

CHAPTER 5

PILOT STUDY AND PROPOSED RESEARCH PLAN

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a review of the pilot study I conducted and the proposed research plan that will be tested with the help of one respondent. The pilot study and research plan were designed in an attempt to illustrate how a possible combined arts therapy approach may be structured and implemented.

5.2 Aims of the Study

5.2.1 Immediate aims

- ✓ Designing a practical procedure, with the aim of creating a holistic portfolio, by employing multiple media to create a visible and audible construct that can literally be viewed on a television screen, in order to stimulate self-insight in the client.
- ✓ Establishing the effectiveness of a procedure designed to create a holistic picture of the client's situation, as depicted by self-generated visual and expressive media.
- ✓ Determining whether the client experienced any meaningful inner response during such a practical and professional looking process.
- ✓ Gaining insight into the value that a multiple arts therapy and media approach holds for the counselling process.
- ✓ Determining the elements regarded as most enlightening, enjoyable and worthy within the parameters of the case study, as well as the exercises that need to be altered, in order to optimise client co-operation.
- ✓ Establishing the meaning of the final private screening for the client's situation.

5.2.2 Secondary aims

- Constructing a marketable, enjoyable and sensory approach to counselling and the motivational arena.

- Triggering self-development and self-discovery in clients, such as discovering talents for activities they did not consider before.
- Enabling clients to leave the process feeling personally enriched, because they were involved in a creative process for which they have proof.

5.3 Hypotheses for the Practical Research Component

- A “visual (video) narrative” can enable clients to become more aware of recurring personal themes.
- Different arts therapeutic approaches and counselling techniques can be meaningfully combined to create a sensory client-friendly process to render a personal motivational portfolio.
- A visual and expressive display of inner concerns can trigger meaningful self-insight in clients, because the client’s self-respect will be enhanced by professional looking, motivational material that was manufactured or designed by him or herself.
- It is practically possible to assist the client in manufacturing meaningful stimuli that are decorative while, at the same time, being laden with a personal message to motivate change.

5.4 Respondent Description and Referral

5.4.1 Description of the desired respondent

The prospective respondent needs to comply with the following criteria:

Life stage: Teenager

Sex: Male

Age: 16 - 18

Grade: 11 – 12

Interests: Among other interests, the determining factor will be an interest in the creative or expressive arts.

Attributes: The respondent needs to be able and committed to participate in a four-day, full-time island-style counselling scenario and be willing to risk the challenges that video recordings require.

Personal situation: The respondent needs to find a measure of clarity and be prepared to utilise an opportunity like this, in order to engage in a process that may stimulate self-dialogue and self-discovery.

5.4.2. Referral and biographical detail of the respondent

The Centre for Adult and Child Guidance of the University of Pretoria identified Lukas (pseudonym) when he was evaluated for possible career choices and referred the respondent to me. The psychologists at the Centre were of the opinion that he would benefit from the intended research process.

Lukas is a 16-year-old, grade 11 Afrikaans learner and has a keen interest in art and creativity. He could not take Art as a subject, due to factors beyond his control but he seems determined to make it part of his future career – in some capacity. He expressed a keen interest when he heard the process involved a measure of art-making.

5.5 Pilot Study Background and Motivation

In **Chapter 1**, reference was made to the visual process I designed in 2002 to make my interests visible to myself. This process is explained below to make the progression to the eventual 18-step pilot study clear. This visual process was eventually expanded to incorporate more arts therapies and electronic media.

5.5.1 The 6-step process and its aims

A combination of brainstorming processes, art techniques, magazine collages, descriptions and labelling of key words was employed to create an example of what a possible procedure might look like that is aimed at giving visual substance to issues that are not “categorised” in a person’s mind.

The gist of what a possible (“self-generated”) visual procedure might entail can be summarised as follows:

1. *Two monoprints are created – one colour per print, according to client’s choice - using a glass plate with acrylic paint. The client draws any easy patterns on the glass with the index finger, a white sheet of paper is placed on the wet paint and a print is pulled. (See Appendix C.)*

Once the paint is dry, the client uses colouring pencils and colours one monoprint image, using a variety of colours. The second monoprint is only coloured with one colour of choice. (The idea here is to create an image resembling a colourful “disorder” and an image depicting a “calm collectedness.”) The exciting monoprint process and colouring action can create a kind of inner awakening in the client. Colour photocopies are made of these “artworks” so that the client may have something beautiful to use for personal purposes.

The aim of step 1 is to attempt to provide an immediate colourful introduction to the procedure and to hopefully provide the client with an unexpected sense of achievement.

2. (a) *The client is told to make a list of all his or her issues, plans, dreams, problems hopes, fears ... any thoughts that he or she may regard as important, describing the present state of his or her life, are randomly listed underneath one another, using double-spacing. The listing can be done by hand on paper, or on a computer.*

This may take the client a few days to ensure that all the prominent concerns from all the major life spheres are listed.

- (b) *A photocopy is made of the abovementioned “double-spaced” list.*

(c) All the entries on the photocopied list are cut loose on a large table and grouped according to relevant content. Once the client is satisfied with the categories, a relevant heading needs to be supplied for each category.

The two monoprints created in step 1 are now used as backgrounds onto which the random and categorised thoughts are pasted. The random thoughts are pasted onto the multicoloured background to symbolise excitement without order and the categorised thoughts are pasted onto the background that seems planned or patterned. Once this is completed, the two completed constructs can be laminated to provide a professional touch. This may, hopefully, assist the client in gaining respect for his personal issues, which now seem so beautifully organised.

The aim of step 2 is to provide the client with an opportunity to “have his head organised on paper”. In seeing the positive and negative issues in a tangible way, he may, hopefully, feel “empowered” to at least make a start in dealing with some of them. Put differently, this step attempts to provide an opportunity for the client to gain respect for the aspects of his life (and to stop fearing the intimidating issues).

- 3. The client is provided with a collection of old magazines from which he may cut or tear pictures, in order to construct a collage depicting visionary elements. The client cuts out images or pictures that symbolise or portray the dreams he has for his life, for example, if the client still wants to attend a chef course in the near or distant future, he might pick a picture of a plate of food. The pictures or images are then pasted onto an A3-sheet of white paper to the client’s liking to create a collage of his future.*

After completion of the collage, without any text, a colour photocopy is made before the client is given the opportunity to explain the relevance of an image or picture with a label or key word. (The reason for photocopying the collage before adding the text is so that it may be seen as a work of art. The client may use the

photocopy at a later stage to suit a personalised purpose, such as, for example, covering a journal.)

The purpose of step 3 is to allow the client the opportunity to visually acknowledge the hidden dreams and desires that he may have forgotten and to allow an opportunity to dream inexpensively on paper, where everything is possible! Hopefully, seeing his dreams so vividly in front of him will enable the client to start realising that his life is still worth living.

- 4. A second collage is made with magazine images or pictures to assemble a visual “identity (collage) document”. The client pages through the magazines and collects all the pictures that “speak” to him in such a way that he (or a part of himself) can identify with the image. All these images that are illustrative of parts of his identity are pasted onto an A3 page, together with a photograph of the client somewhere on the page.*

Once this is completed, a colour photocopy is made before key words are provided. The client can use the “artwork” copy for personal use. Once the key words are in place, the construct is laminated.

The aim of step 4 is to provide the client the opportunity to see what his or her personality and identity look like when displayed creatively. In so doing, he or she can, hopefully, see what a valuable and interesting human being he or she is.

- 5. The collages of the future and identity are placed next to each other and the client is asked to look at how his dreams and identity compare. The client may also be asked to write down anything he finds interesting or revealing about his future or identity collage. A written exercise in creative self-affirmation may be given to the client at this stage.*

Questions such as the following may be asked to assist the client in gaining self-insight:

- *How realistic are his dreams when compared to his identity?*
 - *Which dreams are easier to see fulfilled when compared with his identity?*
 - *Which dreams are more difficult to achieve in the light of his present situation and identity?*
6. *The client draws up a credo in writing of motivational nature, in the light of the insight received during the whole process. The credo will consist of credible, encouraging / motivational thoughts rooted in positive traits of the client's personality and abilities that can be read every day - to keep the reachable dreams alive.*

The aim of step 6 is to provide an opportunity for the client to anchor the discoveries he has made about himself and his dreams and to affirm himself in document format.

To conclude, the abovementioned procedure was simply an attempt on my part to see how feasible some of my ideas were and what a possible example of such a holistic “creative” combination might look like.

5.5.2 Motivation for the 18-step pilot study

The pilot study captured by the conceptual video (**Appendix B**) serves four purposes: firstly, it was designed to be a **conceptual presentation**, in which most of the aspects or constructs I wish to see in a visual approach are made visible (to myself at least); secondly, it was conducted to see how much **time**, **skill** and **resources** are needed in practice; thirdly, it was an attempt to **extend** the **visual procedure** I designed in **Chapter 1** to include a wider range of therapies; and fourthly, it was conducted with the idea of having something visible to show to the prospective **respondent** who may volunteer to participate in the research.

If the reader looks at the CD-Rom application, it will be noted that the conceptual presentation (of the pilot study) does not include the proper application of **video** but merely explains how it may be applied. The reason for this is that it was not possible at the time, seeing that I was both *counsellor* and *client* and my concern was with the practical implications of the constructs and their manufacturing. The idea was to make the constructs for the conceptual video presentation. During the actual research, however, I will be the counsellor armed with a video camera and editing software (or access to an editing facility) for the duration of the process.

Pay attention to the way video may be applied in the conceptual video:

- The **function** of **video** as medium is not to record the complete series of counselling exercises. The video camera will be employed as a thread to integrate the various activities and weave the client's visual portfolio.
- Conversations will not be recorded – unless they are rehearsed for a specific exercise.
- The camera will not be presented as a medium that seeks to expose or embarrass.
- The camera enters the activities to capture colourful footage of the client in a non-threatening way, simply to generate imagery with which a video collage can be constructed, so that the client can remember what the process was all about and to establish respect for the appearance of the client.

Since the video was made, my title and focus have changed slightly. I realise now that, at this stage, my focus is not on how precisely the counselling will be enhanced, but on how practical this combined arts therapy approach will be in reality. Counselling or interaction will take place around the completion of each construct but my focus is now also on the effect the whole completed edited process will have on the client and whether the **process**, as an additional **viewable adjunct** with **cinematic** quality (and cinema therapy qualities), can serve as a **stimulus** for counselling conversations.

At this point, it might benefit the reader to watch the conceptual video ([Appendix B](#)). A summary of the 18-step conceptual presentation and pilot study is given, in which each exercise is explained. After all the steps are illustrated, feedback is provided of the weaknesses or challenges observed in the 18-step design that may hinder the flow and implementation of the approach. Please bear in mind that this design includes my preferred combination of creative exercises and their components, which I conducted in my own life to gather material for the pilot study. Another point worth making at this stage is that there are numerous possibilities regarding the types of exercises that may be included – taken from the vast arts therapy disciplines – but these are mere examples of constructs I thought adhered to certain “manageable” and aesthetic criteria, which merited inclusion.

The aims of the combined arts therapy approach are:

- to inspire fairly healthy people in need of counselling by means of personal truth that is organised in a constructive, meaningful and aesthetic way;
- to assist the client to symbolically create tangible links between things imagined and things in existence, to enable the client to assess himself in terms of his own values and to provide a colourful nudge to pursue dreams within reach; and
- to increase the level of respect the client has for himself, his personal issues and capabilities with the help of professional-looking, functional and motivational material.

5.6 Pilot Study Layout and Feedback

5.6.1 Layout of the 18-step pilot study process

This will be briefly explained, seeing that the process is discussed at length in the 29-minute conceptual video, to enable the reader to understand the flow of the activities.

Photographs of the constructs are available in [Appendix C](#), listed under the relevant steps.

Step 1

The client speaks into the **video camera** and briefly describes the present state of affairs. The client will have time to **rehearse** the sentences that will be **recorded**. Nothing that is embarrassing will be recorded! If the client does not want to face the camera, a **photo** can be placed in front of the camera instead. I think it is important to record something at this point, even if it is just the **voice**! I feel that this **dramatic** introductory exercise could perhaps create an atmosphere of urgency and efficiency. The camera is switched off and the counsellor and the client establish rapport.

Step 2

Two **monoprints** are made to capture the client's interest, while **music** is played to create atmosphere. Here the **video camera** can be used to capture the hands **drawing** in the wet paint or **colouring** in the print. Before the client adds colour, **photocopies** are made.

Step 3

A **brainstorming exercise** is embarked upon, which is simply a listing of thoughts and dreams drifting around through all the aspects of the client's life. Here a few creative examples can be shown to illustrate how brainstorming can be done. This exercise will be started in the workshop situation but will be completed over a week so that the client will have time to drain the mind of all issues that seem to cause inner dissonance. The **computer** can be used as an excellent brainstorming tool, because, among others, it can sort the issues alphabetically later!)

Step 4

The list with random thoughts or issues is **stuck** on the colourful **monoprint**. A set of stickers is provided that will enable the client to copy one issue per sticker. The stickers are then **cut** loose and grouped according to headings. These grouped issues are stuck onto the two-tone art piece to signify clarity. Various methods with interesting diagrams are possible in the brainstorming field. I enjoy this rather left-brain approach on a right-brain background.

Step 5

An interesting **discussion** can take place around the completed **visual layout** of the personal issues. It is important to remember that these very personal and private “brain photographs” are the property of the client and they must remain in the hands of the client! At the start of the brainstorming exercise the client must be made aware of the fact that intimate issues should be given a **symbol** or be renamed to protect the self.

Step 6

Now an A3-**collage** is made that includes pictures or images of the future. A window of vision! A visionary window is created to illuminate desires and dreams. Some magazine images will be provided in the counselling environment and the client can also look for interesting images at home. Time limitations and the need to contemplate would necessitate homework exercises. Once the collage is completed, a copy is made before key words are provided. The finished collage is then **laminated** to add a professional touch and to give tempo to the approach.

Step 7

A **photographic session** takes place to break the tension and add some **humour**. The client is photographed in different ways to create different moods of the personality and, hopefully, introduce the client afresh to the multifaceted self. These photographs are tastefully framed to create a respect for the self. One pose is a very humorous approach in which elements of self, regarded as valuable, are collected and humorously presented. This exercise lends itself very well to a little dramatic scene. (For example, the client has the opportunity to have a flight of fantasy and **face-painting** and an exotic **wardrobe** can provide playful elements to provide a feast of fun!)

Step 8

A second **collage** is made where a **photograph of self** is placed in the centre of the layout and a **visual identity document** is constructed. A colour photocopy is made before key words are provided.

Step 9

Now a **discussion** takes place on the discoveries that can be made when the two collages, the future and the personality, are placed next to each other. A process of **consolidation** takes place, which strives to visually integrate elements of the personality and the future in a meaningful way. I think a short **creative writing exercise** is needed at this point to sum up the impressions generated by the previous colourful exercises.

The choice of approach can be tailored according to the personality type.

Some examples are:

- The client may be requested to **write a poem** or a paragraph about him or herself – or at least **search for a poem** someone else has written that would shed some light on the personality and dreams.
- The client may be asked to **write a message** to the self and suggest ways of achieving goals.
- The client can **read a joke** or discuss things that cause happiness.
- Even some **quotes** would be helpful.

The exercise can be **read into the camera** or can be recorded by the **off-screen voice**.

If the client is willing and adventurous, a little **drama** can be recorded at this point to illustrate a personal goal. This is a **simple presentation** in which the client is the **actor** and the aim is not to embarrass.

Step 10

Integration artworks are constructed, determined by the client's preferences.

Examples are:

- Weave
- Cup
- Styrofoam print
- Two-tone cutout, a simple and aesthetically pleasing exercise, which can capture the most important elements of each **collage**.
- Now an **artwork** (A3) is created to **symbolise** some discoveries or elements of prime importance. Six elements are selected, three from each collage, and a very simple outline of each element / symbol is drawn in a puzzle-like way, so that it can be coloured in like a mosaic. A church window effect will be created. A brief **explanation** is given on **video camera** of the relevance of the six images. This art piece is done with oil pastels (or pen and ink) and, before it is framed or laminated, colour copies are made so that it can be used for a T-shirt, or to cover an object like a pencil box or a keyholder. It will be discreet and meaningful to the client.
- A decoupage **box!** Inside dreams, outside personality.

Step 11

The client is provided with a **spool of film** and instructed to take pictures of his world and its important people – if they agree. What does my world look like? Not my inner feelings. It is a hands-on assignment that will force the client to decide what is important and what not. “A walk through my life” is undertaken. The client will have to **travel** to places and people in order to **take the photographs**. (A sense of **adventure** accompanies this exercise.)

Step 12

The spool is developed and colour photocopies are made of the 20 most important aspects of the self-world. These are then placed into a very interesting **ball** to **symbolise** the **self-world**. This exercise is very useful because, as one constructs the ball, one starts evaluating places and people and this evaluation leads to inclusion and exclusion.

The client may also include older photographs that convey a “special” interest. **Video footage** is taken of the hands holding the whole self-world. Explanations are provided of at least ten important photographs that would not be offensive and this discussion is recorded. A thought-provoking **photograph** is taken of the client holding the world in his hands to stimulate **contemplation**. The ball may later be hung from the ceiling to serve as a decorative piece for a while.

Step 13

In the light of who I am, what my vision is and what the state of my world is, how do I need to spend my time? It is an open assignment that allows freedom of choice but the aim is to have a **literal clock** at the end. I think **pottery** as medium may be very useful here. The client simply paints on half-baked pottery items. These painted articles are then taken to a potter that can glaze and bake them. The face of a clock is designed, depicting images that provide direction, motivation and reminders.

Step 14

A discussion about what I have that I can bless the world with. This is an exercise that purposes to look away from the self and tries to bring a **sense of purpose**.

Step 15

A **T-shirt** design is made to **symbolise** the **insight** gained into the self and to make clear the intentions for the future. Elements of the previous exercises may be incorporated, or it can be something totally new. The wearing of new resolutions can be an outward demonstration of the inward drive towards new ideas. The design of the shirt can be framed and a copy can be transferred onto the shirt.

Step 16

A **CD-cover** is created with **photocopied images** that have been generated since the start of the process. This CD-cover is for holding the CD with an overview of the process. A **message** of advice to the self is placed inside the front cover. **Fridge magnets** are made

of the most important points in the message to the self, in an attempt to create **visual** and **tangible reminders**.

Step 17

An **on-screen conclusion** of the process is **filmed**, in which the client may mention the meaningful elements and address a little note to the self. This needs to be **rehearsed** and is a **creative writing exercise** aimed at a professional on-screen appearance. The basic elements of drama or public speaking can be introduced here to assist the client in presenting a **professional**, enlightened self to the self. The client will determine the duration of the recording.

Step 18

An **exhibition** of the process takes place, at which the constructs and video are exhibited to a very small audience. Essentially, the counsellor and client (and a friend of the client) are present. At the end of the exhibition, the process is terminated and the client leaves with all the constructs generated.

5.6.2 Pilot study feedback

5.6.2.1. Weaknesses, concerns, practical challenges and suggestions

(a) Weaknesses and concerns about the process as a unit:

- It is expensive. It costs R900, 00 to manufacture all the constructs, excluding filming of the concept. The professional quality of the constructs, which is an important part of the process, makes it costly. Laminating, colour photocopying, frames, developing photographs and other detail add to the cost.
- Some steps are too time-consuming.
- The hands-on practical approach may be overwhelming to the client. He or she would, therefore, have to be adequately informed of what such a process entailed before starting.
- It is labour-intensive and specialised knowledge is needed.

(b) Practical challenges:

- If this process is going to function as a legitimate means of counselling, an art-friendly facility, where art materials are accessible and may be utilised, will be a necessity.
- The counsellor and client need access to computers, laminating machines, photocopiers, cameras, digital video equipment and software.

(c) Suggestions:

- Use more promotional gifts or ready-mades that can easily be transformed into a personal construct, e.g. an empty key holder that can hold a personal construct.
- Because of the technological and electronic demands of the process, it may be necessary to attempt to conduct it full-time over four days, instead of in 12 or more individual sessions running over months.

(d) Objective suggestions

As mentioned in **Chapter 1**, I sent a copy of the conceptual video to George Buck (e-mail reference), who is involved in arts-based research in education at the University of Alberta, Canada, and he suggested the following:

- The importance of the **process** should be stressed and not the professional-looking constructs, because clients with limited art skills will shy away from the process.
- Clients need **instruction** on how to do meaningful **photography** before taking photographs for an exercise, because the disappointing quality of their photographs can potentially ruin their enjoyment and involvement.
- For initial research purposes, the number of steps should be **reduced**.
- Steps 10 and 13 should be omitted to reduce the time element. If step 13 is used, the material used must allow for a quick assembling of the clock.

5.7 Proposed Research Plan for the Practical Research in Chapter 6

The manual (see **Appendix D**) that was written to accompany the process in **Chapter 6**, is added in cursive to reveal how the process intends to foster **self-knowledge** and elicit **self-insight**. The reader needs to take cognisance of the fact that the steps were designed to provide multiple perspectives into the self and the self-world. The process focuses on the self and then gradually progresses away from the “private” self to provide the client with a more objective “outside” perspective. At the end of each step, the objective(s) of the step will be briefly highlighted to make the progression of the steps clear, in order to arrive at a more holistic picture of the client’s situation.

The proposed research component process will consist of the following 16 steps. (The explanations of the pilot study in the pilot study process are still valid but abbreviated here.)

Step 1: Video introduction

The client speaks into the video camera and briefly describes the present state of affairs.

Write a paragraph in which you provide an overview of your (present) circumstances and your present state of mind. Explain what you would like to achieve with this process or counselling programme. (What is that you would like to learn about yourself?)

After you have completed the paragraph to your satisfaction, you will explain it first to the counsellor, so that blurred meanings may be corrected, before you explain it to the video camera.

For discussion:

- *How did you experience the explanation you made to the camera?*
- *Are there any interesting remarks or impressions that you would like to record in writing?*

Objective(s):

This introductory step aims to establish an atmosphere of efficiency and to introduce the client to the reality of the self and the major challenges in a logical and reassuring way.

The reason for discussing the written text with the counsellor first is to make sure that only affirming self-information will be recorded to protect the self. Negative material will be discussed but not recorded.

The reason for employing the camera during the first step is to set the stage for the rest of the process and to reveal to the client that the video footage will only be taken in a rehearsed and familiar environment, where personal expression is valued and protected.

Step 2: Monoprints

Two monoprints are made to capture the client's interest.

You will make two prints on the glass panel, as explained by the counsellor. Thereafter, you will decorate the two prints in two different ways with pencils and ink.

For discussion:

- *How did you experience the making of the prints?*
- *Have you ever made a print before?*
- *Can you see other uses for this art technique?*
- *How do you like the colour photocopy?*

Objective(s):

This step purposes to move away from the serious issues of the process by providing an easy opportunity for the client to be successful at creating a monoprint. Because of its surprise element, it introduces the art and colour element of the process in a spectacular way. The questions suggested for discussion provide the client and counsellor with an

opening to move closer to each other by means of neutral material. The general objective of this step is to free the client (and the process) of all “heavy” connotations and to introduce beauty in a very natural way. By doing so, a sense of hope and spontaneity is triggered in the client.

Step 3: Brainstorming exercise

This exercise will be started and partially completed in the workshop situation but additional thoughts may be added later.

Write down all the different issues and aspects [dreams, fears, goals, work, assignments, problems...] of your life on separate stickers (as explained by the counsellor).

Headings that might assist you to remember the different aspects of your life may be supplied, if it appears that you have exhausted your thoughts (too early). When you and the counsellor are satisfied, you will copy the same list of issues onto a second set of stickers, using a different colour pen.

For discussion:

- *How do you feel now that you have tapped your mind? Do you feel in any way different about all the various aspects of your life?*
- *Are there any important tasks or elements that are catching your attention? Things you have forgotten about?*

Objective(s):

This step provides the client with an opportunity to start taking control of his “head” situation, because thoughts or issues are acknowledged and labelled. By means of this step, the client can take stock of those hopeful dreams, present problems and plaguing fears. This step allows the client to acknowledge the present “state of mind” on paper – without the necessity to explain any of it to the counsellor. An opportunity for **self-**

knowledge and acknowledgement of the present flow of thought presents itself to the client in manageable format.

Step 4: Brainstorming exercise stuck on monoprints

The list with random thoughts or issues is stuck onto the colourful monoprint.

You are going to take one set of stickers and stick them onto the colourful monoprint background. The other set of stickers will be separated and grouped and headings that you will choose will be supplied. These will be stuck onto the two-tone monoprint background. The second step should enable you to view the separate sections and the relevant issues of your life at a glance.

For discussion:

- *How did you experience the execution of this step?*
- *Do you feel any different about the various sections, aspects and issues of your life?*
- *Do you think you have gained a greater measure of insight into your personal world by means of the visual layout?*

Objective(s):

This step should foster a greater measure of personal control and **self-understanding** as the client organises the issues to create a framework of categories. The aspects of the mind that could even, at times, seem threatening are given an aesthetic and tangible quality and this could instil a sense of inner peace in the client, seeing that the relevant issues and **self-aspects** are harnessed in an understandable format.

Step 5: Discussion

An interesting discussion can take place around the completed visual layout of the personal issues.

For discussion:

- *Do you feel that your thoughts are now better organised? What is the feeling that you are experiencing at this moment regarding the many aspects of your life?*
- *Where do the greatest challenges, problems, joys and ... lie, according to the previous exercise?*

Record a few impressions on paper regarding the “organised” aspects of which you want to remind yourself. In other words, you need to write a short message to yourself regarding the “things” you regard as important, so that you may live a more effective life, according to your judgment. Once you and the counsellor have agreed on the message, you will explain it to the camera.

Objective(s):

This step builds on the positive emotional momentum that should have been generated in the previous step and provides an opportunity for the client to encourage the self by means of real and credible issues (or stimuli) that were **self-generated**. The client is now able to motivate or **affirm** the **self** by means of the personal issues that were generated by personal decision and the video appearance provides an opportunity to consolidate the **insight** gained. The main objective of this step is to assist the client in feeling good about the self-aspects, to instil a sense of respect for the world in the mind and to allow opportunity for self-affirmation, based on **self-generated** evidence.

Step 6: Collage of the future

Now an A3-collage is made that includes pictures or images of the future.

Page through the magazines provided and tear out the pictures that speak to you regarding your future – or seem like elements you would like to see in your future. You must imagine that you can see these images come to life over the next months, years and decades.

Once you have collected enough images and pictures, cut them to the desired size, evaluate them, organise them on an A3-page and then stick them on. Afterwards, a colour photocopy will be made and you will label (or clarify) the images and pictures and explain them to the counsellor.

For discussion:

- *Explain the great challenges your future holds.*
- *How does it feel to see your possible future like this, in front of you?*
- *Which images do you enjoy looking at the most and which ones provide you with great inner joy?*
- *Which goals would you like to reach first ... and later?*
- *Which goals are almost “impossible”?*
- *If you could choose one symbol or image with which to associate your idea of your future, what would it be?*

Explain the five most important images – as you experience it now – to the camera. You may first want to rehearse your explanation on paper.

Objective(s):

This step intends to inspire and stir the visionary elements in the client by providing an opportunity to escape the “constraints” of the present reality. (It should be experienced as a welcome relief to the hard issues of the present). A further important aspect of this step is to provide **insight** into the numerous dreams, ideals and aspirations that are dormant, simply because they have been forgotten or were never acknowledged. This step should evoke a positive attitude in the client towards dreams and aspirations, because those regarded as relevant were given the desired visual substance and labelled. Once again – as for most steps in the process – the fact that the client takes time to “manufacture” this construct (based on personal inner evaluation) should allow for a greater measure of relevance and **identification** (and may, hopefully, lift the level of intrinsic motivation).

Step 7: Photographic session

A photographic session takes place to break the tension and add some humour.

A photographer, or the counsellor, will take two portraits of you. One portrait will be “serious” and the other will display your humorous side. You can decide what the second photograph will be about by the items you select to bring to the studio.

For discussion:

- *How did you experience the photography session?*
- *How would you prefer your family to see you?*
- *How would you like to be seen by your friends and peers?*
- *To whom do you most frequently disclose your humorous side?*
- *What did you want to convey about yourself with the humorous portrait?*
- *What makes you laugh?*

You may read a joke into the camera or tell briefly what, in general, you find funny or humorous.

Objective(s):

This step is placed in the middle of the process to allow the client an opportunity to generate personal (motivational) material without being in “manufacturing” mode, to activate the more humorous side of the client’s personality and to foster **self-respect**. This step, with its “open” design, should allow the client the freedom to “construct” both a serious and lighthearted (humorous) view and perception of the self in a thought-provoking and entertaining way. An opportunity to use the body to convey a host of personal messages to the self presents itself to the client.

This step should also visually illustrate to the client that the power of humour lies within the self and that it can have positive results. The camera appearance affords the client an opportunity to state the preferred package of personal humour.

Step 8: Visual identity collage

A second collage is made, where a photograph of self is placed in the centre.

This step is a repetition of the methods used in Step 6 but, this time, you will collect images or pictures that represent you as a person. Your collage must answer the question: “Who am I as a person?”

For discussion:

- *What catches your attention immediately when you look at your “ID collage”?*
- *Did you learn anything about yourself you were not aware of?*
- *Name your ten best qualities the collage has highlighted for you.*

If you would like to address or encourage yourself at this stage, what would you say? Prepare a paragraph in which you encourage yourself, or you can simply explain a few of the images you like most to the camera.

Objective(s):

This step presents an opportunity to the client to take a deeper and more balanced look at the “real me” or valued **self-identity**. This step should manifest a more balanced visual presentation of the “true self”, because the preceding steps provided information about: artistic capabilities, the present state of mind, the future and the humorous side. The reason for placing this step at this stage of the process is to allow the client the privilege of constructing a more positive outlook of the “real me” because, as mentioned above, it should be impossible for the client at this point to dwell (only) on the negative, seeing that there is so much colourful and inspirational evidence to support the positive elements in the “true self”.

The video appearance “forces” the client to evaluate the “true self” and to notice the elements that are most prominent and precious pertaining to **self-identity**. This exercise can also trigger a greater measure of **self-acceptance**.

Step 9: Discussion – comparing collages

Now a discussion takes place of the discoveries that can be made when the two collages, the future and the personality, are placed next to each other. A process of consolidation takes places.

The two collages are placed next to each other and comparisons and observations are made. Explain what you see in each collage and how they relate to each other.

For discussion:

- *How does your identity compare to what you would like to achieve in the future?*
- *Do you detect any contradictions?*
- *Do you think you would have to make any adjustments to reach your goals?*

Objective(s):

This step purposes to “earth” and highlight the **insight** the client has gained into future aspirations and the “true self” by providing an opportunity to distinguish between the possible and the impossible, in the light of who the “true self” is and what it is capable of. The exercise aims at aligning the “true self” with a credible and achievable future outlook, arrived at by comparing the two valid self-generated colourful constructs and, in so doing, boosting **self-knowledge**.

Step 10: Photographic exercise or photo selection

The client is given a spool of film and is instructed to take pictures of his world and its important people, if they agree. Existing photographs may also be used.

Bring certain photographs to the counselling workshop, including the photographs that you took especially for this step. The counsellor will inform you in good time about what needs to be done.

For discussion:

- *How important is it to you to take photographs or record important events in your life?*
- *How did you experience the photographic journey you undertook to complete this assignment?*

Objective(s):

This exercise purposes to add an element of adventure that will allow the client an opportunity to scrutinise the reality of the literal world. The client will decide which elements, locations and people need to be photographed to provide visual evidence of the **self-environment**. Once again, the client is given complete freedom and control to include what he or she wants. The execution of the photographic journey takes place outside the counselling environment. This exercise can also emphasise the fact that the process is definitely linked to the reality of the client's life and that this visual exercise has a definite purpose, namely, to provide important **self-information**.

Step 11: Self-world ball

Photocopies are made of the 20 most important aspects of the self-world. These are then incorporated to make a ball to symbolise the self-world.

Select the 20 most important photographs you want to use to represent your world. Then colour photocopies will be made that can be cut and pasted to form the ball. The counsellor will assist you in this regard.

For discussion:

- *What were you thinking of when you were selecting the pictures?*

- *What can you say about your everyday life, when you look at the photographs?*
- *Is there something that upsets you about your world?*
- *Is there anything lacking in your world?*
- *Do you detect an over or underemphasis anywhere of elements you regard as important?*
- *Choose those photographs that make you happy.*
- *How did you enjoy the construction of the ball?*

Explain the core elements of your world briefly to the camera, or comment on the joys in your life.

Objective(s):

This step literally forces the client to take the selection of photographs in hand and to select the 20 most important elements, people or places in order to construct the ball. It should provide a valuable opportunity for the client to gain insight into the importance of certain elements and the personal scale of priorities.

The client should find this activity enjoyable, as a paper ball is constructed that provides the client with a symbolic photographic presentation of the personal world. This activity may lead to a greater measure of **ownership** regarding the personal world and its valued aspects, as well as allowing the client to gain **insight** into the (photographic) reality of his **self-selected** world as reflected by the paper ball.

Step 12: Clock

The face of a clock is designed, depicting images that provide direction, motivation and reminders. An easy-to-assemble kit will be used, into or onto which the face will be inserted or stuck.

All the previous steps will be briefly revised to make this step meaningful. In view of all the important organised aspects or issues of your life, your expectations of the future and your identity, how do you generally need to spend your time?

You are now going to design an “inspirational” clock face. The counsellor will assist you by showing an example. When you have completed the design, a colour photocopy will be made that will be laminated, after which a clock mechanism will be inserted, so that you can make good use of it!

For discussion:

- *What is your favourite pastime?*
- *How do you generally spend your time?*
- *How do you divide your hours?*
- *Do you participate in activities that exercise your body?*
- *Did you gather any new insights? Explain.*
- *How personal and meaningful are the clock images to you?*

Explain the meaning of your clock face images to the camera.

Objective(s):

This step provides an opportunity to distil the **insights** gained in the previous steps into an artwork that should reveal and consolidate personal resolutions and raise the level of intrinsic motivation towards achieving desired goals and living more effectively according the standards set by the **inspired self**. The main components of the client’s life, as evaluated by the self, are identified and given prominence. The fact that a literal clock is constructed in this step should “alert” the client to the fact that the exercise is “useful”, so the artwork has an aesthetic and practical purpose. This step also provides an ideal opportunity for the client to experience success and it should have a positive influence on different self-aspects, especially **self-esteem**.

Step 13: Discussion – “My unique contribution to the world”

A discussion takes place about the special abilities or talents of the client that can enrich the world.

Seeing that you have had opportunity to look into the core of your personality and interests, you will now look away from yourself and regard the world or society “out there”.

For discussion:

- *Name the talents you have that you can use to enrich the lives of others.*
- *How can you utilise your talents to serve mankind?*

Objective(s):

This step focuses on the functions or roles the clients can fulfil in the world “out there”. The “hidden agenda” of this step is to help the client value personal strengths and talents and to create awareness in the client that there is a niche that would welcome the client’s contribution. This step should assist the client to raise the level of personal significance and **self-respect**.

Step 14: CD-cover design

The CD-cover is intended for the CD containing the overview of the process. It is constructed by making use of the photocopied images that have been generated since the start of the process.

The colour photocopies that have been made throughout this process will now be used to decorate the CD case for the CD that will eventually contain the edited process. You are free to use other images or pictures, if you wish. The purpose of this exercise is to summarise the impressions you have gathered during the process and to illuminate your personal goals. The counsellor will explain the detail and show an example.

For discussion:

- *How did you experience this “summarising” exercise?*
- *How do you feel about the personal motivational thoughts you addressed? (Do you think they indicate your personal course accurately?)*
- *Can you recognise any humorous aspects of yourself in the CD-case cover?*

Explain the most interesting aspect of your CD-case cover to the camera.

Objective(s):

Once again, this step allows great freedom and should inspire the client to write motivational slogans to the self that were not possible in the earlier steps. The client is able to reduce the whole process to a few meaningful constructs that should be directive and symbolic of the personal **insights** and **resolutions** (arrived at during the process) and should build towards the closure of the counselling process. The end result is a CD-case filled with imagery that will keep the footage generated during the process.

Step 15: On-screen conclusion

An on-screen conclusion of the process is filmed, in which the client can mention which elements were meaningful and address a little note to the self.

Prepare a concluding camera appearance in which you explain what you have learned about yourself throughout the process. (Compare the notes of the introduction and conclusion and decide if you have benefited from the process.)

Objective(s):

This step allows the client to verbally express the impact of the process and to compare the states of mind at the beginning and at the conclusion of the process.

Step 16: Exhibition and on-screen viewing

An exhibition of the process takes place, at which the constructs are exhibited and the video is shown to a very small audience, namely the counsellor and client and people invited by the client.

Please note that **video clips** will be taken throughout the progression of the steps, as indicated by the pilot study explanation and conceptual video presentation. The client may also suggest when extra video footage may be taken.

Objective(s):

This step takes place a week or a few days after the process has been concluded and provides the client with an “objective” or **camera perspective** of the **self** and the **self-generated** constructs as they were captured during the process. At the end of the screening, the video and CD of the edited counselling process are given to the client.

5.8 Pre and Post-testing

In order to determine whether the respondent has undergone any emotional or personality changes (or has gained a measure of **self-knowledge** and **self-insight**), as a result of the intended counselling process, it was decided to employ the **Emotions Profile Index (EPI)**, designed by Plutchik and Kellerman. This brief test will be administered **before** the process and again on **completion** of the four-day process.

The **EPI** was designed to reveal certain basic personality traits and personality conflicts in an individual. The **EPI** is based on Plutchik’s theory of emotion, which highlights eight basic emotions in people and holds that emotions vary in similarity and polarity.

The sets of bipolar emotions are:

- Timid versus Aggressive
- Trustful versus Distrustful

- Controlled versus Dyscontrolled
- Gregarious versus Depressed

The **EPI** can be used in the following settings: clinical assessment, vocational guidance, counselling, research and class demonstrations. It consists of a 62-item forced-choice test and takes about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. An “emotion circle” is used to capture the final results, revealing the basic emotions and conflict areas (Plutchik & Kellerman).

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter had two aims, namely, to justify the rationale for the pilot study and conceptual video; and to provide the detailed layout of the empirical research plan. The pilot study was analysed and its weaknesses mentioned and, with reference to those suggestions, a new empirical research plan was proposed, which will be implemented in **Chapter 6**. The next chapter will reveal the practical research results.