

RESEARCH ARTICLE:

## Exploring the Challenges and Resilience of Child and Youth Care Workers Employed in a Child and Youth Care Centre in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Sindisiwe Dewa<sup>1</sup> and Mendon Dewa<sup>2</sup>

Received: 22 November 2022 | Revised: 09 October 2023 | Published: 16 October 2023

Reviewing Editor: Dr. Joseph Adebayo, Cape Peninsula University of Technology

### Abstract

Child and youth care work is a stressful profession that results in workforce concerns about poor levels of staff retention and high levels of inexperience. The aim of this study is to gain insight into child and youth care workers' resilience by examining the challenges faced by these workers and establish the methods used to overcome these challenges. This study employed a qualitative research method and data was collected from a child and youth care centre in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, employing a purposive sampling technique using 9 workers. Seven themes emerged from this study and it was evident that the respondents shared a common understanding of resilience. It was also found that an individual's grassroots had an impact on developing a passion to work with young people as well as coping with work challenges. Positive protective factors that emerged were support systems in the organisation as motivators as well as maintaining a balance between work and personal life, while negative factors were low salaries and poor working conditions. The study concluded by recommending organisational interventions to support resilience in child and youth care workers and maintain expertise in child and youth care work.

**Keywords:** child and youth care workers; resilience; child and youth care centres

### Introduction

Child and youth care work is emotionally demanding and challenging and requires child care workers to be extremely skilled and resilient to manage unanticipated events, recovering from crisis, gaining strength, and even foster their future success in executing their duties (Frost *et al.*, 2018). Masten and Barnes (2018: 98) defined resilience as "the process of capacity for or outcome of successful adaptation, despite challenging or threatening circumstances". Child care workers are exposed to the traumatic and often challenging circumstances of the young people's lives (Sibanda and Lombard, 2015: 340). Frosch *et al.* (2019) also highlighted that child and youth care workers (CYCWs) encounter difficulties in their line of work and these challenges hinder their effort and goals to deliver quality services to the young people and their families. Moreover, through their effort in attempting to help young people heal from their traumatic background, child care workers are themselves exposed to stories of traumatic experiences of young people (Sprang *et al.*, 2019). Each of these factors can adversely affect child care workers, leading to an increased worker burnout and, reduced capability to function efficiently in the workplace and reduced morale (Steinlin *et al.*, 2017: 160). Nevertheless, there is not much research about the processes through which CYCWs develop resilience or how they manage and overcome the demands of their work (Cook, 2020). While commonly used in child and youth care, consideration of resilience in child and youth care workers' contexts is generally insufficient.

<sup>1</sup>Durban University of Technology, [21829271@dut4life.ac.za](mailto:21829271@dut4life.ac.za) | <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9371-440>

<sup>2</sup>Durban University of Technology, [mendond@dut.ac.za](mailto:mendond@dut.ac.za) | <https://orcid.org/000-0002-0061-3654>

Wabule (2020: 80) described resilience as a CYCWs' ability to stay in control of challenging circumstances, maintain their dedication to provide care to young people under their care. The concept of resilience theory has historically been used in relation to young people who have been subject to abuse and exposed to the child and youth care system, with resilience research emerging through the field of child development (Russ *et al.*, 2020). Garmezy (1991) proposed three types of protective factors that make up a theoretical framework, which includes individual characteristics of the individual, a close-knit relationship with the family and lastly, social support and structure outside their immediate family. The primary factor in developing resiliency relates to the person's intelligence and character, and Garmezy (1991) stated that resilient young people have above average intelligence. Garmezy (1991) defines the second factor in developing resiliency as one that includes the support of family to help with difficult conditions and the third common factor of resilient young people is external support from institutions. Masten and Barnes (2018) considered the intelligence level of an individual and ability to possess the mind power to tackle an adverse situation as one pleases as the core characteristics of a resilient individual.

According to Ledesma (2014), resilience originated from the Latin word *resiliens*, which refers to the pliant or elastic quality of a substance. According to Wright *et al.* (2013: 16), the scientific study of resilience emerged around 1970 when a group of ground-breaking researchers began to notice the phenomenon of positive adaptation among some group of young people who were considered vulnerable for developing later psychopathology. Resilience theory argues that it is not the nature of adversity that is most important, but how one deals with it; when an individual faces adversity, resilience helps them to recover after the undesirable circumstance (Parsons *et al.*, 2016: 297). Soulen and Wine (2018) define resilience as "the ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune". The literature demonstrates that there is a direct relationship between the stress of the child and youth care job and their ability to maintain resilience in the face of prolonged contact with challenges. According to Van Breda (2018: 2), resilience is complex, as a construct, it can have a different meaning between people, companies, cultures, and society. Rutter (2023: 123) further indicated that people might be more resilient at one point in their lives and less during another, and that they may be more resilient in some aspects of their lives than others. Our study has adopted the Resilience Theoretical Framework that was developed by Garmezy (1991) and can aid an organisation to have a better understanding of how CYCWs would effectively function when exposed to challenging and unfavourable events of their work. Resilience theory reveals the explanations on why some individuals grow up to be healthy adults despite their challenging environment. As it is strength-based, the resilience theory emphasises on constructing protective factors in an individual instead of reducing stressors in a person's community or environment. Resilience theory furthermore looks at which protective factors are effective at reducing the negative effects of certain adverse events (Zimmerman, 2013; Van Breda, 2018: 10).

Child and youth care centres have a long history, are found in many countries worldwide and were established to provide a place of safety for young people by providing care and protection, safeguarding their development and their rehabilitation (Anglin, 2014; Wanglar, 2022: 382). Köngeter and Reutlinger (2022: 267) further stated that in several countries, it remains to be an important intervention for young people whose parents cannot sufficiently care for them for different reasons. From an international view, CYCCs in the Netherlands represents approximately 50% of all children in out-of-home care. Recent developments include the development of small-scale residential settings, including family-oriented residential care and shared family care (Knorth and Harder, 2022). In an effort to further CYCW professional goals, several initiatives have recently been undertaken under the patronages of such groups as the Child Welfare League of America, the National Organisation of Child Care Worker Associations, and the International Leadership Coalition for Professional Child and Youth Care. One of these has been the development of a survey designed to elicit the viewpoints of human service administrators and other leaders as to the present state and future needs of the child and youth care field, and to engage them (Brown, 2019). Locally, there has been a lot of work done in recent years to improve the standard of child and youth care work (Lee *et al.*, 2015: 172). Accredited courses are now a requirement, and child and youth care workers who qualified prior to this new requirement had to attend and pass a course in order to register (Collins *et al.*, 2020). As part of the professionalisation of the workforce, the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care (PBCYC) has developed draft regulations that include standards for education and training and scopes of practice for CYCWs at each level.

The environment in which CYCWs operate on a daily basis is traumatic and stressful, which leads to stress and burnout (Cook, 2020: 972). Schiff and Lane (2019: 456) stated that CYCWs face challenges that include work-related stress and burnout, lack of organised supervision, insufficient resources, low salaries, lack of recognition, unrealistic demands from management, inadequate support, as well as young people' aggressive behaviour. Resilient CYCWs are likely to continue working efficiently in the field and provide effective services to the young people and their families (Mansfield *et al.*, 2016: 80). This is an indication that exploring the resilience of CYCWs will provide better understanding on what needs to be done to assist CYCWs to be resilient and be able to deal with the challenging situations that they experience on their daily activities at the workplace. Workplace challenges in child and youth care work refers to difficulties encountered by CYCWs in their line of work with young people and their families. In their study, Águila-Otero *et al.* (2020) highlighted that due to their complex needs, young people with special needs in CYCCs may present behavioural challenges. These challenges may hamper the effort and goals of the child and youth care workers to deliver quality services to the young people (Frosch *et al.*, 2019). Shortages of skilled child and youth care workers in child and youth care centres lead to increased workloads for existing child and youth care workers, which in turn lead to reduced quality of services, decreased staff satisfaction, and increased number of CYCWs leaving the field (Cook, 2020: 970). Retention of skilled child and youth care workers in child and youth care centres is an issue that requires the attention of all who are concerned with the quality of services for people in CYCCs (Haffejee and Levine, 2020).

In their study, Lamothe *et al.* (2018: 14) stated that lack of structured supervision as well as inadequate support for motivating staff do remain as challenges for CYCWs in their effort to build and maintaining their resilience. According to McLean (2015: 347), supervision is one of the essential tools which can empower child and youth care workers in their work with young people in CYCCs. Supervisors can assist as role-models of care as they showcase the meaning of care and effectiveness through the approaches that they use to connect with CYCWs on a regular basis. Child and youth care workers spend most time in the life space of young people, however, they are not adequately rewarded and supported as it should be by either the government or by their organisations (van Breda (2018: 13). Furthermore, Lamothe *et al.* (2018: 14) reported that lack of structured supervision, insufficient support for motivating staff do remain as limitations for CYCWs' efforts to provide effective behavioural interventions to young people under their care. In their study, Hope and Van Wyk (2018: 422) stated that the inadequacy of essential resources is a major challenge that is faced by CYCWs in their line of work and this has a negative impact on the implementation of essential therapeutic activities. According to Steinlin *et al.* (2017: 162), working shifts, long hours as well as being on standby, are some of the challenges faced by child and youth care workers as it takes away their family time and affect them socially. Moreover, some of the CYCWs lack the relevant skills when it comes to implementing activities and programmes that are relevant to the specific needs of young people if the prevailing situation such as environmental conditions change (Schelbe *et al.*, 2017: 58).

## **Methodology**

This study employed the qualitative research method since it was relevant for exploring the resilience of CYCWs and gain greater understanding of the factors influencing their resilience. Data was collected from a CYCC in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal and the study employed a purposive sampling technique from 9 CYCWs from a child and youth care centre. According to Etikan *et al.* (2017: 14), "the purposive sampling technique, is also called judgment sampling as it is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses". The data in this research was obtained from semi-structured interviews because that allowed the researcher and the participant to pursue ideas in more detail, thereby embracing relevant subjects that may have been unnoticed by the researcher. The data for this study was analysed through thematic content analysis which is a process of identifying patterns or themes, and categorising these patterns into coherent categories that would bring meaning to the data under analysis. This study ensured credibility and trustworthiness through member checking and the study results were analysed in a methodical manner with aim of avoiding study bias. To address confidentiality, anonymity as well as to protect the participants from harm, the participants' names were not mentioned. An ethics clearance letter was provided as permission to conduct the research from your university's research ethics committee.

## Results on the Resilience of CYCWs

It was vital to gain insight into the demographic profiles of the participants who participated in the study on the resilience CYCWs. From the nine participants that were interviewed, eight were females while one was a male. And the participants' ages ranged from 27 to 52 and a majority of the participants, that is six, had worked for the CYCC for a period between 5 and 10 years.

### **Challenges faced by child and youth care workers**

The participants were probed on the most challenging facets of working with young people and some of the responses from the participants are as follows:

*"However sometimes even if one has a strategy it is difficult because of the large number of young people ones will have under their care, who sometimes display difficult behaviour at the same time".*

*"Managing the behaviour of young people is the most challenging part of working with young people. This is because sometimes one might not have the relevant skills to contain the kind of behaviours displayed by young people".*

*"Its difficulty to work with young people who have experienced traumatic experiences. It's not easy at all. ....One of the challenges is to reunite them with their families and also help them not to go back to the streets again".*

Participants expressed that the young people had different behaviours and sometimes they copied each other's behaviour which makes it even difficult to manage. In some cases, if one reaches out to management with the issues of these behaviours, the superiors did not have the solution as well. Another participant also added that when one is used to work with girls it becomes a challenge when asked to work with boys. The participant also highlighted that there was no direct information on how to deal with young people when they are transitioning to teenagers and also that the challenge was for a CYCW to perceive circumstances at the same level as the new generation and try to accommodate them. On the other hand, some of the participants indicated that it was a challenge to work with young people with disabilities and their responses were as follows:

*"It's difficult to work with young people with disabilities more so if they are combined with the abled ones. Sometimes the abled young people don't understand how to interact with their peers with disabilities which becomes very difficult to me as a CYCW".*

*"Now the challenge is if you have a 16 year old coming into care you can't undo that 16 years of trauma and difficult behaviour within 2 years....And also working with young people with disability and young people with ADHD and ODD are some the challenges that we face as CYCWs".*

The participants were probed to share how they managed to maintain a balance between work and personal life and some of the responses are as follows:

*"So when I am here, I try to focus on my work. When I am not here I try not to think about anything that has to do with work".*

*"Sometimes we tend to take work with us home and its affect one's personal life. Sometimes you tend to solve things at work even if you are not at work".*

*"I always try not to combine my work and my personal life. Moreover, for me, I think it also goes with being professional".*

When asked of their opinions on how child and youth care organisations should support child care workers, some of the positive responses from the participants concerning training, supervision and meetings are as follows:

*"The organisation supports us through supervision, through workshops that are organised by our organisation and the training that we are receiving now. We also support each other as colleagues".*

*"We do have Monday meetings whereby we reflect on certain behaviours displayed by young people".*

*"They support us, however when you feel this is too much, they will call the psychologist for you. Our manager is always eager to help".*

However, several concerns were raised by some participants regarding little or no organisational support and the sentiments are as follows:

*"Sometimes as CYCWs we don't want to share our challenges with the organisation because they tend to use that information against you. For instance, if I share my personal challenges with the manager and then something went wrong at work the manager will shift that problem and say this might have been caused by the family challenges that I am facing".*

*"I am saying they hardly support us. I don't think they understand what's it is like to work in the life space of the young people".*

The participants were also asked to add any final comments and some of the responses from the participants concerning salaries, recognition and long working hours are as follows:

*"As CYCWs our salaries are very low, which is a challenge for us. The other challenge is the work overload and the working conditions".*

*"I feel like we should be recognised regardless of whether one is at the government institution or at a private organisation".*

*"The salaries are too low, we are not being taken seriously, yet we are very important. We wish if our profession can be recognised. The other challenge is the issue of working for long hours."*

Some of the participants indicated that the organisation was not implementing anything new and stated that:

*"The organisation is not doing enough towards the healing and positive behaviours of the young people. We need new ideas from the management. It's always same story we don't have money for this and that, and the child's needs are not met".*

Moreover participants expressed the need for CYCCs to have a resident psychologist to assist the workers with the prevalent grief as it might affect the young person. Participants also highlighted that the organisation need to offer workshops and more training for the CYCWs.

### **Resilience of child and youth care workers**

It was crucial to ensure that the research participants understand the terms that were being investigated so that the results that are generated from the study are valid. The participants were probed on their understanding of the term "resilience". The participants were able to provide a positive understanding of resilience. Some of the responses from the participants are as follows:

*"It's a good thought, a clever person who is strong and patient".*

*"Someone who remains strong even if they continue to face difficulties".*

*"Resilience I understand it means to bounce back despite the negative experiences".*

*"I understand resilience as being always calm and positive, and perseverance".*

The participants also perceived resilience as persevering through the difficult times despite the challenges that one faces.



The participants were also asked on the reasons why they chose to work in the field of child and youth care and some of the responses from the participants are as follows:

*“When I was growing up, my mother used to take after a lot of young people who were vulnerable in our neighbourhood. So when I was old enough I used to help my mother take care of other children. That is when I developed the passion to work with young people”.*

*“Working with young people was my way of giving back after I also received love and support from other people during my difficult time as a young person. I come from a broken family so many people helped me to be where I am right now”.*

*“When I was growing up in my community I used to see young people who were vulnerable. How they were being treated which sometimes you will think that if the young person can be in a place of safety, they will have a better life”.*

One participant narrated that she wanted to be a social worker so when the opportunity of CYCW came, she took up the opportunity because of the desire to help and work with young people. On the other hand, another participant indicated that she did not know about CYCW when she joined the profession, however once she started working in child and youth care, she saw a need to make a difference and started working from the age of 17.

Understanding the issues that motivate the CYCW workforce is vital to helping vulnerable children to access key social and health services at a CYCC. The participants were also asked to describe what kept them motivated since that factor may influence the professional activities of the CYCWs. Some of the responses from the participants are as follows:

*“My manager motivates me. Whenever I am doing the right things she always praises me saying ‘well-done’ am so proud of you, this is great’. If I am not doing my work, she will encourage me to put more effort in my work”.*

*“My children, thinking of them motivates me to do my work. To see a smile on the face of all the young people under my care. The support system in our organisation motivates me and keeps me going”.*

*“I motivate myself, I believe in myself and my abilities. When I am off, I tend to do things that I like most. I go out with my friends and spend time with my family especially my son and he does motivate me. I read books whenever I get the chance”.*

It emerged from the research findings that the love for young people and the compassion to help them and make a difference in their lives, was a key driver in CYCW. Additionally, some of the participants indicated that communication with other CYCWs from different organisations and hearing their experience and challenges would also motivate when one realises that other subordinates are also facing challenges. Moreover some of the participants perceived that they drew their motivation from the young people. Some of the responses from these participants are:

*“The passion to make a difference in the lives of the young people motivates me to do my job”.*

*“I would say it's a struggle that keeps me in this job. Because when you know you have to take care of other people that motivates you to keep on going”.*

*“It's not easy to bring a smile on the face of child who has gone through traumatic experiences in life or to mould their lives. However, when you smile on the face of child who has been broken inside, it motivates you to keep on going”.*

*“For me, when I see young people and CYCWs being able to progress and develop themselves, that keeps me motivated”.*

The participants were also asked to describe how they coped with the work challenges and some of the responses are as follows:

*"I listen to music and I go party to cope with the challenges that comes with my work. I also try not to take their issues to be my problems especially the sad stories that they have gone through. I also try to stay positive, listening to motivational speeches, music, go to watch movies with my friends'.*

*"If you are self-aware it helps you to manage and cope with the challenges that comes with our job. It helps to always remain calm, be observant, take time to make decisions and also to control your emotions. I do exercise and keep myself health".*

The participants pointed out on the need for teamwork to deal and cope with work challenges and the some of the comments were as follows:

*"If it's getting out of hand I involve the management to help. The management is helping a lot to cope with the challenges. They give us time for debriefing and talk about the challenges that we face".*

*"When you talk to other people about it, when we share with colleagues then one will tell you that oh this is the approach or strategy that I used. I think talking lowers the level of stress".*

*"Working together as a team, that helps. Staff development, reading literature and sharing with other people in the CYC field".*

The participants also shared the most helpful job-related training that they had received and that included observation training, teamwork, behaviour management training, communication skills training, assessment training as well as attending regional meetings. On the other hand, some of the participants cited training on topics such as the fundamental of CYCW, behaviour management and relational management. Some participants cited safety and security training while other participants highlighted internal training in behaviour management and safety and security, firefighting, CYCW training, HIV and AIDS, and counselling as the most helpful job-related training that they had received. Some of the participants indicated that they have received level 4 and 5 CYCW training, and some of the participants highlighted that they had attended NACCW conferences, forums and seminars.

## **Discussion of Research Findings on the Resilience of CYCWs**

Seven themes were derived from the study and hereafter, these themes are discussed in line with Garmezy (1991)'s theoretical framework for resiliency, which is characterised by individual characteristics, close family relationship and social support and structure as the three types of protective factors. Concerning individual characteristics as positive protective factors in the theoretical framework for resiliency, the first theme was understanding of resilience. It was evident that the respondents shared a common understanding of resilience, which was perceived as being strong and patient, bouncing back despite the negative experiences or persevering through the difficult times. The results are aligned with Cook (2020: 974) who posited that environment under which CYCWs operate requires resilience since these CYCWs are exposed on a daily basis is traumatic, stressful and has lots of pressure which leads to stress and burnout. Also aligned with individual characteristics as positive protective factors was the second theme, which was coping with challenges such as dealing with a large number of young people that display difficult behaviour at the same time. The young people possessing different behaviours would sometimes copy each other's behaviour which makes it even difficult to manage. In addition, it was found that it was difficult to work with young people with disabilities more so if they are combined with the non-disabled ones. In some instances, the non-disabled young people would not understand how to interact with their peers with disabilities which becomes very difficult for the CYCW. The research results demonstrated that there were several ways by which the CYCWs managed to cope with their challenges. When young people are fighting, the CYCW would separate them, if containing their behaviour is the challenge, one would try and keep the young people busy with activities such as drawing, colouring or puzzles. The CYCWs support each other as colleagues and the supervisors also support them. However, listening to music and going for parties after work was also used to cope with the challenges that comes with the child care work. Avoiding sad stories, staying positive, listening to motivational speeches, music,

as well as going to watch movies with friends, were also noted as coping mechanisms. Leisure and social hobbies play a significant part in encouraging resilience as they can assist in diverting the mental focus from work challenges (Matheson *et al.*, 2016: 507).

Additionally, concerning the individual characteristics, the third theme for the study was maintaining balance between work and personal life. It emerged from the research results that a CYCW would only focus on work and leave personal issues and challenges aside in order to maintain a balance between work and personal life. Cellphones are attended to during break times to help the CYCW to focus on work. It was also noted that for some CYCWs, it was quite difficult to maintain the balance because sometimes they tended to take work to home, leading to some adverse effect on one's personal life. In some cases work problems were also solved from home. Concerning close family relationships as positive protective factors in the theoretical framework for resiliency, a fourth theme that emerged was career choice as a function of an individual's background and implications on resilience. It was evident that an individual's grassroots had an impact on developing a passion to work with young people. A majority of the respondents chose to become care workers for altruistic reasons, and they were significantly more likely to be more resilient. The desire to make a difference in vulnerable young people lives was found to be key driver for career choice by the CYCWs. The research findings are in agreement with Thurman *et al.* (2018) whereby the respondents indicated that wanting to help children or the community was their primary motivator for CYCWs.

In line with Garmezy (1991)'s theoretical framework for resiliency, three other themes emerged from social support and structure as a protective factor. The fifth theme was found to be motivators and their implications on the resilience of CYCWs. It was evident from the study that support system in the organisation through management motivated the subordinates. It was also noted that family support as well as hearing experiences and challenges from peers from other CYCCs, had a motivating role on the CYCWs. According to Biggart *et al.* (2017), CYCWs rely on peer coaching, peer and family as their support system. Moreover, it is notable that the positive relationship that CYCWs have with young people is the vehicle through which they overcome job difficulties. Self-motivation was also found among the CYCWs with the love for young people and the compassion to help them and make a difference in their lives, as a key driver. The sixth theme that was derived from the study was organisational support, and it was noted that the organisation supported the CYCWs through meetings, supervision, training workshops such as firefighting, CYCW training, HIV and AIDS counselling. Findings from a study by Russ *et al.* (2019) revealed that some child and youth care organisations provided a wide variety of training opportunities which participants expressed as pivotal in equipping them for their most demanding work. Support from co-workers and leadership enabled CYCWs to thrive in spite of the difficulties that they encountered in their workplaces (McFadden, 2020: 167). In addition, the CYCC would provide psychologists for the CYCWs whenever the need arose. The organisation also had an open door policy whereby the CYCWs would come in and discuss any challenges that they would be facing. However, there was also concerns that the support was too limited. For instance, if a CYCW shared personal challenges with the manager and then something went wrong, the manager could thereafter shift the blame to the CYCW, citing that the problem might have been caused by the family challenges that the CYCW was facing.

As a negative factor, the seventh theme that emerged from the study was salaries, which can in as an additional comment from the respondents. The respondents highlighted that the CYCWs salaries were very low and the other challenge was the work overload and the working conditions. The participants perceived that they sacrificed a lot but were not equally rewarded for working for long hours. Schiff and Lane (2019: 456) stated that CYCWs face challenges that include work related stress and burnout, lack of organised supervision, insufficient resources, low salaries, lack of recognition, unrealistic demands from management. Low pay can be identified as the main cause of job dissatisfaction and if coupled with long working hours and poor working conditions, may lead to work related stress. A critical conceptual shift in recent years has been the move beyond perceiving resilience as an individual personality trait to an acknowledging ecosystemic stimuli, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic that has posed many additional adversities that prompted for more resilient therapeutic professionals. There are three main theoretical implications of this study; first is understanding of resilience, coping with challenges and maintaining balance between work and personal life. The research concerning this issue is rather scarce, to the



best of our knowledge. The second is that an individual's background may influence career choice resulting in resilience implications at work and job satisfaction. The third theoretical implication of this study is that organisational support through meetings, supervision, training workshops as well as offering better salaries, work overload and working conditions, induce an environment that is conducive to nurture resilient workers.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the resilience of CYCWS. It was set out to examine the challenges faced by CYCWs and determine the methods that CYCWs use to overcome these challenges to become resilient when working for child and youth care centres. The research addressed the gap on the resilience of child and youth care workers since more emphasis had been placed on resilience of the young people. Seven themes were derived from the study and the first theme was understanding of resilience. It was evident that the respondents shared a common understanding of resilience. It was evident that an individual's grassroots had an impact on developing a passion to work with young people. It was also evident from the study that the support system in the organisation through management motivated the subordinates. The research results demonstrated that there were several ways by which the CYCWs managed to cope with their challenges. It emerged from the research results that a CYCW would only focus on work and leave personal issues and challenges aside in order to maintain a balance between work and personal life. It was also noted that the organisation supported the CYCWs through meetings, supervision, training workshops such as firefighting, CYCW training, HIV and AIDS counselling. It is recommended that the management at the CYCC improve salaries, reduce work overload and improve the working conditions of the CYCWs. An area of future study would be to identify the facets that are needed to support the efforts of organisations that are willing to foster the resilience of both employee and organisation. Some important limitations were noted from the study; the sample was purposively selected to obtain contextually relevant and in-depth information from CYCWs. However, the sample was not representative of CYCWs that work in diverse contexts. As a result, the generalisability of the findings from the study was generally limited due to the constraints imposed by the sampling technique that was adopted. Additionally, purposive sampling of the volunteers might induce a positive bias towards the study, which would influence the participant reporting.

## References

- Águila-Otero, A., Bravo, A., Santos, I. and Del Valle, J. F., 2020. Addressing the most Damaged Adolescents in the Child Protection System: An Analysis of the Profiles of Young People in Therapeutic Residential Care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 112: 1-8.
- Anglin, J. P. 2014. *Pain, Normality, and the Struggle for Congruence: Reinterpreting Residential Care for Children and Youth*. New York: Routledge.
- Biggart, L., Ward, E., Cook, L. and Schofield, G. 2017. The Team as a Secure Base: Promoting Resilience and Competence in Child and Family Social Work. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 83: 119-130.
- Brown, M. 2019. Institutional Change in the American Human Service Sector: Professional and Organisational Dynamics. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Chicago.
- Collins, T. M., Jamieson, L., Wright, L. H., Rizzini, I., Mayhew, A., Narang, J., Tisdall, E. K. M. and Ruiz-Casares, M. 2020. Involving Child and Youth Advisors in Academic Research about Child Participation: The Child and Youth Advisory Committees of the International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 109: 1-9.
- Cook, L. L. 2020. Storytelling among Child Welfare Social Workers: Constructing Professional Role and Resilience through Team Talk. *Qualitative Social Work*, 19(5-6): 968-986.
- Etikan, I. and Bala, K. 2017. Sampling and Sampling Methods. *Biometrics and Biostatistics International Journal*, 5(6): 215-217.

Frosch, C. A., Mitchell, Y. T., Hardgraves, L. and Funk, S. 2019. Stress and Coping among Early Childhood Intervention Professionals Receiving Reflective Supervision: A Qualitative Analysis. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 40(4): 443-458.

Frost, L., Hojer, S., Campanini, A., Sicora, A. and Kullburg, K. 2018. Why Do they Stay? A Study of Resilient Child Protection Workers in Three European Countries. *European Journal of Social Work*, 21(4): 485-497.

Garmezy, N. 1991. Resiliency and Vulnerability to Adverse Developmental Outcomes Associated with Poverty. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 34(4): 416-430.

Haffejee, S. and Levine, D. T. 2020. 'When Will I Be Free': Lessons from COVID-19 for Child Protection in South Africa. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 110: 1-14.

Hope, J. and Van Wyk, C. 2018. Intervention Strategies Used by Social Workers in Emergency Child Protection. *Social Work*, 54(4): 421-437.

Köngeter, S. and Reutlinger, C., 2022. Social work and community work. In *Handbook on Urban Social Policies* (pp. 266-280). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Knorth, E. J. and Harder, A. T. 2022. Residential Care for Children and Youth in the Netherlands: High Difficulties in Low Lands. In Whittaker, J. K., Holmes, L., Del Valle, J. F. and James, S. eds. *Revitalizing Residential Care for Children and Youth: Cross-National Trends and Challenges*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 193-208.

Lamothe, J., Couvrette, A., Lebrun, G., Yale-Soulière, G., Roy, C., Guay, S. and Geoffrion, S. 2018. Violence against Child Protection Workers: A Study of Workers' Experiences, Attributions, and Coping Strategies. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 81: 308-321.

Ledesma, J. 2014. Conceptual Frameworks and Research Models on Resilience on Leadership. *Sage Open*, 4(3): 1-8.

Lee, S. Y., Benson, S. M., Klein, S. M. and Franke, T. M. 2015. Accessing Quality Early Care and Education for Children in Child Welfare: Stakeholders' Perspectives on Barriers and Opportunities for Interagency Collaboration. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 55: 170-181.

McClean, S. 2015. Managing Behaviour in Child Residential Group Care: Unique Tensions. *Child and Family Social Work*, 20(3): 344-353.

Mansfield, C. F., Beltman, S., Broadley, T. and Weatherby-Fell, N. 2016. Building Resilience in Teacher Education: An Evidenced Informed Framework. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 54: 77-87.

Masten, A. S. and Barnes, A. J. 2018. Resilience in Children: Developmental Perspectives. *Children*, 5(7): 1-16.

Matheson, C., Robertson, H. D., Elliott, A. M., Iversen, L. and Murchie, P. 2016. Resilience of Primary Healthcare Professionals Working in Challenging Environments: A Focus Group Study. *British Journal of General Practice*, 66(648): 507-515.

McFadden, P., Campbell, A. and Taylor, B. 2015. Resilience and Burnout in Child Protection Social Work: Individual and Organisational Themes from a Systematic Literature Review. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 45(5): 1546-1563.

Parsons, S., Kruijt, A. W. and Fox, E. 2016. A Cognitive Model of Psychological Resilience. *Journal of Experimental Psychopathology*, 7(3): 296-310.

Rose, S. and Palattiyil, G. 2020. Surviving or Thriving? Enhancing the Emotional Resilience of Social Workers in Their Organisational Settings. *Journal of Social Work*, 20(1): 23-42.

Russ, E., Lonne, B. and Lynch, D. 2019. Increasing Child Protection Workforce Retention through Promoting a Relational-Reflective Framework for Resilience. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 110(3): 1-12.

Rutter, M. 2023. Resilience: Some Conceptual Considerations. In: Cree, V. E. and McCulloch, T. eds. *Social Work*, New York: Routledge, 122-127.

Schelbe, L., Radey, M. and Panisch, L.S., 2017. Satisfactions and Stressors Experienced by Recently-Hired Frontline Child Welfare Workers. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 78: 56-63.

Schiff, J. W. and Lane, A. M. 2019. PTSD Symptoms, Vicarious Traumatization, and Burnout in front Line Workers in the Homeless Sector. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 55(3): 454-462.

Sibanda, S. and Lombard, A. 2015. Challenges Faced by Social Workers Working in Child Protection Services in Implementing the Children's Act 38 of 2005. *Social Work*, 51(3): 332-353.

Soulen, R. R. and Wine, L. D. 2018. Building Resilience in New and Beginning Teachers: Contributions of School Librarians. *School Libraries Worldwide*, 24(2): 80-90.

Sprang, G., Ford, J., Kerig, P. and Bride, B. 2019. Defining Secondary Traumatic Stress and Developing Targeted Assessments and Interventions: Lessons Learned from Research and Leading Experts. *Traumatology*, 25(2): 72-81.

Steinlin, C., Dölitzsch, C., Kind, N., Fischer, S., Schmeck, K., Fegert, J. M. and Schmid, M. 2017. The Influence of Sense of Coherence, Self-Care and Work Satisfaction on Secondary Traumatic Stress and Burnout among Child and Youth Residential Care Workers in Switzerland. *Child and Youth Services*, 38(2): 159-175.

Thurman, T. R., Taylor, T. M., Nice, J., Luckett, B., Taylor, M. and Kvalsvig, J. D. 2018. Factors Associated with Retention Intentions among Isibindi Child and Youth Care Workers in South Africa: Results from a National Survey. *Human Resources for Health*, 16(1): 1-7.

Van Breda, A. D. 2018. A Critical Review of Resilience Theory and Its Relevance for Social Work. *Social Work*, 54(1): 1-18.

Wabule, A. 2020. Resilience and Care: How Teachers Deal with Situations of Adversity in the Teaching and Learning Environment. *The Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 15(1): 76-90.

Wanglar, E. 2022. Childcare Institutions in India: Caregivers' Solutions to Challenges in Childcare. *Child and Family Social Work*, 27(3): 381-391.

Wright, M. O. D, Masten, A. S. and Narayan, A. J. 2013. Resilience Processes in Development: Four Waves of Research on Positive Adaptation in the Context of Adversity. In: Goldstein, S. and Brooks, R. eds. *Handbook of Resilience in Children*. Boston, MA: Springer, 15-37.

Zimmerman, M. A. 2013. Resiliency Theory: A Strengths-Based Approach to Research and Practice for Adolescent Health. *Health Education and Behavior*, 40(4): 381-383.