

The Social and Emotional Challenges of Female Postgraduate Students in South Africa

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ABSTRACT The study focused on the challenges to female black postgraduate students in South Africa during their period of study. The purpose was to explore the social and emotional challenges to female black postgraduate students and to come up with guidelines on assisting them in coping with their studies at postgraduate level. The qualitative design type was used and the theoretical framework that guided the study was that of Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic theory. Three female black postgraduate students were purposely sampled from three universities in South Africa. Data was collected through interviews and analysis indicated that all three participants experienced serious challenges, socially and emotionally, including trauma. The power relations between supervisor and students prevented some of the participants from sharing their social challenges with their supervisors. Support was lacking from home, work and society.