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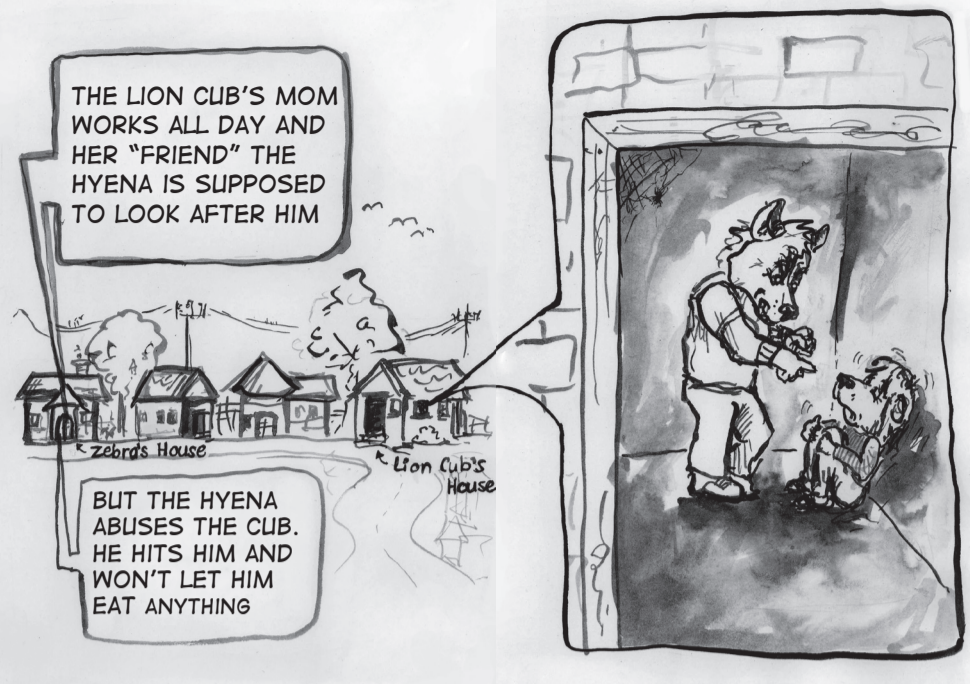


## CPAF: The Child Protection Action Forum

Martha Thompson (ABOVE CENTRE), who represents Child Welfare Grahamstown on the CPAF (pronounced 'Ca-paff') committee explains that CPAF was brought about due to a dialogue hosted by Child Welfare Grahamstown in June 2012.

The dialogue determined the need to establish a protocol on child abuse and to establish what was being done about child abuse in Grahamstown. They realised that there was a need to find a more streamlined process of reporting and acting on child abuse cases in order to "increase the chances of convicting those guilty of abusing children" says Thompson.

**Pic:** BOTTOM LEFT: Kim Wright, Social Work supervisor at Child Welfare.  
BOTTOM RIGHT: Tendai Wapinduka, social worker



## Community member DID YOU KNOW?

- If you witness or suspect that a child has been physically or sexually abused or intentionally neglected then you are legally required to report their concerns to a child protection agency and/ or the police. "If you don't report abuse you might be as guilty as the perpetrator" says social worker Nasiphi Matshaya. This includes dentist, physiotherapists, neighbours, doctors, teachers and anyone who notices suspicious signs. Saying "I don't want to get involved" is irresponsible and can hurt the child. Reports can be made anonymously.
- Form 22 is the name of the form that reports abuse or deliberate neglect of a child, and it falls under section 110 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 and is the same for the Department of Social Development, Child Protection, and the South African Police Service.
- If a child has been physically abused, **you must contact the police immediately** in order to get evidence before it is washed away or destroyed. Do not hesitate, go to the police.
- It is very important to report child abuse as soon as it happens. Sometimes abuse is only discovered years later, when severe damage has already been done.
- There is a National Offenders Register, which holds the names of any suspected or convicted child abuse offenders. This register exists to protect children, and is meant to be used when institutions employ people in order to make sure that offenders are kept away from children. Although the system is not very functional yet, CPAF hopes to set wheels in motion to make it happen.
- There are psychologists available in Grahamstown who provide counseling and therapy to those who have been abused. If a child is abused and examined at a hospital, a psychologist should see the child immediately. Both Settler's Hospital and Fort England offer counseling and therapy, as do local clinics.

# Child abuse in Grahamstown

## What is child abuse?

Social worker Tendai Wapinduka explains that child abuse refers to “any form of harm or ill-treatment deliberately inflicted on a child, and includes assaulting or deliberately injuring a child, sexually abusing a child or allowing them to be sexually abused, bullying by another child, a labor practice that exploits a child, or exposing or subjecting a child to a behaviour that may harm the child physically or psychologically”.

In Grahamstown there are generally 2 or 3 reported cases a month although Wapinduka explains that there are “many, many unreported cases” which are sometimes only discovered much later.

Wapinduka explains that although they do not have current statistics, the social workers have noticed an increased amount of intentional neglect in the past few months. Most cases that the social workers deal with are cases of neglect. However, they have also noticed an increase in child – on – child abuse in recent months, which is a grave concern.

Social workers sometimes struggle to affirm their work in the community as some people call them “the people who take children away from their homes” which makes it challenging for social workers who have to remove children from homes in order to protect them. Kim Wright, the Social Work supervisor at Child Welfare in Grahamstown is pleased to explain that a new law has been put in place under the Children’s Act that will give social workers the legal right to remove offenders or suspected offenders from homes, thus enabling the child to stay in his/her environment and removing the cause of harm.

## CPAF : The Child Protection Action Forum

The members of CPAF are:

- Child Welfare Grahamstown
- FCS Unit (Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual offences Unit)
- NPA (National Prosecuting Authority)
- Education Department
- Department of Social Development
- Rhodes University Community Engagement office

## RUCE + CPAF =Voices heard

Nosipho Mngomezulu of the Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE) office explains that Child Welfare Grahamstown is one of Rhodes’ 34 community partners. They were approached in June to help with the initial dialogue. Martha Thompson (of Child Welfare and CPAF) explains that having young people manage the upcoming dialogues with the children is very important.

Mngomezulu believes that the upcoming youth dialogues (which will be held with gr 6-7 learners in the public library on 26 October) are very important “because we also want young people’s perspectives and voices”.

Mngomezulu says that RUCE is mainly involved in liaising between the GAP (Gender Action Project), journalism students getting involved with CPAF, and CPAF and it’s members. RUCE’s largest role is in trying to help establish the Child Protection Protocol, which is currently outdated, and “has led to misunderstandings between media, activists and legal practitioners” according to Mngomezulu.

RUCE aims to help professionals establish good working relationships with non-governmental stakeholders and make sure that the “processes of reporting on and maintaining child safety issues are child-friendly” according to Mngomezulu.



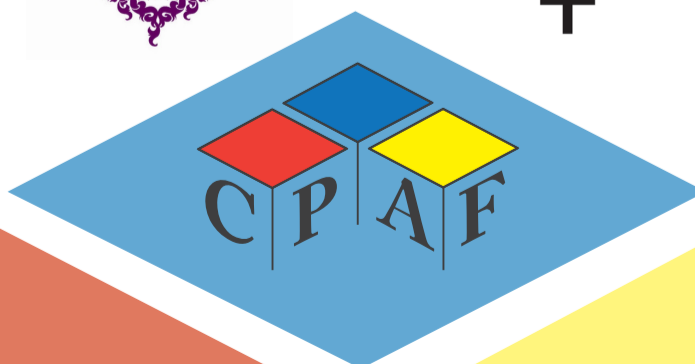
Nosipho Mngomezulu  
RUCE (Rhodes University  
Community Engagement)

## What can you do?

- Firstly, if you witness or suspect abuse of any kind, you must report it immediately. Martha Thompson of CPAF explains that even if abuse is not confirmed, a thorough investigation will be done.
- Thompson explains “community members need to take responsibility for educating children about abuse, thereby empowering them to report it”.
- Sometimes family members will try and hide or protect an offender or deny what has happened. “Members of the community need to play a role in exposing this in order to protect children” say Thompson.

## Who can children talk to?

- If you think a friend is being abused or neglected you must report it to a child protection organisation (as listed on the following page) as soon as you can.
- If you are worried that it will hurt your friend if you report what is happening you need to understand that the social worker will always think about what is best for the child. Sometimes this means moving the child to a safer place, although the new Children’s Act lets them move the person who is hurting a child away.
- If you have been abused or are being abused or neglected, try to find someone that you can talk to. Teachers, social workers, church leaders or trusted family members can put you in contact with a child protection organisation.
- You can even use MXIT (with Child Line) to report abuse or call the toll free number on the following page. You can even call it if you have no airtime or from a telephone box.



## What can parents / family members do if a child is abused at school?

- Firstly, they need to offer protection and support.
- They must report the case to the police (especially if there is physical evidence), provide care, and report the case to Child Welfare (if the child is under the age of 10) and the Centre for Social Development (if the child is over the age of 10).
- They need to establish whether the child needs therapy or counseling and arrange this if so.
- They should motivate the school to establish a child abuse protocol to prevent future cases.
- Children who are abused often feel dirty, damaged and unworthy of love. That is why it is very important that they receive support, and therapy as soon as possible after the incident.
- It is very important that the child’s support system stress that the abuse was not the child’s fault, and that the responsibility lies with the perpetrator.

## What should teachers, headmasters and daycare staff do?

- All staff should receive training on child abuse, how to identify child abuse and what action to take.
- Staff members must be made aware that they are legally bound to report abuse of children to a child protection organisation.
- Schools can run child abuse programmes, or make it part of the school’s Life Orientation programme to teach children about child abuse, how to keep themselves safe, how to report it and so on.



## REPORT ABUSE AND NEGLECT HERE:

### Child Welfare Grahamstown

Children 0- 10 years  
Tel: 046 636 13 55  
Cell: 071 086 6382  
[www.childwelfare.org.za](http://www.childwelfare.org.za)  
e-mail: [childwelfare@telkomsa.net](mailto:childwelfare@telkomsa.net)

### Department of Social Development

Children 11 – 18 years  
046 602 3300/  
046 636 1484

### Child line SA

0800 055 555 (FREE)  
[www.childlinesa.org.za](http://www.childlinesa.org.za)  
MXIT : Child line online counseling available  
Monday to Saturday from 2pm to 6pm

### Lifeline

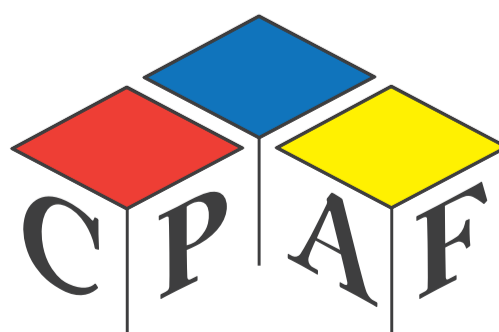
0800 0123 22  
[www.lifeline.org.za](http://www.lifeline.org.za)

### South African Police services

046 603 9111  
10111 (free)

### Family violence Child protection and Sexual offence unit (FCS)

046 622 2350



The Child Protection Action Forum