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**The affordances of narrative group music therapy with
adolescents who self-harm**

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requirements for the degree**

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined how adolescent participants who self-harm narrate motivations for and experiences of self-harm and what a narrative group music therapy process could afford them. Seven participants from a high school in South Africa who engage in self-harm attended narrative group music therapy sessions for six weeks. Multiple interventions were used to create opportunities for self-expression within sessions. Narratives that emerged during this therapeutic process were analysed. Five main narratives were identified: “who I am, becoming and strive to be,” “relationships,” “worldview,” “self-harm,” “music therapy.”

Key Words:

Self-harm

Narrative Music Therapy

Adolescence

Trauma

Abuse

Identity

Narrative analysis

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

As a registered social worker in South Africa engaging with troubled teenagers, I observed their constant involvement in music. Many of the teenagers I worked with self-harmed and, as a social worker, I often longed for knowledge of how to use music more effectively in this context. As I was accepted into the music therapy Master's programme at the university of Pretoria the opportunity for this study was born.

This introductory chapter provides the background and context for the study. The aim of the research was to explore what a narrative music therapy group process could afford adolescents who self-harm, particularly in relation to identity development and the processing of emotions.

1.1 Background and Context

Self-harming tends to bring about confusion in popular discourse as creating pain while experiencing relief can be seen as a complex contradiction (Chapman, Gratz, & Brown, 2006:371). Klonsky (2007:227) defines self-harm as the mutilating of body tissue without intending to commit suicide, and explains that self-harm is practiced intentionally. The purpose of this behaviour could be described as transforming emotional pain, which is experienced as too intense to process, into physical pain that may be less overwhelming (Hicks & Hinck, 2008:64).

Self-harm is found to occur at the highest rates among adolescents and young adults (Muehlenkamp, Claes, Havertape, Plener, 2012:6). Adolescence can be described as the phase of life between childhood and adulthood beginning at puberty and ending with young adulthood (Barker, 1999:9). In South Africa, Shamos (2007:255) found that 10-15% of teenagers self-harm, while speculating that the actual prevalence is higher as many cases are not reported. In the course of a survey-based community study with 15 and 16 year-old school students in England, Hawton, Rodham and Evans (2006:13) found that 6.9% repeatedly self-harm, while 13% had self-harmed in their lifetime. This developmental phase is marked by hormonal changes, emotional pinnacles and confusion, the development of a sense of identity and self-esteem, as well as a greater need to be

accepted by peers (Shull, Van Sell & O'Quinn, 2008:20). Identity stands at the crossroads of adolescent psychology (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Steinberg, 2011).

As explained by Gratz and Chapman (2009:37), research has not yet pinpointed the exact causes of self-harm. Nonetheless, certain common themes emerge in research examining self-harming behaviour. The features that appear to increase a person's propensity to engage in experimentation with self-harm include genetic and neurological factors, behavioural disorders, traumatic events (particularly traumatic childhood experiences), negative environmental factors, knowing someone who self-harms, requiring emotional relief and an inordinately intense experience of stress. More specifically, Lewis and Heath (2015:526) state that emotional relief is sought by adolescents through self-harm as a coping mechanism for negative affects such as anxiety, frustration, and hopelessness, self-criticism, poor body image, and low self-esteem. Self-harm becomes one of the few alternative forms of relief for adolescents who do not have the skills to reflect on or understand their life events when emotional states become too difficult to endure and express (Skarderud, 2007:324).

Within the adolescent life phase more complex thinking develops. According to Lerner, Esterbrooks and Mistry (2003:325) (writing in a Western context), the focus of adolescence often expands to include philosophical concerns, including increased questioning and analysing. The development of a personal code of ethics also starts in this life phase. These developments are accompanied by an increased cognisance and formation of opinions regarding issues such as justice and history. Adolescents develop future-focussed thought patterns and can be concerned with their emerging role in adult society, although they may hold an idealistic view of adulthood. Their investigation of possibilities and formulation of goals for the future inform their identity development. When this search for identity is interrupted by, for example, not knowing "why their parents could not love them enough to care for them," it can lead to confusion about who they are, and what their role in the world is. This can cause emotional turmoil, which may result in self-destructive behaviour as an attempt to find emotional relief (Heffner, 2002:1).

Music is an important tool used by adolescents to achieve and express identity (Ruud, 1997:6; ter Bogt, Mulder, Raaijmakers, & Gabhainn, 2011:150). Through playing or listening to music adolescents are afforded emotional expression, and this is essential in developing and exploring self-knowledge (McFerran, 2010:66). Being able to explore one's identity through music can offer an empowering experience (Judith, 2001:35).

Narrative group music therapy was explored in this research. A narrative approach involves investigating and understanding one's own story within the broad structures and systems we live in (Muller, 1996:159). Exploring emotions is facilitated through this greater understanding of ecological influences (Muller, 1996:159). A narrative approach was selected as it is inclusive. The process invites fuller participation in constructing one's life narratives and affords one opportunities to experience one's voice and authorship (White, 2007:77). The narrative group music therapy process that was examined in this research was conducted at a high school in Pretoria with six adolescent girls aged between 14 and 18.

1.2 Aim

This study aimed to explore the possible affordances of narrative group music therapy for adolescents who self-harm. Through qualitative research I explored the meanings that participants found and created in a six-week music therapy process, with particular focus on identity development and the processing of emotions. I also aspired to gain insight into adolescent participants' motivations for and experiences of self-harm.

1.3 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do participants narrate motivations for and experiences of self-harm within a group music therapy process?
2. What can a narrative group music therapy process afford adolescents who self-harm?
 - 2.1 What can a narrative group music therapy process for adolescents who self-harm afford in relation to identity development?
 - 2.2 What can a narrative group music therapy process for adolescents who self-harm afford in relation to constructively processing emotions?

1.4 Overview of the dissertation

There has been ample research done on self-harm, adolescence, narrative- and music therapy. Within this dissertation multiple theoretical and research articles were explored and a broad view is given with the literature review in order for the reader to have a

thorough understanding of these phenomena. The research study is thoroughly explained and the findings are discussed in a creative manner.

What makes this document an interesting and helpful read is the combination of music- and narrative therapy, specifically focussed on adolescents experiences with self-harm. I have not been able to find a study combining all of these components. The data that was captured during our sessions are rich with heartfelt experiences as expressed by the participants themselves.

In order to emphasize and explore the findings in a supplemented manner by making the read engaging and interesting, I have used metaphoric examples of trees and stories told of trees. This research study has been a process of growth for the participants and the therapist, and growth has always directed my thoughts towards trees and their ability to grow in the most difficult circumstances.

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, a brief overview of literature relating to self-harm, music- and narrative therapy was considered. The aim of the study and research questions were discussed and an overview of the dissertation was laid out in short. The next chapter will include a thorough overview of existing literature on the main themes found throughout the research study and dissertation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Schögler and Trevarthen (2007:157) explain how,

The rhythmic impulse of living, moving and communicating is musical, as is the need to "tell a story" in "narrative time", a need that is inseparable from the human will. It is in this sense that musicality precedes and underlies language.

In this chapter I will explore research that has been conducted on adolescents, self-harming and the blending of narrative and music therapy.

2.2 Self-harm

The causes of adolescent self-harm appear to be multiple. Psychologically, adolescents may self-harm due to feelings of entrapment and the absence of a sense of belonging, as well as an interpersonal longing for attention and authentic care (O'Connor et al., 2012:330). Self-harm has been found to have a 'contagious' quality. Adolescents can be influenced by family or friends who self-harm (O'Connor, 2014:200) and they are vulnerable to influences from media, such as social networking and films (Daine et al., 2013:8). There can also be a comorbidity between self-harm and other psychiatric disorders such as depression and borderline personality disorders (Crowell, 2012:45).

In a review of empirical and theoretical literature on the function of self-harm Gratz (2003:192) found that adolescents describe feelings of numbness, emptiness, and disconnection with others during the act of self-harm. Self-harm has been found to provide a possible sense of control as well as excitement. Other experiences while self-harming that have been documented are feelings of 'realness', or of being alive and 'true', as well as lower levels of awareness and clarity (Evren & Evren, 2005:15). Possible functions of self-harm also include affect regulation (of anxiety, anger, frustration and depression), cognitive effects including distraction from problems and stopping suicidal thoughts, self punishment and disrupting dissociation (Peterson et al., 2008:20).

Walsh (2006:59) developed a comprehensive biopsychosocial model for understanding the antecedents of self-harm. The model includes five dimensions: affective, behavioural, cognitive, biological and environmental. Affective antecedents of self-harm include emotions of unexpected outbreak or those that may have been lingering for some time. These can include tension, panic, anxiety, shame, depression, frustration, anger, guilt and contempt (Walsh, 2006:72). Chapman et al. (2006:371) classified these contributing emotional experiences further as emotional dysregulation, a lower tolerance for emotional arousal and heightened emotional arousal.

Behavioural antecedents of self-harm involve observable actions by the individual that trigger the act of self-harming. These are often perceived by the person involved as shameful or worthy of punishment (Walsh, 2006:68). In a systematic review of 152 literature studies describing first-hand accounts of reasons for self-harm, Edmonson, Brenner and House (2016:112) found that 63% of quantitative studies' participants describe self-harm as punishment. Reasons provided include "to punish myself for positive feelings" (feelings of guilt for feeling positive as they believe they should feel bad). Occasionally participants mentioned that they wanted to punish someone else by engaging in self-harm. Another reason found was to invite punishment or criticism from others (Osuch et al., 2014:104). Suyemoto (1998:531) mentions that the inability of individuals to self-soothe behaviourally has also been identified as an antecedent for self-harm.

Walsh (2006:66) explains that thoughts and beliefs that trigger self-harming are considered as cognitive antecedents of self-harm. Examples include past traumatic experiences, interpretations of incidents, intermediate and core beliefs as well as thoughts that are automatically triggered by events. Deiter, Nicholls and Pearlman (2000:1173) state that past trauma that leads to self-harm often relates to neglect and abusive childhood experiences (often including sexual abuse).

Biological antecedents of self-harm include an inability to regulate emotions, difficulties controlling impulses, and addiction. Addiction to self-harm can occur because of opioid receptors releasing dopamine after the act of self-harming, creating an experience of lost sensitivity towards pain.

Environmental antecedents of self-harm involve, for example, relational conflicts or loss, interpersonal struggles or social isolation. These can evoke memories of trauma as well (Walsh, 2006:58).

While knowledge of the antecedents and functions of self-harm is helpful in work with adolescents generally, additional research in South Africa is useful to understand specific contextual facets. Hawton and Heeringen (2009:1327) and Vijayakumar (2004:158) state that reports on self-harm and the global burden thereof, are mostly based on information gained from research studies in high income countries. In a 10 year quantitative study of 2795 households (during the period of 2006 to 2011) in Johannesburg, Naicker, De Jager, Naidoo and Matthee (2016) found that household exposure to violence and economical issues such as poverty and limited health care is strongly associated with self-harm. Price (1996:445) highlights the factor of poor availability of healthcare and insufficient psychiatric services in rural areas such as settlements in the Eastern Cape.

There are multiple qualitative studies seeking to gain understanding regarding the subjective experiences of adolescents who self-harm (Klineberg Et al. 2013; McAndrew & Warne, 2014). However, qualitative studies on the affordances and effectiveness of therapeutic interventions for self-harm are limited globally and in the South African context. This information is vital for developing more effective ways to prevent self-harm and to intervene when this behaviour is taking place (Fortune, Sinclair & Hawton, 2008:96; Hilt, Kock, Lloyd- Richardson & Prinstein, 2008:457).

2.3 Relationships between self-harm and suicidal behavior

Suicidal behaviors are defined as self-harming behaviors with the intent of ending life through actions such as severe cutting, strangulation or jumping from high buildings (Andover & Gibb, 2010; Nock, 2010:101). Suicidal thoughts, or suicidal ideation, refer to planning or thinking of engaging in behaviors to end life (Nock, 2010; Nock et al., 2008:133-154).

Several researchers have found that self-harming is a risk factor for suicidal behaviours (Andover & Gibb, 2010; Hamza & Willoughby, 2013:1; Tang et al., 2011; Whitlock et al., 2008), but there is insufficient research exploring what risk factors distinguish self-harming behaviour from suicidal behaviour. Shared risk factors for self harm and suicidal behaviours have been identified within various studies. These risk factors include

conditions such as borderline personality disorder and depression (Favazza, 1998:259-268; Gould, Greenberg, Velting, & Shaffer, 2003:386-405), sexual or physical abuse (Muehlenkamp, Kerr, Bradley & Adams, 2010:258), difficult family situations (Connor & Rueter, 2006:143), and impulsivity (Lynam, Miller, Miller, Bornovalova, & Lejuez, 2011:151). Muehlenkamp & Gutierrez (2007:69) state, however, that it is difficult to know which high risk individuals are most likely to engage in suicidal behavior. It is also uncertain under what circumstances self-harm might increase the risk for suicidal behaviours. Suyemoto (1998:531), through her anti-suicide model, argues that self harm could be considered as a protective compromise to avoid taking one's own life as it may offer some relief.

2.4 Adolescents and identity development

Louw and Louw (2007:326), writing in a Western context, emphasise the importance of identity development in adolescence. This is a stage where the development of critical thinking through cognitive processes, and the focus on self and self-awareness, is key. They describe the notion of an 'imaginative audience'. This entails the adolescent's own idea of what people might think of him or her, regardless of whether people do hold this notion.

Feinstein (2013:168) explains that the technology of neuro-imaging enables researchers to study the process of self-awareness in the brain during adolescents. The adolescent brain relies more on the amygdala (responsible for, amongst other tasks, memory and emotions) than on the rational frontal lobes. This reliance seems to play a role in evoking emotional outbursts, while adolescents possibly also experience emotions before they can verbally express them (Kircher et al., 2001:1). Feinstein (2013:169) also explains that great fluctuations take place in the levels of neurotransmitters in the adolescent brain. These transmitters are the chemical messengers between the neurons that either excite or inhibit behaviors.

Piaget argued that, during adolescence, differentiation between abstract perspectives of self and others become difficult for individuals (in Berk, 2005). As a result thereof, adolescents often feel that others constantly observe them and that others think about them often. These thoughts may affect self-esteem, either lowering it or resulting in feelings of self-importance (Steinberg, 2008:78).

Another important aspect of identity development involves adolescents' relationships with family and peers. Results of systematic literature reviews found positive association between attachment to peers and adolescent identity development (Doumen et al., 2012:1417; Meeus et al., 2002:91; Nawaz, 2011:104). The ability to attach to peers leads to better quality relationships with peers and a decrease in feelings such as loneliness (Doumen et al., 2012:1419). Adolescents who are insufficiently supported when facing difficulties and are required to cope alone often experience damaged trust and a lack of a sense of belonging, which then leads to further problematic interpersonal relating (McCarthy & Taylor, 1999:476).

Results from a literature review exploring subjective wellbeing in adolescents showed that social factors (including their relationships with school classmates, friends, teachers, and family members) contribute significantly to their identity development (Cunsolo, 2017:81). During a narrative study of the writings of adolescents, Flum and Lai-Yudelevich (2002:527) explored how the qualities of connection to others relate to identity formation during adolescence. They found that mutual connections are very important to adolescence. This includes self-disclosure and 'sharing with another person' (shared affect and resonance). These relationships are often the platforms where different identities and roles are tested by adolescents (Flum and Lavi Ydelevich (2002:527). Social identity refers to the part of the self-concept that is adopted from one's group memberships. Adolescents typically define their social identities by how different or similar they are to others. This includes finding meaning in school groups, gender, sports, religion, ethnicity etc. (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006:571).

Several studies have found a direct relation to identity development and a broader perception of his/one's place in the world (Brooks, 2006:372; Butler, 2008:76; Daisey & Kampfner, 2002:578; Denner, Werner, Bean & Campe, 2005:90; Guzzetti & Gamboa, 2004:408). Pasupathi and Hoyt (2009:558) state that identity develops through integrating experiences of past, present and future. McAdams (1993:45) writes from the view point that adolescents start to understand themselves and the significant events in their lives through developing their life story. This story is reshaped as events from the past and present are discussed with others. Through these explorations the events gain meaning and can be integrated into their life story.

Berntsen and Rubin (2006) developed a scale called the Centrality of Event Scale (CES). This scale measures the degree to which a life event or traumatic memory has become central to a person's identity, influencing their life story. The authors found that the CES measurement positively correlates with the intensity of post traumatic stress symptoms. They are of the opinion that enhanced integration of the life event or traumatic memory into the life story appears to be a key concern regarding the extent to which an individual allows an event to become central to their identity as well as the possibility for the development of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome.

Dallos (2006) suggests that identity formation for adolescents who self-harm is difficult as they can experience a feeling of being misunderstood and categorised as 'crazy'. Often these adolescents develop a 'counterfeit' identity as a way to resist others' attempts to categorise them, such as pretending to be excited while they are actually very sad.

Stigmatisation also plays a role in adolescents' perceptions of themselves. Literature differentiates between two types of stigma within mental illnesses among adolescents: public stigma relating to the individual's perception of how others react to their mental health difficulties; and self-stigma often marked by internalised feelings such as shame, low-self esteem and embarrassment. The two types of stigma are related to one another as self-stigma can be instilled by public-stigma (Corrigan 2004:614). During a qualitative study conducted on stigma among adolescents with mental health difficulties Kranke, Floersch, Townsend and Munson (2010:503) found that most of their participants experienced aspects of one of the themes of secrecy, shame, and isolating social interaction. Moses (2010:570) explains that stigmatisation is often perceived by adolescents from their friends and peers. Avoidance of the harmful effects of stigma can be achieved by supportive family and peer groups who either have a similar problem or who show empathy and support (Kranke et al. 2010:504).

2.5 The value of social support in adolescence

Malecki and Demaray (2000:1) define social support as:

An individual's perceptions of general support or specific supportive behaviors (available or enacted upon) from people in their social network, which enhances their functioning and/or may buffer them from adverse outcomes.

Lin, Dean and Esel (1986) define social support as meaningful assistance, whether it is real or perceived, given by social networks, intimate relationships and by the community. In adolescents, emotional support from friends and family is the most beneficial (Griffiths, Crisp, Barney, & Reid, 2011:96). Brown (2011:192) explains that adolescents become highly concerned about being socially accepted in peer groups, and that they spend an increased amount of time with their peers. Harter (2012:85) explains that adolescent peers start having a core influence on each other's development as their attention shifts from parents. Aisenson, Aisenson, Battle, Legaspi, Polastri, and Valenzuela (2007:71) found that adolescents often feel more comfortable to talk about their problems with peers than with parents.

Camara, Bacigalupe and Padilla (2017) undertook a study on social support in adolescence in Spain. Nine focus groups were facilitated with 80 adolescents (43 boys and 37 girls). Through this study they found that, for the adolescents, interpersonal relationships can be experienced as a source of distress, for example when there is conflict with peers or parents. At the same time, however, they also find interpersonal relationships to be supportive. The adolescents seemed to place most value on emotional support, understood as empathic support and presence.

2.6 Adolescence and Music Therapy

North and Hargreaves (2001:565) write that adolescents are highly intentional about their music choices and carefully consider what this communicates to their peer group. Music displays a part of their identity and helps them to fit into certain peer groups, as well as indicating what groups they do not want to be part of. Ruud (1997:6) confirms this by stating that music is a way of achieving and expressing identity. As a result, music therapy is useful in work with adolescents as it encourages self-identification and validation through gaining knowledge and insight into emotions, experiences and abilities, as well as exploring identity and needs (McFerran, 2010; Ridder, 2011b; Tomaino, 2000).

Today, many adolescents are experts in social media and technology and many spend large amounts of money and time on downloading and listening to music (Roberts, Henriksen, & Foehr, 2009:314). Experts in the music industry create applications that seek to increase young people's ability to access music (Brown & Bobkowsky, 2011:95).

Adolescents' love for music, and the impact they experience from music, might help with their openness towards joining a music therapy group or individual process.

Through studying the psychology of music authors such as Juslin and Västfjäll (2008:559) have advanced knowledge about the ability of music to induce emotions as well as the mechanisms of these processes, including brain stem reflexes, visual imagery, intermittent memory etc. Furthermore, research has shown that music can serve as an emotion regulator (Chamorro-Premuzic, Gomà-i-Freixanet, Furnham, & Muro, 2009:155). For adolescents, emotional regulation is important for adapting to developmental difficulties and assists with resilience in the face of traumatic life events (Compas, 2009:87). North et al. (2000:255) and Saarikallio et al. (2007:89) state that music can fulfil adolescents' emotional needs and can influence their ability to regulate their emotions.

The American Music Therapy Association (2007) identified categories of modalities used in music therapy work with adolescents. These include the making of music (shared musical experiences); music and movement; music with other forms of art; music for expression and insight; and relaxation. Dalton and Krout (2006) note song writing as another beneficial intervention for adolescents as it involves the facilitation of emotional expression, group cohesion and could be a stepping stone to increasing self-esteem.

Music therapy is particularly suited to offering a sense of group belonging. The music therapist uses various methods such as structured improvisation to afford clients a feeling of togetherness while also "having their voice heard at the same time as others" (McFerran & Teggelove, 2011:5). During music sessions group members can be heard and listened to as part of a group where all members are equally validated. This can contribute towards creating positive social identities (McFerran, 2010:66). McFerran (2010:66) states that when adolescents play or listen to music they also experience emotional expression, and this experience is essential in fostering self-knowledge and identifying emotions. Being part of a music therapy group can afford an individual opportunities to explore his or her identity and find healthy ways to deal with emotions, thereby offering an empowering experience (Judith, 2001:35). While the past cannot be changed its hold can be modified and a reconfigured sense of identity can be developed, through being reached and understood within a music therapy relationship (Robarts, 2006:269).

2.7 Narrative-focused Music Therapy

Muller (1996:21) explains how every new sensation, stimulation or inter-personal transaction, whether occurring intentionally or unintentionally, is moulded into story forms by our thinking processes, and often remembered that way as well. Narrative has gained continuously more interest in the last few decades, and has been synthesised in various disciplinary fields (Hyvärinen, 2010:69). Through the different interactions between self and society, meaning is constructed and reconstructed. McCormack (2012:282) states that this is an internal process that is made visible through stories. Hammack (2011:17) relates to this approach especially when working with risk behaviour and vulnerability in youth, as he finds that a narrative approach provides a more complex framework and bridge between multiple social sciences in understanding the broader contexts involved in every story. Music and narrative share similar objectives, such as expressing thoughts, emotions and meanings (Eyer, 2007:1). Narratives and music can both be used with the intention to form relationships and to communicate emotions through creative means. Using narrative can also serve the purpose of better understanding oneself and one's experience of the world. Music and narrative can share the core purposes of communicating, being heard, as well as hearing others, and ultimately affording effective self-expression that is felt to be validated (Eyre, 2007:2). Musical interventions can be used within processes of discovering, illuminating and expressing stories. Narrative therapy often has social constructionist leanings and so tends towards acknowledging how narratives can construct identity. Hudson (2008:1) states that music also serves the purpose of constructing identity.

Robarts and Sloboda (1994:7-14) explain how music therapy eases self-expression. Through musical communication clients can share emotions, intentions and meanings (MacDonald, Hargreaves & Miell, 2002:10) and this can be enhanced when combined with narrative therapy techniques such as "deconstruction" that entails the breaking down of a problem the client experience, and making it easier to understand and less confusing and overwhelming (Bishop, 2011). Narrative metaphors (verbal and musical) can help individuals to understand their lives better, while music also illuminates the associated emotions that the client may seek to understand (McCormack, 2012:282). Within Music therapy Wigram and De Backer (1999) explain that an awakening of the feelings that are difficult to access could be attained through playing music when the music therapist, through the listening approach is able to create a potential space that is safe enough. For

the client, the musical interaction can create an experience of being listened to - however he or she chooses to express himself or herself in the moment - and for this to be contained.

In music therapy and narrative therapy Eyre (2007:24) found that the dual relationship between narrative and music provides a focus and context for feelings and emotions, and that this is then expressed through music, often with emotions surfacing strongly through the use of improvisation (Eyre, 2007:25). Bruscia (1998:12) believes that with creating musical, visual, and verbal narratives participants grow in intrapersonal communication as well as developing confidence within interpersonal communication.

Integrating narrative and music therapy, therefore, offers a well-rounded approach to therapy with various ways of expression.

Duvall (2014:2) refers to “ah-ha” moments in narrative therapy, in which a client becomes aware of something previously unknown. In music therapy similar moments occur when unconscious material is unveiled. Duvall explains that in the combination of music and narrative therapy the individual is guided by the music therapist to reflect on his or her life story, gain personal insight, and creatively construct their identity.

2.8 Conclusion

Through this chapter, I have explored what music therapy and narrative therapy have to offer, particularly in combination. The particular focus of this study lies in the area of adolescent self-harm, and key studies in these areas have been reviewed. In addition to this literature, further research is required to explore adolescents' subjective experiences of self-harm (Fortune, Sinclair & Hawton, 2008:96; Hilt, Kock, Lloyd-Richardson & Prinstein, 2008:457). As far as could be attained no study has yet been conducted to examine how group narrative music therapy can be used as an intervention for adolescents who self-harm.

The following chapter will consist of explanations of the research methodology including the research approach, design and information about the participants. Ethical considerations and the research quality is discussed and concluded.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will include the research methodology of this dissertation. I will outline the research strategy, design and approach, as well as the methods of data collection, sampling and ethical considerations. The narrative data analysis will also be discussed.

3.2 Research Approach

Qualitative research was applicable for this study because I was interested in understanding how the adolescents who participated expressed their thoughts, interpreted their experiences, and what meaning they associated with self-harm. As Merriam (2009:5) explains, qualitative research is interested in understanding the meanings people give to their experiences. Bryman (2016:401) further suggests that qualitative studies are concerned with the individual's point of view. According to Babbie and Mouton (2007:53), the focus of qualitative research is on "describing and understanding" human behaviour rather than "explanation and prognosis". Qualitative analysis makes room for uncertainty and contradictions within the gathered data, which can be reflected on as part of social reality (Denscombe, 2010:157).

Maudsley (2011:92) gives a broad summary of the key features of qualitative research. She suggests that the questions asked do not require yes or no answers, they rather seek explanations. The focus is on cases and understanding differences in meanings instead of variables and calculations. Maudsley (2011:92) explains that qualitative research is explorative, descriptive and especially applicable for uncertain concepts, sensitive issues, and for complex human interactions.

For this study I particularly made use of a narrative research approach as the music therapy process that explored used a combination of music therapy and narrative processes. Gudmundsdottir (2001:226) describes the narrative researcher as the collector of experiences and stories, and narrative research as a study of how individuals understand and convey their experience of the world. Reissmann (2008:10) explains that narrative is an important way of expressing human experience, as individuals instinctively form stories to comprehend and structure their experiences. The individual, according to Grobler and Schenk (2009:11), is the centre of their own changing world and, therefore, has unique experiences, perceptions and behaviour in reaction to events in their life. Each

individual's perception should be respected and validated as they have the most authentic understanding of their own experience.

Heikkinen (2002:13) is of the opinion that a narrative approach is more a frame of reference than a clear methodology. Narrative research can be situated within a variety of theoretical perspectives (Tamboukou, 2008:283). This proposed study will utilise a constructivist frame. Constructivism is based on the idea that reality is a product of one's own cognitive construction. A constructivist narrative inquiry allows us to apprehend how individuals form meaning from within their value systems (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:3).

An important aspect in this study was that of narrative embodiment. Narratives are experienced in many ways, for example narrative can manifest within or on the body. The focus of the narrative is then on bodily experiences (Bailey, 2001:322). Self-harm on the body, for example cutting, can also be recognised as a form of narrative embodiment (Barker & Barker, 2002:88) and stories surrounding the cutting experience can become the focal point of an investigation such as this one.

3.3 Research design

I made use of a case study research design as this research focussed on the meanings formed by a group of participants in one music therapy group regarding their life experiences. Case studies enable exploration of individuals' social worlds in context, for example the value that adolescents may attach to experiences of self-harm (Schurink & Fouche, 2011:320).

The music therapy group was held at a high school in Pretoria. The sessions were run after school to avoid encroaching on academic time, as well as to avoid stigmatisation from peers. Six sessions were facilitated of varying durations (ranging from one to two hours). Sessions were goal-directed and consisted of narrative and music therapy interventions such as drumming, songwriting and improvisation. The use of percussion instruments such as drums afforded adolescents the opportunity to express their emotions through the music making process. Improvised music allowed adolescents to non-verbally explore conscious and unconscious material, after which they could share thoughts and feelings that were evoked during the improvisation. Themed improvisations (as explained by Wigram (2004:203) were also used to facilitate narrative expression and processing. The adolescents were invited to create stories, sketches or writings to further explore the

material that emerged. Songwriting was used as another form of evoking personal narrative (Bright, 1999:481) and metaphors were explored during lyric analysis. Adolescents were invited to analyse the lyrics of a popular song and explore the meaning thereof from the point of view of their own story (individually and together as a group). In this way, music facilitated in-depth sharing and was also utilised as a platform for problem-solving and support (Mark, 1988:313).

During this study I fulfilled dual roles as both the therapist and researcher. Managing these roles well was challenging, but important. Gottlieb (1993:41) suggests that the therapist/researcher should be adaptable and flexible in order to capture the reality of the observed events while acting in the best interest of the clients/participants. Qualitative research and therapy have certain aspects in common, such as goals of social transformation and empowerment, as well as taking the best interest of participants into consideration (Wolcott, 1994:9).

Aigen (1993:20) identifies areas of harmony between qualitative research and music therapy. Both a music therapist and a researcher employ “multiple perspectives to ensure integrity”. As researcher one should consult with colleagues, peer support groups and literature while as music therapist clinical supervision is inevitable. Another important commonality is the valuing of creativity and the interactive process. Therefore, as researcher I was required to assume a flexible approach to methods, and as a music therapist I needed to allow the course of therapy to evolve as it happened.

Aigen (1993:22) suggests that the researcher can be seen as a research “instrument.” The quality and the trustworthiness of the findings of the study become the responsibility of the researcher, not the method. As therapists and researchers the use of our human abilities for intuition, plasticity, creativity as well as empathy enhance the research process. Similarly, Packer (1989:109) suggests, with regards to the qualitative researcher specifically, that “emotions must not be shrugged off as a personal and subjective attitude but acknowledged as a helpful way of understanding an interaction.”

During the music therapy sessions there was interactional flow between my posing of questions to group members to stimulate conversation, and their own free sharing. The challenge lay in balancing directive work (affording the members a challenging experience to obtain growth) while aiming to also facilitate a space for members to express

themselves freely. Joseph (2014) describes this process with a metaphor, saying that the therapist is walking alongside the client, at times a few steps back, and at times a few steps ahead. Thus, working “non-directively” does not mean there is no direction, it implies rather that the client is the main director.

Toseland and Rivas (2005:432) explain that a feeling of empowerment and potency develops as members of a therapy group realise they are capable of accomplishing goals, and a feeling of confidence evolves as members realise that problems can be coped with. My aim was to create a therapeutic space where participants and the therapist/researcher formed part of a trusting and supportive group, through utilising musical interventions in order to reach cohesiveness and empowerment, as explained by McFerran and Tegge love (2011:5), regardless of my role as researcher or therapist.

3.4 Participants

The participants all attended a double medium high school in Pretoria. I approached this school as I know the social worker who practices there. We worked together at an organisation a few years ago. I made use of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is referred to by Marlow (2005:144) as “typical case sampling”. Purposive sampling involves selecting cases that relate to the specific topic of the research (in this case self-harm within adolescence) in order gain more information about the subject matter (Patton, 2002:230).

Participants were identified and referred by the school’s social worker. Adolescents were referred in line with the following selection criteria:

- * Participants had to be adolescents who currently self-harm
- * Participants could be either male or female
- * Participants needed to be between the ages of 14 and 18 years
- * English and Afrikaans speaking learners could participate

Participants and their parents/guardians received information forms and they had the freedom to decide whether or not they wanted to participate. Parents/guardians were required to sign a consent form (see Appendix B) and participants were asked to sign an

assent form (see Appendix C). There were no consequences for any adolescent who decided not to participate or to withdraw from the process.

The music therapy group consisted of seven adolescents, although sessions differed as not all the participants were present in each one. Qualitative research typically uses a smaller sample size because this allows for more in-depth information to be collected (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam 2003:77-108).

This group consisted of girls only, as only girls were referred to the group. Morgan, Webb, and Carr, et al. (2017) conducted a population-based cohort study from 2011 to 2014 of adolescents in the United Kingdom. The study found that self-harm engagement is more prevalent in girls (37.4 per 10 000) compared to boys (12.3 per 10 000). They also found an 68% increase among self-harming girls since 2001.

3.5 Data collection

In order to address the research questions guiding this study I collected narrative data that emerged through the process of group music therapy with these participants. Participants engaged in creative processes during sessions such as song- and story-writing as well as improvisations and drumming, as previously explained. Data were collected through participant observation by making use of video recording. All the music therapy sessions were recorded on video, after which relevant excerpts were selected for transcription.

Video recording was useful because it enabled me to see naturally occurring events in detail. Video allowed timely observation and study of the dynamics of a situation, the chronological order of events, and interactions between participants. Video is durable, shareable and malleable (Lemke, 2009:39-52). Knoblauch, Schnettler and Raab, (2006:19) explain that videos “preserve the temporal and sequential structure which is so characteristic of interaction”.

Video data can, however, also be problematic in that recordings can reduce the affinity between the researcher/therapist and the participants as they are aware of being filmed (Kelly, 2006:298). Participants can be more focussed on the fact that they are being recorded than on the actual process they are involved in (Willig, 2001:20). As researcher and therapist, I used a small camera and placed it strategically in a position where it was obscured from the participants' immediate field of view. Erickson (2009:145) suggests that a camera could be invasive in that the participants are overly self aware as they can see the camera and are constantly reminded that they are being filmed. Although participants

were aware of the camera, no noticeable intrusion of the presence of the camera was observed during our sessions.

3.6 Data Preparation

After the six-week process I watched the video from all the sessions in full and noted all the main narratives that appeared to emerge repeatedly during the music therapy sessions. I then watched all the videos again, this time selecting excerpts that illustrated each of these narratives that I had identified as being articulated mostly commonly and prominently during the sessions. During this selection process I also considered what was most relevant in relation to the research questions.

After identifying all the relevant excerpts (those that captured the main narratives that emerged in the process and offered material that directly related to the research questions) I then wrote transcriptions of the verbal interactions in these excerpts and thick descriptions of the musical (and other non-verbal) data. This process of writing thick descriptions is explained by Charmaz (2000:88-89) and Stige (2002:266) in relation to the manner that narratives can emerge in musical forms (e.g. within a themed improvisation) or in art.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

Reissman (1993) describes narrative analysis as a process of investigating the stories told by participants in order to explore how they find meaning and make sense of circumstances and actions in their lives. Reismann (2002:707) also asserts that “narratives provide windows into lives that confront the restraints of circumstances”. Cresswell (2007:55) outlines a narrative analysis procedure involving two steps. Firstly, excerpts are identified that contained narratives pertaining to the research questions and focus of the study. This step was explained in the previous section. Once collected, the content of the narratives is placed in chronological order (considering personal, cultural and historical contexts). Kim (2016:203) explains that one of the earlier stages of narrative analysis includes grouping the text together into discrete narratives and putting the information in each one into chronological order. After transcribing and writing thick descriptions of all the excerpts I used different colours to distinguish between text that related to the past, present and future.

I also created tables for each narrative. The tables had separate rows for content referring to the past, present, and future.

In addition to Crewell's (2007:55) broad explanation for how to go about conducting a narrative analysis I also drew upon the specific technique articulated by Labov (2013:15). According to him it is important not only to consider the content of the language, but the linguistic techniques used by the story teller (Labov, 2013:15). A number of linguistic features emerged in the narratives (these will be discussed in detail in the following chapter). Comments on the narrative structure and the musical context within which narratives often emerged were noted. These linguistic and musical features were often intertwined. Eyere (2007) explains that using music and narrative cohesively often strengthens the therapeutic experience.

Once the tables had been constructed (with text divided into references to the past, present and future, and with notes included relating to linguistic and musical content), the next layer of analysis could take place. Labov and Waletzky (1967), suggest six components that a thoroughly developed narrative consists of: abstract (a summary of the narrative); orientation (the narrative's context); complicating action (a problem causing the particular events included in the narrative); evaluation (the speaker's evaluative comments or meaning that they ascribe to the events); result or resolution (additional conflict the results from the narrative or the manner that the story resolves); and coda (entailing a return to the present). This structure is also explained by Mishler (1995:94).

After placing the selected narratives into tables (in which I organised the identified narratives into text relating to the past, present, and future, as well as writing notes on language and musical elements), additional tables were assembled consisting of these six components. After the narratives were structured and assembled according to these components, I wrote a summary of the narratives to assist in the discussion that will follow. Not all of the narratives consisted of each of these elements and the sequence of the elements varied in every story (a feature affirmed by Labov (1982:219-247). Elements of the stories overlapped at times. A metaphor that became useful was that of a tree. Each narrative appeared to function as a "story tree" with branches that could extend and touch the branches of other "story trees". This is explored further in the following chapter.

Finally, interpretation took place. Commonalities found in and across narratives, as well as emerging themes, were explored as suggested by Maree (2011:102).

3.8 Research quality

Qualitative researchers tend to seek numerous views of situational specific realities, rather than distinct truths (Golhafshani 2009:597). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that it is important to consider truth value, applicability and consistency. When considering a qualitative research study, they explain that truth value is measured through the credibility of the study and by evaluating if the presentation of the data holds true to the views of the participants. Consistency is assessed by dependability: whether the study is logical and clearly documented. In order to assess if my research was valuable, applicable and consistent, I used a practical evaluation checklist developed by Coté and Turgeon (2005:71) to assess the quality of this qualitative study.

This checklist is in table format and guides the researcher in compiling a thorough report of the study. I made a summary of the table, as an example. While conducting this research I held these features in awareness and reviewed the study at the end to ensure that the column “fully present” applied to all the evaluation aspects.

	Fully present	Present	Not present
Problem clearly described (Intro)			
Clear questions and objectives (Intro)			
Context of study and researcher roles clear (methods)			
Methods appropriate to research question (methods)			
Data collection process clear and applicable to question			
Data analysis process clear and applicable to question			
Results presented clearly (results)			
Quotations enhance understanding of findings (results)			
Interpreted in credible and innovative ways (discussion)			
Limitations clear (discussion)			
Presents a synthesis of study and propose next steps (conclusion)			

Table 1: Summary of features to be considered in relation to research quality (Coté and Turgeon 2005:71)

3.9 Ethical considerations

Consent was given by school authorities and approval by the Gauteng Department of Education, as stated by the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No 27 of 1996) and the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No 84 of 1996), was granted as well.

Parents and participants were given information forms explaining the research process. These forms can be viewed in Appendix A and B. All those who were interested in participating were then asked to sign an informed assent form. As the adolescents were younger than 18 years old, informed consent forms were signed by their parents or legal guardians as attached as Appendix A, B and C and D. These forms included consent/assent for the sessions to be video recorded.

3.9.1 Avoidance of harm

As a researcher and therapist, I ensured that none of the participants were pressurised to share information or take part in activities they felt uncomfortable with. Even after they had given their assent to participate they were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.9.2 Confidentiality and protection of data

No identifying information was included in this study. Data will be archived at the University of Pretoria for 15 years. If any other researchers desire to use this data they must obtain consent from participants and parents/guardians (if this is still relevant given the time period) to do so.

3.9.3 Actions and competence of the researcher

A researcher is ethically obligated to ensure that she is competent and sufficiently skilled to undertake an investigation (De Vos et al., 2005:63). As a music therapy student registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa, receiving clinical supervision, and as an experienced registered Social Worker (registration number: 1037884) I was competent to conduct the music therapy sessions for this study.

3.9.4 Debriefing of respondents

A referral system was in place with the registered social worker at the school in case there were any participants in need of further therapy.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter described the research methodology, including the data collection and interpretation as well as strategies used to ensure the ethical standards, quality and validity of the study.

This qualitative study was conducted from a narrative research approach. A case study research design was used in order to focus on the meanings formed by participants regarding the complex phenomenon of self-harm. Consent was obtained from the participants themselves, as well as their legal guardians. Permission was acquired from the Gauteng Department of Education as well as the participating High School.

The following chapter will discuss the research analysis and interpretation in detail. A description of the participants and the music therapy sessions are also provided.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Atkins and Wallace (2012:245) state that a qualitative study strives to construct a reasoned interpretation of data. In this chapter the analysis of the chosen excerpts will be presented. Kim (2016:190) suggests that the analysis of narrative data and the interpretation thereof are acts of meaning finding. Narrative meaning provides a framework that helps to understand how participants make sense of past events and plan future actions. Through narrative meaning human existence becomes meaningful. Polkinghorne (1988:1) suggests that we study narratives to understand the meaningfulness of human experience, as human actions are cultured by this meaning. He cautions, however, that there are some difficulties that may be encountered when researching meaning. Firstly, meaning is not easily grasped because it is not concrete, unchanging or static. Secondly, narratives are context-sensitive and make use of interpretive reasoning, therefore, analysis of narratives is not as precise a method as, for example, a quantitative approach and there are many complexities in investigating the connections amongst modes of presentation, interpretations, images and ideas (Polkinghorne, 1988:10). Polkinghorne (1988:11) suggests, however, that these cautions should not discourage one from pursuing this method of analysis. Rather, they should act as encouragement to engage with narrative meaning in more nuanced and attuned ways.

4.2 Participants

The participants for the study were seven adolescent girls between the ages of 14 and 18 years who self-harmed. All were learners at a high school in Pretoria. The oldest member in the group was in grade 12, and the youngest was in grade nine. They voluntarily attended the sessions. The participants were referred by the school social worker and understood the research process as it was thoroughly explained to them before agreeing to join the music therapy group. They also knew that they could withdraw from the process at any time. The members did not all know each other before the process started.

For purposes of confidentiality only initials are used in this description of the group members. Where two learners have the same initials a random letter was used for one learner. H, a grade nine student clinically diagnosed with depression, was adopted when

she was younger after being removed from her sexually abusive father and negligent family. She often came to sessions in an emotive state, either feeling anger towards someone in her class, or being sad about a family issue. She did, however, share these emotions and would always select the biggest drum as she said she had a lot of frustration that needed to be played out on the biggest drum. Y was also in grade nine. She lived with her mother. They struggled financially and she received food at the school feeding project. She had been working for a hair dresser to contribute financially to the family and hoped to qualify as a hairdresser after school. She was excited about attending music therapy. Y was always the last to leave the sessions and after most sessions she asked if the session could continue. A lived with her father and grandfather in a small flat close to the school. She was often absent from school for weeks at a time and concerns regarding the guidance she was receiving from her father and grandfather were raised by the school social worker as she seemed to be allowed to decide for herself when she would attend school and when not. K lived with her mom and stepfather. She did not want to share her experiences or feelings with the other group members until later sessions. She expressed that she still hopes at times that her biological parents will remarry. At the time of our study she was dating a much older boy and concerns by the social worker were raised about the influence the boy had on her. She easily neglected her responsibilities to be with her boyfriend. She also missed some of our music therapy sessions to be with him and would lie to her mother, saying that she had indeed attended music therapy. G was the only grade 12 learner who attended the sessions. She expressed creative flair and especially enjoyed writing down her feelings in poems and song lyrics. She was generally quiet. In one of the sessions she said that she did not want to talk, but she did sing the words she wrote. M was in grade nine. She had been sexually abused by her older brother as a child. She often expressed struggling with suicidal ideation and feelings of low self-esteem. Mg only attended the first session and then had to leave the group due to compulsory extra classes for learners who are in danger of failing the year.

4.3 Music Therapy Sessions

Participants were invited to six music therapy sessions that took place once a week after school. The duration of sessions differed as some evoked more complex matters than others. Attention was placed on using age-appropriate music and narrative interventions in order for members to be engaged easily. Now and then a member was hesitant or nervous

at first, but everyone engaged in all the techniques. Sessions always started with group members being invited to share about how they experienced their week. After the greetings and sharing, we usually began drumming, except for one session when we started with receptive musical relaxation as the group members asked for it. This was followed by, for example, lyric analysis, song writing, sonic sketch (an intervention consisting of members moving around a large piece of paper and drawing or writing whatever feelings come up while listening to varying musical pieces), and so on. The sessions usually ended with drumming or instrumental improvisation. Attendance by some members was sporadic due to exams, illness and other unforeseen events. Table 2 shows which learners attended what sessions.

Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6
H K G M A Mg	H M G A Y	Y A G H	Y M K	Y H K	Mic M

Table 2: Learners attending sessions

4.4 Analysis

4.4.1 Part one: Identifying story trees within the data as a whole

There were various steps in the analysis process, as discussed in the previous chapter. Firstly, I watched the full videos from each of the six sessions (without yet selecting excerpts). As I did so I noted down the main narrative “themes” that emerged within each session, as displayed in Table 3. These themes were stories about fathers, loss, pain and depression, stories about how the world is unfair, about how no-one cares, self-hatred, stories about boyfriends and friends, about identity and judgment, courage and strength, and stories about suicidal ideation. I created a table of these broad narrative themes, indicating their occurrence in each session (after assigning a different colour for each session). In table 3 the lines represent the number of times the theme emerged in the session for example, the orange lines are the number of times the theme from the column emerged in session 1. Narrative analysis does not focus on frequency (as one would find in a technique such as content analysis, for example). My intention was not to quantify the data in any way. I did, however, want to identify the kinds of narratives that the participants

chose to speak about most prominently. This is not to say that these are the “most important” narratives in their lives. These are the narratives that they elected to share in this context. They identified these, during this particular process, as being meaningful to them, and they are explored in this study as such.

Session 1: ● Session 2: ● Session 3: ● Session 4: ● Session 5: ● Session 6: ●

Stories about fathers	Stories about losses/pain/depression	Stories about how the world is unfair	Stories about how no one cares and about self hatred	Stories about boyfriends and friends	Stories about identity and judgement	Stories about courage and strength	Stories about suicidal ideation
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---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
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Table 3: Emerging themes from the six music therapy sessions

I then grouped related narrative “themes” together, such as “stories about boyfriends and friends”, “stories about fathers”, and “stories about brothers”, which were grouped under “relationship narratives”. As discussed in section 3.7 of the previous chapter, I used the metaphor of a “story tree” as each tree has a few “branches” (or sub-narratives, such as the three mentioned in relation to the relationship narratives, or “relationships story tree”). By grouping the narratives together I identified five story trees: “who I am, becoming and strive to be” ; “relationships”; “worldview”; “self-harm”; and “music therapy”. Figure 1 shows how the narratives were grouped together within each of these five story trees.



Figure 1: Grouped narratives within the Story trees

4.4.2 Part two: Selecting video excerpts to explore each “story tree” in-depth

I then watched all of the video recordings again and chose six excerpts that illustrated these story trees and related to the research question. One excerpt was chosen from each session, relating to the relevant narrative themes that were present. The excerpts typically included a variety of different narratives within one account. This will be explained further momentarily. Pictures and written dialogues were also included as these were born from the interventions that took place during the video excerpt that was chosen.

I then transcribed the excerpts verbatim. As mentioned, the excerpts typically contained narratives that blended features of different story trees into one account. For example, in one dialogue facets of relationship stories could be intertwined with facets of self-harm stories. For clarity I, therefore, coloured the text according to which story tree each section related to. Every story tree was a different colour (as seen in figure 1): ‘Who I am, who I am becoming and who I strive to be’ was green, ‘relationship stories’ were written in blue, ‘worldview stories’ were red, ‘self-harm’ were orange and music therapy stories were purple. In addition I considered how the narratives referred to the present, past or future. I did this by using bold for text related to the past, italics for text related to the present and underlined text for content related to the future. As such I could then organise the sections of text into the relevant story tree and could also organise the material in the correct chronological order for the group narrative to emerge.

The following example shows text from a section of the transcribed excerpt from session two. Sections related to the relationship story tree are coloured in blue and sections related to the “who I am, who I am becoming and who I am striving to be” are coloured in green. As mentioned, text in italics refers to the present and text in bold refers to the past. (The full coloured transcriptions texts can be viewed in appendix E.

Y: Shame I'll do afrikaans almal is afrikaans. M, *Well, the song relates to two stories of mine. Where it says you “shoot me down, by I get up”, is when people always like judge you and there where it says but I won't fall, it's not always true, cause sometimes it kinda does get you to fall. And you kinda want to get up and eventually you do. And the other story comes in and it says you “cut me down but its you who have further to fall”, and that's*

kinda for my father. He always cuts me down and he is the one who is falling. He has done a lot in my life that none of us like, and he kind of got, not to say payback, but he kind of, life got back at him. And he kind of learned his lesson of everything that he has done to our family. And then it says here”nothing to lose”, because I have nothing to lose and he lost everything. (cries)

MT: Thank you Mick. thank you so much for sharing that! (she nods her head) Do you still feel like, mm, can you describe when you say that you have got nothing to lose, what is the reason that makes you say that, what do you feel?

Y: **Because he took everything that we had, our money, house my mom’s job everything. And at the end of the day he lost all of this, he lost our furniture and he sold everything for drugs. And we still don’t have enough to do everything, like I always get lunch at the school, and I’m saying I have nothing to lose, because I still have my family and he lost everything so he doesn’t have it, so.**

MT: I’m just writing down themes from what stands out from the song, okay? is it okay? (She nods.) Sho Mick, I can’t even imagine how hard it must be. Thank you for sharing that! Okay is there anyone else who would like to share with us?

H: **mm Mine is actually very the same as her’s because my father was a drug dealer, and, but he, he also hit us, and he also lost all our money so I know how you feel. And mine starts with “you shout it out” because he always shouts at us, :but i cant hear a word you say” because I always don’t listen. mmm “im talking loud” ...I tried to speak out but nobody could hear what I was saying so it was too late, “Im criticised but all your bullets ricoche”, Everybody criticise me fast, they judge you before they even know who you are, mmm “you shoot me down, by I get up” is when they think they got you down but you are strong enough to get up by yourself. “You cut me down, but it’s you who have further to fall”. he thinks he owns everthing, that he is the one that has most value to me, mm he raises his, mm, “raise your voice, sticks and stones may break my bones” mm he raises his voice when he gets angry and he hits us, so**

I then extracted the text from each transcription that related to the five different story trees and placed these in separate tables. Each table was further divided into rows for text that related to the “past”, “present” and “future”.

Bamberg (1987:12) explains that we use linguistic devices to build characters and situate them in relation to others. The narrator uses shifts in language to build themes and ultimately narratives. Labov (2013:15) explains that the linguistic shifts between clauses, and the related fluctuations between telling, orienting, acclimatising and evaluation,

differentiate narratives from other approaches that simply report past occurrences. As such, narrative analysis is not only interested in the content of narratives, but in the linguistic devices used to create them. Once I had organised the data into narratives belonging in each story tree, and had grouped the text in relation to reference to the past present and future, I also examined the text further to ascertain how language was being used. Labov (1997:395) suggests that devices that one could look for include temporal organisations, definitions and implications etc.. I identified seven prominent linguistic devices in the text:

- * Temporal Organisation (TO): Order is important for meaning, eg. before/after/then/when
- * Implication (I): Why a statement is made eg. because
- * Expectation or Comparison (EC): (E) A belief that something will happen / (C) Considering similarities of reality and expectations
- * Free Clauses (FC): Holds across entire narrative
- * Pivot (P): Position from where change of course takes place eg. but
- * Symbolism or Projection (SP): (S) Use of symbols or metaphors to represent ideas (P) Transferring one's emotions/desires to another person or object
- * Questioning and Hesitance (HQ): Expressions of uncertainty or doubt
- * Ambivalence (A): State of contradictory feelings or thoughts
- * State of Being (SB): Expression of present emotions (In the moment)

The use of <...> shows where linguistic devices are identified and the use of [...] refers to accurate language within the meaning of what the participant is saying.

The musical context of each excerpt was also essential to consider as the musical techniques and experiences were central in evoking and creating the narratives. As Eyere (2007:3) explains, "music expands the primary semantic function of words beyond the realm of their connotative and denotative meanings to intensify their message by stimulating the emotions and the subjective associations of the listener."

Within the tables that had been created for the five separate stories (with rows for "past", "present" and "future") I, therefore, added two additional columns. One contained notes on the linguistic devices as listed above and one contained notes on the music. Table 4 includes a section for self-harm narratives to illustrate this process.

PAST	<p>through everything. ya, wa, ya okay. <Then> [I'll choose the lyrics] "cut me down" I hate myself, even have like suicidal thoughts and stuff like that. I've been like that <before> but at <moments> it's worse. <Then> [I'll choose] "raise your voice" and "sticks and stones may break my bones" it just feels like. <because> my brother would usually raise his voice at me and shout at me. Like he usually, he is better <now>, <but> then he wasn't a nice person, he would hit me and stuff like that. so that's it basically. <Then> "you shoot me down but I won't fall", is just like hmm, <even though no matter how hard it is>, <I can go on in life>. I never talked about it before, hurt[ing] myself. <I used to> struggle a lot, but I got over that and started working through it and going on with life. So I'm trying <now>. (M)</p>	<p>TO TO TO I TO Pivot TO FC pivot TO TO</p>
PRESENT	<p>The scars on my arms will <never> be as deep as the scars on my heart. One cut here, one cut there it's okay, <on one scars> (H)</p> <p>I drew with silver and it turns red magic night (H)</p>	<p>F/C F/C SP</p>

Table 4: Example analysis of linguistic devices

Some overlapping branches are displayed in their original story tree colour. For example, in the self-harm table (originally orange) there are narratives that overlap with relationship stories (in blue). Therefore, even though the narrative still remains in the self-harm table, the blue colour indicates that it overlaps with the relationship table. The full tables for each of the story trees can be viewed as Appendix F.

4.4.3 Analysing the six components of each story tree

The next step in the analysis process involved creating/identifying the six components of narrative analysis as identified by Labov and Waletzky (1967), in Mishler, (1995:94). As mentioned, these components are: abstract; orientation; complication; evaluation; resolution/result; and the coda. I reviewed the data in each story tree and compiled a table for each one according to these six components. A column was included on the right of these tables entitled "branches" where I made notes of when emerging narratives was also relevant to other story trees.

Afterwards I wrote a summary of the table. The linguistic analysis guided the writing of the summary as it helped me to identify temporal organisation, distinguish between emotional states, symbolic or projective speech, and so on.

In this section the tables present the narrative analysis for each of the five story trees. The first relates to "who I am, becoming and striving to be", the second to "relationships", the third to "worldview", the fourth to "self-harm" and the fifth to "music therapy". The content of

the tables was written largely as an integration of the narratives from all the participants. At relevant places the initials of the participant are added next to a specific statement that refers specifically to her.

Six components of narrative; Analysis

Who I am, becoming and strive to be		
	Facets of the narrative	Related “branches”
Abstract	<p>Unfair traumatic events happened to the girl, and she now feels judged by others for having experienced these. This fuels a sense of injustice. As a result there is the surfacing of battles: physical and mental battles. She is confused because these battles cause and are caused by contrasting thoughts in her mind.</p> <p>However, she believes that this is a temporary state, and she retains hope of victory. Her hope is that she will become her true self in all its wonder again.</p>	
Orientation	<p>She used to be a girl in fear and in need of someone to bring light to her life, such as through adoption into a new family.</p> <p>She was let down (abused) and had to fight, with the battle manifesting outwardly (through physical cutting of her own body) and inwardly (in her mind). Now she experiences a sense of relief as she has found love in the context of her adoption, help received through social services and school support. Having a loving boyfriend also gives her joy.</p>	

<p>Complication</p>	<p>Physically her body was abused and “taken away”. This results in her now feeling as though her body does not belong to her anymore. She is realising that she has to stop internalising and embodying the problem. Speaking out about her difficulties helps her, but stating them aloud is not easy.</p> <p>The mental battle of ambivalence is expressed in statements such as:</p> <p>...Lost inside; worth it; strong; let down; observant; blue; paralysed inside (MIC)</p> <p>...Ugly; fake and honourable; strong enough; hold on (G)</p> <p>...Giving up right now; not giving up right now; good enough (A)</p> <p>...Reborn; depressed; overcome my fears; tired; gentle (H)</p> <p>...Confused; curious; in love; she is hesitant, does she need people or can she fix this herself? (K)</p> <p>The complications become her internal battles of identity and emotion. She now struggles with poor self-esteem and feeling ugly, fake, worthless, and judged by others. There is a co-existence of sadness and strength are explored.</p> <p>Sadness is found to be a very “secretive”, “broken”, “silent”, “dark” place filled with questions: why and how could the world be this way?</p> <p>Sadness is characterised as a girl, while strength is not assigned a gender (being called “it”). Strength is narrated as a character without a particular gender.</p>	
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<p>Evaluation Evaluate comments, justification, meaning</p>	<p>Although she was brought to safety by adoption or welfare services, she often still longs for a “normal” family. She still asks questions relating to why she had to go through the difficulties that others do not have to. (H)</p>	
<p>Resolution/result Their reflection</p>	<p>As the girl discovers she has inner strength, strength becomes a protector of sadness and stands up for her. Strength teaches sadness to be courageous and strong. Strength uplifts sadness. They are growing towards a closer relationship.</p> <p>She has some form of belief in herself, and she states that this is a temporary stage.</p> <p>She is starting to feel like a conquerer, a victorious wonder woman who is also becoming a kind person because of the hurt that she has had to overcome.</p> <p>She feels strong and knows that she can fix herself because her past had made her stronger and given her courage for any difficulties that the future might hold.</p> <p>She has learned that supporting others saves her life as well. She is becoming stronger and she is learning from her mistakes.</p>	
<p>Coda My Reflection</p>	<p>The past cannot be reversed and the hurt remains a constant battle, but through all the hardship, strength and overcoming and self-worth is emerging.</p>	

Table 5: Who I am, becoming and striving to be story tree

Relationships		
	Facets of the narrative	Related branches
Abstract	Her deepest hurts seem to be rooted in broken or hurtful relationships.	Self-harm stories connect with relationship stories.
Orientation	<p>Relationships have many implications. Relationships can be with family, friends and even the relationship a member longs for through fantasy with a celebrity.</p> <p>Her expectations of what relationships should look like (such as an idealised “healthy” family, or notions of what a father and daughter relationship should entail according to her worldview) lead to disappointment as these relationships transpire differently in reality.</p> <p>Her focus shifts from the unfair traumatic events, onto questions of how relationships can be so destructive. The relationships that were in play at the time of the traumatic event seem to contribute further struggles in addition to the traumatic events that took place.</p>	<p>In ‘self-harm’ and ‘who I am, becoming and strive to be’ stories the traumatic events that took place were the main focus. In these stories of relationships, the emotional pain seems to lie deeper than the traumatic event. The relationship with the “offender” seems to create even deeper questions, depression and depressive symptoms and hurt.</p>

<p>Complication event causing problem “and then what happened”</p>	<p>She views relationships with significant people, such as her father, as broken. Such individuals are viewed as acting unfairly in their relationship with her. Her father dealt drugs and sold all their belongings while abusing substances; her mother chose the abusive father above their child. Questions of self-worth arise here, because the girl finds it difficult to love herself when she feels that significant people in her life do not care for her.</p> <p>The girl realises that the perpetrator (her father) loses most in the end (he loses his family), but this realisation does not make the things they have to deal with easier.</p> <p>She experiences emotional pain, financial pain, societal pain (being different from what she perceives a “normal” family to be).</p>	<p>The participants appeared to be willing to express their difficult and painful emotions within the music therapy group perhaps as music and creative interventions are less threatening. Therefore, the theme of ‘relationship’ has a branch of the theme of ‘music therapy.’ The pain caused by broken relationships are easier expressed and explored through music therapy.</p>
	<p>The girl expresses that she does not care at all about the person who has hurt her. This significant person could not care about her. Feelings of “not being good enough” are internalised.</p> <p>Friends often turn away. As soon as they hear these traumatic stories they seem to start ignoring the girl who has shared her story.</p> <p>In light of the expectations of what the relational motives and actions of a father, for example, should be, it seems intensely unfair that in reality his motives and actions are starkly different.</p> <p>The impact of this is a mind battle between the mantra “don’t count on anyone they will always let you down”, and deciding to allow other relationships to grow.</p> <p>The hurt of the past also has present implications such as depression and self-harm and ample emotional struggles. This brings difficulties in present relationships, such as with her adoptive parents.</p>	

Evaluation Evaluate comments, justification, meaning	Trust becomes a challenge as a result of these experiences. Extending trust within any relationship becomes difficult after one as relationally significant as a father could behave as destructively as her father did. Friends who appeared trustworthy have also rejected her after hearing her stories.	
Resolution/result Their reflection		Music therapy story: The hurt, questions and dark thoughts were possibly expressed by the participants through the music therapy interventions we used as these were designed to be non-threatening. Expression through arts and music becomes easier as it provides a way of sharing through projection and externalisation.
Coda My Reflection	Participants state that they do not care about the person who has hurt them. This is a possible defence mechanism. It is clear that they are indeed profoundly hurt and do care about this tremendously.	

Table 6: Relationship story tree

Worldview		
	Facets of the narrative	Related branches
Abstract	The worldview is found merged into different areas of being. Hurt, confusion and unfairness, but also the emerging of strength.	
Orientation	Through encouragement to explore her view of the world, the girl explains that her world is defined by pain and visually characterised by the use of dark colours. She is also in love, however, and seems consumed in the emotion of the moment.	Dark colours (pain) of her worldview are contrasted with the colours of love. Emotions in the moment seems to be overpowering. This appears to colour her experience of life in general.

Complication	The girl views the world as dim and lonely. It is marked by ambivalence and confusion. On the surface there appears to be beauty and peace, but underneath lies hatred, alienation and feelings of drowning. The world is perceived to be a place that sucks one into a hole, provokes depression, and then serves judgement for these very experiences.	
Evaluation	Three things that surface predominantly are confusion, pain, suffering and judgement and/but also a belief in hope.	
Resolution/result	In addition to characterising the world as hurtful and confusing she also articulates hope. While there are people in the world who bring suffering to others, the world is not entirely bad. The girl mentions “hope”, being “stronger” and “pushing on”.	
Coda	<p>These views of the world (entailing hurt, confusion and strength) are present in the other story trees as well.</p> <p>In music therapy the group members were offered an opportunity to construct new narratives regarding the roles that these three aspects (hurt, confusion and strength) play in their lives, as well as how they co-exist and inform each other.</p>	

Table 7: World view story tree

Self-harm		
	Facets of the narrative	Related branches
Abstract	<p>Traumatic and violent events perpetrated by people close to her negatively influenced her by provoking self-hate, isolation, and suicidal ideation. However, she expresses the capacity to process this and move forward.</p> <p>The physical marks on her body reflect emotional pain, as well as a sense of surrender. Hurting the self is an expression of not caring for the self due to the lack of care from others.</p> <p>Self-harm becomes an act of surrender and of losing control. She finds self-harm to be an advice giver. It is powerful and strong.</p>	Self-harm connects with relationship stories.
Orientation	<p>Self-harm stories happen in the context of the family, and is known to emerge from past traumatic and aggressive events that occurred repeatedly. Key characters are often found in the trauma that is linked to self-harm, such as her brother who raped her.</p> <p>Self-harm stories relate to the past (as associated with these traumatic events), but the self-harming is situated in the present.</p> <p>The girl expresses some characteristics of self-harm as follows: “[It is] Bad for you” “[It] goes and comes back here because you need me” “You can’t live without me” “[Self-harm is] manipulative”</p>	Here self-harm branch with relationship stories, family members cause destructive relationships that leads to self-harm.
Complication	<p>Traumatic events such as rape and abuse took place in her life and her response is silence, because her experience is that no one cares about her, and therefore she does not care about herself either.</p> <p>She has emotional pain and, therefore, hurts herself physically. She experiences a feeling of being in love with self-harm.</p>	

Evaluation	<p>She assigns blame to the person who caused the trauma (her brother/father/mother/friend) and for what happened to her. She begins to understand that the traumatic events (such as abuse by a parent) is not something she has brought upon herself. This then leads to her taking on agency in discovering her worth and slowly dissolving feelings of guilt.</p> <p>She gives meanings to self-harm. She experiences self-harm as magic, as well as a way of giving up and losing control. Feeling better after self-harm is short lived, but at least she gains relief for a short while.</p> <p>Then, she takes a stand against self-harm, "I will never do it again" and it is "not the air I breath."</p>	
Resolution/result	<p>She is trying now. She is starting to believe in herself, although there is still uncertainty and doubt.</p> <p>She then hesitantly states her worth and she becomes proud of herself: proud for not committing suicide and giving up completely. She realises that she is strong and that she made it through difficult times without giving up completely through suicide.</p>	
Coda My Reflection	<p>The girl struggles with dealing with traumatic events and relationships of the past. Although self-harm was perceived as a method of coping, it has now in the present become a struggle and destructive relationship.</p>	

Table 8: Self Harm story tree

Music Therapy		
	Facets of the narrative	Related branches
Abstract	<p>Exploration of self and feelings in a non-threatening environment seems to bring relief.</p>	
Orientation	<p>She is discovering her own strength, and being proud of the strength she has.</p>	

Complication	<p>She shares her feelings with people who do not understand and this leaves a feeling of being unable to share effectively.</p> <p>Having the opportunity to express herself in different creative ways allows for broader exploration of her feelings and identity.</p>	
Evaluation	<p>When sharing with others and feeling understood by people who have gone through more or less the same experience she gains feelings of being validated and understood.</p>	
Resolution/result	<p>The girl is able to let go of some of the turmoiling emotions and feelings that were lingering in her mind, as she feels she is understood and heard in the group. She then shifts her focus to sharing in this safer space, rather than attempting to explain how she feels to people who do not understand.</p>	
Coda	<p>The experience of the drumming and improvisational music making offers containment after the group members have shared raw and difficult emotions. The group's mood becomes lighter and the girl feels more balanced.</p> <p>At the beginning of sessions the music prompts engagement and connection. The music also seems to bring consolation to the group members at the end of a difficult session.</p> <p>Pre-recorded music offers a catalyst for deeper emotional experiences. Lyric analysis and processing of music used to explore the hero's journey guides the members in thinking about the strengths of their life journey and why they deserve a trophy (cup) for it.</p>	

Table 9: Music Therapy story tree

4.4.3.1 Narrative Smoothing

In order to construct the tables presented above, a helpful concept I considered was that of narrative smoothing, as explained by Kim (2015:191). Kim (2015:191) states that narrative data analysis always inquires interpretation, a difficult engagement of subjectivity within the analysis. Understanding the phenomenon that is being studied is one component of data analysis, with the other is the presentation of this understanding in a clear way for the reader. Kim (2015:192) explains that narrative smoothing is a necessary concept in narrative research as it guides the researcher in constructing the participant's stories in a coherent manner for the reader, while being interesting and engaging. Context and background must be clearly described to guide the reader. Spence (1986:212) provides guidelines to the researcher to act ethically when engaging in narrative smoothing and to aim for truthful representation of the data. He suggests that the researcher must be sensitive and nuanced, remembering that stories are not definite and referents can be debatable. As Riessman (2008:13) argues, a good narrative encourages the reader to think creatively towards an extensive explanation, exceeding the surface of the narrative data.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I explained the narrative analysis process that I engaged in with the collected data. Although different narratives are present in this analysis, the links between them, understood metaphorically here as "overlapping branches", show how self-harm is a phenomenon that requires holistic consideration. The following chapter will include a discussion of the findings of the data analysis.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

An old story narrated by Aesop and Zipes (1996:49) tells of a willow tree and an oak tree standing in one field together. The willow was always very envious of the oak tree who was strong and possessed power. One day a mighty storm visited the field and after the wind had vanished, the willow saw that the oak tree was broken and had fallen to the ground. The willow was confused about how this could possibly have happened and decided to ask the farmer about it. The farmer told the willow that, although the oak tree was strong, it was also very rigid and unbendable. The oak tree collapsed because his ability to be flexible and adaptable was lacking. This story reminds us of the value of human resilience and flexibility. During this six-week process the participants explored their emotional experiences, actions and identity. They reflected on how their situations have changed them and how they are flexibly changing themselves in relation to the challenges they have and are facing.

In this chapter each of the five “story trees” will be discussed in further detail. The first story tree that will be explored will be “Who I was, am and who I am striving to be”, followed by the story trees of “relationships”, “worldview”, “self-harm” and “music therapy”. The tree images at the start of each section are filled with prominent words that emerged in each narrative.

5.2 “Who I was, am and who I am striving to be”



The participants are the protagonists in this story of “Who I was, am and who I am striving to be”. The narrative revolves around battles (battles that are physical, psychological and emotional). The participants experienced unfair events, such as sexual abuse and negligent parenting that left them physically and emotionally scarred. They express that they are now dealing with feelings of confusion, low self-esteem and of being judged by society and the community. Identity difficulties and acceptance of the self are often exacerbated in adolescence. Briere and Scott (2012:8) found that growing into a coherent identity might be harder for the adolescent who has been deprived of supportive parenting. Tumult in their sense of identity can be especially prominent for adolescents who have experienced abuse. When a child has been neglected or abused, defenses often occur that inhibit the development of an intelligible sense of self (Briere & Rickards, 2007:497).

The exploration of identity narratives became a meaningful part of the music therapy sessions for the participants. The research question guiding this study asked what a narrative group music therapy process for adolescents who self-harm may afford in relation to identity development, and this exploration itself became an affordance. McFerran (2010) argues that music therapy is especially useful in the adolescent life phase as it motivates self-identification and validation through developing insight into emotions and needs.

In the narrative “Who I was, am and who I am striving to be”, the protagonist is presented as an individual youth, and she holds the collective voice of the participants (in line with how the narratives were presented in the previous chapter). In addition to this stylistically unified voice the initials of the participants are also included next to specific statements so

that the reader can gain both a sense of the narrative as a whole, and a sense of the stories of the individuals who took part in the music therapy group. Quotes from the transcriptions are incorporated in the text. The colours from the original analysis process have been included, as well the varying font styles with standard text for my notes, bold for narratives speaking of past experiences, italics for present, and underlined text when referring to the future.

The girl feels let down by the world. She has been failed by significant relationships and believes that she needs a saviour. She explains, "*sometimes I wish my childhood was not, my body was not taken away from me when I was so small, because I do not have that body to myself now*" (H). She feels ugly and as if her body is not her own sacred existence anymore; it has been made worthless and she struggles with feelings of being "fake" (G) and "paralysed" (Mic).

The World Health Organisation (2017) reports that children and adolescents who are sexually abused face higher risks of depression, anxiety, and externalising symptoms such as having thoughts of suicide and self-harm.

"There was a girl who was petrified, someone found her in the dark and brought her to the light" (H). When this help came it was in the form of social services and adoption. While this relieves the situation to a degree, the emotional turbulence continued and still does. Although the girl has been "saved", she explains that she still longs for a "normal" family, and struggles with difficult questions such as: "*If I see people with normal families, with a mother and a father, I think to myself what a wonderful world, and why can't I have it*" (H).

Odhayani, Watson, and Watson (2013:834) state that the emotional effects of abuse are often found in insecure relationships with caregivers and the attachment development of the child is affected. These attachment difficulties are damaging to their self-esteem and self-confidence and it is likely to create problems within relationships with others.

The girl believes that you should "*Cover up the inside so no one sees what you think of yourself*" (G). She tries to deal with the turmoil and pain, but struggles until she starts to use resources such as music therapy and the school social worker to assist her in dealing with the pain. She later, with help, realises that she

has to stop embodying and internalising the problem. She needs to articulate it to others, however, this is not easy. In her mind the battles of confusion and ambivalence include thoughts and emotions such as feeling lost inside, let down, but also strong, worthy and observant. As previously mentioned she feels ugly and fake, but she still experiences strength to hold on and have thoughts about herself that she feels are honourable as well.

At times she feels like giving up, while at others she believes she can persist and that she is good enough after all. She is tired and depressed, as well as reborn, gentle and curious. At times she thinks she has overcome her fears, but then she feels confused. She is, at times, in love with her boyfriend.

A large part of the battle seems to be the pull between a need for people and the strength to be self-sufficient: *“Strong enough to be alone, Don’t need nobody else” (G)*. These battles become complicated as her sense of identity and belonging is unclear. She struggles with poor self-esteem. Although what had traumatised her in the past was unfair and she in no way brought it upon herself, she feels judged by others for the challenges she faced.

Briere and Lanktree (2012) explain that adolescents need to explore and express their emotions in a safe and understanding space. If the adolescent is confused, offers incomplete information or expresses a need for survival defenses (such as self-harm) she should be assured that her feelings are valid. It should be communicated that her feelings and perceptions can be explored, and the emotional turmoil can be “updated” with new information and even changed in the safe and supportive therapeutic space (Briere & Lanktree, 2012:93).

The girl has been invited to write a story of two main turmoils she is struggling with. She explores the relationship between her sadness and her strength. Sadness is associated with being “secretive”, “broken”, “silent”, a “dark place” filled with questions of why and how the world could be the way it is. Sadness is narrated as a girl, (which may demonstrate the girl’s identification with this emotion). Through music therapy these difficult thoughts are explored, discovered and expressed, as the space and soil on which she examines these thoughts is accepting, supportive and nourishing. Strength is narrated as a character without a

particular gender. As the girl discovers that she has inner strength, strength becomes a protector of sadness and stands up for her. Strength teaches sadness to be courageous and strong. Strength and sadness develop a close relationship with each other and are able to help each other.

Polan and Taylor (2017:155) describe that adolescents often have conflicting needs and opposing feelings about one situation or person. For example, they may love and hate their family, or want both independence and supervision. Polan and Taylor refer to this phenomenon as ambivalence and highlight the prevalence of this in the adolescent life phase. Dealing with ambivalence can be challenging within a healthy developmental situation. Maughan and Cicchetti (2002:1525) state that when individuals have experienced maltreatment, the capacity to organise, regulate and integrate difficult and conflicting emotions can be severely damaged, resulting in even greater difficulties in this regard.

Strength and sadness co-exist and rely on one another within this story. Through developing this narrative the girl is able to reflect on how this acknowledgment has been becoming more relevant in her own life and has been a part of her constructive progress. For example, as (H) writes: “strength is not always strong, strength counts on sadness too, they make the world a better place for each other.” As strength and sadness are explored as being helpful to each other, relationships can start to be seen in this more complex light as well.

The adolescent girl slowly begins to believe in herself, and she realises that the current difficult steps required to deal with hurt are a temporary stage. She starts to feel like a conquerer, a victorious “wonder woman” (H) who also becomes kind because of the hurt that she has had to overcome. She feels strong and knows that she has the inner strength to empower herself, to “fix herself”, because her past has made her stronger and courageous for any difficulties that the future might hold.

Although research by Everall, Altrous and Paulson (2006) found lower levels of resilience in individuals who self harm, Luthar and Cicchetti (2002:858) are of the opinion that adolescents do have the ability to develop resilience (positive adjustment) despite experiences of significant trauma or suffering. Southwick,

Vythilingham and Charney (2005:255) explain that social support enhances adolescents' resilience in the face of stress and their functional capacities after experiences of trauma.

She has learned that the support she has received from others is highly valuable and she is now more receptive to receiving support. She experiences also, that by supporting others this literally and emotionally saves her life as well: "And every time that I wanted to do something stupid, well I could have not been here anymore, something came up where someone else was going through something worse than me, and I supported them, thats sort of the one thing that has kept and keeps me here" (M) [as translated from Afrikaans].

The girl has now become stronger. She experiences being silent about the injustice as a "mistake". She realises that being silent and silenced about injustice, hating herself for what others did to her, feeling as if she is not good enough, and hurting and isolating herself is not in her best interest.

D'Onofrio (2007:54) writes that when a child is exposed to complex trauma within the family, the foundation of their emerging self and identity becomes attacked. When a child attempts to elicit care from caregivers, and the caregivers fail to respond appropriately, the child often becomes silent and the internalisation of her experiences and her processing of reality become stunted.

Although the battles still continue in her mind, there have been victories as she feels that her strengths sometimes conquer the negative thoughts and experiences of self. At other times the sadness of her memories still become too overwhelming. However, during this six-week process, she has discovered that she has resources within the turmoil, that she has conquered a lot already and that she has hope for herself, as she is starting to believe that she is worthy. Within narrative music therapy she has been afforded an opportunity to explore the turmoil in creative ways, and to discover the strengths within her through her expressions in the group.

5.3 “My Relationships”



In their book *The secret life of trees*, Wohlleben, Flannery, Simard, and Billingham (2016:4) describe how trees are social, how they share resources and even at times nourish their enemies. They write that the reasons for these characteristics are the same as those that relate to humans: there are benefits in working together. When a group of trees are together they form an eco-system (a community), which allows them to tolerate extreme weather occurrences and store larger amounts of water together. Wohlleben et al. explain that every tree is important in the relationship and the community has to be balanced. The weak trees need the strong ones and, at times, the strong ones need the weak ones as the system that allows each to grow in a healthy manner suffers when one tree is not taken care of (Wohlleben et al., 2016:4). The importance of support and relationships, and the significant effects that destructive relationships have, surfaced throughout the music therapeutic process of this current study. This is relevant to consider in light of Bronfenbrenner’s (1986:723) ecological model that emphasises the influence of diverse levels of environment, relationships and situations on adolescents’ development.

Relationships that were highlighted in the participants’ narratives included those with family, friends and even the fantasy relationship a group member (A) longed for with a celebrity (reflected in the value she found in a famous singer’s lyrics). Expectations of what relationships should look like (such as an idealised “healthy” family, or notions of what a father and daughter relationship should look like according to their worldview) led to disappointment when these relationships transpired differently in reality.

The deepest hurts and desperate doubts in the girl's mind seem to be rooted in broken or hurtful relationships. The core of her trauma lies in relationships, especially in parental abuse (Mic, H, M). The focus here shifts from the traumatic event itself to question of how this could have taken place within the context of a close relationship. The girl asks: "I was raped by own older brother and, mm..., I guess I felt criticised because like he is someone that's supposed to love you, supposed to be your best friend, through everything" (M).

She sees relationships as being highly destructive. In light of her expectations of what the relational motives and actions of a father should be (namely, being protecting and loving), it seems intensely unfair that his motives and actions were starkly different in reality. Rather than being loving and reliable, he was the perpetrator of trauma. These expectations evoke additional psychological and emotional turmoil (as another layer upon the traumatic event).

Briere and Langkree (2013:4) explain that, where maltreatment happened in a context that was supposed to be nurturing, these relational problems and the longing for the relationships to be loving, become triggers that create ample interpersonal issues in adolescents. Allen (2001:109) states that one of the first impacts of child maltreatment is on the internal presentation of the self and others. For example, the child might perceive him or herself as deserving of punishment and as inherently unacceptable. These perceived feelings also lead to feelings of helplessness and weakness. Another implication is then that the child may view others as rejecting and unavailable.

Relationships with significant people, such as her father, were broken, and he is viewed as acting unfairly in his relationship with her. Instead of being loving, a father was a person who dealt drugs and sold all their belongings while abusing substances; a mother chose the abusive father above her child. The girl's lyric analysis of the song "Titanium" starts with "you shout it out" as she explains, "because he always shouts at us...we were the ones who were running away. Trying to get away from him. We had no where to go. My mother had a choice between me and my father, she always chose my father" (H).

Questions of self-worth arise here, because the girl finds it difficult to love herself when she feels that her parents do not care for her. As expressed by (Mg):“People don’t care about those with problems. [I am] not good enough for my loved ones and those who know me.”

The girl experiences another great relational disappointment, this time not from family, but from friends. Friends often turn away, as soon as they hear the girl’s traumatic stories. They seem to start ignoring her after she has shared her story. The girl often experiences a lack of understanding of her situation from her peers and friends. Friends have hurt her greatly: “I’ve had a circle of good friends and then I told them about it, we were in class together, and I told them my story, and they started basically [to] ignore me. It was really horrible...” (M).

Trust becomes a challenge as a result of these experiences. Extending trust within any relationship now becomes difficult after a person as relationally significant as a father could behave as destructively as her father had, and after friends who appeared trustworthy were rejecting after hearing her stories. The impact of this leads to an internal battle between the belief that one should not trust anyone, (“Don’t count on anyone they always let you down” (H). Still, though, the girl wants the growth of relationships in her life.

As she explores further she realises that the culprits (fathers/mothers/friends) lose most in the end, but this does not make the processing of difficult events any easier. Emotional pain, financial pain, pain in relation to social expectations (e.g. being part of a family who are different from “normal” families) remain as enduring struggles. The hurt of the past has implications in the present, such as depressive symptoms and self-harm, in addition to ample emotional struggles. This negatively impacts current relationships (such as those with her adoptive parents (H). When relationships are destructive this impacts her preception of the world: it is “lonely”, “unfair”, it “gives depression” and is “judgmental.”

The girl expresses that she no longer cares about the person who has hurt her, as she explains that this individual does not care about her. This leads to her experiencing feelings of not being “good enough”.

“So I’ve given up on trying

And you're the only one to blame
You shut me out but
I don't care about you now" (Y).

Although the girl says that she does not care about herself or the people who have hurt her, this may be a defence mechanism, as she also shows that she does indeed care deeply.

Defense mechanisms are found to be beneficial in helping individuals tolerate or adapt to difficult emotions and situations. They do, however, become counter-productive when the individual's awareness becomes clouded and cut off from reality, or when this psychological process diminishes relational functioning (Phaneuf, 2005:4). The difficult emotional material (hurt, questions, and "dark thoughts") of these girls may have been easier to share through the music therapy interventions we used, as these were non-threatening. Though projection within music and the other arts, expression of difficult thoughts and feelings could be facilitated (a process explained by Ruud (1997)).

5.4 “My View of the World”



In Merwin’s (2014) essay, *Unchopping a tree* he muses upon how easily a tree can be chopped down, yet how difficult it is to repair. His suggestion is to “Start with the leaves, the small twigs, and the nests that have been shaken, ripped, or broken off by the fall; these must be gathered and attached once again to their respective places” (Merwin, 2014:2). The author aims to create awareness about how, as the human race destroys much of the natural ecology by cutting trees down, any attempts at restoration will not return an environment to its original condition. This metaphoric image of how difficult the process of repair is, and how the outcome will always be different from the original relates to the participants’ worldview story tree in a number of ways and this section explores some of these.

The girl has been “let down” and “hurt” by people in the world. Her view of the world is characterised by pain and visually expressed through dark colours. She views the world as dim and lonely. It is marked by ambivalence and confusion. On the surface there appears to be beauty and peace, but underneath lies hatred, alienation and feelings of drowning.

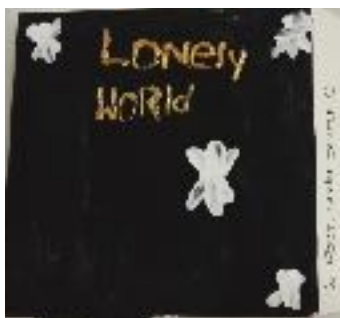


Figure 1: “Worldview” drawing by Meg (left) and “worldview” drawing by A (right)

The girl perceives the world to be a place that sucks one into a hole, provokes depression, and then serves judgement for these very experiences. The girl explains her view of the world with phrases such as *“unfair to youngster”* (M), *“I am a failure [in the eyes of the world]”* (Mic), and the world *“gave me depression and took away my mom”* (A).

There is the presence of romantic love in her world (K). She is in love at the time and seems consumed in the emotion of the moment. This appears to colour her experience of life in general, however, in later sessions she expresses feelings of confusion.

In addition to characterising the world as hurtful and confusing the participants also articulated hope. This is metaphorically resonant with an image (drawn from Merwin’s (2014:48) descriptions) of new leaves and twigs growing from chopped, “dead” branches, and how the shape of trees change as branches are cut off and new ones grow in different directions.

“The world can be a better place, but people make it bad” she (A) says. While the girl is very disappointed about how there are people in the world who bring suffering to others, she also describes the world as not being entirely bad. She also acknowledges how she can grow through experiences the difficulties that the world imposes on her: *“There may be tears and there may be screams—a dark world full of bad dreams—but stronger and stronger it will make me”* (G).

The girl mentions *“hope”*, being *“stronger”* and *“pushing on”*. She retains a positive view of the world to a degree and realises that there are caring people.

In music therapy the girl is offered an opportunity to construct new narratives regarding the roles that these three aspects (hope, being stronger and pushing on) play in her life, as well as how they co-exist and inform each other. The hurt causes confusion and physical and mental battles, but through it all strength is present when she *“believe in hope”* (A).

5.5 Self Harm's Story



A research team at Grenoble University in France have found that when trees are suffering from drought or other difficulties, one can hear them “cry”. These cries are ultrasonic and need to be listened to with special devices. Water-stressed trees make sounds through the bubbles forming inside them as they suffer (Popkin, 2013). As mentioned in the literature review, possible functions of self-harm include affect regulation (of anxiety, anger, frustration and depression), cognitive effects including distraction from problems and stopping suicidal thoughts, self punishment and disrupting dissociation (Peterson et al., 2008:20). With regards to these functions, self-harm could metaphorically be understood as the cries or the managing of the cries born from the hurt or emotional “drought” inside participants.

As I analysed the self-harm story tree, there were particular characters who came to the fore: Self harm as a sage; Brother/father as the antagonist; and Self-harmer as both victim and agent. An overlapping of the branches between the story trees became evident in the examination of the narrative of self harm. For these participants self-harm took place within the context of family.

The stories of self-harm had connecting branches with the “relationships” story tree, as the narratives started with the actions of the antagonist, mostly a family member such as a father or brother.

The girl explains, “a few years ago I was raped by own older brother, and mm I guess I felt criticised because like he is someone that’s supposed to love you,

supposed to be your best friend, through everything” (M).The antagonists perpetrate ongoing aggression and trauma through rape and abuse. The victim responds with silence. **“I never talked about it before, hurt[ing] myself. I used to struggle a lot” (M).** The girl feels alone and that there is no one who cares, leading to destruction in the capacity and desire to care for herself.

“Let the walls fall down and just give up on myself

Let the blood flow, let the bruises hurt

If I give up, If I give up on myself, on myself.” (G)

The emotional pain becomes unbearable and, therefore, the physical pain of hurting herself becomes a refuge. At first she wants to give up, but then she gives in to the “magic” that self-harm brings. It’s a brief moment of “feeling better.” **The scars on my arms will never be as deep as the scars on my heart, One cut here, one cut there it’s okay, no one cares” (H).**

Relief of emotional pain was highlighted in the findings of a study by Holm and Seveinsson (2010:57) regarding the reasons for self-harm.

(The following excerpts are taken from a music therapy dialogue technique where the participants were invited to write a dialogue between themselves and self-harm while accompanied by a instrumental dialogues classical piece)

Self-harm has a powerful hold over the girl’s life. It is a coping mechanism, a quick relief when this is desperately needed.

Self Harm: Hi, there I see you not looking to well: Ja, I’m a little depressed.

Well you would feel better if you pick up that razor blade that’s under your pillow.

K: Yes, I know but I only feel better for like two minutes and then after that I feel hurt again.

Self Harm: Yes, but at least you gonna feel better.

Chandler (2014:114) conducted a narrative study of self-harm and also found that participants engaged in self-harm as a way of calming themselves when they were intensely emotionally upset.

In addition to easing her pain, self-harm is a sage. It is perceived as masculine, and as an advice-giving wise one. Self-harm is both a helpful and destructive friend, though. The girl realises that self-harm is powerful and manipulative. The long struggle begins: the struggle of letting self-harm go.

“You need to stop”, self-harm says. “I can’t”, the girl replies. “I am in love with the feeling of you” (M).

Self-harm is bad for her. Even when he does go away he returns often. Self-harm comes only when the victim needs him, and then he is manipulative, leaving her with hesitant self-worth. “But it is people who choose me”, self-harm argues. “No, you manipulate people” the girl defiantly responds (K).

The girl realises that she is worth more. A small glimpse of hope starts to grow within her. Hesitantly she asks questions of self-worth and they slowly turn into statements. With the help of music therapy and other support she tries, hesitantly, to start believing in herself and her worth. Then, she takes a stand against self-harm, “I will never do it again”, she says. It is “not the air I breathe” (H).

Self Harm: Just do it, nobody likes you.

H: A lot of people care, my life doesn't count on you. I won't; people love me.

Self Harm: You can't live with the feeling of not having me in your life. Do it.

H: Never again! I'm over you. I have grown stronger than before.

Self Harm: What??

H: Yes. Someone brought me to the light [and] show[ed] me better things than you.

Self Harm: I will be back. You will need me again.

H: Not ever.

She is trying now. Through her discussions with self-harm, the girl realises that it is the antagonist who deserves the blame for her pain. It is still a struggle, but she starts to believe in her value. She hesitantly states her worth. In a meaningful shift in the therapeutic process the girl realises that she is strong. She fights for life; she becomes proud of herself for coming this far even though her circumstances were very difficult. She is proud that she has not committed suicide or given up completely. She is stronger than that. “I actually feel proud...because we all wanted to commit suicide” she says. “We didn't. We all know how strong we are” (Y).

Chandler (2014:114) found a similar experience of pride through a narrative study where participants spoke of their scars being symbols of having been through extremely difficult times, and of the pride of overcoming such challenges

The victim of self-harm now becomes the agent of change. The broken relationship between the antagonist and the girl is explored and even accepted to a degree. She discovers her own strength and, while self-harm still teases her, at times it has much less power.

5.6 Music Therapy story



Douglas Malloch (1984:1) wrote a poem about how difficult situations foster strength in trees:

Good timber does not grow with ease:
The stronger wind, the stronger trees;
The further sky, the greater length;
The more the storm, the more the strength.
By sun and cold, by rain and snow,
In trees and men good timbers grow.

The music therapy journey seemed to be one of self-expression, experiencing support, discovering inner strength, and experiencing pride. As discussed in the literature review, Ruud (1997) explains that music assists in achieving and expressing identity, an important aspect within the life phase of adolescence. Music therapy is useful in work with

adolescents because it encourages self-identification and validation through gaining knowledge and insight into emotions, experiences and abilities, as well as exploring identity and needs (McFerran, 2010; Ridder, 2011b).

The girl expresses that she often feels misunderstood in her life. She seems to have a longing to share her feelings and experiences, but when she attempts to do this with her friends who have not had similar experiences, she feels that this worsens her feelings of being misunderstood and compounds her sense of not being able to express herself fully. She then chooses to ruminate rather than express her feelings and thoughts to others.

In music therapy, however, she seems to experience a sense of being understood when given the opportunity to share her feelings and experiences with people who have had similar experiences. This, as mentioned in the self-harm story, assists her to externalise and then explore her feelings rather than cyclically pondering on the matter and exacerbating her internal struggle.

“And like, you get many people...it’s nice to be here [in the music therapy group], because when you’re with people during break, there is no one that actually understand how you feel, because they have happy chappy lives and when you are here it feels as if everyone understands how you feel and they listen to you, and it feels better because when you say it to someone but they don’t understand what you say, it feels as if you didn’t, it didn’t come out right, but when we are here and everyone understands how you feel, you feel better afterwards, you let it go.”

The music therapy group offers a safe and containing space where she can freely share her thoughts and feelings, and feel eased, supported and validated. *“I think it’s the times that we actually shared with one another, when we shared our pain with each other. We all felt the same emotions what the other person have”* (M).

Participants were afforded opportunities to explore their identity in broader and richer ways by being able to express their thoughts and emotions through music, narrative, and art techniques. Harris (2009:15) emphasises the adaptability of music therapy to be suitable for the needs of the clients. Pavlicivic (2000:94) reminds us that the non-verbal characteristic of music makes it an excellent resource for enhancing contact and

facilitating self-expression through an alternate means of communication. Music is a valuable tool for opening communication with the adolescent population. Through analysis of the lyrics in the song Titanium, written by Sia, for example, participants could delve deeper into hurtful experiences and share these with the group, while also then re-conceptualising and re-constructing their stories by writing their own songs. Here they added their strengths and other positive attributes they had identified.

Interventions such as lyric analysis and song writing created opportunities for free expression that was non-judgmentally received. Music also appeared to offer containment during the sessions. Music also offered a sense of consolidation at the end of sessions when "raw" and painful emotions were expressed by the members.

Participants could play instruments with as much aggression and/or strength as they desired to express and their contribution, no matter how large or small, was valued as part of the group musicking. Music engaged all the members, and established supportive connections that fostered open sharing within the group. McFerran (2010:66) states that when adolescents play or listen to music they also experience emotional expression, and this experience is essential in developing self-knowledge and identifying emotions. Being able to explore one's identity and find healthy ways to deal with emotions through being part of a music therapy group can, therefore, offer an empowering experience.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, narratives from the collected data were discussed with the help of literature, narrative excerpts and the creative use of tree story metaphors. The narratives that were discussed include; 'who I was, am and who I am striving to be', 'my relationships', 'my view of the world', 'self-harm's story' and the 'music therapy story'. The following chapter will conclude this research dissertation and summarises the findings, recommendations and limitations of the study.

6. CONCLUSION

This chapter includes a summary of the main findings of the study presented in this dissertation. Furthermore, the recommendations and limitations of this study are considered and suggestions for further research are discussed. Some final comments are made to conclude this research undertaking.

6.1 Summary of findings

The narrative group music therapy process offered these adolescents an opportunity for self-discovery and self-exploration. Each participant's story emerged through various music therapy interventions and modes of expression, and was unique to their particular circumstances and upbringing. Participants sang songs, drew sketches, and took part in creative writing. They explored their own narratives and, over time, a picture of their lives and the accompanying emotions began to emerge. They were able to explore how influential and destructive certain relationships in their lives had been, and the impact those relationships had had on their development. They took the chance they were given to express their feelings, and candidly shared about their experiences. The unjust events in their lives became the organising structure around which they made sense of their emotions and sense of self. They confronted feelings of low self-esteem and self-condemnation, of feeling ugly and unattractive, fake, broken and worthless. The participants spoke of people in their lives either not understanding them, or choosing to abandon them because they were seen as a burden. Such experiences left them feeling ashamed, unloved and uncared for.

In every "story tree", various narrative branches emerged, often revealing ambivalent thoughts, and emotional battles. Emotional turmoil and ambivalence was often expressed as a result of destructive relationships causing negative and devastating emotions and leading to self-harm. During the therapeutic process, the participants came to the realisation: that they did not have to succumb to the voices of "I am not good enough" and discouragement and that an internal battle rages in many people (not only within them) between sadness and strength. Participants realised that sadness and strength are intertwined and inform one another.

Most participants revealed ambivalent views about self-harm that stemmed from a combination of interpretations of their own identity and how they made sense of significant relationships in their lives. The five story trees in this study, all of which have overlapping branches, illustrated that, for these participants, self-harm has many facets and multiple causes. Self-harm results from a culmination of life events that have led an adolescent to perceive of this behaviour as meaningful as well as destructive. Participants narrated motivations for, and experiences of, self-harm in honest, and sometimes explicit, ways. For

some, self-harm appeared to be powerful and manipulative, while at the same time they characterised it as masculine and spoke of falling 'in love with' self-harm. For others, self-harming was either a cry for help, or a sign of resignation and giving up on oneself, while at the same they experienced a sense of power in having the ability to choose their own fate. They could decide to take their life or not, or how intense they could hurt themselves. This, in contrast with experiencing a sense of giving up, gave them a feeling of control or power as they are experiencing a sense of losing control over many other aspects of their lives. Additionally, self-harming occurred because the participants felt that no one truly cared about them. These feelings led to a diminishing sense of self-protection and self-care. An important finding of this study is that, through the music therapy process, the participants appeared to express their feelings more freely. They were able to speak to self-harm as if it were a living being, firmly instructing it to leave them. While this study cannot comment on the impact of this process over time, the interventions did appear to afford them a more positive experience of self and exploration of the negative impact self-harm has on them.

Another significant finding, was the value of being part of a **therapeutic group process**. The participants experienced being understood and validated for what they had expressed. In this group setting, they began to notice that their stories had similar threads and this created camaraderie and a sense of not being completely alone as they realised that there were others who could relate to the turmoil they had been through. They often expressed how they appreciate being heard and understood by the group, in contrast to how they often feel judged and misunderstood by friends and family. Participants also realised that they could give support to others, which in fact contributes to their own healing journey as well. This created a sense of **empowerment** as the sessions progressed. During this process the participants discovered, some to their surprise, that they were strong, if no other reason because they were still alive, having overcome suicidal thoughts. They were able to recognise that the story of their lives had not only broken them, but that it had made them more courageous.

Although participants still have a lot of turmoil and pain, and although the road to being productive, as opposed to despair and self-harm, is still in progress, this process has afforded them an opportunity to explore their thoughts and emotions in creative ways, while being validated for their courage. Their gratitude and enthusiasm was evident to me. All their sadness and pain had been given an open, non-judgmental outlet.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering that self-harm is such a broad subject, I would recommend more in-depth research that focusses on specific aspects of the phenomenon. This could include studies exploring narratives between a person and their interpretations of the meanings of self harm, and their particular experiences while self-harming. I would also suggest a study such as the current one could be repeated with more music therapy sessions being offered to participants to build the therapeutic relationship, build trust and give more time for progress to emerge. The current study indicated, through the large amount of narratives and emotions shared in this short process, potential for deeper therapeutic intervention within a longer relationship built with the participants. As previously mentioned, emotional ambivalence regarding self-harm emerged frequently during this process, and a study exploring this specifically could be insightful. Research into how the receiving and giving of peer support within a group of adolescents who self-harm may contribute to greater levels of well-being may also be valuable.

6.3 LIMITATIONS

The findings of this small, qualitative study cannot be generalized to the larger population. This study was concerned with the in-depth meanings participants expressed as they made sense of self-harming behaviour. The broad term 'adolescents' generally include individuals of all genders of certain ages and having had only girls referred for the study implies that the findings can only be considered as applicable to adolescent girls. Another limitation is that of having too little sessions for an emotional and frangible process as with this study with adolescents who have been traumatised and hurt, a longer process might enhance the relationship of trust, and enhance encompassing participation.

6.4 CONCLUSION

During this study, selected audiovisual excerpts from narrative music therapy group sessions with adolescents who self-harm were studied and analysed by the researcher / music therapy student. The findings were explored using the metaphor of story trees. The intention was to provide an overview of the participants' narratives of self-harm and other relevant aspects of their lives. The participants' engagement with self-harm was

represented as a tree with many branches, influenced by many other branches such as their backgrounds as children and their relationships with significant figures in their lives.

I cannot think of a more apt way to end this process of exploring the inner and outer turmoil of these adolescents who self-harm, than with the words of Robert Frost in his poem *Tree at my window*. The phrase “That day she put our heads together, Fate had her imagination about her, Your head so much concerned with outer, Mine with inner, weather” especially highlights what has emerged throughout this process. He sees the tree as a comrade, a fellow sufferer. Everyone is consigned to the weather conditions, and similar to how a tree experiences outer storms, we humans do as well, however, the outer storms are found to be connected and have a significant influence on our ‘inner weather’.

Tree at my window, window tree,
My sash is lowered when night comes on;
But let there never be curtain drawn
Between you and me.

Vague dream head lifted out of the ground,
And thing next most diffuse to cloud,
Not all your light tongues talking aloud
Could be profound.

But tree, I have seen you taken and tossed,
And if you have seen me when I slept,
You have seen me when I was taken and swept
And all but lost.

That day she put our heads together,
Fate had her imagination about her,
Your head so much concerned with outer,
Mine with inner, weather.

(Robert Frost, A tree at my window)

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APPENDIX A: Parents/guardians' Information

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1908 - 2008



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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Department of Music

STUDY TITLE: The affordances of narrative group music therapy with adolescents who self-harm

Dear _____

I am researching the possible value of narrative group music therapy sessions with adolescents who self-harm. The purpose of the research is to explore whether this process is useful in relation to identity development and constructively processing difficult emotions.

Group members will all be referred by the school social worker, Suzette Kotze who is familiar with the learners. She will identify individuals who she believes are suitable candidates for this study. After explaining to them what the process entails the learners will have the opportunity to accept the invitation to take part, or to decline participation in the group.

All sessions will take place at High School Hendrik Verwoerd in the afternoons after school. Participation in the study will be entirely free of charge.

All the music therapy sessions need to be video-recorded for analysis. No-one except me and my research supervisor will see the video material. Although the results of analysis will be published as part of a dissertation, all information shared during sessions will be treated with confidentiality. The anonymity and privacy of participants will be ensured as pseudonyms will be used and no identifying information will be included.

Participants may withdraw from the study at any point without owing anyone an explanation.

Data from the study will be stored securely at the University of Pretoria and should any other researchers wish to use the data in future they would need to obtain your consent and your son/daughter's assent.

My contact details are supplied below. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions. Your decision to allow your teenager to participate will be greatly valued and appreciated.

Kind regards,

Sané Lötter

084 013 9880

Sané@echoyouth.co.za

APPENDIX B: Consent form



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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Department of Music

Date:

MUSIC THERAPY SESSIONS: PERMISSION FOR ATTENDANCE AND TO RECORD

Herewith I, (parent/guardian) _____ give permission that (child name) _____ may take part in the music therapy sessions by Sané Lötter, for the purposes of a MMus (Music Therapy) research dissertation through the University of Pretoria.

I understand that (teenager's name) _____ has the personal choice to attend music therapy sessions and may withdraw at any stage. I also grant permission for sessions to be video recorded.

With full acknowledgement of the above, I agree to participate in this study on this _____(day) of this _____(month) of _____(year).

Name of parent/guardian: _____ Signature: _____

Contact number: _____ Date: _____

Son/daughter's name: _____

Researcher name: _____ Researcher signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor name: _____ Supervisor signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C: Participant Information



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Department of Music

STUDY TITLE: The affordances of narrative group music therapy with adolescents who self-harm

Dear _____

I am doing a research study on how group music therapy sessions may be useful for teenagers who cut themselves, especially for exploring identity and dealing with tough emotions. The social worker at your school has suggested that this may be helpful for you. I would be grateful if you would think about participating in this study, but it is up to you whether you would like to take part. If you do decide to, you are also free to withdraw from the group at any time you wish to do so.

All the sessions will take place at High School Hendrik Verwoerd in the afternoons after school, so that your academic classes will not be interrupted. The group sessions are entirely free of charge.

All the music therapy sessions need to be video-recorded for analysis. No-one except me and my research supervisor will see these videos. The results that I find through the videos will be used to write a final paper, but all information shared during sessions is confidential. I won't use your name in anything I write up and no information that would identify you will be included.

My contact details are supplied below. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Your decision to participate will be greatly appreciated.

Kind regards, Sané Lötter

084 013 9880, Sané@echoyouth.co.za

APPENDIX D: Assent form



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Department of Music

Date:

MUSIC THERAPY SESSIONS: PERMISSION FOR ATTENDANCE AND TO RECORD

I, (Name) _____ agree to attend music therapy sessions by Sané Lötter for the purpose of a MMus (Music Therapy) research dissertation through the University of Pretoria from (months) _____ to _____ 2017.

I understand that I have the personal choice to attend music therapy sessions and that I am allowed to stop attending the group at any time. I also accept that sessions will be video and audio recorded because they will be used for research purposes, as well as for the music therapist to reflect on sessions and plan for ongoing sessions.

Name of participant: _____ Signature: _____

Contact number: _____ Date: _____

Researcher name: _____ Researcher signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor name: _____ Supervisor signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E

CLIP 1

Members: G, H, K, M, A, Meg, T

SESSION 1 (Duration - 1:18:51) / DATE: 27 JULY 2017 / CLIP TIME: 24:03 - 56:32.

MT: We're gonna become a little creative. Do you like being creative?

Group: Nodd heads, some say yes.

MT: And if you don't like too your gonna become creative (jokingly)

Group: Some laughter

MT: (shows box) Okay so this is a box as you guys can see, actually I was looking for round boxes, but just imagine this is the world, okay, neh...
So, if the world wasn't round it would've been, maybe a boksie, maybe it's star shaped, but let's say for today this is the world, okay.
So you are going to fold your box, if you struggle with this just ask me because I took a while to actually do this., and you must put the glazy side on the inside so you can write easier on the outside okay. So you are going to decorate.
I'm gonna play some nice music, and you are going to decorate this box, as you see the world. But remember, you don't always see the world the same way, so, today I might feel like the world looks a certain way and tomorrow my box, the, the world looks different to me so you are going to decorate this box as you feel the world, or the way you see the world today. okay. So if someone asked you how do you see the world today, then you can show them, this is, well this is like it, very like this or that, you understand. ya?

H: Can we do stuff like write?

MT: Just what you want, anything. You can, there's stuff to paste with, there's paint, there's...

H: So you can just like put hearts and stuff like

MT: You can do anything you want, theres a lot of creative stuff, that I'll put, we'll put it in the middle now and we I'll play some music now and you can just, you can use the drums to put it on or you can get a chair to press on or sit on the floor, whatever you want, but you are going to decorate this box as you see the world okay. So if you are going to say the world is full of hearts and stars then that's it, and if you want to say the world is so ugly and dark then that's what you'r gonna do, but, you are going to do it as you see the world, and remember it might change. Okay, so don't feel like you are doing this now and this is how it is, this is how you feel now. Tomorrow you might view the world a little different than it is now, but we are focussing on now. I this okay with everyone.

Group: some members Nodd

MT: Okay, so please help me to move to a space where you feel comfortable. Here is the box of creativity and there are strings and coquis and stuff to paste and wool and...

K: Can we use anything

MT: Yes. Okay so theres lots of stuff you guys. paint. magazines, scissors...

H: Wow, theres lots of stuf in there

MT: *(Just packing out and naming the things in the box, can't hear clearly as Im packing things on the floor)* then I say: but, as you see the world. So, here is your boxes.

Group is now passing things around and picking up what they would like to use first etc.

MT: You can start folding the box, I took like half an hour to figure it out.

K: Watse kant moet onder wees?

MT: If you want to put the glazy side outside you are welcome, just make sure you can d what you want to. Okay, are you guys ready?

M: Ya.

MT: Who is struggling? Cause you can have my one?
You guys are doing it so fast, I suck at this!

K: Laughing

MT: You can do anything inside your box, do whatever you feel but this tis the world as you see it. okay. Theres some stencils here that you can use also. Colourful paper. okat you guys.

K: ta-da

MT: Okay everybody I'm gonna start the music, no talking just creating.

H: (angrily hits box on drum)

MT: Wil hy nie werk nie?

H: NEE

MT: vat myne?

H: Hys nou reg.

M: laughs loud

MT: Take this one (gives new box to T) Some are not....simetric, thats the word.

Some girls laugh and whisper. I say ssshhh.

Music piece 1: I see fire Instrumental
Stagecoach stars (4:25)
Instruments: guitars, tjello, drums, percussion shakers.
Quality: Calm, moderato tempo, not very dramatic, neutral with little build up, "mellow"

Music piece 2: Ideal of hope instrumental mix
Anime Kei and the evolved
Themes form the man of steele (3:19)
Instrumental crescendo's and climax, moving and "triumphant" feel with variety

Music piece 3: Saawali Si Raat
Pritam & Arijit Singh
Barfi! (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack) (5:08)
Hindi. Allegro with variety between staccato and legato with flow and moderato tempo.

MT: While your busy. Everyone now received two red and two green papers. So would please, on the red one's, write a word, or a phrase or anything now that you feel the world has called you before or labelled you. It could be anything, and on the green one, you write

something like a word a phrase that you believe about yourself. So the green is what you believe about yourself, two things that you believe about yourself, and the red is two things you feel the world has called you or has done to you. Do you guys understand? Then you paste it anywhere on your box. It can be inside, outside or anywhere on the sides, just "plak" it...here is some prestik.

M: Asks a marker from T.

MT: You write it now and just paste it.

Few minutes of silence pass

T: What is the green for again?

MT: Anything you believe about yourself.

MT: Okay. while your still finising up, is there anyone who would like to share what you wrote and their view of the world with us? H puts up hand, I ask her to share with us. (few just read what they have wrote)

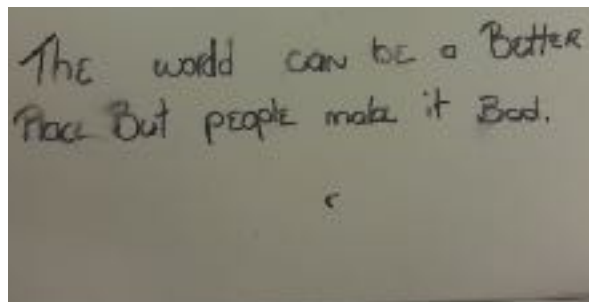
End of clip 1.

A:

World view:



(On the top there is a calm and peaceful landscape, but underneath there is lies, pain, hate, drowing and alienation)



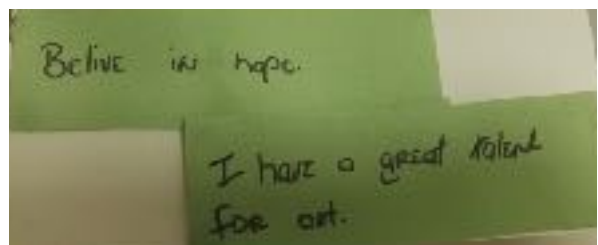
The world can be a better place but people make it bad

Red:



Gave me depression took away my mom

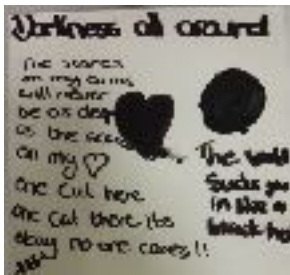
Green:



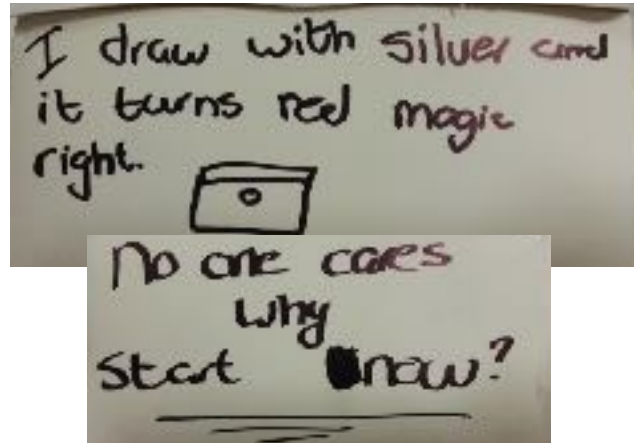
Believe in hope and I have a great talent for art

H:

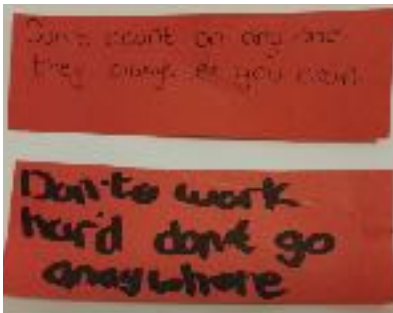
World View:



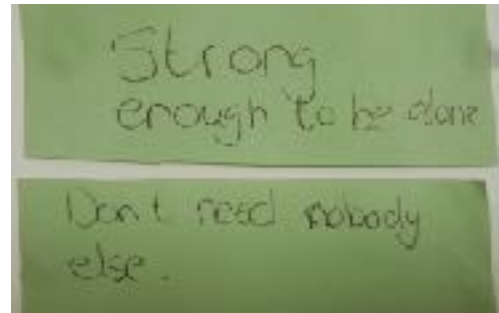
The scars on my arms will never be as deep as the scars on my heart, One cut here, one cut there, it's okay, no one cares



I draw with silver and it turns red magic right

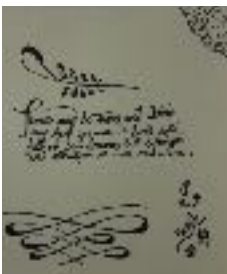


Don't count on anyone they always let you down
Don't work hard don't go anywhere

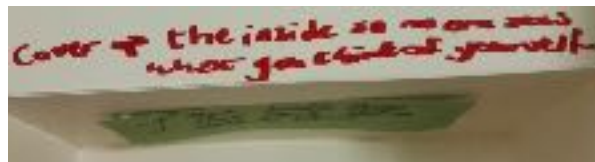


Strong enough to be alone
Don't need nobody else

G:



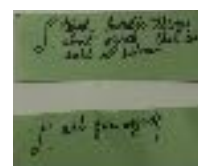
There may be tears and there may be screams a dark world full of bad dreams but stronger and stronger it will make me



Cover up the inside so no



I am stronger from what the world has told me



I think honorable things about myself that I've started to believe

I will fix myself

CLIP 2 - Lyric analysis

Session 2 (54:55) / Date: 3 August 2017 / Clip duration: 20:40 - 39:14

MT: But, for today, I want you to quickly close your eyes and think of a very significant story in your life. A story that made a really big impact on you. Either bad or good, like anything. It could be only a paragraph in your whole life story, that one moment that really like messed up everything for you, or maybe theres a thousand moments like that, but one moment that you think really played a significant part in emotions that you carry today...wait, wait...you dont have to share it now. So quickly close your eyes and think of a moment like that. Of a story, remember life happens in stories.

Amor wil jy ietsie vra of deel?

A: deel

MT: oukei deel met ons!

A: Dis vir my erg dat die sanger van linkin park oordede is, want ek het klaar twee kaartjies gekoop om hulle te sien. Ek was 'n big fan, en toe moes hy selfmoord pleeg.

MT: So dit was vir jou n groot loss? Is dit wat ek hoor? Die loss daarvan

Amor: Ja, ek het, dis n groot geheim van my, maar ek skryf baie stories en ek het gedroom om hom te ontmoet. Dit was nie vir my maklik om hom nou te verloor nie.

MT: Ag oukei...dankie. Thank you for sharing that.
Oukei so almal, dink aan 'n storie, gou vir 2 minute, ietsie wat significantly in jou lewe jou baie seer gemaak het. Oukei isit reg?
Jy hoef nie te share nie, jy moet net die storie gou gou deur hardloop al is dit sleg.

K: Moet dit iets wees wat jou seer gemaak het of kan dit iets wees wat jou baie gelukkig maak?

MT: Dis jou storie, jy kan kies. Die storie wat vir jou, toe ek sê iets wat regtig ernstig in jou lewe impak gemaak het. As dit 'n goeie een is vat hom of 'n slegte een, die een waaraan jy eerste dink. Julle reg? So dink gou net so paar minute.
So wat ons nou gaan doen is n lyric analysis. So hierdie liedjie, this is probably a song that all of you know. Okay, so Im gonna give you the words, and then Im gonna play the song so you listen to the song, and while you go through the song, you listen to the song you go through the words. So when you think of this story, this very significant either horrible or great story in your life that you are thinking about. Any of these phrases in this song that stands out for you, that can say something about that story, or that expresses absolutely nothing about that story. If you don't find anything applicable to that story in this song then that's also okay. But, take a pen or a pencil or colours or whatever, and you highlight or you can draw pictures or cut it out, whatever you want to do, when you, terwyl julle hierdie liedjie se lirieke probeer vergelyk met jou storie. En of dit dalk enigins applicable is. Dalk is hier een sentence wat vir jou is soos, hierdie is soos ek voel of nie voel nie, of anything like that. Do you guys understand that? Maak dit sin?

Y: Ja

MT: Okay so elke een, vat sommer een en stuur aan asseblief. Baie keer hoor ons hierdie liedjies maar ons luister nie honderd persent na die woorde nie. Okay en no talking.

SONG PLAYS

MT: Okay, would anyone like to share with us how you found this song applicable to your story.

H: Do you just..?

MT: Sorry wat sê jy?

H: Moet jy soos lees wat jy gehighlight het?

MT: Jy kan, jy kan soos lees of jy kan net woorde uithaal en sê hierdie is nou applicable want my storie is dit, of net soos wat jy wil. Watokal jy wil sê.

Y: I'll go

MT: Do you want to go first? let's give her a chance

Y: mmm should I speak Afrikaans?

MT: You can speak English you favourite language

Y: Shame I'll do afrikaans almal is afrikaans. M, *Well, the song relates to two stories of mine. Where it says you "shoot me down, by I get up", is when people always like judge you and there where it says but I won't fall, it's not always true, cause sometimes it kinda does get you to fall. And you kinda want to get up and eventually you do. And the other story comes in and it says you "cut me down but its you who have further to fall", and thats kinda for my father. He always cuts me down and he is the one who is falling. He has done a lot in my life that none of us like, and he kind of got, not to say payback, but he kind of life got back at him. And he kind of learned his lesson of everything that he has done to our family. And then it says here"nothing to lose", because I have nothing to lose and he lost everything. (cries)*

MT: Thank you mickayla. thank you so much for sharing that! (she nodd her head) Do you still feel like, mm, can you describe when you say that you have got nothing to loose, what is the reason that makes you say that, what do you feel?

Y: **Because he took everything that we had, our money, house my mom's job everything. And at the end of the day he lost all of this, he lost our furniture and he sold everything for drugs. And we still don't have enough to do everything, like I always get lunch at the school, and I'm saying I have nothing to loose, because I still have my family and he lost everything so he doesn't have it, so.**

MT: I'm just writing down themes from what stands out from the song, okay? is it okay? (She nodd.) Sho Mickayla, I can't even imagine how hard it must be. Thank you for sharing that! Okay is there anyone else who would like to share with us?

H: **mm Mine is actually very the same as her's because my father was a drug dealer, and, but he, he also hit us, and he also lost all our money so I know how you feel. And mine starts with "you shout it out" because he always shouts at us, :but i cant hear a word you say" because I always don't listen. mmm "im talking loud"...I tried to speak out but nobody could hear what I was saying so it was too late, "Im criticised but all your bullets ricoche", Everybody criticise me fast, they judge you before they even know who you are, mmm "you shoot me down, by I get up" is when they think they got you down but you are strong enough to get up by yourself. "You cut me down, but it's you who have further to fall". he thinks he owns everthing, that he is the one that has most value to me, mm he raises his, mm, "raise your voice, sticks and stones may break my bones" mm he raises his voice when he gets angry and he hits us, so "sticks and stones may break my bones" relates to that, so "stone hard machine guns",**

he had a stone heart, (MT makes active listening sound), he thought of no one but himself. Firing at the one's who run" we where the one's who where running away. Trying to get away from him, we had no where to go, my mother had a choice between me and my father, she always chose my father...(crying silence)

MT: Sho, and how do you feel about that now?

H: *Well, since I got helped, and I was taken away from my family when I was small, (MT says okay,) mm I think I'm in a better place, but I still miss my family. I miss having a family. If I see people with normal families, with a mother and a father, I think to myself what a wonderful world, and why can't I have it. And sometimes I wish my childhood was not, my body was not taken away from me when I was so small, because I do not have that body to myself now, and I cant give it to someone that I love anymore.*

MT: okay, SHO, thank you for sharing that, is it difficult for you to say these things?

H: *I really need to say it because my psychologist said I need to share and I can't keep bodying up, but it's really hard trying to tell people that I have been abused and raped by my own father, somebody that you where supposed to say, being loved by and being protected by, so it's hard to tell someone that he was the one who did things to you when you where small, when youre supposed to say that he was the one to protect you, to love you. (crying)*

MT: ya, sho Hayley. I think youre very courageous to share that with us today. Really, that takes a lot of courage. Is there any, do you still want to say something else, or do you want to move on? Have you said what you need to say?

H: yes

MT: You can stop us if you need to say anything else, okay. Does anyone else wanna share? (Marthie says, I'll share)

MT: Okay thanks Marthie

M: hm okay, I first I thought I'll take out words. **Ill take out the first lane "Im criticised", mm a few years ago, I was raped by own older brother, and mm I guess I felt criticised because like he is someone that's supposed to love you, supposed to be your best friend, through everything.** ya, we, ya okay. *Then "cut me down" I hate myself, even have like suicidal thoughts and stuff like that. I've been like that before but at moments its worse. Then "raise your voice" and "sticks and stones may break my bones" it just feels like, because my brother would usually raise his voice at me and shout at me. Like he usually, he is better now, but then he wasn't a nice person, he would hit me and stuff like that. so that's it basically. Then "you shoot me down but I wont fall", is just like hmm, eventhough no matter how hard it is, I can go on in life. I never talked about it before, hurt myself. I used to struggle a lot, but I got over that and started working through it and going on with life. So I'm trying now.*

MT: Marthie thank you for sharing that. How does it feel when you talk about it?

M: It's really hard, its very difficult.

MT: Do you sometimes experience a feeling of regret when you talk about it?

M: Sometimes, **mm Ive had a circle of good friends and then I told them about it, we where in class together, and i told them my story, and they started basically ignore me. It was really horrible so basically I understand (shows to Haley).**

MT: Dankie dat jy dit met ons gedeel het.

Clip 3

Session 3 (53:50) / 9 August 2017 / CLIP: 11:00 - 29:20

(Girls had homework to write their own lyrics to the song of which we did a lyric analysis the previous week. It was more improvised in the end. Adid not do the homework and was assured that its totally fine and that she could write words now if she wanted to.)

MT: Wie wil eerste vir ons lees? Do you want to read it to us?

Y: Its just, the same tune...

MT: Do you want me to sing it rather?

Y: Well it's the same tune so...

MT: Do you like singing Gabrielle? (she nodd yes). Would you like to sing yours to us? (she nodd again) thats cool. Do you like singing (look at Mic)

Y: Yes, I do like singing

MT: Okay, Gabrielle start for us

G: Sings her lyrics:

LYRICS: **Voices in my head
They scream and shout don't let it out
I can remember what you said
Every single word, even though it hurts
Their just pushing me back into that whole again.**

A: very nice

MT: That's beautiful, do you want to do it again (starts playing the guitar)

G: Ek het nog n tweede versie aan

MT: Doen gaan aan!

G: Sings the song further:

LYRICS: *Loosing control, loosing my mind (MT Accompany on guitar)
If I give up
Would you think me blind
If I give up
Let the walls fall down and just give up on myself
Let the blood flow, let the bruises hurt
If I give up, If I give up on myself, on myself.*

MT: SHOOO! (MT Keeps guitaring going) Wanna sing Your's Mic?...(she is too shy) I sing her lyrics.

LYRICS: **Try not to cry
Then everything just comes out at once
So I've given up on trying
And your the only one to blame
Yu shut me out but I don't care about you now.**

MT: Okay, kom ons almal sing die chorus saam, isit reg?

Group: **I'm Bulletproof nothing to lose
Fire away, fire away
Ricochet, you take your aim
Fire away, fire away
You shoot me down but I wont fall, I am titanium**

You shoot me down but i wont fall
I am titanium

MT: Well done! Amori wil jy ietsie probeer? of wil jy ietsie neerskryf? Nog nie? (She nodd no)
Okay let's go from the beginning. So we will start with Gabbi, you sing your, both your
parts, and then you sing your part (Mic), and then Amor you sing with us the chorus?

SONG: **Voices in my head**
They scream and shout don't let it out
I can remember what you said
Every single word, even though it hurts
Their just pushing me back into that whole again.

Loosing control, loosing my mind If I give up
Would you think me blind
If I give up
Let the walls fall down and just give up on myself
Let the blood flow, let the bruises hurt
If I give up, If I give up on myself, on myself.

Try not to cry
Then everything just comes out at once
So I've given up on trying
And your the only one to blame
You shut me out but I don't care about you now.

I'm Bulletproof nothing to lose
Fire away, fire away
Ricochet, you take your aim
Fire away, fire away
You shoot me down but I wont fall, I am titanium
You shoot me down but i wont fall
I am titanium

MT: Amor hou jy van sing?

A: As ek op my eie is

MT: So jy hou nie van voor mense song nie? (nodds no)
So jy wil nie en van dit alleen sing nie?

A; Nee

MT: (While keeping guitar playing flowing) Okay so what we are going to do now...you guys
wrote a really beautiful song together, did you hear that? (EVERYONE SMILE AND NODD)
So what we are going to do now is, you can choose any instrument, the drums, the
xylophone, theres the bag full of shakers and stuff, and you keep it with you, so we are
going to do the singing part again and then afterwards we just go into an improvisation
where we just play our instruments. Okay, and if you want t o sing different words out you
are more than welcome. So we can make up words as we go along. Okay, so get
something that you feel like playing. Theres the xylophone, the symbol is in the red bag,
bag full of shakers is over there...(guitar music keeps flowing)

G: Waars die shakers

MT: Daar by jou voete. So you can play your instrument anytime. Amor is jy ons drummer?
(smiles yes)
Okay, Gabs take it away...

SONG: Voices in my head
They scream and shout don't let it out
I can remember what you said
Every single word, even though it hurts
Their just pushing me back into that whole again.

Loosing control, loosing my mind If I give up
Would you think me blind
If I give up
Let the walls fall down and just give up on myself
Let the blood flow, let the bruises hurt
If I give up, If I give up on myself, on myself.

Try not to cry
Then everything just comes out at once
So I've given up on trying
And your the only one to blame
You shut me out but I don't care about you now.

I'm Bulletproof nothing to lose
Fire away, fire away
Ricochet, you take your aim
Fire away, fire away
You shoot me down but I wont fall, I am titanium
You shoot me down but i wont fall
I am titanium

INSTRUMENTAL IMPROV

MT: We are going to go around, and we are going to sing, "I am" then you sing something that you think you are. Like for instance you can go "I am titanium", or something like "I am so sad right now" or you know whatever your feeling or whatever you think about your self right now. You can sing your an angel or you can sing your a devil it does not matter. Something that you think you are okay. Not what the world says you are, something you believe you are. It can be very dark or very light! Is that okay? Who is gonna start? (I nodd at Mic)

Y: *I am lost inside*

MT: *.....lost inside..... Gabbi*

G: *I am strong enough*

MT: *I am strong enough, if I echo you wrong you mus correct me okay! I am strong enough*

A: *I am giving up right now.*

MT: *I am lost inside
I am strong enough
I am giving up
now let's sing something that the world says about you*

Y: *I am a failure*

Mt: *I am a failure*
G: *Keep pushing on and on*
Mt: *I will keep pushing on and on*
A: *I am very confused*
Mt: *I am very confused*

Okay, now we are going to sing what you want the world to tell you, okay.

Mic: I am strong
Mt: I am strong
G: I am enough
Mt: I am enough
A: I am good enough
Mt: I am good enough

Lets repeat this one again

Y: I am strong
Mt: I am strong
G: I am enough
Mt: I am enough
A: I am good enough
Mt: I am good enough

Okay, last one, now something you want to tell yourself. So we have done what you think of yourself, and we've done what the world tells you about yourself, and wve done what you want the world to tell you about yourself. Now, what do you want to tell you?

Y: *I am worth it*
Mt: *I am worth it*

G: *Hold on*
Mt: *Hold on*

A: *I am not giving up now*
Mt: *I am not giving up now*

mt: Lets do the chorus again together.

I'm Bulletproof nothing to lose
Fire away, fire away
Ricochet, you take your aim
Fire away, fire away
You shoot me down but I wont fall, I am titanium
You shoot me down but i wont fall
I am titanium

MT: I am titanium; ooho ooohoo
sing with me anything that you want to

I am strong enough, I am worthy enough, I wont give up, cause I am enough.

MT: okay, Mic If you say that you would tell yourself that you are worthy, thats what you said worth it of what? exaggerate a bit please?

Y: Kind of like worth it of keeping my life...

Clip 4 - STORY

SESSION 4 (Duration: 59min) / Date: 31 August 2017 / Clip taken from: 10:05

- MT: okay, so first things first. What will be the name of our story? What do you think? Any story, Anything that comes up.
What should the story be about?
- M: maybe something like being sad
- MT: *Sadness?*
- M: *something like that*
- MT: Okay, do you agree with sadness? (Mic says yes) Do you agree with sadness? (H nods)
If you want to suggest something else it's okay because we can negotiate.
- Y: *I think strength*
- MT: *Sadness and strength. Do you wanna do a two word title?*
(group nods and say yes)
Sadness and strength, okay cool.
- M: (asks Mickayla) Does it hurt to get a pearcing there
- Y: Not really
- MT: Was it sore for a few days though?
- Y: ja,

(I CANT HEAR WHAT THEY SAY.....THERE IS A DISCUSSION ON EAR PEARCINGS)

- MT: okay, so we have sadness and strength. So what happened to sadness. (Marthie laughs)
Okay let's start with this, how does sadness look?
- Y: *Blue*
- H: *Dark*
- MT: OKay, sadness is the first character, blue and dark. What else? Is it a boy or a girl?
- H: *A girl*
- MT: *Okay, sadness is female. What else do we know about sadness.*
- H: She hides away
- MT: okay, she hides away. And you said she is?
- M: *depressed*
- MT: And if we had to like give her a body? what would she look like?
- M: *Thin*
- MT: *Sin?*
- M: *thin*
- MT: OH okay. Does everyone agree with that? (Haley shakes her head) You don't agree with that? how do you think she looks?
- H: *She has a body of like a mushroom.*
- MT: *A mushroom. You agree with that?*
- Y: *Short, very short*
- MT: *Short mushroom thingy majiggy. (Marthie laughs) okay, let's see.*
- Y: *Her body is ... (cant hear)*
- MT: *draws mushroom...okay like this. Youve got the idea?*
Let's talk about strength, how does strength look? Is it a boy or a girl?
- M: *Boy*
- H: *Boy*
- MT: *Are you sure?*

Haylee and Marthie each says something but they speak very softly, I can not hear what they say.

MT: It can be a boy-girl also? what do you suggest?

Y: Maybe an it

M: Yes that (Haylee nodd)

MT: You want it to be an it? okay, it can actually go both ways. IT. And mmm tell me more about strength?

H: Its very bright and has a strong body.

Y: (Can't hear, she speaks very very soft)

I wrote down, strength is positive most of the times...so that is what Mick said.

MT: If we had to give IT a body, how would it look?

M: Strongly build

H: Muscular

MT: How does that look, like give it a shape or..

H: 'n wortel.

MT: n wortel?

Y: its all vegetables (whole group laughs)

MT: You really like vegetables in your life?

M: Smile and nodd

MT: Do you agree with carrot?

(others say yes)

H: (Explains with hands the muscular shoulder of a carrot)

MT: ooohh like shoulders, like carrot man.

Okay, shoulders and eyes, (Mickayla shows me how to draw something)

Okay so what happened between the two? Like what is the story line? think of anything, you can say like anything.

M: I have two things. Strength protected sadness, or strength gave in to sadness.

MT: Okay so theres two ways to it?

Y: Ill also say protected

MT: protected

H: I want to say strength stood up for sadness

MT: strength protected sadness and stood up for him.

Ive heard, sorry. And then what happened?

Y: strength taught sadness to be courageous, and strong.

MT: strength taught sadness to be courageous, and strong.

WHAT ELSE?

H: You don't need anybody to count on, but yourself.

MT: Okay, is that what strength thought?

(to others) do you agree? do you agree? (both nodd yes)

you dont need anyone..

H: To count on but yourself

MT: Okay

M: They grew close

MT: Did they grow close?

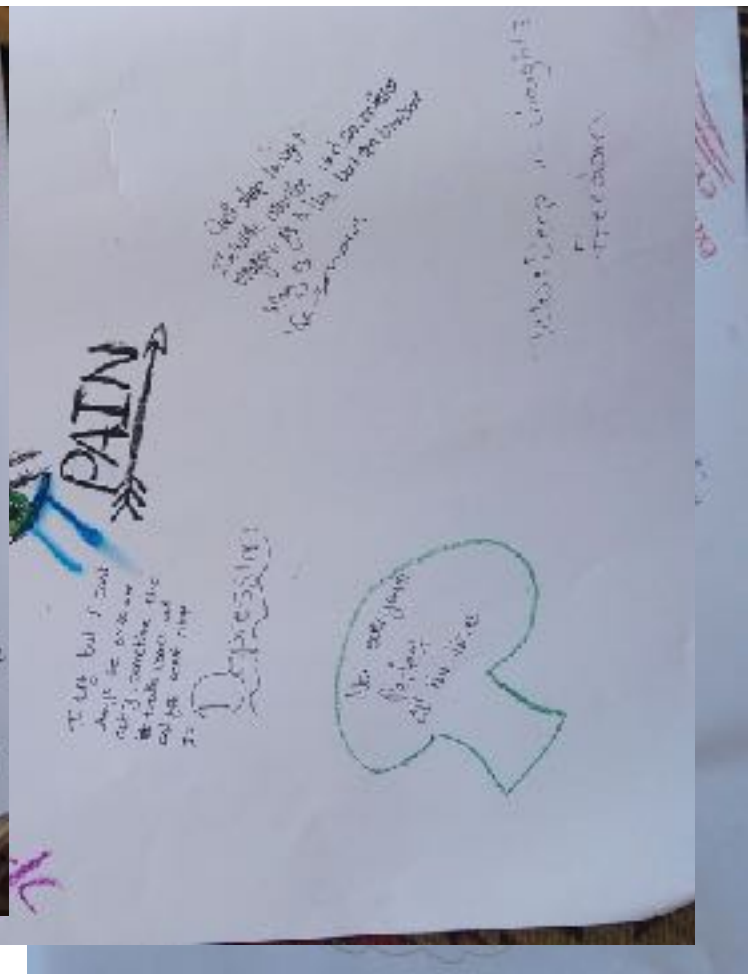
what happened when they grew close?

h: Sadness started counting

MT: on strength?

VIDEO STOPPED UNEXPECTEDLY!! THE VIDEO RECORDING STOPPED, BUT HERE ARE SOME THINGS THEY SID ABOUT THE STORY:

We did a sonic schetch. I played 6 very differing pieces of music for about 2 minutes each, and they had to keep the story in mind and draw or write or do anything on the paper that they feel during the music playing, while also moving to a new place on the paper every time the music changed.



- MT: (They started organising the crayons, I said dont worry about that now) If you guys look at this thing. You can walk around and everything, just make sure you get a clear view of this musical journey.
How does it feel?
- Y: IT felt like just drawing
- MT: Did you feel that the music helped or not really?
- M: Yah,
- Y: It felt like the music.....(cant hear??)
- MT: Did you feel that?
- Y: yes
- MT: Okay, if you look at the picture, if theres one thing that stands out to you in this picture personally what would that be?

DISCUSSION ON PICTURES AND THE MEANINGS BEHIND THEM.

LATER IN SESSION: (Haylee said that one word to describe how she feels after this session, she says sadness and she cries. Everyone support her and talk about crying and then:

- Y: *I actually feel proud*
- MT: *Proud? Why?*
- Y: *because we all wanted to commit suicide we didnt, we all know how strong we are. other people just*

MT: *SHO, i agree*

TIME GOES BY...Mic shares some of her past, but the sound is very unclear.

H: I don't have the courage to go home and face my mother

She has been crying since yesterday night.

She has been looking after me for 11 years now. I don't know what to do, or where to hide I do not have the courage to look her in the eyes and tell her it's not your fault.

Just because I had a rough children childhood, being molested and not wanted, and now having depression, and now having a sense that wishes me to die...all of it, is getting me, at this stage Im feeling why, why, why was I here? I don't have the courage to walk out this door and go home and look my mother in the eyes and tell her, this is not your fault. She doesn't deserve this. And I don't know how to tell her that?

MT: Why do you feel that is your responsibility to tell her that.

H: All she has ever done for me was fight for me and looked after me. She faught my dad when he came to take me back when he was not supposed to come near me after he molested and beat me. She faught him. She took care of me for 11 years, thats almost my entire life, so I feel like I have to have the responsibility. Rigt ow I dont have it in me I just wish I can go away sometimes and just never come back. Its so so hard

MT: Its very hard

H: I don't have the courage in me.

MT: Can I ask you another question? If you think of all the things your mom has done for you neh, if you think back of how she faught for you, except for the fact that you feel a responsibility and the sadness you feel with your mother, is there any other emotion that you feel towards your mom?

H: Pride

MT: Proud Okay are you proud of your mom

H: Yes Im proud of her

MT: thats wonderful, is that the only one or is there another one?

H: Im happy.

MT: happy with for her? happy about her?

H: Im happy that I have been given a second chance to have a family, with her, but right now I feel like the chance is slipping away because everything is wrecking and my world is tearing apart right now.

MT: That is how you feel now and that is very real. So you don't have to try to fix it. That is how you feel now.

What do you you guys think if you put the words proud and, what was the other one, happy, if you put proud and happy together what do you think comes out?

M: Greatfull

MT: That is the word I was looking for. Because proud is greatness, when youre proud is something you feel great about it. When you are happy you are thankful for it. So maybe just for today...you know a therapist is not allowed to give you any advice, but maybe just for now, just for you to have that last courage and strength you need to face your mom, cause you cant sleep on the street. But maybe go there and just focus on the gratefulness you have for your mom.

And just as you and all of us want to be allowed to be sad, let her be sad, thats okay, let her be sad, okay, but in that you don't have to tell her that its not her fault, you dont have to do anything, you can just think about it, and maybe try to focus on that. And if you struggle, maybe talk to your mom and tell her, lets rather be grateful for now.

Clip 5 from session 5:

SONG AND IMPROVISATION

Every one wrote a story and then from the stories the made a song.
Kayleigh, did not want to sing, so me and her where the band, she played the drum and shaker.
with the improvisation at the end she shared her feelings for the first time.

THE SONG THEY WROTE:

H:

**There was a girl who was petrified, someone found her in the dark
and brought her to the light**

Group:

**She was herself
herself....**

Y:

**She was raised to fight for herself, sometimes the battle was in her mind
She felt let down**

H:

**She didn't let it hold her back, like wonder woman she appeared
Victory in hand, she conquered the world
she was kind, yeaaa, she was kind, ooh**

Group:

**She was herself
herself...**

Y:

**Shee found magic love wherever she went, after all this battling
she went back to her old self, the one that everyone knew**

Group:

**She was herself
herself...**

MT:

**NOW WE ARE GOING TO GO ONE BUT YOU SAY SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF LIKE SHE
WAS...AND THEN YOU SAY SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF, OKAY, I WILL START like.**

She wasmmm stressed.

h: she was reborn

Y: *she was strong*
 k: *moet ek sing?*
 mt: *jy hoef nie te sing jy kan maar net sê*
 K: *confused*
 MT; *Nice, Dis nie nice om confused te wees nie, maar goeie beskrywing van hoe mens voel*
 She was courageous
 h: *she was depressed*
 Y: *she was let down*
 MT: *As jy nogsteeds confused is kan weer confused wees, net wat jy wil*
 k: *kom ons se curious*
 MT: *curious. She was a little bit scared of the future*
 h: *She overcome her fears*
 Y: *She was observant*
 K: *ek het niks*
 MT; *Niks oor jouself nie,*
 k; *Nee*
 MT: *wel jy het gese curious en confused DIS TWEE GROOTTES so moet ons jou skip?*
 k: *ja*
 MT: *she was...mmm...hungry*
 H: *she was tired*
 Y: *she was blue*
 K: *nou gaan ek se in love*
 MT: *she was laughing?*
 K: *in love*
 mT: *she was inlove....En dan terwyl jy dit se kom daar hartjies uit jou mond uit, sien julle dit?*
 okay, last one.
 she was, mmm what is tge word, she was gewillig
 H: *she was saggeard*
 Y; *she was paralysed inside*
 kl: *ek het niks*
 MT: *and She has nothing to give right now, but she gave a lot already so it's cool.*
 MT: *Okay, but all of this is just one thing. We are our selfs*

Group:
ourselves

Mt: Let's just quickly look back on this process today. The first story you wrote and the song that we wrote does anyone feel that it had anything in common with each other. Anything that like evoked or they both touched your heart in a way or not, and if theres nothing that's also cool. Something that stood out that came from both?

H: They both showed that. they both showed like, they both tell you like, both my story and the song showed how do we overcome stuff. They both showed that overcoming is a things that is possible, thats why I draw this today. We had today a speech in class about, with the world stop self-harm. So you draw on one arm if you cut yourself and you draw in both cause you support.

Y: I drew on both

MT: Yes its good cause you stopped.

H: (speaks extremely soft)

MT: In what class was that?

H: in all the classes

MT: Oh okay, is it self-harm day?

Mic: mm no, its about this girl who found a website and their trying to support people who self-

MT: okay cool
H: So we made it a self-harm day.
MT: That's amazing, I didnt even know about that
okay, and was there something that stood out for you?
Y: ja, (i cant hear)) uuurgh
MT: Wat staan uit vir jou?
K: Ek weet nie.
MT: was daar enigiets vandag wat jy gevoel het was soos valuable? of voel jy net negatief?
K: humm, ja.
MT: Okay, het julle nog krag om een ding te doen? of wil jule gaan?
H: Hoe laat is dit?
MT: Dis 15:10
H: Nee ons het nog krag
MT: Het jy nog krag?
k: Bietjie ja.
MT: OUkei....kan ons n excersize doen, dis baie intens, maar ek dink dit gaan goed wees, dan doen ons die liedjie weer na dit. As julle wil. okay. Ek gaan vir julle n pen en n papier gee, oukei, en dan gaan jy n dialoque skryf, tussen jou en self-harm. Wat jy vir self-harm wil sê, of wat self-harm vir jou sê. Sien julle kans vir dit? Wat jy vir dit wil se of wat dit vir jou wil se, maar dis hierdie dialoog tussen die twee. Jou een opskrif gaan wees ek, die andr een gaan wees self-harm. En julle gaan met mekaar praat.
H: Kan ons dan n liedjie luister?
MT: Ek gaan vir julle 'n liedjie speel saam met hierdie process van die dialoque. So julle kan by die tafel sit.
Y: moet ons na die tyd dit lees?
MT: Jy hoef nie as jy nie wil nie! okei.

clip 6 session 6

MT: so, wat ons nou gaan doen is, jy gaan nou jou cup aan jouself oorhandig neh, en dan gaan jy nou terug dink aan jou storie, soos van die stories wat jy vertel het in die begin of goed wat in jou lewe gebeur het wat flippen erg was, oukei. Tog sit jy hier vandag. so jy gaan nou aan jouself hierdie cup oorhandig, en vir ons vertel hoekom jy hierdie cup verdien. oukei. So hier is niks van vanity hier nie, niemand gaan dink jys hoogmoedig of jy dink baie van jouself nie.

Y: what does that mean?

MT: no ones going to think you are...soos, dis net ons, oukei. No one's going to think yu are pridefull or like, wat's hoogmoed in engels, like arrogant or veign, nothing like that. ja or self-centred.
Today this is absolutely you handing yourself a cup like a trophy and explaining to us why, all the stuff youve been through, I almost said the bad words, all the stuff that youve been through, why you deserve this cup today. So wil julle bietjie dink daaroor?
what Im gonna do is, i am going to play a song, and while the song plays you think of how you are going to tell the story. So in your head you, do you guys need some pen and paper? Or do you just want to think of it?
So think of how you will tell the story of why you deserve this cup. okay. So ek gaan gou vir julle musiek opsit, en hierdie musiek gaan jou ook hopelik help om te dink aan hierdie journey waaraan jy dink. So maak jou oë toe, relax en luister na die musiek.
(wrong song starts) OOH, it's not that one...laughing.

- Y: *I think I deserve the cup of courage, because all the obstacles that I have faced in life I always get through it with my head held high, and I am always strong enough to get through it and not making any stupid decisions causing not be here, and I know the obstacles that will come, i will have even more courage, that I have improved from the years and I will have become stronger by that time. And, like I told her, that the operation i am going in for, that has a 90% chance that i will not be able to have children one day, and through all of that i will just have courage and I think Ive just always been a warrior, in my heart and I have had a lot of courage not just for myself but for other people too.*
- MT: *Okei cool, and how did it feel like when you where listening to the song and thinking of this journey that you have been through in your life?*
- Y: *Wel the way, that the tone of the song makes you feel like Ive survived, it k has a positieve sound to it*
- MT: *Okay, and how did it make you feel?*
- Y: *Made me feel good about myself, what I've been through and that I stayed strong.*
- MT: *cool. okay, do you want, do you think that that is everything. if you where handing ourself the cup today, like you are, is that everything you wanted to get out of your system, to say this is really why I deserve this. have you said it all?*
- Y: *the thing is that I've been strong, and i am proud of myself for that.*
- mt: *cool, oukei cool. You can take your cup, you deserve it!*
- M: *Moet ek engels praat?*
- MT: *Nee, afrikaans jou taal.*
- M: *oukei, ek dink ek verdien hierdie koppie, klink weird as ek dit in afrikaans se, mm want soos alles waardeer ek was en nou al is, het ek daardeer gekom. en elke keer as ek iets wou doen soos 'n stupid ding wou doen, wel ek kon nie meer hier was nie, het daar altyd iemand anders voorgekom waar dit iets slegter gaan en was ek altyd daar om hulle te ondersteun en dis so half die een ding wat my hier hou, gehou het, is elke keer om iemand anders te help, en ek is trots op myself dat ek heeltyd daar is vir ander mense, maar ook dat ekke deur alles gekom het, en dat ek sterker is as voorheen en ek het actually uit my foute uit geleer het.*
- MT: *Oukei en as jy nou ook, terwyl jy gedink het aan hierdie journey waarop jy was jou hele lewe en al hierdie goeters, wat het jy gevoel? wat het jy ervaar? waaran het jy gedink, wat is iets wat uitgestaan het?*
- M: *Ek het actually trots gevoel soos prideful, om te dink jis ek het deur dit gekom, ek is rerig 'n wenner eks 'n survivor, dit het my baie happy laat voel actually.*
- MT: *Oukei, en wat sal jy se is die een ding wat jou laat voel, jis ek het deur dit gekom*
- M: *Ek dink dit sal wees, die verkragtinge waardeer ek gegaan het, wat die grootste ding is en dat ek oor dit kon kom en mense kon vergewe. Ek onthou ek het die een ou, dis my bestee vriendin se nefie gewees, toe kkry ek sy nommer en whatsapp hom en se haai ek weet nie of jy my onthou nie, en ek se vir hom als wat hy aan my gedoen het, en toe se ek vir hom ek vergewe jou, en het nooit weer kontak met hom nie.*

MT: oukei, en as julle teryg dink aan hierdie tye wat ons saam gehad het, Mickala jy was elke keer hier. Wat is die dinge wat vir julle uitgestaan het?

m: Ek dink dis die kere wat ons actually met mekaar geshare het, mekaar se pyn gedeel het met mekaar, ons het almal dieselfde emosie gevoel, wat die ander peroon gehad het, ...ek wil nies

Y: En soos, jy kry baie mense...dis lekker om hier te wees, want as jy net in soos pouses saam mense is is daar nie eintlik mense wat verstaan hoe jy voel nie, want hulle het n happy chappy lewe en as jy hier is voel dit soos almal verstaan hoe jy voel en hulle luister eintlik vir jou, en dit voel soos, dit voel beter want as jy dit vir iemand se maar hulle weet nie eintlik wat jy se nie, voel dit asof jy nie reg, dit het nie eintlik reg uitgekom nie, maar when jy hier is en almal verstaan hoe jy voel, voel jy beter na die tyd want jy let it go.

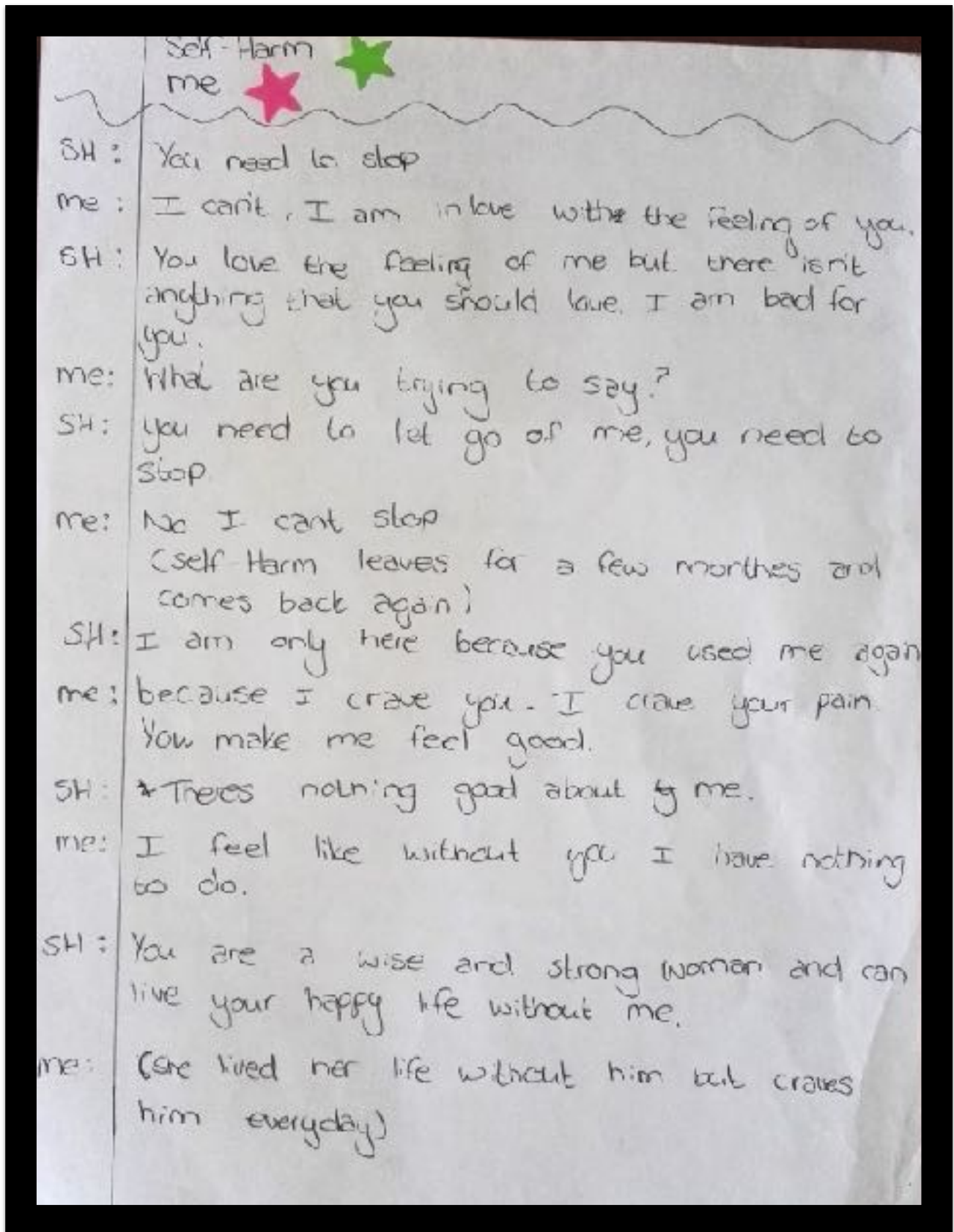
APPENDIX G
SUMMARY OF LYRIC ANALYSIS

Title of song: Titanium, Lyricist: Sia



APPENDIX H

ORIGINAL DIALOGUES BETWEEN THE SELF AND SELF-HARM BY PARTICIPANTS



Dialoog

Selfharm: Hi, there I see you not looking too well.

Kaylee: Hi, I'm a little depressed.

Selfharm: Well you would feel better if you pick up that razor blade that's under your pillow.

Kaylee: Yes, I know but I only feel better for like a minutes and then after that I feel hurt again.

Selfharm: Yes but at least you gonna feel better.

Kaylee: NO!

Selfharm: What?!

Kaylee: I'm not doing it again, it's really not worth it I support selfharm and I'm gonna continue helping those that suffer from self harm.

Selfharm: But by helping, you have to do it.

Kaylee: That's not the only way to help, I will find away. Stop putting people in bad situations! So many people have died because of you, so many people are in hospital because of you! You are evil! You ruin peoples lives!

Selfharm: But it's people who choose me.

Kaylee: No, you manipulate people.

Selfharm: Your worthless you can't live with out me
me: I can't, your not my air I breath.
Selfharm: Just do it, Nobody likes you
me: A lot of people care my life doesn't count
on you - I want people love me.
Selfharm: you can't live with the feeling of not having
me in your life do it.
me: Never again! I'm over you. I have grown
stronger then ever before
Selfharm: What??
me: Yes. Someone brought me to the
light show me better things then you
Selfharm: I will be back. you will need me again
me: Not ever.