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# EXPLORING THE PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN PREVENTING VIOLENT BEHAVIOR AMONG MALE PAROLEES CONVICTED OF INTIMATE PARTNER FEMICIDE

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## ABSTRACT

Global literature consistently recognizes South Africa as the epicenter of intimate partner femicide. This study adopted a social learning theory to investigate the perceived effectiveness of the Department of Correctional Services' rehabilitation programs in preventing violent behavior among intimate partner offenders in a South African correctional center. 10 male parolees were purposefully sampled and interviewed qualitatively using a semi-structured interview guide to draw on their experiences after having participated in intimate partner femicide (IPF) rehabilitation programs before their release. The study found that in the studied correctional center, rehabilitation programs enabled IPF offenders to identify the root causes of their violent behavior, which in this instance were substance abuse and emotional dysregulation. Participating in these programs not only created a safe space for self-reflection and the development of anger management skills but also harnessed self-awareness and underscored the significance of valuing the emotions of intimate female partners as well as avoiding situations that may incite aggression or lead to violent reactions. Generally, the overarching connotation is that, even in the face of numerous institutional and human resource challenges, through mutual commitment by officials and offenders, IPF rehabilitation programs

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can have a transformative effect and may go a long way in preventing femicide and aiding social reintegration.

**Keywords:** ***rehabilitation programs, correctional centers, offenders, intimate partner femicide, parolees, violent behavior.***

## Introduction

Globally, the underreporting of gender-motivated murders persists for various reasons, including ineffective policing and inadequate case management practices in prosecutorial and law enforcement systems (Lopes, 2016). Consequently, owing to underreporting, researchers often have limited data available for reference when conducting research related to gender violence and must search databases to access fragmented datasets. The study investigated the perceived effectiveness of rehabilitation programs in preventing violent behavior and inculcating anger management skills among Intimate Partner Femicide (IPF) parolees in a community corrections component of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). The subject of discussion in this study is compelling because it not only problematizes IPF as a scourge affecting victims and their families, leading to disorientation within societies where it occurs, but also examines how it is addressed within a correctional system. Furthermore, the study draws on participants' perspectives to assess the perceived effectiveness of correctional programs, particularly rehabilitation, in combating the phenomenon.

Women and girls worldwide are increasingly becoming victims of severe incidents of gender-based violence, and no region is exempt from this issue (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2024). It has been reported that in 2023 alone, approximately 51,100 women and girls globally lost their lives, either at the hands of their intimate partners or individuals they knew well (UNODC, 2024). Often, those who are supposed to report gender motivated violence, either survivors or witnesses, refrain from doing so due to stigma or fear of reprisal (Joyner et al., 2015). What is also worth mentioning is that most of the individuals convicted of IPF-related offenses have reportedly previously engaged in acts of violence or homicide targeting women, and most of these incidents were not reported to the authorities (UNODC, 2024). These figures demonstrate the need for a social compact between State parties, civil society, gender advocacy movements, artists, politicians, philanthropists, trade unions and social commentators, underpinned by the goal of radicalizing mechanisms to combat senseless gender motivated killings that are ravaging women, and, by implication, their families and children.

The South African government has been hard at work in an attempt to quell or at least reduce the frequency of different forms of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, rape, homicide and femicide. It invests heavily in the implementation of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, a global campaign established in 1991 that runs annually from November 25 to December 10. While the campaign signifies acknowledgment of the necessity to deter all forms of gender-based violence, Abrahams et al. (2024 a) caution that there still exists substantial work to be carried out by the government to halt gender-motivated killings. It is thus statistically proven that South Africa's public spaces are generally unsafe for women and girls, even in the company of friends, acquaintances, romantic partners, relatives, and family members. For example, in the 2019/2020 reporting period, a total of 2,695 women were murdered in South Africa, which, in statistical terms, implies that a woman is likely to be murdered approximately every three and a half hours (Go Legal Industry News & Insights [GLINI], 2024). Also worth mentioning is that 56% of these women's deaths were caused by an intimate male partner (GLINI, 2024). Furthermore, in 2009, 42.1% of adolescent girls were murdered in environments that were ordinarily supposed to be safe spaces for them by a family member or male intimate partner (Mathews et al., 2019).

To contextualize the growing trend of younger males engaging in IPF, the authors cite Ndlovu et al. (2020), whose research pointed out that female students in South Africa frequently encounter premature death on campus or within student residential areas due to conflicts or disagreements with their male partners. Taken together, these statistical findings portray South Africa as the epicenter of gender-based violence and femicide. Despite its Constitution being known for its robust stance on the need to secure protection of women's rights (Rustin, 2021), South Africa finds itself among African countries where femicide perpetrators thrive. Mshweshwe (2020, p. 1) concludes that it has increasingly become a society in which "male assertiveness and domination of women influence the constructions of masculinity and reinforce domestic violence." The statement made by this scholar is warranted, as it is backed by statistics, proving the government's inadequate resolve in addressing this problem (see GLINI, 2024; Mathews et al., 2019; UNODC, 2024).

In its 2013 resolution, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly asserted that criminal justice systems must "take action against the gender-related killings of women and girls" (Resolution 68/191). In consonance with this, South Africa's criminal justice system dictates that once a prison term has been pronounced, perpetrators of IPF or any other form of gender-motivated offense are transferred to a correctional facility, where they are kept until they complete their

sentence or are released on parole. The primary role of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), a government agency overseeing correctional facilities, is to correct offender behavior "in a secure, safe, and humane environment," aiming to promote offender rehabilitation through various correctional programs (DCS, n.d.). Given that the country's correctional system adheres to the Mandela Rules - also known as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which endorse prudent behavior - modifying corrective methods, IPF offenders are required to participate in a rehabilitation program during their incarceration. Mujuzi (2017) states that for rehabilitation to be effective, it ought to facilitate offenders' attainment of parole and reward those who show commitment and adhere to their sentence conditions without being in contempt of the prison regulations and also exhibit behavior that supports reintegration into society.

Literature presents contrasting views on the role and effectiveness of rehabilitation programs. While certain studies conclude that correctional programs are ineffective in rehabilitating or deterring offenders and may somewhat contribute to recidivism (Musekwa et al., 2021; Schaefer, 2018), others contend the opposite by asserting that, through meticulous planning and the provision of adequate resources, such programs instill a renewed sense of hope among offenders and effectively deter recidivism and foster social integration (Ndimande & Archer, 2026). However, in the context of the present study, the authors argue that rehabilitation programs remain largely generic and insufficiently tailored to address IPF. As a result, offenders may complete these programs without demonstrating substantive changes in the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that underpin violence against women. Therefore, to close this gap, the authors used DCS's community corrections parolees to examine the perceived effectiveness of the IPF rehabilitation programs in preventing violent behavior and inculcating anger management skills. It recruited (male) parolees - a research population often overlooked - whose insights and direct exposure can immensely help scholars and correctional authorities better understand the successes and failures of DCS offender rehabilitation programs (Letlape & Dube, 2023). At present, empirical evidence on parolees' experiences of IPF rehabilitation in South Africa is limited, particularly in studies that explore the phenomenon through qualitative research (Mahamba, 2023). Addressing this shortcoming is particularly important in the South African context given the persistently high rates of femicide and the contrasting findings reported in empirical research. The following research question guided the study:

- How do male parolees convicted of intimate partner femicide (IPF) perceive the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs in addressing violent behavior?

The following section discusses relevant literature, theoretical framework, methodology, as well as findings, discussion, recommendations, and study limitations.

***A contextualization of intimate partner femicide as a global phenomenon***

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE, 2023, p. 1) defines "intimate partner femicide (IPF) as the killing of a woman by an intimate partner and the death of a woman as a result of a practice that is harmful to women caused by unequal gender power dynamics". Imbalances in intimate relationships may reinforce male dominance and entitlement over women's lives, potentially culminating in violence and homicide. IPF is particularly concerning in low- and middle-income countries, where contributing factors include unemployment, limited educational opportunities, and substance abuse (Gunarathne et al., 2023). Sanz-Barbero et al. (2015), in a quantitative study involving 7,898 adult women in Spain, found that female assaults were less prevalent in residential areas characterized by stronger economic activity and employment opportunities than in low-income areas. Similarly, Hassan et al. (2024) identified patriarchy, poverty, limited educational opportunities for girls, inadequate victim support, and insufficient public awareness of gender-based violence as factors exacerbating IPF in Egypt. These findings highlight the need for coordinated institutional and societal efforts to challenge patriarchal norms and promote women's rights and safety.

South Africa also experiences high rates of femicide, with IPF representing a significant manifestation of gender-based violence (Abrahams et al., 2024 (b); Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, 2025; Mathews et al., 2020). The South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC, 2024) reported that 60% of women murdered in South Africa were killed by male intimate partners. Furthermore, many femicide cases are preceded by a history of abuse, suggesting shortcomings in early intervention and prevention (Mathews et al., 2020). Therefore, femicide should be understood not merely as an isolated criminal incident but, in many cases, as the culmination of escalating violence within intimate relationships. Despite legislative amendments and prevention strategies, its persistence indicates that punitive responses alone may be insufficient to address the structural, relational, and psychological factors underlying violence against women (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). Internationally, UNODC (2021) reported that women and girls constituted 82% of victims killed by intimate partners or family members in 2020, compared with 18% of male victims, highlighting the gendered nature of lethal violence in domestic contexts. Inadequate law

enforcement responses, limited understanding of relevant legal frameworks, patriarchal attitudes, and insufficient specialized training further complicate efforts to address gender-based violence (Lopes, 2016; Oktadiana et al., 2025).

Substance abuse, particularly alcohol consumption, is another important consideration in understanding intimate partner violence and its potential escalation. Ramsoomar et al. (2025), examining the experiences of female survivors of severe intimate partner violence in South Africa, found that male partners' alcohol consumption contributed significantly to aggression against women. Similarly, Mofokeng and Simelane (2024) identified substance and alcohol abuse as contributing factors in cases of assault against girls in South African educational institutions. These findings suggest that substance use warrants attention when assessing factors associated with violent behavior. However, substance abuse should not be considered an independent explanation for IPF or as an excuse for perpetrating violence. Rather, it should be examined alongside patriarchal beliefs, unequal power relations, and individual patterns of aggression. Rehabilitation interventions therefore need to consider substance-related risks where relevant while maintaining offenders' accountability for their actions.

Emotional regulation is equally important when considering the psychological dynamics underlying intimate partner violence. Coercive control, jealousy, emotional dependency, and distorted beliefs about masculinity and ownership may contribute to violent and controlling behavior within intimate relationships (Sikweyiya et al., 2019; Variava & Dekel, 2024). These dynamics highlight the importance of examining how parolees respond to relationship conflict, emotional distress, and perceived threats to their authority or control. Although correctional rehabilitation programs commonly incorporate anger management and conflict management, such interventions may be insufficient if they do not address the gendered beliefs and relational dynamics underpinning violence against women (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). Emotional regulation should consequently be considered alongside broader social and psychological influences, rather than treating aggression solely as an anger-management problem.

These concerns highlight a significant gap in offender rehabilitation within South African correctional services. Although rehabilitation programs are implemented to address offending behavior, Mahamba (2023) identifies a lack of programs specifically tailored to offenders convicted of femicide and designed to address its underlying cognitive, emotional, and gender-related drivers. Existing interventions predominantly target general violent behavior through anger management, conflict management, and life skills development (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). However, patriarchal entitlement, misogynistic belief systems, coercive control, power

imbalances, and gender-based cognitive distortions may remain insufficiently addressed by generic interventions (Burke et al., 2024; Sikweyiya et al., 2019). Consequently, offenders may complete rehabilitation without meaningfully reconsidering the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors associated with violence against women.

From a psychological perspective, rehabilitation should contribute to offender reformation by promoting accountability and addressing the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes associated with offending. Therefore, meaningful behavioral change requires more than reducing overt aggression; it also involves challenging harmful gender-related beliefs, developing non-violent responses to interpersonal conflict, strengthening emotional regulation, and addressing substance abuse where relevant. Given the persistence of IPF despite existing prevention and punitive measures, the authors argue that greater attention should be directed towards the relevance and adequacy of current rehabilitation programs. A more targeted approach may provide opportunities to address the distinctive psychological and relational dynamics associated with femicide and to investigate whether rehabilitation contributes to sustained behavioral change and the prevention of further violence against women.

***Theoretical Framework***

The study used Social Learning Theory (SLT), which was developed by Albert Bandura in 1961. It postulates that people adopt behaviors by observing and imitating others within their social environment, either subconsciously or consciously. The theory emphasizes modelling as a central mechanism through which both positive and negative behaviors are learned or adopted. It is particularly relevant for characterizing the mediating role of rehabilitation programs because it suggests that unbecoming behavior can be unlearned and replaced with pro-social alternatives through structured interventions. When contextualizing SLT within the domain of gender studies, it postulates that domestic violence develops as a learned behavior when individuals grow up witnessing marital conflict, abuse, or ineffective parenting, rather than an inherent behavior of a person (Mahamba, 2023). Because parents, children and community elders serve as primary role models, children may subconsciously adopt harmful behaviors owing to their exposure to them in domestic settings (i.e., home, school, community etc.). As a result, violence can be transmitted from one generation to the next (Power et al., 2017). The theory forwards a supposition that aggression and violence, including extreme forms such as femicide, are not innate but learned through repeated exposure and modelling.

When using this theory as a frame of reference, gender prejudices such as patriarchy and toxic masculinity should be understood as socially constructed rather than innate human characteristics (Katembo, 2015). To support this, Mahamba (2023) extrapolates that boys who observe their fathers abusing their mothers may interpret violence as an acceptable expression of masculinity and replicate such behavior in their own intimate relationships. Through cognitive processes, individuals internalize societal expectations regarding gender roles and behavioral norms. Overall, SLT frames violence, gender norms, and intimate partner aggression as socially learned behaviors shaped by modelling, reinforcement and environmental conditions.

## Method

The methodology employed a qualitative phenomenological approach. Littlejohn and Foss (2009, n.p.) describe phenomenology as "the philosophical tradition that seeks to understand the world through directly experiencing the phenomena." As a research design, it aligns with the study's objective of engaging participants socially to generate their insights rather than quantifying the perceived effectiveness of DCS IPF rehabilitation programs numerically or statistically. According to Lim (2024, p. 11), social researchers prefer qualitative research because their interest lies more in assessing the emotions expressed by participants, as it enables them to "delve into the rich textures of human experience and perspective, capturing contexts and nuances often lost in numerical translation". Similarly, in this study, the researchers focused on understanding the participants' experiences of attending rehabilitation programs by listening to their stories to identify parallels and commonalities. With qualitative research being centered within an interpretive paradigm, the researchers' role was more than that of a data recorder and interviewer, but also co-interpreters of lived experiences alongside the participants. Essentially, interpretivists see reality as a construct shaped by shared meanings and understandings at the social and experiential levels (Myers, 2008).

The study was conducted within the community corrections of DCS in the Gauteng region. A formal letter outlining the nature and purpose of the study was submitted to the Research Committee Division at the DCS Head Office to obtain permission to access the research sites. Following the granting of permission, social workers at the respective sites were approached to facilitate access to potential participants. They assisted in distributing recruitment letters (leaflets) to individuals who met the study's participation criteria. Those who expressed an interest in participating were asked to provide their contact details and were subsequently

contacted telephonically to arrange interview appointments and receive further information about the study. Before the interviews commenced, informed consent was obtained from all participants, including their permission for the interviews to be audio-recorded. The interviews were conducted in the participants' preferred South African indigenous languages to minimize potential communication barriers and promote their comfort and ease of expression. Data saturation was considered to have been reached when the researchers were satisfied that no new information or insights were emerging from the interviews. Each interview lasted less than an hour, and the interviews were transcribed shortly after completion.

Deliberate sampling was used to recruit 10 male parolees for the study. Considering that IPF, within the scope of the study, pertains to femicide committed by males against their intimate female partners, it was deemed appropriate to exclusively include male parolees, as they were better equipped to respond to the questions intended to elicit relevant responses for the study. The above was one of the primary criteria for selecting participants, along with the requirement that individuals be convicted of IPF and have subsequently been paroled after attending DCS rehabilitation programs. The data analysis for the study was conducted using the thematic analysis technique outlined by Naeem et al. (2023). The process involved several systematic steps: first, inspecting the recorded data set; second, selecting words with significant meaning and connotations relevant to the research; third, coding the data across all datasets based on these words or codes; fourth, expanding the selected words to generate initial search phrases or mini-phrases that characterize the nature of the findings; fifth, refining the structure and relatedness of the themes; and finally, framing the report of the findings by using the themes as headings and subheadings within the report.

In terms of ethical considerations, participants' real names were anonymized to protect their identity. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage, to which they consented in writing. During the interview process, they were assured confidentiality and access to debriefing services should the need arise

## Results and Discussion

The interface between men's emotions and how masculinity influences their actions and emotions in intimate partner relationships has received little research attention (Oliffe et al., 2022). Within that premise, the findings of the study were derived from interviews held with 10 male parolees in a community corrections program at the DCS. To respect their right to remain anonymous, they were assigned participation codes P1 to P10. The study was guided

by the research question: *What are male parolees' perceptions of the effectiveness of IPF rehabilitation programs in addressing offenders' violent behavior?*

***Theme 1: Aids the recognition of root causes of violent behaviors***

The point of departure was to understand the nature of IPF-related offenses that resulted in their incarceration. This theme is characterized by two subthemes, as discussed below.

| ***Subthemes*** | ***Characterization of subthemes*** |
|---|---|
| 1. Substance abuse | - "I was out drinking and then went home…we started arguing" [P3].<br>- "As we were drinking, she continued making accusations and throwing remarks until I lost control" [P10]. |
| 2. Anger and emotional dysregulation | - "I was angry; I shot her" [P7].<br>- "We argued and I stabbed her" [P8].<br>- "There was a physical altercation, and I took out my firearm" [P1].<br>- "I wrestled and took the knife and stabbed her" [P9]. |

**Discussion:** As illustrated in the above inferences, discussions with the participants aimed to understand their awareness of the symptoms and effects of harm caused by their behavior and actions. These inferences indicate that rehabilitation programs are instrumental in enabling attendees to identify the root causes of violent behavior and appreciate the transformation they see in themselves. The rehabilitation programs offered by DCS provide a nurturing and secure environment that encourages individuals to engage in deep self-reflection and personal development. In attending rehabilitation programs, attendees are guided to confront their challenges, particularly the need to control their alcohol consumption. They indicated that processes are carried out in a supportive atmosphere where they can openly acknowledge their struggles, with a focus on how their actions and behavior impact both their relationships with female partners and their interactions within the larger community. Through this introspective journey, individuals are empowered to make positive changes in their lives and build healthier connections with those around them. Similar to this finding, Grocott et al.'s (2024) study deduced that in the United States, alcohol abuse is listed among the most common criminal offenses related to intimate partner violence. In Australia, approximately 36% of offenders

convicted of IPF are reportedly murders of their partners perpetrated while under the influence of alcohol (World Health Organization [WHO], 2016). Additionally, research indicates that 65% of South African women who experienced domestic abuse identified alcohol as the primary catalyst (WHO, 2016). It is thus sensible to conclude that the manner in which the program is conducted reforms their behavior while also invoking in them the spirit of reformation.

Meanwhile, in reference to the inferences projected in subtheme 2 (i.e., anger and emotional dysregulation), it has been demonstrated that emotional dysregulation is directly responsible for difficulty in controlling one's temper during argumentative or tense situations. A similar deduction was made by Maloney et al. (2023) whose study concluded that North American men's inability to control their emotions engenders intimate partner violence. In another study that was framed around a sample of 33 men from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Honduras, Mexico, and Venezuela, it was found that their inability to regulate their emotions was the leading cause of high femicide incidents in Latin America (Di Marco & Sandberg, 2024). Emphasizing the need for comprehensive support systems within these rehabilitation frameworks can help realize the broader goals set forth in the White Paper, ensuring that transformation is not just a possibility, but a tangible outcome for all involved. Based on the insights gathered from various empirical studies and the personal experiences shared by participants, it becomes clear that rehabilitation programs play a crucial role in facilitating social transformation. This alignment is vital for addressing the broader social issues at stake and ensuring that the objectives of reform are met effectively.

***Theme 2: Reflections on the transformative effects of DCS rehabilitation programs***

The second theme is framed around participants' reflections on their attendance of rehabilitation programs. The findings are curated through the following inferences.

| ***Subthemes*** | ***Characterization of subthemes*** |
|---|---|
| 3. Retrospection | - "Had I known what I know now, I was not going to commit such a horrific crime." [P1]<br>- "If I was not drunk that day, I would have done things differently; and she would still be alive today." [P5] |

| | |
|---|---|
| | - "I should not have reacted that way. I should have left before [I could consider] stabbing her." [P8] |
| 4. Lessons learned | - "I have learned to avoid argumentative situations because they can turn into violence, even if provoked I should avoid them". [P5]<br>- "I am grateful for the drugs and alcohol program for helping me understand things better." [P1]<br>- "Behavior modification program helped me confront and learn from my past offense." [P9]. |

**Discussion:** The tabulated inferences present participants' thought processes as they interrogate their conscience and moral compass regarding the violent offenses they inflicted on their female partners. They responded with sincerity and remorse for their actions. Participants recounted how they inflicted harm on their intimate partners, admitting that they were unable to regulate their emotions due to substance abuse. As illustrated above, the two subthemes are backed by inferences taken directly from the participants, indicating the perceived effectiveness of the rehabilitation programs in enabling them to retrospectively identify the harmfulness of their deeds and learn from their mistakes. Subtheme 3 forwards a sentiment that participants' attendance of rehabilitation programs made them inclined to retrospect on their offenses and recognize what it is that they could have done differently. Inferences in Subtheme 4 reveal that the participants take with the lessons that have shaped their lives for the better. They have learned that excising restraint, emotional regulation as well as sobriety are effective ways of avoiding recidivism or repeat of intimate partner violence or any other form of violence. Inferences mostly made in the study mirror what was found by Novo et al. (2012), whose study established that a cohort of Spanish men convicted of intimate partner violence, reportedly over time while attending anger management-focused rehabilitation programs, learned from their past deeds, admitted the wrongfulness of their actions, and transformed into non-confrontational and emotionally sensitive citizens. In the present study, the participants' exposure to rehabilitation programs was characterized as self-discovery because it assisted them in identifying the contributing factors to femicide, namely, substance abuse, whilst others identified anger and emotional dysregulation. From these findings, it is reasonable to assume that change in behavior occurs in an enabling environment where learning is provided; and

consistent with SLT, rehabilitation programs seem to have enabled an environment for the participants' learning. These findings are also consistent with previous literature confirming that substance abuse, anger management, and life skills programs are successful in reducing criminal behavior (Mackenzie, 2006; Yearwood, 2020).

Generally, connotations drawn from both subthemes are in support of Ndimande and Archer's (2026, p. 186) overarching finding "that engagement in rehabilitation programmes can be associated with increased self- awareness, a greater sense of personal responsibility and the development of future-oriented perspectives".

## Conclusion

Set in a community corrections setting in South Africa, the study aimed to investigate the perceived effectiveness of DCS rehabilitation programs in addressing violent behaviors among IPF offenders. Responses were sought from 10 male parolees who had since been reintegrated back into their communities. Most notably, they mentioned alcohol abuse and emotional dysregulation as the foremost reasons for their offenses and subsequent incarceration. They further disclosed that they learned to apply their minds sensibly, consider other people's feelings, and control their emotions as well as avoid situations that can potentially invoke aggression and harmful reactions. The participants indicated that DCS rehabilitation programs had a transformational effect on their behavior. This premise attests to the tenets of the social learning theory in the unlearning of harmful behaviors.

When using social learning theory as a frame of reference, the study provided evidence that undesirable and violent behavior can be unlearned if there is a willingness to change or start afresh, free from past actions such as inflicting harm or fatality on one's intimate female partner. Also, from a policy perspective, the study demonstrated that it is feasible to implement policies backed by planning, institutional support, and correctional officers and inmates. More broadly, qualitatively zooming into the topic addressed how far a resource-strapped public correctional center could achieve positive outcomes amid the challenges it had to contend with. Not only are the findings transformational for practice, but they are also impactful for agenda-setting and benchmarking purposes, paving the way for other correctional centers to learn from the studied correctional facility.

Notwithstanding some of the challenges, they unanimously declared that their participation in the DCS rehabilitation programs enabled them to introspect on their past offenses and recognize their harmfulness. They were pleased with how effective the rehabilitation programs

were in helping them identify symptoms or root causes of their aggression towards intimate female partners. To ensure that rehabilitation programs are of sound and practical value to attendees (offenders), it is recommended that correctional authorities eliminate all physical and resource-based impediments, such as shortages of wellness and counselling officers, lack of personalized interventions, as well as failure to monitor and evaluate the implementation of programs of action.

Also worth mentioning is that the findings of the study reflect what was found in one DCS region, and as a result, do not represent other DCS regions in South Africa. Therefore, it is acknowledged that the generalizability of the findings across national contexts would be misleading. Instead, the authors advocate for more exploration of research on IPF rehabilitation programs in similar carceral contexts nationally and penal systems internationally, using larger samples and longitudinal studies to see how far they can go in addressing violent behaviors and promoting social reintegration. Collectively, these findings are a snapshot of what all community corrections can achieve through concerted efforts between officials and inmates. Finally, the uniqueness of the study lies in its focus on parolees as opposed to individuals currently serving time in correctional institutions. This lends authenticity to the research, as it gathers insights from participants who are actively applying the skills learned in rehabilitation programs within their daily lives in the broader society. In contrast, interviewing inmates who have yet to be granted parole might have compromised the authenticity of the results, as they would be reflecting on the perceived effectiveness of the rehabilitation programs without having had the opportunity to return to their communities and assess their impact on preventing them from reoffending.

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