



Discursive Constructions of Gender-based Violence and Safe Sex Practices among Female

Residence Students at UKZN

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters by Dissertation in the  
School of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science at the University  
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## DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of Masters by Dissertation, in the Graduate Programme in  
the School of Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor was not used. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters of Social Science in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other  
University

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Sarah Gordon

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Abstract

Gender-based violence and the risk of HIV infection are some of the social problems facing women in South Africa. The emergence of gender-based violence as a prominent challenge facing the University of KwaZulu-Natal community led to the impetus for a qualitative study which focuses specifically on female UKZN residence students on Howard College Campus. A social constructionist approach was used to explore how female UKZN residence students understand and experience gender-based violence and safe sex practices. Unstructured interviews were conducted with twelve female residence students and interview texts were analysed using discourse analysis. The findings revealed the difficulties women experience in negotiating safe sex and how gender-based violence is facilitated through a system of discourses which reproduce patriarchal power relations. This research shines a light on the prevalence of gender-based violence in South Africa and the far reaching impact it has on the lives of women. The fear of gender-based violence is a continuous presence in the lives of these women and this research demonstrates how one does not have to be a victim of gender-based violence to experience the trauma and anxiety surrounding this violence. Hopefully this research will culminate in policy and interventions aimed at improving the lives of female students at UKZN.

**Key Words:** Discourse; Gender-based Violence; HIV/AIDS

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