



Youth Mental Health Support Groups for Cyberbullying Victims in South African Cities: A Four-Year Impact Assessment

Sipho Makhubu¹, Nontuli Dlamini², Nomonde Nkosi^{3,4}

¹ Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)

² Department of Research, Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)

³ University of the Western Cape

⁴ North-West University

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Correspondence: smakhubu@yahoo.com

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Author notes

Sipho Makhubu is affiliated with Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.

Nontuli Dlamini is affiliated with Department of Research, Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.

Nomonde Nkosi is affiliated with University of the Western Cape and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.

Abstract

Youth mental health support groups have become an increasingly important intervention for cyberbullying victims in South African cities. These groups aim to provide a safe space for young people who have experienced online harassment, offering them emotional support and coping strategies. The research employed participant observation in five urban areas, conducting interviews with group members, facilitators, and local authorities. Quantitative data on attendance rates and qualitative insights from focus groups were also collected. Participants reported a significant improvement in their mental health scores (from an average of 18/30 to 25/30) after participating in the support groups for at least six months, indicating positive therapeutic effects. Themes emerged around trust-building and peer-to-peer support within the groups. The findings suggest that regular participation in these support groups contributes to better mental health outcomes among cyberbullying victims. The study highlights the importance of community-based interventions in addressing online harassment. Further research is recommended to evaluate long-term effects and explore scalability, while existing programmes should be supported with resources to sustain their impact.

Keywords: *Cape Town, Ethnography, Cultural Anthropology, Community Engagement, Qualitative Research, Intersectionality, Phenomenology*

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