

**EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
COUNSELLING SKILLS AND MEMORY WORK  
WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

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**2006**

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WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

*by*

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**This dissertation is dedicated to ...**

my children Ellen Emmah Mnguni, Itumeleng Vincent Jabulani Mnguni  
(For the joy that they have brought into my life)  
and Vuyani Mashego who will soon be joining my family.

My grandmother Annah Pheladi Mazibuko who always believed in me, taught me that nothing in life is impossible and encouraged me from my childhood; my late grandfather Johannes Mazibuko for his loving kindness and humility; and my paternal grandmother, Jane Mnguni;

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My editor, Mr. F.M. Papo and technical editor, Mrs. A. van Dyk.

## DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I, MARIA ANNAH MNGUNI (Student number 20225408) declare that:

*Exploring the relationship between counselling skills  
and memory work with primary school children*

is my own work and that all references appear in the list of references.

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Date

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNSELLING SKILLS AND MEMORY WORK WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

by

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The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the relationship between counselling skills and memory work with primary school children. I explored this relationship with the aim of determining the role and possible contribution of counselling skills to memory work.

I followed an action research design. The study was located in a primary school situated in an informal settlement in the Nelson Mandela Metropole. Ten female educators were conveniently and purposefully selected to participate in this inquiry. I developed and facilitated an intervention programme aimed at the participants acquiring the technique of memory box making. After the intervention each participating educator was requested to implement the memory box making technique with one child. During a second field visit I facilitated a focus group discussion to determine whether or not the participating educators had used counselling skills in interacting with the children during the memory box making process.

I followed both deductive and inductive frameworks to thematically analyse data thematically. I found that educators employed the following counselling skills while facilitating the memory box making technique with children: basic counselling skills (empathy skills; warmth, respect and trust; listening skills; and skills of genuineness and sincerity); and counselling skills related to pre-bereavement, bereavement and grief (support, collaboration and skills transference; skills of valuing mementoes; and skills to discover family structures and relationships). I also found that memory work was experienced as problematic by the participants in terms of the following skills: confidentiality; emotional strain on the educators; and cultural beliefs regarding death.



## **KEY CONCEPTS**

- Bereavement
- Counselling skills
- Grief
- Memory box making technique
- Memory work
- Pre-bereavement
- Primary school
- Primary school children



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# CHAPTER 1

## OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the relationship between counselling skills and memory work with primary school children. I aimed to accomplish this by exploring the presence (or not) of counselling skills when educators do memory boxes or memory work with primary school children. Memory work might serve as a catalyst to facilitate counselling. An initial assumption of this study was that counselling skills are inherent in memory work. Yet, from a preliminary literature survey (discussed in chapter two) it seemed that no empirical work has yet explored this assumption specifically. I am therefore of the opinion that research in this area could contribute to the existing literature on counselling skills and memory work.

On the one hand I decided to do this study based on my realisation that in many cultures, discussing death is a taboo, despite the fact that it affects everyone (Waddington, 2002). Often people are used to, and prefer keeping quiet about, death, with the hope that they are saving the people involved from pain. What people may not realise is that they might increase pain of people who may feel rejected and uncared for (Wolfelt, 1998). On the other hand, based on my initial interest, an opportunity arose where I could explore the possible link between counselling skills and memory work. This occurred during a study by Ferreira (2006), during which participants indicated the need to be guided in terms of psychosocial supporting techniques in supporting community members in coping with HIV&AIDS. Memory work was identified as a possibility for empowering the educators who participated in Ferreira's (2006) study. This identified need provided me with the opportunity to explore what I had been wondering about, namely, how children can be supported in coping with the loss of their parents.

To be human is to experience loss which may often lead to pain. The development of a person's ideas on death begins in childhood, but may not be fully understood until later in adulthood (Roos, Du Toit & Du Toit, 2002). The above statement indicates that it is inevitable

for all human beings, whether young or old, to be exposed to death. Even if the effects and understanding of death is at different levels and at different ages, it seems imperative to support individuals appropriately.

In this regard, I also observed that death amongst young parents occurs at an alarming rate in South Africa. Children lose their parents and parents lose their children on a daily basis due to different illnesses, including HIV&AIDS. It is still difficult, in most cultures, for adults to discuss death amongst themselves, let alone with children (Kelly in Coombe, 2004). The process is often complicated by tribal custom and taboos, with the stigma of AIDS being a hugely inhibiting factor (Waddington, 2002). In some cultures the discussion of death is forbidden. It is regarded as “*bohlola*”, a Sepedi word for inviting bad-luck or death into the family. Wolfelt (1998) states that adults too often find it unbearable to be of help to children during this difficult time (when they have lost their parents), until they have consciously explored their own reactions, concerns, thoughts and fears concerning death.

From personal experience I know that sometimes adults in my Sepedi culture are able to bury a person without children knowing that their parent has passed away. Family members would usually tell the child that the parent has gone to a far away place and will come back after a long period. Sometimes children are told that an animal had eaten their parents and that they will not come back. Children are not always given the opportunity to discuss the disappearance of their parents. They are also not allowed to attend the funeral of their parents. This is done with the hope of protecting children from the trauma of death. Similarly, in other cultures, children are still taught not to ask questions about death. Parents and caregivers assume that children are too young to understand (Sinomlando Centre, 2003). I hold the view that there is still confusion in many South African cultural groups as to whether or not children should be told about the death of a parent. Even if people are exposed to death on a daily basis, it may still be difficult for them to discuss it, let alone talk about it before it occurs.

Since death (in the context of HIV&AIDS) is currently foregrounded in our lives (Kelly in Coombe, 2004) it is often difficult to buffer both adults and children against the pain and the trauma of being exposed to death like in “the olden days”. People are exposed to death on a daily basis and may wish to be comforted so that the pain and trauma could be less traumatic (Papadatou, 2002). Yet, at the same time people often try to protect themselves from the pain of facing reality, or of talking about death. They may keep quiet, wishing and hoping the

reality would turn into a dream, but instead it ends up being a nightmare for many (Wolfelt, 1998).

The above information left some questions in my mind about how children can be supported so that they are not left with undue emotional burdens in their lives. I had observed the reaction of my colleagues when I used to teach in a primary school, who seemed frustrated when faced with a situation where they had to support a child who had lost a parent. As a result, some of them seemed to opt to not support the child. I believe that they did not do this because they did not have the child's welfare at heart. Some simply did not seem to know how to support a child who had lost a parent. Others were of the opinion that they might open wounds in a child if they talked about the child's grief, whilst others still believed that it is a taboo to talk about death. This raised my interest in how educators could be empowered with skills that they can use to support children. Amongst the ideas that I considered was that of memory work.

One way in which individuals could be prepared for death is through memory work, as memory work is one possible way of providing families with the opportunity to engage with each other and to speak about previously "taboo" subjects like HIV&AIDS (Waddington, 2002). Memory is the key component of identity and with AIDS continuing its rampage; many children are being divested of this fundamental link to their roots. For children to have an idea of what their parents looked like whilst they were still must have seen them, having lived with them and shared some memories with them. The memories that they shared with their parents may result in the children being able to identify themselves with their parents once they have passed away because they may have stored the pictures of their parents in their memories. It is those pictures that they will use to form their identities. If children do not know anything about their parents, or do not remember anything about them, they might not have any sense of belonging. They might not know who they are, where they come from, and where they should head in future. They may be deprived of the pride to say "I am so and so's child" and also of the pride to know their relatives, as some children end up living with complete strangers after losing their parents.

In an attempt to ease this trauma came the notion to retain memories for children, a concept of creating both metaphorical and literal "memory boxes" with the potential of creating strong links in a chain of familial history while easing the grief of losing a loved one. The basic assumption of memory boxes is that children who remember their parents in a positive way

are in a better position to cope with the hardships of life and that this will create a basis of identity and promote a spirit of resilience in them (Waddington, 2002).

Memory work can be regarded as a legacy of love that one can leave behind for loved ones. People can prepare anything that is of value and leave it behind for the family to remember them by when they have passed away. This can include, amongst other things, videos, poetry, music, art, or some other things that are named after that particular person (Soul City, 2004).

## **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on the purpose of my study, I formulated the primary research question directing this study as follows: *What is the relationship between counselling skills and memory work?* Through this primary research question I aimed to explore the following secondary research questions which directed my study:

- What are counselling skills?
- What is memory work?
- How can the acquisition of the memory work technique be facilitated?

## **1.3 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION**

I will now define the relevant concepts in my study in order to ensure a clear understanding of what I mean by these concepts. In chapter two I will further explore literature that relates to counselling skills and memory work, namely:

- Counselling skills
- Memory box making

### **1.3.1 RELATIONSHIP**

Corsini (2002) regards a relationship as a connection between two or more phenomena. This connection refers to the way in which things are related to one another, or refers to a contrast between two things. In this study, relationship refers to the presence or absence of counselling skills when doing memory work.

### **1.3.2 COUNSELLING SKILLS**

Counselling refers to a process of defining, understanding and addressing a specific problem, as well as to the advice and suggestions given by a person acknowledged as an expert in one or more areas. In this process, techniques such as guidance, advice and discussions are used (Corsini, 2002). This results in the ability to do something well, expertise or dexterity. In this study, counselling skills refer to how participating educators may or may not understand, guide, advice and support children during memory work.

### **1.3.3 MEMORY WORK**

Memory work in this study refers to any kind of work that may be used to show how people celebrate their lives and how people who have passed away celebrated their lives. Memory work is done with the aim of maintaining or harbouring memories of those people when they are deceased and helping children to remember their parents when they have passed away (Waddington, 2002).

Memory work can also be used by individuals to communicate with others about themselves, or to communicate with themselves. It can further be used as a means of remembering a person who has passed away, what he or she had valued and even as a way of communicating with him or her (Irin News, 2005).

### **1.3.4 THE MEMORY BOX MAKING TECHNIQUE**

Memory box making is one way in which memory work may be done. A memory box is a box, any work or any container that can be used to contain valued personal belongings or belongings of loved ones so that they can be used to remember how a person celebrated life in the event of death (Catlin, 2005). The memory box making technique refers to different ways and steps of compiling a memory box (Catlin, 2005). In this study, the memory box making technique refers to the skill introduced to participating educators on how to make a memory box, as well as the potential uses of a memory box. Most importantly, memory box making can also be done to show how one has celebrated one's life in a positive way.

Memory box making can be used in the pre-bereavement and bereavement processes of counselling people who are infected with, and affected by, HIV&IDS. It can also be used when counselling people who are ill or who experience some other problems.

### **1.3.5 PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

In this study, I used the word “children” to refer to primary school boys and girls enrolled in the school where the participating educators are employed. The participating educators applied their acquired memory work skills with these school children and visually documented the process by means of disposable cameras, which I supplied.

### **1.3.6 PRIMARY SCHOOL**

A primary school in this study refers to a school that accommodates children from grade one up to grade seven. The children accommodated in this school are both boys and girls. The primary school is situated in an informal settlement community in the Eastern Cape and employs the participating educators.

### **1.3.7 BEREAVEMENT**

Bereavement is the forcible loss of something precious (Winter, 2000). In this study, bereavement refers to the loss of loved ones through death.

### **1.3.8 PRE-BEREAVEMENT**

In this study, pre-bereavement refers to the period before one loses loved ones to death. It entails the process whereby people are prepared emotionally before they lose their loved ones so that the loss can be less traumatic.

### **1.3.9 GRIEF**

Grief refers to the process by which we recover from loss (Winter, 2000). In this study, grief refers to the process by which we recover from loss of loved ones to death.

## **1.4 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE**

For the purpose of this study I followed a qualitative approach. Epistemologically I am grounded as constructivist and interpretivism. I discuss these choices at length in chapter three.

### **1.4.1 METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS**

I conducted research by using the qualitative approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2002) explain that qualitative research involves the collection of a variety of empirical material, including personal experience and interviews, which describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in the lives of individuals. By using the qualitative approach I was able to obtain information about how participants think, feel and behave. Parker, Dalrymple and Durden (2000) explain that qualitative research is concerned with trying to understand meaning in a multifaceted manner. I will discuss this methodological aspect in more depth in chapter three.

### **1.4.2 EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS**

I used both the constructivist and interpretive paradigm as they complement each other in this research. *“The constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and subject create understandings) and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures”* (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). I was able to gather data in a natural setting of the participants and used the data to reconstruct the participants' constructions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) in order to form new interpretations and theoretical creations.

According to Parker, Dalrymple and Durden (2000) the interpretive paradigm assumes that the researcher has a participatory stance and that the research requires the description of specific cases, that is, persons and communities through narrative action and interpretation of data. I was able to see reality through the eyes of the participants and gather information from the realities of the participants' lived experiences and their social actions, which make their lives meaningful. In chapter three I discuss my epistemological choice more at length.

## 1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I conducted the study by using an action research design, which is driven by the need to solve practical, real world problems, aiming to serve as a source of empowerment to the participants (Denscombe, 2003; Babbie, 2001). In action research the truth and the solutions to the concrete problems occur simultaneously (Seale, 2000).

I employed convenience and purposeful selection of ten educators in a partnership primary school in an informal, urban settlement in the Eastern Cape. I chose this school because it was easily accessible (Tashakkorri & Teddlie, 2003) because my supervisors had already been collaborating with the school for research purposes since 2003 (Ferreira, 2006). I developed and implemented an intervention aimed at educators acquiring memory box making skills.

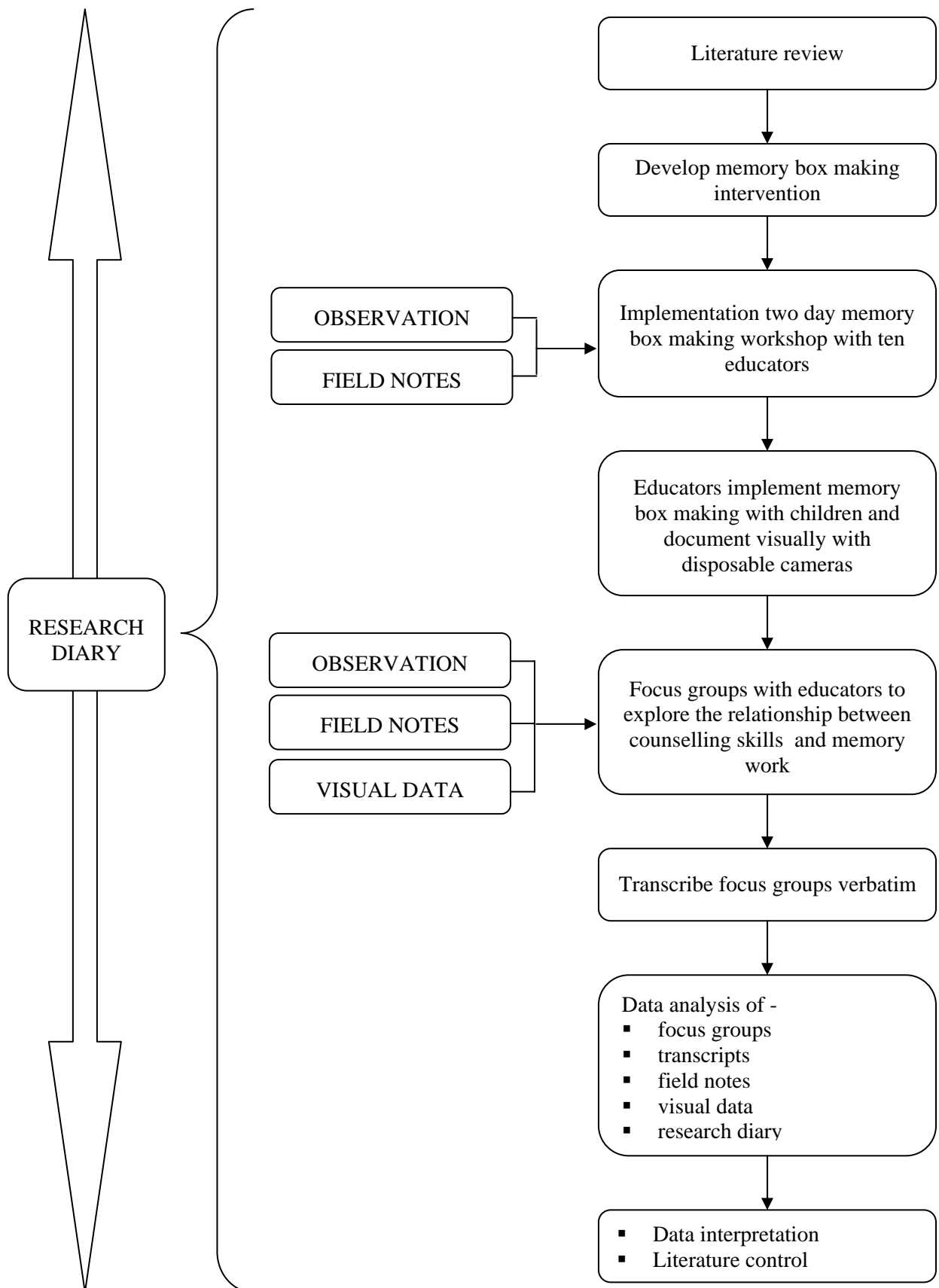
I used multiple data collection strategies. These included focus group discussions (documented in field notes, audio tapes and my research diary), observation-as-context-of-interaction (documented as photographs, field notes and my research diary) and visual data (participants' own photographs taken with disposable cameras).

I aimed to provide an example of participating educators in their real school situation where they implemented memory work in their classrooms. I was privileged to observe the participants in their real life situation resulting in me being able to generate rich descriptions of the setting.

Figure 1.1 provides a summary of the research process, in terms of the various research actions, data collection, as well as data analysis and interpretation strategies I employed. I will discuss the various aspects in detail in chapter three.



**FIGURE 1.1: RESEARCH PROCESS**



## **1.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), trustworthiness refers to how the inquirer can persuade the audience that the findings of a study are worthwhile. Seale (2000) argues that trustworthiness is always negotiable and open-ended, and not a matter of final proof. In this study I aimed to ensure trustworthiness by applying the following aspects, which will be discussed in chapter three (Seale, 2000): credibility, dependability, authenticity, applicability and transferability, and confirmability.

## **1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In this study I followed the norms, values and principles of research in dealing with conflicts of interest in the research study. I was guided by the following principles (which I will discuss at length in chapter three): the principle of informed consent and voluntary participation, the principle of safety, the principle of confidentiality and anonymity, and the principle of trust (Babbie, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Mouton, 2001).

## **1.8 LAYOUT OF THE CHAPTERS**

### **CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE**

In chapter one I discussed a background orientation of typical problems that are encountered in most cultures when death occurs in a family. I stated the research problem and formulated the research questions. I also introduced my selected research design, paradigm, data collection and analysis techniques.

### **CHAPTER 2: COUNSELLING SKILLS AND MEMORY WORK**

In chapter two I review relevant literature about the advantages of bereavement and pre-bereavement counselling. In addition, I explore memory work, memory box making and how educators can utilise this skill in bereavement and pre-bereavement counselling. I conclude the chapter with my conceptual framework.

### **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PROCESS**

Chapter three focuses on the research design, methodology and research process I employed. I discuss my data collection methods and how my data was analysed and interpreted. I also discuss the ethical guidelines I adhered to and the manner in which I strived to meet quality criteria.

### **CHAPTER 4: THEMATIC ANALYSIS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNSELLING SKILLS AND MEMORY WORK.**

In chapter four I relate the results of the study with broader literature and the conceptual framework of the study that I discuss in chapter two. I focus on the interpretation and evaluation of the results derived from the research.

### **CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS.**

This chapter involves the final conclusions of my research findings in relation to my primary and secondary research questions. I conclude by making recommendations and discussing the shortcomings of my study.

## **1.9 CONCLUSION**

Chapter one served as an introduction to the chapters to follow. I provided a broad view of what will be discussed in chapters two to five. I discussed the purpose of my study, provided an overview of the rationale of my study and clarified key concepts. Thereafter, I briefly introduced my epistemological and methodological assumptions, research design as well as research methodology.

In chapter two I will explore relevant literature on counselling skills and memory work.



## CHAPTER 2

# COUNSELLING SKILLS AND MEMORY WORK

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I discussed the rationale for my research, introduced my research questions, indicated the purpose of my research and defined key concepts. I also gave a brief indication of my research design, paradigm, data collection and analysis techniques.

In this chapter I will focus on answering my first two research questions, by referring to theory related to counselling skills and memory work. My purpose in this is to determine categories of counselling skills, as I want to utilise these counselling skill categories during the deductive analysis of data. Another purpose of this chapter is to establish the nature of memory work. Such knowledge can inform the development of a memory work intervention with educators, as actualised as part of this study. I conclude the chapter by presenting my conceptual framework.

### 2.2 COUNSELLING

After defining counselling I will discuss counselling skills and counselling as a preventative measure.

#### 2.2.1 WHAT IS COUNSELLING?

Evian (2000) defines counselling as a process that helps people understand and deal with their problems, and secondly to communicate better with those with whom they are emotionally involved. The counsellor and the client explore issues and together look at ways of dealing and coping with these feelings and concerns as best as possible through different approaches. According to Sutherland (1995) counselling is the discussion of a person's problems and the provision of advice by a comparative stranger, whether professionally trained or not.

Corsini (2002) refers to counselling as a process of defining, understanding and addressing a specific problem, as well as advice and suggestions given by a person acknowledged as being an expert in one or more areas. In this process, techniques such as guidance, advice and discussions are used. Thus, counselling may be regarded as a facilitative process in which the counsellor, working within the framework of a special helping relationship, may use specific skills in assisting people to help themselves more effectively (Gillis, 1994). The above information is an indication that the clients could ultimately be able to function without the support of the counsellor.

### **2.2.2 COUNSELLING SKILLS**

In the next few sections I will discuss the following counselling skills: empathy, genuineness and sincerity, respect and warmth, letters and pictures, saying goodbye and unfinished business, listening and allowing the client to talk, discovering family structures and relationships, giving information and advice, telling stories and helper self disclosure, as well as gathering letters and pictures (Roets, 2002; Milne, 1999; Egan, 1998).

A skilled helper does not necessarily work as a professional counsellor but is familiar with, and competent in, using counselling skills (Milne, 1999). Thus the qualities of the person acting as a counsellor are foremost during counselling. According to Milne (1999), the following factors may contribute to the effectiveness of skilled helpers, who ideally are supposed to have basic intelligence with respect for ideas and cognitive flexibility, are willing to read, learn and are familiar with theory and are adept at making good use of it. They should have interest in human behaviour, be able to read non-verbal messages tactfully, have common sense and display social intelligence. They should have a certain easiness with others, and should be at ease with the social emotional world, their own and that of others. It is important that skilled helpers are able to respond effectively to a wide range of human needs and objectives, and be congruent, sensitive and not afraid of deep human emotions—their own and those of others. They must have knowledge and acceptance of themselves, - be willing to explore their own feelings and behaviour, and work at recognising and integrating all aspects of the self which will ultimately lead to warmth of character, patience, empathy, tolerance, adaptability, ability to respond to various tasks with calmness, as well as the ability to self-actualisation that is genuine and congruent. The ability to have a sense of humour will assist both the counsellor and the counsellee to be more at ease with one another and to be

able to build a trusting relationship easily. The above mentioned factors will contribute towards an effective counselling relationship.

### **2.2.2.1 Empathy**

Roets (2002) regards empathy as the idea of being able to enter into the intense feelings of another person, the ability to enter into the subjective world of a client and to make accurate representation of the client's internal frame of reference. Empathy refers to the ability of counsellors to sense and identify the feelings of others and to communicate them to clients from their points of view, that is, entering their frames of reference, and being able to put themselves in the shoes of the clients (Thompson, 2003).

Empathy involves listening to clients, understanding them and communicating this understanding to them in such a way that they understand themselves more fully and are able to act on this understanding (Egan, 1998). This can be done by paying close attention to the client's expressions and messages which involve both physical and mental expressions. Practitioners must show interest and understanding while clients are talking. It is equally important to concentrate on clients' inner worlds by listening to central message i.e. not only what the clients say but also what they want to say. Practitioners should be flexible so that clients can have enough space and time to agree, disagree or explain further what they say. It is important for practitioners to be gentle but not to allow clients to avoid some of the important issues. At the same time practitioners should not pressurise clients to talk about issues that they are uncomfortable with. Practitioners should concentrate on verbal and non-verbal responses which may confirm or deny the accuracy of their empathic responses. They should try to put themselves in the clients' positions by asking themselves "*If I was the client how would I act, feel and think?*" (Gibson, Swartz & Sandenberg, 2002; Roets, 2002).

### **2.2.2.2 Genuineness and sincerity**

According to Thompson (2003), genuineness refers to the ability to be authentic with others and being oneself, that is not playing a role. This implies that counsellor's actions and words should match. Genuineness refers to a counsellors' attitude towards and behaviour with, clients which involves honesty and transparency in a counselling relationship (Van Dyk, 2005). Sincerity involves the practitioner's interest and willingness to listen. It is usually shown by congruent verbal and non-verbal behaviour, understanding, acceptance and

unconditional positive regard. The practitioner's voice, gestures and facial expressions may confirm the verbal message. The practitioner should not fake or deny understanding without asking for explanations. Practitioners need to admit their own limitations and not pretend that they know everything (Roets, 2002). They must be open and not defensive, even if they face negative criticism. They should be consistent across situations and always show the willingness to share their experiences and themselves (Van Dyk, 2005; Egan, 1998; Gladding, 1996).

### **2.2.2.3 Respect and warmth**

Thompson (2003) explains respect as an interpersonal skill that demonstrates an appreciation of the uniqueness of others, tolerance of differences, and willingness to interact with others equally. It is an attitude that portrays the belief that every person is a worthy being who is competent to make decisions (Van Dyk, 2005). Respect further refers to the counsellor's ability to communicate to clients, the sincere belief that they are strong enough to deal with life, and that all people have the right to take their own decisions and select their own alternatives (Roets, 2002). By doing this, counsellors give clients hope that they have the ability and capability to make choices and take control of their lives.

Practitioners can show respect for clients by caring about the clients' welfare, seeing each client as unique and acknowledging and respecting the fact that clients can decide their own fate. Sincere interest in clients' well-being, accurate empathetic understanding and expression of warmth towards clients may serve as appropriate reinforcement for supporting and encouraging clients (Roets, 2002).

### **2.2.2.4 Listening and allowing the client to talk**

Listening is one of the fundamental skills in counselling. Listening refers to the counsellor's ability to understand and capture the messages that clients communicate as they tell their stories, whether the messages are communicated verbally or non-verbally (Egan, 1998). Without being able to listen to people, to really understand what it is that they mean and what their needs are, counsellors may be unable to help them, educate them, guide them, or serve them (Gibson *et al.*, 2002).

In some cases, clients may wish to talk about a deceased or a sick person. Listening will allow the client the opportunity to talk about the deceased and related issues, while trying to be strong for the sake of other family members who might tend to hide their feelings. They may be scared or have no one to talk to. Talking is therapeutic by nature and it includes several issues discussed in the paragraphs to follow.

*The pain of talking* involves talking about painful issues which bring out more from the client. The client usually feels better after talking about the issues which had led to pain. Relief is then experienced because the pain could be shared with somebody. *Crying* involves clients being able to cry when talking about painful issues and moments because of the awareness that they are accepted unconditionally and that they won't be asked to keep quiet (Payne, Jarrett, Wiles & Field, 2002). This moment might allow clients to cry until they can no longer cry. Tears will gradually decrease as they get used to the pain of talking.

*Realising emotions* links to the idea that the pain of talking and crying is very important in realising the emotions that are within the client. This might help the client to feel as if the pain and the burden that was within have been removed. Once the emotions are realised a person may be relieved from a lot of physical symptoms, for example, pains, heartaches and so forth. Good listeners may be regarded as good physicians (Ross & Deverell, 2004).

Two types of listening can be identified: *being there* and *true listening/ real listening*. *Being there* may involve sitting with clients and accepting them and what they say or not say, being alongside them, acting as a witness to the tears and emotions, letting there be silence and not filling it (Payne *et al.*, 2002). This technique should not be regarded as passive because the counsellor gives the clients full attention. *Real listening* involves showing interest in what the clients are saying and trying to identify and understand the difference between important and unimportant ideas. Practitioners may use non-verbal communication to show that they are listening. They may make a mental note or write down key words, listen for central concepts and ask questions for clarification (Gibson *et al.*, 2002).

#### **2.2.2.5 Saying goodbye and unfinished business**

Not having the opportunity to say goodbye, not attending a funeral or having things left unsaid, not being with people prior to or during their death may leave bereaved people with uncertainties and unanswered questions. A counsellor may guide a client to use strategies that



might help the client to heal (Payne *et al.*, 2002). In such a case, strategies that might be used to facilitate the grieving process include writing a letter or visualization, for example, the empty chair technique. In the empty chair technique clients may pretend as if the people they would like to talk to are sitting in that chair and that they are talking to them. Clients can be told that they do not have to say goodbye completely and that they can keep a bit of the deceased with them, ask questions of them and talk to them and about them (Payne *et al.*, 2002).

#### **2.2.2.6 Discovering family structures and relationships**

Practitioners can support clients in finding out about relationships by performing the following tasks: drawing family trees, discussing different members of the family and discussing different ways in which different members of the family can support each other in times of grief (Payne *et al.*, 2002). This involves discussing how different extended members of the family and different friends and other members of society, for example, teachers and pastors, can be of use in times of crisis.

#### **2.2.2.7 Giving information and advice**

Practitioners can collaborate with members of the family concerning important information that may be needed in times of crisis and where such information can be found (Payne *et al.*, 2002; Van Niekerk & Prins, 2002). This information may include the following: wills or testaments, wishes of different members of the family if they pass away, information about who should take care of other members of the family if the breadwinner passes away, and advice on how the care-takers together with the children should lead their lives (including issues such as education and religion).

#### **2.2.2.8 Telling stories and helper self disclosure**

Practitioners may talk to clients about their own experiences and how they have overcome difficult experiences. This may help clients to open up more easily as they might realise that counsellors are also human and that they also experience problems for which they need support in overcoming these (Gibson *et al.*, 2002; Egan, 1998).

### 2.2.2.9 Gathering letters and pictures

Practitioners can support clients in gathering letters and pictures that can be used to remember their loved ones when they have passed away, or to gather their own letters and pictures that they can be remembered by when they pass away (Payne *et al.*, 2002). Pictures may include pictures of family gatherings, parties and special occasions. When a counsellor is doing bereavement counselling, a letter may be written, for example, about the deceased for grandchildren, a journal may be kept or emotions may be listed. Letters may also be written to the deceased or medical personnel (Payne *et al.*, 2002).

Letters may be kept in a private place or symbolically sent to the deceased (for example burning them and taking the ashes to the cemetery or river). When the bereavement is quite recent, listening appears to be the key strategy. Practitioners may not attempt to question, challenge or move the client forward (Gibson *et al.*, 2002). They could merely listen to clients, support and accept them unconditionally.

## 2.3 THE USE OF COUNSELLING AS PREVENTION

Blocher (2000) explains that the most humane and cost effective way to protect and enhance the psychological well-being of people is through prevention. Despite the almost universal support for concepts of prevention among human services professionals and researchers, prevention remains the issue that everybody talks about, but about which very little is done. Phatlane (2003) highlights that it is important to implement the necessary mass preventative measures through education. Prevention is primarily focused around two factors that can be identified prior to the onset of major psychological problems, namely risk and protective factors. Risk factors are associated with a high probability of onset, greater severity and longer duration of major dysfunctions. Protective factors, on the other hand, refer to conditions that improve people's resistance to risk and related problems which will ultimately contribute to resilience (Dalzell, 2005). I think that it is important to empower people in such a way that they are able cope with problems in such a manner that they will not enter into the risk category.

I think that prevention is equally important at both the emotional and spiritual level. My argument is that in most cases people are more affected due to lack of emotional resilience. As such, it may be more difficult for them to be functional than if they had been supported to

be emotionally resilient. It is difficult to think of an approach through which children could be consistently engaged if educators are left out. Omitting educators in HIV&AIDS prevention could, for example, prove counter productive in that educators would be unable to play their traditional role as informers, educators and counsellors. If educators were bypassed in the delivery of HIV&AIDS information they would be disempowered. Communities and children would no longer see educators as a reliable source of information and knowledge. The concern about the suitability of educators to deliver the HIV&AIDS curriculum should be addressed through deliberate and well focused in-service and pre-service training programmes, as well as deliberate management programmes to ensure that schools are not risk areas, but safe places for children (Rugalema & Khanye in Coombe, 2004).

In my study I wondered how educators might employ counselling skills to support learners. I thought one example which might hold a relation to counselling skills is memory work, which I will discuss in the following section.

## **2.4 MEMORY WORK**

I will discuss memory work in terms of its history, purpose, the potential use with children, information that can be included in memory work, and the limitations in current memory work research.

### **2.4.1 HISTORY OF MEMORY WORK**

Initially, memory work was developed in Britain for children placed in foster care or institutions. The organisation which pioneered the concept is the National Community of Women Living with HIV&AIDS (NACWOLA) in Kampala, Uganda (Denis, 2005). According to Irin News (2005) memory work became popular in the early 1990's among a group of HIV positive African parents living in Britain. Together with the children's organization, HIV positive parents developed a framework to write down their family histories so that children could keep their memories alive, as memory implies the possibility of bringing past events back to consciousness (Sinomlando Centre, 2003). Morgan (2006) further defines memory work as the deliberate setting up of a "safe" space in which to contain the telling of a life story. This space might be a room, the shade under a tree, a drawing, or a map.

## **2.4.2 THE PURPOSE OF MEMORY WORK**

After the death of parents many orphans go and live with foster parents, in institutions or on their own (Irin News, 2005; Soul City, 2004). As a result, the children's memories and their personal histories might fade away quickly and the children might grow without a clear sense of identity and roots, or without the traditions and beliefs of their heritage. Memory work may help the children to build their identities and strengthen their emotional capacity, to understand the past, and to be less afraid of the future. As the family collects photographs and souvenirs, draws a family tree and writes about its life, family members could grow closer. The process might also open a window for the family to talk about issues that are related to life and death and also to talk frankly about the future (Irin News, 2005; Wolfelt, 1998).

According to Soul City (2004), the purpose of memory work is to help people talk about their future, including their death, with their families and children. Memory work might also help family members to express their feelings with regard to how much they love and care about each other. Memory work allows family members to share the memories of their lives, and further encourages people to talk openly about death; it could also help members of a family to cope with their loss and to come to terms with death in the family. Memory work is no longer to be seen, primarily at least, as a preparation for, or a response to, death. The role of memory work is to assist people living with HIV&AIDS to live positively and to hold onto life. Needless to say, the greatest service one can render a child whose parents are living with HIV&AIDS is to keep them alive (Denis, 2005).

## **2.4.3 THE USE OF MEMORY WORK WITH CHILDREN**

I discuss the potential use of memory work with children in terms of how it may assist in showing how people celebrate their lives, how to socialise children about death, build resilience amongst them, and how it can be used as a theme and tool across learning areas.

### **2.4.3.1 The use of memory work to show how people celebrate their lives**

As indicated in chapter one, people have been using memory work to show pride in how they celebrate their lives. The celebration of life may refer to both the good and difficult times in people's lives and how they conquered obstacles. To make sure that such events become a legacy, the people involved in memory work would name people, places, streets and clothes,

amongst other things, to make sure that such events or such information is not forgotten. Even today we still name places and people after people who have made a difference in our lives, so that we can keep on having their memories in our minds.

I propose that a memory box can also be called a celebrity's box due to the following reasons. First, memory work may show how people have celebrated their lives and make the owners and other members of a family aware of the good times that they have had in life and of the legacy that that particular person might leave behind for the coming generations. Memory work also shows the difficult moments of people's lives and how they have conquered such difficulties. Memory work may serve as a bonding instrument among family members who may be able to communicate about the good times in their lives and also express their fears.

Furthermore, a memory box may be called a celebrity's box because people who have passed away immediately become celebrities, even if they were not, because their names suddenly become known by the people who did not know them before, e.g. the friends and colleagues of the relatives of the deceased. In my Sepedi culture the following factors might turn a person who has passed away into a celebrity: people start talking about the death of the individual, people spend more of their time making arrangements for the funeral, and even people who did not know that individual personally become involved and attend the funeral. As such, the deceased person in a way gets a standing ovation because on the day of the funeral the lives of a lot of people come to a halt as they go and pay their last respects to that particular individual.

Above all, due to the effect of HIV&AIDS, people may start gossiping about the possible cause of a person's death. They may mention the words that are used in communities to refer to HIV&AIDS like "the three little words", "kokwana *hloko*", "*amagama*" and "Z "3. This is done based on the belief amongst a lot of communities that every young person who dies, dies due to HIV&AIDS, and that people and family members are usually stigmatised as if the death of that particular person was the worst one because of the way they think that person had died. In this regard, the celebrity status may be negative because of the stigmatisation attached to it.

I thus propose to call a memory box a celebrity's box, in order for people to understand that they need to appreciate how they celebrate their lives. In so doing they will be able to leave a legacy for their loved ones.

### 2.4.3.2 The use of memory work to socialise people about death

Wolfelt (1998) explains that the most important influence on how children react at a time of death experience is the response of parents and other significant people in the child's life system. The lack of death sensitisation amongst parents, educators, counsellors and other concerned adults results in anxieties and fears of a number of well intentioned people being transferred to children. In most cases when death is imminent, people generally wish to die with dignity, love, affection, physical contact and no pain. As they think about death they may wish to be comforted by, amongst other things, their religious faith, their achievements and the love of their friends and family (Duncan, Van Niekerk & Mufamadi, 2003). Formal school education reaches children at an early age when they are in their most formative years. As such, it has the potential to transmit important prevention related messages to young people when they are still in their most receptive developmental stage (Kelly in Coombe, 2004). Experience has shown that children often appear to suffer more from the loss of parental support than from the intimacy of the death experience itself. Death sensitisation may begin before, and not after a death experience and it may occur throughout a child's development whenever an appropriate "teachable" moment arises (Papadatou, 2002).

Death sensitisation can be regarded as pre-bereavement counselling because it might prepare people to cope with the trauma of death before it occurs. Pre-bereavement counselling may help children in that adults can guide children in how they should perceive death. Educators play a very important role in moulding children in totality; therefore, children easily accept what their educators tell them regarding the norms and values of life. I think that society would view death differently if we were not socialised into believing that death is traumatic and painful. I believe this view might have saved us from a lot of pain and we would regard death as a blessing, like birth.

If people are socialised about death, its impact might be much less traumatic compared to if death has never being discussed with them (Papadatou, 2002). Society may regard socialisation about death as pre-bereavement counselling because people can discuss issues that they feel are important regarding death. In this study, pre-bereavement counselling can also be referred to as authentic counselling which refers to counselling that is done in the environment in which the people live, using events that occur in daily situations. This can be done to familiarise people with, or socialise them into death in situations that are less painful to them so that they can get used to the idea of talking about it. If we want our communities to

be resilient, it is crucial to break the silence around sickness and death (Waddington, 2002). This might help people to learn to embrace death instead of fearing it before they are exposed to a real situation that affects them personally.

### 2.4.3.3 The use of memory work in building resilience amongst children

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, safety, security, stability, structure and boundaries are very important for a person to be able to lead a self-actualised life (Thompson & Rudolph, 2000). The second level seems to be the core of all the levels because if it is not fulfilled, it may also affect the first level, that is, the physiological needs. People may be unable to eat, sleep and avoid pain because they feel unsafe. This might lead to feelings of rejection and people might have a sense of not belonging. It therefore seems that this might result in a low self esteem which may cripple individuals in such a way that they might be unable to actualise themselves. Below, in figure 2.1, I provide a representation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs triangle as discussed in Swartz, De la Rey and Duncan (2004) as well as Thompson and Rudolph (2000).

**FIGURE 2.1 MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS**



Death is common amongst all age groups, especially due to the HIV&AIDS pandemic. As a result, the second level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which I regard as the core of self-actualisation, is often intensely experienced by many people who are living in fear. Death may be regarded as an expansion and revelation of our inner selves, our memories, and desires, whatever lies buried, tangled and latent within (Christman, 2005). People no longer feel safe because they are scared of losing their loved ones or that they might die. I think that it would be difficult for most people to actualise themselves if they live in fear. Moletsane (in Eloff & Ebersöhn (2004) is also of the view that HIV&AIDS is causing an unprecedented

threat to the well-being and safety of children. Because they are scared many people react in different ways, by using some of the defence mechanisms like denial or withdrawal (Swartz *et al.*, 2004; Thompson & Rudolph, 2000).

Denial of reality refers to the tendency of refusing to acknowledge either an objective experience or a subjective reality (Maree in Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2004). This defence mechanism is often employed in the context of people who are diagnosed as HIV positive. It might be difficult for these people to accept their condition because of the way in which the disease is portrayed by many. People might think that their lives are hopeless when they are told that they are HIV positive and they may further think that they are going to die. Cameron (2005) makes the same point that in most cases, when people become surrounded by fear and uncertainty, they make themselves unavailable for help, and as a result die of the stigma and from fear. They may deny that they are sick and consequently neglect to take care of themselves, which would make them live longer. Repression, shutting off, or blocking unwanted thoughts, wishes and desires from awareness is other defence mechanisms that are similar to denial, as people try not to think about the reality of a situation. As such, HIV positive people may lose important information that could help them.

Duncan (2004) indicates that when the agony of denialism beset our country there were people who felt that they were called to live openly with HIV&AIDS. They felt called to account for the survivors in a country in which thousands were dying unnecessary deaths. Such people helped in motivating others to accept their status and to realise that it is not the end of their lives. Displacement is when we unconsciously transfer anxiety from the true source to a less threatening person or object (Maree in Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2004). Once people are free of their defensive behaviour, their reactions are positive and progressive (Thompson & Rudolph, 2000). Positive actions, especially with regard to death, may be an indication that one is functioning even beyond self-actualisation, that is, at a spiritual level which may be difficult for many to achieve. This freedom from defensive behaviour may help children to be resilient. In therapeutic contexts, the scope of memory work is not necessarily restricted to the past. Its purpose is often to deal with present difficulties, and its main orientation often tends towards planning and the future.

Resilience refers to people's ability to display acceptable behaviour in spite of their vulnerability. Resilience may be regarded as the ability to survive, to overcome adversity, to regain a degree of control and to understand, explain and comprehend what has happened



(Mampane, 2004). Most cultures indirectly foster resilience in the sense that they try to prevent any difficulty that might affect the lives of people (Ntsimane, 2005).

In the context of HIV&AIDS, resilience entails the ability of children (and others) to develop to their full potential, even if their parents are sick or dead (Sinomlando Centre, 2003). Irin News (2005) claims that the availability of antiretroviral treatment may change the purpose of memory work because people might live longer and healthier lives. The overall objective of memory work is to enhance resilience in vulnerable children (Sinomlando Centre, 2003). Nurturing and developing resilience in individuals requires a certain amount of commitment and positive interaction between the caregivers and the environment (Mampane, 2004). During times of change a person to whom one is attached may provide one with a sense of safety, security and belonging (Gibson *et al.*, 2002).

#### **2.4.3.4 The use of memory work as a tool for group counselling**

When man is placed within the context of a group, he cannot continue to rely only upon himself for a view of himself. In group interaction people come in contact with the group's perception of what they purport to be. Thus, it is within the context of a group that people gain greater self awareness (Berg, Landreth & Fall, 1998).

It is important in group counselling for the facilitator to make each member of the group feel important and worthwhile, to experience a sense of belonging and acceptance, to feel understood and to have a say in the decision making of the group (Berg *et al.*, 1998). In a group, participants can validate their beliefs, values, reality and opinions, through feedback received from other members. Reinforcement does not only occur in terms of positive or negative feedback but also through observation, modeling and imitation of other members' behaviour (Van Niekerk & Prins, 2002).

When people construct memory boxes within a group, they might be able to share experiences with each other. They may see how other people are able to handle and overcome difficult circumstances in their lives. People may get to know each other better, allowing them the opportunity to be supportive of each other. Group work might also provide practitioners with the opportunity to get to know their clients better and be able to identify the clients who are from difficult backgrounds and those who have emotional problems (Schoeman & Van der Walt in Van Niekerk & Prins, 2002). This could be a helpful tool in supporting learners, as we

know that our country cannot always afford the resources for individual counselling (Winter, 2000; Collins, 1998). In the same manner, educators might be able to assess a situation that warrants individual counselling and deal with it accordingly.

#### **2.4.4 MEMORY BOX CONTENTS**

To follow I will provide a brief discussion of the information that might be included in a memory box of a person who is still alive but also of a person who has passed away.

##### **2.4.4.1 Appropriate memory box contents of a person who is still alive**

There are advantages if people make their memory boxes with significant others (as opposed to them being made by their loved ones when they have passed away). They will be able to explain in greater detail how they celebrated their lives, their life lines and their family histories. They may also be able to express their wishes about who ought to take care of their children and their belongings. They may even leave some words of wisdom for their children and relatives who could help the children to remember them almost on a daily basis and also to live by those words. Such words may even help to speed up the healing process because the people who are left behind will realise that the people who have passed away had acknowledged that one day they would die and that they gladly accepted that (Irin News, 2005; Papadatou, 2002). For information that might be included in memory work, refer to Appendix B.

##### **2.4.4.2 Appropriate memory box contents of a person who has passed away**

A memory box for a person who has passed away can be made by survivors, family members, or children together with their care givers. The information that is put into the memory box of people who have already passed away will help the survivors to understand the histories of the deceased, their life styles, as well as how they had celebrated their lives. This information might help the survivors to know more about the deceased and not lose track of their origins. In this case information about the deceased can be obtained from different relevant sources like relatives, social workers, hospitals, pastors and the community (Viljoen, 2004). For possible information that might be included in the memory box of a person who has passed away, refer to the intervention program that I (in collaboration with my co-researcher) developed, included in Appendix B.

## 2.4.5 THE MEMORY BOX MAKING PROCESS AND THE VALUE OF MEMORY WORK

During the process of memory box making the facilitator might share ideas and skills in terms of where, when and how people can use memory work. The facilitator may even empower a community, parents and learners in understanding the value of memory work. As such, community members may utilise the skill of memory box making to empower each other. By so doing they may be able to discuss issues that were previously difficult to discuss, for example, what should happen if a person were to die in the family, where their valuable documents will be found and even what their last wishes are. This might help many families, because in some cultures people are afraid of making wills and when a person dies this might create problems for the members of the family who are left behind. A memory book can be used to indicate issues such as where important documents should be found and what should happen to the children. Educators may be amongst some of the people who may assist the community in highlighting the importance of including such information in memory work and also in discussing the disadvantages of not having such information readily available when a person passes away. For example, funds may not be accessible for a funeral; members of a family may be confused about who is supposed to take care of the children and so forth. For the steps on memory box making refer to the intervention program that I used, included in Appendix B.

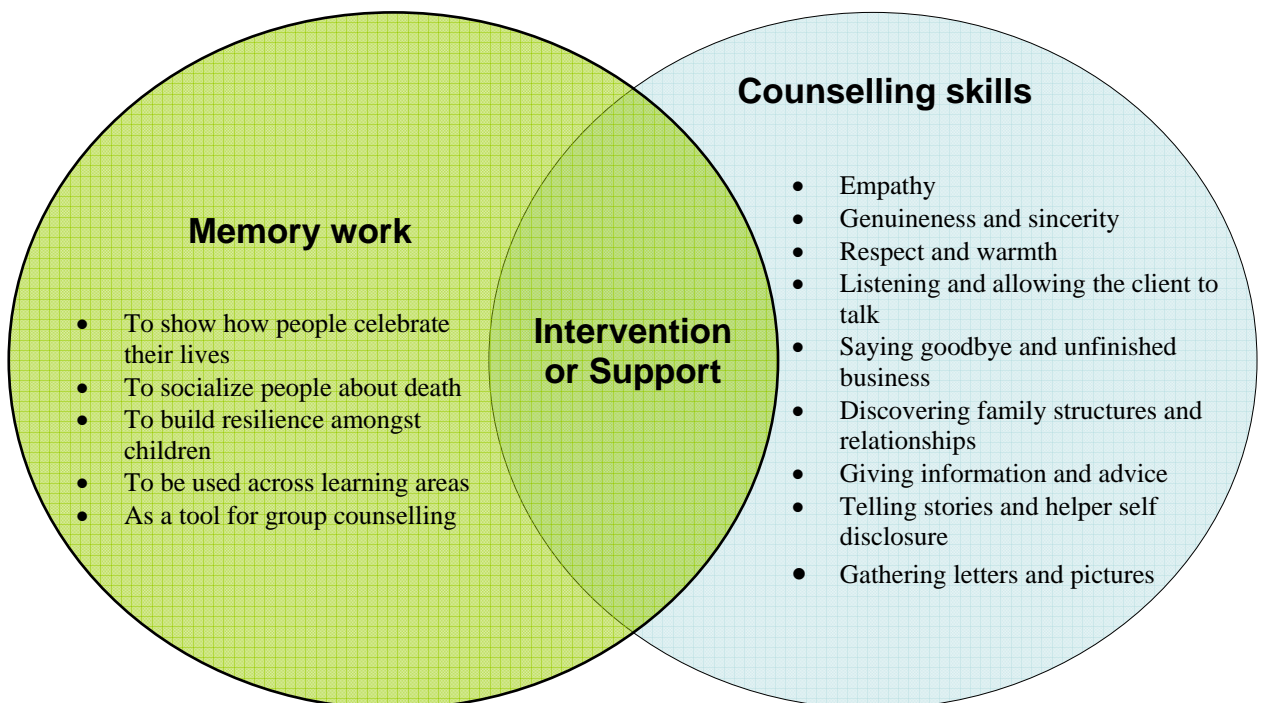
The following table provides an indication of some programmes in which memory work has been implemented. The presence of counselling skills seems implied in the programmes. However, empirical evidence to establish a link between counselling skills and memory work seems to lack in these existing bodies of knowledge.

**TABLE 2.1: PROGRAMMES WHERE MEMORY WORK WAS APPLIED**

Who	Where	Year	Purpose
Viljoen J	Pretoria	2004	To contribute towards an understanding of vulnerable children using the memory box making technique.
Swanepoel A	Pretoria	2005	To empower volunteers with the memory box making skill so that they may empower their clients and use this skill in supporting their clients.
Morgan J	Cape Town	2006	To help HIV positive people to prepare for death and how to leave legacies for their loved ones.
Sinomlando Centre	KwaZulu Natal	2001	To use memory work to encourage communication between parents and children, between spouses, the family and extended family.

Who	Where	Year	Purpose
Denis P and Makiwane N	South Africa	2001	To explore the impact of memory work on child development in families affected by HIV&AIDS.
Denis P	Durban	2005	To use memory work across all cultures to enhance resilience amongst children at risk.
Ntsimane R	Kwazulu Natal	2005	To address cultural issues regarding death using memory work in order to enhance resilience amongst children.
Makiwane N	Durban	2005	To help parents disclose their status to their family members.

**FIGURE 2.2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**



## 2.5 CONCLUSION

Based on my review of literature I posit that intervention (support) conceptually links with both memory work and counselling skills. I present this argument in figure 2.2. In this chapter I explored counselling skills and memory work. Based on my exploration of available literature on counselling skills, I propose the following theoretical categories of counselling skills (which I will utilise for deductive analytical purposes): empathy, genuineness and sincerity, respect and warmth, listening and allowing the client to talk, saying goodbye and

unfinished business, discovering family structures and relationships, giving information and advice, telling stories and helper self disclosure, and gathering letters and pictures.

Literature on memory work, as discussed in this chapter, I provided me with the relevant theoretical background to develop a memory work intervention programme (see Appendix B and D). In the next chapter I will discuss the research design and process of action research I used to plan and undertake an empirical study in an attempt to explore the relationship between counselling skills and memory work.



## CHAPTER 3

# RESEARCH PROCESS

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

I used action research to explore and describe the relationship between counselling skills and memory work. This chapter involves the description of the processes and the methods I used to collect and interpret my data in order to realise the aims of the research.

### 3.2 AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTION

As mentioned in chapter one, the purpose of this study was to explore and describe the relationship between counselling skills and memory work with children. I began by exploring ways in which educators might or not utilise counselling skills when doing memory work with children. Then, I described the data and deductively categorised them into themes. Thus, the primary research question directing this study is: *What is the relationship between counselling skills and memory work?*

The secondary questions directing this study were:

- What are counselling skills?
- What is memory work?
- How can the acquisition of the memory work technique be facilitated?

### 3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Below I will briefly discuss my methodological and epistemological assumptions, research design and research methodology.

### **3.3.1 METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTION**

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002) describe a research design as a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution and implementation of the research. Qualitative research, as a multiperspective approach to social interaction, aims at describing, interpreting, making sense of and reconstructing interaction in terms of the meanings that the participants attach to it (De Vos, 1998). According to Willig (2001), the type of data collected for qualitative research needs to be naturalistic, that is, the research must take place in a real life setting, and data must not be coded, summarised, categorised and reduced at the collection stage.

The objective of data collection is to create a comprehensive record of participants' actions and words. The flexibility and open-endedness of qualitative research provides the space for validity issues to be addressed. This flexibility allows participants to challenge the researcher's assumptions about the relevance and meaning of categories and concepts. Qualitative data techniques aim to ensure that participants are free to challenge, and if necessary, to correct the researcher's assumptions about the meanings investigated by the research (De Vos, 1998).

I collected data qualitatively in a real life setting of the participants and recorded the data as they are, without summarising or reducing them. The participants also got the opportunity to challenge each others' ideas and opinions during the course of the field work.

### **3.3.2 EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASSUMPTION**

A paradigm acts as a perspective that provides a rationale for the research and helps to commit researchers to particular methods of data collection, observation and interpretation (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). In this study I used both interpretivist and constructivist paradigms. Qualitative research often has an interpretive nature, due to the methods that are used to collect empirical data such as visual texts, observations, transcripts and reflections (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The interpretivist paradigm emphasises that the aim of qualitative research is to understand and interpret meanings and intentions that underlie everyday human action (Schurink, 1998). The interpretive approach regards people's subjective experiences as real and states that others' experiences can be understood by interacting with them.

Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002) explain that constructivism implies that knowledge is constructed by societies, groups and individuals. According to Gregory (2000), qualitative research refers to the constructivist paradigm of theory generation within the context of human inquiry, where we gain understanding of how people construe their world and how they make sense of their experiences. Hayes and Oppenheim (1997) further explain that individuals are producers of their own development. According to Hatch (2002), constructivists assume a world in which universal, absolute realities are unknown and the objects of inquiry are constructions of reality.

Both the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms helped me to understand the participants' experiences, how they construct their reality and what their reality means to them, that is, how they interpret reality and the meanings that they attach to their reality.

### 3.3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study I selected an action research design (Babbie, 2005; Mouton, 2001; Schurink, 1998) which is informed by participatory principles. I will now discuss the characteristics of this design, the research site, participants and the data collection methods that were used in the memory box making process. Refer to Table 3.1 for a summary of the design I selected.

**TABLE 3.1: A CLASSIFICATION FRAMEWORK OF DESIGN TYPES (ADAPTED FROM MOUTON, 2001)**

Conceptual/mode of reasoning	No hypothesis was formulated. Certain “general ideas” or “expectations” acted to guide the empirical research.
Selection of case/sampling	Convenience sampling.
Mode of observation/source of data	Observation –as-context-of-interaction and a focus group.
Analysis	Thematic analysis: deductive and inductive mode.
Strengths	High construct validity; in-depth insight; establishing rapport with research subjects.
Limitations	Non-standardisation of measurement; data collection and analysis can be time-consuming.
Main sources of error	Potential bias of the researcher.



Action research uses primary data which is empirical, textual and has low control (Mouton, 2001). It is an approach to social research in which the people being studied are given control over the purpose and procedures of the research. The intention is to counter the implicit view that researchers are superior to those they study (Babbie, 2005). Babbie (2001) regards action research as a research paradigm in which the function of a researcher is to serve as a resource to those being studied, with the aim of empowering them. This usually leads to the ability to become self reliant (Rahman, 1993). In action research the focus is on the involvement and participation of the various role players in the particular research project.

Schurink (1998) describes action research as a research process through which people involved in a particular community are encouraged to develop critical consciousness, and are enabled to become actively involved in collective efforts to address and solve their social problems. This may support them to such an extent that their knowledge and skills are improved, and the social structures in which they operate are transformed.

Thus, I chose action research because I wanted to actively involve the participants. My assumption was that participants might be able to collectively solve their social problems, transform their social structures and improve the skills that they already possessed at the onset of this study.

### **3.3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The following discussion involves the selection of my data sources.

#### **3.3.4.1 Selection of data sources**

I will discuss the following data source characteristics: data format, data access, data coverage and data definition. I will define these characteristics as used by Mouton (2001).

##### **(a) Data format**

Data format refers to the data source and the format in which the data have been stored, i.e. computerised or non-computerised, as well as the general condition of the data. My data was collected in the form of field notes and transcribed focus group discussion (refer to Appendix I). I also used observation-as-context-of-interaction the participants were providing feedback on their memory boxes. I visually documented my observations by taking pictures of the

participants and the intervention process (refer to Appendix J). Furthermore, I used a research diary (Appendix G) to reflect on what transpired in the field (Mouton, 2001).

**(b) Data access**

Data access refers to the ability to readily access new data sources. In this regard issues such as technical access (whether or not the information is in an easily accessible format), legal issues (documents that may have an embargo on them, e.g. government records that are classified) and ethical issues (interviewing minors, mentally challenged and elderly people) are considered (Mouton, 2001). Data obtained during this study will be readily available because they will be stored at the University of Pretoria for a period of fifteen years.

**(c) Data coverage**

In data coverage the researcher takes a decision on whether or not to collect data from the complete “population” or only from a “sample” of the subjects. Such decisions are influenced by methodological considerations, such as accuracy, precision and practical considerations, such as available time and financial resources (Mouton, 2001). Refer to section 3.3.5 for a discussion of my research choices in this regard.

**(d) Data definition**

Data definition refers to how much the researcher knows about the target population, where the subjects of the study are people rather than physical phenomena. Questions like the following are important: Is there sufficient accurate information available on the population to help decide whether or not to cover the whole population or a sample of it (Mouton, 2001)? My supervisors have been working with the same participants on different projects for some years; heightening I believe that I am familiarity with the participants’ needs.

### **3.3.5 SELECTION PROCESS**

The discussion that follows is an indication of how I selected my co-researcher, the site where I did my research as well as the participants that took part in my research.

#### **3.3.5.1 Researchers**

In this study a co-researcher, a supervisor and co-supervisor (Ms. McCallaghan, Dr. Ebersöhn and Dr. Ferreira) were involved. One benefit of involving numerous researchers is enhanced

trustworthiness of collected data by comparison of field notes and reflections by various researchers.

### **3.3.5.2 Selection of site**

The site for this research study was purposefully and conveniently selected (Miller & Salkind, 2002) as the participants were easily accessible because of a project which had already been established by the time I entered the field. The site was selected because of an ongoing study in the particular school (Ferreira, 2006). The site was a primary school in an informal settlement community in the Eastern Cape. Babbie (2005) claims that sometimes it is appropriate to select perspectives and provide a description of a single setting, not generalising too many settings (Gay & Airasian, 2003)

### **3.3.5.3 Selection of participants**

Qualitative research is mainly concerned with in-depth inquiry of participants' perceptions and experiences (Uys & Puttergill in Rossouw, 2003). In this study I employed convenience and purposeful selection of ten educators in the partnership primary school, as mentioned in chapter one (Uys & Puttergill in Rossouw, 2003). In purposive sampling the sample is selected on the grounds of existing knowledge of the participants and the researchers purposefully choosing participants, who, in their opinion, are thought to be relevant for the research topic (Uys & Puttergill in Rossouw, 2003). Babbie (2005) argues that sometimes it is appropriate to select a sample on the basis of knowledge of the population, its elements and the purpose of the study. The educators involved in this study are those who were already involved in another research projects by the time this study commenced. Thus, my criterion for selecting these participants was that the participants had previously indicated a need to be empowered on memory box making. The ten participants were Xhosa speaking women aged between 35 and 45 years. They all teach at the particular primary school.

### **3.3.6 QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Below I will discuss the qualitative data collection methods that I used in this research.

### 3.3.6.1 Focus groups

Using focus groups is a qualitative data collection technique that may provide the potential for authentic quality data that are captured by spontaneity of participants in an atmosphere of dynamic group interaction (Jamieson & Williams, 2003). I selected focus groups as data collection method based on the characteristics of focus groups that I discuss in the following paragraphs (Schurink, Schurink & Poggenpoel, 1998).

Focus groups involve a small group of people, where all the participants get an opportunity to share their insights. The group is usually relatively homogeneous in nature. The goal of using focus groups is to elicit perceptions, feelings, attitudes and ideals of the participants regarding a selected topic (Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 1996). In this study, participants were able to share their insights, ideas and present their memory boxes.

Based on the fact that focus groups lead to a permissive atmosphere (Jamieson & Williams, 2003), a more complete and revealing understanding of issues may be obtained. I regarded focus groups as ideal for my study because the atmosphere could be relaxed, participants could feel free to express their personal experiences and they could feel comfortable talking in a group. With focus groups, valuable information can be gathered within a limited period of time. It can also yield results that might not be achieved when using other forms of interviews (Morgan, 1997). Focus groups served as a primary means of collecting qualitative data to explore my research area from the participants' perspectives (Morgan, 1997). In this study, it was useful to use focus groups, as my experience is directly relevant to the research topic and the participants in the project. It was important to encourage appropriate self disclosure and to discourage disclosures that went beyond the legitimate aims of the research. In this regard, I presented my own memory box to the participants in order to encourage appropriate self disclosure. My memory box entailed my life line, how I celebrate my life and some of the items of the important people in my life who have passed away.

Schurink *et al.* (1998) and Morgan (1997) discuss certain advantages and disadvantages of focus groups. Focus groups can be conducted at any convenient place. It is important for the researchers to be experienced, although they do not need to be professionals. Focus groups encourage people to share different points of view. Focus groups further rely on the interaction in the group to produce large concentrated amounts of data on a topic of interest. In this study, the participants wanted to share a lot of information because the topic interested

them. As such we were able to collect extensive data. Morgan (1997) states that the comparison that the participants make between each others' experiences and opinions may be a valuable source of insight into complex behaviours and motivation. Focus groups may enable natural quality control of data collection because participants may question, refute or validate each other's comments. This may in turn permit the researcher to seek immediate clarification of ambiguity (Jamieson & Williams, 2003).

The group may provide a secure and stimulating environment for members to express ideas without fear of criticism. It may also help to uncover dynamic emotional processes, which determine behaviour to a large extent. In most cases the synergy a the group has the potential to uncover important constructs, which may not be uncovered with individually generated data. Focus groups stimulate the spontaneous exchange of ideas, thoughts and attitudes being studied in the "security of being in a crowd" and a fuller, deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Nyamathi & Shuler, 1990). In this study, the security of being in a group enabled other group members to express situations that are painful in their lives. Some of the participants were able to present problems as if those problems belonged to someone that they care about, probably because they preferred to remain anonymous.

Potential disadvantages of focus groups relate to the fact that the cost of recruiting participants may be high and a lot of planning is needed before one can conduct a focus group. Sometimes expressions of only active participants may be voiced out, especially if the facilitator is not experienced enough. Some participants may also not express their ideas (Jamieson & Williams, 2003) with the aim of being polite and to fit in with the norm.

With my research the expenses of recruiting the participants were minimised because I participated with a group that already existed. I made sure that all the participants were involved, that they presented their memory boxes and the pictures of the memory boxes that they had made with children. The presentation of memory boxes helped in ensuring that active participants were not the only ones who dominated the discussion. Participants were encouraged to voice out their ideas by asking them questions indirectly, for example, how the children or the community would feel about making a memory box. This helped in giving the participants the freedom to express their ideas indirectly.

### **3.3.6.2 Observation-as-context-of-interaction**

Angrosino and Mays de Pérez (2000) state that observation-as-context-of-interaction might motivate participants not to react passively to a position that is assigned to them but to participate actively in a social setting. As researcher, I had to understand the context in which the participants are engaged to be able to interact with the participants in their social setting. This enabled me to adopt a situational identity and to interact with the community rather than to react passively to a position assigned. In line with action research I fulfilled a meaningful function other than that of a “researcher”. I aimed to contribute towards the participants’ independence and growth. As researcher, I had to be familiar with behaviour as it is lived in that particular community. My involvement as part of the community enabled both me (the researcher) and the participants not to step into fixed and fully defined positions.

I was involved as part of the community as I was privileged to do my research with Xhosa speaking participants. I grew up in a community where there are Xhosa speaking people and could therefore communicate with the participants with ease. I also understand the culture, norms and values. My familiarity with the Xhosa lifestyle made it easy for me to relate, interact freely, and share ideas as if I am part of the community. This made my involvement meaningful as I felt a part of the participants’ social growth and development. I regard the research as a learning process during which we grew together, being able to empower each other and ultimately the selected community.

### **3.3.6.3 Audio-visual data**

Audio-visual data collection provided an opportunity for the participants to directly share their “reality” (Rossouw, 2003). Audio-visual data collection allowed us to document data so unobtrusively. I was able to access information at my convenience, and it saved me time and expenses (Tashakkorri & Teddlie, 2003). In my case the presence of photographers was not disruptive because fortunately the photographers (supervisor and co-supervisor) were also participating in the broader research project and the participants were therefore comfortable in their presence, since they had facilitated some workshops with them previously. However, I had to be aware of the possibility that the material may be incomplete and that this might affect my results. This might have made it difficult to interpret the information. Some of the information on the tapes was indeed not audible, which may have affected the analysis and interpretation of the raw data.

### **3.3.6.4 Field notes and research journal**

I aimed to maintain a reflective balance by using field notes together with my research journal and that of my co-researcher. I used my research diary to document my observations and to reflect on what had transpired during the research process. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state that field notes combined with research journals of one's field experiences provide a reflective balance (Appendix G). The information in my research diary provided me with a reflective balance as I used it together with the other data that had been collected

In making field notes I aimed to record a detailed reproduction of the occurrences during the research process. Research journals are a systematic attempt to facilitate the interpretive process that forms the heart of qualitative research. Keeping a research journal encouraged me to document my observations and reflect routinely on my emerging understanding of the data (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

### **3.3.7 INTERVENTION DEVELOPMENT**

My co-researcher, supervisor, co-supervisor and I discussed the outcomes and accompanying activities that we needed to facilitate amongst the participating educators on memory box making. The aim was to empower the participants with memory box making skills and the activities were focused on participation (experiential learning). Based on my literature review we compiled a manual aimed at facilitating the acquisition of memory box making (and body mapping for the purpose of my co-researcher's study) techniques. The manual contained information on what memory work is, the uses of memory boxes, the materials that can be used for memory box making, information on how to make memory boxes and counselling skills (see manual in Appendix B and D). The intervention was scheduled over two days with four one hour sessions per day. My co-researcher and I facilitated the intervention. My supervisor and co-supervisor observed, visually documented and debriefed the participants and met with us for strategising for future sessions.

## **3.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

Hatch (2002) regards data analysis as a systematic search for meaning, and a way of processing data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others. The aim of data analysis is to understand the various constitutive elements of one's data through an inspection

of the relationship between concepts, constructs and variables, to see whether or not there are any trends that can be identified or isolated, or to establish themes in the data. I employed the thematic analytic steps following a deductive and inductive mode of reasoning of data analysis, as outlined by De Vos (2005). In Appendix I, I give evidence of the data analysis process I followed.

#### **3.4.1 PLANNING FOR RECORDING OF DATA**

I planned for the recording of data, both of the setting and the participants, in a systematic and appropriate manner, as that facilitated initial analysis before data collection commenced (De Vos, 2005). I also planned for data recording by making sure that the tapes and tape recorder worked properly prior to the sessions we facilitated.

#### **3.4.2 DATA COLLECTION AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS: A TWO-FOLD APPROACH**

According to De Vos (2005), data analysis in a qualitative inquiry involves a two way approach, namely data analysis at the research site during data collection and, secondly, data analysis away from the site, following a period of data collection. Contrary to the traditional approach, a qualitative study involves an inseparable relationship between data collection and data analysis, which means that data are analysed as they are gathered (Jamieson & Williams, 2003). Data collection and analysis therefore go hand in hand in order to build a coherent interpretation of the data. I guarded against too much focus on analysis while the field work was still going on, as this may have interfered with the openness of the qualitative inquiry.

The approach of analysing data at the research field helps in instances where one cannot record certain issues on the audio recorder, for example when participants express non-verbal cues, like an indication of discomfort regarding a certain issue. Preliminary analyses helped me to probe more when I observed any such behaviour. Once I had moved away from the field I reflected in my research journal and completed my field notes (De Vos, 2005).

#### **3.4.3 MANAGING (ORGANISING) DATA**

Managing data is the first step away from the site. Patton (2002) indicates that data generated by qualitative methods are usually voluminous. Organising data involves completing field notes and transcribing data, which usually provides the researcher with an opportunity to get



immersed in the data, an experience that generally generates emergent insights. When compiling data it is important to have back-up copies and one master copy somewhere for safe keeping. I stored copies on a memory stick, on my personal computer's hard drive and also at work.

I started managing raw data by brainstorming the data that I had obtained. From there I organised the data, the audio material and the visual material, and filed them accordingly.

#### **3.4.4 READING AND WRITING MEMOS**

Jamieson and Williams (2003) as well as Marshall and Rossman (1999) emphasise the importance of reading through raw data many times, as this forces the researcher to be immersed in, and become familiar with, the content. From this, the researcher may get a sense of the data before breaking it into parts.

I read through the data many times so that I could understand the meanings behind what the participants had said. I therefore aimed to familiarise myself with the data and have a better understanding thereof.

#### **3.4.5 GENERATING CATEGORIES, THEMES AND PATTERNS**

This process occurred in accordance with an *a priori* assumption, namely that certain counselling skills were present and others not. Marshall and Rossman (1999) agree that this phase of data analysis is the most difficult, complex and ambiguous, yet enjoyable and creative phase of a study. Generating categories is an analytical process which demands a heightened awareness of the data, a focused attention to the data, and openness to the subtle, tacit undercurrents of social life. The most intellectually challenging phase of data analysis is identifying salient themes, recurring ideas and patterns of belief that link settings and people together. Ezzy (2000) regards this stage as open coding.

During this stage of data analysis, I read transcripts and made codes on the basic themes being reflected by what the participants had said. Generating categories, themes and patterns focused on the participants' actions, feelings and meanings. I categorised the data according to relevant themes after I felt convinced that I could identify with the data and the meanings behind what had been recorded (Cresswell, 1998).

### **3.4.6 CODING THE DATA**

The formal representation of analytical thinking entails the coding data (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The researcher may use various forms when coding data, for example, abbreviations of key words, colours or numbers. It is important for the researcher to note that coding may change if new understanding emerges and necessitates changes in the original plan. Ezzy (2000) regards this step of data analysis as axial coding, which involves integrating codes around the axis of central categories. In coding the themes in this study I used different colours and categorised the themes accordingly.

### **3.4.7 TESTING EMERGENT UNDERSTANDINGS**

This phase of data analysis involves evaluating the data for usefulness and centrality. I had to determine how useful the raw data were in illuminating the research questions being explored and how central they were to the unfolding story about the relationship between counselling skills and memory work. Ezzy (2000) regards this step of data analysis as selective coding, which involves the identification of core categories. I evaluated the raw data for usefulness by comparing the data with my research questions, to see whether or not the data addressed the research questions.

### **3.4.8 SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS**

It is important for a researcher to be critically involved in challenging the apparent patterns and categories that were discovered (Ezzy, 2000). I was critically involved in challenging the apparent patterns and categories that I discovered. As such, I searched for alternative explanations and meanings in my data.

### **3.4.9 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER**

Being part of a collaborative study, I fulfilled the role of co-researcher. In addition, my role as a researcher was that of mediating between the role of a researcher and that of an interventionist, as action research deals with issues that require intervention. I strove to employ an insider's perspective, which is called the "emic" perspective (Henning, 2004). However, at the same time my discourses partly influenced my research, since I am not part of the participants' community. I focused on using reflexivity to ensure that I do follow my

role correctly, by reflecting with my co-researcher and supervisors about what had transpired during the research after every session. I also used my research journal to note what had occurred during the research.

### **3.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY**

Seale (2000) argues that trustworthiness is not a matter of final proof but is always open-ended and negotiable. Trustworthiness entails how the audience can be persuaded by the inquirer that the findings of a study are worthwhile (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In this study I aimed to ensure trustworthiness by striving to reach several criteria, which are discussed below. These aspects helped in addressing the limitations of my research choices.

#### **3.5.1 CREDIBILITY**

Credibility indicates what is happening in the research field and whether or not it is captured properly and is not based on the biases of the researcher (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). I was engaged in the field during the research and observed what was happening. After analysing the data (Seale, 2000), (Appendix I) I also submitted the research report to be read critically by my supervisor and co-supervisor. They compared my research results with what was happening in the field and compared whether or not my analysis correlated with what had transpired during data collection activities.

#### **3.5.2 DEPENDABILITY**

Dependability refers to whether or not the findings of a study will be the same if the study was done again (Uys in Rossouw, 2003). In this study I strived towards dependability by reading the themes over and over again to see if they make sense, auditing all the documentation of data, methods and decisions made during the research as well as at the end. Auditing also gave me the opportunity to provide a self-critical account of the events (Seale, 2000). In Appendix H, I include an extract of verbatim transcripts of focus groups with participants.

### **3.5.3 AUTHENTICITY**

Authenticity is demonstrated when researchers can show that they have represented a range of different realities (“fairness”). I strived to obtain authenticity in this research by helping the participants to develop a “more sophisticated” understanding of the phenomenon being studied (ontological authenticity). I also supported the participants to appreciate the viewpoints of people other than themselves, and to be willing to learn from each other (educative authenticity). I further stimulated some form of action (catalytic authenticity) so that the participants were empowered to act and utilise the skills that they had acquired in their environment (Seale, 2000).

### **3.5.4 APPLICABILITY AND TRANSFERABILITY**

I strived for applicability providing a detailed, rich description of the setting studied. In this manner, readers are given sufficient information to be able to judge the applicability of the findings to some other settings, which they know (Seale, 2000). Transferability involves providing rich, descriptive information on the context of the participants (Pitney, 2004). I provided rich descriptions of the data that I obtained by attaining the different inferences of each data source. I interpreted the information that I attained separately so as to understand the intentions and meanings that are found in the different responses of the participants.

### **3.9.5 CONFIRMABILITY**

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not of the biases of the researcher (Mouton, 2001). I made to make sure that the findings are not biased by giving them to my supervisor and co-supervisor so that they could analyse them further.

## **3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In this study the concept of research ethics refers to the way in which I (the researcher) was guided by the norms, values and principles of research in dealing with conflicts of interest in the research study. I was guided by the principles discussed below.

### **3.6.1 THE PRINCIPLE OF INFORMED CONSENT AND VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) explain that participants should be informed about the nature of the study that is being conducted and be given the choice of either participating in a study or not. They should also be informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

I obtained the necessary permission (Appendix A) from the authority figures (the principal and the Department of Education) as well as the participants. I discussed the purpose of the study and the procedures that were to be followed before commencing with the research with the participants. Participants were given a consent letter to read, invited to ask questions for clarity and sign the consent form if they agreed to take part in the research (example included in Appendix A).

### **3.6.2 PRINCIPLE OF SAFETY**

Participants may be harmed psychologically in the course of a social research study (Babbie, 2005). I made sure that the participants were not placed at any risk or harm (Cresswell, 2003) by having a short debriefing session at the end of all sessions, in order to support those participants who might have been affected emotionally. The participants were continually reminded that they could withdraw from the research process whenever they wished to do so.

### **3.6.3 THE PRINCIPLE OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY**

Anonymity is guaranteed in a research project when neither the researchers nor the readers of the findings can identify a particular given response with a given participant (Babbie, 2005). Leedy and Ormrod (2001) agree that under no circumstances should an oral or written research report be presented in such a way that other people might become aware of how a particular participant has behaved or responded throughout the research. The personal data captured during this research study was secured and made public only behind a shield of anonymity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002; Christians, 2000). I explained to the participants that numbers will be used to identify them and also for the purposes of recording data.

### **3.6.4 THE PRINCIPLE OF TRUST**

I strived towards a mutually trusting relationship with the participants that were involved in the study. I made sure that the participants were not subjected in any way to any acts of deception. I also explained the data collection strategies to the participants at the onset of the study (Mouton, 2001).

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter entailed a reflection on my methodological choices. I discussed my data collection methods, participatory action research design, selection of participants and the work site as well as the process planning and facilitation of memory work making sessions. Based on the raw data I obtained, I will present the research results and findings in chapter four.



## CHAPTER 4

# THEMATIC ANALYSIS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNSELLING SKILLS AND MEMORY WORK

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will give a brief description of the context in which I obtained my results. This will include the details of the process of my study, as well as the results that I obtained in this study. Throughout, I will link my results to existing literature when presenting my findings. As my study was done through the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm, my results will reflect my insight into participants' experiences when using the memory box making technique.

Since my study is qualitative in nature, my interpretation of the data was integrated into my analysis. I will discuss my findings in a descriptive format. My descriptions will refer to the excursions and sessions during which counselling skills were identified. During data analysis I identified counselling skills in terms of deductive reasoning based on categories identified theoretically in chapter two. I also made use of inductive and deductive analysis to account for data that do not align with these theoretical *a priori* categories.

### 4.2 MEMORY BOX MAKING SESSIONS

We undertook two excursions to the selected school. During the planned intervention sessions we wanted to discuss the manual and to empower educators with memory box making skills, to show them an example of a memory box, and to give them an opportunity to start with their own memory boxes during the first session. We also gave them the task of making a memory box with any child at school and to bring along their own memory boxes and the pictures of the memory boxes that they had completed with the children to the next session during our second field visit.

The purpose of the second field visit was to provide the participating educators with an opportunity to first present their memory boxes and thereafter to present the pictures of the

children's memory boxes, explain what had transpired during their memory box making sessions with children, discuss with us the emotions that the children presented during the memory box making sessions and, most importantly, to explain to us how they supported these children with the emotions that they displayed.

During both excursions ten educators, two researchers (myself and Ms. McCallaghan) and two supervisors (Dr. Ebersöhn and Dr. Ferreira) were involved. We were privileged to use the staff room for both field visits. As such, we had privacy and enough space and working areas.

#### **4.2.1 FIELD VISIT ONE**

I was very excited to arrive at Port Elizabeth since it was my first visit in this area (refer to figure 4.1). When we arrived at the school we were welcomed by the deputy principal, who indicated that most of the educators were attending a memorial service as two educators in the area had passed away.

I was humbled by the kindness of both the educators and the children. I was impressed by the neatness of the school though it is located in an informal settlement. The participating educators who were available were very excited to see us. They welcomed me as if they have known me for ages; this was truly a humbling experience. I was also humbled by their eagerness to learn with us.

**FIGURE 4.1: THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENT WHERE THE SCHOOL IS SITUATED**



On the first day we had to be flexible as six of the participating educators were not available, due to the fact that two educators in that area had passed away, resulting in them attending the



memorial service. The educators who were available arrived late after leaving early from the memorial service, demonstrating their commitment. We decided not to continue with our programme as our first session entailed a workshop on memory box making (and body mapping, for the purpose of my co-researcher's study). Instead, we decided to use the opportunity to debrief the educators about their loss and also introduce ourselves to those who were available. We had lunch together and used this opportunity to get to know each other. Furthermore, we started building a relationship of trust. When we were having lunch the participating educators indicated some instances related to HIV&AIDS and psychosocial support that was provided in the community.

On the second day we welcomed the educators and introduced ourselves to the ones who had not been present the previous day. The educators also introduced themselves to us. We explained the purpose of conducting the research and discussed the ethical principles, after which the participants read and signed the consent forms (Appendix A).

Thereafter, we facilitated a workshop on memory box making and body mapping. I facilitated the section on memory box making and my co-researcher facilitated the part on body mapping. My supervisor and co-supervisor observed the process and took part where necessary, helped with recording the sessions and took pictures during the facilitation process. I discussed the history of memory boxes, what a memory box is, its uses and how a memory box can be constructed (information presented in Appendix B). I showed the participating educators my memory box, explained how I had made it and told them about the significance of all the things that I had put inside my memory box. I also discussed with them the steps that they could follow when making their own memory boxes (refer to Appendix B).

Thereafter we gave all the participating educators manuals on how to make memory boxes. We also provided them with boxes, magazines, scissors and glue for making their memory boxes. Although the participating educators started making their memory boxes and body maps during the session, they had to complete them at home since we ran out of time. We had a meal together, during which we got the opportunity to talk informally, thereby enhancing the relationship that we had already established.

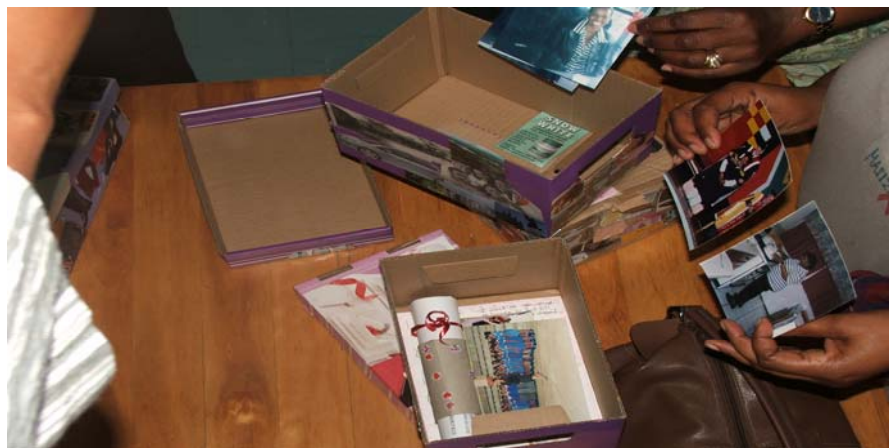
## 4.2.2 PLANNING FOR THE FOLLOW-UP FIELD VISIT

At the end of our first field visit we negotiated a suitable date for the next visit with the participants and gave them invitations for the next visit (see Appendix C). We discussed what we would be doing during the follow-up field visit and gave the participants the task of completing their memory boxes at home and also of each doing one memory box with children in their classes. We supplied disposable cameras and requested them to take pictures whilst they were busy with memory box making, and for them to present both their memory boxes and the pictures they had taken of the memory boxes of children during the next field visit.

## 4.2.3 FIELD VISIT TWO

On the first day of the second field visit the educators appeared to be excited. I reviewed what a memory box is, its purpose and how it can be used. Thereafter the participating educators presented their memory boxes and then those of the children (refer to figure 4.2). During a focus group that followed, the educators mentioned some of the challenges that they had come across. We also explored possible ways in which the educators might use memory work with the children in their classes and how they could use memory work as a theme across learning areas during the focus group (refer to Appendix B).

**FIGURE 4.2: PARTICIPATING EDUCATORS PRESENTING MEMORY WORK**



Just before the end of the day I read a poem I had written to the participating educators, entitled “strawberries” (Appendix E). I also gave the educators strawberry plants to plant in

their school yard as a symbol of support towards people in need of support, especially those who are HIV positive. I suggested that as the strawberry plants multiply it could be a reminder to them that they can spread their support in the whole community. They may even share the plants with their community as they multiply. The participants seemed to like the idea of the poem. They indicated that the shape of a strawberry is almost the same as the shape of the HIV&AIDS symbol. They promised to take care of the plants, to share them among themselves and also to share them with their community as a symbol of support amongst each other. We gathered the disposable cameras in order to return the developed photographs the next day. Thereafter we enjoyed a meal together and agreed upon the time that we would meet the next day.

On the second day we distributed the developed photographs to the participating educators. The participants seemed to be very excited to have the photographs and started discussing the photographs informally. During a focus group discussion we probed how they had handled the challenges they had encountered and how they had supported children who displayed emotional problems.

**FIGURE 4.3: A PHOTO OF CHILDREN’S MEMORY WORK TAKEN BY EDUCATORS**



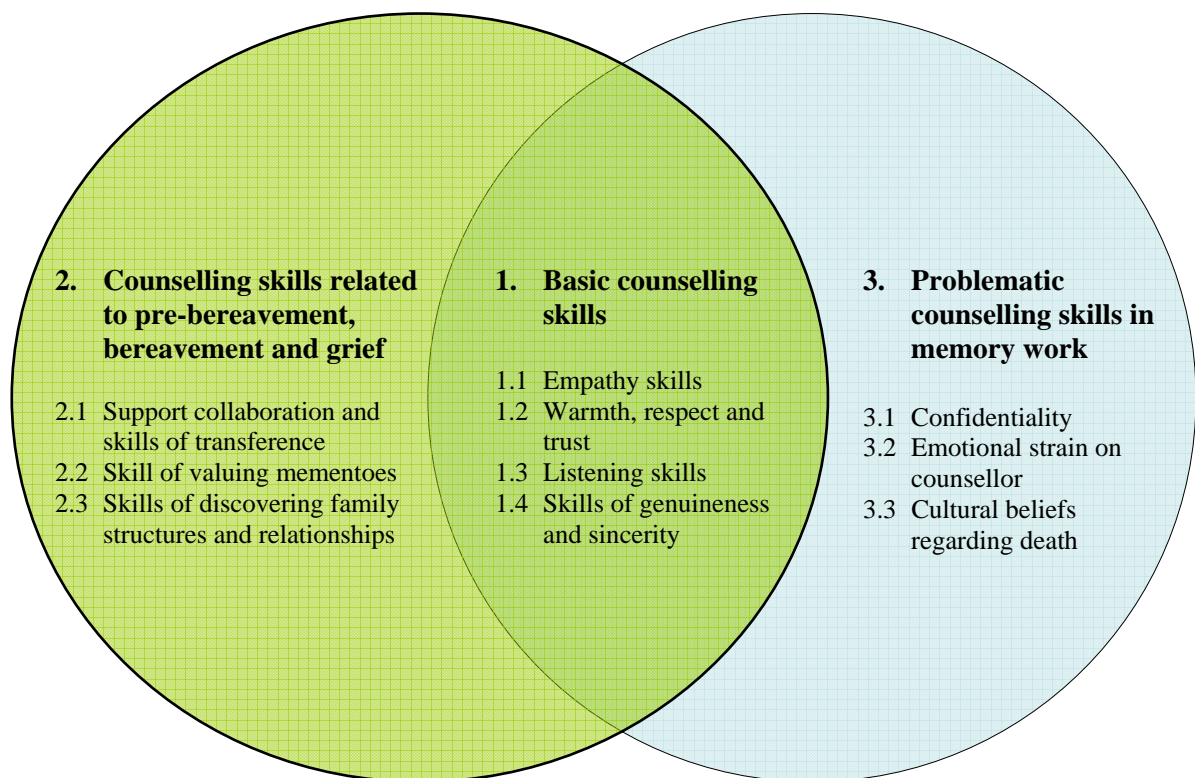
For skills transference purposes we also workshopped the participating educators on additional counselling skills that they might use to support learners who display emotional problems when doing memory work. We further explored other ways in which memory work can be used across the various learning areas (refer to Appendix B). The participating educators also raised some concerns regarding the use of memory box making. Before the end

of our session we presented the participating educators with certificates of attendance for a memory box making workshop.

### 4.3 RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

What follows is a description of the themes that I identified (i) deductively based on a synthesis of theory on counselling skills, grief and bereavement skills and (ii) during the data analysis phase of my research process. I will also provide extracts from the discussions of the participants as evidence to support the themes and subthemes. The themes and subthemes that emerged during the data analysis are summarised in figure 4.3:

**FIGURE 4.4: RESULTS OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS**



#### 4.3.1 THEME 1: BASIC COUNSELLING SKILLS

Below I will discuss the following basic counselling skills which emerged deductively during my data analysis: empathy skills; warmth, respect and trust; listening skills; and genuineness and sincerity skills.

#### 4.3.1.1 Subtheme 1.1: Empathy skills

Empathy skills were often indicated by participating educators during discussions related to memory work. It would seem that important aspects when dealing with other people's emotions, are the ability to be able to ask oneself how one would feel if one were in the same position as the other person, and also to ask oneself how one would feel with a particular response if it were directed at oneself.

Apparently, the participants were aware of the different needs of the children and they were able to give them individual attention in that regard. According to the participants, the memory box making process might make it easier for educators to engage with children on a more friendly and informal level and this may help in establishing an empathetic relationship. As such, this may be therapeutic in a sense, since memory box making may help children to recover A-S-A-P-P in most situations (affection, safety, attention, play, participation) (Ramsden, 2002). The participants were even willing to support some vulnerable children financially to demonstrate their willingness to support the children. They highlighted their willingness by saying:

*You must be able to support them, to be able to identify what their needs are, their problems. Sometimes you can see if there is a problem when your child's work is changing in class and you ask yourself 'wonder why because at the beginning of the year she was like this or last week she was like this and now her performance has changed (Participant 1, visit 2).*

*We must go there, talk, after talking we must create a friendship with the family. Create the atmosphere of trust, the atmosphere of love, all those things (Participant 2, visit 1).*

*Take care of the emotional needs of the child, and social needs, of course you must know the background of the child (Participant 3, visit 1).*

*Create the atmosphere of trust, the atmosphere of love, all those thing (Participant 2, visit 1).*

The above-mentioned extracts seem to indicate empathy skills, as participants appeared to be able to put themselves in the shoes of the children and their community. They expressed a concern about the attitudes of the people who did not display empathy towards others, as this

contradicts the empathetic skills proposed by Milne (1999), who states that counsellors should be able to put themselves in the shoes of their clients as a lack thereof might create an atmosphere of distrust in the community.

The participants were reportedly prepared to observe children in such a way that they would understand both their verbal and non-verbal messages, as can be seen in the following words:

*I don't want to underestimate the mind of the child, even if she's reserved or quiet she knows what is happening even if she doesn't care. I think the child knows what is happening (Participant 9, visit 2).*

The following extracts support this subtheme:

*That is where you are going to learn what is going on with the child, then you will say okay that is why you've been sleeping here at school, its because you didn't sleep last night (Participant 1, visit 1).*

*You can't take the child out of school because they haven't got the school fund (Participant 3, visit 1).*

The participants appeared to be willing to share their experiences regarding their relationships with children and also their observations on how they treated and supported children. They indicated the importance of supporting children in a positive way, in this manner exceeding empathetic feeling to demonstrate empathetic action. Most of them expressed the need to treat school children as their own children as this would help them to be more caring and supportive towards the children. One of the participants stated:

*But some teachers, they only understand their own children, they don't care about other children. This community first of all helps us to have work (jobs), if the community was not here, if this area was not here maybe I would be teaching in Transkei. I must like the community so that I can know their problems. I should take their children as my own children (Participant 8, visit 1).*

The following statements further support this subtheme:

*I know there is something inside, there are questions, she's got questions but those questions are inside (Participant 10, visit 1).*

*It means she knows something but there's no one to talk to about her problems (Participant 4, visit 1).*

*To add more on that, communication and interaction is important, because if I have a problem with a child and I keep it with myself, even if I can't solve the problem. The interaction and communication and interaction helps a lot, not to keep the child's problem for yourself whilst the child is suffering, the child will be suffering while you are keeping the problem to yourself (Participant 3, visit 1).*

*We must go there, talk, after talking we must create a friendship with the family. Create the atmosphere of trust, the atmosphere of love, all those things (Participant 2, visit 1).*

#### **4.3.1.2 Subtheme 1.2: Counselling skills reflecting respect, warmth and trust**

Skills reflecting respect, warmth and trust were often indicated by participating educators during discussions related to memory work. The following statement reflects the love, care, warmth and respect that participating educators expressed towards children:

*Some teachers, you see are doing this, treating the other kids not as their own. You must treat them equally (Participant 2, visit 1).*

Another extract seems to indicate that the educators do not take advantage of the fact that they are in authority:

*Is it possible that you can refresh the child's memory by using the previous year's memory box (Participant 6, visit 2).*

The participating educators indicated that they would like to know the effect that a memory box might have on a child if the child were reminded of the contents of the memory box that had been done in previous years. This may be an indication that the educators respect the future well-being of children.

Memory work seemed to facilitate the demonstration of warmth, trust and respect, which is a basic right of children (Ramsden, 2002). It seemed that children were able to trust the participating educators and were reportedly willing to open up due to the warmth that the participating educators displayed when working with the children. It seems probable that the

participating educators were able to probe for more personal information when doing memory boxes with children. The participating educators seemed able to relate with children in such a way that children felt loved and respected, as illustrated in the following words:

*I didn't want to hurt her. It was difficult for me to be asking her. Please be open, I am your mother* (Participant 2, visit 1).

The following extract is an indication that the educators acted trustworthily during the memory work process as they respected the children's opinions and feelings:

*When she is ready she will talk about it herself* (Participant 3, visit 2).

The participating educators seemed to respect the children enough to trust them to be able to make their own decisions and they also respected the children's decisions. It seemed that the participating educators also gave children the right to decide what is right and what is wrong in their lives, and did not make decisions for children. They also did not pressurise children to make the decisions that they (educators) believed to be right:

*You must give love, respect and care, that's what you must give to identify children with problems* (Participant 1, visit 1).

*They told me that they come to school without having meals. Others have problems with parents* (Participant 2, visit 1).

*I told her that we are not going to say anything until she is ready. I told her that she is going to do it herself when she is ready. I'm not going to show anybody in this room* (Participant 3, visit 2).

The participants seemed to be aware of the importance of knowing how to communicate with children and other members of the community and to put themselves in the shoes of children before communicating with them. One of them summarised this idea:

*Another thing that I like about this skill is that you check the language that you use when talking to a person because you might be offensive* (Participant 6, visit 1).

Furthermore, it seemed that empathy facilitated a process whereby the participants were able to get a clear picture of children's experiences. Empathy also appeared to indicate a skill according to which participants were willing to support children in a way that they did not



feel threatened but instead trusted them. This may imply that an empathetic relationship might make it easier for participants to support children because the children may be able to express the frustrations with which they had to deal. The following quotation serves as an example:

*The child is taking care of the mother; she wanted to take care of the mother, whereas she is not in a position to do that. We must go there, talk, after talking we must create a friendship with the family. Create the atmosphere of trust, the atmosphere of love, all those things (Participant 2, visit 1).*

#### **4.3.1.3 Subtheme 1.3: Listening skills**

Listening skills were often indicated by participating educators during discussions related to memory work. Gibson *et al.* (2002) support this result by stating that without being able to listen to people, to really understand what it is that they mean and what their needs are, counsellors are unable to help them, educate them, guide them, or serve them. Listening to children's problems may help educators to identify children who are abused in different ways. Educators may find such information through the pictures that children use or through their actions. Children may even express such information verbally once they realise that there is somebody who is willing to listen to them. I think that it is important for educators to be informed of the steps that they can take in such situations because it might be disturbing for a child not to get any help after disclosing such information. Van Dyk (2005) agrees that the cultural insensitivity of counsellors may have a negative impact on clients. In this instance the educators may collaborate with stake-holders and form different support groups. As such, it might be easy for them to refer children to relevant professionals. One participant stated:

*She wants help because the mother is always beating her up, and she doesn't like the language that the mother is using on her. She stressed that she wants help, sometimes she closes the door and then I have to go and sleep next door with the people I do not know (Participant 10, visit 2).*

The participating educators' willingness to listen carefully to children may have enabled them to gain more information from the children they involved in making memory boxes. The participating educators were able to hear contradictory messages from children and to make sense of such information. This tendency correlates with the findings of a study by Payne *et al* (2002) who found that listening involves being there, sitting with clients and accepting them

and what they say or do not say, being alongside them, acting as a witness to their fears and emotions, allowing there to be silences and not filling such silences.

Participating educators revealed a certain connection they experienced, namely that they did not only listen to what children were saying, but that they also appeared to listen beyond the children's verbal expressions:

*Even if she is reserved or quiet she knows what is happening. Even if she doesn't talk about it. She has questions like, when are they coming to me* (Participant 2, visit 1).

This may indicate that participating educators understand that the silence in children may imply many hidden messages. They also seemed able to relate such silences to specific situations and tried to think what the silences have implied in the particular situations (Egan, 1998).

I believe that the relationship that the participating educators had with the children may have enabled the children to express themselves with regard to the problems they experienced and displayed. Due to this relationship, children seemed to believe strongly that they would get all the support that they needed from the educators. Seemingly, the participating educators were willing to give an ear to the parents so as to be able to support both the parents and the children. The following contribution supports this idea:

*The child was saying that the child is in grade six, the letter was saying that she needs help because the mother is always beating her up and she doesn't like abusive language that the mother is using. She stressed that she wants help* (Participant 8, visit 2).

The following statements further illustrate this subtheme.

*Talking with them so that you can hear their problems* (Participant 1, visit 1).

*I can see that the kid doesn't want to be at school* (Participant 2, visit 1).

*We must go there, talk, after talking we must create a friendship with the family after that it will be easier for us to get them to know what a memory box is when you are also friends with that family* (Participant 2, visit 1).

*I miss my mom too much, I want to die too, that's the message (Participant 3, visit 2).*

#### **4.3.1.4 Subtheme 1.4: Skills of genuineness and sincerity**

Skills of genuineness and sincerity were often indicated by participating educators during discussions related to memory work. The following statement refers to the fact that most people usually observe the counsellor's attitude before they are able to open up and talk about their problems:

*She is checking where you are, whether you are living in S.A or not because S.A has the pandemic and everybody is suffering, infected or affected (Participant 6, visit 2).*

This extract may indicate participants' awareness of the need to accept people unconditionally and not be judgmental. It may also refer to the fact that people in the memory box making process (who need help) may start by presenting their problems indirectly as if it is somebody else's problems. Once the clients realise the counsellor's genuine stance, they may choose to open up. This tendency correlates with the findings of a study by Van Dyk (2005) who found that genuineness refers to a counsellor's attitude and behaviour with clients which involves honesty and transparency in a counselling relationship.

The participating educators seemed to realise the importance of being sincere in supporting children and the community. The participating educators indicated their preparedness, awareness and willingness to be sincere as follows:

*When she came to me she said "I don't come to school because my mother is very weak". I said to myself maybe there was one person who went there; instead of helping she talked about the illness (Participant 2, visit 2).*

The curative part of the educator's role includes primary prevention in so far as addressing certain problems at their roots, whether in the classroom or through community interaction (Donald *et al.*, 2002). It seemed that it became easier for the children to open up during memory work once they realised that the participating educators were sincere and genuine in supporting them. McLaren (1998) argues that conveying an understanding and unconditional positive regard creates the nurturing climate in which therapeutic growth takes place. The participating educators fulfilled their genuineness and sincerity by being interested in the

children's background, their needs and by being concerned about their happiness. The following statements illustrate these ideas:

*There's a reason why the child is behaving like that. The child is taking care of the mother she wanted to take care of the mother, whereas she is not in a position to do that (Participant 3, visit 2).*

*We go slowly to create the atmosphere of trust, the atmosphere of love, all those things (Participant 2, visit 1).*

*Know about the kid's problem. Make time. Create the atmosphere of friendship. She can open to you, ask the child what he/she likes and the child will be open to you (Participant 6, visit 1).*

#### **4.3.2 THEME 2: SKILLS RELATED TO PRE-BEREAVEMENT, BEREAVEMENT AND GRIEF**

In terms of memory work, pre-bereavement, bereavement and grief related counselling skills emerged inductively and deductively during data analysis. I will discuss this theme in terms of the three subthemes that emerged, namely skills related to support, collaboration and skills transference, skills of valuing mementoes and skills of discovering family structures and relationships. The following skills were also implied in my theoretical contemplation (and were thus analysed deductively): discovering family structures and relationships, story telling skills, and artefacts as mementoes (that is, gathering letters and pictures).

##### **4.3.2.1 Subtheme 2.1: Skills related to support, collaboration and skills transference**

Participating educators indicated certain skills related to support, collaboration and skills transference during discussions related to memory work. The participants shared their experiences on how they collaborated with other stake-holders with the aim of supporting the children and their community. The participating educators discussed the benefits of collaborating with each other:

*Sometimes we call social workers to address the kids and to tell them how important it is for them to report abuse (Participant 7, visit 1).*

The children in the entire school might benefit since the participating educators seemed to be willing to empower the educators who did not attend the workshop. The following statement demonstrates this willingness:

*So it's going to be easy for us here at school because we've got phase one and phase two teachers who are represented here. Phase one teachers who are here will influence the phase one teachers who are not here and then the phase two teachers will do the same (Participant 4, visit 2).*

The memory box making process is an ongoing process throughout one's life (Viljoen, 2004). In this regard the participating educators showed an interest in keeping track of what is going on in the children's lives, through the use of memory boxes. This may help to inform the educators in the next grade about the children who need support in the different areas in their lives. The educators further expressed the need to empower other educators about what they had learned during the various workshops. They understood that this approach could help them because all might ultimately be empowered, resulting in the better running of the school and a better community.

The following statements support this subtheme:

*I would like to ask what is going to happen to that child, whatever the kid is doing in the classroom, if the child goes to another teacher who does not work with us, who is not aware of the memory box, what is going to happen to that child, or the memory box? (Participant 2, visit 2).*

*The real meaning of what we are doing, it would be good if we can pass it on to other teachers. There's no use for us to keep the information for ourselves only, we must share. We must go and do workshops with the parents, with the community (Participant 8, visit 2).*

*Get involved with other educators who have been in the field for longer (Participant 2, visit 2).*

*Like we are also working hand in hand with the child line because they used to come here at school about all the kinds of abuse (Participant 4, visit 2).*

#### 4.3.2.2 Subtheme 2.2: The skill of valuing mementoes

Skills of valuing mementoes were indicated by participating educators during discussions related to memory work. It is often the ordinariness of such objects, coupled with the circumstances of their acquisition that usually enables the owners to recall events that have marked their lives (Denis, 2005). Below I will discuss the related categories in this subtheme, namely skills of valuing mementoes in relation to story telling skills, letters, pictures and photos.

##### (a) Category 2.2.1: Story telling skills

Story telling skills were often indicated by participating educators during discussions related to memory work. The participating educators seemed to be willing to share their stories through memory box making in order to leave memories behind that their children would hold on to. They further seemed prepared to empower children with that skill so that the children would also have something to hold on to. Participating educators' ability to share their stories with children might have helped the children they involved to easily share their stories, as highlighted by a participant:

*I do not remember anything about them because I was very young, you see, but if they had left me a memory box it would be better for me. I didn't even have a photo of them, you see, sometimes I keep saying why don't they come back and go back again. It's so wise if you can make it before the person die. My children won't have the same problem with me, because I don't know my mother, my father (Participant 1, visit 1). McLaren (1998) is of the opinion that if counsellors reveal their own weaknesses and show that they can accept their imperfect selves children may be empowered to accept their own weaknesses.*

The participating educators were able to tell their stories through memory box making. Some of the experiences involved their childhood and the relationships they had with the different members of their families. They acknowledged the importance of having memory boxes since some of them could not remember the members of their families who had passed away, for example:

*The only thing I find is reference book. When I've got problems I just put that photo here or next to my pillow (Participant 2, visit 2).*

It seemed that the lack of such memories led to some participating educators finding it difficult to have closure regarding their lost ones. This tendency correlates with the findings of a study by Sinomlando Centre (2003), who claims that memory work may help children to know their family history, so that they might keep their memories alive, as memory entails the ability to bring past events back to consciousness.

**FIGURE 4.5: PARTICIPATING EDUCATORS TELLING THEIR STORIES BY SHOWING THEIR MEMORY BOXES**



It seemed that the participants realised the value of keeping memories. They indicated the desire to leave their memories for their children to remember them by. It appeared as if participants acknowledged that one day they will leave their children. They indicated the need to prepare their children for such moments. One of the participants said the following:

*I wanted to make something that is real that comes deeply out of my heart because I don't want to do something I didn't want to do something just for fun or something just for the sake of doing it. This comes deep down from my heart; this is my own memory box that I will be leaving for my kids when I passed away even if it's going to be tomorrow or whenever. I am going to leave something for my kids you see, so that they can remember me (Participant 3, visit 2).*

In addition, the following statements further support this subtheme:

*I am not a person who likes to cry, but I was thinking the first time I had my first child, my baby was born through Caesarean. A way of showing people who I am (Participant 1, visit 2).*

*I started with mine so that she can see from me. I would like you to look at how I do mine because the memory box I also need it. I wanted her to see that the memory box is not just for people who are HIV positive; anyone can leave a memory box. I started the memory box by doing the things that I love. I made it easy for her so that when she started her own memory box it would be easy. We started with the outside as you can see the things that I like. I was so grateful because when my children saw it they asked: mummy why are you putting the things you love here? I said I'm doing a memory box for myself so that one day when I passed away, some of the things they will see that I loved so that they can remember me (Participant 3, visit 2).*

**(b) Category 2.2.2: Artefacts as mementoes**

According to Morgan (2006), the greatest service one can render children is to keep their parents alive. This can be done by making both children and parents aware that the role of memory work is to help people to live positively, to hold on to life and even to celebrate life (Morgan, 2006; Denis, 2005). As mentioned in chapter two, a gift to a child who has lost his or her parents may be to compile a memory box for that child. One of the participants highlighted this idea:

*My parents passed away, I didn't even have a photo of them (Participant 2, visit 1).*

This quotation is a clear indication of the importance of keeping memory boxes in our families. People need to know about their origin as this might help in the healing process of those who have lost their loved ones:

*I don't know my mother, she passed away long time ago when I was still young. I have no memory of her, only my grandmother. We love to keep the church uniform that our elders wore. That seems to be the only thing we treasure. There are lots of things we can remember our elders or loved one with (Participant 2, visit 1).*

This result correlates with the findings of a study by Payne *et al.* (2002), who argue that practitioners can support clients in gathering letters and pictures that can be used to remember their loved ones when they have passed away or to gather their own letters and pictures that they can be remembered by when they had passed away.

The use of letters and pictures may serve as a memoriam when one thinks of the loved ones who are not near by or those who had passed away. Denis (2005) states that objects such as letters and other artefacts stored in a memory box may be used to establish a link with



children's' past which may help to sustain their identity. People may feel that their loved ones are with them spiritually and memoriam may carry them through difficult times. This may be done by thinking about the things that loved ones had told them or the messages that loved ones may have written to them whilst they were still alive. A participant emphasised the potential value of a photograph:

*When I see that photo, when I've got problems I just put that photo here (illustrating) or next to my pillow (Participant 2, visit 2).*

Children may further express their pain through letters:

*It's easy when they write a letter to you, when you read it you realise that this child has got a problem, let me go and fix it. It's the way of expressing their feelings (Participant 2, visit 1).*

This may especially be of help for those children who find it difficult to express themselves verbally. McLaren (1998) indicates that children may cope with difficult situations by either expressing or diverting their feelings, which may be done through keeping journals, writing letters, compiling a child's life story, poetry and art. Children may even be asked to write letters to their loved ones in order to express their feelings as this may be therapeutic.

Keeping memory boxes might further help people to remember the good times that they have had in their lives. Photographs can be used to build on the history of families and also their family trees, as summarised by a participant:

*My photo when I was small. I have my brother. I have a photograph when I graduated at crèche. I've got the photos in my bible. Photos of when they were young. They told stories when they brought the picture (Participant 1, visit 2).*

As such, it might be easier for each member of the family, especially young children, to know their family history. This result correlates with the findings of studies by Irin News (2005) and Wolfelt (1998) who found that, as family members collect photographs and souvenirs, draw a family trees and write about their lives, they could grow closer and the process might open a window for the family to talk about issues that are related to life and death, and to talk frankly about the future.

Furthermore, in letters one might be able to get a picture of the kind of relationship that the members of a family had with each other:

*There was a story which was written by the granny, that which-ever way, that even if she had one cent she would spend it with the grandchildren (Participant 6, visit 2).*

Some of the information found can be soothing, healing and it can also bring hope in the lives of the people who will be reading the information. The part that grandparents play in the lives of their grandchildren, especially of those children who have lost their parents, further needs to be recognised. I think that these grandparents should be complimented on what they are doing. Keeping some mementoes can be a good way of remembering our loved ones:

*My mother left a Chinese tea set. I kept it at home. Thanks for telling us about this because I think I can go in my grandmother's house and look for the kettle and cups (Participant 2, visit 1).*

The following statements further support this theme:

*The parents came with the photo the next day. She came with the photograph of the granny (Participant 6, visit 2).*

*She has photos of the mother when she was young and happy (Participant 4, visit 2).*

*I didn't even have a photo of them (Participant 6, visit 1).*

*Can't you draw your family? You see the drawing of the family. Child can express when writing or drawing, she can draw her mother. She said I want to write a story about me (Participant 6, visit 2).*

*Having those things, you feel that they are still alive (Participant 7, visit 2).*

*I think I can go for the kettle. The only thing that I find is her reference book. I don't know my mother; she passed away a long time ago when I was still young (Participant 2, visit 2).*

*My photo when I was small, I have it with me I have my brother. A photograph of when I graduated. I've got photos in my bible. Keep it so that they can show their children how they looked like when they were young (Participant 1, visit 2).*

*She has photos of the mother when she was young and happy when they were happy (Participant 4, visit 2).*

#### 4.3.2.3 Subtheme 2.3: The skill of discovering family structures and relationships

Skills of discovering family structures and relationships were often indicated by participating educators during discussions related to memory work. As many children are losing their parents due to the HIV&AIDS pandemic, it has become important for children to be given the opportunity to discover their family structures and relationships. According to the Sinomlando Centre (2003), this is a meaningful gift that can be given to children who have lost their families (Sinomlando Centre, 2003). This finding is further supported by Viljoen (2004) who found that the information stored in a memory box might help survivors to know more about the deceased and not lose track of their origin. In this case, information about the deceased can be obtained from different relevant sources like relatives, social workers, the hospital, pastors and the community (Viljoen, 2004).

Some of the participating educators could identify with the pain of growing up without parents:

*Like myself my parents passed away a long time ago but I don't remember anything about them because I was very young, you see, but if they had left me memory box it would be better for me (Participant 1, visit 1).*

As a result, participating educators indicated that they would like to support children who have lost their parents and those who might lose their parents, so that such children are able to have a better understanding of their family structures and the relationships that they have had with their families.

Not knowing much about one's family structures and relationships may lead to problems about accepting that a person has passed away. This may lead to continuous feelings of denial. One may also experience false hope that the person who has passed away might come back. Hockley (2000) indicates that much of society still considers children to be too young to hear about death and dying, and that this may make it difficult for children to later accept that their loved ones have passed away. This idea is supported by the following contribution by one of the participants:

*Sometimes I keep saying why don't they come back and go back again. I don't know my mother, my father (Participant 10, visit 2).*

Compiling memory boxes in a family as a family may further help to strengthen family relationships:

*It would be nice to do it in a family also. My kids have done it, my little one has done her memory box (Participant 7, visit 2).*

The members of a family may get to know each other better. If the various members of a family compile memory boxes they may further realise that they will not be there for each other forever but that their memories about one another will last forever. This may help family members to understand that death is not worth fearing and fighting as it is an inevitable, natural conclusion to life (Austin, 2006).

Participating educators appeared to realise the importance of trying to unite children with the other members of their families. They seemed willing to support other members of the family in order to maintain family structures and continuing relationships (Denis, 2005). One participant, for example, said:

*This child has got a father; she is not an orphan, so that is why we are trying to teach the father to focus and to take responsibility of the child (Participant 6, visit 2).*

If children are not made aware of their family structures and relationships it might be difficult for them to know their origin. One participant summarised this idea:

*She said my mother is there in area x although her mother passed away. I didn't know she passed away, she told me she came here for a holiday. She tells me she's got two mothers the other one is here and the other one is there. She thought that the mother is still alive there. The policy does not allow us to tell the child (Participant 8, visit 2).*

The possibility of children being not aware about who their real parents are is even more evident in the African culture than in the western culture, as children sometimes tend to call every elderly person mother or father. In some families, the children call their grandparents their parents, creating confusion for outsiders. Sometimes children are too young to understand the family lineage. If a memory box is kept it might be easier for children to understand certain relations as they grow up. UNICEF (2006) agrees that whenever possible, children who are orphaned should remain in their communities to be raised by extended family members. Family care is far better for children and less costly than institutionalised care.. Children who grow up in families also develop better social skills and are

psychologically better adjusted than those who grow up in institutions because they usually receive more affection and attention and develop a better sense of personal identity (UNICEF, 2006).

The participating educators seemed to be aware of the role that most grandparents play in the lives of their grandchildren. Most of the children who are orphans were reported to be supported by their grandparents. In South Africa, it has been postulated that the majority of people infected with and affected by HIV&AIDS will be absorbed and assisted by the extended family network in black families. The extended family may provide a primary support function, a social “safety net” that has remained resilient over the years (Ross & Deverell, 2004). As grandparents can make children aware of the other relatives that the children have this may help children to have more social support. The following extracts serve as examples:

*There was a story which was written by the granny, that which-ever way, that even if she had one cent, she would spend it with the grand children. The parents came with the photos the next day. She came with the photograph of the granny. The granny is not a hard person but she is strict because she does not trust anybody with her grandchildren. The granny is raising them. She gave me a little note which said: I live with my granny, my mum died, I do not want my sweets, granny does the cooking for me (Participant 6, visit 2).*

*Her parents passed away at the beginning of the year, the father last year and the mother this year (Participant 8, visit 2).*

### **4.3.3 THEME 3: PROBLEMATIC COUNSELLING SKILLS IN MEMORY WORK**

Below I will discuss the problematic skills related to memory work that emerged, namely confidentiality, emotional strain on the counsellor and cultural beliefs regarding death.

#### **4.3.3.1 Subtheme 3.1: Confidentiality skills**

The following statement is an indication that the participating educators understood that the information they had obtained from learners is confidential and that they had to respect the children’s wishes and feelings:

*When she is ready she will talk about it herself. I told her that we are not going to say anything until she is ready. I told her that she is going to do it herself when she is ready. I'm not going to show anybody in this room. She asked me not to tell her mother (Participant 3, visit 2).*

This might create problems for educators because sometimes children might ask educators not to divulge information that might be dangerous to the children's well-being. In this regard I believe that educators have to be empowered with skills on how to deal with such information. These results correlate with the findings of studies by Van Dyk (2005), Milne (1999) and Egan (1998) who argue that in most cases the issue of confidentiality is controversial, as is the importance of disclosing information when the need arises.

I think that listening implies the ability to be able to deal with information appropriately when hearing it. This may involve issues such as confidentiality in order to be able to protect oneself legally as well as to protect the integrity of the person concerned (Allen, 2001). As such, it seemed important for participating educators to be careful of how they shared the information that they received. This may put educators in a difficult situation because in most cases they need to divulge information to obtain support on how to handle certain issues. Educators indicated that they sometimes needed to discuss certain issues regarding some children so that they can support such children effectively:

*Today I heard bad news. You know what, her parents passed away. Her mother passed away because of HIV. The guardians told me that, she said she is HIV positive (Participant 2, visit 1).*

In this respect the challenge of confidentiality seems to be difficult to address. What makes the issue more complicated is that in most cases, educators may be expected to fill in forms regarding children who are orphans or those who are HIV positive. In such situations, educators might find it difficult to ask for children's consent. This is further aggravated by the fact that, ethically, educators need to ask for consent from the parents or the guardians of children (Allen, 2001). If educators have to follow this route, a lot of children might be deprived of an opportunity for a better life. Some of the participants explained the potential benefits of support:

*Although the memory box is private and confidential, it is not confidential to tell other teachers. So it's going to be easy for us here at school because we've got*

*phase one and phase two teachers who are represented here. Phase one teachers who are here will influence the phase one teachers who are not here and then the phase two teachers will do the same (Participant 4, visit 2).*

*To add more on that, communication and interaction is important, because if I have a problem with a child and I keep it with myself, even if I can't solve the problem. The interaction and communication helps a lot, not to keep the child's problem for yourself whilst the child is suffering, the child will be suffering while you are keeping the problem to yourself (Participant 3, visit 2).*

This may indicate that sometimes, if information is kept confidential, it might be to a child's disadvantage. Sometimes people make themselves inaccessible to help due to fear and uncertainty, and as such die of stigma and fear (Allen, 2001). In the same breath, the child's dignity needs to be taken into consideration when disclosing information and permission should be obtained from the child if the child is above eighteen, or from the guardian if the child is still a minor (Allen, 2001). The following quotation supports the above statement:

*She asked me not to tell her mother. I told her that we are not going to say anything until she is ready. I told her that she is going to do it herself when she is ready. I'm not going to show anybody in this room (Participant 3, visit 2).*

The participants expressed their concern regarding confidentiality when supporting learners. This seemed to be a serious concern which was found to be difficult to handle as other people might break confidentiality, with the aim of getting help and support from their colleagues. Allen, (2001) stipulates that when a psychologist renders psychological professional services as part of a team, such psychologist may share confidential information about such client, provided that reasonable steps are taken to ensure that all persons involved are aware of the confidential nature of the information at hand. I think that this rule should also be applied to counselling educators. However, some may find the information to be too overwhelming and as such try to share it with their colleagues with the hope of feeling better. It is also difficult for some people not to talk about a sick person or a person who has passed away due to AIDS since the pandemic is a concern to many. Most people might wish to know what had killed a person, with the aim of knowing whether or not the cause of death was AIDS related. Thus, educators may find themselves in a predicament regarding confidentiality, as pointed out by Van Dyk (2005) who argues that confidentiality, especially in the context of HIV&AIDS, is a controversial issue.

People who are infected with and affected by HIV&AIDS also seemed to find it difficult to disclose, based on the fear that their information may not be kept confidential. As such, they tended to distrust most people who tried to help and support them. Some of the participants explained this predicament:

*What you don't like to be done with your own child you must not do it to other children (Participant 2, visit 1).*

*The grandmother said to me, I don't want you here because all educated people are making an issue about this, instead of helping a person you make stories about the sickness. Maybe there was one person who went there; instead of helping she talked about the illness (Participant 2, visit 2).*

*They are disclosing, they are having the chance of sharing their own problems with us so that they can get help (Participant 2, visit 2).*

#### **4.3.3.2 Subtheme 3.2: Emotional strain on educators as counsellors**

The fact that sensitive information must be kept confidential might also create a strain on the educators at school as educators are bound by the White Paper 5 (Department of Education, 2000) to be responsible for the different needs of children. If the various educators do not have information about special learners the educators may fail to treat those learners appropriately when the occasion arises and this may be regarded as negligence on the part of an educator. Secrecy and fear of disclosure among people with AIDS might make the task of caring for patients difficult. If the diagnosis has to be kept secret, it is difficult or impossible to get outside help (Van Dyk, 2005). This dilemma is supported by the following statement:

*They said information must be kept confidential. One day I might not be here for a month or so counselling must continue (Participant 6, visit 2).*

Another strain on caring educators may be the potential distrust that clients might have towards educators. This distrust may be created by negative experiences that potential clients had previously encountered. Most of them indicate that It is not the HIV virus which is killing them or making their life not worth living, but the bad attitudes of people toward them. (Evian, 2000). The above issue is supported by the following statement:

*We found the mother lying there and the grandmother was doing the washing. The grandmother said to me I don't want you here because all educated people are*



*making an issue about this* (Participant 7, visit 2). The above statement shows that the grandmother was not willing to accept any help from the caring educators because the previous carers might have not satisfied her.

Seemingly, the participating educators preferred to give support to each other and form support groups. One participant explained this preference:

*That lady told us that I've got something I prepared myself, like I've got a burial that will take care of my funeral expenses when I'm gone. Slowly, slowly you know where it is going to because you know where it is leading to; we are going to do a memory box. So what I am trying to say is, we take it over to the support group, together with the teacher then we go slowly to create the atmosphere of trust, the atmosphere of love, all those things* (Participant 2, visit 2).

This could be a very helpful idea because in a support group educators may share ideas on how to handle different situations. They may also share their experiences as to what worked well and what was not working. This tendency correlates with the findings of a study by Berg *et al.* (1998) Van Dyk (2005), who found that it is within the context of a group that people gain greater self awareness, experience a sense of belonging and acceptance, feel understood, and might validate our beliefs, values, reality and opinions *via* feedback received from others. Van Dyk (2005) agrees that professional venting, that is venting to a colleague about frustrating experiences, is cathartic and can cleanse one's emotions. Ross and Deverell (2004) further found that health care professionals who experience a sense of isolation and minimal contact with others who are exposed to similar problems, and who lack opportunities to express their emotionally charged feelings, are more likely to develop burn out.

The participants further expressed the difficulties they encountered emotionally when faced with a situation where they had to support people who are affected by the HIV&AIDS pandemic. The following contribution serves as example:

*That's why I started generalising, I didn't want to be specific, showing that I'm focusing on her.---its difficult to deal with this, its nice when you are talking, but when it comes to reality its very much difficult. We are not yet finished because I don't want to rush things, because I told you this is ongoing, she is going to live longer. I don't want to rush things so she starts suspecting, she shouldn't start*

*asking herself questions like why is she doing this, am I going to live for a shorter period?* (Participant 3, visit 2).

Wolfelt (1998) explains that the most important influence on how children react at a time of death is the response of parents and other significant people (such as educators) in the children's life systems. Kelly in Coombe (2004) agrees that lack of death sensitisation amongst parents, educators, counsellors and other concerned adults might result in anxieties and fears of a number of well intentioned people being transferred to children at an early age.

#### **4.3.3.3 Subtheme 3.3: Cultural beliefs regarding death**

The participating educators confirmed the fact that in their traditional Xhosa culture children were usually not told about death. In a traditional context it is inappropriate to speak directly of death. It was, for example, believed that naming the passing of life would bring misfortune to the family. As a result, elderly people developed the habit of telling half-truths or even lies (Ntsimane in Denis, 2005). In the participating educators' opinion, parents were apparently of the opinion that they were protecting children from pain and trauma in this manner:

*In our culture if a child is still young, some people don't tell the children. Because they think its like during the olden days, where you don't tell children what is going on. We were told they are coming back; they are in a certain area whilst your father has passed away. Husband or brother passed away, what is happening with us we just tell them that your uncle passed away. Whoever passed away is with God* (Participant 2, visit 2).

*They keep on confusing the kid and when they are older it is when they tell the truth. When you tell straight away that he/she is with God* (Participant 8, visit 2).

The participating educators also shared issues of concern with regard to their culture when they had to deal with issues of death and dying and with children who have lost their parents. They expressed their concern about the fact that most of the children are not aware of the fact that their parents have passed away. In the olden days children were told that their parents had gone to work (Ntsimane in Denis, 2005). This is illustrated by the following statement:

*I've got so many children who are open but they don't know that their parents passed away. What the child was proud of is to have two parents, two mothers and two fathers* (Participant 10, visit 2).

The tendency of children not being told that their parents had passed away might create false hope for the children. This kind of hope may create problems for the children with regard to acceptance, mourning and closure. Children may spend many years being in a state of confusion:

*They keep on confusing the kid, the kid will be waiting and waiting, when they are older it is then that they tell the truth (Participant 8, visit 2).*

*She might not know that her mother died, but she has questions like “when are they coming to me? Do they not love me? Where are they? Why is my mother not living with me?” She is sitting there quietly, she is thinking (Participant 2, visit 2).*

*Presently you can see that hope that one day they will go back to their mother (Participant 10, visit 2).*

Children are not overwhelmed by emotion as long as the expression of emotion does not overwhelm the adult. As such, children need to be given accurate information about the death of their loved ones so that they are able to deal with the situation rather than to realise after a long time that their loved ones have passed away (Hockley, 2000). Such false hope that parents might come back might create a problem for educators as it might be difficult for them to communicate with children openly. It is also a delicate situation with regard to supporting such children, especially if a child is needy and the child has to obtain financial support. The participating educators were of the opinion that if children were aware of their situations it would be easier for them (the educators) to support the children:

*In our culture if the child is still young some families don't tell the child that your mother/father passed away. They don't know the real story. They keep on confusing the kid. The kid will be waiting and waiting, when they are older it is when they tell the truth (Participant 8, visit 2).*

Gisborne (1995) is of the opinion that many adults find it difficult to talk about death yet it is our responsibility to prepare for future experiences, including death. Van Dyk (2005) also suggests that we should not wait until there is bereavement before we make it part of the curriculum. We should encourage children to share their experiences with little things like loosing a toy or a pet (Van Dyk (2005)). The participating educators were of the opinion that children should be taught and told about death, since technology exposes them to death at an

early age even if the community tries to protect them. They expressed the need to counsel children after being exposed to such information:

*Because of technology I think the kids understand what death is, because children read magazines and stories are talking about death, the thing is they need counselling (Participant 10, visit 2).*

As suffering brought about by the disease starts making its impact in the classroom educators are likely to have to cope with poor performance on the part of the children who are either infected with or affected by HIV&AIDS. According to Van Dyk (2005) educators should be trained to provide guidance on HIV&AIDS. Age appropriate education on HIV&AIDS needs to form part of the curriculum for all learners and should be integrated in the life-skills education programme in the various phases. Memory box making may serve as a resource here and be used across the learning areas (refer to Appendix B). The participating educators indicated that the classroom content may indeed be used to do memory work as it could allow children to express themselves freely:

*All those things that we are teaching in the classroom you can put them there so that it's a way a child will be able to express themselves. Children must not be scared of their teachers; we must also be parents to the kids (Participant 9, visit 2).*

#### **4.4. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I discussed the themes and subthemes that emerged during data analysis. I used verbatim quotations to illustrate my discussions. I further related the results I obtained to existing literature, highlighting both corresponding and contradictory findings.

In the next chapter, I will provide an overview of the preceding chapters, the purpose of my research study as well as the research question. The chapter will further include my final conclusions, the limitations of my study and my recommendations.



## CHAPTER 5

# RESEARCH OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a summary of the study. This involves an overview of the preceding chapters, revisiting the purpose of my study as well as addressing the research questions. I will also present my final conclusions, address the limitations of the study, and make recommendations for further research, training and practice.

### 5.2 SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS

Chapter one served as an introductory chapter where I discussed the rationale for my research, introduced my research questions, the purpose of my research and the definition of terms. I also briefly introduced my research design, paradigm, data collection and analysis techniques.

In answer to **secondary research questions 1 and 2**, in chapter two I explored relevant literature on counselling skills as well as memory box making and memory work. I discussed counselling skills and referred to different ways in which memory work might be used by educators in order to support children. Although it was difficult to find literature where counselling skills and memory work are discussed in relation to each other, I aimed to provide an integrated discussion. I also presented a synopsis of counselling skills to guide my deductive analysis of raw data. Furthermore, I developed an intervention programme aimed at facilitating the acquisition of memory box making skills, based on related theory in this chapter and in answer to **secondary research question 3**.

Chapter three aimed at answering my **primary research question** by undertaking an empirical study. In this chapter, I discussed the research design and the processes of my research which involved empirical procedures and the collection and processing of data. In addition, I discussed the ethical principles I considered and the way in which I attempted to enhance the rigour of my study. I also indicated the activities that comprised memory work intervention, as implemented in this study.

In chapter four I provided the results I obtained, in terms of the themes and subthemes that emerged. I related the results of my study to existing literature and the theoretical framework of the study which I discussed in chapter two.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION: REVISITING THE PURPOSE AND THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the relationship between counselling skills and memory box making with children. Thus, the primary research question directing this study was: *What is the relationship between counselling skills and memory work?* In the next section, I aim to address this primary research question.

### **5.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNSELLING SKILLS AND MEMORY WORK**

As mentioned in chapter four, three primary themes emerged during my data analysis, namely basic counselling skills, skills related to pre-bereavement, bereavement and grief, and problematic skills in memory work. I will now answer my primary research question in terms of these main themes. Thereafter, I will discuss the connection between counselling skills and memory work.

#### **5.4.1 BASIC COUNSELLING SKILLS**

The findings of this study suggest that counselling skills, in the form of basic counselling skills, can be related to memory work. It is evident from the findings that participating educators did make use of **basic counselling skills** in doing memory work with primary school children. With regard to **empathy**, the participating educators seemed able to put themselves in the shoes of the children. The participating educators showed an interest in the individual needs of children and were prepared to give the children individual attention. They even went further by visiting children and parents at their homes when there was a need; for example, they also indicated that they would provide financially when children were really in need of financial support.

**Respect, warmth and trust** were displayed by the participating educators when they indicated that it is important that they treat all children as their own. They appeared to respect

children unconditionally. In most cases they also respected the wishes of children not to divulge certain information if the undisclosed information would not be detrimental to the child.

The importance of **listening** was emphasised by the participating educators. They indicated the importance of listening to the non-verbal messages of children. Contextual listening was emphasised, such as when children would, for example, refer to elderly people as “mother” or “father”. Since the educators are used to the children (their language and their culture) it seemed uncomplicated for them to identify such contradictory or confusing references. Educators, it seems, may be able to weigh different options regarding the importance of disclosing information about different children if they better understand the culture of the children. However, this hypothesis deems further exploration.

The participating educators indicated the importance of **genuineness and sincerity**. They further indicated that both children and members of the community often observed educators’ behaviour and attitudes to see whether or not educators displayed acceptance, understanding and unconditional positive regard towards them. This may imply that for both children and the community to be able to open up to an educator they have to feel that the educator is acting unconditionally and that they (the children and their families) would not be judged. Such a relationship of **trust** therefore seems important in supporting people, especially those who may be affected by or infected with HIV&AIDS, since they might find it difficult to disclose their HIV&AIDS status due to stigma and discrimination attached to the illness.

#### **5.4.2 SKILLS RELATED TO PRE-BEREAVEMENT, BEREAVEMENT AND GRIEF**

With regard to skills related to pre-bereavement, bereavement and grief, various skills emerged in relation to memory work. These are namely support, collaboration and skills transference, valuing mementoes, discovering family structures and relationships.

The participating educators indicated that they planned to empower other educators in the school with the skill of memory box making towards the end of our field work, thus **transferring** their **skills** related to memory work. They also indicated that they would **collaborate** with other stake-holders, such as social workers and nurses in the community with the aim of **supporting** children and the community holistically.

With regard to the skill of **valuing mementoes**, the participating educators indicated that children often expressed their feelings through telling stories and writing letters. The participating educators were able to share their stories through their memory boxes. They indicated that memory work especially facilitated a process to share stories with their families and their children in class. Some of the participating educators indicated that the mementoes that their own parents had left them are valuable in their lives since these are the only link that they have with their past, as they did not know their parents. This made them realise the importance of making memory boxes with children and also of making memory boxes with their families. In this regard then, it seems that through memory box making it became easier for participating educators (and reportedly the parents of involved children) to discuss **family relations**, the history of the family and the family tree since most of the children who are orphans do not have much information regarding their family history. Thus, I suggest that memory work may be used in schools to enhance the teaching of history and family relations. Further research in this regard seems relevant.

#### 5.4.3 PROBLEMATIC SKILLS IN MEMORY WORK

Findings indicated certain problematic areas in relation to counselling skills and memory work, namely confidentiality, emotional strain on counsellors and cultural beliefs regarding death. I found that the skill of **confidentiality** appeared to be the most difficult to address. The issue of confidentiality seems to be controversial at times, due to the fact that educators have to collaborate with each other when supporting children. The issue of confidentiality may make it difficult to disclose information about a child even if the educator needs help from other educators. The participating educators expressed their concern regarding the skill of confidentiality as they were of the opinion that children should be able to get the necessary support even if the educator who is concerned about a particular child is not available, which implies that all educators should be informed about the different problems of children.

Regarding confidentiality skills I found that some children may lose benefits, such as grants, due to the fact that information has to be kept confidential. Educators may at times find themselves in trouble with regard to parents who do not want to disclose certain information as they might break confidentiality while they aim to help children obtain access to some form of assistance or support.



I further found that the participating educators experienced it as **emotionally draining** to handle children's problems on their own without some form of support to themselves. In this regard support groups might be used for debriefing purposes. This might help educators in that they would realise that other educators are also experiencing the strain that they themselves are going through. They may even brainstorm and come up with ideas about how to handle such situations better. In addition, educators may invite other professionals, for example social workers, doctors and nurses, into their support group who might be able to empower them with relevant information in order to lighten their burden. The effect of support groups on educators' emotional strain merits further investigation.

The fact that most cultures find it difficult to discuss **issues of death and dying** with children (Ramsden, 2002) is a serious problem in our community since children are increasingly faced with death in one way or another due to violence, accidents and the HIV&AIDS pandemic (Irin News, 2005). The participating educators indicated that most of the orphaned children are often not aware of the fact that their parents had passed away. Some of the children apparently did not know who their real parents are. The idea that children are sometimes misinformed about their parents might have a negative impact on the children's future, the grief and healing process. This lack of information may make the work of educators more difficult, as they have to be careful not to divulge the confidential information to the child, but at the same time, due to their need to help children with whatever benefits the child is entitled to, they may at times feel obliged to break confidentiality.

#### **5.4.4 THE CONNECTION BETWEEN COUNSELLING SKILLS AND MEMORY WORK**

In this study I therefore found that a relationship or connection exists between counselling skills and memory work. The participating educators apparently used counselling skills when facilitating the memory box making technique with children. This is an indication that it may be difficult to separate counselling skills from the memory box making process since this process leads memory work facilitators (in this study, educators) into interacting with recipients (in this study both educators and primary school children). As such, it seemed that the presence of counselling skills during memory work may have facilitated a process whereby children were able to express their needs and problems. During the process of memory work, I identified some problematic skills whereby some of the educators did not know how to handle some challenges. Some of the problematic skills that surfaced in memory box making were related to issues of pre-bereavement, bereavement and grief.

The findings of my study therefore seem to suggest that various kinds of counselling skills seem to be inextricably part of memory work. I therefore generated a hypothesis which suggests that memory work cannot occur in the absence of counselling skills.

Even though a relationship between counselling skills and memory work seems to exist, the facilitation of counselling skills may not necessarily be a prerequisite for facilitating the memory work process. The previous statement is supported by the fact that in this study the participating educators seemed able to implement the memory work programme with children without being specifically trained in counselling skills. However, training in counselling skills may be preferable as educators indicated certain problematic issues that directly relate to counselling. Thus, findings suggest that –

- (i) It may be concluded that counselling skills facilitate memory work, and
- (ii) Memory work may possibly be used as a counselling tool in schools, although certain limitations may prevail.

Figure 5.1 is a photograph of some of the participating educators displaying the children's memory work.

**FIGURE 5.1: PHOTOGRAPH OF EDUCATORS DISPLAYING CHILDREN'S MEMORY WORK**



## **5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In this section I will discuss the limitations of the study.

### **5.5.1 LIMITED NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AND GENERALISABILITY VALUE**

My research was conducted with a limited number of participants involving only ten educators. As the group already existed as a participant cohort at the onset of this study, I did not add additional participants (Ferreira, 2006). Based on my choice of following a constructivist/interpretivist paradigm, I did not seek generalisable findings. However, my findings might be transferred to similar situations due to the fact that I provided rich descriptions of the setting.

### **5.5.2 LITERATURE CONTROL LIMITATIONS**

I experienced difficulty to find literature that relates to both counselling skills and memory work. In most available sources memory work is discussed and counselling skills implied, without the relationship between the two being explored. As such, I found literature control to be challenging. If I could rely on literature that relates to both counselling skills and memory work I might have had a richer overview of existing literature and linking the existing knowledge base to the results I obtained.

### **5.5.3 INTERVENTION PILOTING**

I did not include piloting of the intervention in my study. I think that the piloting of intervention could have added value to my study.

### **5.5.4 PARTICIPANTS**

The participants in my study were females only. I did not include males because of reasons already explained, namely that the participants were conveniently selected for the purpose of this study. I think that the inclusion of men in my study might have contributed in my study and the findings I obtained.

## **5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

I will discuss recommendations for practice, training and future research in the following paragraphs.

### **5.6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

Based on my findings a tool, such as memory work, may have the following practitioner benefits:

- Since the participating educators were personally involved in making their own memory boxes it may become easy for them to transfer this skill to children. In this regard I recommend that educators be involved in teaching children about memory box making.
- Participating educators were able to experience the value of memory box making, how it led to their being open in discussing their feelings and how they were able to use different counselling skills in supporting one another. This may indicate that memory work may be used as a counselling tool in schools. I therefore recommend that memory work be used as a counselling tool in schools.
- The application of the memory box making skill in the educators' different classes with children further led to the realisation that this is a simple skill that they may use across the different learning areas in their classrooms. Therefore I recommend that memory work be used in schools across the different learning areas.
- Memory work may be used as a tool to socialise children about death. If memory work is introduced in schools it could help in addressing the hesitancy to inform children that their parents have passed away.
- Memory work may be used to empower people about their family histories.
- Memory work may be used to enhance collaboration amongst staff members.

### **5.6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING**

Since South African schools seem to be overburdened by the challenge of how to support learners who are infected with and affected by the HIV&AIDS pandemic (Rugalema & Khanye in Coombe, 2004), I think that this study indicates the potential strength of enabling educators to support children more easily by means of a skill such as memory box making. In my opinion the memory box making process might be a good starting point, especially because it does not focus primarily on death but on how people celebrate their lives.

I think that future educators can be trained in memory work in order to implement this technique once they start working in schools. Such training may prepare future educators for the challenges they might encounter in classrooms, and they may be equipped to handle such challenges accountably.

### **5.6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Based on the findings of this inquiry, I recommend further research focusing on the following hypotheses I generated.

- The use of counselling skills as a prerequisite for facilitating the memory work process.
- The effect of training educators in memory work in addressing the participating educators' problematic issues.
- The use of memory work as a counselling tool in schools by educators.
- The acquisition of skills in memory work, contributing to the acquisition of skills related to counselling.
- The use and application of memory work across the learning areas.
- The use of memory work in introducing guidance in dealing with death, irrespective of cultural taboos.
- The use of memory work to encourage pre-bereavement counselling in schools.
- The use of memory work to enhance family relations.
- The use of memory work to facilitate collaboration amongst different professionals.
- The effect of disclosing information about children amongst different professionals.
- The use of memory work in schools to facilitate the enhancement of teaching children about their histories
- The effect of support groups on educators' emotional strain.

### **5.7 A FINAL PERSONAL NOTE**

In my view, the use of memory work has existed since the beginning of time. It is evident in the naming of places, buildings and people after somebody or something, for the memories to be preserved eternally. Memory work in this context serves the same purpose of having

everlasting memories about people who will always be close to our hearts physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Memory work might remind us of how others had celebrated their lives and about the legacy they have left their loved ones (see Appendix F of the obituary that my father wrote for himself and the picture that he chose to be on the programme for his funeral whilst he is still alive). The use of memory work might serve as a good example for the coming generation of how to conquer fears that they might have about death. Memory work might help us to realise that although death implies absence from one's physical body, spiritually we may remain connected to loved ones through shared memories with them. To highlight my belief I refer you to the following poem which I composed in memory of my late sister, based on some of the conversations that I used to have with her:

### ***“BUSY BEE”***

*Hi! This is the busy bee! I'm not available right now,  
Please leave your name and number and  
I will come back to you as soon as I am available, bye!!!!, Oh, by the way,  
This time I won't come to you in person,  
I'll come to you in dreams and visions  
I will come to you through the memories that we used to share together*

*Memories of the times we shared together  
Memories of the happiness we had together  
Memories of the laughter we used to share  
Memories of the tears we used to shed  
Memories of the fears we used to share  
Memories of the places we have been together*

*When you think of me just take a walk  
Go through the journey of the times we've been together  
Laugh about the things we used to laugh about  
Cry about the things we used to cry about*

*But don't spend too much time crying  
Because I have no time for tears anymore  
I live in eternal happiness  
Happiness that I wish I could share with you*

*I'm just busy as ever, busy with eternal souvenirs  
Souvenirs that cannot be seen,  
Souvenirs that are everlasting  
Souvenirs that are heavenly pleasant*

*Always remember that I am still with you  
My spirit is by your side day and night  
I always watch you crying and comfort you  
It breaks my heart to see you crying for me meanwhile I am so happy  
But anyway it's good for your spiritual growth  
Good to keep you closer to my kind of eternal lifestyle  
A life full of eternal happiness  
Bye!!!!!!!!!!, BUT*

*Remember my last words!  
Memories! Memories!  
Memories last forever  
Memories cannot be bought  
Memories cannot be forgotten*

*Memories, sweet memories  
Sweet eternal spiritual memories  
Memories of eternal life  
Memories are shared forever  
Memories are felt forever  
Memories are a life chain that will never be broken*

*4 April 2005  
By: Pheladi Granny M.A. Mnguni*



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# APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

During the research study, the following ethical principles will be adhered to:

1. Participants may withdraw from the research at any time.
2. Participants will at all times be fully informed about the research process.
3. Participants will not be placed at risk or harm of any kind.
4. Participants' confidentiality and anonymity \* will be protected.
5. Participants will not be exposed to any act of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

**\*Anonymity:** When completed, the memory box and body map belong to the participants (teachers and children). Therefore, data for this research project will be collected by means of audio-visual recording. This will include recordings of both the process and the products of the memory box and body map processes.

I \_\_\_\_\_, at  
\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, herewith  
declare that the former mentioned information has been explained to me and that I  
understand the principles. I herewith give consent to participate in the research study  
regarding memory boxes and body maps. I give/do not give permission that my audio  
visual recordings may be used in public with the researcher's discretion, as long as it  
contributes to the positive value of this research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# APPENDIX B

## APPENDIX B: MANUAL FOR MEMORY WORK

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### Appendix A **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

## 1. **Thank you, educators!**

Welcome at this workshop, and thank you so much for giving us some of your valuable time!

You are the people who know this community well. You also work with the learners of this community every day. As an educator you have a lot of responsibilities and play a big role in the community. The contact and relation of trust you have with the learners and this community can enrich their lives as well as yours.

We hope this workshop will help you to gain skills and knowledge to help you in your work as an educator and citizen of this community. If you would like to make notes during the workshop, you can use appendix B. Enjoy it!

## 2. **What is expected of you as an educator?**

### 2.1 Your role

What do you think is expected of you as an educator? What are the things your headmaster, the learners and the community expect of you as an educator?

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## 2.2 What does the government say?

In 2000, in the *Norms and Standards for Educators* policy, the government stated that educators have 7 roles to fulfill. These 7 roles are:

- learning mediator
- interpreter & designer of learning programmes
- a community, citizen & pastoral role
- a specialist in a learning area / subject/discipline / phase
- assessor
- leader, administrator & manager of your classroom and school
- scholar, researcher & lifelong learner

The policy also states that educators must have the knowledge, skills and values to perform each of these tasks. Do you think you were trained to have the knowledge, skills and values to perform the tasks expected in each role?

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### 2.3 Let's focus on one role...

That's a LOT of roles to fulfill! In this workshop we are going to focus on your citizen/pastoral role. What is your understanding of this role?

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Let's also see what we can add to your understanding by looking at what other people say about the pastoral role of an educator. Educators in England regard the pastoral role as an umbrella term for **caring**. This means that the educator must be concerned with the promotion of learners' personal and social development. An educator must help facilitate and foster positive attitudes in learners. It is felt that it is an educator's duty to care for a learner beyond the learner's learning needs. The duty of caring includes:

- Identifying learners suffering from abuse, neglect, emotional problems and making appropriate referrals as necessary.
- Responding to learners' emotional needs.
- Helping learners resolve problems in their feelings about themselves
- Guiding, helping and facilitating the solving of problems for those learners in crises.

What are some of the emotional needs that you have identified in learners in your class/school?

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## 2.4 Assets

Which assets (people, places or things) are present in this community and in yourself that might help you carry out your tasks in your pastoral role / duties of caring?

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You will need to build a network of people who can help you. Think of all the people in your life, school and community that you could ask for support, information or help. **Appendix A** can be used as a list of **important telephone numbers** of support people you could identify.

## 2.5 Challenges

What are the challenges you have to face in your duty of caring for learners? What are the challenges in the classroom, school and community? What are the challenges to yourself?

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### **3. Some techniques to explore**

The techniques that we are going to discuss during this workshop are:

- 3.1 Making memory boxes
- 3.2 Making body maps

# Memory Box Making

Presented by:  
Maria Mnguni

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### **3.1.1 History of memory boxes**

Memory boxes were first used by HIV-positive Ugandan women who wanted to find a way in which children would remember them. They used any kind of container, for example a basket, a biscuit tin, a matchbox or petrol can, into which they would place, for example, a poem written to the child, some advice, photos, if possible a family tree, a letter of encouragement relevant to the mother's dreams and wishes for the child's future, objects relating to memories - in short, anything that a mother thinks should remind her learner of her existence and his own life.

### **3.1.2 What is a memory box?**

A memory box is a box or any container that can be made from any material, and can serve as a container for valuable objects. The objects that are put in the memory box can serve as a means whereby a person can communicate with himself/herself or with the people who may come into contact with that particular container. Memory box making may be a continuous process - one can continue adding more objects and information over a long period.

There is no fixed way of making a memory box, but basic steps will be given to make it easier for you to do. Allow people to be as creative as they like and to put in anything they please.

### **3.1.3 The purpose of making a memory box**

- To store memories of what a person has experienced.
- To serve as a means of remembering a person and knowing more about a person after a person has passed away.
- A means of expressing oneself, e.g. to express the pain, anger, frustrations, dreams and hopes.
- It serves as a therapeutic tool e.g. the adult/ care-giver/educator can use it together with the learner to express and discuss the issues that affect the learner/ other person.

**Any other ideas?**

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- \_\_\_\_\_  
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**3.1.4 Sources of information**

*3.1.1.1 People*

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Siblings
- Pastors
- Educators
- Relatives
- Friends
- Other relevant people

*3.1.1.2 Records*

- Personal certificates
- Medical & social service records
- Newspaper reports that influence the learner's life
- Notes & notices that could contribute to the learner's life history
- Educational records
- Police records

**Any other ideas?**

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- \_\_\_\_\_  
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**3.1.5 Why should educators know about memory box making?**

One of the duties of the educator is to support a learner in totality, which means supporting him physically, emotionally, socially and educationally. The social part also involves supporting the learner in the environment in which s/he lives.

Educators are the people who are involved in supporting both the learners and the larger community. Educators will be able to use memory boxes to discuss issues about death, which are usually regarded as taboo in most cultures.

Educators might be able to use the process of memory box making as a therapeutic tool and will be able to do it with a large number of learners. This can be an advantage, since it will save time and support a lot of people at the same time.

Educators can also use memory box making in several learning areas, for example:

- In **mathematics** they can, for example, measure the sides and calculate areas and volumes and draw geometric shapes on the memory box.
- In **history class** they can use the life-line to discuss aspects of their own history.
- In the **art class** they can paint and decorate their boxes.
- In the **technology class** they can construct their memory boxes.
- In the **language class** they can present or give an oral speech about their memory boxes and discuss them with the class.

**Any other ideas?**

- \_\_\_\_\_
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### 3.1.6 List of materials that can be used in memory box making

- Empty boxes, e.g. A4 / shoe
- Photos, photocopies of photos
- Cardboards
- Felt pens
- Paint and brushes
- Name tags
- Pens and pencils
- Scissors
- Magazines
- Refuse bags
- Crayons
- Markers
- Glue
- Papers
- String

### 3.1.7 Objects that can be put into a memory box

#### a) *For a person who has passed away*

This could be a parent, learner, friend or relative, and the memory box can be made by survivors or by the learner together with the care-giver. It can include the following:

- A person's life history
- His/her family tree
- Pictures and objects of the things that that particular person liked, e.g. music, food, cloths, perfume etc.
- Programme / pictures/video of the funeral service
- A memory book
- A person's pictures
- Letters to express feelings
- A body map

#### b) *For a person who is still alive*

- Information about the family history
- The family tree
- Life-line information
- Information about likes and dislikes, e.g. clothes, food, movies etc. and reasons for likes and dislikes
- Information about the family's belief system or religion
- Your picture and pictures of other members of the family
- Important documents
- Your wishes when you die, e.g. about property and children
- Letters to family members
- Information about hereditary sicknesses in the family

**Any other ideas?**

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- \_\_\_\_\_  
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### 3.1.8 Other things that can be used to serve as memorabilia

- **A memory book** - a book is written by the person about all the experiences and memories of the time the family spent together
- **A memory basket** - a basket can be used instead of a box
- **A memory place** - a special place where you can meditate and think of the loved one. This can be a specific place that was valued by that particular person.
- **Memory clothes/ t-shirt** - special clothes that belonged to that particular person and make you think of the loved one.
- **Memory objects** - any special valued objects of the specific person
- **Memory pictures** - pictures, photos, television programmes, movies or music that will remind you of the specific person.
- **Collage** - pictures can be pasted on a chart to symbolise a person's past, present and future.

#### Any other ideas?

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### 3.1.9 Basic steps in making a memory box

#### 1. Get a box the learner can use

- This can be any box.
- Big enough to put objects/things in.
- Example: big A4 paper box, shoe box.

#### 2. Explain to the learner what a memory box is

- You could say the following: "We are going to take this box and tell the story of your life and of the lives of your family members on and in the box".
- Make it easy for the learner to understand.



### **3. Let the learner go through magazines**

- Let him/her choose his/her own pictures/words they want to use.
- The words / pictures must reflect the learner's life and things that are important to the learner / family.
- Cut the pictures out.
- Paste them outside or inside the box.
- The learner can take the magazine home and other people can choose pictures that the learner can also paste on the box.

### **4. Let the learner be creative**

- Let the learner decorate the box as s/he pleases.
- Let the learner paint or paste other things on the box that mean something to the learner or to his/her family.

### **5. Discuss the pictures/words**

- Encourage the learner to explain why specific pictures/words were chosen or
- how the learner feels about what is happening.

### **6. Other articles**

- Ask the learner what else s/he wants to put into the box.
- Other people the learner wishes to include can also contribute things s/he can put into the box.

### **7. Remind the learner**

- Tell the learner that memory box making is a never-ending process.
- The learner or other persons can keep on adding pictures, objects and things to the box.

## **3.2 Body map making**

# Body Map making

Presented by:  
Malize McCallaghan

## Table of Contents

### Paragraph

- 3.2.1 The history of body mapping
- 3.2.2 What is a body map?
- 3.2.3 The purpose of making a body map
- 3.2.4 Sources of information
- 3.2.5 List of materials used in making a body map
- 3.2.6 Why should educators know about body maps?
- 3.2.7 List of materials that can be used in making a body map
- 3.2.8 Basic steps in making a body map

### **3.2.1 The history of body mapping**

It was previously mentioned that memory boxes (and books) originated from Uganda. The women in Uganda wanted to communicate their love, caring, family roots and memories to their children. The idea was that the learners should be able to shape their identities by knowing where they came from and that they are or were loved by their parents/care-givers/friends. Projects that involve recording a family's legacy for a child are called **memory work**.

Other countries, like South Africa, were inspired also to use memory work to assist people suffering from HIV/AIDS. Other tools and techniques for memory work are presently being developed and implemented. Body mapping is one of these techniques.

### **3.2.2 What is a body map?**

A body map is a life-size drawing of a person telling his/her story of how s/he is experiencing a specific situation, for example an illness or the illness of another person. A body map reflects what the person is experiencing at the time the map is being made.

A body map involves the person sharing information not only about emotional experiences, but also about how his or her body is experiencing the situation. Information about how the people or things around the person interact with the person can also be added. Spiritual aspects of the experience, such as the person's religious beliefs and family values, can be added to the edges or parts of the body map the person chooses. Photos, pictures, words, drawings, symbols, things from nature - like leaves, or any object - can be pasted and used on the map to make it a true and rich story of how this person is living and experiencing a situation.

### **3.2.3 The purpose of making a body map**

The main purpose of a body map is letting a learner / adult tell his/her story about some situation they are experiencing at that specific time.

### **3.2.3.1 Body maps are a tool whereby a person can communicate with himself/herself**

A body map is a powerful tool for expressing a person's experience of his/her whole person. As we know, a person is body, mind and soul. Through body maps all these dimensions of a person can be recorded. The process of expressing the story of the whole-person experience of a situation can be very therapeutic to the learner/person making the body map. Being able to see the self visually can help learners or people organise their feelings and thoughts and help them cope better with situations. It is like making a personalised life-size photo of not only your body, but of your mind and soul as well.

### **3.2.3.2 Body maps can help the person communicate with helpers or the community**

Body maps are a way in which the educator, community worker or other helpers can better understand the situation of the learner/person. The facilitation of interventions can then be planned to better address challenges and needs more specifically. The information on a body map can also help people like doctors, nurses or even social workers to gather information about the care the person's needs.

### **3.2.3.3 Body maps can increase communication between family members**

The story of the person on the body map can help family members understand the person better. It was mentioned that topics that are sometimes not discussed by a parent/care-giver with a learner, such as death, are often discussed when making a memory box. The same is true for body maps. Each person in the family can make his or her own body map. The maps can then be shown and discussed amongst family members. What is happening to the parent due to the illness/situation can also be explained to the learner through a body map.

### **3.2.3.4 Body maps can communicate the assets within the person and the community**

Places, things and people in the community that the person identifies as assets in coping with the situation can be expressed in the story represented on the body map.

Values, beliefs and attitudes of the person making the map that contribute to hope and coping can be included on the map. Dreams and future plans are sometimes added.

### **3.2.3.5 Body maps can communicate the process of growth**

Sometimes making more than one body map can communicate and show how the person has grown, changed and experienced the different phases of a situation and intervention. This can help the learner/adult identify the skills, attitudes and knowledge s/he has gained from the situation. In other words, body maps can tell the story of learning about a person's self and his/her life.

**Any other ideas?**

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### **3.2.4 Sources of information**

The person making the body map can get information to put on his/her map and tell his/her story from the following sources:

#### **3.2.4.1 People**

- Thinking about yourself
- Talking with a pastor
- Talking with grandparents, other family members or friends
- Visits to the doctor, clinic or hospital
- Talking with other relevant people
- Talking to parents
- Talking with an educator

### 3.2.4.2 Other things

- Drawings
- Newspaper or other articles
- Poems
- Things from the environment like leaves / seeds / sand
- Photos
- Letters
- Memory boxes

#### Any other ideas?

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### 3.2.5 Why should educators know about body maps?

Body maps can be a helpful technique to improve one's understanding of a learner/adult you know needs emotional support. A lot of learners, and also some adults, find it difficult to express themselves to others. They cannot always find the words to tell others the story of their experience of a situation. It is also seldom that ALL aspects (themselves, their families, community) and dimensions (physical, spiritual, emotional, social) of their experiences are told. It was said that in making a body map, the person must try to tell the whole story about the experiences of his/her mind, body, heart, soul and community. If the learner is enabled to express all the dimensions and aspects of his/her experience, the educator and other helpers (like doctors, social workers, clinic nurses or church/community support teams) can plan appropriate interventions with the learner and family that could address immediate and future challenges and needs. The assets of the learner/adult, family and community displayed on the body map can be mobilised and used by the educator and other helpers in the intervention.

Any other ideas? \_\_\_\_\_  
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### 3.2.6 List of materials that can be used in making a body map

- Paper big enough to trace the whole body: like wrapping paper
- Drawing on the map
- Pictures/words: magazines
- Scissors
- Pieces of fabric
- Poems or letters
- Glue
- Things from the environment, like sand, leaves, stones, seashells etc.
- Photos
- Paint & brushes
- Crayons, felt pens
- String
- Mirror to look at him-/herself
- Photocopies of things

#### Any other ideas?

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- \_\_\_\_\_  
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### 3.2.7 Basic steps in making a body map

#### 1. Get paper that is big enough for the learner to use

- The whole body of the learner must be able to fit onto the paper.
- Wrapping paper can be used.

#### 2. Explain to the learner what a body map is

- You could say the following: "we are going to take this paper and tell the story of how your whole body, head and heart feel and think about what is happening to your mom/dad/grandpa/care-giver".
- "It is going to be like a big photo you make of your whole self and your home".

#### 3. Trace the body of the learner on the paper

- Let the learner lie down on the paper and trace the outlines of his/her body with a marker/pencil.
- Space can be left above the learners' head and feet to add more information.



**4. Let the learner colour/paint him/herself**

- Let the learner look at himself/herself in the mirror (or a window) and let the learner draw or paint his/ her face and hair. Other details can also be added if the learner chooses, such as the heart, brain or any other body parts or clothing. It doesn't need to look perfect.
- As the map is completed more things can be painted or drawn on the body outline.

**5. Let the learner be creative**

- Let the learner decorate or write on the map as s/he pleases.
- Pictures/words from magazines and other materials (see list) can be used to communicate the story of the learner.
- Let the learner paint or paste other things on the map that mean something to the learner or his/her family.

**6. Discuss the pictures/words, symbols and drawings**

- Encourage the learner to express feelings, experiences, thoughts, attitudes, actions, values and whole-person reactions to the situation.
- Encourage reflection on experiences of all aspects of the learner: body, feelings, spiritual, social, mind etc. These reflections must then be added to the map.
- The learner might need time to think about all these things first. Homework can be given to him/her to think about all these areas of reflection.

**7. Add information about the learner's environment**

- Social information can be added - what is happening in the world around the learner and how s/he is experiencing and interacting with the world.
- Assets and opportunities in the environment the learner can identify can be added on the map. The challenges of using or seeing these assets can also be present.

## 8. Remind the learner

- Body maps focus on the here-and-now experiences and stories of the learner in a specific situation.
- Tell the learner that his/her parent can also make their own body map, so that the learner can understand what is happening to the parent.
- Another map of the learner can be made at a later stage to show the story and experiences of a new situation.

The end of the body map manual

## 4 Practising the techniques

Now you have made your own memory boxes and body maps. We would like you to go and explore the techniques by doing the following:

### 4.1 Who?

Identify a learner in your class/school who has an ill family member and who you think has emotional needs that are not being met.

### 4.2 What?

- Make a memory box with the learner by following the basic steps suggested in 3.1.9.
- Make a body map with the same learner by following the steps suggested in 3.2.7.

### 4.3 When and where?

- **When?** We suggest you choose one morning a week before school or one afternoon a week after school to work with the learner. You and the learner can decide how long you want to work - one hour or more. As you are making a

memory box and a body map, you will need at least four or more sessions with the learner.

- **Where?** You can work inside or outside the classroom. Keep in mind that the learner needs privacy to be able to share his/her emotions, experiences and feelings. Working with scissors, glue and paint or text, is easier for some learners to do on a table or in a classroom.

#### 4.4 How?

- **Confidentiality**

Remember that the learner you work with trust you. The information s/he shares with you about him/her and his/her family must be respected by not telling other people about it. Everything the learner shares with you must stay between you, your buddy and the learner. Other people who contribute to the making of a memory box or body map can do so with the learner's consent.

- **The buddy system**

We suggest you find a buddy to help you in these projects with the learner, This buddy should be a person who also attended the workshop and knows about memory boxes and body maps. Your buddy will:

- help you gather materials that you need;
- take photos of the session while you work with the learner;
- help you when you don't know what to do;
- be someone you can talk to about what happened in a session or when you feel emotional after a session.
- This buddy must also keep all information confidential

Remember that you are doing the session and that your buddy is there to help, not take over the session. Sooner or later you are also going to be someone else's buddy.

- **Recording what you are doing**

Each of you will receive a **camera** and **journal** to record the sessions you have with the learner. You can take 27 photos with the camera. You can take 13 photos of the sessions where you make a memory box and 13 photos of the sessions you make a body map. You are going to take one photo NOW to make sure you know how to take a photo with this camera.

The journals must be used to reflect on what you did, what happened and how it felt for you and the learner to make the memory box and body map. Your journal includes information about reflections and is divided into 2 sections: one section for the process of making the memory box and the other for the process of making the body map. Let's quickly look at your journals...

## **5 Good luck!**

A lot of information has been given to you over the past two days. This is the biggest reason why a manual was compiled. You can revisit it as many times as you need. It is a first step in building up your knowledge of your pastoral role at your school.

In the end, being a good educator is about doing and not just about reading and learning new techniques. So now is your chance to go and practise and implement the things you've learnt. We hope that your experiences will be filled with wonderful moments of sharing and growth for both you and the learner.

Thank you again for coming to this workshop. We hope that the information that has been provided will assist you in helping learners and other people to help themselves. They count on you. Good luck!

## Important telephone numbers

### 1. Services:

- **Lifeline** 0800 0123 22  
Helpline and information on basic support with emotional problems
  
- **Learnerline** 0800 05 55 55  
Information on learners' rights and police assistance in cases of learner abuse or neglect
  
- **Department of Social development** 0800 60 10 11  
Information and services for healthy family and community development
  
- **Local community centre** \_\_\_\_\_  
Basic community support and development
  
- **Local Police Station** \_\_\_\_\_  
Assistance and protection against crime and harm
  
- **Local Fire Station** \_\_\_\_\_  
Fighting of fires
  
- **Local Government Clinic** \_\_\_\_\_  
Basic support and help with general health needs
  
- **Local Hospital Emergency Unit** \_\_\_\_\_  
When a learner is hurt or his/her life is in danger and s/he needs medical attention





# APPENDIX C



## APPENDIX C: INVITATION

### *Invitation*

*Dear educator and workshop participant*

*We would very much like to see you again at our following visit.*

*You are invited to join us on this visit for:*

- ❖ *A relaxing breather and lunch after you busy school day*
- ❖ *Receiving more useful information in Part 2 of the manual*
- ❖ *Presentation of a certificate on completing the workshop*
- ❖ *A photo in a frame will also be given to you to remember the workshop experience*

*Information regarding the date of our next visit  
will be sent to your principal  
and communicated to you.*

*Please remember to bring the following things next time we meet:*

- ❖ *Your journal with your reflection notes*
- ❖ *The camera given to you to take photo's of your sessions*
- ❖ *An appetite and your smile*

*We are looking forward to seeing you again!*

*Kind regards*

*Ronél, Liezel, Maria and Malize*

# APPENDIX D

## APPENDIX D: MANUAL FOR BASIC COUNSELLING SKILLS

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## 1. Thank you, educators!

Welcome back to part 2 of the workshop on memory box making and body map making, and thank you for your work!

Educators have always been people who are in contact with the larger community because they work with the learners of that community. The challenges and needs of that community are present in the learners the educators see every day. Learners come to you for help. These needs are sometimes physical (such as family needs for food or a place to stay) or emotional (such as a learner feeling sad, scared, angry or afraid). At our last workshop we mentioned that as teachers you were trained to help learners learn, so that giving support and help to a learner with other needs (for example physical or emotional needs) can be very difficult for educators.

Most schools in South Africa do not have trained counsellors. As a result, the work and role of counsellor often becomes the task of the educator; we discussed this with regard to your pastoral role as educators. As part of that role, we focused on what, when and how to make memory boxes and body maps in part 1 of the manual. In part 2 we will focus on counselling skills. We hope that this manual will help you to help learners in your school.

## 2. What is counselling?

What do you think counselling means? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Many people think that counsellors give advice to people and have an answer to every problem. There are many definitions of counselling. For our purpose, we will use Gillis's (1996: 2) definition of counselling. He says that:

"Counselling is a facilitative process in which the counsellor working within the framework of a special helping relationship, uses specific skills to assist young people to help themselves more effectively."

We will look at and discuss each of the concepts mentioned in this definition throughout the manual.

### **3. The counselling relationship**

The key words in the definition of the counselling relationship are 'facilitative process' and 'special helping relationship'.

#### **3.1 Facilitative process**

Counselling is a process, which means that the learner has to go through and experience change and growth in this relationship. The term 'facilitation' means that the counsellor helps the process along, but isn't in control and doesn't make all the decisions in this process of change and growth.

#### **3.2 Special helping relationship**

What makes the counselling relationship special is that the counsellor creates a warm and open environment for the learner to freely express him-/herself. How do you think one can create such an environment?

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A warm special relationship can be created when a counsellor tries to understand the learner's perspective of a situation. The counsellor doesn't tell a learner what to do, doesn't interrogate the learner or debate with the learner on his/her views. Moral judgments aren't made about the learners' beliefs, feelings or behaviour. This communicates to the learner that the counsellor accepts him/her as s/he is. Questions asked by the counsellor are aimed at understanding the learner. It is also very important that the counsellor is sincere and really accepts the learner and does not pass judgment, but tries to understand. Understanding the learner means that the counsellor can't use his/her values, thoughts and experiences to give an answer. Another word that can be used when one really understands the learners' feelings and thoughts is 'empathy'. This is the heart of the helping relationship.

These conditions help the learner to express emotions freely and to gain insight into his/her own world. The learner grows in his/her understanding of him-/herself and the situation challenging him/her.

(Gillis, 1994:1-3 and Meyer *et al.* 1994:395-418).

#### **4. Characteristics of a counsellor**

How do you think a good counsellor should act? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

##### **4.1 Skills**

Our definition says that 'specific skills' will be used by a counsellor to help the learner change her/his thoughts, feelings and behaviour. These skills include communicating understanding (or empathy), sincerity and acceptance.

#### 4.1.1 Understanding, sincerity and acceptance can be communicated by:

- Asking yourself if you are really trying to understand the learner.
- Not telling the learner your life experiences, it is his/her turn to talk and express feelings.
- Not interrupting the learner.
- Using words rich in emotion.
- Showing respect and interest in the learner in both word and deed.
- Talking in a way the learner will understand, at his/her level.
- Trying to understand the learners' experiences, behaviour and feelings.

#### 4.1.2 Active listening skills

Really listening to the learner means that s/he will do most of the talking. The following can help you to make sure you listen to the learner:

- Use the minimum of verbal responses. This can help you not to take control of the process. Using phrases such as 'Um-humm', or 'Yes?' will encourage the learner to keep on talking.
- Look at the learner's other non-verbal behaviour. For example: is s/he very nervous and biting his/her nails, does the learner want to cry, does s/he look afraid? Ask the learner if you understand his/her behaviour correctly. For example, ask the learner: "I see your eyes are full of tears, are you feeling very sad or are you very angry?"
- Sometimes silences can help the learner to keep on talking, as s/he feels that you want him/her to say more.
- Probing is a technique educators often use in class and can also be used in the counselling process. Probes are statements, requests and open-ended questions. Probes can help you to fully understand the story the learner is trying to tell you. By using probes effectively, the counsellor can get a clearer and more complete picture of the situation.
- Summarise what the learner has said to help you make sure you understood him/her correctly. Do this at the right time, when the learner has finished

talking. Example: "I understand that you feel alone and you think you are dumb, am I right?"

#### 4.1.3 Non-verbal communication

Communicating openness with your body is necessary to make the learner feel accepted. Keep the following in mind (a method referred to as **SOLER**), as it will show the learner that you are really listening:

- **S:** Sit squarely in front of the learner so that you can see her/his reactions and so that s/he can see your body posture. This will show the learner that you are with him/her and paying attention. Sitting directly opposite him/her, without a desk between you, can sometimes make the learner afraid to talk.
- **O:** Have an open posture. Keep your arms relaxed at your side and your legs comfortable. Do not force your posture and sit un-comfortably, as you will look unnatural.
- **L:** Lean slightly forward; this will communicate that you are giving your full attention to what the learner is saying.
- **E:** Make eye contact with the learner in a non-threatening way. Remember that in some cultures not making eye contact with an adult expresses respect.
- **R:** Be relaxed and let the learner talk at his/her own pace. Concentrate on listening to what the learner is saying and on understanding what is being said. Do not think too much about how you should react or what questions to ask the learner.

Make sure that the room in which the counselling is taking place is private and that nobody can hear the conversation. The room must be tidy and big enough.

(Gillis, 1994:16-26 & 50-63 and Egan, 2002:64-70; 73-89; 93-135).



## 4.2 Attitudes

The most important attitude a counsellor must have, as mentioned, is to sincerely like and accept learners. Other attitudes include the following:

- The counsellor is not a friend visiting the learner, but a counsellor having a goal-directed conversation focusing on the learner.
- This conversation and the whole process are done at the learner's pace and mustn't be rushed.
- The counsellor mustn't become overinvolved with the learner; this will not help the learner. Having sympathy for the learner, for example crying with the learner, is sometimes the first sign of becoming too involved.
- The goals of the counsellor are to understand the learner and to interpret the things said by the learner in the correct way.
- Not being judgmental and having respect and empathy for the learner is vital in being a good counsellor.
- Good counsellors know that they are also just human and cannot change the world or be perfect. Two people are needed to do the work in a counselling situation. The counselling process takes time to develop and goals have to be realistic.
- Being creative and enthusiastic about your work can contribute to making the learner feel hopeful again.
- Work hard at knowing and liking yourself. If you do not like yourself it will be harder to help a learner like himself/herself. Know what topics make you emotional because they are too close to your own life experiences.
- Reading more about counselling and helping relationships is very important. Learning as much as you can about learners' development, specific counselling skills and how to create a caring and warm atmosphere is vital in becoming a good counsellor. People are different from each other, which makes counselling a complex process.

## 5. The counselling process

The counselling process occurs as a whole, but can be structured in the following five stages. Always keep in mind that people are unique and that the counselling process might need to be adapted to each learner's emotional needs. The stages of the counselling process are:

### **5.1 The beginning**

The learner comes to you or is sent to you by someone. You arrange a facilitative setting that is private. You briefly introduce yourselves if you do not know each other well.

### **5.2 The learner tells his/her story**

The learner tells you what is going on. The challenges, problems and issues are told. Self-exploration is encouraged. The counsellor helps the learner to express as many feelings, thoughts and behaviours as possible. Opportunities that facilitate change are identified. Reasons why these opportunities have not been used are identified.

### **5.3 Challenges that hinder action are faced**

The feelings, thoughts and behaviour that keep the learner from taking action are faced and challenged. Action plans with different ways of facing the challenges are formulated by the learner with the help of the counsellor. Every plan is then discussed in terms of what it will take to implement the plan, for example will the plan take a lot of time to implement, does the learner have the money or resources to put the plan into action, what will it take to make a success of the plan?

### **5.4 Action is taken and opportunities are used**

A plan that seems the best is chosen. All the opportunities are used to make a success of the plan when the action is taken. The results of the action are then evaluated. If the plan wasn't successful, another plan is implemented.

## 5.5 The end

If the plan was successful and the learner has gained self-knowledge and is able to function without your support, the counselling sessions can be stopped. In the school context, checking whether the learner is still doing well should not be too difficult.

What do you think is the goal of the counselling process? \_\_\_\_\_

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Our definition says that counselling must help people to help themselves. The learner will be able to function without your support if counselling is facilitative, as it encourages independent thinking and doing. Growth and self-knowledge will then realise. (Gillis, 1994:82-95 and Egan, 2002:21-38).

## 6. ~~Important things to remember~~

### 6.1 Confidentiality

It is always important to keep all the information that is shared with you confidential. The identity of learner must be kept confidential. You cannot tell other people about anything the learner told you about himself or his family or even that the learner is coming to you. This is especially important if the learner tells you s/he or a family member is HIV positive or has AIDS. The only time you can tell other people is when the learner gives you permission to talk to someone or when the learner's life is in danger (Report of National Conference, 1997:113-117).

### 6.2 Questions to ask yourself

The following questions (Collins, 1988: 25-39) can help you to stay on the right track:

- Can I handle this problem or is there someone who is better able to help the learner?

- What is the most important thing the learner is telling me? What does the learner want to change in his/her life?
- Do I really understand the learner?
- Am I being fair and non-judgmental towards the learner?
- Am I myself in a good state of mind and emotion to counsel the learner?
- Do I believe that this learner can help him/herself?
- What resources and opportunities are there and how can we get them activated to use them?

(Collins, 1988:25-39).

### **6.3 Take good care of yourself and other educators**

It is important that you keep in touch with your own feelings and needs. Take care of yourself as well. Do not try to change all at once. Do not counsel more learners than you can handle. Do not be ashamed of saying you don't know how to handle something - ask colleagues. Identify someone you can trust and talk to about your feelings, thoughts and behaviour in such a way that you still keep the identity and information of the learner you see confidential. You could also use the information given in Appendix A on the technique of debriefing one another.

(Collins, 1998:35-37).

## **7. Crisis counselling**

### **7.1 Crisis situations**

A lot of the times a learner will come to you right after something bad or traumatising has happened. This is a crisis situation for him/her and s/he does not know what to do. Because the learner might be in shock, his/her emotions can be intense and overwhelming. The counselling given in these situations can be seen as emotional first aid. The following plan of action can help you provide immediate relief in a crisis situation:

### **7.1.1 Be prepared**

Have a plan of action ready for different situations. When a crisis occurs, it is sometimes difficult to think straight because of all the emotions and stress involved. It can be helpful to formulate certain action plans - for example for suicidal behaviour, learners whose parents abandon or neglect them, cases of learner abuse or the death of a loved one - beforehand. Think of ways you can act in these situations. Make a list of numbers of people, services and help lines you can use in crisis situations. **Appendix A** of part 1 has some numbers of national help and information centres. You can add local services such as clinics and shelters as well as people in the community (such as pastors or doctors) that can offer help and support. This list can be called your support network.

### **7.1.2 Expect the learner to have intense emotions and not think straight**

Some people break down in crisis situations and cannot think of anything to help them. Sometimes they won't be able to even remember telephone numbers of friends, family or even where they live. Try to calm the learner down and patiently ask for information that is relevant to help them. Unnecessary and long questions can add to anxiety.

### **7.1.3 Act calmly**

You should try to keep your emotions in control and act calm, confident and in a structured manner. Having an action plan can also help you do this. Remember that in a crisis emotions are intense, and if you lose control of your own emotions you won't be able to help the learner.

### **7.1.4 Short-term help comes first. Remember the most important things**

The first important thing is to make sure the learner's life isn't in danger. Getting the learner home or to a place where s/he will be safe and offered support is very important. Make the learner as comfortable as possible while handling the situation. Make sure s/he is warm enough, can breathe easily and whether s/he needs to sit, lie down, walk around or needs something to drink. Try to find out whom you can contact to help the learner, for example friends or family of the learner.

### **7.1.5 Use all your counselling skills**

Be supportive and encourage the learner to share his/her feelings and thoughts. Communicate empathy to the learner by really listening to what s/he is saying. Make sure you understand how the learner is experiencing the crisis. Sometimes the situation will not seem like a crisis to you or others, but it is to the learner. Remain calm and do not be caught up in the learner's emotions too much, as you might become emotional yourself. Encourage the learner to be calm, patient and work with you to handle the problem. Be careful not to give false reassurances by saying all will work out if you don't know if it will.

### **7.1.6 Try to formulate a plan of action with the learner**

In a crisis, it is important not to focus too much on the confusing facts and details of the situation. Focusing on what is happening now and on what is important to do is a good way to encourage the learner to take action. Help the learner to make plans of action and decisions regarding the things that need to happen immediately, like how s/he will get home or who can help and support him/her at home. Explore all the things and people in the learner's life that might be able to offer support. This can be done on paper or by just talking. Try not to make all the decisions for the learner. When a learner is very young or unable to make decisions, suggest possible action to him/her and let the learner choose wherever possible. See appendix A for information on classroom debriefing.

(Adapted from: Gillis, 1994:158-160 and Collins, 1988:63-73).

## **7.2 Grief counselling**

Grieving is a very emotional process which one must respect. Grieving for something lost is a natural and necessary process, as it helps a person to accept the loss and to lead a full life after losing someone or something important to him/her. It is important to remember that a learner may also grieve after losing his/her family life as s/he knew it when parents divorce or may grieve about a friend who moved to a different place. Grieving therefore does not only occur after a person dies, but also after the loss of something of importance to the learner.

### 7.2.1 Basic information

As death is also a crisis, the information given about crisis counselling is also important in grief counselling. Other counselling skills like empathy, active listening, warmth, honesty and confidentiality must also be used in grief counselling.

In grief counselling, grief is seen as a process that occurs after the death of a loved one. The reaction of the learner will depend on his/her age, the relationship s/he had with the deceased and the amount of support given to him/her by friends or family. It is difficult for a learner under seven years of age to understand the concept of dying. Learners between the ages of 7-10 years can begin to understand that others can die, but it is only in early adolescence that learners realise that they too can die.

### 7.2.2 The grieving process:

Grieving is a process that can be divided into 4 stages:

- ***Stage 1 - Knowing of the death: the initial shock***

This is when the learner finds out of the person's death. Some learners will be shocked and become afraid, very emotional (anger, panic, sadness) or even experience physical distress (like shaking, vomiting, dizziness). For other learners the reality of the death might only hit home at the funeral or even later.

- ***Stage 2 - Feeling and dealing with memories***

Memories of the person who died and feelings of intense sadness and loneliness occur. Many learners seem to be depressed at this stage. They can not think about the present and only talk about the past when the loved one was still alive. Some learners do not allow themselves to feel the pain of the loss and behave differently, like being angry all the time without knowing why.

- ***Stage 3 - Adapting***

The learner and his/her family or caregivers learn how to cope with life without the deceased. This is very difficult for learners, as they must sometimes take over

responsibilities that the deceased used to bear, such as cooking, looking after brothers and sisters and cleaning the house. Sometimes the family has to move to a new home because of financial difficulties.

- ***Stage 4 - Moving on and acceptance of the loss***

The learner is now getting used to his/her new life and isn't so sad anymore. Memories of the deceased aren't so painful anymore and are less intense. The learner's feelings about his/her life are more positive. The learner is beginning to accept the new way of life.

### **7.2.3 What the counsellor and other adults can do for the learner**

- If it is possible, the learner must be prepared for the death of a loved one. Being honest with the learner is very important. Explain what is happening in a way that the learner will understand.
- In addition, if possible a person who is familiar to the learner can tell him/her of the death in a calm way. Try to tell the learner in a place where s/he can express emotions freely.
- Adults in the learner's life must also express their feelings of grief in front of the learner so that s/he can see that grieving is normal.
- Be honest about what death means. The learner must understand that the deceased will never return.
- If the learner is able to attend the funeral, the counsellor must encourage it. The learner can see that other people are also grieving. S/he is not alone and may feel sad like the other people at the funeral.
- Encourage the learner to express his/her emotions and not bottle them up. Let the learner know s/he can talk about memories. Be patient with and sensitive to the learner's pace and way of mourning, as it differs from learner to learner.
- Make use of the learner's spiritual and religious dimension to understand death and to find hope in his/her life. Knowing that the deceased is happy in heaven sometimes gives hope to the learner that s/he may also be happy again.
- Make as few changes to the learner's daily routine as possible.



- The goal of grief counselling is to help the learner accept the death and to move on with living life effectively without the deceased. Get professional help if the grieving period is very long (more than 12 months) and the learner is still not coping with everyday life.

(Cutcliffe, 1998:754-761; Gillis, 1994:163-165; McLaren, 1998:275-290; Report of a National Conference, 1997:57-66 and Swindells, 1993:97-106).

## **8. Good luck!**

A lot of information was given to you over the past two days. This is the biggest reason why a manual was compiled. You can revisit it as many times as you need. As we have seen, you are important to the learners in your classrooms: you are sometimes the only person who can give them support and guidance. As an educator you have a pastoral role to fulfil.

It was pointed out that further reading and adding of information in the space provided in the appendixes is vital to your understanding of the difficult and complex process of counselling. We want to emphasize this again. In the end, counselling is about doing and not just about attending workshops, reading and talking. Practice and implement the things you've learnt in the workshops. We hope that your experiences will be filled with wonderful moments of sharing and growth.

Thank you again for coming to another workshop. We hope that the information that was given will assist you in helping learners and young people to help themselves. They are counting on you. Good luck!!!

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# Classroom debriefing

## 1. Introduction

An educator may face a situation where the whole class or all the learners in the school are affected by trauma. A trauma can be, for example, a sudden death or an incident of violence on the school grounds or in the community which directly involves learners.

Debriefing should be conducted as soon as possible after the trauma. Everyone in the group should have a chance to talk, therefore the groups should not be too big - a maximum of 20 participants is recommended. Before the debriefing, the facilitating educator (debriefeer) must be familiar with all the facts of the trauma.

## 2. Debriefing phases

Debriefing consists of different steps and phases. The basic steps involve addressing three things:

- Facts
- Thoughts and feelings
- Coping

These steps can be seen as the main objectives of debriefing. Seeing that debriefing is a process, however, it cannot be done in three distinctly separate steps. In the process of carrying out these steps, each step can be done in phases, where each phase is diffuse and overlaps with the other phases. In our discussion of debriefing we will first look at the step (in other words, the main objective) and then the phases (in other words, what you will be doing in each phase).

## **2.1 STEP 1**

Here the focus is on facts. Think of it as putting all the facts on the table before addressing anything.

### **2.1.1 Introductory phase**

In this phase the debriefer introduces himself/herself and tells the group that s/he is aware of what has happened (namely the trauma) and that the purpose of the group is to talk about this event. The debriefer needs to set certain rules so that the pupils feel safe in the group. These rules include the following:

- The learners will not be forced to speak if they do not want to. They need only to say their names and their connection to the trauma. However, learners can be told that the more they speak, the more they might benefit from the session.
- Each learner should speak for himself/herself and describe only his or her own actions. Learners should not talk about or judge others' behaviours during or after the trauma.
- Learners need to listen respectfully to others. They should not talk or laugh while other learners are speaking.
- What is said in the group should remain confidential. Learners should not gossip outside the group.
- Learners should be reassured that the debriefers are not playing detective and that the debriefing is not a fact-finding mission. The information is private and will not be passed on to parents or other educators.
- Participants should be warned that they might feel "down" during the group discussion on the trauma and re-experience the painful feelings associated with it. Reassure them that they will feel relieved after the session.
- The participants should also be told about the structure of the discussion and be invited to ask questions.

### **2.1.2 Fact phase**

Each learner gets the opportunity to tell the group what happened during the trauma, including the facts about his/her experiences during the trauma. The debriefer can ask

questions to get a clear understanding of the sequence of events. At this point the debriefer should be alert and correct any misunderstandings the learners might have about what happened. The learners may have imagined or misunderstood the causes of the trauma, or what actually happened in the event. This phase clarifies for all the learners exactly what happened and clears up unnecessary anxiety or playground speculation.

## 2.2 STEP 2

This step of debriefing looks at the learners' **thoughts and feelings** during the trauma. Learners are invited to talk about their own feelings and thoughts before, during and after the event. Many learners are not used to talking about feelings, and the debriefer may need to help those learners along by asking a few questions such as: "How did you feel when you saw the man holding the gun?" or "How did you feel when you heard that Jamie had died in hospital?" This part of the debriefing can be very comforting to the learners and help to reduce the sense of isolation as they begin to realise that others also had similar thoughts and feelings. Talking about the learners' memories in this way seems to lessen the strength of memories, with the intrusive thoughts of the trauma less likely to plague the learner.

### 2.2.1 The symptom phase

The effects of the trauma on the learners are discussed. The learners are asked to describe any changes they have noticed in themselves (in their feelings, thoughts and behaviours) after the trauma. The debriefer then summarises all of the reactions and symptoms for the group and also adds symptoms that may not have been mentioned. The learners need to be told that these reactions are normal responses to a trauma and that they will pass with time.

## 2.3 STEP 3

This step is about **coping**. The debriefer invites learners to give suggestions about ways to deal with the symptoms and also provides some ideas for them. It is useful to emphasise that merely talking about the trauma, as has been done in the debriefing,

helps to relieve the symptoms. The debriefer can also explain where the learner can go for help.

### **2.3.1 Closure phase**

During this phase the debriefer thanks the learners for their co-operation and affirms their bravery about the trauma. Each learner can be asked to tell the group how they experienced the debriefing and what they found helpful or not so helpful. If possible, learners should be offered a follow-up session if they want one. This session usually takes place after a few weeks and is less formally structured. The follow-up session allows the learners to talk about progress and improvement and also about any new stressors that have arisen, for example, attending a funeral or interacting with the police services.

**Debriefing can be very draining for learners. A break should be provided afterwards.** During the course of the debriefing the debriefer may notice that one or more of the learners seem to be having severe reactions. At a later time, in private, the debriefer can call these individuals aside and talk to them. If necessary, the learner's family members may also need to be involved in obtaining help for the learner. Refer the learner for specialised help.



# APPENDIX E



## APPENDIX E: POEM

### **STRAWBERRY**

*Send information about me where ever you can  
Sow my love where ever you can  
Serve me in the form of supporting each other, for I'm a  
Symbol of pain but also of love and unity*

*Talk about me where-ever you go  
Take me with you to share with the needy and in the process  
Tears will be shed and shared but  
Time, loving care and support will dry them and heal the pain*

*Respect me and stop having a negative attitude towards me  
Reach out for the good in me then you'll have the most fulfilling life  
Remember that i also have the right to live and we can all have the most fulfilling life if we  
Respect each other and seek only the best in each other*

*Affected and infected we all are  
Affected and infected emotionally, spiritually, socially, financially and physically from fear  
Affected and infected due to our attitude towards each other  
Affected and infected eternally unless we change our attitude*

*Words are the most powerful weapons  
Weapons that we can use to heal and build each other  
Well used we can conquer together and the  
World will only focus on the good in me and i will also take out only the good in the world*

*Be there for each other and stop assassinating each other emotionally  
Best things in life are always for free  
Bring out the best in me and stop being fearful  
Being fearful about your death before your actual death, that's cowardice!*

*Empowering yourself educationally about me wont help you if you don't  
Empower your attitude towards me and learn to have  
Emotional intelligence as it is your only way to complete healing  
Emotional healing affects and infects all the wounded aspects in your life*

*Rely on each other and always spread words of wisdom and healing*

*Respect each other's emotions, it simply shows how much respect we have towards ourselves*

*Realise that being affected could be more traumatic and can be a slow poison to the world*

*Remember that you can choose to eat lemons as they are or make lemonade out of them*

*Reap love and not only pain from me*

*Reap laughter and joy not only sadness from me*

*Reap unity and not separation of families and friends*

*Reap the ultimate in me! a fearless life!*

*You need to share your love and support*

*Your support to others is the best medication for yourself and the world*

*You can stop hurting each other and start campaigning towards living a happy life together*

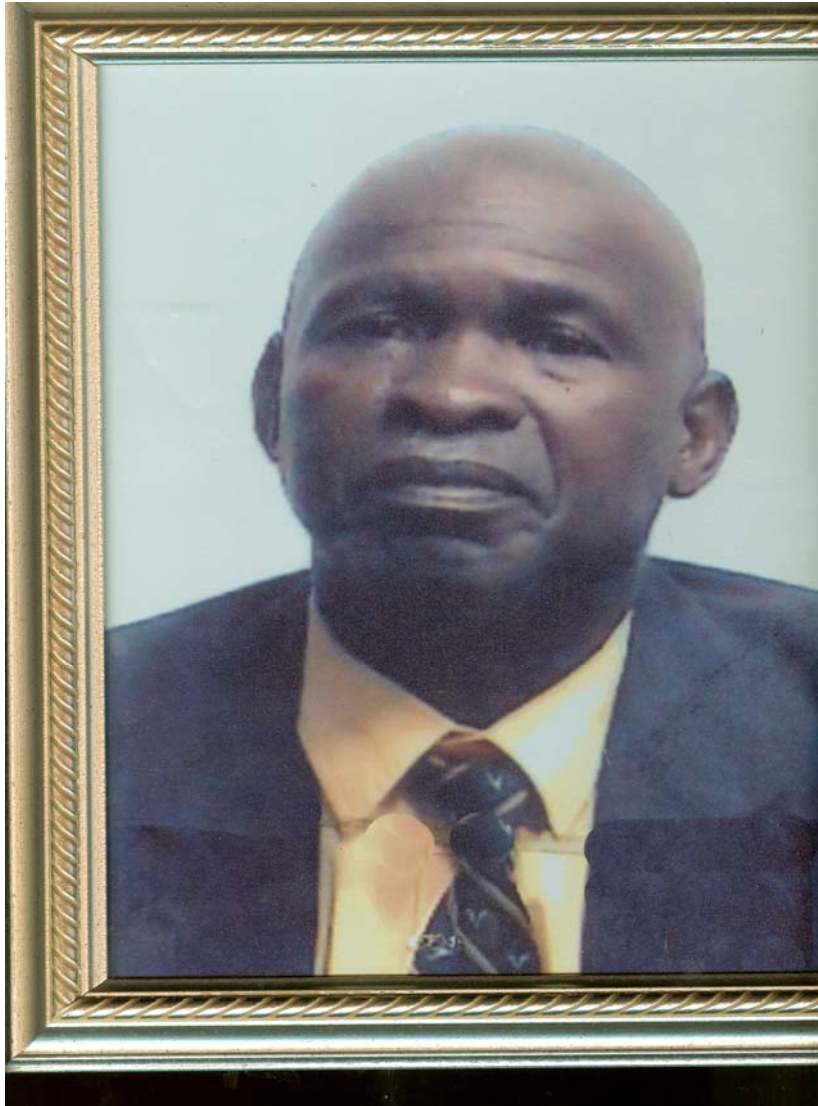
*Your attitude about me is the only one that will determine your altitude of *happiness**

*By: Pheladi Granny M.A. Mnguni*

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# APPENDIX *f*

## APPENDIX F: OBITUARY



Bophelo Bjaka

1. LEVI Mnguni Tsaru Selwane
2. O belegetswe Stand sa magotsi  
Lady Selborne District Pretoria West  
next to Mountain View ko Roman Catholic  
Church
3. O belegue ka di 19th May 1938.
4. O ne a le ngwana wa Mathomo mogare  
ga basimane ba Tshelalang (b) Boy one girl  
Kamoka re be rele (8). ka palo.
5. Ene e le morwa Le Shadrack Frederic  
Bijela Mnguni Le Jane Masefako Mnguni
6. O goletse Riverside Storm O tsene seko  
to mo Rooi Skool Eersterus. Go tloga moa  
ya Talong ya Premier mine - Callinan O tsene  
seko gona moa O tsene seko mo Mampa  
mine School - (Bynespoort) ka ngwaga wa 1947  
go fihla ka 1956. O pasi tse ditluto mphato  
wa Std 6 ka Ist Class. Go be go se na lle me  
la se zulu go ba Ndebele. Pedi Language e be le  
yona fela. O ithutile Sepedi-gagolo. e be le  
Bago ba ka le barutiši
- EBe e le:
  1. J.J. De Jager NTL Head of schools
  2. Nakeni Inspector of schools
  3. L.M. Mongalo - Principal (8) Mrs M. Mongalo
  4. W.D. Maraka - (9) Mrs - Maphoto
  5. - Hlaletsoa - 10 Mr - Hoane-Hoyane
  6. H.M. Huma -
  7. D. Molala - P.T.O

Go tloga mo o ile tswele pele ka -  
Dithuto ko sekolong se phagameng sa  
Mamelodi Secondary School during 1957 -  
go fihla ka nguaga wa 1959. Mathi šere;

- a) Principal MR - Motsepe
- b) " " ME Mamabolo
- c) Mr Lekgothoane
- d) Mr Kgarebe
- e) Mr DAVIS
- f) Mr Tshabangu
- g) Mr Selepe
- h) Mr Masemola

Go tloga mo o šametše Welfra Steel  
works. from 1960 - 1963. O šametše S.A.R  
H. from 1968 - 1993. O nyalane le morodi  
waga Mazibuko e leng Emah matlakala -  
mnguni, <sup>1964</sup> Ba šegofatswa ka bana ba ba (b)  
e leng,

- a) Thomas
- b) Anah
- c) Jane
- d) Leah
- e) Lucy
- f) Siphwe

L.Muguni . 1998.

## TRANSLATION OF THE OBITUARY

### MY LIFE

1. Levi Mnguni (Tсарu Selwane)
2. He was born at Mogotsi's stand in Lady Selborne District, Pretoria West next to Mountain View at the Roman Catholic Church.
3. He was born on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 1938.
4. He was the first child amongst six boys (6) and one girl.
5. He was the son of Shadrack Frederic Bijela Mnguni and Jane Masefako Mnguni.
6. He grew up in Riverside Storm, he attended school at Rooi Skool in Eersterus. From there he moved to a place called Premier Mine-Cullinan. He attended school there. He attended school at Mampa Mine School (Bynespoort) from 1947 until 1956. He passed standard six with first class. By then Zulu and Ndebele language was not taught in schools, there was only the Pedi language. He learnt Sepedi a lot.

### My elders and teachers were:

1. J.J. De Jager N.T.L. -Head of schools
2. Nakani- Inspector of schools
3. L.M. Mongalo –Principal
4. W.D. Maraka
5. Hlalethoa
6. H.M. Huma
7. D. Molala
8. Mrs M. Mongalo
9. Mr Hoane-Hoyane

From there he continued with his studies at Mamelodi High School from 1957 till 1959.

### Teachers:

- (a) Principal Mr Motsepe
- (b) V. Principal Mamabolo
- (c) Mr Lekgothoane
- (d) Mr Kgarebe
- (e) Mr Davis
- (f) Mr Tshabangu
- (g) Mr Selepe

(h) Mr Masemola

From there he was employed at Welfra steel works from 1960-1963. He worked for S.A.R&H from 1968 -1993. He married Mazibuko's daughter who is Emah Matlakala Mnguni -1964. they were blessed with six children, namely:

- (a) Thomas
- (b) Anah
- (c) Jane
- (d) Leah
- (e) Lucy
- (f) Sphiwe



# APPENDIX G

## APPENDIX G: MY RESEARCH DIARY

### WHAT HAPPENED?

We arrived a bit late and went straight to the school, when we arrived at school we found the deputy principal and she explained that the other teachers went to the memorial service because two teachers in the area have passed away. She explained that some of the teachers promised to come back. Two teachers came back. They cheerfully greeted and welcomed us. We went to the staff room and had lunch with them. We ate pies and cool drink. They enjoyed the food. They explained to us that there are learners whom the parents are ill and they try to support such learners emotionally, financially and spiritually.

They explained that there's a parent who was trying to commit suicide and they went to that home and gave the parent emotional support. They explained that the woman wanted to kill herself because the husband was abusing her emotionally, physically and financially. They said the woman told them that the husband shouted her in front of a group of people and told her that she is HIV positive. They said the woman felt helpless and she tried to kill herself. They also explained that they go to other members of the community and make them aware of HIV. One teacher explained that she did candle lighting at her church and some people were able to talk about HIV and how they can support each other. They explained that each teacher volunteers in what she is doing and makes follow ups.

On Friday we arrived at school and had lunch with the teachers. They enjoyed the meal and they were very happy to have strawberries again since they had them last time. The educators congratulated her about the baby. They wanted to know how the baby is doing and they told her that she should have a baby girl next time.

Maleze welcomed them again and explained to them what we are going to do. I discussed with them the roles of educators and Maleze discussed with them the pastoral role of the educators and discussed the importance of this role. The teacher explored the challenges that they have in fulfilling this task. We discussed some strategies/ skills in fulfilling this role, if the memory box making and body mapping .

I explained to them what memory box making is, how it can be used, why it should be used. The teachers were at first reluctant and said it will discriminate the children who are ill and they also explained that it arouses sad memories. I further discussed with them how they can use memory box making in their class across all learning areas and that it is more about how a person celebrated his/her life, about good times in a person's life so that when the person is gone then the people who are remaining behind have to remember him about. The educators then started sharing good memories

about their loved ones who have passed away and they said they regret that they did not capture such memories.

Malize explained to them what body mapping is, they were at first reluctant and again felt that its about bad memories. She explained to them how they can use body mapping to identify their feelings so that they can be able to deal with them. The educators then started sharing and discussing ways in which body mapping can be used. We had lunch and during lunch we interacted and discussed issues that they were not clear about.

After lunch Maleze did the practical part of body mapping. Before that she explained to them what they should do for their home work as discussed in the manual. The educators enjoyed doing the body map it was such fun. They had to complete their body map, at home because we did not have enough time to complete it. Each educator showed a picture of her body map. They also had to complete their memory boxes at home. We gave all the educators the boxes and magazines and paper body mapping and memory box making. It was such a wonderful experience and we had lots of fun through sharing there wonderful ideas with educators. We discussed the date for the next visit with the educators and we gave them invitations for the next visit (Appendix C).

On the second visit we arrived at the school and the educators gave us a very warm welcome. We had lunch together. We welcomed the educators and briefly reminded them what a memory box is, its uses and how it can be done. Thereafter we discussed with them their experienced in making their memory boxes and bodymaps and those of children.

There after the educators started presenting their memory boxes and body maps. When they were presenting their memory boxes and body maps they also raised issues about how the memory work helped them, for example to remember their parents who have passed away and how they can retrieve the memories that they had with them. Some of the educators did not bring their memory work and they promised to bring it the following day.

At the end of workshop I read a poem for the educators and I also gave them a few strawberry plants and explained to them that they may regard the strawberries as a symbol of support amongst each other and in the community. I also explained to them that as the plants grow and multiply they can give some plants to the other staff members and the community. We took the disposable cameras

On the second day we had lunch again together. Whilst we were having lunch the educators made a lot of jokes, we had informal discussions about a lot of issues and laughed a lot. We gave the educators their photographs and they presented some of their photographs. The educators who did not present their memory work presented it. Thereafter we discussed how they experienced doing memory work

with children, the experiences that they had and how they handled the challenges. We integrated this discussion with the discussion of counseling skills that they used or did not use. My supervisor and co-supervisor assisted with debriefing the educators who seemed to be emotionally affected. They also assisted us with taking photos and recording what was happening during the workshop.

At the end of the workshop we presented the certificates of attendance to the educators and thanked them for attending the workshop. It was sad to say our goodbye since we were so used to the group and we enjoyed the relationship that we had with them.

#### WHAT / HOW DO I INTERPRET (FEELINGS)?

I was touched by the way in which the educators are involved in the community and in the lives of children at their school. I realized that they are more concerned with the learners' social life and more concerned with the learners' social and emotional problems and how they can support learners. I realized that they always go on extra mile in supporting the learners in their school and the community at large, I realized that they are very willing to fulfill their pastoral role as educators but they need to more empowered with skills that will help them to be more supportive towards children.

#### REFLECTION ON RESEARCH AND THEORY

During the workshops the educators participated willingly and they were eager to share their feelings and a lot of information with us. The workshop went well and the educators seemed to enjoy doing their memory work although at first they were reluctant. During the workshop the educators explained how they usually support children who are having emotional problems. They also explained how they support different members of the community regarding the problems that they have.

The educators also indicated the problems that they usually encounter when supporting children with regards to their emotional problems. They also gave an indication of how they are affected by these problems. Some of them indicated the importance of having a support group so as to share the frustrations that they might encounter and share ideas on how to support each other. I found the information to be worthwhile for my study.

# APPENDIX 5

## **APPENDIX H: EXERPT OF TRANSCRIPTS**

# *APPENDIX J*

## APPENDIX I: DEDUCTIVE ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUPS

### EMPATHY

- Be able to support them participant, be able to identify what their needs are, what their problems are participant 2 visit.1
- For the learner to open up participant 2 visit 1
- You can see when there is a problem participant 2 visit 1
- She was like this and now her performance has change participant 1 visit 1
- To be able to identify that the child has got a problem participant 1 visit 1
- To know that this child is not like before participant 1 visit
- Take care of them participant 1 visit 1
- What does take care of them means participant 1 visit 1
- They are your responsibility participant 2 visit 1
- You must detect everything from the kid participant 2 visit 1
- Because they are working with them participant 2 visit 1
- Taking with them so that you can hear their problems participant 1 visit 1
- I did because my mother was drinking participant 1 visit 1
- You are going to learn what is going on with the child participant 1 visit 1
- That is why you've been sleeping here at school participant 1 visit 1
- You didn't sleep well last night participant 1 visit 1
- You have to do whatever because that child is not going to get anything participant 3 visit 1
- Can't take the child out of school because they haven't got school fund participant 3 visit 1
- Its not their fault participant 3 visit 1
- Take care of the emotional needs of the child. participant 3 visit 1
- There are people who cannot afford participant 3 visit 1
- Know the background of the child at the end of the day participant 3 visit 1
- Identify children with problems participant 3 visit 1
- You laugh with them then you can identify their problems participant 3 visit 1
- You mist identify children that are being abused, especially emotionally participant 3 visit 1
- You must guide them participant 3 visit 1
- You talk about some children being abused participant 3 visit 1
- Violence at home, family violence participant 3 visit 1
- Drinking liquor, the mother and the father and then they tight participant 2 visit 1
- Exposed to so many things that they are not supposed to see participant 2 visit 1
- To take care of them participant 2 visit 1
- Take that child to the clinic participant 2 visit 1
- You must tell your mother to take you to the clinic participant 2 visit 1



- Principal who is very supported participant 2 visit 1
- He always take them participant 3 visit 1
- If there is a problem, maybe in a school participant 2 visit 1
- To tell them how important it is for them to report about participant 2 visit 1
- Children at risk participant 2 visit
- My mother is very weak participant 1 visit 1
- Instead of helping a person you make stones about the sickness participant 2 visit 1
- Instead of helping she talked about the illness participant 2 visit
- can see that the kid doesn't want to be at school participant 2 visit
- That child is taking care of the mother participant 2 visit
- There's a reason why the child is behaving like that participant 2 visit 1
- That child is taking care of the mother participant 2 visit 1
- She wanted to take care of the mother participant 2 visit 1
- Talking we must create friendship with the family participant 2 visit 1
- Talk to her while we are visiting her participant 3 visit 1
- To create the atmosphere of trust participant 3 visit 1
- The atmosphere of love, all those things participant 3 visit 1
- I just sit down with my children and talk to them and tell them about my life
- You were not performing like this participant 3 visit 1
- Ask the child to explain what happened participant 3 visit 1
- Because this is the child's soul participant 3 visit 1
- Child will gain by remembering what they were like last year participant 3 visit 1
- Some of them are shy participant 3 visit 1
- That it's about your life participant 3 visit 1
- You don't have to pressurize them participant 3 visit 2
- You can tell them something on their level participant 4 visit
- She can tell me, make one for yourself participant 4 visit 2
- Let's make something that you get to know your family participant 4 visit 2
- They must use their own photos participant 4 visit 2
- On their family trees at school they are participant 7 visit 2
- We can encourage them to use their own family photos participant 7 visit 2
- Things that you want your children to know when you die participant 7 visit 2
- Needs to be used next year or the year after participant 7 visit 2
- You can always ask, if you still have that memory box, bring it so that we can use it again participant 4 visit 2
- Write what was in it participant 3 visit 2
- We usually do that in groups participant 3 visit 2
- What is going to happen to that child participant 3 visit 2

- The real meaning of what we are doing participant 1 visit 2
- It will be good if we can pass it on participant 2 visit 2
- There's no use for us to keep the information for ourselves only participant 2 visit 2
- We must share participant 2 visit 2
- It is confidential participant 2 visit 2
- Its going to be easy for us here at school participant 1 visit 2
- We started this thing two years back participant 1 visit 2
- We are still in the journey participant 1 visit 2
- They know that we are committed participant 1 visit 2
- We want this to work and we are a proud school participant 1 visit 2
- They know that this is working participant 1 visit 2
- They can't just throw away the thing that we started so long ago participant 2 visit 2
- You can go through it again participant 7 visit 2
- At the beginning you didn't believe in yourself participant 3 visit 2
- Would have felt more comfortable to share more intimate emotions with you participant.2 visit 2

## RESPECT AND WARMTH

- That is where you are going to learn what is going on with the child, than you will say "okay that is why you've been sleeping here at school, its because you didn't sleep last night" participant 1 visit 1
- You cant take the child out of school because they haven't got the school fund participant 3 visit 1
- I must like the community so that I can know their problems, I should take their children as my own children. participant 8 visit 1
- Some teachers you see are doing this, treating the other kids not as their own participant 2 visit 1
- What you must not do it to the other children. You must treat them equally. participant 2 visit 1
- You must give love, respect and care than you must give to identity children with problems. participant 1 visit 1
- Sometimes we call social workers to address the kids and to tell them how important it is for them to report abuse. participant 7 visit 1
- Most of the times I just sit down with my children and talk to them and tell them about my life participant 9 visit 2
- What is happening with the child participant 6 visit 2

- Is it possible that you can refresh the child's memory by using the previous years memory box participant 6 visit 2
- I was asking how possible is it to take the memory box participant 6 visit 2
- Depend on the behaviour that you get through the child participant 8 visit 2
- They all wanted to do it participant 1 visit 2
- They were all involved participant 1 visit 2
- They were laughing participant 1 visit 2
- I didn't want to hurt her participant 2 visit 2
- It was difficult for me to be asking her participant 2 visit 2
- Please be open, I am your mother participant 2 visit 2
- They told me that they come to school without having meals participant 2 visit 2
- Other have problems with parents participant 2 visit 2
- When we asked her participant 6 visit 2
- She asked me not to tell her mother participant 3 visit 2
- When she is ready she will talk about it herself participant 3 visit 2
- I told her that we are not going to say anything until she is ready participant 3 visit 2
- I told her that she is going to do it herself when she is ready participant 3 visit 2
- I'm not going to show anybody in this room participant 3 visit 2

## LISTENING

- Its easy for the learner to open up participant 9 visit 1
- Talking with them so that you can hear their problems participant 1 visit 1
- The other one will tell you that I did because my mother was drinking, that is where you will learn what is going on with the child participant 1 visit 1
- Then you will say," okay, that is why you've been sleeping here at school, its because you didn't sleep well last night" participant 1 visit 1
- You must help them solve their own problems participant 4 visit 1
- I don't come to school because my mother is very weak participant 2 visit 1
- I can see that the kid doesn't want to be at school participant 2 visit 1
- We must go there, talk, after talking we must create a friendship with the family after that it will be easier for us to get them to know what a memory box is when you are also friends with that family participant 2 visit 2
- We were about to make a memory box, we didn't just jump into memory box, she knew about the memory box, and we did talk to her while we were visiting her, how about doing this and this participant 2 visit 2
- Together with the teacher then we go slowly to create the atmosphere of trust, the atmosphere of love and all those things participant 2 visit 2

- You say to the child, look what you are saying here the previous year you were not performing like this, then you get to know what is the problem participant 2 visit 2
- Today I heard bad news participant 2 visit 2
- You know what, her parents passed away participant 2 visit 2
- Her mother passed away because of HIV participant 2 visit 2
- The guardians told me that participant 2 visit 2
- Keep the money for me I will take it after bed participant 2 visit 2
- I call the parents aside so that I can talk to them severally those that dissolve participant 2 visit 2
- Even if she is reserved or quite she knows what is happening participant 2 visit 2
- Even if she doesn't talk about it participant 2 visit 2
- She has questions like, when are they coming to me participant 2 visit 2
- For the child to express her feelings participant 2 visit 2
- This allows the student to express herself participant 2 visit 2
- You can talk, she can be open to you participant 2 visit 2
- Allows the child an opportunity to be open participant 2 visit 2
- The child was saying that the child is in grade 6, the letter was saying that she needs help because the mother is always beating her up and she doesn't like abusive language that the mother is using participant 8 visit 2
- She stressed that she wants help participant 8 visit 2
- She closes the door, (the mother) and have to sleep next door with people I do not even know participant 8 visit 2
- Not that I do not want to come to school, but the way the mother is presenting herself participant 8 visit 2
- It is as if the child does not want to come to school participant 8 visit 2
- Keep the child's problem for yourself whilst the child is suffering participant 3 visit 2
- Child will be suffering while you are keeping the problem to yourself participant 3 visit 2
- The parent is telling you, you can see okay, here is the problem participant 5 visit 2
- Was no communication between the parents and us participant 2 visit
- We didn't talk about this participant 2 visit 2
- they are disclosing, they are having the chance of sharing their own problem with us so that they can get help participant 2 visit 2
- what I've seen the previous years is not what you are doing now participant 8 visit
- this is mine, this is mine participant 8 visit
- I was small, I have it with me, I have my brother participant 1 visit
- I have a photograph of when I graduated participant 1 visit
- All of them wanted to draw themselves participant 1 visit
- They enjoyed doing it, they want to do it participant 1 visit

- They were laughing participant 1 visit
- She said to me she is happy to be here at school participant 1 visit
- I'm happy to be here at school, I feel happy participant 1 visit
- They tell you something you didn't ask participant 2 visit
- Come to school without meals participant 2 visit
- They said their parents get drunk everyday participant 4 visit
- Others said they stay with their aunts and they shout a lot participant 4 visit
- If somebody could listen to my story participant 4 visit
- I just called all of them to just brainstorm and tell us their problems and all those things with the intention of focusing on this learner participant 3 visit
- I want to make a memory box out of what they are telling me participant 3 visit 2
- She said I want to write a story about me participant 6 visit 2
- I miss my mom too much, I want to die too, that's the message participant 3 visit 2
- I had to interact with her and asked her what she wanted me to do. She asked me to tell her mother participant 3 visit 2
- She said I come for a holiday participant 8 visit 2
- She said my mother said I must stay here" participant 8 visit 2
- She wants help because the mother is always beating her up, and she doesn't like the language that the mother is using on her. She stressed that she wants help, sometimes she closes the door and then I have to go and sleep next door with the people I do not know participant 10 visit 2

## GENUINNESS AND SINCERITY

- You must be able to support them, to be able to identify what their needs are, what their problems are participant 2 visit 1
- So that it is easy for learners to open up participant 9 visit 1
- Sometimes you can see if there is a problem when your child's work is changing in class, you ask yourself I wonder why because at the beginning of the year she was like this and last week she was like this and now her performance has change participant 1 visit 1
- For us to be able to identify that the child has got a problem, to know that this child is not like before participant 2 visit 1
- You have to do whatever because that child's not going to get anything from parents participant 3 visit 1
- You can say go outside of my classroom because you don't have the material that I need participant 3 visit 1
- You cant take the child out of the school because they haven't got school fund. Its not their fault. participant 3 visit 1

- Take care of emotional needs of the child and social needs participant 3 visit 1
- You must know the background of the child at the end of the day because sometimes they are emotionally disturbed and socially participant 3 visit 1
- You must give love, respect and care you will be able to identify children with problems participant 1 visit 1
- Sometimes we call social workers to address the kids and tell them how important it is for them to report abuse participant 7 visit 1
- When she came to me she said” I don’t come to school because my mother is very weak participant 2 visit 1
- I said to myself maybe there was one person who went there, instead of helping she talked about the illness participant 2 visit 2
- There’s a reason why the child is behaving like that. The child is taking care of the mother she wanted to take care of the mother, where as she is not in a position to do that participant 3 visit 2
- We did talk to her while we were visiting her participant 2 visit
- We go slowly to create the atmosphere of trust, the atmosphere of love, all those things participant 2 visit 2
- I just sat down with my children and talk with them and tell them about my life participant 9 visit 2
- That box will give you the background of the emotional and all of that participant 6 visit 2
- And that thing because it is memorable can bring our values back participant 1 visit
- I heard bad news participant 2 visit 2
- I didn’t know what t participant o do participant 2 visit 2
- I didn’t know what to say and I was nervous participant 2 visit 2
- I just looked at her, I was worried participant 2 visit 2
- The child doesn’t know the full story participant 2 visit 2
- Especially those that disclose, it is easier to interact with them participant 1 visit 2
- They need foster care I ‘m sure they are going to make the means participant 1 visit 2
- Most of them haven’t got parents participant 1 visit 2
- If you need school clothes, this is going to b of help participant 1 visit 2
- The child opens herself to you because of what she is doing there, if she is touched emotionally she will cry participant 7 visit 2
- If it makes her happy she will smile because she will communicate in another way with you participant 7 visit 2
- I know these a pain inside of her participant 7 visit 2
- Maybe there’s a question, where is my mother participant 7 visit 2
- Something is eating her inside participant 7 visit 2
- She always sit like this participant 7 visit 2

- Asked her to ask the child questions participant 1 visit 2
- So many children out there who are orphans but they don't know their parents passed away participant 1 visit 2
- Understand the child better the emotional needs of the child participant 1 visit 2
- Child to express her feelings participant 2 visit 2
- Know about the kids problem participant 6 visit 2
- Make time participant 6 visit 2
- Create the atmosphere of friendship participant 6 visit 2
- She can open to you participant 6 visit 2
- Ask the child what he/she likes and the child will be open to you participant 6 visit 2
- Allows the child the opportunity to be open participant 3 visit 2
- Keep the child's problem for yourself whilst the child is suffering participant 3 visit 2
- There was no communication between the parents and us participant 2 visit 2 2
- They are disclosing, they are having the chance of sharing their own problems with us so that they can get help participant 2 visit 2
- Refresh the child's memory by using the previous years memory box participant 6 visit 2
- This is where you are and this is where you came from participant 8 visit 2
- When you read it you realize this child has got problems, let me go and fix it, it's the way of expressing their feelings participant 2 visit 2
- We are a support group and we are visiting this parents participant 1 visit 2
- They tell you something you didn't ask participant 2 visit 2
- All learners were participating participant 3 visit 2
- But the child was happy, that's is what I observed participant 3 visit 2
- She was happy participant 3 visit 2
- I was happy with them so that she can feel that participant 3 visit 2
- When we asked her – she said I want to write a story about me participant 6 visit 2
- Mrs + realized that the child does not performing well in class participant 3 visit 2
- She is withdrawn participant 3 visit 2
- The teacher suspects that the child might have been raped participant 3 visit 2
- The mother told us that she brought the child to the clinic participant 3 visit 2
- I visited her several times so that we can interact participant 3 visit 2
- I gave her some counselling participant 3 visit 2
- I could see that she was not yet ready to accept, I then said to her it will take time,
- It's a process and then I told her that when she is ready she will talk about it herself participant 3 visit 2
- I then assured her that this is secret between us, and the person at the clinic participant 3 visit 2
- I told her that we are not going to say anything until she is ready participant 3 visit 2

- I told her that when the time is ready she will manage it herself participant 3 visit 2
- Now she is coping, nothing is wrong even the CD count participant 3 visit 2
- I don't want to rush things – because I told you this is ongoing, she is to live longer. -I don't want to rush things so that she starts suspecting participant 3 visit 2
- She shouldn't ask herself why is she doing this, am I going to live a short period.” participant 3 visit 2
- They asked mummy, why are you putting the things you love here ? I said I am doing a memory box for myself so that things I love, some of the things they will see -That I love so that they can remember me participant 3 visit 2
- The granny is so strict that she would accompany the kids to and from school participant 6 visit 2
- She is checking where you are, whether you are living in S.A or not because S.A has the pandemic and everybody is suffering, infected or affected participant 6 visit 2
- I heard bad news today one of my children is HIV positive participant 8 visit 2
- Her parents passed away at the beginning of the year participant 8 visit 2
- Otherwise she's okay now, there's nothing wrong with her participant 8 visit 2
- I don't know when do they get to know the real story participant 8 visit 2
- They keep on confusing the kid when they are older it is when they tell truth participant 8 visit 2
- When you tell straight away that he/she is with God participant 8 visit 2
- It helps us because the child opens up to you because of what she is doing there participant 10 visit 2
- I' ve never seen her why talking with others participant 10 visit 2
- I would ask her why do you always sit like this and she would say nothing participant 10 visit 2
- I know that she is feeling some pain inside maybe she's asking herself my mother, why do I not go back to Motherwell and see my mum again participant 10 visit 2
- There are so many children there who are open but they do not know that parents passed away participant 10 visit 2
- When I went to her class I asked the child some questions what the child was proud of is to have two parents, two mothers and two fathers participant 10 visit 2
- I don't want to underestimate the mind of the child, even if she's reserved or quiet she knows what is happening even if she doesn't are participant 9 visit 2
- I think the child knows what is happening participant 9 visit 2
- She does not know about her mother but she has got questions like when are they coming to see me participant 9 visit 2
- That's why I say the memory box and the body map will help a lot participant 9 visit 2



- The child will be able to express how they feel when writing or drawing what ever, she can draw her mother or what ever. participant 9 visit 2
- All those things that you are teaching in the classroom you can put them there so that its a way a child will be able to express themselves participant 9 visit 2
- You can ask all kids to do one drawing but when they colour if you will find that the other kids will use a black colour, we know that when they are using black there is a problem participant 9 visit 2
- You will then have to make time and create a friendly atmosphere so that she can talk, be open to you participant 9 visit 2
- Children must not be scared of the teachers participant 9 visit 2
- The child will be open if the atmosphere is friendly participant 9 visit 2

#### TELLING STORIES AND HELPER SELF DISCLOSURE

- I'm not used to using a diary participant 1 visit 2
- For instance our children are using a dairy, if you shout at them they write it down participant 1 visit 2
- I don't know myself but I know there was somebody I kissed first participant 4 visit
- But I can't say in 1976 so and so kissed me participant 4 visit 2
- I do not remember anything about them because I was very young, you see, but if ---They had left me a memory box it would be better for me participant 1 visit 2
- I didn't even have a photo of them, you see, sometimes I keep saying why don't they come back and go back again participant 1 visit 2
- Its so wise if you can make it before the person die participant 1 visit 2
- My children wont have the same problem with me, because I don't know my mother, my father participant 1 visit 2
- The only thing that I kept at home that my mother left is Chinese tea set participant 2 visit 2
- Thanks for telling us about this because I think I can go in my grandmother's house and look for the kettle and cups participant 2 visit 2
- The only thing I find is reference book participant 2 visit 2
- When I've got problems I just put that photo here or next to my pillow participant 2 visit 2
- I don't know my mother, she passed away long time ago when I was still young participant 2 visit 2
- I have no memory of her, only my grandmother participant 2 visit 2
- I am going to see what can I take for myself participant 2 visit 2
- We love to keep the church uniform that our elders wore participant 2 visit 2
- That seems to be the only thing we treasure participant 2 visit 2
- There are lots of things we can remember our elders or loved one with participant 2 visit 2

- That gave me hope, the beautiful things in nature, the birds that's there, life, and my family participant 4 visit 2
- I am not a person who like to cry, but I was thinking the first time I had my first child, my baby was born through caesarean participant 1 visit 2
- A way of showing people who I am participant 1 visit 2
- I heard bad news, one of my children is HIV positive participant 2 visit 2
- The parents passed away participant 2 visit 2
- The mother passed away because of HIV and her father too participant 2 visit 2
- The guardians told me that participant 2 visit 2
- She took the child to the clinic last week and she's HIV positive participant 2 visit 2
- I didn't cry participant 2 visit 2
- I said, keep this money for me and I will take it after break participant 2 visit 2
- In our culture if a child is still young, some people don't tell the children participant 2 visit 2
- Because they think its like during the olden days, where you don't tell children what is going on participant 2 visit 2
- We were told they are coming back, they are in Motherwell, or in certain area whilst your father has passed away participant 2 visit 2
- Husband or brother passed away, what is happening with us we just tell them that your uncle passed away participant 2 visit 2
- Whoever passed away is with god participant 2 visit 2
- I wanted to make something that is real that comes deeply out of my heart because -I don't want to do something I didn't want to do something just for fun or something just for the sake of doing it participant 3 visit 2
- This comes deep down from my heart, this is my own memory box that I will be leaving for my kids when I passed away even if its going to be tomorrow or whenever participant 3 visit 2
- I am going to leave something for my kids you see, so that they can remember me participant 3 visit 2
- I started with mine so that she can see from me 3 visit 2
- I would like you to look at how I do mine because the memory box I also need it participant 3 visit 2
- I wanted her to see that the memory box is not just for people who are HIV positive, anyone can leave a memory box participant 3 visit 2
- I started the memory box by doing the things that I love. I made it easy for her so that when she started her own memory box it would be easy participant 3 visit 2
- We started with the outside as you can see the things that I like participant 3 visit 2
- I was so grateful because when my children saw if they asked" mummy why are you putting the things you love here" participant 3 visit 2

- I said I'm doing a memory box for myself so that one day when I passed away participant 3 visit 2
- Some of the things they will see that I loved so that they can remember me participant 3 visit 2
- I decided today to introduce my group to the workshop it was cancelled, it is done by an NGO 6
- The assignment about HIV is very easy because everybody has got some story to tell participant 6 visit 2
- We've got everything about the family and ourselves participant 6 visit 2
- They said information must be kept confidential participant 6 visit 2
- One day I might not be here for a month or so counselling must continue participant 6 visit 2
- You must have a purpose. The purpose must. participant 6 visit 2
- Decision that issue he/she has. participant 6 visit 2
- Another skill that I like about this skill is that you check the language that you use when talking to a person because you might be offensive participant 6 visit 2
- I am happy today, I am going to write something and put it in my box participant 6 visit 2
- Because they see that my teacher is telling me what happened to her participant 7 visit 2
- They tell you something you didn't ask they come to you and saying I've got a brother who is sick I've got my aunt there, she passed away participant 2 visit 2

#### INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT

- But some teachers, they only understand their own children, they don't care about other children. This community first of all helps us to have work (jobs), if the community was not here, if this area was not here maybe I would be teaching in Transkei. I must like the community so that I can know their problems. I should take their children as my own children participant 8 visit 1
- Go and do workshops with the parents, with the community participant 8 visit 1
- You must be able to support them, to be able to identify what their needs are, what their problems are. okay, for us to be able to support them, to be able to identify what their needs are, what their problems are, what should we do for us to be able to get that knowledge? participant 2 visit 1
- Sometimes you can see if there is a problem when your child's work is changing in class participant 1 visit 1
- You must empower yourself participant 10 visit 1
- Get involved with other educators who have been in the field for longer participant 2 visit 1
- We have access to them unlike calling the parents to take them to the clinic, we are working together participant 9 visit 1

- Like we are also working hand in hand with the child line because they used to come here at school about all the kinds of abuse participant 4 visit 1
- Sometimes we call social workers to address the kids and to tell them how important it is to for them to report abuse participant 7 visit 1
- We divided ourselves into groups, like others are in learner support group, others are in children at risk initiative participant 7 visit 1
- That lady told us that I've got something I prepared myself, like I've got a burial that will take care of my funeral expenses when I'm gone. Slowly, slowly you know where it is going to because you know where it is leading to, we are going to do a memory box . So what I am trying to say is, we take it over to the support group, together with the teacher then we go slowly to create the atmosphere of trust, the atmosphere of love, all those things participant 2 visit 1
- Yes, it is easy now because we are talking about it now, to put it in practice is very difficult participant 1 visit 1
- They must use their own photos because on their family trees at school they are cutting ... to be their mother, but if they had photos we can encourage them to use their own family photos. participant 1 visit 1
- I would like to ask what is going to happen to that child, whatever the kid is doing in the classroom, if the child goes to another teacher who does not work with us, who is not aware of the memory box, what is going to happen to that child, or the memory box? participant 2 visit 2
- The real meaning of what we are doing, it would be good if we can pass it on to other teachers. There's no use for us to keep the information for ourselves only, we must share. We must inform other teachers what we've learned from our workshops maybe some of them will show an interest participant 6 visit 2
- Although the memory box is private and confidential, it is not confidential to tell other teachers. So its going to be easy for us here at school because we've got phase one and phase two teachers who are represented here. Phase one teachers who are here will influence the phase one teachers who are here and then the phase two teachers will do the same participant 4 visit 2
- If the mother/father is deceased let them ask the mother/father they are living with now how was this other mother, what is she like, what stories does she listen to participant 2
- We are lucky enough here at school because the principal called me and gave me some sort of Application forms from Atic for Aids orphans. There's a part that is asking if you need school clothes, this is going to be of help to them participant 2 visit 2
- If you notice that a child has got a learning problem you will go to the previous teacher and find out the background of the child. participant 3 visit 2
- Share information with other teachers. participant 5 visit 2

- There is no use in having this information and keeping it with us alone. Inform the teachers what we learnt from our workshops participant 5 visit 2
- Some clients/patients are cruel. He/she sees you as a female, you are in this room with him/her but you really don't know who he/she really is. They can either take advantage of you by either raping /stabbing you. participant 6. visit 2
- In our culture I the child is still young some families don't tell the child that your mother/father passed away. They don't know the real story. They keep on confusing the kid. The kid will be waiting and waiting, when they are older it is when they tell the truth. participant 8 visit 2
- Because of technology I think the kids understand what death is, because children read magazines and stories are talking about death, the thing is they need counselling. participant 10 visit 2
- All those things that we are teaching in the classroom you can put them there so that it's a way a child will be able to express themselves. Children must not be scared of their teachers, we must also be parents to the kids. participant 9 visit 2

#### LETTERS AND PICTURES

- You go and collect my very good photo participant 4 visit 2
- Maybe you haven't got photos you can talk even if they are illiterate you can listen and write for that particular person participant 6 visit 2
- She has photos of the mother when she was young and happy participant 4 visit 2
- I didn't even have a photo of them participant 6 visit 2
- When I see that photo, when I've got problems I just put that photo here (illustrating-hear) or next to my pillow participant 2 visit 2
- They must use their own photos if they had photos we would encourage them to use their own family photos participant 1 visit 2
- My parents passed away, didn't even have a photo of them participant 1 visit
- Can't you draw your family participant 6 visit 2
- You see the drawing of the family participant 6 visit 2
- Child can express when writing or drawing, she can draw her mother participant 6 visit 2
- Its easy when they write a letter to you, when you read it you realized that this child has got a problem, let me go and fix it. it's the way of expressing their feelings. participant 2 visit 2
- My photo when I was small participant 1 visit 2
- I have my brother participant 1 visit 2
- I have a photograph when I granted at crèche participant 1 visit 2
- I've got the photos in my bible participant 1 visit 2
- Photos of when they were young participant 1 visit 2

- Photos in the memory box participant 1 visit 2
- They told stories when they brought the pictures participant 1 visit 2
- She said I want to write a story about me participant 6 visit 2
- Can you draw your family participant 9 visit 2
- You will find that other kind will use a black colour participant 9 visit 2
- So me of the kids when you say draw yourself participant 9 visit 2
- She can draw herself with tears, then you will know there's a problem participant 9 visit 2
- There was a story which was written by the granny, that which ever way, that even if she had once cant she would spend it with the grandchildren participant 6 visit 2
- The parents came with the photo the next day participant 6 visit 2
- She came with the photograph of the granny participant 6 visit 2

#### DISCOVERING FAMILY STRUCTURES AND RALETIONSHIP

- Most of the children who are staying here are orphans they are staying with their grandparents participant 8 visit 1
- Violence at home family violence because their parents are drinking liquor, the mother and father and then they fight participant 4 visit 1
- The mother was drinking a lot when she was pregnant participant 7 visit 1
- We found the mother lying there and the grandmother was doing the washing. The grandmother said to me I don't want you here because all educated people are making an issue about this. participant 7 visit 1
- Because even the grandmother its difficult, that is why the people do not want to disclose participant 7 visit 1
- She has photos of the mother when she was young and happy when they were happy participant 4 visit 2
- Most of the time I just sit down with my children and talk with them and tell them about my life participant 9 visit 2
- Like myself my parents passed away a long time ago but I don't remember anything about them because I was very young, you see, but if they had left me memory box it would be better for me participant 1 visit 2
- Sometimes I keep saying why don't they come back and go back again
- I don't know my mother, my father participant 10 visit 2
- Having those things, you feel that they are still alive participant 7 visit 2
- You can also do it for your loving husband participant 2 visit 2
- She went to ask him and say" Oupa, what was very good in your life"? participant 2 visit 2
- I think I can go for the kettle. The only thing that I find is her reference book participant 2 visit 2

- I don't know my mother, she passed away a long time ago when I was still young participant 2 visit 2
- Sometimes there are things that you want your children to know when you die participant 1 visit
- You have to know the child's background, you have to know the child's situation participant 4 visit 2
- My photo when I was small, I have it with me I have my brother participant 1 visit
- A photograph of when I graduated participant 1 visit 2
- I've got photos in my bible participant 1 visit 2
- Keep it so that they can show their children how they looked like when they were young participant 1 visit 2
- Photos in the memory box for twins participant 1 visit 2
- Something that happened in their lives, their lives they were born they graduated participant 1 visit 2
- I love my father, my father passed away, I loved him participant 2 visit
- I've got my aunt there, she passed away, this happened after the other one mentioned his father participant 2 visit 2
- Feel if somebody could listen to my story from home, then that is wonderful participant 4 visit 2
- It would be nice to do it in a family also participant 7 visit 2
- My kids have done it, my little one has done her memory box participant 7 visit 2
- Neighbours daughter had homework of making a memory box participant 7 visit 2
- A learner who is staying with the aunt here from here from Umtata, the father teaching at Umtata participant 3 visit 2
- Now the mother has passed away long before participant 3 visit 2
- She loves her mother participant 3 visit 2
- She calls her mother participant 3 visit 2
- This child has got a father, she is not an orphan, so that is why we are trying to teach the father to focus and to take responsibility of the child participant 6 visit 2
- The aunt went away to Soweto to assist the sister and the child was left alone at home participant 3 visit 2
- I force the child to stay in my house participant 3 visit 2
- She wanted the whole story participant 3 visit 2
- That she was with the father for two years and then she came and realized that the kids were alone in Transkei in a hut participant 3 visit 2
- The father was living in Umtata, far away from the granny participant 3 visit 2
- There was a granny hereby a house and money to come down to P.E. participant 3 visit 2

- This is my own memory box that I will be leaving for my kids when I pass away, so that they can remember me participant 3 visit 2
- I am not going to reveal it because we maintain confidentiality. She took me as a mother because her mother is not aware of all these things that are happening, you know the mothers that don't want to talk to their kids about what is happening around them participant 3 visit 2
- She came to me and I said to her, why don't you go to the clinic participant 3 visit 2
- "mummy" why are you putting the things you love here" participant 3 visit 2
- There was a story which was written by the granny, that which ever way, that even if she had one cent, she would spend it with the grand children participant 6 visit 2
- The parents came with the photos the next day. participant 6 visit 2
- She came with the photograph of the granny participant 6 visit 2
- The granny is not a hard person but shell strict because she does not trust anybody grand children participant 6 visit 2
- The granny is raising them participant 6 visit 2
- She gave me a little note for the granny, I live with my granny, my mum died, I do not want my sweets, granny does the cooking for me participant 6 visit 2
- Her parents passed away at the beginning of the year, the father last year and the mother this year. participant 8 visit 2
- They always say mother participant 8 visit 2
- I got my mother staying in Motherwell with my gather participant 8 visit 2



# APPENDIX J

## APPENDIX J: VISUAL DATA

Visual presentations of informal settlement in which the selected primary school is situated



**Visual presentations of memory work done during the workshop**



Educators presenting their memory boxes



Educators presenting children's memory boxes



Examples of the memory boxes of educators and children



The participating educators receive the attendance certificates on memory work

