

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS, FINDINGS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the findings from the treatment programme, the conclusions reached by the researcher and the limitations of the study. The evaluation and integration of all the material was a process in itself, which impacted on and interlinked with the main process of the research.

10.2 DETERMINING WHETHER THE STUDY OBJECTIVES WERE MET

Given the fact that no suitable treatment programme for incarcerated rapists exists in South Africa, the researcher is of the opinion that the initial study objectives were met. The needs of the rapists, the community, the Department of Correctional Services and the researcher were identified and taken into consideration. A treatment programme was developed, implemented and evaluated by means of different change processes. In addition, the success or otherwise of the programme was measured by means of a variety of assessment procedures throughout the whole process. The contents of the previous chapter confirmed this assumption.

10.3 THE PROCESSUAL PARADIGM AND PROCESSES AS RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher focused on the basic principles of processes as research methodology as this is an accepted approach in the caring professions and offers a holistic approach. This methodology added value to the existing scientific knowledge available to the psychology profession as it illustrated the researcher's thinking, therapeutic actions and evaluations throughout the study and why certain methods, procedures and processes were utilized.

The processual paradigm in this instance was effective as it allowed the researcher to create a flexible and easily adaptable approach to cope with a project such as this. It allowed and accepted the influence of many processes on different levels. It created an environment where everyone involved could learn from mistakes and make adjustments on the spot.

The assistance and co-operation of the rapists gave additional value to the research project as their need for change and involvement in a meaningful exercise was accommodated and they were able to assist themselves and/or others (e.g., the researcher, other prisoners with similar problems, the Department and the community) in the process.

Instead of focusing on one aspect or seemingly correct way to approach a problem or issue, the researcher dealt with various problems, issues and uncertainties on a day-to-day basis. The processual approach followed in this indicated clearly that changes in individuals or a system do not happen or take place in an incidental, episodic or haphazard way. They were interwoven processes that went on continuously and only by dealing with them in a step-by-step way did the researcher and the rapists gain understanding and meaning.

Controls built into the process assisted the researcher in adhering to guidelines, policies and/or procedures of the Department, and ethical guidelines. Other controls, such as the use of various methods to assess or measure change, also assisted the process of evaluation. In addition, they indicated the effectiveness of working according to certain plans and procedures as it facilitated the documentation and interpretation of the findings.

Working with processes is time consuming. It took far longer to complete the programme than was initially envisioned. The researcher found that it required following certain processes at certain times (e.g., extensive research abroad before a research proposal was even submitted, evaluation of existing treatment programmes, compilation of a treatment programme for the unique South African context, piloting the programme

and an on-going evaluation of the changes in the process and the rapists while implementing the programme and documenting all the results after implementing the programme). It can be seen that the development of the treatment programme was only one process while several other processes were overlapping and/or taking place in this process simultaneously.

10.4 THE SUITABILITY OF THE TWO MODELS THAT WERE UTILIZED IN THE PROCESS OF RESEARCH

The researcher found it useful to work with two models in the study as both models evaluate change on different levels. Mink et al's (1993) Total Transformation Management Process model worked well in developing and implementing the treatment programme for incarcerated rapists as the model provides a broad but flexible and holistic framework and change on many levels could be facilitated. Brock and Salerno's (1994) Change Cycle was utilized to indicate whether change did, in fact, take place in the individual rapists while participating in the whole process. This meant that the researcher was able to work with different change processes during the whole process of research, as one process occurred within another at the same time.

The two models complemented each other and suited the researcher's frame of thinking and style. Both offered a logical as well as holistic approach. Both models also anchored each end of the two processes (see chapter 3). On the one hand, the entire system/organization (the work-side) was dealt with, while on the other, attention was given to the human-side of the individual incarcerated rapists. This allowed the use of different assessment tools, activities and resources; could be used by an individual (the researcher) to bring about change in a small-scale effort; guided the learning needs of the rapists in an individual as well as a group context in order to examine what they were, what they are, what they would need to be and how to make the necessary changes; allowed for optimal exchange of human energy; was open and communicative, and minimized constraints created by the environment, structure, processes, policies and technology. The two models also clearly illustrated that change processes affect not only

the individual, but also the group and/or an organization. The models recognized and accepted individual differences, and allowed the rapists to work together as a group because they were solving problems by means of giving and receiving feedback, letting go of the past and working towards a better future.

Although the two models and processes used in this study are more commensurate with industrial psychology than clinical psychology, both of them combined in a unique way with psychometric evaluations, observations and other data more familiar to clinical psychology and offered a unique way to bridge the gap between these two disciplines.

Like Mink et al. (1993), the researcher agrees that change/transformation goes hand in hand with intense learning. For the rapists, learning took place on more than one level as they could examine themselves and make the necessary changes to get there, especially those who completed the whole cycle of change (Brock & Salerno, 1994). The researcher is of the opinion that some of the rapists who completed the whole cycle of change have become successful changers and will continue the change process into the future.

The researcher found that both models could be utilized effectively. This might therefore be a useful tool for other researchers to develop and/or evaluate other change processes in different circumstances. The researcher is also of the opinion that even if some changes could be considered good or bad (Brock & Salerno 1994), the models added value to this research study.

This study confirms Mink et al's (1993) as well as Brock and Salerno's (1994) findings that:

- Change is a process and not an event.
- Change can be accomplished by individuals.
- Change is a highly personal experience.
- Change involves developmental growth (emotional, intellectual and

spiritual).

- Change affects thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

10.5 THE SAMPLE OF RAPISTS

This research study confirmed various perspectives on rapists and at the same time included some differences as indicated below.

Similarities between rapists:

- Mainly single, young adult males under the age of 30 commit rape.
- The absence of a father or mother, or an important role model affects socialization processes and interpersonal relationships, leading to low self-esteem and insecurity about masculinity.
- Anger and hostility towards women is a factor. It confirms that a bad relationship with the mother figure leads to the projection of anger and distrust of females in general. Some rapists indicated in no uncertain terms that they even had more anger against women after being arrested than before the offence.
- Some degree of male dominance exists in all societies.
- Alcohol plays an important role as more than half of the group also indicated alcohol abuse or other forms of abuse in their family homes and their own use and/or abuse of alcohol at the time of the crime.
- Many rapists still believe that if women say “no” to sex they are willing to have sex. Therefore “no” means “yes” to them.
- Rape is a violent crime and the numbers of rapists are increasing daily everywhere in the world, including South Africa. The high incidence of rape taking place also in South Africa today confirms that we might be living in a rape culture (Vogelman, 1990). This is confirmed by the increasing numbers of rapists convicted over the last 5 years.
- More social factors and cultural differences endorse the crime of rape, than

other factors.

Differences, including cross-cultural comparisons:

- Even though most rapists generally have a low educational level, the educational level of the rapists involved in this study was exceptionally poor and limited, as was their previous emotional and/or intellectual stimulation. Some of the rapists were totally illiterate.
- In most Western countries, talking about sexual matters is acceptable. In African culture, talking about sexual matters, especially with females, is still taboo.
- In most Western countries, a common language assists in the sharing of information. In this study language difficulties increased the problem of sharing information and an additional prisoner had to be recruited as a facilitator and language interpreter during parts of the process. This made it more difficult to share information and experience.
- Even though women are becoming more emancipated and empowered by society, anger towards women and male dominance and power as opposed to female submission is very real in the different indigenous groups in South Africa. This was evident even though some rapists had been living in cities for a long time and exposed to Western culture.
- South African women, in general, are still perceived to be submissive and dependent and have a non-dominant role in society where men can do with women as they wish (Louw, 2001). Men still have more rights than women because in some societies men are dominant since they control the exchange of valued goods beyond the family group and this activity brings prestige and power.

10.6 THE IMPACT OF THE PRISON SETTING ON THE TREATMENT PROCESS

The researcher, as senior manager in the Department of Correctional Services, was able to tackle the urgent need for a treatment programme for incarcerated rapists. The researcher is of the opinion that the treatment programme will meet both the rehabilitation and treatment needs of incarcerated rapists.

The fact that the researcher was a senior manager in the Department of Correctional Services was a great asset in the positive outcome of the research as she already had credibility, knew Departmental policies and procedures, knew the system, where to go for assistance and how to obtain information. It can be assumed that if the researcher was a stranger and unfamiliar to Departmental procedures and/or policies, the research outcome might have been different. Gaining support and co-operation from top management from the start is therefore imperative because, without support and commitment from top management any new programme will fail (Mink et al., 1993). The fact that the researcher had this support gave the leverage and added advantage because when particular problems arose, they could be dealt with immediately (e.g., to retain the trust of the rapists – especially during the first two weeks of the treatment programme).

This study confirmed that to develop trust, co-operation and open communication with a client - in this instance the rapists, as well as the correctional officials on the premises - is essential (Winick, 1994). It is agreed that one of the first and essential tasks in any research project and even more so in a prison context, is the establishment of trust as trust is considered to be the basis of any therapeutical intervention and it will affect treatment outcome. If trust is not established quickly and maintained throughout, then, it is almost certain that any treatment programme or intervention will fail.

Negative and/or restrictive environments do not necessarily hamper positive outcomes. The researcher agrees that prison is perhaps not the best or ideal place to render treatment

programmes or bring about positive change, as it is a closed system, often ambiguous and paradoxical. Nevertheless, this factor should not discourage other researchers from working in a restrictive environment, since that is often the first or only place where a prisoner/rapist will be exposed to treatment possibilities. The positive findings in this study indicate that even with the barest resources (personnel, infrastructure, facilities, material, finance, etc.) it is possible to bring about constructive and positive change in a rapist provided he is willing and motivated to change and receives empathy, support and assistance from a caring therapist.

The researcher came to the conclusion that the prison environment is, indeed, a living organism/system, implying that all the persons involved in the process were affected by the treatment programme as it affected people on different levels (the rapists, the researcher and correctional officials).

Most treatment programmes are essentially preventative and aim to instil a sense of self-worth in offenders so that they can rebuild their lives in a constructive and pro-social manner. The researcher therefore agrees with Clear and Cole (1999), Guy (1991), Marshall et al. (1999) and Scutt (1990) on the importance of treatment and the difficulties of treating sexual offenders when working in a prison context. The researcher acknowledges that treatment programmes to rehabilitate or treat rapists, especially in a prison, have shortcomings and/or limited effectiveness.

Various treatment approaches have shown limited success with sexual offenders and the lessons learnt from experts in the field were utilized to develop a treatment programme for incarcerated rapists in a unique South African prison environment according to a modular approach. The researcher accepts and agrees that this is not the best or only way or model to treat sex offenders/rapists. However, it is a new way of evaluating a treatment programme, since this has not been done before in South African Correctional facilities. The researcher also acknowledges that even though the results were encouraging, the programme was done with a limited sample and more treatment programmes for sexual offenders need to be developed. These should be relevant to the

unique South African context. It should also be borne in mind that sexual offenders and rapists will always be at risk of repeating their behaviour.

10.7 CRITIQUE

The main criticism or limitation of the present study is that it was only done with a small group of nine incarcerated rapists who were first-time offenders, which could indicate that they might have a better/more positive outcome. The positive results obtained therefore might be due to the fact that they were first-time offenders and the results cannot be generalized to all incarcerated rapists, particularly not serial rapists, who might have totally different psychodynamics and/or treatment outcomes.

One prisoner who was not a rapist but a murderer was initially included in the group to primarily assist the researcher with language difficulties (see chapter 5) and his inclusion in the group might be considered a point of criticism. This prisoner was a valuable asset, however, as he not only facilitated but also translated sensitive sexual information into the rapists' own indigenous languages. The researcher is a White female, is not able to talk any indigenous language and was not aware of all the taboos. The fact that this prisoner became an active member in the group might also be considered a criticism and a variable as he was accepted by the group as a member during the process and due to his own needs was participating in the learning process. He consequently changed his own behaviour positively although his results are not included and/or discussed as they fell outside the scope of this study.

The questions that could be asked now are: How successful was the treatment programme in bringing about change? Did it achieve what it set out to achieve? Does this impact to a significant degree on the existing knowledge? The honest response to these questions is that it is too early to determine accurately how effective the treatment programme was. The researcher can confidently say that many change processes were observed. She is therefore optimistic that the participants maximized the opportunity made available to them, and left greatly different to when they started. Although insight was gained and

positive results obtained from some rapists who participated in this learning experience, there is still limited understanding of the intricacies of why men rape and what will help them not to continue with this violent and negative behaviour in future.

How stabilized the change for the rapists and the organization will be in the long term is difficult to determine. The effect of long-lasting change fell outside the scope of this study, since its focus was limited to determining whether change took place during and after the intervention of the treatment programme. The effect on the organization can therefore only be measured once the treatment programme is accessible to more than one group of rapists or sexual offenders in a prison context and once it is implemented more extensively. The fact that change could be accomplished in this study on a small scale is an indication that it could be done on a much wider scale.

Expectations of the ultimate success of this treatment programme need to be balanced against the fact that most researchers agree that sex offenders, especially rapists, cannot be cured, but can learn to control and take responsibility for their own offending behaviour (Cull, 1992; Evans & Gallichio, 1991; Report of the Working Group Sex Offender Treatment Review, 1990).

The way this research was done and is presented was more time consuming than an empirical method. It can therefore only be done in small groups at any particular time. Taking into account the limited human resources available in the Department of Correctional Services, particular problems in the prison/organization and planning, the future viability or similar replication of this process could be a problem and can be questioned.

The present study did not attempt to deal with the attitudes of men who do not rape women as there was no control group of non-incarcerated rapists. The results in this study should therefore be interpreted with caution although Harmon, Owens and Dewey (1995) and others indicate that incarcerated rapists' attitudes are not necessarily different from other men's attitudes towards women.

10.8 CONCLUSION

The conclusions of the whole study indicated that the treatment programme was indeed an intense learning experience not only for the rapists but also for the researcher and others involved. The researcher pointed out and confirmed that change is learning and learning is change (Mink et al., 1993). The main results were discussed, including similarities and differences between rapists in other studies. Chapter 11 covers recommendations and strategies to implement similar studies in the future.

CHAPTER 11

RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher's recommendations here are based on the findings of this study and should be seen in the context of a prison environment, which is known to be controversial, complex, restrictive and not necessarily conducive to positive change.

The recommendations focus on dealing with (and possibly resolving) the main issues that were highlighted in the study and the implementation of similar programmes. The recommendations are not restricted to working in a prison environment, however, as similar processes are found in individuals, groups and organizations.

11.2 IDENTIFIED AREAS

11.2.1 Utilizing a processual approach

The researcher recommends that a processual approach be followed in more studies because it is a flexible approach, even though it is more time consuming than other approaches. This approach allows, accepts and influences many processes on different levels (e.g., in individuals, groups and organizations), is logical and holistic and will enhance transformation processes. It also easily creates an environment where everyone involved can learn from mistakes and make adjustments on the spot.

11.2.2 Creating a conducive environment where positive change can occur

The researcher recommends that a conducive and supportive environment be utilized as it creates an atmosphere for positive change to occur. As indicated, the researcher worked in an old, unused, and barren facility in the prison environment. The researcher is of the

opinion that the provision of an environmentally friendly environment will facilitate and enhance positive changes as it shows respect. The commitment by the Department to assist in accomplishing this goal is needed for such an environment where treatment programmes can be presented to prisoners.

11.2.3 Focus on humane treatment to facilitate positive change

The role of the therapist in any context is very important and even more so in a prison context. Therefore therapists who work with rapists/sex offenders must not be judgmental or punitive and should be comfortable with all aspects of sexuality, especially their own sexuality (Prendergast, 1991). Rapists and sexual offenders are not “monsters” or “victims” (Marshall, 1996, p. 317) and should not be treated as such. The researcher therefore recommends that therapists not only focus on treatment processes but also on optimising characteristics that facilitate the effectiveness of procedures, have respect for clients, display compassion and empathy, and convey a belief in the redeemable nature of all people, including sexual offenders.

11.2.4 Develop and/or adjust treatment programmes for a South African context

Where possible and if available, treatment programmes from Western counterparts should be obtained, carefully evaluated and adapted for use in South African circumstances. They should not be utilized just as they are. Researchers are encouraged to be creative and innovative and to develop indigenous treatment programmes that deal with South African problems in a unique way.

11.2.5 Awareness and management of diversity

Professionals such as psychologists and social workers should take note that many South African citizens and especially rapists/sexual offenders in general have been disadvantaged in the past, have serious intellectual and emotional disadvantages, lack social skills and have diverse cultural beliefs, customs and taboos which need to be dealt

with and taken into consideration. Treatment programmes for prisoners must therefore be adapted and developed for the unique South African circumstances to make provision for the disadvantages and/or constraints of the past and meet the personal and social needs of prisoners.

Language diversity and language difficulties must be overcome in new and creative ways. The researcher recommends the use of a facilitator (e.g., a prisoner or correctional official as a translator) when working with diverse language groups and/or persons from different cultures, as sufficient resources are and will remain to a problem in the near future.

Different views and customs regarding sex and sexuality must be also be noted when treatment programmes for rapists and/or sexual offenders are developed, as there are still many taboos in our urban and rural indigenous populations. Sexual aspects and sexuality can only be discussed after a good and trusting relationship has been built up with clients and where therapists are comfortable with their own sexuality, preferences and values. Issues and facts should be discussed with sensitivity and cognisance should be taken of different values, customs and beliefs. Researchers should not impose their own cosmologies and/or points of view as there are many different group and individual cosmologies and world-views. They should not try and change this, but accept this as a reality and try and gain more knowledge and experience from clients and share knowledge and fears. Only then will researchers be able to learn from others and facilitate a positive/relevant learning experience.

Researchers should also take cognisance of the many differences between urban and rural areas in South Africa. This study found that even though persons from urban areas claim to be Westernised, some rapists still firmly believed in their traditional customs. The rapists from rural areas were found to be very traditional and have strong beliefs. In a similar situation, some might not be able to share or might be less willing to share or take in new information, which might be in direct conflict with their beliefs. This might be considered a stumbling block in therapy, but if different beliefs and customs are accepted

and shared, it widens possibilities and the learning experiences of all involved. Only after sharing information in an open and trusting environment will it become the responsibility of the individuals to test or not test newly acquired information against the backdrop of their beliefs.

11.2.6 Register a need for more African researchers

More African researchers need to be trained to work with persons/prisoners in general from their own cultural background. Persons/prisoners will then have the advantage of being able to understand the language and might feel more comfortable about sharing information regarding sensitive issues (e.g., sexual customs and/or beliefs).

11.2.7 Awareness of the impact of equity and the changing role of women in the community on men

Within the community the changing role and social status of men and women is a problem area that needs serious and urgent attention. In this study the rapists regarded the current shifting and more prominent/dominant role of women, affirmative action policies and so on, as a real threat to their masculinity as they have insecurities about their masculinity, self-esteem, and role. New programmes should therefore be devised for men and women to empower them and allow them to take cognisance of the shifting roles of men and women and to understand the needs of both groups.

11.2.8 Follow a holistic and flexible treatment approach

The researcher followed a holistic and eclectic approach and therefore recommends that other researchers who wish to develop treatment programmes for rapists or other sexual offenders also follow a similar approach. The findings from this study confirm that a combination of holistic, cognitive-behavioural and psychodynamic approaches in the rendering of treatment programmes for rapists/sexual offenders is the best method (Marshall et al., 1999). Marshall et al. (1999) found that these methods are the most

appropriate, have positive and long-lasting affects, enhance strengths and deal with personal as well as social issues.

11.2.9 Expansion of the developed treatment programme to all sentenced prisoners

As mainstream psychotherapy or traditional psychotherapy is very difficult and not within the reach of all prisoners (including rapists) in correctional facilities, it is suggested that this treatment programme be made available and utilized in as many correctional facilities in the Department of Correctional Services as possible for all prisoners, rapists and/or other sexual offenders. The rapists in this study also recommended that this treatment programme be made available and utilized not only for rapists, but also with other sexual offenders, particularly young and/or first-time offenders. The reason for this is that the treatment programme deals with many aspects, namely cognitive thinking, exploring emotions, anger management, sex education, use of leisure, violence against women, AIDS awareness, substance abuse, victim empathy, stress management and relapse prevention in very simple but effective modules. Because this treatment programme is flexible, the researcher also suggests that this treatment programme be utilized in various formats, for instance:

- as a total package in an intensive six-week course
- on a modular basis (e.g., one module per week)
- in combination with other treatment programmes (e.g., other life skills, family therapy, etc).

11.2.10 Provide training for departmental professionals to utilize this programme

It is recommended that all psychologists and social workers in the Department of Correctional Services be trained to utilize this treatment programme.

11.2.11 Communicate the results to the criminal justice system and the community

The Criminal Justice System and the community need to take note of the findings of this study. It is also recommended that legal advice should be more easily available and accessible to persons who do not have the financial means for legal advice. There seems to be a need for such assistance.

11.2.12 Conduct more research on sexual offenders and replicate this project

More research must be conducted on prisoners and/or groups of incarcerated rapists to test the treatment efficacy. The researcher also recommends a replication study of the treatment programme especially for repeat and/or serial rapists in order to see whether there are differences between first-time rapists and/or repeat rapists.

11.3 THE VALUE OF THIS RESEARCH

The processual approach followed in this study added objective and scientific value and uniqueness to the existing body of knowledge. The researcher is of the opinion that the different models and processes utilized successfully bridged the gap between the industrial and clinical psychological field and expects that it will motivate, inspire and assist other researchers to follow a similar approach in future.

11.4 CONCLUSION

The recommendations made in this chapter apply not only to the Department of Correctional Services, but to other organizations or situations as well.

It is the researcher's hope that this study will lead to the development of more treatment programmes for incarcerated rapists and other sexual offenders for future utilization in the Department of Correctional Services, will increase knowledge and expertise on the

subject of rapists, and will stimulate further research and interest in this field.