

The Children's Delphi: considerations for developing a programme for promoting children's self-concept and well-being

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Abstract

This study is premised on the notion that intervention programmes aimed at improving children's well-being should be inclusive of activities which promote children's self-concept. Using a child participation framework, this study aimed to explore children's perceptions of the nature and content of intervention programmes aimed at improving children's self-concept within two impoverished communities of the Western Cape, South Africa. The Delphi technique was followed with a group of 10 children between the ages of 10 and 12 years who were considered to be knowledgeable experts and authorities on matters affecting their lives and well-being of children. They suggested that intervention programmes include a focus on *safety, the provision of social support, the creation of opportunities for learning and for play and the provision of basic material needs.*

Introduction

The 'self' in social psychology is seen as a multidimensional, dynamic and complex construct, largely created as a reflection of children's interaction and engagement with their social environment (Kenny & McEachern, 2009). It is, therefore, essentially shaped by social institutions, culture, history and the social context in which they live (Staub, 2003). Recent research (see Benninger & Savahl, 2016a; Fattore, Mason & Watson, 2007; Savahl *et al.*, 2015; September & Savahl, 2009) has shown that the ways in which children experience and make sense of the 'self' plays a central role in their psychosocial functioning and overall well-being. Subsequently, the importance of the self-concept has been foregrounded in intervention programmes aimed at improving children's well-being (Swann, Chang-Schneider, & McClarty, 2007).

Prior studies have recommended that the self-concept be supported through intervention programmes which are inclusive of meaningful social relationships, feelings of inclusion, safety, coping skills, structured and unstructured activities, opportunities for reflection and through addressing the larger structural issues which may influence the resources available to nurture a healthy self-concept (see Demaray *et al.*, 2009; McMurray *et al.*, 2011; Noble-Carr *et al.*, 2013; Rogers *et al.*, 2012). An example is seen in a study conducted by McMurray (2010) with 13 British adolescents from a low socioeconomic background. The study found that the self-identity

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