

## CHAPTER 4

### IN A PLACE OF HUNGER – WHEN A CHILD LOSES A PARENT

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

*It was not long before Magoda came to another village. Here the people were singing a sad song of hunger. Drought had left them with little food. Magoda believed that his horns could help bring some laughter back to this cheerless place - if it still worked. As he greeted the villagers, they replied: "If it is food and lodgings that you want, young man, there is nothing in this place of hunger".*

*Yet, one of the villagers invited Magoda to his home to shelter for the night. Later, Magoda took out his horns and hit one, saying, "Give me food!" Just as before, the bounty gushed forth from the horn. The people of the house were amazed and began to eat their fill at once. When they saw that the supply seemed to be endless, they invited their friends and neighbours into their home, and all had a fine meal. When they were done, Magoda struck the other horn and the food that was left disappeared.*

*The boy had such an exhausting day and was soon fast asleep, but his host saw him command food to appear by striking the horns, so he knew it possessed great magic. When he knew Magoda was fast asleep, he crept out of the hut to the rubbish pile and found a pair of ox horns. He then returned to the hut and silently stole the magic horns from Magoda's side, replacing them with the worthless ones. Magoda woke up none the wiser.*

*(Adapted from Greaves 2004:109)*

Next, Magoda our destitute orphan friend came to a place of hunger – a village ravished by the onslaught of a drought. These villagers were feeling on a physical level like Magoda did on an emotional level before he felt compelled to run away from his own village. The reason for the villagers' feelings of desolation was the terrible drought they were experiencing. On the other hand, Magoda was feeling like he did, because he was an orphan having lost both his parents; forced to seek happiness away from his own village as a result of exploitation by his fellow villagers. Furthermore, he was still traumatised after recently also losing his only possession and friend – the ox his father left him – in a violent bull fight.

Chapter 4 looks at the losses my co-researchers have experienced, after also losing their parent(s) or caregiver to death and becoming, like Magoda, orphans. Going through difficult times in one's life – like the ongoing drought, the villagers were experiencing, losing one's parents like Magoda and my co-researchers did, has an effect – not only on a material and emotional level, but also on one's relationships with others and with God. This chapter aims at addressing how my co-researchers experienced the effect of losing their parent(s) / caregiver on a material level as well as in their relationships with others and God and on an emotional level.

According to the PFPT's fifth movement, we need to reflect on the religious and spiritual aspects, especially on God's presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation – the situation of losing their parent(s) / caregiver to death, some deaths even caused by HIV and Aids. For me, this cannot be done without incorporating other aspects in their lives that have influenced my co-researchers' bereavement, as these are interconnected, hence the research's interest in their psycho-spiritual bereavement needs and not only the spiritual aspects to their bereavement. We begin our discussion by looking at death itself and the impact it has on those left behind.

## 4.2 WHEN HUNGER STRIKES: LOSING A PARENT

Nobody mourns an unnoticed death  
- African Proverb -

Language as such is rich in euphemistic expressions to mock death. Expressions such as ‘to give up the ghost’, ‘to kick the bucket’ and ‘to exchange the temporary with eternity’ are used on a daily basis in colloquial language. Death as subject matter is seen in many cultures as a taboo discussion (Webb 1993:3), since death is seen in most cultures as “... distasteful to man and will probably always be.” (Kübler-Ross 1970:2). Euphemisms like these can be seen as mechanisms of humans to try and understand the unknown and subsequently be able to handle it. Probably it represents a universal human need to negate the ever-present reality of death to something that the power greedy humans have control over. However, problems arise when death becomes a personal matter – when someone near and dear to you is snatched away by the claws of death. What to do now with something that is encompassed in the expression ‘... *ignorance is bliss* ...’?

This avoidance of death is now being challenged to a duel by the grieving process that follows on the loss of a loved one. One cannot stand engulfed in the grieving process and still turn a blind eye to the hard reality of death. The broader community is also at the same time being confronted with the inevitable, since death is “...a community experience” (Bowman 1998:120).

When death occurs within the context of the family and a husband and father or a wife and mother dies the children are usually excluded from this process and marginalised. In relation to this, Kübler-Ross (1970:157) says that the children are “... the forgotten ones”.

Children become the ‘silent victims’ of these tragic circumstances, not because people do not care, the opposite is most often true, but rather because few people feel at ease talking to children about death (Kübler-Ross 1970:157). Adults may further entertain the notion that children do not really have an understanding of death, and that they subsequently have no need to grieve (Holland 2001:50). Dane (1994:23): “(t)here is a widespread belief that children are not concerned with death.” Killian and Perrot (1994:10) also state that people believe that children should be protected from death itself. Perhaps this belief that children should be protected from the experience of death sustains the belief that death does not trouble children. Views like these remind strongly of the discourse that children should be seen and not heard. Yet, children often respond to the loss of a parent with a heightened sense of vulnerability, “... often marked by fears of recurrent tragedy.” (Siegel & Freund 1994:43). Dane (1994:16) states that children have a “... struggle of living with fear” in reaction to the loss of a parent. Children are dependent on their parents for providing in their needs, both physical and psychological (Siegel & Freund 1994:44). When the ultimate loss, the loss of a parent (Dane 1994:13) occurs, children – like my ten co-researchers – often grieve for more than the loss of their parent(s) / caregivers. Klein (1998:15) agrees saying that “(e)ven though people tend to think in terms of death as a loss, death is not the *only* loss we can experience”. They also grieve for losses such as loss of home, social networks, routines, surroundings and possessions (Dane 1994:13).

Killian and Perrot (1994) therefore propose that some background information on children’s understanding on illness and death is needed in order to “... understand the child’s concerns and to help them to deal with their emotions.” (Killian & Perrot 1994:10). Jean Piaget formulated a theory of child development from infancy to adulthood. In accordance with this theory, Killian and Perrot (1994:10) state that the child’s reaction to and understanding of these issues will depend on which of these developmental stages the child is undergoing.

My co-researchers are all in the adolescent stage of development. Louw (1996:393) states that adolescence begins between the ages of eleven and thirteen – at the onset of puberty – and lasts until the ages of seventeen and twenty-one years of age. Although the adolescent generally finds this a difficult developmental stage (Louw 1996:363), there is not much difference between the way that adolescents and adults experience death (Kübler-Ross 1970:158). Holland (2001:50) agrees with this point, stating “... by the age of 12 years, they will probably have an understanding of death close to that of an adult”. However, having the ability to understand on a cognitive level that your parent(s) died and why they died does not ensure that these adolescents are free from the effects that their parent(s)’ death might have on them in the long run. Bereavement is experienced on a psychological and also on a spiritual level – especially for religiously inclined adolescents like my co-researchers. Zayas and Ramos (1994:59) mention in regard to adolescents, like some of my co-researchers who lost their parents to HIV and Aids, that there is “(p)erhaps no group of children in modern times (that) has been battered by the combination of social and familial decay and a devastating illness, coupled with the normal storms of adolescence.”. The writers conclude that “(t)his group of youngsters may be the most damaged survivors of the Aids pandemic.” (Zayas & Ramos 1994:59). Crewe (2001:12) also comments in referring specifically to HIV and Aids orphans that children who have lost one or both of their parents to HIV and Aids increasingly have less and less, until eventually “... they’re destitute in every sense: emotionally, economically and in terms of community.”

In light of the above, the rest of this chapter will focus on the multiple losses these adolescents, who were my co-researchers on this research journey, have experienced. The following discourses regarding loss were identified from the stories my co-researchers told about their bereavement – discourses regarding their material and physical needs, discourses regarding relationships with others and with God, and discourses regarding their emotional needs.

I therefore use the acronym 'MORE' to refer to these discourses as it were socially constructed, described and interpreted by my co-researchers themselves.

M = Material needs / issues

O = Others

R = Religion and God

E = Emotional needs / issues

### **Reflection-in-Progress: My own experiences of death**

Unlike most of my co-researchers, I am lucky enough to still have both my parents. Yet, death is no strange phenomenon to me. I grew up on a smallholding with lots of animals. My parents occasionally slaughtered sheep, cattle and chickens for our own consumption. My paternal grandparents owned a farm in Thabazimbi, Limpopo and would also send us meat and biltong from the cattle they kept and from the game they hunted on their farm. Thus, growing up, I had no illusions on where meat really came from. Although I would eat the meat and biltong my grandparents sent us, I preferred not to be present at the slaughtering or to eat the meat from the animals my father slaughtered, as I 'knew' them. Some of the animals on the smallholding, I raised by hand as a child. I would also nurse and care for sickly chicks, birds, lambs, rabbits, kittens and even mice. Some would make it, and some wouldn't. To this day, I find it very distressing when I attempt to keep a sick or injured animal alive and well and despite all my efforts, it still dies.

When talking about death – be that of an animal, people I knew or death in general – I would usually remark that I am comfortable with my own uneasiness about death [*gemaklik met my eie ongemaklikheid oor die dood*]. Furthermore, I also believe that one's first experience of death – be that of a beloved pet animal, a family member or – as in the case with most of my co-researchers – a parent, impacts on one's further experiences of death and the grieving process that follows the death and loss.

My first experience of the death of a family member is as far as I can remember the death of my paternal great-grandmother when I was ten years of age. Her death did not really affect me, because I did not really know her, as she was already very old and frail then, and when I did see her at my grandparents' home, she was always quiet and did not really engage with me and my brother. I am from a large maternal family especially, and since then I have lost many family members – aunts, uncles as well as my three remaining grandparents (my maternal grandfather past away from cancer while my mother was an adolescent). I also lost friends to death – in standard 9 (grade 11) one of my school friend's committed suicide by shooting herself. In my first year at university another school friend, who was also in one of my university classes, was involved in and burnt to death in a motor vehicle accident while on her way with some university friends of hers, to a music festival *Oppikoppi* in Northam, Limpopo. The year after that, our neighbours' son who was close to my own age, was also killed in a motor vehicle accident. As an adolescent and young adult, I would say that the death of my friends had a great impact on me as a person, as they were my age and it made me realise that we are all – no matter our ages – susceptible to death, at any given time.

The death of Nadia's – my best friend – father to cancer when we were still at primary school was probably the first death (excluding pet animals) that I experienced. As a young child of around eight years of age, I can remember feeling very confused and unable to help my friend and her older sister and brother in their grieving process. I did not know what to say or do to make things better for her. From the sidelines, I saw what she – like my co-researchers – went through after the death of her beloved father and there was nothing I could do for her, or so it felt at the time. At the same time another school friend of ours' father also died. He and Nadia have experienced something the rest of us have not – the loss of a parent. This made me realise that one's parents might not always be there to love and protect you, and this scared me.

Years later, in 2007, after her sister's 13 year old son, Brett, was killed in a freak accident when someone hit him from behind while he was bicycling home after school, we spoke about not only Brett's untimely death, but also about her own father's death years earlier. I mentioned how difficult I experienced her father's death and she remembered that I came up to her on the school grounds when she was back at school (we weren't in the same class that year) and told her that I was sorry about her father's death and that she can – from then on – share my father with me [*jy kan my pa met my deef*]. This meant a lot to her and it also explained to me why she was so fond of my own father. She literally took to heart what I as a small child shared with her.

Therefore, I believe that no matter how difficult one finds it to approach a bereft person, if your intentions are good they will benefit from the experience and even just your presence.

#### **4.3 HUNGRY FOR 'MORE': DISCOURSES REGARDING THE BEREAVEMENT NEEDS OF MY CO-RESEARCHERS**

##### **4.3.1 Hungry for 'MORE': Meeting material needs**

*After my Matric year I had plans to study at the College of my dreams (CTT) and I could not study there because of financial issues, that was my biggest storm because as much as I wanted to go there I could not because my aunt whom I am currently staying with could not afford it*

**- Annie**

Education – like some necessities like food, shelter, and clothing – is still a luxury for most people living in Africa. South Africa is no exception.

For children like Annie who lost her mother and who is now dependant on their extended family – in Annie’s case, her aunt – for their survival and well-being, it becomes close to impossible to fulfil an ambitious dream to further their studies. Important now, is to put food on the table and a roof over their heads. Anything else becomes luxuries, luxuries caregivers like Annie’s aunt, cannot afford even if they wanted to.

Dee also told the story, during one of the second TOL camp sessions, about how her mother who passed away left her a house to inherit, but her aunt and other family members in essence bullied her out of it. After her mother’s death, her relationship with her aunt changed dramatically to the point that she was no longer welcome under her aunt’s roof and had to seek shelter in *Precious Pearls*, one of the Houses of Safety under the guidance of PEN. However, when there is trouble with the deed of the house, maintenance needs or trouble with the tenants they call her in an effort to get her to fix the problems. In tears, she told the group that she did not want the house anymore, that the rest of the family, who did not want her after her mother’s death, can take it if they want to. They already did anyway, and that they should leave her alone and not bother her – a mere child as she referred to herself – with the problems regarding it.

After her father’s death, Zee was also not welcome in the house she shared with her beloved father, the house that she called home. Her stepmother – reminding of Cinderella’s stepmother – made her feel unwelcome and as a result, friends of her father initially took her in after his death. Not staying in the house where she stayed with her father and stepmother anymore, meant that she missed having contact with her little brother as well. This impacted greatly on her emotionally as she wrote about him in her workbook, as well as referred to him in group discussions. She later also moved into *Precious Pearls* along with Dee after the family friends who initially took her in had trouble in financially supporting her and paying her school fees.

Dimakatso, whose grandmother and aunt now take care of her after losing her mother, showed a great need to also contribute to the household in any way that she could. She clearly understood the difficulty her caregivers experienced in their attempts to care for her and meeting her physical needs. After both camps, she asked me if she could take some of the items left over from the camps – like long-life milk and cookies – back home with her as her grandmother would appreciate it.

Although not mentioned here due to lack of space, all ten my co-researchers have stories to tell of how some of their material, financial and physical needs went unmet after losing their parent(s) / caregivers. This is not uncommon for children left orphaned. Referring specifically to HIV and Aids orphans, the Avert website (<http://www.avert.org/aids-orphans.htm>) states that:

The loss of a parent to AIDS can have serious consequences for a child's access to basic necessities such as shelter, food, clothing, health and education. Orphans are more likely than non-orphans to live in large, female-headed households where more people are dependent on fewer income earners. This lack of income puts extra pressure on AIDS orphans to contribute financially to the household, in some cases driving them to the streets to work, beg or seek food.

Regarding basic education, the Avert website (<http://www.avert.org/aids-orphans.htm>) also mentions that:

Children orphaned by AIDS may miss out on school enrolment, have their schooling interrupted or perform poorly in school as a result of their situation. Expenses such as school fees and school uniforms present major barriers, since many orphans' caregivers cannot afford these costs. Extended families sometimes see school fees as a major factor in deciding not to take on additional children orphaned by AIDS.

Also referring to the education needs of these orphans, the UNAIDS website (<http://www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/KeyPopulations/ChildAndOrphans/default.asp>) states that children in:

... extended families or in foster care are frequently subject to discrimination and are less likely to receive health, education and other needed services. The situation is yet more desperate for those living in child-headed households or on their own on the streets. The vulnerability of these children represents part of a vicious cycle: their circumstances put them at high risk for exploitation and abuse, and therefore exposure themselves to HIV, and lack of access to health care, education and social support perpetuates the conditions of poverty.

As was mentioned earlier, Zee moved to *Precious Pearls* after the family friends that were caring for her after her father's death were no longer able to support her financially and with regards to her school fees. Yet, luckily for my co-researchers, all ten of them had the opportunity to progress to Matric (grade 12). Moses, Palesa and Annie all successfully completed their schooling. Victor and Wiseman had to enrol for supplementary exams after they failed some subjects in their Matric year (2009) and Zee is currently finishing her schooling at college while the rest – Dee, Dimakatso, and the twins – Shaun and Michael are currently preparing to write their final grade 12 exams this year (2010). Dee, Zee, and all five of the boys were put through school with the help of government grants that PEN receives for the children in their care and residing in one of their Houses of Safety.

Suffering and surviving on the little they can afford have taught my co-researchers to appreciate that which they do have, and even to see the suffering in the lives of other people around them as well.

Knowing from first hand experience how difficult it can be to be forced to live without some necessities has pre-empted some of them to reach out and help others:

I remember giving my last R10-00 to a blind person, my fruits when I go to school on a Friday. I helped a blind person to write her exams and I was late for school - **Michael**

Material things like food, shelter and clothing are important for one's survival. The ability to afford good health-care is important for one's overall well-being. Having access to funds to further one's education, will ensure a good quality education that in turn will help one to further one's career, which in a country like South Africa, where unemployment rates are exorbitant, is very important. Access to services also helps in furthering one's dream for one's own and others' lives. Unfortunately, sad as it is, not everybody has access to these services and is doomed to poverty. Women and children, especially vulnerable children and orphans, are often bearing the brunt of this poverty

I want to be a lawyer. I wish to have a big house, drive an expensive car and I also want to be a hip hop star. Have a family build a home for those who don't have - **Michael**

Orphans – like my ten co-researchers – also have dreams of material things like Michael's dream of owning a fancy house and an expensive car and becoming a lawyer. And also having the ability and the money to fulfil, not only their own and in their family's needs, but also to assist and help others who are not as fortunate as they have become. However, for most orphans and vulnerable children growing up in poverty, this mostly just stay dreams – as if unreachable and far away.

#### 4.3.2 Hungry for ‘MORE’: The need to be loved by others

One of the greatest diseases is to be nobody to anybody

- Mother Theresa -

We as humans are social beings, we all need the company of other people. We all want to feel loved, cared for, and cherished by other people. Mucherera (2009:80) says that “(t)o have life is to have one's story unfold in the midst of community”. In essence, we want to be somebody to someone. Again, in reference to HIV and Aids orphans, the Avert website (<http://www.avert.org/aids-orphans.htm>) refers to the impact these orphans have on family systems and the society at large. They state that:

In African countries that have already suffered long, severe epidemics, AIDS is generating orphans so quickly that family structures can no longer cope. Traditional safety nets are unravelling as increasing numbers of adults die from HIV-related illnesses. Families and communities can barely fend for themselves, let alone take care of orphans. Typically, half of all people with HIV become infected before they are aged 25, developing AIDS and dying by the time they are 35, leaving behind a generation of children to be raised by their grandparents, other adult relatives or left on their own in child-headed households.

Traditional systems of taking care of children who lose their parents, for whatever reason, have been in place throughout Sub-Saharan Africa for generations. But HIV and AIDS are eroding such practices by creating larger numbers of orphans than have ever been known before. The demand for care and support is simply overwhelming in many areas.

HIV reduces the caring capacity of families and communities by deepening poverty, through medical and funeral costs as well as the loss of labour.

As can be seen from the statement above, the caring capacity of especially families are under great strain in light of the great number of orphans – HIV and Aids or otherwise. Three of my co-researchers – Annie, Dimakatso and Palesa – are lucky enough to still be taken care of by family members after losing their mothers and becoming what the literature terms ‘single orphans’. Annie is taken care of by her aunt, Dimakatso by her aunt as well as her grandmother, while Palesa is fortunate enough to still have her father to take care of her. For them, these caregivers are significant people in their lives, and as such mean a lot to them as can be seen from their statements about who they view as important people in their lives:

The person who is most important to me at this point in time is my aunt because throughout my family she is the one person would take me in when I had nobody else to take me so she has been great towards me - **Annie**

I grew up with my grandmother. She taught me a lot of things, she told me never to give up in life. She also taught me how to talk, read and love people. PEN people have taught me to say please and thank you - **Dimakatso**

Okay. My father is a good person, he likes me to do good things always and he is giving me love, comfort and he is supportive but he does not like to do bad things - **Palesa**

The two acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans – Dee and Zee – are resident in and under the care of one of the Houses of Safety of the NGO PEN, *Precious Pearls*. Although they both still have living family members – Dee has a maternal aunt, and Zee has her stepmother and extended maternal family members – the relationships between Dee and her aunt, and between Zee and her stepmother are strained after they respectively lost their mother and father due to HIV and Aids infection. Zee’s extended maternal family are Mozambican nationals, and as such unable to care for her, although she did recently visit them during the extended South African school holidays during the 2010 Soccer World Cup. Therefore, they are currently both finding themselves within the welfare system and institutionalised as such.

The rest of my co-researchers – all the boys – also at one stage or another, found themselves living in PEN’s other House of Safety, *Precious Pearls II*. The twins – Michael and Shaun – are currently still residing there, as they are ‘double orphans’ after losing both their parents, while Moses has moved out after an unfortunate incident during sea camp, and Victor and Wiseman have moved out to move in with Wiseman’s sister and her family who are staying in Tembisa, Kempton Park. Michael and Shaun however do have extended family – an uncle with whom they do have contact, but who is unable to care for them. Moses initially moved into *Precious Pearls II* after his brother he was staying with threw him out after the fighting between them became too bad. Wiseman and Victor also ended up in the welfare system, while still having living relatives, but who were also – at that stage – unable to care for them.

From my co-researchers’ own situations, it is evident that the extended family, traditionally seen as the natural support system during crises like losing one’s parents and becoming orphans, especially in the African context, are under severe pressure to cope with the demands placed on it by taking in more children. That is when organisations like the NGO PEN steps in to help.

Dee acknowledged already during the first TOL camp that she was an HIV and Aids orphan. She is a single orphan, as her father's whereabouts are unknown.

I lost my mother. She died of Aids but the sad thing is that she died with lies from everyone around. We were never close, so when she died, I was stuck between I was wrong or why she died without telling me the truth. My mother, she was sick of HIV/AIDS. We never had a proper conversation but yeah I guess it's too late now, and my aunt because of the stress we became strangers to each other and I moved out- **Dee**

Mucherera (2009:80) states that: "(t)he sense that one belongs has always been the key to African survival". From Dee's statement above, it becomes clear that Dee's social relationships with her family and especially her beloved aunt changed drastically after her mother's death. In relation to this experience of Dee, Dane (1994:17) states that: "(d)eath from Aids, ... profoundly alters survivor's social relationships as a consequence of real or imagined stigma". In referring to HIV and Aids deaths Crewe (2001:12) contends in this regards that "(a)lthough the whole family suffers, it is clear that children suffer most acutely." This is because they are faced with more than one trauma all of a sudden - that of the "... death of their parents, and of an uncertain future" (Crewe 2001:12). Siegel and Freund (1994:43) concur with this statement by saying that "(the) loss of a parent during childhood is perhaps the most devastating trauma a child can experience." This trauma leads to a total disruption of the unity of family life (Siegel & Freund 1994:43) and this uncertainty is what scares children. According to Dane (1994:20) it is "(l)iving in the aftermath of death from Aids is often more painful for children and adolescents than the death itself" (Dane 1994:20). Both Dee and Zee, the two acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans in the group, left their families after the deaths of respectively their mother and father, and came under the care of the NGO PEN.

The following poem by Dee expresses some of the feelings people in different contexts are experiencing and how we all have the need to be understood by other people. Dee read the poem at one of PEN's celebration shows. The poem is reprinted with permission and in the same font sizes as it was originally written in.

## THE SHOE SIZE

As the birds fly and the bet begins

And the door closes so we can rest, So no-one can see what we  
hide

But we turn on the lights and always close the curtains

But what about the shoes? What about them?

There is a shoe for everyone, but not a size for everyone

Look at the person next to you; go on look at them

Do you think you have the same shoe size?

Some of you have the same size and some of you don't; It is  
clear to see

You will never really know until you try them on. So let's  
try them on

Put yourself in his shoes

He cries out: "Why, why my mother. . ." in confusion

". . . has to cry? Why that man (how for some reason I cannot stand to call him my  
father) is clearly not seeing how he is hurting my mother!"

She says: "It's not his fault, your father wanted a better life with another woman"

She lies to me! He cries! Why my brother smiles no more, does he not like me  
anymore, or maybe he lost his memory, but no that couldn't be. And when I ask

why they say I would not understand 'it's grown-up stuff'

*I am a size 2 and I am your neighbor*

**Put yourself in her shoes**

I dream of higher things than what my grandmother had, I see myself in every corner of the world, painting Paris red, showing New York a star. Those were the days, now I am full of hatred and rage. I think the worst of the person who says he loves me the most.

But is this love?

I feel the wounds that hurt me inside more than on the outside!  
I hate sunglasses, I feel they make me look so cheap but I wear them. I don't want to show the world who cheap my husband really thinks I am.  
Not by my broken legs and arms but by my face.

Where have I gone to?

*I am a size 5 and I am your boss.*

**Put yourself in her shoes**

She walks the route, says the same thing, wears the same clothes, everyday! She is normal nothing good nor bad, she comes to work and does her job during the day.

She gets home, changes her clothes, puts on some make-up and left the house again, every night.

She stands at the street far from the robot, waiting for someone to pick her up. She sells herself and goes back to a crying baby with a R50 note! And it starts all over again tomorrow!

She is a size 6 and she's your colleague!

**Put yourself in my shoes**

**If anybody knows order it has to be me! I thought of everything, the worst that could happen, ever happen "You know"**

**But WOW, I was astonished when I found out my home is dying! I have never been so ambivalent about anything before. I lost total control. Conviction was upon me, the population of China seemed to be perched over my head. I found out that HIV has moved into my home, the bank has robbed my home and regulation has left my home under the roof of unemployment! And my home is me and you, my family, my nation!**

**And I am a size 7 and you just met me!**

Why can't we all be in love, happy, have full of joy, no hidden secrets, no lies and definitely no surprises! How's stopping, What's stopping us, nothing because Jesus will give us His shoes and He will take ours!

Because He is sizeless, never changing!

Put yourself in His shoes!

- Dee

In this touching poem, Dee pleads with her readers to have compassion for other people, even the prostitute on the street corner, as one does not know her life story – of maybe doing what she does for a living, to be able to care for her baby at home. In the fifth stanza of the poem, Dee reveals the impact that HIV and Aids has had on her own life story –

**I found out that HIV has moved into my house - Dee**

She beautifully externalises the HI-virus as an unwelcome squatter that moves into her home – into her place of comfort without permission. This virus not only invaded her mother's body, but also her family and even the lives of the people of the nation –

**And my home is me and you, my family, my nation! - Dee**

Even while this is the sad reality not only in her own life, but also in the lives of other South Africans, stanza 6 brings hope by referring to Jesus as being sizeless and able to exchange our shoes – our troubles for His great love –

**Jesus will give us His shoes and He will take ours! - Dee**

This poem therefore brings us to our discussion on the spiritual and religious needs of my ten co-researchers after the death of their parent(s) or caregivers.

### 4.3.3 Hungry for 'MORE': Addressing spiritual and religious needs

For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them.

- Matt 18:20 (NIV) -

Mucherera (2009:76) says "... the story of humanity begins, is lived out, and ends with God". Religion is very important for most people, especially for African people. He goes on to say that Africans believe that we as humans were created to be in relationships with one another as well as with God. According to him, this makes hope possible from two sides – primarily from God, but also from other humans we have formed relationships with (Mucherera 2009:76).

In light of this statement, we look at some statements made by my co-researchers about the role God has played in their lives thus far, especially after the death of their parent(s) or caregiver:

God really needed to be BIG at that moment. He always took me back to the word, and if it was not for Him taking me I would have died a long time ago. Because he gave me answers when I was filled with the devil's lies. And the answer was HIM, I live for HIM, I serve him, and that brought me peace and comfort, to know what kind of a God I am serving and he promised me eternal life filled with peace. So I know that the danger is not there forever, and He provide that to me - **Dee**

God did help me a lot in terms of healing my wounds by forgetting the past and to move forward or behaved to experience new life with out my loved ones who passed away. I thank him so much and I love him My Lord Jesus Christ nothing is impossible with him - **Palesa**

God has helped me in so many ways like making me strong everyday. And that means a lot to me because it shows that he is always be for me no matter what happens. He makes me brave, and to continue with life, and shows me every good thing that I shouldn't be worried about like a pressure, friends and schools - **Zee**

I think everything bad that I've experienced in my life, God help me not to act negatively as I probably think in those kind of events most of the time - **Victor**

God protected, and brought Dee back to His Word; He helped Palesa to heal the wounds of losing her mother; and helped Zee be strong and brave to withstand peer pressure. He also helped Victor not to think and feel negative towards life, but to trust in Him. He even assisted Dimakatso and Moses in more mundane daily struggles, like writing exams and having money to attend the Matric dance:

When I was writing my geography test. I used to cheat like nobody's business, but when I wrote my second geography test I pray to God and God gave me strength that is when I realised that God is a living God - **Dimakatso**

God played a really important part in my life especially before the Matric dance because I didn't have money to pay. But by praying all that changed, Magic moments was able to lend as suits and somehow my brother got the money for me to pay. Everything went accordingly! - **Moses**

## HOW COULD YOU? (Poem by Dee)

I wonder, I reason  
You are so wonderful  
How do You do it?  
How can You do it?  
You are great and for that we thank you

You nurtured us, You know us  
You see us though You have no eyes  
We see You but never notice  
We see your beauty  
never feel your presence  
but known of You in this place

How can You?  
How can You do no wrong  
Yet perish for my being?

We take care of each other  
In my darkest time  
And how can You take care of me when I have deserted You?  
I ask of You please to tell me

How can You love us so much and we doubt You yet again?  
How can You hold us and our bodies and call it a temple when it's being used  
to promote the devil to a higher position?

How can You call us your children when we screw and deny your word?  
How can You return and bless us when we come back to You?  
How can You forgive, then save us when we have sinned enough?

Please speak; the One who calls Himself:  
The I Am, All Powerful God, The Beginning and The End  
Why do You do the things You do?  
But say, tell me mostly  
How can You die for me?  
How could You?

I chose to include this poem written by Dee in this section about the religious and spiritual needs of my co-researchers, as it tells of Dee's ability to converse with God and even question Him regarding His motives for doing certain things.

In the beautiful poem entitled "How could You?" written by Dee and reproduced with her permission, the writer tries to engage God in a conversation. At first glance, it seems like the writer tries to attack the addressed 'You', who later turns out to be God Himself, by posing the defensive style question: "How could You?". The poem tells of all the addressee's good qualities – he is wonderful, his greatness, his nurturing nature and the ability to create beautiful things:

*We see your beauty / never feel your presence - Dee*

The writer then poses the question central to this poem:

*How can You do no wrong / Yet perish for my being? - Dee*

It turns out that the writer questions Jesus' ability and willingness to sacrifice His own life in order for her to be saved from her sins. This He does, even though we at times desert Him and doubt Him:

*And how can You take care of me when I have deserted You? - Dee*

*How can You love us so much and we doubt You yet again? - Dee*

The statements above by some of my co-researchers as well as this beautiful poem by Dee, give us some insight into how my co-researchers perceive God and the role He has played in their lives, especially after losing their loved ones.

#### 4.3.4 Hungry for ‘MORE’: Towards emotional empowerment

In the life of any individual, family, community or society, memory is of fundamental importance.

It is the fabric of identity.

- (Nelson Mandela 2005:009 Foreword) -

To remember people we have lost, lies at the basis of our identity. It informs who we are and who we are to become. These people have taught us certain life lessons, and their absence leaves emotional scars on our souls. The emotional impact of the death of their parent(s) on HIV and Aids orphans and vulnerable children is described on the Avert website (<http://www.avert.org/aids-orphans.htm>) as follows:

Children whose parents are living with HIV often experience many negative changes in their lives and can start to suffer neglect, including emotional neglect, long before they are orphaned. Eventually, they suffer the death of their parent(s) and the emotional trauma that results. They may then have to adjust to a new situation, with little or no support, and may suffer exploitation and abuse...

... Anxiety, depression and anger were more found to be common among AIDS orphans than other children. 12% of AIDS orphans affirmed that they wished they were dead, compared to 3% of other children interviewed. These psychological problems can become more severe if a child is forced to separate from their siblings upon becoming orphaned.

Dee suffered emotional neglect from her mother, because as she states, she did not really know her mother when she passed away. After her mother’s death her beloved aunt also neglected her emotionally when she did not want to care for Dee any longer, resulting in Dee moving to PEN’s House of Safety.

Dee, like Zee, had to adjust to a new situation after their parents' death. Dee moved to the House of Safety, and Zee stayed with some family friends for a while, before eventually also moving to the House of Safety. Dee expresses her anger towards her mother and her aunt, and also acknowledges feelings of depression, while Zee expresses anger towards her stepmother for allegedly infecting Zee's father with the HI-virus. Zee also became separated from her baby brother after moving out of the house following her father's death. This separation causes her much emotional pain. Due to limited space, I have not included any direct references to the above statements. Dee and Zee's complete stories are however included in the chapter on interdisciplinary collaboration, chapter 5, should the reader be interested in reading these references. The UNAIDS website (<http://www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/KeyPopulations/ChildAndOrphans/default.asp>) concurs that: "(a)fter illness and death, the harshest impact on children is the death of one or more parents, and the resulting loss of affection, support and protection". Dimakatso stated it beautifully when she said:

*You know when a child loses a mother she thinks everything is gone -*

**Dimakatso**

Palesa adds that her mother was "my everything". Not only did my co-researchers lose out on the affection of their deceased parents, they also lost their support and the stability they provided. These children have certain emotional needs that have to be met in order for them to be able to function optimally. The Avert website (<http://www.avert.org/aids-orphans.htm>) states that "(h)aving a parent become sick and die is clearly a major trauma for any child, and may affect them for the rest of their life (sic)". Schoeman, Verster and Kritzing (2002:467) comment about a statement such as the one above, that there is a need for more personal counselling that would address the fears and needs of these HIV and Aids orphans. They add that such a counselling method should also take into account the African context within which children like my co-researchers find themselves (Schoeman et al., 2002:467).

## Reflection-in-Progress: What if God was one of us?

As chapter 4 focused on the fifth movement of PFPT, namely a reflection on the religious and spiritual aspects, especially on God's presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation, I thought about not only how my co-researchers reacted to God and perceived Him, but also on my own views about God and religion. What came to mind was the song "What if God was one of us?", (<http://www.lyrics007.com>) originally sung by Joan Osborne but probably made popular by Alanis Morissette's version thereof. It also featured as the theme song for the television programme "Joan of Arcadia", where the main character is confronted by God in different human forms each time, in order to address some social and moral wrongs in society. The song poses the question: What kind of person would God be if He had to live with us on earth? The song starts out:

If God had a name what would it be?  
And would you call it to his face?  
If you were faced with him  
In all his glory  
What would you ask if you had just one question?

I wonder what I would ask God if I could ask Him that one question. Would it be a question about something that is wrong in the world, would I ask about poverty, children dying of hunger or even why children need to lose their parents to HIV and Aids? On the other hand, would I ask something more mundane like what His favourite colour is, or what kind of ice cream He likes? I understand that some Christians would see such questioning of God as bordering on blasphemy, but for me a relationship with God entails a two way exchange where I can, like Dee did in her poem "How could You?", question some of God's actions. I might not always get an answer or get the answer I hoped for, but I can certainly try to elicit a response from Him.

Although embedded in the church and organised religion, I see a relationship with God as very personal. If I were to attribute certain human characteristics to God, I would dare to say He has a very good sense of humour and would jokingly add that He likes to take it out on me. As an example, I always tell the story of how in 2006 two friends of mine went on separate overseas trips at about the same time. I was frustrated that they could afford it and I couldn't and wondered why I never got opportunities like that. Then all of a sudden, the opportunity arose for me to go on a trip outside South African borders. Where to you might ask – Nigeria of all places! To attend the AAPSC Congress I spoke about in chapter 1. My friends got to visit first world countries and I was sent up in deep dark scary Africa. Now that definitely takes a good sense of humour if you ask me! 😊 And I enjoyed it thoroughly beyond all expectations!

Regarding how my co-researchers perceive God, I will limit my reflections to some comments in relation to the two self acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans due to concerns for space. Neither girl has a father figure in her life at present. Although Zee was very close to her father and by the sound of it he was the epiphany of a good and loving father, his death took that away from her. Dee's father never featured in her life, although uncle Matebise fulfilled that role to some extent at one stage. Yet, both girls experienced God in a fatherly manner – loving and caring, although at times presenting them with challenges – 'storms' – to overcome in order to become stronger. Nevertheless, by trusting in Him they knew they would be able to overcome any 'storms' that come their way.

This view of God can, in my opinion, be utilised to help them relate to other people in their lives, since trust issues were mentioned by quite a few of the interdisciplinary team members (see chapter 5) as a concern for both girls. Not only relating to other people but also more specifically to males and potential boyfriends and husbands, as it is a great concern that Zee's boyfriend at the time of the second TOL camp had a history of drinking excessively.

#### 4.4 THE WAY FORWARD: THE PALAVER MODEL

In terms of what the future holds for Aids orphans, and the way forward in dealing with this crisis, the Avert website (<http://www.avert.org/aids-orphans.htm>) states:

The way forward is threefold: firstly new HIV infections must be prevented so that children do not lose their parents; secondly access to antiretroviral treatment needs to be stepped up; and finally care must be provided for those children who are already orphaned. The rest of this page is devoted to issues around the care of AIDS orphans in Africa, but it is also important that HIV prevention is not forgotten. The situation of AIDS orphans is ultimately generated by adult deaths; until this problem is addressed the orphan crisis will continue.

It is clear that HIV and Aids will keep on robbing babies, young children and their adolescent brothers and sisters of their parents, if the surge of HIV infection cannot be stopped or at least slowed down to a great extent. These children and youths will need our help to not only survive, but to write the rest of their life stories with enthusiasm and hope.

Mucherera (2009:90) brings narrative counselling theory and the art and way of African storytelling in connection with each other, by explaining it as follows:

Narrative counselling theory proposes that we live the story of our lives, and the story that we live is socially constructed. The stories that we live out are based out of the communities in which we find ourselves embedded. It was natural in traditional Africa that the elders would sit around a fire in the evenings and verbally pass on family, community, and clan stories. Individuals also shaped the stories of pain, hope, and joy in the same setting.

This was the palaver, where people were given the opportunity to retell personal, family, and even religious stories that was active in the community (Mucherera 2009:90).

He expresses his conviction that the church would be the ideal institution to provide the function of the palaver system to youths infected by the HIV and Aids phenomenon (Mucherera 2009:91). According to him, the church is in the position to recreate the palaver synonymous to African storytelling for these children where they can gather and talk about their personal struggles (Mucherera 2009:91). Here they can come together to hear others' personal stories, biblical stories, as well as folk tales and community stories that might inspire hope (Mucherera 2009:91). He furthermore states that in hearing about other people's stories and sharing one's own, and experiencing compassion towards and also from them, helps your own burden, though not fully lifted, to become a bit lighter (Mucherera 2009:91).

As the church as an institution is also cross-generational by nature, like the palaver system was, the older generation is in a good position to mentor the younger generation. This was traditionally done by elders, aunts, uncles, grandfathers and grandmothers who mentored the youth regarding emotional, spiritual, and mental development. In doing so, the younger generation will find the support they need, and the older generation will also benefit from this mentoring relationship as they will find meaning and something to look forward to (Mucherera 2009:91). In order for this kind of mentoring to be successful, Mucherera (2009:92) proposes that it must be holistic in nature making sure the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the children are addressed (Mucherera 2009:92). Even in an urban church setting this church palaver system can be incorporated with success in my opinion, as it will help to enhance the 'sense of community' between believers of different generations. I am further of the opinion that our own TOL camps to a great extent represented the idea of the palaver system as proposed by Mucherera (2009) in focussing on psychological, social as well as on their spiritual needs.

#### 4.5 CLOSING REMARKS ON CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4 started out by looking at the loss of a parent or caregiver through death. We looked at how children – especially adolescents like my co-researchers – experience this loss and death itself. I also reflected on some losses I, as researcher, have experienced and how I view death.

We then turned our attention to discourses related to the bereavement needs of my co-researchers. By making use of the acronym MORE, I paid attention to the material needs, the need for significant others, religious and spiritual needs as well as emotional needs my co-researchers have experienced since the death of their parent(s) or caregivers. This was done in order to focus on the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of my co-researchers this thesis aimed to address.

Lastly, a model suggested by Mucherera (2009), the palaver, is introduced as a way in which to address these psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of my co-researchers. This model based on the art of African storytelling, connects very well to the narrative approach and as such overlaps significantly with what the two TOL camps aimed to achieve. This model, in my opinion, if implemented in even an urban church setting, much like the activities of PEN are, could be beneficial. It could help to enhance a certain ‘sense of community’ within the church community. This ‘sense of community’ receives some more attention in chapter 6.

Chapter 5 that follows will focus on the interdisciplinary conversation between theology, psychology, social work, anthropology, information science as well as life coaching. This will be done by the use of the life stories as compiled during the two TOL camps of the two self acknowledged Aids orphans – Dee and Zee. These interdisciplinary conversations will focus on the concerns of these two girls as represented in their stories.

## CHAPTER 5

### TWO HEADS (OR EVEN MORE) ARE BETTER THAN ONE – AN INTERDISCIPLINARY INDABA

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

*The next morning, Magoda bade farewell to the villagers and set off on his travels again. He wanted to get as far away as possible from the kraal he had grown up in. By midday, he was hungry so he struck a horn and said: “Give me food”, but nothing happened! “I must have struck the left horn instead of the right one,” he said to himself, and struck the other horn. Again, nothing happened. So, he studied the horns, and saw that they were smaller than the horns from his father's ox. He knew he would have to find the thief. He went back and waited outside the village until dusk, then quietly made his way to the hut where he had slept. As he crept up, he almost laughed aloud, at hearing the impatient householder shouting: “Give me food! Give me food I say!” Magoda remembered that the ox told him that the horns would only work for him. So, he waited, and not long after he heard the horns being thrown against the wall of the hut. The man stamped out, and Magoda slipped in, found the magic horns, and ran away swiftly. That night Magoda had another feast and slept in the branches of a tree to be safe from wild beasts.*

*At the first village he came to the next day, he walked boldly in and asked the headman, an ugly person, shelter for the night. “Go away! We do not take in beggars here! It is difficult to feed our own without providing for worthless ones such as you!” he shouted.*

*(Adapted from Greaves 2004:110)*

The headman in the first village Magoda came across the next day thought that Magoda, because of his old and tattered clothing, was a beggar of sorts. Immediately he made negative assumptions about Magoda as a person, and even called him ‘worthless’; without any attempt to get to know him. Here Magoda is like the proverbial book which one should not judge by its cover. As we will see in the next part of the story (chapter 6), the headman of the next village does not agree with the first headman’s view of Magoda. Yes, he did use the horns to dress better, but the second headman looked beyond even that, and got to know the real Magoda – the caring, unselfish Magoda who himself did not look down on other people. We also get a glimpse of how the headman’s daughter sees Magoda. Okay, not to run ahead with the story – but what I attempted by my telling, was to show that different people might have different views (perspectives) about (on) the same person (issues).

This part of Magoda’s story is a fit introduction to chapter 5, since chapter 5 focuses on movement 6 of the 7 movements of PFPT, namely a description of experience thickened through interdisciplinary investigation.

Professor Robin Crewe of the Centre for the Study of Aids, University of Pretoria is of the opinion that the “... deliberate mixing up of the disciplines...”<sup>1</sup> and contact with other disciplines other than one’s own is necessary if we want to progress in making a positive difference in the HIV and Aids research field. She went on to say that social determinants of HIV and Aids have an influence even in the medical field of research, and therefore there is a need for social scientists such as practical theologians to become involved in research of this kind.

Chapter 5 is therefore an attempt to involve other social science disciplines in making sense of the life stories of the two acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans who were co-researchers on this research journey.

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<sup>1</sup> Stated during the opening address entitled “Setting the scene” at the Centre for the Study of Aids, University of Pretoria’s HIV/AIDS Indaba on 26 February 2009.

## 5.2 LETTER OF INVITE AND SELECTED STORIES

### 5.2.1 Inviting interdisciplinary team members

Dear .....

Would you please be so kind as to read the attached stories of two adolescent girls who acted as co-researchers in my research project for my PhD and then answer the questions below? Each story consists of two parts (Part 1 & 2) – compiled at two separate camps over a time span of 16 months. Please also note the girls' similar sounding names in order not to mistake the one for the other.

Please answer the following questions **separately** for each story:

1. When reading the story of **Dee** (Parts 1& 2) or **Zee** (Parts 1& 2), what do you think would her concerns be?
2. How would you formulate your discipline's unique perspective on these concerns and why is it important that this perspective be heard at the interdisciplinary table?
3. Why do you think your perspective will be understood and appreciated by researchers from other disciplines?

In a separate paragraph, please also introduce yourself and state your occupation and or place of employment as well as your involvement within the field(s) of HIV and Aids, bereavement, counselling, adolescence or any other related field(s) of interest.

Thank you very much for your willingness to help me with my research!

Kind Regards

Amanda Richter

The letter above was formulated according to the interdisciplinary questions of Müller (2009a:227). This letter and transcripts of the stories of Dee and Zee were sent via email to possible interdisciplinary team members whom I have identified in theology as well as other related disciplines. It serves as an invitation to them to take part in an interdisciplinary conversation regarding the stories of the two self-confessed HIV and Aids orphans in the TOL group. Most responded positively to my request.

Unfortunately, the following persons respectfully had to decline my invitation. Drs Jill Freedman and David Denborough of the Dulwich Centre, Australia due to workload and work related travels abroad at the time of my request. I specifically contacted Dr Freedman, as I have come to know her through my involvement in getting them to South Africa to present a narrative workshop at the University of Pretoria in 2008, which I also attended. Dr Denborough is the co-author of the article on the *TOL* metaphor. He gave me the updated email address of Ncazelo Ncube who was also involved with it. She is now the proud mother of a new baby and also had to decline my request.

Professor Antoinette Lombard of the Department of Social Work, University of Pretoria whom I have met through the SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS research project, unfortunately also declined due to current workload, but put me in contact with Corlie van der Berg – a lecturer in the Department of Social Work, University of Pretoria.

Represented disciplines and fields of interest which came to the table were – psychology, social work, anthropology, information studies, music (see contribution in chapter 3) and a life coach. I asked my interdisciplinary team members to introduce themselves before I reflected on the reasons why I decided to invite them to the interdisciplinary table. I wanted to include it in this chapter, but moved it to an addendum at the end of the research report, in an attempt to de-clutter this extensive chapter.

## 5.2.2 A story told: Dee's story

*(Part 1)*

*(Story compiled during 1<sup>st</sup> TOL camp October 2008)*

*16 y/o female (in Oct 2008), maternal orphan.*

*Mother died of Aids in 2008.*

*Father's whereabouts unknown.*

*Living in a Faith-based Organisation's (FBO) House of Safety in Pretoria East.*

*(House of Safety moved to Pretoria inner city in 2009.)*

Well, I was the only child, no dad, (my) mother was Rebecca, so I was raised by many family members - Miona (grandma), John (grandpa), Rebecca (closest aunt), 2 other aunts and 2 uncles, Matebise (uncle who was like a father), best cousin ever (Basetsana)... and so on.

I never really liked my mom, but loved her, because we never knew each other. Rebecca my aunt, I loved her so much. She was the closest thing to me, like a mother, but she's crazy and I have (an) anger problem - emotional with her, she was my centre. My uncle, love him like a father. My grandma, (I) love her to bits, (but) want nothing to do with her because she broke my trust.

My aunt, she taught me to be independent, stand up, was my role model, taught me about life, how to do things and how not to do it, how to treat others, taught me that family is very important and that one thing she kept reminding me of. Then my friend, Zee, she became my comfort since there was no one close to me after me and my aunt separated.

I live at (the FBO's House of Safety), I just moved there in August (2008). I live with 7 other girls, two woman who take care of us. And, yes it's the closest thing I feel to home, since I never had a home, just a house or a room. With everyone I lived with, it was never welcoming since I started moving.

Well I am used to waking up early, take a bath but first we all talk in our rooms, then eat breakfast while watching TV, do the dishes, do the laundry, clean my room, tidy up, iron. Then we walk around during the day then at about 18h00 I do my homework till 23h00 or just read or study. Hate having fun a lot (like everyday) no!

On a school day after school I attend (the FBO's) meetings, extra school (arts), everyday at home about past six everyday.

My favourite thing is poetry, because I can express myself when I have nobody to talk to. And because I teach someone something through the things I feel.

I am good at poetry, and public speaking including debating. (My friends would describe me as a person who (l)ove(s) God with everything I have, very strong and brave, but very much strict. Talk too much, very loving and sweet, soft voice and no patience at all and they sometimes say I don't socialise because I am always busy or studying.

(My strengths as a person would be that I am) (v)ery disciplined, talk my mind, use time wisely and do everything I want on my own, trust no one. I became (like) this as I was growing and realised it when I found Jesus. And my teachers saw this in every school I (went) to, but friends thought otherwise.

(A story about one of my strengths would be - ) While in doing things on my own, independent, because every time I would ask something from my mother she'll say yes, but never do it, so I stop asking and made ends meet.

I want to be a poet, writer, author, filmmaker, storyteller (one day), I want people to know about God and his love. It doesn't really have a story, but I just felt it, everyone in my family disagreed with my dreams.

I lost my mother. She died of Aids but the sad thing is that she died with lies from everyone around. We were never close, so when she died, I was stuck between (if) I was wrong or why she died without telling me the truth.

(People I lost were) (n)ot really that important or it's just because I never saw the importance of them being in my life, but she (my mother) was important because she was my mother - which does not mean much. She is special because she was kind to other people - but me - and very loving.

Favourite memory (of my mother) was when we used to live together in Jo'burg and I used to sing to her every night. And when we used to sleep, we would hug the whole night. Yes, (I think she would like me to remember her this way) because we never had many moments together without fighting.

Well, I don't usually like thinking about her and I use nothing that remind myself of her. And her death, I never thought it would be so much pain, separation of the family, which was already broken and bring lies and hidden family secrets to be revealed, so much hurts and anger, with disappointment.

(I have) (n)othing (special that someone gave me), I can't treasure objects, but feelings, because things I lose, or it gets broken or I grow tired of it. But I bought myself something special - a journal and that is how I started writing.

The support from my church, and the caring of (the FBO) (is special to me), but the best was my friends who took me to church and I found meaning to life. (I don't know what I did, but I just had wonderful people around me - 20). (They helped me with this) (b)ecause I was in need of spiritual food. (I think they appreciated me) being myself (that's what led them to help me). (I think I contributed to their lives as well by), showing them the same love back.

(Everyone in my mother's family) taught me something and by that they made me wiser and stronger. They don't take care of me anymore. They used to tell me right from wrong, and tell me that they care and will always be there.

When my mother was still alive and in trouble, they used to take me in and look after me. But now they all don't want me and have deserted me because of lies, (and of being) jealous of me. (They wanted me) (t)o be rich at first. Now they wanted to see if I would have a baby or Aids or bad things happening to me. Just to see me fall, to prove they were right. (Memories of them don't support me as) we never really had moments of gold and learning channels.

Well, Aids took away my mother, separated my family and left questions like if I was next. And my aunt is another big danger, she has spoilt my name, left me without a home, she hurt my spirit, my heart and trust for anyone in my life. She has left me with not good, but very abused memories. She ruined hopes of goodness. She really affected my tree.

The devil used storm(s) through the closest people in my life, my family, so the storms always comes back dressed differently. God, really needed to be BIG at that moment. He always took me back to the Word, and if it was not for him taking me back, I would have died a long time ago. Because He gave me answers when I was filled with the devil's lies. And the answer was Him, and that brought me peace and comfort, to know what kind I am serving and He promised me eternal life filled with peace. So I know that the danger is not there forever, and He provided that to me.

(Storms) have to be there, it is a test from God, a challenge. He is making us grow. In 2 Cor 4:7-14 it talks about the treasure in a clay jar, and we are the clay jar and He moulds us to perfection. And the storms are there to help the work of God.

Truly, (when problems come into my life) there is only one thing, person, place, I run to the Word of God, thank(?) and seek from Jesus and resting in church. If I don't go to Him, I'll be giving myself to the devil, sin - just to feel better. And the storm will never (be) overcome.

(During storms I) (r)ead the Bible, worship Him (cry to Him) everyday. Be busy, get occupied, hide most of the time from the storm from hurting me. Seek answers to reason with the devil in a bad way. Used to sometimes tell myself that this is my storm.

I am a fighter and very strong because I know my hopes and dreams were given to me by the Lord, and know that nothing will go wrong with my future. I hold on to God, hope that He will hold my head up.

Yes (I do sometimes have times when I do not experience storms), but just a few months, because the devil used the storm through the closest people in my life, my family, so the storms always comes back dressed differently.

(When the storms have passed), I keep on keeping on. I continue to thank, ask, seek the Lord at all time. And I find the joy with victory of overcoming the storm.

My church, my pastor prayed for me, advised me, the church looked after me, they fought the spirit with me, they reminded me of how God is. Then (the FBO) they're not only were comforters, they made me feel special and loved, showed the colours of God.

I support Zee (during her storms), by being there, praying, listening, comforting, encouraging her not to give up, tells her God's plans for her life and mostly show her love.

*(Part 2)*

*(Story compiled during 2<sup>nd</sup> TOL camp February 2010)*

(What I remember from our first camp was) (t)he time when we talked about our loved ones, (and) I realised that I am not comfortable talking about my mom. And I learned that I am far from heal(ed).

(Reminder of who I am) - I am Dee, I live in a Home of Safety, (my) mother passed away while living with aunt. (I am) a very independent person, loud and confident, but (I) can't handle pain. (I) love poetry and writing and (is in) grade 12 in 2010, turning 18 years this year.

Zee (friend) is very important to me. She is my closest friend, we met in grade 9 (2007), she knows me better than anyone. She started in (the FBO) then introduced me. And in 2009 we ended (up) living together in (the FBO's) House of Safety because our parents passed away in the same year. Mostly God, because he wakes me up. He said he got good plans for us. I want to see them.

I can't say my mother's death guided me, because her death made the family situation (fighting and separation) worse. My mom wanted to see me living uncomfortable if I might say (so), and not living my dream. She believed that dreams (mine) were not enough.

My tree used to be dull but 'looked' fine. I had two dying leaves; my mother and my depressed aunt. Now there are chunks on the log to show the emotional strain because I cry when I think about my family and the chunks show that I have grown. I told myself that "I (am) going to be the woman I was meant to be". My fruit are more people around me encouraging me to live my dream despite of what might happen.

After the camp, I found out that one of the women I hold dear is HIV (positive) and I thought that I should become closer with her before she goes. Then I couldn't because the day she is gone I would have to deal with the pain. But I then remembered that I don't want the same thing to happen to my mom happen to her. So I gave her lots of love despite it, but the thought after HIV/AIDS is the storm that can't leave.

When my mom passed away I was left to confront and be with my negative family. And during that time I wanted to commit suicide. At that moment I was angry with God and told Him to take me away because I can't kill myself. I joined a wonderful church a year before my mom's death. And the church and (the FBO) gave me support and that (was) only truly a miracle from God. He took me away.

(Lol). (*Acronym for 'Laugh out loud'*) Anyway my church came from Pretoria to Randfontein for my mom's funeral, showing great support (coming to my house, counselling spiritually that God is watching over me). And (the FBO) offered me a place to stay, a good school and (a) support group since my aunt was going to take me to my grandma's house.

I moved (to the House of Safety) a couple of months before our first camp. Yes I like it because there are people that want to help (school and future) and No, because I don't know where I (am) going when I leave the house, unlike if I was living with a family member.

(Different aspects to my personality would be -)

Only child meaning very independent.

Writer = only place I feel safe.

Leader (in) church = people must feel the same joy I find in Jesus.

(Sometimes I would act differently than usual, like for instance -)

Because of the bad relationship between me and the house mother I would pretend to be happy at the dinner table to spite her. When all I want(ed) to do is cry.

(Where I want my tree to be one day, my hopes and dreams for myself -)

I (am) going to have to give up many things if I want to get to a time (place) where I am fulfilled. I wish to write for a living, not a living house but (a) living spirit. Write for the love as Jesus died (pain) because he loved us.

(I lost) (m)y mother, she was sick of HIV/AIDS. We never had a proper conversation but yeah I guess it's too late now, and my aunt because of the stress we became strangers to each other and I moved out. (Coping without them is) (n)ot easy. I miss my aunt, we used to be best friends until my mom became sick and she could not handle taking care of me alone so she broke down and I lived in an abusive environment where myself got lost.

If she (my mother) was still alive I would still be in my family, I would still be depressed. Now she (is) died, I don't talk to my family and I lost an aunt forever.

She left the house for me but I don't want it. I don't know if it counts.

(The impact of the first camp on my life -)

I started talking to my aunt, I forgave her because we were both feeling pain. And because I forgave her and opened the door for her and even if it is tough. There was a time when she was crying and confided in me like we used to. So I try not to lay judgement on her, and she can move on with her life knowing that she is not the one to blame for my problems. That they are just storms that will pass.

The greatest storm (that I faced, since our first camp, of that time) was trying to understand and forgive my abusive aunt. Since she was the only, closest (distance) family I had at that time. But even if the past remain we still try communicating.

And what happened to my mom I am now scared that it might happen to someone close to me, so I don't have/try not to have people close to me but I am trying to overcome it. So everything is just trying to settle down and my (tree) have changed it looks (different) but (is) still pretty much the same.

It has been two years since my last tree, and my ground has become more solid.

The Bible and the promises that I know are waiting for me made/was watered to my tree making my trust and faith in God not (to) be removed by anything.

Dealing with family issues made my trunk grow wider than it should might now I can stand the storms with wisdom and experience. My leaves had not fallen since (the) last (camp) and my fruit have multiplied.

**MY OWN TREE SONG:**

***TIME STOPPING***

Carrying all these bags, and

walking on bugs.

Inside not looking that heavy

Feeling not so lightly.

When did I pick it up?

**Chorus**

**Picking up feels undecided, takes time.**

**Shopping feels so natural**

**The thinking takes time to shop**

**Takes time shopping.**



Ask for help to bring it up

Get company to walk up

Spilling to go further

Now it's time to put it down

Thinking takes time.

### **Chorus**

Ask again but no one there.

Looked around and there

Find no one

till Jesus put it down

Finally stopped.

### **MY OWN AFRICAN FOLKTALE ABOUT STORMS AND RAINBOWS:**

Mmosteso ('questioner') was known in the village to help people where he could.

One day Mmosteso was trying to pick up a huge rock but he was alone. He looked around, he found nothing, he looked for (someone), but (saw) no one. There (he) was alone and no one to help (him).

Then it started to rain, there were no way of running with out the rock moving.

As he was pushing and pushing, the rock started moving. When the rock was moved, the rain stopped. Mmosteso looked around to find the person who helped him, and he saw a tiny little ant still push(ing) the big rock. Mmosteso thank the ant because if it was not for the strength of the ant (who helped) him the rock would not have been moved.

**TURNING A NEW LEAF:**

(African languages are very descriptive when it comes to name giving. For instance the name Themba means 'hope'. If you could choose a new African name for yourself, what would it be? What is the meaning thereof and why did you choose that name for yourself?)

Name : Siphamandle  
 Language : Xhosa  
 Meaning : Give us strength  
 Reason : God gives me strength and I want him to use me,  
 all of me to serve him by giving strength to others.

**5.2.3 A story told: Zee's story**

**ZEE'S STORY (PART 1)** *(Story compiled during 1<sup>st</sup> TOL camp October 2008)*

*16 y/o female (in Oct 2008), double orphan.*

*Mother committed suicide in 1996.*

*Father died of Aids in February 2008.*

*Living with unrelated friends of her father, to whom she refers to as 'aunt and uncle'.*

*(Moved to a Faith-based Organisation's (FBO) House of Safety in the inner city of Pretoria late 2009.)*

I am Zee Whitney M, I was born in Queenstown, Port Elizabeth. I grew up most of my time in Johannesburg. I lived with my father for 14 years, he was a mother also to me. I wouldn't say I know all of my family, because I never got the chance to know them all. From my father's side I know a few of them (my family members). I think they are lovely people, very cultural they are into much of the culture, which is a good thing. I won't say I know much from my mother's side, because she died before I even knew all my aunts and uncles.

My father (is the most important person in my life), he has taught me to think wisely and to be strong (brave), he showed (me) reality. Also my friend Dee, she is one special friend that means she is different from all my friends, she (is) my sister in a way. Pal groups (*a FBO activity*) is also one of the important things in my life, it guides me through life because God is the guardian in my life.

At the moment (my favourite things are) my CDs because when ever I feel sad or down or even angry, once I put on music my mood just changes to happy and I start expressing movement in my body.

I stay with my auntie and uncle, basically I would say I was adopted by them. And I have all a(n) older sister, but she only comes to stay with us on weekends, because she is working on other days.

In (the) morning all I do is prepare for school and eat breakfast and bounce. Then on weekends I have responsibilities that have attend (to) - cleaning the house, washing the dishes and do my homework.

I do my homework at home or at the library. What I do for fun is watching TV a lot, dancing which is the best. And most of all (I) like the dictionary because I am addicted to learning new words. If I am not doing all of that I (am) just lazing out.

I am good at dancing and I also liked listening to people and getting to know them. Like meeting new people. And I enjoy making people laugh all the time.

Well, (my friends) would describe (me) as a person with a strong character fun, lively and sweet. They also find my zest very down to earth, very shy sometimes and stubborn.

I am a very loving person so strong, that when people see what I really am they get so shocked. Because (they) didn't expect such a strong character of me. Because people judge me before they even know me.

I have so (much) love for my little brother, but knowing that I won't be able to see every day of my life hurts me badly.

(One day) I want to be an architect, if it's possible. I would also want to be famous.

I have lost my father because he was sick. And I also lost my mother by the age of three years, my dad also passed away early this year it was traumatising. (These people were important to me) because I love and care about them and knew them.

(My favourite memory of my dad is) music. We used to laugh together and watch wrestling together. My father used to love music. I also love music as much as he did.

(My dad) was a strong person in and out and that made me strong too. My father gave me everything like music and it gave me the (?), he was a very kind soft person. (?)

(I got my dad's) smile. (He had a) beautiful smile. (I) also smile to other people like you (he) did. (He smiled) to show me that he was happy but sad inside, but I believed that smile. Yes, (I think he gave me the smile) because (even if) I am going through a hard time but I always smile that's what keeps me going. I was the most adorable person in their lives, special full of surprises, loving, caring and most of all amazing.

My auntie and uncle do take care of me and give me what I need and important things like: paying my school fees, caring for me and showing me laugh. And that's why they are a big part of my life and decisions that I make. They provide me with shelter, clothing and loving.

The memories (of my dad) are sometimes sad and some are happy but some of them actually guide me through life in a very, very good way. They (the people who died) had dreams like me, to study (to) become something in life. And also think positive about life (for) example my cousin would stop worrying about small things and be happy.

God has helped me in so many things like making me strong everyday. And that means a lot to me because it shows that he is always there for me no matter what happens he makes a brave, and to continue with life, and show me every good thing that I shouldn't be worried about like pressure, friends and school.

Yes (I think storms are part of our lives) a lot of the time, because storms are trouble once they come it's like a big boom that has just take(n) you which (is) trouble.

It's difficult to deal with problem(s) but I always find a(n) easy way out of it, by talking about (it) to friends or family members who wants to listen . And it also sometimes depends on what kind of problem it is. I always cry when I have problem(s). I think that heals me and I always pray to God to help me overcome the problem.

My faith keeps on making me hold on(to my dreams). I have so much faith in myself and I'm proud of myself. And I always make sure I never forget who I am and where I came from.

Yes (I sometimes have times when I do not experience storms), because there are sometimes very painful but sometimes I know it's God's plan for me to have all these storms. Every time I have storms in my life and they make me strong(er) every time they come. (When a storm has passed) I feel relieved and free.

My friends and I also support myself (during these storms) by being strong. And (it) also helps to be strong. God supports (me) because (He) knows all the problems I go through and I always tell (Him) my problems. Because He is the only one who understands what I am going (through). I also help myself by crying alone and talking out all my problems.

<b>ZEE'S STORY (PART 2)</b> <i>(Story compiled during 2<sup>nd</sup> TOL camp February 2010)</i>
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(What) I remember (from our first camp is) that we had to grow our own fruits, be influences into other people's lives (good influences).

(Reminder of who I am -) I am Zee the crazy, smart and beautiful young lady. I come from PE and I am half Mozambican and half Xhosa. Getting to know new people is one of the things I enjoy doing and being around people.

My dad used to be one of the important people in my life, but at the moment I would say my aunt and uncle are important in my life. Because they (have) taken care of me at the time when I needed support, they loved me like their own child, which meant a lot to me. Mummy Angela (*previous house mother*) was actually also one of the most important people in (my) life. My dad wanted me to be successful in everything I do from education to getting a job one day. My aunt and uncle believe in me so much that they motivate (me) to become a chef one day. Mummy Angela made me realise that cooking, being a chef was my dream.

When I found out that my father died from HIV and not cancer I was so disappointed, because I kept on asking myself why couldn't he tell me. The most thing that even hurt me the most is knowing that my step mom passed the HIV to him, the first thing that came to my mind is why my dad? Couldn't she choose someone else to pass the virus to, why did she have to lie to my dad?

If it wasn't for her giving my dad this virus I would be laughing and smiling with my dad at the moment.

I was faced with a situation where I had nowhere to go 'cause my aunt and uncle couldn't take care of me, that's why I moved to (the FBO's) House of Safety. I wouldn't say (the House of Safety) is the best place ever but I had no other choice. (It) was the only place that could provide me with shelter so why would I refuse such opportunities.

God help me because he kept reminding me that it is still by my side no matter what kind of storms I was facing. It was difficult believing that God was (still) by my side because of so many challenges that I was facing.

(The FBO) only help me with the moving to the House of Safety and education, but that didn't mean I was happy as a person because I was dying emotionally. I live in a (FBO) House of Safety and living there didn't change my life at all, because without my dad I don't think my life will change.

My personality changes, people think they know (me) at one point but they (are) wrong. I am a person that can really influence someone in a good and bad way. I take the side of my personality to advantage sometimes.

My boyfriend likes drinking and partying. I wasn't really happy about his behaviour because he was always influenced by his friends. I once told him he's going to have to choose between taking the right route to life or the good route to life. And he is on the process of quitting drinking, but it is not easy for him, but (I am) there for him.

(Where I want my tree to be one day, my hopes and dreams for myself -)

I want to get married to Kgosi one day (boyfriend). Open my own restaurant, become the best chef in the **WORLD**, changes people's lives in a good way. I would also love to have kids one day. ☺

Special person in my life (that I have lost) is my dad, he will always be in my heart and always special to me. **LOVE YOU DADDY** (*drew a heart*)

Wow I miss laughing, making jokes with him and spending time (with) him. My dad was like a mom to me he did **EVERYTHING** for me, we went shopping together, and shared memories together. The wise words my father used to tell me I still take those words into my mind and practice them. He once told me never did give up. In everything that I do I never give up.

(The impact of the first camp on my life -) It made me open up a little bit, expressing my feelings and thoughts to my friend Dee. When something bothered me I could tell Dee about (it) unlike before I keep quiet about everything.

My storm before was not accepting that my dad was gone because he was the most important person in my life. And after the camp I learned to deal with the situation but I wouldn't say that accepting my dad is gone is okay. I still feel angry, sad and lonely knowing that my dad is gone without him my life feels empty.

God was with me when I faced storms, even though sometimes I felt that he was not around me but I learnt that the Lord is always by my side. When facing storms sometimes I get irritated because I feel what's the use of us living if we gonna have so many storms in life.

When you lose someone you love it doesn't mean it's the end of the world, life moves on. I can't move on because (I) still haven't gotten over my dad and that's why I can't picture my future without my dad. I need my dad at this moment of my life because I am growing and I need his wise words to encourage me.

**MY OWN AFRICAN FOLKTALE ABOUT STORMS AND RAINBOWS:**

Our lives is like a long road that we are trying to reach at the end of the road. But as we (are) walking or driving along these roads there's potholes and bumpy rides. That's how I see life - bumpy drives. Some things happen for a reason and we don't know why these things happen.

**TURNING A NEW LEAF:**

(African languages are very descriptive when it comes to name giving. For instance the name Themba means 'hope'. If you could choose a new African name for yourself, what would it be? What is the meaning thereof and why did you choose that name for yourself?)

Name : Palesa  
Language : Tswana  
Meaning : Pearl / Flower  
Reason : I feel that I am a very special person, beautiful and important.  
"Pearl" describes the adorable side of me, I feel like a pearl  
sometimes. I even treat myself like a pearl.

### 5.3 IN CONVERSATION WITH THEOLOGY ITSELF

#### 5.3.1 Dee's concerns

ANDRE DE LA PORTE	SIMON MAILULA	ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD
Rejection		When I read her story, I sensed that she had experienced a lot of <b>rejection</b> in her life. No father...
Need for love, acceptance and security	The plight of these stories is one of the greatest challenges facing therapists, researchers and missionaries today. From their stories, I will say; they are more deeply affected by the <b>loss of parents</b> , or loved ones.	... <b>no home</b> , moving from home to home and never experiencing the place where she stayed as her home.
Struggling with anger		
The challenge of forgiveness		... broken <b>trust</b> from her grandmother... She trusts no one. People kept on telling lies, even when her mother became sick and died. (Probably they were trying to protect her from the reason why her mother had died – but which still means they didn't trust her enough to share the truth with her.)
		Her aunt <b>abused</b> her.
Finding an identity and purpose	They face many <b>unique and tragic circumstances</b> that greatly impact each one of them.	
Deciding on and living with a healthy set of values		
Learning to live in healthy relationships		... bad <b>relationship</b> with her mother...

## Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's concerns from a theological perspective

It is important to note that Simon Mailula did not formulate the girls' concerns individually. Comments of his that related to specific discourses, I have nonetheless included with regards to both stories. Therefore, the wording is the same for both stories.

From the comments received from the theologians who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, one or more of the participants from theology mentioned the following concerns of / for **Dee**:

- Rejection by mother and family
- Relationship issues
- Anger issues
- Lack of trust and abuse by aunt
- Bereavement issues
- Need for love and acceptance
- Need for security
- Identity and purpose in life

Mailula acknowledges the tragic circumstances that Dee has experienced in her life so far. These events affected greatly on not only her life, but also on her as a person; her identity. De la Porte states that she, like Zee, is now faced with challenges in life they need to address. They need to decide on healthy positive values which to live by, and they are both faced with the challenge of forgiveness. Dee needs to address the issues she has with her deceased mother, her family and her aunt who rejected and even abused her. In order to be able to do this effectively she needs to address her own anger, before she will be ready or able to forgive them what they have done to her.

### 5.3.2 Zee's concerns

ANDRE DE LA PORTE	SIMON MAILULA	ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD
<b>Family</b>		Unfortunately she lost her mother at a young age and therefore she <b>never had the opportunity to build relationships with the extended family</b> on her mother's side.
<b>Identity</b>		
<b>Purpose in life</b>		
<b>Dealing with loss and bereavement</b>	The plight of these stories is one of the greatest challenges facing therapists, researchers and missionaries today. From their stories, I will say; they are more deeply affected by the <b>loss of parents</b> , or loved ones. They face many <b>unique and tragic circumstances</b> that greatly impact each one of them.	Unfortunately she <b>lost her mother</b> at a young age. But she also experienced great disappointment in her life when she found that her <b>dad had died because of AIDS</b> but that <b>he never told her</b> that he was sick. Although her aunt and uncle had taken good care of her, she had to <b>move to the House of Safety</b> when they were unable to support her any longer.
		She is also disappointed in her <b>stepmother</b> whom she blames for <b>passing the virus to her dad</b> .
		Zee also experienced some <b>disappointment with God</b> and struggled to believe that He was still on her side.

## General comments regarding Zee's story and her concerns

<p><b>ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD</b></p>	<p>It is clear from Zee's story that she has a much more <b>positive outlook on life</b>. She <b>loves her extended family members</b> and <b>her father was the most important person in her life</b>. Reading her story, I was struck at the <b>remarkable person</b> she seems to be, even to the point of having a dream to become an architect one day.</p>
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## Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's concerns from a theological perspective

Since Simon Mailula did not formulate the girls' concerns individually, his comments are included as a whole in both stories.

From the comments received from the theologians who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, one or more of the participants from theology mentioned the following concerns of / for **Zee**:

- Relationship with maternal family
- Identity and purpose in life
- Loss and bereavement
- Role of HIV and Aids in her life
- Anger issues with stepmother
- Issues with God

Zee's more positive outlook on life, and her love for her family, especially her extended family, was noted by van Wyngaard. Also her love and admiration for her deceased father was mentioned. He also mentions her relationship with her maternal family as a concern. With the limited information to his disposal, I can understand him mentioning this as a concern, as it does indeed seem like a concern of hers in her first TOL workbook. Yet, I am aware of the fact that she visited her maternal family in Angola when the Soccer World Cup took place in South Africa middle of 2010.

### 5.3.3 Importance of theology at interdisciplinary table and unique perspective

<p><b>ANDRE DE LA PORTE</b></p>	<p>A <b>pastoral narrative perspective</b> in the story will help (them) to <b>tell and come to terms with (their) life-stor(ies)</b>, <b>identify the challenges (they) have to face</b> and <b>develop alternative hopeful stories</b> for the future. A <b>spiritual perspective</b> on (their) challenges and identity is needed as it will <b>ground (them) in values and truths for (them) and (their) life stor(ies)</b>. Situating (them) as the “<b>expert</b>” on <b>(their) own stor(ies)</b> will be important to counter labelling and diagnosing and creating a collaborative approach which will empower them. We give <b>meaning to our lives through the life-stories</b> we tell and interpret. When leaving this earth we can leave nothing behind but our life-stories and memories. In times of <b>HIV/AIDS</b>, many children are <b>left without memories</b> about their parents and <b>information about their roots and background</b>. <b>Memory work</b> is about <b>remembering and telling yesterday's life stories</b> in a way that <b>makes life meaningful today</b> and <b>offers hope and direction for the future</b>. <b>It is all about packing yesterday, living today and constructing tomorrow</b>. For those in the helping professions this work will also facilitate a process of <b>preserving the life stories of the people</b> we work with and the <b>lessons learned from our <i>patient/client-teachers</i></b>. The <b>faith community</b> will be a powerful resource in her life journey.</p>
<p><b>SIMON MAILULA</b></p>	<p><b>Training and information</b>, including <b>listening to their stories</b> is of importance. A <b>need to train pastors</b>, bishops, priests, <b>community leaders and youth</b> including other spiritual (<b>Traditional healers</b>) is to develop, facilitate and evaluate appropriate <b>ethical and value-based responses to HIV/AIDS</b> and to facilitate an <b>ethical community development programme</b> in which a <b>Christian response to HIV/AIDS</b> is addressed.</p>
<p><b>ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD</b> (comments on next page)</p>	

<p><b>ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD</b></p>	<p>Shiselweni Reformed Church Home-Based Care trains its caregivers to handle the type of situation which Dee experienced in a number of ways. The caregivers are taught to be very <b>sensitive</b> about the situation within a homestead, <b>not to give quick answers</b>, but to <b>listen first</b> in order to hear what is going on within the homestead. <b>Confidentiality</b> is a big issue with the caregivers; therefore they will never discuss sensitive issues without first getting permission to do so. But at the same time they are <b>trained not to stigmatise people</b>. If they had reached the homestead in time, while the mother was still alive and Dee was still living with her mother, they would have started counselling the mother. If the mother was not sure about her HIV status, they would have tried to convince her to be tested by explaining the advantages of knowing your HIV status. Once they had found that she is HIV-positive, they would have encouraged her to go to a hospital to determine her CD4 count so that she could start ART as soon as possible. After starting treatment, they would have gone to <b>visit her regularly</b> to ensure that she was taking her medication as prescribed and to ensure furthermore that the side-effects of the medication was minimised. At the same time they would have <b>encouraged her to speak openly about her HIV status</b>. If she did not feel at ease to have this conversation with her daughter, the caregiver would have either told the daughter herself (after obtaining permission from the mother to do so) or she would have <b>facilitated a conversation between the mother and daughter</b> where the mother would tell the daughter herself what had happened. Because the caregivers are trained not to stigmatise nor to condemn, it is likely that Dee might have found someone she could trust in the person of the caregiver. If it seemed that the situation in the home was so bad that it was impossible to reconcile the family members and Dee, then they would also have started making enquiries on a <b>place of safety</b> where she could stay. It is highly likely that the caregiver might have offered her own home as such a place of safety.</p>
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## Reflection-in-Progress: A theological perspective on the girls' stories

From the comments received from the theologians who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, theology and the faith community's unique contribution in similar situations (van Wyngaard referred specifically to **Dee's** situation as an example) can be to:

- Acknowledge that a Christian response to HIV and Aids is much needed
- Utilise the faith community as an invaluable resource in the fight against HIV and Aids
- Train and supply the community at large with information about HIV and Aids
- Train community members to assist in this crisis
- Develop ethical and value-based responses to HIV and Aids

In helping, members of the faith community need to:

- Be sensitive to the specific situation
- Adhere to the upholding of confidentiality and not to stigmatise people involved
- Keep abreast of the situation by regular visits
- Not give quick answers
- Encourage people to speak openly about their status
- Facilitate conversations between parties involved (For instance Dee and her mother)
- Help with placements in Houses of Safety if needed

A spiritual perspective helps people to ground their values and their truths, and a theological perspective like a pastoral narrative perspective focuses on people's life stories as it is remembered, experienced and dreamt. From this perspective, it is important to listen to and work with the stories people tell. Working with bereavement, memory work can also be helpful according to De la Porte.

### 5.3.4 Theology in conversation with other disciplines

<p><b>ANDRE DE LA PORTE</b></p>	<p>Working from a <b>pastoral narrative</b> and <b>contextual approach</b> is <b>inclusive</b> and <b>non-judgemental</b> and focuses in the <b>unique contribution that each discipline can make</b> to the understanding, unfolding and changing of a life story. It is <b>not bound by theological and spiritual “absolutes”</b> and <b>not</b> locked into rigid conceptual frameworks and <b>“recipes” for change.</b></p>
<p><b>ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD</b></p>	<p>The HIV/AIDS problem in southern Africa is totally different from the problems encountered in the USA and Europe. In that respect former Pres. Thabo Mbeki was correct to say that <b>we cannot duplicate the solutions for the problem found in Western countries in South Africa.</b> The ratio of those infected and affected in southern Africa are of a proportion that few people in Western countries can comprehend. In both Dee and Zee’s case, they were fortunate to find housing in a place of safety. But for the vast majority of children and youth in Africa, this is not an option. Thousands upon thousands of these homes would be needed to accommodate every single individual in need of care. The concept of <b>home-based caring</b> makes so much sense within these circumstances, as the <b>caregivers concentrate on trying to resolve the problems within the homestead and with the use of the extended family,</b> rather than taking the child out of the familiar circumstances within which they grew up. Many of the <b>caregivers have received specialised training in counselling traumatised children</b> which means that they are equipped to work with children and youth going through pain because of their family members dying because of AIDS-related infections. Because many of the caregivers are themselves HIV-positive and because they are also members of the community within which they work, they have much more <b>empathy</b> with their clients than a qualified doctor, nurse or social worker would have. Obviously clients are <b>regularly referred to other professional disciplines</b> such as trained <b>medical people,</b> including physiotherapists and occupational therapists.</p>

<p><b>ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD</b> (continue)</p>	<p>But the aim remains to have people <b>remain within their communities</b> and <b>to keep families together</b> as far as humanly possible. By visiting the client and the family regularly, an opportunity is given to the family members to speak openly about problems they experience and to try and resolve the problems, not only by giving advice, but also by asking the older members of the community of the extended family members to participate in the process.</p>
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### Reflection-in-Progress: Theology at the interdisciplinary table

Theology brings the following to the interdisciplinary table:

- Taking a non-judgemental stance
- Showing empathy
- Working inclusively with and openness and willingness to help
- Acknowledges the unique contribution that each discipline can make
- Also acknowledges the fact that solutions that seem to work in other parts of the world cannot just be duplicated to the context of South Africa
- Home Based Care is seen as a workable alternative to large scale institutionalising of orphans and vulnerable children

I thought it good to also include conversations with other theologians working directly in the field of HIV and Aids. This I have done in an attempt to gain a better perspective of how this phenomenon and the impact it has on these teenagers affected by it, are viewed by other disciplines as well as other persons from my own broad discipline who have a more hands-on experience of working in this field than I do.

## 5.4 IN CONVERSATION WITH PSYCHOLOGY

### 5.4.1 Dee's concerns

ILZE BARNARD	ILZE JANSEN	TILDA LOOTS
<p><b>Trust issues for future relationships</b> – <i>“My grandma, (I) love her to bits, (but) want nothing to do with her because she broke my trust”. “My strengths as a person would be that I am (v)ery disciplined, talk my mind, use time wisely and do everything I want on my own, trust no one”. “While in doing things on my own, independent, because every time I would ask something from my mother she’ll say yes, but never do it, so I stop asking and made ends meet”. “I lost my mother. She died of Aids but the sad thing is that she died with lies from everyone around. We were never close, so when she died, I was stuck between (if) I was wrong or why she died without telling me the truth”.</i></p>	<p>A lot of people have disappointed her in the past. This can cause <b>trust issues</b> for her in future relationships.</p> <p>Her mother dying of Aids without telling her also contributes to her <b>trust issues</b> and she might fear in future that people will lie to her about important things that will affect her life.</p>	
<p><b>Pseudo-maturity</b> – <i>“Hate having fun a lot (like everyday) no!” “I don’t socialise because I am always busy or studying”.</i></p>		
<p><b>Lack of boundaries</b></p>		
<p><b>Lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem</b></p>		



ILZE BARNARD	ILZE JANSEN	TILDA LOOTS
<p><b>Unstable family setup with confusing boundaries</b> –  <i>“Well, I was the only child, no dad, (my) mother was Rebecca, so I was raised by many family members – Miona (grandma), John (grandpa), Rebecca (closest aunt), 2 other aunts and 2 uncles, Matebise (uncle who was like a father), best cousin ever (Basetsana)... and so on.</i></p>		
<p><b>Lack of structure and support in the past</b> – <i>“And, yes it’s the closest thing I feel to home, since I never had a home, just a house or a room. With everyone I lived with, it was never welcoming since I started moving”.</i></p>		
<p><b>Working through grief effectively</b> - <i>“Well, I don’t usually like thinking about her and I use nothing that remind myself of her. And her death, I never thought it would be so much pain, separation of the family, which was already broken and bring lies and hidden family secrets to be revealed, so much hurts and anger, with disappointment”.</i></p>	<p>The fact that she doesn’t want to think about her mother or to be reminded of her is an indication that she has not yet worked through the <b>loss of her mother</b> and without working through the loss she will not be able to move on.</p>	
<p><b>Lack of coping skills to deal with difficult situations</b></p>		



ILZE BARNARD	ILZE JANSEN	TILDA LOOTS
<p><b>Building of secure, strong relationships in the future as she does not have a good solid foundation to work from</b> – <i>“I lost my mother. She died of Aids but the sad thing is that she died with lies from everyone around. We were never close, so when she died, I was stuck between (if) I was wrong or why she died without telling me the truth. (People I lost were) (n)ot really that important or it’s just because I never saw the importance of them being in my life, but she (my mother) was important because she was my mother - which does not mean much. She is special because she was kind to other people - but me - and very loving”.</i></p>	<p>Conflict is a big issue/problem for her. According to Dee she and her mother fought a lot. This might have an impact on other loving <b>relationships</b> that she might have as it can cause her to believe that you only fight with people with whom you have a loving relationship.</p>	
<p><b>Need for acceptance and love might cause Dee to get involved in undesirable relationships and situations</b> – <i>“Favourite memory (of my mother) was when we used to live together in Jo’burg and I used to sing to her every night. And when we used to sleep, we would hug the whole night. Yes, (I think she would like me to remember her this way.</i></p>		



ILZE BARNARD	ILZE JANSEN	TILDA LOOTS
<p><b>Rejection from loved ones –</b>  <i>“(Everyone in my mother’s family) taught me something and by that they made me wiser and stronger. They don’t take care of me anymore. They used to tell me right from wrong, and tell me that they care and will always be there”.</i>  <i>“When my mother was still alive and in trouble, they used to take me in and look after me. But now they all don’t want me and have deserted me because of lies, (and of being) jealous of me. (They wanted me) (t)o be rich at first. Now they wanted to see if I would have a baby or Aids or bad things happening to me. Just to see me fall, to prove they were right. (Memories of them don’t support me as) we never really had moments of gold and learning channels”.</i></p>	<p>She has a lot of family conflicts and problems. Most of them have not been resolved and she feels that she is in the centre of the problems. This leads to a lot of feelings of <b>rejection</b>.</p>	<p><b>The longing for a family and regret on losing her family -</b>  <i>“If she (my mother) was still alive I would still be in my family, I would still be depressed. Now she (is) died, I don’t talk to my family”.</i></p>
<p><b>Inability to deal with difficult situations and/or uncomfortable feelings –</b>  <i>“Because of the bad relationship between me and the house mother I would pretend to be happy at the dinner table to spite her. When all I want(ed) to do is cry”.</i></p>		



ILZE BARNARD	ILZE JANSEN	TILDA LOOTS
<p><b>Anger and resentment issues toward her family, especially her mother –</b>  <i>“Well, Aids took away my mother, separated my family and left questions like if I was next. And my aunt is another big danger, she has spoilt my name, left me without a home, she hurt my spirit, my heart and trust for anyone in my life. She has left me with not good, but very abused memories. She ruined hopes of goodness. She really affected my tree”. “I can't say my mother's death guided me, because her death made the family situation (fighting and separation) worse. My mom wanted to see me living uncomfortable if I might say (so), and not living my dream. She believed that dreams (mine) were not enough”.</i></p>	<p>Her mother's death brought on a lot of <b>painful situations</b>- these should also be addressed.</p>	
	<p>The <b>abuse of one of her aunts</b> should be discussed and worked through.</p>	
	<p><b>One of the positive aspects in her life is her religion.</b>  This should be encouraged and reinforced during therapy.</p>	



ILZE BARNARD	ILZE JANSEN	TILDA LOOTS
<p><b>Family psychiatric history and awareness of possible depression/suicidal behaviour</b> – <i>“(I) can't handle pain”. “I had two dying leaves; my mother and my depressed aunt. Now there are chunks on the log to show the emotional strain because I cry when I think about my family and the chunks show that I have grown. I told myself that ‘I (am) going to be the woman I was meant to be”. “When my mom passed away I was left to confront and be with my negative family. And during that time I wanted to commit suicide”. “If she (my mother) was still alive I would still be in my family, I would still be depressed. Now she (is) died, I don't talk to my family and I lost an aunt forever . She left the house for me but I don't want it. I don't know if it counts”.</i></p>	<p>The fact that she wanted to commit <b>suicide</b> is alarming and should be addressed.</p>	

<p><b>Regrets of not having a good relationship with her mother</b> (<i>Query attachment issues</i>) – “(I lost) (m)y mother, she was sick of HIV/AIDS.</p> <p><i>We never had a proper conversation but yeah I guess it's too late now, and my aunt because of the stress we became strangers to each other and I moved out”.</i></p>	<p><b>She has ambivalent feelings towards her mother –</b> this should be explored in therapy and discussed with her.</p>	<p><b>The need / regret for a closer relationship with her mom who died:</b></p> <p><i>“I never really liked my mom, but loved her, because we never knew each other”; “I realised that I am not comfortable talking about my mom. And I learned that I am far from heal(ed)”; “I had two dying leaves...my mother”.</i></p>
	<p>The <b>abuse of one of her aunts</b> should be discussed and worked through.</p>	<p><b>Concerned about her aunt / Self blame</b> <i>“Rebecca my aunt, I loved her so much. She was the closest thing to me, like a mother, but she’s crazy and I have (an) anger problem”; “I had two dying leaves...depressed aunt; “I lost an aunt forever . She left the house for me but I don't want it. I don't know if it counts”.</i></p>

ILZE BARNARD	ILZE JANSEN	TILDA LOOTS
	<p>Her <b>future plans</b> should also be discussed and possible opportunities should be explored.</p>	<p><b>Uncertainty on her future / a sense of blaming her mother</b></p> <p><i>I can't say my mother's death guided me, because her death made the family situation (fighting and separation) worse. My mom wanted to see me living uncomfortable if I might say (so), and not living my dream. She believed that dreams (mine) were not enough; I" don't know where I (am) going when I leave the house, unlike if I was living with a family member".</i></p>
		<p><b>Fear of becoming too close to someone and losing that person</b></p> <p><i>"... thought that I should become closer with her before she goes. Then I couldn't because the day she is gone I would have to deal with the pain"; "And what happened to my mom I am now scared that it might happen to someone close to me, so I don't have/try not to have people close to me but I am trying to overcome it".</i></p>

## Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's concerns from a psychological perspective

From the comments received from the psychologists who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, one or more of the participants from psychology mentioned the following concerns of / for **Dee**:

- Trust issues
- Rejection from loved ones
- Abuse by her aunt and self blaming for situation
- Anger and resentment towards family
- Longing for a family
- Regret of not having good relationship with mother
- Pseudo-maturity: Doesn't involve herself with typical teenager interests
- Lack of boundaries: Unstable family setup
- Lack of self-confidence and self-esteem
- Lack of structure and support in the past
- Need to work through grief effectively
- Lack of coping skills to deal with difficult situations, inability to deal with difficult situations and uncomfortable feelings
- Need to build strong and secure relationships in the future
- Need for acceptance and love may cause Dee to become involved in undesirable relationships and situations
- Possible depression
- Suicide ideation and expression should be addressed
- Uncertainty about future
- Fear of becoming too close to someone and then losing that person

In my opinion, what is referred to as the pseudo-maturity of Dee, rather reflects her responsible nature as a person, who is self-reflecting and knows of the dangers of becoming involved in undesirable situations. As was mentioned, her religion plays a positive role in coping with life and its issues.

### 5.4.2 Zee's concerns

ILZE BARNARD	ILZE JANSEN	TILDA LOOTS
<p><b>Loss of both parental figures</b> – <i>“Mother committed suicide in 1996. <b>Father died of Aids</b> in February 2008”.</i> (Loss of stability and (query) parentified nature).</p>	<p>The <b>loss of her father</b> is of great concern as she idealized him.</p> <p>The fact that <b>they lied to her</b> about the fact that her <b>father died of Aids</b> and not cancer is causing trust issues with her.</p>	<p><b>The fact that her father died and is not with her anymore.</b></p> <p><b>Loosing her parent figure of security and stability in her life:</b> <i>“was also a mother to me, “the most important person in my life”, “taught me to be strong”; “I need my dad at this moment of my life because I am growing and I need his wise words to encourage me”</i></p> <p><b>Many questions with regards to her father’s death:</b> <i>“When I found out that my father died from HIV and not cancer I was so disappointed”; “because I kept on asking myself why couldn’t he tell me”; “hurt me the most is knowing that my step mom passed the HIV to him”</i></p>
		<p><b>Acceptance of her dad’s death:</b> <i>“My storm before was not accepting that my dad was gone because he was the most important person in my life. After the camp I learned to deal with the situation but I wouldn’t say that accepting my dad is gone is okay. I still feel angry, sad and lonely knowing that my dad is gone without him my life feels empty”</i></p>

ILZE BARNARD	ILZE JANSEN	TILDA LOOTS
<p>Psychiatric family history – <b>“Mother committed suicide in 1996”</b></p>	<p><b>Zee not having a mother</b> for the most part of her life is a concern. It is good for a girl (if possible) to have a mother figure.</p>	<p><b>The fact that she lost her mother</b></p> <p><i>“And I also lost my mother by the age of three years, my dad also passed away early this year it was traumatising”</i></p>
	<p>The fact that she <b>likes music</b>, might be one way in which she tries to hold on to him and her memories of him.</p>	
<p>Possible development of <b>trust issues</b> in other relationships – <i>“When I found out that my father died from HIV and not cancer I was so disappointed, because I kept on asking myself why couldn't he tell me. “Couldn't she choose someone else to pass the virus to, why did she have to lie to my dad?”</i></p>	<p>She resents her step mom for giving her father HIV. She might have underlying <b>feelings of being robbed</b> of her dad by her step mom who gave her dad the HIV. He was taken from her life prematurely and now he cannot share her life with her as she would have wanted him to. If her dad didn't die she would not have ended up in a safe house. This can also lead to trust issues and issues of loss.</p>	
<p>Dealing with the <b>grieving process</b> effectively – <i>“My storm before was not accepting that my dad was gone because he was the most important person in my life. I still feel angry, sad and lonely knowing that my dad is gone without him my life feels empty”.</i></p>	<p>Until she has worked through the loss of her father in <b>bereavement counselling</b> she will not be able to move on in life. She feels empty without her dad. This should be addressed in therapy.</p>	



ILZE BARNARD	ILZE JANSEN	TILDA LOOTS
	<p>Her <b>faith is important</b> to her and this should be encouraged and highlighted as an important and stable aspect in her life.</p>	
<p><b>Inability to be part of her brother's life</b> – <i>“but knowing that I won't be able to see every day of my life hurts me badly”.</i></p>		<p><b>Not being able to support and care for her little brother in the way she wishes to:</b> <i>“but knowing that I won't be able to see every day of my life hurts me badly”.</i></p>
<p>Regular follow-up sessions to eliminate <b>depression</b> – <i>“I was dying emotionally. I live in a (FBO) House of Safety and living there didn't change my life at all, because without my dad I don't think my life will change”.</i></p>		
<p>Adoption of <b>manipulative strategies</b> to survive – <i>“My personality changes... I am a person that can really influence someone in a good and bad way. I take the side of my personality to advantage sometimes”.</i></p>		

ILZE BARNARD	ILZE JANSEN	TILDA LOOTS
<p>Subjected to <b>negative influences of others</b> and Zee's <b>need to belong</b> and feel wanted might lead to "toxic" relationships – <i>"My boyfriend likes drinking and partying. I wasn't really happy about his behaviour because he was always influenced by his friends. I once told him he's going to have to choose between taking the right route to life or the good route to life. And he is on the process of quitting drinking, but it is not easy for him, but (I) there for him"</i>.</p>		<p><b>Knowing that her boyfriend is on the wrong road</b></p> <p><i>"My boyfriend likes drinking and partying. I wasn't really happy about his behaviour because he was always influenced by his friends. I once told him he's going to have to choose between taking the right route to life or the good route to life. And he is on the process of quitting drinking, but it is not easy for him, but (I) there for him"</i></p>

### Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's concerns from a psychological perspective

From the comments received from the psychologists who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, one or more of the participants from psychology mentioned the following concerns of / for **Zee**:

- Death of beloved father
- Issues surrounding his death
  - loss of stability and security
  - questions regarding his death from HIV and Aids
  - acceptance of his death
  - trying to hold onto him through sharing of the love of music
- Death of her mother through suicide
- Trust issues
  - being lied to about the true cause of her father's death
  - blaming stepmother for his disease and death

- Need for bereavement counselling to work through loss of father
- Importance of faith: Importance and stable aspect in life
- Inability to be part of little brother's life
- Possible depression: Follow-up sessions is suggested
- Use of manipulative strategies in her life
- Need to belong
- Negative influence of other people (like boyfriend) in her life

As with Dee, faith plays an important role in Zee's life. She shares the issues of trust and anger with Dee, as they both feel betrayed and rejected in a sense by their families. Zee is angry about the fact that her father withheld his HIV status from her and that she believes her stepmother is responsible for infecting him. After his death, Zee became separated from her little brother and the double loss impacts greatly on her life. Not surprisingly, they both feel the need to belong and to be loved.

Both girls are experiencing difficulty with their multiple losses, and it seems like they haven't worked through their bereavement issues in an efficient way. Therefore, possible depression is mentioned as a concern for both girls.

In contrast to the story of Dee, Zee seems to involve herself much more with typical teenager issues, such as having a boyfriend, yet she also finds it more difficult not to be influenced in a negative way by people surrounding her, like her boyfriend. She admits to the fact that she sometimes reverts to using manipulative strategies to get what she wants in life. By doing that she is possibly trying to exert some kind of control over her own life and that of other people, in an attempt to cope with the situations she is faced with and to hide what she is feeling.

### 5.4.3 Importance of psychology at interdisciplinary table and unique perspective

<p><b>ILZE BARNARD</b></p>	<p>Clinical psychology includes the scientific study and application of <u>psychology</u> for the purpose of <b>understanding, preventing, and relieving psychologically-based distress</b> or <u>dysfunction</u> and to promote subjective <u>well-being</u> and personal development (Plante, Thomas. (2005). <i>Contemporary Clinical Psychology</i>. New York : Wiley.) In the case of Zee and Dee, the history enables the practitioner to understand the presentation of symptoms as well as give the ability to assist and intervene to establish psychological well-being. From a positive psychology approach, both individuals, despite the concerns noted, can be assisted by focusing and <b>reinforcing</b> their <b>strengths</b>. Both individuals indicated <b>resilience</b> as part of their strength inventory as well as other valuable personality characteristics.</p> <p>According to Seligman (Seligman, Martin E. P. (1991). <i>Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life</i>. New York: Knopf) "Positive Psychology is the scientific study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive. This field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to <b>enhance</b> their <b>experiences of love, work, and play</b>".</p>
<p><b>ILZE JANSEN</b></p>	<p>My discipline's unique perspective is to make sure that a person is <b>coping</b> well in his/her life. That the person is <b>well balanced</b> and <b>can function effectively</b> in most areas of their lives.</p> <p>It is important that the above mentioned issues be discussed as it is causing and will cause problems now and in future in Dee's personal, social and work life if she does not address these problems effectively. My discipline's unique perspective on Dee's life is that in order for her to become a fully functioning human being she will have to work through the above mentioned concerns in her life. If the concerns that were discussed in question 1 is not sorted out they will follow Dee throughout her life and it will catch up with her and have a</p>

<p><b>ILZE JANSEN</b> (continue)</p>	<p>negative impact in her life especially if someone else that is close to her also dies. If Zee's overall well-being is important for the different disciplines it will be vital that the above mentioned concerns be discussed and worked through with Zee. If these concerns of Zee are addressed the other disciplines will find that it makes their work with her and her concerns easier and more focused. Zee will also understand her feelings and behaviour in certain situations much better; so will the researchers from the other disciplines.</p>
<p><b>TILDA LOOTS</b></p>	<p>I think it is <b>difficult to formulate only one unique perspective</b>, as my discipline does not only have one unique approach. For me, I would view each case study within an <b>eco-systemic perspective</b> and consider the <b>influence of the different sub-systems</b> on each other. I would <b>also identify and mobilise potential assets</b> within each individual and sub-system in order to overcome some of these concerns.</p>

### **Reflection-in-Progress: A psychology perspective on the girls' stories**

From the comments received from the psychologists who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, psychology's unique contribution in similar situations (Jansen referred individually to the girls' situations), although difficult to formulate only one unique perspective can be to:

- Relieve psychological distress like depression
- Ensure the person is coping in life
- Enhance overall well-being
- Effectively address current issues to help future coping in same and similar situations
- Promote personal development
- Help them to understand feelings and behaviour in certain situations

Methods that can be used:

- Positive psychology

- Reinforcing the strengths as individuals
- Enhancing their experiences of love, work, and play – thus enhancing balance in their lives
- Eco-systemic perspective
  - Consider the effects of different subsystems on each other
  - Identify and mobilise potential assets within each individual and subsystem in an attempt to overcome their concerns

From the above comments, it seems like psychology from all three sub-disciplines can play a substantial role in addressing the specific concerns of each girl as it is currently manifesting in their lives.

Looking from an eco-systemic perspective, and looking at the role of subsystems in this perspective, helps one to understand the role that significant other people can play in the lives of these girls. It reminds of what is referred to in the narrative approach as an 'audience' to one's life story, in that you are not alone, but form part of a greater community. That community can consist of family, friends, religious affiliations like PEN and the church and people from the faith community.

Positive psychology also relates very well with the narrative approach, with its emphasis on the individual's strengths and positive aspects in their lives. It looks at how this can be utilised to help the specific individual cope with the situations and issues in their lives. In effect, it is thus aiming to find a so-called sparkling moment or unique outcome for that specific individual. This can be done by working together with the individual and utilising their strengths as a person to address issues that need current attention. By doing this, coping skills for similar situations in the future can be developed by the specific individual and thereby not only help the individual to focus on their current situation, but also create hope for the future.

#### 5.4.4 Psychology in conversation with other disciplines

<p><b>ILZE BARNARD</b></p>	<p>It is important to <b>move away from focusing only on diagnosing disorders</b> in clinical psychology and <b>offering a more hope-filled and solution focused option</b> to patients who are already discouraged by their debilitating symptoms and histories. It is widely known among researchers and practitioners that the DSM focuses on “what is wrong” with an individual rather than focusing on what an individual possesses that makes “things right / better”. Positive psychology focuses more on <b>optimum functioning</b> and <b>personal happiness</b> and <b>well-being</b> in the midst of other “negative” symptoms, <b>without denying the importance of these symptoms.</b></p>
<p><b>ILZE JANSEN</b></p>	<p>My discipline’s input can help other disciplines <b>understand Dee’s current situation better</b> and help them to identify issues and problems that they might not have seen without the highlighted concerns.</p> <p>My discipline’s perspective can assist in helping other disciplines to help Dee more effectively and <b>address her issues more holistically</b> and more effectively. Her problems are not only personal concerns but also social concerns. The different disciplines will thus, by following a holistic problem solving method, help Dee to overcome most of her concerns and help her to get a more balanced outlook on life. The psychological perspective is not that difficult to understand and it can make the work of the other researchers much easier as we address most of Zee’s current problems. The psychological perspective can also help the other disciplines in future to identify why Zee is presenting a specific concern and they will then be able to address it accordingly.</p> <p>The psychological perspective on Zee’s concerns <b>gives a better understanding of Zee’s overall concerns and problems.</b></p>
<p><b>TILDA LOOTS</b></p>	<p>It is important to view individuals within the different sub-systems in which they are functioning, as a <b>person is constantly influenced by different sub-systems.</b></p>

<p><b>TILDA LOOTS</b> (continue)</p>	<p>It is also important to <b>work with what is present</b> and what is <b>available</b> in order to overcome difficulties and barriers experienced. Assets and resources within individuals and each sub-system can be utilised to address identified difficulties.</p>
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### Reflection-in-Progress: Psychology at the interdisciplinary table

Psychology brings the following to the interdisciplinary table:

- From positive psychology the acknowledgement that we need to move away from just diagnosing people and their problems
- In order to offer a more hopeful or solution focused option
- Emphasises the need to focus on optimum functioning
- As well as the need for personal happiness and well-being
- Without denying the importance of life issues (so-called symptoms)
- Help in understanding the girls' issues better from different perspectives
- Helping address the issues more holistically
- This relates to not only personal concerns but also social concerns
- It helps to gain a better understanding of their overall concerns and problems
- Look at how people are constantly influenced by different subsystems
- To work with what is present and available in order to overcome difficulties in life

In light of the above, the discipline of psychology is very helpful in addressing the needs and concerns of these girls. In order to be able to look at not only their spiritual bereavement needs, but also how their bereavement needs relate to their overall psychological functioning. As well as how their unique personal attributes and strengths can be utilised to help them in overcoming their bereavement needs as well as other social and interpersonal concerns that are currently manifesting in their lives.

## 5.5 IN CONVERSATION WITH SOCIAL WORK

### 5.5.1 Dee's concerns

SUZANNE JACOBS	JERRY STREETS	CORLIE VAN DER BERG
<p><b>Trust</b> is one major concern. Dee's inability to trust others because of the lies that were told about her mother's death. She felt betrayed and hurt and now developed a defence mechanism where she does not allow herself to trust others or form relationships with other individuals, to avoid the possibility to go through the same pain again.</p>		<p>She feels that she cannot trust her grandmother because the grandmother <b>broke her trust</b>. Why did her mother not tell her the <b>truth</b> about her illness before she died? Was Dee not worth it?</p>
<p>It also seems as if Dee is also continuously battling with herself and her statements are contradictory – <b>mother</b> was important to her, but it does not seem as if they shared a positive <b>relationship</b>.</p>		<p>She has concerns about her <b>relationship with her mother</b> and what it meant to them both but also what it means for her life now.</p>
<p>Her <b>relationship with her relatives</b> – the rejection that she experienced.</p>	<p>(A)nd a <b>sense of betrayal</b> particularly as manifested by depression.</p>	<p>Why did her mother's <b>family desert her</b> after they told her they will take care of her always? Her <b>Aunt hurt and disappointed her</b> and Dee sees this aunt and her action as a danger to her life somehow.</p>
<p>(A)nd the impact this (relationship with relatives) might have on her <b>identity and self-esteem</b>.</p>		

SUZANNE JACOBS	JERRY STREETS	CORLIE VAN DER BERG
Unanswered questions about <b>HIV</b> and Dee's knowledge and perception about HIV that caused <b>death and separation</b> .	As young women, how can they be further strengthened to remain in control of their "bodies" and not become a <b>victim of sexual abuse</b> and or <b>unprotected sexual activity</b> ?	She is concerned that she may also die like her mother, perhaps also from <b>Aids</b> .
		Dee is of the opinion that she has a <b>problem with anger</b> .
		It seems that she is <b>afraid</b> to have "too much fun" and <b>enjoyment</b> .
	In spite of the hardships they face, they express <b>dreams and hopes</b> consistent with their age group.	Would she be able to <b>realize her dreams</b> if no one in her family believe in her?
		Concerned about <b>storms coming back</b> ... Her family and their actions and words are part of these storms and concerns.
		(A)nd that she might " <b>give herself to the devil</b> " and <b>sin</b> just to feel better and then she will never be able to overcome the storm.
		<b>Forgiving her aunt.</b>
	I wondered about how they will get help to deal with the long range <b>impact of their losses</b> ? Regarding the stories: they are powerful descriptions of <b>loss</b> , confusion, resilience and hope.	

## General comments regarding Dee's story and her concerns

<p><b>JERRY STREETS</b></p>	<p>Regarding the stories: they are <b>powerful descriptions of loss, confusion, resilience and hope</b>. I assume that the reference to a "tree" is regarding an exercise they did to imagine their lives. Also, how can their combined sense of loss and hope be more weighted with hope and aspiration given what I understand as their lack of family, educational and job training support and the economic situation there? What is strongly expressed by them is their <b>sense of resilience and aspirations</b>, no doubt increased by the <b>support they receive from the church, housing and social support programs</b> of which they are a part.</p>
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## Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's concerns from a social work perspective

It is important to note that Jerry Streets did not formulate the girls' concerns as such, or individually, but rather focused on how these discourses can be viewed in a more positive way. Comments of his that related to specific discourses, I have nonetheless included with regards to both stories. Therefore, the wording is the same for both stories.

From the comments received from the social work participants in the interdisciplinary conversation, one or more of the social work participants mentioned the following concerns of / for **Dee**:

- Lack of trust and truthfulness
- Relationship with mother
- Relationship with and desertion by relatives
- Identity and self-esteem
- Interplay between HIV and Aids and sex
- Problem with anger
- Cautiousness to enjoy life
- Realisation of dreams
- Possible return of difficulties (storms) in life

- Ever present temptation to sin
- Ability to forgive
- Impact of losses experienced

The general comments made by Jerry Streets applicable to both stories, refer in the first instance to the loss these girls have experienced – for Dee this loss is compounded by the death of her mother. With her mother’s death – a mother whom she barely knew – she not only lost her mother, but also the opportunity to establish a better relationship with her. Her close family members, most notably her aunt, lied to and ultimately rejected her, which led to feelings of anger, hurt and confusion.

Streets mentions the positive role played by the church, housing and other support systems. For Dee the people involved with these systems become her new family. One that now takes care of her material, emotional, social and spiritual needs – as would happen in another family. Zee becomes her ‘sister’ in that they not only live together and interact on more than one social level, but possibly also because they share similar life experiences.

What stands out for Streets is the sense of resilience and hope these girls exude notwithstanding their traumatic life experiences thus far. For Dee her faith in God and the support of her church sustain this resilience and hope in her life, and it also forms a foundation for the aspirations she has for herself. The relationship with Zee – their so-called sisterhood – also sustains her in life. In Zee, she found someone who understands her and her situation, without putting pressure on her to be someone she is not – with Zee she can just be. As she puts it –

Then my friend, *Zee*, she became my comfort since there was no one close to me after me and my aunt separated - **Dee**

### 5.5.2 Zee's concerns

SUZANNE JACOBS	JERRY STREETS	CORLIE VAN DER BERG
Zee has much better coping skills and seems more resilient than Dee. She did find ways to deal with the pain of the death of her parents, but there are still <b>unresolved issues / concerns</b> that will limit her in some way or another.		
These concerns are her <b>feelings of anger towards her step mom</b> for passing the HIV virus onto her father.		She also felt that it was <b>unfair of her stepmother to have passed it on to him.</b>
Zee's <b>ignorance and knowledge about HIV</b> must be addressed. That will also address her feelings towards her stepmother.	As young women, how can they be furthered strengthened to remain in control of their "bodies" and not become a <b>victim of sexual abuse</b> and or <b>unprotected sexual activity?</b>	It is difficult for Zee to come to terms with the fact that her <b>father died from HIV Aids</b> and could not tell her that.
<b>The community must also be educated about HIV</b> to eliminate the stigma that surrounds it and confront it, instead of disguising it – cancer		
It also seems as if she still finds it <b>difficult to cope without her father</b> , despite her good coping skills that were described in the beginning.		<b>She still misses her dad</b> very much – she feels she needs him in her life, especially now – to guide and encourage her.
		Her <b>dad</b> has been a <b>good influence</b> in her life. Now that he is not there will she be able to change her life?

SUZANNE JACOBS	JERRY STREETS	CORLIE VAN DER BERG
<p>It is almost as if she is <b>wearing a mask</b> to show the world that she is doing fine, but this is not necessarily the reality.</p>		
<p>The reality of uncontrollable events that have such a major impact on her life and <b>emotional well-being</b> is also a concern that must be dealt with appropriately. Her pain must be acknowledged in a proper manner.</p>	<p>I wondered about how they will get help to deal with the long range <b>impact of their losses</b> and sense of betrayal particularly as manifested by depression.</p>	
		<p>She does not have daily <b>contact with her younger brother</b>. This seems to be a painful experience to her. She seems concerned that she does not see him enough.</p>
		<p>Her <b>boyfriend</b> is very important to her but she is concerned about the boyfriend's drinking and partying. She wants him to make the right choices in life.</p>
	<p>It seems that <b>support from religious people and organizations such as the church</b> is important to them and is a source of strength for them.</p>	<p>She is concerned about the <b>storms in life</b> and asks the question "What's the use of us living if we are going to have so many storms in life?"</p>

### General comments regarding Zee's story and her concerns

<p><b>JERRY STREETS</b></p>	<p>Regarding the stories: they are <b>powerful descriptions of loss, confusion, resilience and hope</b>. I assume that the reference to a "tree" is regarding an exercise they did to imagine their lives. Also, how can their combined sense of loss and hope be more weighted with hope and aspiration given what I understand as their lack of family, educational and job training support and the economic situation there? What is strongly expressed by them is their <b>sense of resilience and aspirations</b>, no doubt increased by the <b>support they receive from the church, housing and social support programs</b> of which they are a part.</p>
<p><b>CORLIE VAN DER BERG</b></p>	<p>Overall it seems as if Zee knows that she will be <b>able to survive and even thrive in life</b> but that she is concerned that <b>without her father's guidance and support she will perhaps not make the right choices</b> and have the <b>courage and perseverance to carry on</b>. She is <b>aware of the support systems in her life</b> such as her aunt, uncle and boyfriend as well as her faith in God, but she is still <b>not completely sure that she will be able to survive and realize her dreams, goals and hopes in her life</b>.</p>

### Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's concerns from a social work perspective

As Jerry Streets formulated the girls' concerns as a whole and not for each individual girl, comments of his relating to specific discourses, were included with regards to both stories. Therefore, the wording remains the same for both stories.

From the comments received from the social work participants in the interdisciplinary conversation, one or more of the social work participants mentioned the following concerns of / for **Zee**:

- Unresolved issues in life
- Feelings of anger towards stepmother
- Interplay between HIV and Aids and sex

- The role of education about HIV and Aids for the community as well
- Longing for her deceased father
- Lack of positive parental influence
- Hiding the real emotions
- Emotional well-being
- Lack of regular contact with younger brother
- Relationship with responsible boyfriend
- Concerns about storms in life

Jerry Streets mentioned the loss both girls experienced in their short lives. Zee lost her father and with that her great friendship with a man she held in high regard. He was her role model; her positive influence in life. After his death she moved in with friends of his, who took care of her as their own. In doing so, she lost the opportunity to play an active role in her younger brother's life. By the time of the second camp she also – like Dee – made the move to the House of Safety, as it became increasingly more difficult for the friends to take care of her. She also exudes a sense of resilience and hope in her life.

Corlie van der Berg also notices Zee's resilience – her ability not only to survive, but to thrive in life – but cautions that Zee might feel that she still needs guidance like the guidance her father provided for her when he was still alive. Without enough positive influences in Zee's life, van der Berg fears she might be tempted to make the wrong choices in life, and although she shows great resilience, without guidance she might not have the courage and perseverance to carry on with her life in a positive way.

Like Streets, van der Berg mentions the fact that Zee is fully aware of the support systems in her life – notably her faith in God, but cautions that Zee might feel unsure about what her future holds – if she will indeed be able to live up to the hopes and dreams she – but also her dad – has for herself.

### 5.5.3 Importance of social work at interdisciplinary table and unique perspective

#### Dee's story and social work

<p><b>SUZANNE JACOBS</b></p>	<p>It is important from social work's perspective that an <b>individual's own potential and own strengths be developed</b> and be utilized to overcome a specific problem or concern that is hindering the individual to function 'normally'. In other words a <b>strengths perspective</b> will be followed to address Dee's concerns. In Dee's case, it will probably be best to approach her concerns through <b>individual case work method</b> and through a <b>therapeutic process</b> help her to be able to trust again. The <b>trust relationship between Dee and the worker</b> will also be very important since trust is an issue for her. In other words, her <b>fear of trusting others will be addressed</b> through social work, as well as her <b>relationship struggles with her relatives</b> that are definitely having an <b>impact on her identity formation and her perception of herself</b>.</p>
<p><b>CORLIE VAN DER BERG</b></p>	<p>Because Social Work focuses on the <b>individual in relation and interaction with other systems</b> the perspective of social Work regarding Dee's concerns would be that her <b>relationship with her family</b> needs some attention.</p> <p>Because Dee has formally been placed in a place of safety the social worker involved is obligated to work with Dee's family of origin. A professional person needs to become involved with Dee's family specifically to begin making them aware of the effects of their behaviour on Dee. The social worker or psychologist involved with Dee on a personal level would also need to guide the Place of Safety to whether or not it is in Dee's best interest to have contact with her family or under which circumstances she may have contact with them. It is also important that Dee receives <b>individual therapy to work through the trauma of her mother's death</b>, as well as her <b>aunt and family's abandonment</b>.</p>

<p><b>CORLIE VAN DER BERG</b> (continue)</p>	<p>For Social Work it is necessary to do some <b>future planning</b> for Dee with regard to her schooling, career planning and complete psychosocial functioning. The social worker will try to determine whether Dee has enough <b>support systems</b> for example her <b>friends, place of safety staff</b> and especially the <b>church</b> where she is integrated.</p> <p>This view of Social Work on the <b>individual within a larger system</b> and ultimately as seen from a <b>social developmental paradigm</b> is very important at the multidisciplinary table because the social worker is able to connect all the different disciplines and role players in the child's life to ensure that she will function at an optimal level.</p>
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### **Reflection-in-Progress: A social work perspective on Dee's story**

From the comments received from the social work participants in the interdisciplinary conversation, individual therapy for **Dee** should address:

- Trauma of her mother's death
- Trust issues
- Relationship struggles with relatives (abandonment issues)
- Impact of these relationships on:
  - her identity formation
  - perception of herself
- Nature of Dee's support systems:
  - friends
  - Place of Safety staff
  - Church
- Future planning:
  - schooling
  - career
  - psychosocial functioning

Social work's unique perspective on working with **Dee** encompasses:

- A social developmental paradigm
- A strengths perspective: Dee's own potential and strengths to be developed
- A person that is seen as an individual within a larger system
- Individual case study work

### Zee's story and social work

<b>SUZANNE JACOBS</b>	Zee's social functioning and her interaction with others can be utilized to identify her <b>strengths</b> as a means to address her <b>fear of being alone</b> (her father not being in her life anymore).
<b>CORLIE VAN DER BERG</b>	For the Social Worker it would be important that Zee is firstly placed in an alternative care setting which will provide an environment for her optimal functioning and development. In Zee's case it seems as if the "aunt and uncle" can provide this kind of environment for her. It will also be important to make sure that Zee receives <b>counselling</b> in future – <b>individual</b> or in a <b>group</b> context to support her <b>when she starts doubting herself</b> , to talk about her <b>relationship with her boyfriend</b> and the <b>loss of her father</b> . The Social Worker would also like to know how Zee is <b>faring in school</b> and what <b>support she will be able to have from teachers and friends</b> . If it is possible the Social Worker would like to <b>establish some links with Zee's family of origin</b> especially from her father's side because she loved him so much. Attention would also be given to <b>regular contact with her brother</b> , if at all possible. The input of the Social Worker at the interdisciplinary table is important because Social Work does not look at Zee (or a child) in isolation but at her <b>total functioning in relation to all the different people in her life and the different systems</b> which are part of her life. Social work realizes that every person is part of a broader <b>interconnected system</b> and focuses both on the <b>individual and the broader context</b> of his or her life.

## Reflection-in-Progress: A social work perspective on Zee's story

From the comments received from the social work participants in the interdisciplinary conversation, therapy (group or individual) for **Zee** should address:

- Loss of her father
- Tendency to doubt herself
- Relationship with boyfriend
- Nature of Zee's support systems:
  - friends
  - teachers at school
- School performance

Other issues that should receive attention:

- The possible establishment of links with Zee's family of origin, especially paternal
- Attempts to try and ensure regular contact with Zee's younger brother

Social work's unique perspective on working with **Zee** encompasses:

- A strengths perspective: Zee's fear of being alone needs to be addressed
- That an individual forms part of an interconnected system. Focus on individual as well as broader context
- Total functioning in relation to different people's and systems in life

Corlie van der Berg refers to the need for Zee to be placed in an alternative care setting, such as living with the friends of her father – whom she refers to as 'aunt and uncle'. Since the first TOL camp Zee has; however, moved to the same House of Safety that Dee stays in, due to the difficulties these friends experienced in caring for her. She is therefore in a legitimate alternative care setting which by all probability do receive a grant from the government to provide housing for her.

#### 5.5.4 Social work in conversation with other disciplines

<p><b>SUZANNE JACOBS</b></p>	<p>Social work, as mentioned before, <b>looks holistically at the person and looks at all possible contexts</b> that individuals find themselves in. Individuals are <b>assisted to adapt to their environments</b> and most importantly <b>to rely on their own strengths to cope</b> with specific demanding situations and events in their lives.</p>
<p><b>CORLIE VAN DER BERG</b></p>	<p>I am of the opinion that ultimately all the disciplines have <b>the child's best interest at heart</b>. According to the new Children's Act (Act 35 of 2005) any child that has been entered under the Children's Act must be evaluated and placed according to what is in the best interest of the child. <b>A multidisciplinary team focuses on the child and his best interest</b>. The <b>social worker connects all role players to achieve this purpose</b> and his role in this process will be understood by other team members. Researchers from <b>other disciplines focus on different aspects of human functioning</b> than Social Work does. If the perspectives of different disciplines are being put together a <b>multi faceted perspective of the child and the context of her life</b> can be obtained. This will be to the child's benefit because careful <b>consideration will be given to which interventions may be appropriate</b> to enable the <b>child's optimal functioning</b> within her specific environment. <b>Social work</b> in South Africa has a <b>developmental focus</b> and aims to bring all the role players in contact with one another to ensure optimal development of the entire society. <b>Social development implies development of communities</b> by means of <b>economical, social and physical development</b>.</p> <p>(The girls') <b>future development</b> not only relies on <b>support and individual therapy</b> that they might need but also on the <b>ability of the country they reside in to provide ample opportunities for them</b> to finish their schooling, obtain a qualification after school and to be employed.</p> <p>As children they also still need the <b>support of the state</b> to provide a <b>grant for an alternative care placement</b> for them.</p>

<p><b>CORLIE VAN DER BERG</b> (continue)</p>	<p>Social work will be able to focus on (the girls') <b>current situation</b> but simultaneously also keep the <b>broader context</b> of their lives and future in mind. This perspective will enable the multidisciplinary team to make informed decisions regarding their interventions in (the girls') lives.</p>
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### Reflection-in-Progress: Social work at the interdisciplinary table

Social work brings the following to the interdisciplinary table:

- A holistic view of the person
- Taking into account all the possible contexts
- Individuals are assisted to adapt to their environments
- Assisted to rely on their own strengths as a person to be able to cope
- The social worker connects all the interdisciplinary team members
- Keeping the focus on the child and his / her best interest
- Acknowledges that other disciplines focus on different aspects of human functioning
- In working together, a multi-faceted perspective of the child and his / her context is obtained
- This multi-faceted perspective takes into account interventions that may be appropriate for the child's optimal functioning
- Social work sees social development, that is the development of communities at large, as important
- Sees support and therapy where needed as important for future well-being
- The State has a responsibility
- Current situations need to be situated within the broader context

## 5.6 OTHER DISCIPLINES SEATED AT THE INTERDISCIPLINARY TABLE

### 5.6.1 Anthropology – Mieke de Gelder

#### 5.6.1.1 *Dee's concerns*

Dee's story seems to me to speak of **great uncertainty**; at times she also seems to **contradict** herself. She clearly had a **difficult relationship with her mother**; initially in her life it sounds like she depended more on her aunt (Rebecca) and other family members than on her own mother. Sadly, when her mother became ill, the **relationship** she had with the one person she was especially close to—her **aunt Rebecca**—also became increasingly strained. The **concerns** she expresses sometimes explicitly, sometimes subtly in the story **have to do with these difficult relationships** and how to deal with them following her mother's passing. Her mother was a person she "didn't like" when she was still alive—but of course the pervasive ideology is that mothers and daughters ought to have a close relationship—so now, in the wake of her mother's death, she is **struggling to "reframe" that relationship**. How to remember her mother? She switches uncomfortably, contradictorily between "harsh" and "loving" remembering. At the same time, the good connection she once had with her aunt and which grew strained also remains important: why did this happen (was her mother maybe responsible—her mother's illness and death—leaving the aunt with the **burden of caring for her niece**)? And how might it be changed? Is it possible that the **aunt's anger** at the mother's death became targeted at Dee? Is that how Dee sees it?

#### **Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's concerns from an anthropological perspective**

Mieke de Gelder mentioned the following discourses as concerns of / for **Dee** from an anthropological perspective:

- Feelings of ambivalence and uncertainty about relationships in her life
- Difficult relationship with her mother
- Struggling to redefine (reframe) the nature of relationship with late mother
- Strained relationship with her aunt Rebecca
- Reasons for aunt's anger

Interesting, De Gelder pick up on the confusion Dee is experiencing about the two most important relationships in her life thus far – that with her mother (how to remember her?) and with her aunt (did she maybe feel misused by Dee's mother?)

### 5.6.1.2 Zee's concerns

Zee's story is **significantly different from Dee's**, not least because Zee several times conveys the **positive relationship she had with her father**. In this sense (and also because she was for a time "adopted" by her father's friends, who took good care of her), what this story demonstrates/implies is the **importance of kinship bonds** (whether "real" or fictive) in situations of untimely death. In such situations, **strong and affective family ties** help orphans both in terms of the **people to who they might turn** following the death of a parent or parents, and in relation to the process of **remembering the parent(s)**. **Arguably, it is/becomes "easier" to process a death when one's relationship with the deceased (parent) was (more or less) good rather than conflicted in life.** (Perhaps related, Zee also is less specific about the "storms" in her life than is Dee.) So in this vein – it's **not as clear to me what Zee's concerns are or may be** (as opposed to Dee's). On **one level Zee seems to be quite engaged in normal or average teenage concerns**, such as having a **boyfriend** and maybe getting married to him one day and wanting to become an architect. It could of course also be that **in her narrations she kept her real concerns more hidden** than did Dee.

### Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's concerns from an anthropological perspective

Mieke de Gelder does not identify specific concerns for Zee as she did with Dee. She rather frames Zee's story from a more positive perspective, stating the following aspects as having a positive influence in her life:

- The positive relationship she experienced with her father
- The importance of kinship bonds in her life –
  - her father
  - the friends of her father who took care of her after his death
- Positive relationships gives orphans such as Zee –
  - someone to turn to for support after their parent(s) death
  - people with whom she can talk about her father and help her to remember him
- The good relationship with her late father, eases the bereavement process for her
- She engages herself in normal adolescent interests like having a boyfriend

De Gelder however cautions that the fact that Zee's concerns were apparently not as clear as was Dee's concerns, does not mean that she does not have any concerns to begin with. She speculates that Zee might not have been as open and forthcoming in her narrations about her real concerns, as was Dee, but that she might have hid them better than did Dee.

I tend to agree to a certain extent with this last statement of de Gelder. Zee wasn't as forthcoming during the first TOL camp as Dee was. She kept to herself more during the first camp than during the second camp, and only revealed during the second TOL camp the true cause of her father's death. I believe she needed to learn to trust us first before bluntly blurting out her story. Also I believe the fact that Dee was open and honest about her mother's death helped her to talk about it.

### ***5.6.1.3 Importance of anthropology at interdisciplinary table and unique perspective***

Hmm... This is not a question that is easily or straightforwardly answered. My discipline is **socio-cultural** (and to a lesser extent medical) **anthropology**; our field methods are quite in-depth, and commonly **require living with the people one is working with** (as far as possible). In brief, possibly an anthropological approach to Dee's (and also Zee's) concerns would situate them in relation to what we can broadly call the **historical developments of colonial capitalism and apartheid in S.A.**, which in myriad complex ways engendered the general, violent "breakdown" of black or African polities, communities and kinship systems. The effects of these processes continue to be everywhere present, visible, and indeed "productive"... also in and through **HIV/AIDS** (see e.g. Didier Fassin's "When Bodies Remember" [2007]—and there are many more publications on this...). So, if/since the concerns Dee and Zee express highlight the matter of fraught and broken kin relations (Zee's less so, though she does mention her **mother's suicide** and also blames her **stepmother for infecting her father** [and thus for being responsible for his death]), in a sense "beyond" analyzing this in terms of HIV/AIDS, an anthropological approach would further tie it to the historical and contemporary events that have shaped S.A.—within which (the experience of) HIV/AIDS is also situated and needs to be understood.

## Reflection-in-Progress: An anthropological perspective on the girls' stories

According to de Gelder, anthropology's unique perspective on working with the girls encompasses situating their life stories in the following contexts:

- Historical events in South Africa like colonialism's and apartheid's pervasive influence on society, still to this day
- Contemporary issues like the prevalence of HIV and Aids

Anthropology works from a socio-cultural approach whereby culture and the influence it has on the broader society over time is taken into account. In light of this, de Gelder views issues such as colonialism and apartheid – which within the South African context has a certain distinctiveness to it – as still impacting on the girls' stories, even though they were primarily brought up in post-apartheid South Africa.

### 5.6.1.4 Anthropology in conversation with other disciplines

**I am not sure if it would be.** This might depend on the discipline (i.e. **social historians** and **anthropologists** sometimes share **methodological and theoretical approaches**, but **interdisciplinary collaboration appears to be on the rise** more generally) but also on individual researchers and scholars.

## Reflection-in-Progress: Anthropology at the interdisciplinary table

De Gelder voices her concern that anthropology might not be understood and appreciated by other disciplines during interdisciplinary collaborations, yet acknowledges that interdisciplinary collaborations seem to be on the rise. This might be strengthened by the fact that anthropologists and social historians sometimes use similar methodological and theoretical approaches.

## 5.6.2 Information science – Jacques du Plessis

### 5.6.2.1 Dee's concerns

Her concerns **relate to family**. The **broken relationships with an aunt**, a **grandmother**, and her **mother** with whom she **never bonded** adequately. Now, living in a world where she finds it **difficult to trust** is a harsh reality.

### Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's concerns from the perspective of information science

From the comments received from Jacques du Plessis who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, the following concerns were mentioned regarding / for **Dee**:

- Concerns relating to her family
- Broken relationships with –
  - aunt
  - grandmother
  - mother
- Inadequate bonding with mother figure
- Difficulty to trust

Du Plessis also voices concern over Dee's difficult relationships with significant people in her life, which influences her life as she is currently experiencing it. Not surprisingly, she is therefore experiencing difficulty in trusting and allowing people into her life and personal space.

### 5.6.2.2 Zee's concerns

She had such a **deep admiration for her dad**. The fact that she was **not given the truth**, did hurt her a lot. I do not feel overly concerned about her, since she seems to exude such inner self confidence. Wonderful to see that. Her concerns are about **support** and **getting Kgosi straightened out** so that he would be worthy of her as a life partner.

### Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's concerns from the perspective of information science

From the comments received from Jacques du Plessis who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, the following concerns were mentioned regarding / for **Zee**:

- Difficulty to trust, as people have lied to her about the true cause of her father's death, whom she greatly admired
- Feelings of being hurt by significant other people
- Concerns about support – emotional, psychological, spiritual and material needs
- Concern about current boyfriend and his lifestyle

For Zee, her loss was great. Not only did she lose the man she admired the most in life, her dad, but in the process she was also lied too and denied access to the truth. The truth in this case being the true cause of her father's death, caused by infection with the HIV virus, which she believes was transmitted to her father by her stepmother.

She misses the support given to her by her father, not only the material security that he provided for her, but especially the emotional support and guidance he gave her. Du Plessis mentions the fact that she wishes her boyfriend would change his lifestyle. As mentioned earlier, she is no longer in a relationship with this boyfriend, which should indicate that in one aspect of her life she has made progress since the interdisciplinary conversations took place.

### ***5.6.2.3 Importance of information science at interdisciplinary table and unique perspective***

#### **Dee's story and information science**

From the perspective of information ethics, **she was not given the truth**. It was not shared and dealt with. The **right of affected parties to know the truth is essential to coping, understanding, and surviving the trauma**. She mentions specifically the **lack of info** and the **lies** and how that might never be out there for her.

#### **Zee's story and information science**

**The right to know:** (info ethics) Taking a look at the **difficulty of being forthright about the truth** is a problem for her initially with DEE, and it is also a problem for her father and family in telling her the truth. She **blames her step mom for introducing the virus to her dad**. She **might be misinformed**. Maybe her dad introduced the virus to her step mom. **Knowing the truth is key to healing, and coping**.

#### **Reflection-in-Progress: Information science perspective on the girls' stories**

From Jacques du Plessis' comments, information science's unique perspective on working with the girls' stories encompasses:

- All affected parties have the right to the truth
- Information ethics
- Knowing the truth is essential for being able to cope and overcome the trauma of losing her father
- The lack of information and the lies accompanying that plays a significant role in the girls' coping and well-being
- The possibility that Zee might be misinformed with regards to how her father got infected with HIV and Aids

#### **5.6.2.4 Information science in conversation with other disciplines**

##### **Dee's story and information science**

Information is often not seen as part of psycho-social care, yet it is a **mesh of support** that upholds the quest **to come to terms and understand oneself**. The things of the heart have to be built on **trust**. It is **truthful access to information** that allows that to happen.

##### **Zee's story and information science**

Based on the report of Zee, her life is unsettled because of the **lack of truth**. It is not so much the reality of hardship that she has to face that gets her down, but it is a deep disappointment that she was not given the truth. In my perspective, it is the splinter in the wound. You get that known, then we know it is there and we are willing to accept the pain to remove it, and only then can the **meaningful healing** happen.

##### **Reflection-in-Progress: Information science at the interdisciplinary table**

Information science brings the following to the interdisciplinary table:

- Importance of the truthful access to knowledge
- Forms part of the wider support system that contributes to coming to terms with oneself and your own situation and beginning to understand oneself
- Reminder that meaningful healing can only occur when you have access to much needed information that impacts on your life

As Du Plessis clearly states, information science isn't seen as related to the psycho-social care of people in the same sense that psychology or social care will play a role. Nonetheless, it does emphasise the importance of so-called information ethics, wherein people involved should be granted the right to knowledge on the 'truth'. When people have access to this kind of knowledge, this too can help in the healing process – in this case the effective coping with their parental bereavement.

## 5.6.3 Life coaching – François Wessels

### 5.6.3.1 Dee's concerns (part 1)

It is difficult to answer these questions as the **context is unknown** and I can only infer what questions have been asked to her. If I were to don the hat of a life coach, I would suspect that Dee's **concerns would be with her future**:

- a. How well does her life narrative equip her for the future which she mentioned in passing (storyteller, poet, author, film maker)?
- b. What hope does she have for a good future?
- c. According to this narrative, she seems to be living very much in the present and past, but no timeline to the future is mentioned.
- d. This also affects narratives of ambition, wishes and dreams.

Another concern may be **connectedness**:

- e. She has been **“abandoned” to her own fate by her relatives**. How does this **affect trust, relational security and social identity**?

Dee's **material security** may also be a grave concern to her.

Another concern may be with knowledge and skills equipping her for a **life beyond the FBO**.

### Dee's concerns (part 2)

The concerns still may be **isolation from significant others**. Her **connectedness to the life narratives of others and specifically significant others has been severed**. Her **sense of belonging** and how that **impacts on her identity** story may be affected by this.

Another discourse which has been present in the first part of Dee's story as well, was **emotional wellbeing**:

- a. She quite often mentions **anger**.
- b. Her **social relationships** (with the exception of her relationships with Zee and the church) seem to be **dominated by conflict**. This may be a serious concern to her.
- c. (Ontological) **safety and a future beyond the FBO** are still discourses appearing in her life narrative from time to time.
- d. This is closely connected to her story of **being able to live her dreams**. At least she is mentioning dreams this time round.

**Spirituality as a meaning making discourse** may be a concern here as well.

## General comments regarding Dee's story and her concerns

Since the previous account of her life story, **another time dimension has been added** to Dee's story. There seems to be **more mention of a future**.

## Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's concerns from the perspective of a life coach

From the comments received from François Wessels, the following concerns of / for **Dee** were identified:

- Isolation from significant others
- Severed ties with significant others
- Sense of belonging has been affected
- Identity is impacted
- Emotional well-being
  - anger issues
  - social relationships are dominated by conflict
- Safety and future beyond the FBO
- Ability to be able to live her dreams
- Spirituality as a meaning making discourse

Wessels notice the evolvment in Dee's story since the first TOL camp, in that she is now more able to verbalise her hopes and dreams for her own future. Since the first TOL camp (October 2008) was held shortly after her mother's death (August 2008), the first camp was arguably more emotional than the second TOL camp that was held in February 2010. She has probably learned to deal with her bereavement issues more effectively in the meantime and this makes it possible for her to be able to foresee some kind of future for herself.

### 5.6.3.2 Zee's concerns

I think that Zee's concerns would be:

- a) **Material:** where would she obtain the **means to set up a restaurant** one day?
- b) **Recurring narratives of misfortune:** her **parents both died** and the relationship in which she finds herself, seems to be problematic as well. Her **boyfriend** has a **drinking problem**.
- c) **Spiritual:** her God narrative seems to suggest that **storms are part of God's plans for us**. Her ontological **perspectives of need and suffering may be detrimental** to her agentic life narrative.

### Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's concerns from the perspective of a life coach

From the comments received from François Wessels, the following concerns of / for **Zee** were identified:

- Having the means to one day fulfil her dream of opening a restaurant
- The loss of both parents
- Drinking problem of her boyfriend
- God's role in her suffering and the storms present in her

Zee not only lost her father due to HIV and Aids infection, but as a small child also lost her mother due to suicide. This double loss sets the scene for misfortune in her life. Arguably, these storms in her life of losing both parents gave rise to the idea that God was behind the suffering she has experienced in life. Wessels is also concerned like some other interdisciplinary team members about her relationship with her boyfriend, who has a drinking problem. Shortly after the second TOL camp in February 2010 however, Zee broke up with said boyfriend and has since moved on.

### ***5.6.3.3 Importance of life coaching at interdisciplinary table and unique perspective***

As a life coach, a **prospective perspective** is adopted. The involvement with the client centres around a **meaningful life**, the wish to have a **life of fulfilment** rather than a therapeutic perspective focused on healing. The perspective may therefore be concerned more with **how the present “strengthens” the future and not repairing a broken present life**.

This perspective **complements therapeutic perspectives** in taking the conversation beyond the repair of the life narrative to the “launching” narrative, which is concerned with **empowering the client to launch a new life story**.

An important discourse in life coaching is **social intelligence** or **social skills**. This discourse **deals with relationships** and therefore a position of agency in **relationship development and maintenance** is very important.

Another important discourse is **a life that matters; existential meaningfulness** is key to our life stories, our identity stories and our connectedness stories.

- a) **Material:** discourses of material needs are positioned within larger life narratives, and these discourses need to be deconstructed to determine the effect on existential meaning and ontological security.
- b) **Recurring narratives of misfortune:** the voices supporting an understanding of recurring misfortune should be externalised and the effects mapped as far as life meaning is concerned.
- c) **Spiritual:** Spirituality is an integral discourse in the existential meaning narrative. As such, developing a sensitivity to spirituality can form part of a meaning making process in personal life narratives.

### **Reflection-in-Progress: Life coaching perspective on the girls’ stories**

From François Wessels’ comments, life coaching’s unique perspective on working with the girls’ stories encompasses:

- Working from a prospective perspective, focusing on attaining a meaningful and fulfilling life
- Existential meaningfulness – ‘a life that matters’
- It is not about fixing what is wrong presently, but rather about using that which is good in the present to secure and enhance a fulfilling future story
- Empowerment of the client and her life story so that it becomes a meaningful unit
- The importance of social skills is emphasised
- As well as how to develop and maintain relationships

#### ***5.6.3.4 Life coaching in conversation with other disciplines***

As a life coach, a **prospective perspective** is adopted. The involvement with the client centres round a **meaningful life**, the wish to have a **life of fulfilment** – rather than a therapeutic perspective focused on healing. The perspective may therefore be concerned more with **how the present “strengthens” the future** and not repairing a broken present life.

#### **Reflection-in-Progress: Life coaching at the interdisciplinary table**

Life coaching brings the following to the interdisciplinary table:

- A prospective perspective
- Attempts of attaining a meaningful life of fulfilment
- Focus on how the present supports and strengthens the future

From the above, it is clear that life coaching overlaps significantly with what is termed in clinical psychology as ‘positive psychology’, whereby the focus falls on empowering the client today for a better tomorrow.

## 5.7 CLOSING REMARKS ON CHAPTER 5

Chapter 5 was an interesting mix of different disciplines' perspectives on the two stories of Dee and Zee, two of my co-researchers during this research process. Through the use of transversal rationality and the involvement of different disciplines and individuals' perspectives, the concerns of these two girls were successfully highlighted and emphasised and in the process valuable information regarding the stories were put on the table for possible further discussion and investigation.

The value and great possibilities regarding interdisciplinary conversation for similar research projects became evident and even necessary in the future.

In chapter 6 we will focus on possible alternative interpretations of the research process, which constitutes the seventh movement of PFPT and its relation to research.

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