

The Role of Life Orientation Teachers in Addressing the Emotional Needs of Rural HIV/AIDS Orphaned Learners

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ABSTRACT The study was conducted in a village of Magangeni in Venda in South Africa. HIV/AIDS has left many children orphaned and has led to the emergence of many social problems. In many rural areas, the number of deceased parents leaving behind young children is on the rise. The study is qualitative in nature since this was conducted in a natural setting. This study explores the emotional needs of a number of rural orphaned learners and the impact these needs has on their academic work. The study also highlights the role of Life Orientation teachers in these learner's lives. Purposive sampling was used in obtaining data from learners who lost either one or both parents and teachers who taught Life Orientation. Findings of this study affirmed that rural orphaned learners were plagued with many emotional problems such as need for safety, sleeping disturbances and emotional abuse which affected their learning at school as well as other social interactions with peers and caregivers. The findings on the side of teachers were the need for training in how to counsel the learners. This studies' intention was to identify the unique emotional needs of orphaned learners and to suggest ways in which support structures can be established to ensure the learners' overall success both in the schooling system and in society as a whole.