

**PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY HIV/AIDS ORPHANS
IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus) for the degree of Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology has not been previously submitted by for a degree at this or any other university, that it is my work design and in execution, and that all material contained here in has been duly acknowledged.

Signed at _____ on the _____

N. Nematondoni

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the psychological difficulties encountered and ways of coping by HIV/AIDS orphans in Limpopo Province. The sample was comprised of 70 children whose parent(s) died of HIV/AIDS related diseases between the ages 05 and 18 years. The data were collected through the use of face to face interview and questionnaires. The study results show that as a result of trauma resulting from taking care and witnessing ill parent(s) die, HIV/AIDS orphans suffer from sadness, helplessness, anger, guilty, aggression and frustration that often lead to withdrawal and subsequent depression. In quantitative study Beck Depression Inventory was also used to determine the levels of depression (mild, moderate, and/or severe levels) and it was discovered that HIV/AIDS orphans experience moderate to severe depression. The study further looked on whether demographic factors including (age, gender, religion, home language, number of siblings, and level of education) have an impact on the experience of depression. Qualitative study findings also discovered that HIV/AIDS orphans do not experience the relationship with their caregivers as being supportive. Furthermore, mixing with non-orphaned peers was reported to be a mission and emotionally distressing. Qualitative study also discovered that HIV/AIDS orphans lack many adults whom they can trust and who they could be able to express their feelings, as result they try to find their own ways of coping with their circumstances. However, quantitative study also looked at three ways of coping (cognitive, behavioural and avoidance ways of coping) that could be used by HIV/AIDS orphans. This was achieved through the use of ways of coping scales. The findings of this study discovered that HIV/AIDS orphans use cognitive and avoidance ways of coping more than behavioural ways of coping. Furthermore, the study looked at whether there is a relationship between ways of coping and biographic factors (age, gender, religion, home language, number of siblings, and level of education). It was discovered that HIV/AIDS orphans are psychologically distressed and need to be transferred for psychological therapy after the loss of their parents.