation services and may decrease the high caseloads of social workers with regards to statutory intervention.

Furthermore research could explore the relationship between group work and family preservation services, since there appears to be a lack of literature available with regards to the utilisation of group work during family preservation services.

## **5.4 SUMMARY**

Analysis of the empirical results, as gathered through the semi-structured interview schedule, was presented in this chapter. Firstly, according to the identifying particulars of the respondents, in terms of factors such as the age of respondents, the years of working experience the respondents have, the length of time they have worked at their current organisation and any other in-service training the respondents have received.

Secondly, the implementation of family preservation services by social workers at child and family welfare organisations were explored, with regard to the delivery of family preservation services according to the requirements set out in South African policy documents, the type of services delivered to at-risk families to prevent the removal of children and the social work intervention method utilised most often when rendering family preservation services.

Thirdly, the utilisation of group work during the delivery of family preservation services was investigated, with specific focus on how group work is utilised when implementing family preservation services, the type of group utilised, the group work model utilised, the advantages of group work and the obstacles encountered when utilising group work during the implementation of family preservation services.

This chapter therefore ensured the achievement of the last objective of this research study by means of providing various conclusions and recommendations with regards to the utilisation of group work by social workers at child and family welfare organisations during the implementation of family preservation services. The ultimate aim of the research study was also achieved since a better understanding of how social workers utilise group work as part of the implementation of family preservation services was gained.

Furthermore, regarding the problem statement in chapter 1 the researcher did determine that group work could be utilised advantageously to enhance family preservation services, but that various obstacles do inhibit social workers from utilising this social work intervention method. The researcher could therefore determine why social workers refrain from utilising the group work method by means of exploring obstacles related to the utilisation of group work during the implementation of family preservation services. These obstacles include, but are not limited to, motivational and life stress issues of at-risk families, a lack of available time and resources to render group work as well as a lack of training and knowledge with regards to the utilisation of group work during the delivery of family preservation services.

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## APPENDIX A: ENGLISH INFORMED CONSENT FORM



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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#### **The utilisation of group work by social workers at NGOs in the implementation of family preservation services**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Josane van Huyssteen, a master's student from the Social Work Department at the University of Stellenbosch. The results of this study will become part of a research report. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are currently a social worker with at least a year experience in the field of family preservation.

#### **1. AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to gain a better understanding of how social workers within NGOs can utilise group work as part of the implementation of family preservation services.

#### **2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to provide feedback on questions in a semi-structured interview. These questions will consist of short questions and more detailed questions about your views on family preservation services. The semi-structured interview will take approximately 60 minutes and questions will be recorded with an electronic device for the purpose of data processing. The research process is confidential and no personal information will be disclosed.

### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

No potential risk or discomfort is foreseen. Any discomfort experienced during the interview can be discussed and clarified at any time. If participants experience discomforts during any stage of this study participation may be terminated.

### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND / OR TO SOCIETY**

The results of this study will inform welfare organizations to areas of improvement in family preservation services. This information could be used by welfare organisations for further planning in service delivery.

### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

No payment in any form will be received for participating in this study.

### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coding where each semi-structured interview schedule is numbered. All semi-structured interview schedules will be managed, analyzed and processed by the researcher only and will be kept in a safe and secure place.

### **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so, eg should you influence other participants in the completion of their semi-structured interview schedules.

### **8. IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCHER**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher, Josane van Huyssteen by email: [15823539@gmail.com](mailto:15823539@gmail.com). You can also contact the supervisor, Doctor Marianne Strydom, Department of Social Work, University of Stellenbosch, tel: 021 808 2070 or email: [mstrydom@sun.ac.za](mailto:mstrydom@sun.ac.za).

### **9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

**SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

The information above was described to me, \_\_\_\_\_, the participant by Josane van Huyssteen in English and the participant is in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to him / her. The participant was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to his / her satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Participant or Legal Representative**

**Date**

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [name of subject/participant]. He / she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Investigator**

**Date**

## APPENDIX B: AFRIKAANS INFORMED CONSENT FORM



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### UNIVERSITEIT STELLENBOSCH

#### INWILLIGING OM DEEL TE NEEM AAN NAVORSING

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#### **Die benutting van groepwerk deur maatskaplike werkers by NRO's in die implementering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste**

U word gevra om deel te neem aan 'n navorsingstudie uitgevoer te word deur 'n meesters student Josane van Huyssteen, van die Departement Maatskaplike Werk aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch. Die resultate van die studie sal deel vorm van 'n navorsingstesis. U is as moontlike deelnemer aan die studie gekies omdat U tans 'n maatskaplike werker is met ten minste een jaar se ondervinding in die veld gesinsinstandhouding.

#### **1. DOEL VAN DIE STUDIE**

Die doel van die studie is om 'n beter begrip te ontwikkel vir die moontlike benutting van groepwerk deur maatskaplike werkers in NRO's, as deel van die implementering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste.

#### **2. PROSEDURES**

Indien u sou instem om aan die navorsings studie deel te neem, sal daar van u gevra word om terugvoer te verskaf oor vrae in die vorm van 'n semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud. Die vrae sal bestaan uit kort vrae en meer uitgebreide vrae oor u sienings rakende gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste en groepwerk. Die semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud sal ongeveer 60 minute duur en vrae sal met 'n elektroniese toestel opgeneem word vir die verwerking van data. Die navorsingsproses is konfidensieel en geen persoonlike inligting sal bekendgemaak word nie.

### **3. MOONTLIKE RISIKO'S EN ONGEMAKLIKHEID**

Geen risiko of ongemak word voorsien nie. Enige ongemak wat ervaar word tydens die onderhoud kan dadelik bespreek en uitgeklaar word. Indien deelnemers tydens enige tydperk van die studie onduidelikheid of ongemaklik ervaar mag deelname gestaak word.

### **4. MOONTLIKE VOORDELE VIR PROEFPERSONE EN/OF VIR DIE SAMELEWING**

Deelname aan die navorsing sal die gesinsorganisasie help om areas vir verbeterde dienslewering tydens gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste uit te ken.

### **5. VERGOEDING VIR DEELNAME**

Geen vergoeding sal deur deelnemers van die studie ontvang word nie.

### **6. VERTROULIKHEID**

Enige inligting wat deur middel van die navorsing verkry word en wat met u in verband gebring kan word, sal vertroulik bly en slegs met u toestemming bekend gemaak word of soos deur die wet vereis. Vertroulikheid sal gehandhaaf word deur middel van koderingstappe wat behels dat elke vraelys 'n nommer ontvang. Alle vraelyste sal slegs deur die navorser hanteer, geanaliseer en verwerk word en in veilige bewaring gehou word binne 'n gesluite kabinet. Indien resultate gepubliseer word, sal u deel vorm van 'n statistiese voorstelling en weereens sal geen persoonlike inligting bekend gemaak word nie.

### **7. DEELNAME EN ONTTREKING**

U kan self besluit of u aan die studie wil deelneem of nie. Indien u inwillig om aan die studie deel te neem, kan u te eniger tyd u daaraan onttrek sonder enige nadelige gevolge. U kan ook weier om op bepaalde vrae te antwoord, maar steeds aan die studie deelneem. Die ondersoeker kan u aan die studie onttrek indien omstandighede dit noodsaaklik maak.

### **8. IDENTIFIKASIE VAN ONDERSOEKERS**

Indien u enige vrae of besorgdheid het, staan dit u vry om in verbinding te tree met die navorser, Josane van Huyssteen, deur middel van epos: 15823539@sun.ac.za. U kan ook met die supervisor, doktor Marianne Strydom, Departement van Maatskaplike Werk, Universiteit van Stellenbosch in verbinding tree per epos: mstrydom@sun.ac.za of telefonies 021 808 2076.

### **9. REGTE VAN PROEFPERSONE**

U kan te eniger tyd u inwilliging terugtrek en u deelname beëindig, sonder enige nadelige gevolge vir u. Deur deel te neem aan die navorsing doen u geensins afstand van enige wetlike regte, eise of regsmiddel nie. Indien u vrae het oor u regte as proefpersoon by navorsing, skakel met Me Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] van die Afdeling Navorsingsontwikkeling, Universiteit Stellenbosch.

**VERKLARING DEUR PROEFPERSOON/DEELNEMER OF SY/HAAR REGSVERTENWOORDIGER**

Die bostaande inligting is aan my, \_\_\_\_\_, gegee en verduidelik deur Josane van Huyssteen in Afrikaans en ek is dié taal magtig of dit is bevredigend vir my vertaal. Ek is die geleentheid gebied om vrae te stel en my vrae is tot my bevrediging beantwoord.

Ek willic hiermee vrywillig in om deel te neem aan die studie. 'n Afskrif van hierdie vorm is aan my gegee.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Naam van proefpersoon/deelnemer**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Naam van regsverteenvoordinger (indien van toepassing)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Handtekening van proefpersoon/deelnemer of regsverteenvoordinger Datum**

**VERKLARING DEUR ONDERSOEKER**

Ek verklaar dat ek die inligting in hierdie dokument vervat, verduidelik het aan \_\_\_\_\_ [Naam van proefpersoon/deelnemer]. Hy/sy is aangemoedig en oorgenoeg tyd gegee om vrae aan my te stel. Dié gesprek is in Afrikaans gevoer en geen vertaler is gebruik nie.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Handtekening van ondersoeker**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Datum**

## APPENDIX C: ENGLISH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

### DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

#### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The utilisation of group work by social workers at NGOs in the implementation of family preservation services.

*Information obtained through this semi-structured interview schedule will remain confidential.*

**Family preservation definition:** Family preservation services are those essential child protection services rendered to at risk families in order to prevent the unnecessary alternative placement of children through immediate intervention that defuses the crisis situation, stabilizes the family, and teaches the family members new problem-resolution skills, so they can avoid future crisis.

#### 1. IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS OF RESPONDENT

##### 1.1. Age of respondent:

Age	Mark with an X
20 - 30 years	
31 - 40 years	
41 - 50 years	
51 - 60 years	
61+ years	

##### 1.2. How many years have you been practicing social work?

Number of years' experience	Mark with an X
6 months - 5 years	
6 - 10 years	
11 - 15 years	
16 - 20 years	
21 + years	

## 1.3. Length of time at current organization:

Length of time	Mark with an X
Less than a year	
1 – 2 years	
3 – 4 years	
5 – 6 years	
7 – 8 years	
9 – 10 years	
More than 10 years	

## 1.4. Indicate your highest qualification in social work.

	Mark with an X
Diploma in Social Work	
B. Social Work	
B.A. Social Work (3 years)	
B.A. Social Work (4 years)	
B. Social Work (4 years)	
B.Diac. Social Work	
Honours B.A. Social Work	
M.A. Social Work	
D.Phil. Social Work	

## 1.5. Other in-service training that you have obtained relevant to family preservation services and group work? Briefly describe what the training consisted of.

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**2. FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES**

2.1. According to South African policy documents, such as the White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997) and the Integrated Service Delivery Model (Department of Social Development, 2006a) strong emphasis is placed on the delivery of family preservation services. How does this requirement guide your service delivery?

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2.2. Describe the type of services that you deliver to families to prevent the removal of children.

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2.3. What method of social work intervention do you utilise most often when rendering family preservation services in your case load?

Social Work Method	Mark with an X
Casework	
Groupwork	
Community work	

**3. UTILISATION OF GROUP WORK IN THE DELIVERY OF FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES**

3.1. How do you utilise group work as an intervention strategy during the delivery of family preservation services?

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3.2. Indicate the type of group that you utilise most often when rendering family preservation services in your caseload.

Type of group	Description	Mark with an X
Therapeutic group	Promotion of a personal change in a client’s understanding of themselves.	
Counselling group	Exploring and learning from group members that are in similar situations to take on important decisions or difficult problems.	
Support group	Enhancing the capacities of members that are experiencing a similar challenge through supporting one another.	
Educational group	Develop group members’ knowledge and skills to address a challenge or opportunity.	
Other? Specify		

3.3. In your opinion which group work model do you find most applicable when rendering group work during family preservation services?

<b>Group work model</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mark with an X</b>
Remedial model	Utilises the group as a context and means for altering deviant behaviour in dysfunctional individuals.	
Reciprocal or mediating model	Is a form of resolving disputes between two or more parties, where the social worker acts as the mediator to assist parties in negotiating a settlement.	
Developmental model	Groups explore, enhance and develop the capacities, knowledge and skills of group members through mutual aid and contact with group members in similar situations in order to address a challenge situation.	
Social goal model	Designed to bring about important social gains for the group by addressing social problems related to a community's development and growth.	
Other? Specify		

3.4. When implementing the group work method during family preservation services, do you:

	<b>Mark with an X</b>
Run separate groups for family members, for example a group with the parents and a group with the children	
Refer some family members to groups outside your organization, for example a group on parenting run by in a clinic or hospital	

3.5. Indicate two advantages of group work that you find most applicable in your caseload as a social work method to enhance family preservation services.

Advantages of group work	Mark with an X
Group work provides the social worker with the opportunity to identify at risk families in a caseload and effectively involve them in service delivery, by collaborating with clients to identify family needs, develop appropriate goals and identify possible community resources.	
Group work is a positive and optimistic way of working with at risk families, by providing them with a safe place to practice new skills and receive the needed motivation and direction to make a positive change in their lives.	
Group work is a more cost and time effective social work intervention method to enhance family preservation services.	
Group work is especially relevant in family preservation services where the social workers aim is to provide clients with education, reduce isolation, promote social action and build support.	

3.6. Indicate the two obstacles you encounter the most when utilising the group work method.

Obstacles	Mark with an X
Motivational Issues: e.g. resistance from group members; high levels of distrust among group members and/or the social worker, group goals are not compliant with group member goals.	
Life Stress Issues: e.g. difficulty with developmental stages of group members, such as parents with small children who are unable to attend group meetings or problems with engaging teenagers.	
Pattern of Life Issues: e.g. certain times of the day, week, month or year impacting on group meetings due to the significance of these days to group members, such as holidays or birthdays.	
Cultural Issues: e.g. difficulty related to the language, values and/or other culture related barriers of group members.	

3.7. In your opinion, what other obstacles do you encounter in your organisation when utilising the group work method during family preservation services?

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Any other comments

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Thank you for your participation and cooperation  
Josane van Huyssteen

## APPENDIX D: AFRIKAANS SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITEIT DEPARTEMENT MAATSKAPLIKE WERK SEMI-GESTRUKTUREERDE VRAELYS

The utilisation of group work by social workers at NGOs in the implementation of family preservation services.

*Informasie ingesamel deur middel van die vraelys sal streng konfidensieel bly.*

**Gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste:** Gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste is daardie noodsaaklike kinderbeskermingsdienste wat gelewer word aan risiko gesinne ten einde die onnodige alternatiewe plasing van kinders te voorkom deur onmiddellike intervensie wat die krisis situasie ontfont, die gesin stabiliseer en gesinslede nuwe probleemoplossings vaardighede leer, sodat hulle 'n toekomstige krisis kan vermy.

#### 4. IDENTIFISERENDE BESONDERHEDE VAN RESPONDENT

##### 4.1. Ouderdom van respondent:

Ouderdom	Merk met 'n X
20 - 30 jaar	
31 - 40 jaar	
41 - 50 jaar	
51 - 60 jaar	
61+ jaar	

##### 4.2. Hoeveel jaar praktiseer U al maatskaplike werk?

Aantal jaar ondervinding	Merk met 'n X
6 maande - 5 jaar	
6 - 10 jaar	
11 - 15 jaar	
16 - 20 jaar	
21 + jaar	

## 4.3. Aantal jaar by huidige organisasie:

Aantal jaar	Merk met 'n X
Minder as 'n jaar	
1 – 2 jaar	
3 – 4 jaar	
5 – 6 jaar	
7 – 8 jaar	
9 – 10 jaar	
Meer as 10 jaar	

## 4.4. Dui U hoogste kwalifikasie in maatskaplike werk aan:

	Merk met 'n X
Diploma in Maatskaplike Werk	
B. Maatskaplike Werk	
B.A. Maatskaplike Werk (3 jaar)	
B.A. Maatskaplike Werk (4 jaar)	
B. Maatskaplike Werk (4 jaar)	
B.Diac. Maatskaplike Werk	
Honneurs B.A. Maatskaplike Werk	
M.A. Maatskaplike Werk	
D.Phil. Social Work	

## 4.5. Ander indiensopleiding wat U ontvang het relevant tot gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste en groepwerk? Beskryf kortliks waaruit die opleiding bestaan het.

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**5. GESINSINSTANDHOUDINGSDIENSTE**

## 5.1. Volgens Suid-Afrikaanse beleids dokumente, soos die Witskrif vir Maatskaplike Welsyn (Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997) en die Geïntegreerde Dienslewering Model (Department of Social Development, 2006a) word sterk klem geplaas op die lewering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste. Hoe lei hierdie vereiste U dienslewering?

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5.2. Beskryf die tipe dienste wat U lewer aan risiko gesinne om die verwydering van hul kinders te voorkom.

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5.3. In U gevallelading watter maatskaplike werk intervensie metode benut U die meeste wanneer U gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste lewer?

Maatskaplike Werk Metode	Merk met 'n X
Gevallewerk	
Groepwerk	
Gemeenskapswerk	

## 6. BENUTTING VAN GROEPWERK TYDENS DIE LEWERING VAN GESINSINSTANDHOUDINGSDIENSTE

6.1. Hoe benut U groepwerk as 'n intervensie metode tydens die lewering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste?

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6.2. Dui aan die tipe groep wat U die meeste benut tydens die lewering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste in U gevallelading.

Tipe Groep	Beskrywing	Merk met 'n X
Terapeutiese groep	Bevorder die persoonlike verandering in 'n kliënt se begrip van hulself.	
Beradingsgroep	Ontdekking en leer van groepslede wat in soortgelyke situasies is om belangrike besluite of moeilike probleme te kan aanvat.	
Ondersteuningsgroep	Die verbetering van groepslede se vermoëns deur ondersteuning vanaf ander groepslede wat soortgelyke uitdagings ondervind.	
Opvoedkundige groep	Ontwikkeling van groepslede se kennis en vaardighede ten einde 'n uitdaging of geleentheid aan te spreek.	
Ander? Spesifiseer.		

6.3. In U opinie watter groepwerk model vind U die toepaslikste wanneer groepwerk benut word tydens gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste?

<b>Groepwerk model</b>	<b>Beskrywing</b>	<b>Merk met 'n X</b>
Remediërende model	Benut die groep as 'n konteks en metode vir die verandering van afwykende gedrag in disfunksionele individue.	
Wedersydse of bemiddeling model	Word benut as 'n metode om geskille tussen twee of meer partye op te klaar, waar die maatskaplike werker optree as die bemiddelaar tussen partye wat onderhandel om 'n beskikking te bereik.	
Ontwikkelings model	Groepe verken, verbeter en ontwikkel die vermoëns, kennis en vaardighede van groepslede deur middel van onderlinge hulp en kontak met groepslede in soortgelyke situasies ten einde 'n uitdaging of situasie aan te spreek.	
Maatskaplike doel model	Ontwerp om belangrike sosiale winste vir die groep te bring deur sosiale probleme wat verband hou met 'n gemeenskap se ontwikkeling en groei aan te spreek.	
Ander? Spesifiseer.		

6.4. Wanneer U groepwerk tydens gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste implementeer:

	<b>Merk met 'n X</b>
Bedryf U aparte groepe vir gesinslede, byvoorbeeld 'n groep met die ouers en een met die kinders	
Verwys U sommige gesinslede vir groepe buite U organisasie, byvoorbeeld 'n ouer groep by 'n kliniek of hospitaal	



6.5. Dui die twee voordele aan van groepwerk as 'n maatskaplike werk intervensie metode om gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste te bevorder in U gevallelading.

<b>Voordele van groepwerk</b>	<b>Merk met 'n X</b>
Groepwerk voorsien die maatskaplike werker met die geleentheid om risiko gesinne te identifiseer in hul gevallelading en hulle effektief te betrek by dienslewering, deur in samewerking met kliënte gesinsbehoefte te identifiseer, toepaslike doelwitte te ontwikkel en moontlike hulpbronne in die gemeenskap te identifiseer.	
Groepwerk is 'n positiewe en optimistiese manier om met risiko gesinne te werk, deur 'n veilige plek te skep waar hulle nuwe vaardighede kan oefen en die nodige motivering en hulp kan ontvang om 'n positiewe verandering in hul lewens te maak.	
Groepwerk is 'n tyd en koste effektiewe maatskaplike werk intervensie metode om gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste te bevorder.	
Groepwerk is veral relevant tydens die lewering van gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste waar dit die maatskaplike werker se doel is om kliënte te voorsien met opvoeding, isolasie te verminder, sosiale aksie te bevorder en ondersteuning te bou.	

6.6. Dui aan die twee struikelblokke wat U die meeste ervaar wanneer U die groepwerk metode benut.

<b>Struikelblokke</b>	<b>Merk met 'n X</b>
Motiverings Kwessies: bv. weerstand van groepslede; hoë vlakke van wantroue tussen groepslede en/of die maatskaplike werker; groep doelwitte is nie in ooreenstemming met groepslede se doelwitte nie.	
Lewensdruk Kwessies: bv. probleme met die ontwikkelings fases van groepslede, soos ouers met klein kinders wat dit onmoontlik vind om groepsessies by te woon of probleme wat verband hou met die betrokkenheid van tieners.	
Lewenspatroon Kwessies: bv. sekere tye van die dag, week, maand of jaar wat 'n impak op die groep sessies kan hê weens die betekenis van die dae vir groepslede, soos vakansie dae of verjaarsdae.	
Kulturele Kwessies: bv. probleme wat verband hou met taal, waardes en/of ander kulturele hindernisse van groepslede.	

6.7. In U opinie, watter ander struikelblokke word in U organisasie ervaar wanneer U die groepwerk metode tydens gesinsinstandhoudingsdienste benut?

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Enige ander kommentaar.

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Dankie vir U deelname en samewerking.  
Josane van Huyssteen