

# **POSSIBILITY AND LIMITS OF LIFE DESIGN COUNSELLING WITH AN ABANDONED ADOLESCENT**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

**Magister Educationis  
(Educational Psychology)**

in the

Department of Educational Psychology  
Faculty of Education  
University of Pretoria

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PRETORIA

2011

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### **My deepest thanks and appreciation goes out to:**

- My Heavenly Father for giving me the opportunity to be part of this research project.
- Prof. Kobus Maree for his inputs, guidance, motivation and support throughout this process.
- My dear husband and best friend, Tristan: Without your support, motivation and understanding this would not have happened. You are my inspiration.
- My family, old and new, for their support and motivation during this process.
- Ms. Zelda Pollard for her input, support, critical reading and help with coding the data.
- Ms. A. Bowlby for her language editing services.
- The research participant for sharing your story with me. I wish you all the best for your future endeavours.



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In loving memory of my father (1953 – 2011):

**We left out all the  
rest...**

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## SUMMARY/ABSTRACT

### POSSIBILITY AND LIMITS OF LIFE DESIGN COUNSELLING WITH AN ABANDONED ADOLESCENT

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The number of children being abandoned in South Africa is rising steeply. With already existing challenges in the current South African labour market, one must consider the expectations of abandoned adolescents in terms of future careers. It is unreasonable to expect an abandoned adolescent to be guided towards making career decisions using modern career counselling methods, as these were developed for use with individuals from traditional, nuclear families. Most abandoned adolescents are taken in by extended family; grow up in children's homes or on the streets. One can expect these circumstances to negatively impact the abandoned adolescent's outlook and hope for the future. There is thus a need for an approach to career facilitation, which takes into account the abandoned adolescent's subjective experience of his/her context.

It was the primary goal of this study to investigate the possibility and limits of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent. This was done against the background of both the systems theory and social constructionism in order to help the researcher to focus on the experience of the participant within his/her unique context. The study specifically focused on the experience of an abandoned adolescent. In order to better understand the subjective and diverse experiences of the participant, I aimed to investigate, through the lens of social constructionism, the way in which abandoned adolescents in general (and my participant in particular) create meaning through interaction with others as well as his/her environment. Within the qualitative paradigm this study was conducted by means of a case study during which a variety of postmodern techniques were implemented in order to facilitate co-constructive conversations with the participant.



## LIST OF KEY WORDS

Life design  
Counselling  
Abandoned  
Adolescent  
Career construction

Postmodern career counselling  
Adaptability  
Cultural identity  
Future expectations  
Case study

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

*Behind any autobiographical act is a self for whom certain things matter and are given priorities over others. Some of these things are not only objects of desire or interest, but command the writer's admiration or respect. These are the key "goods" the writer lives by, shaping her acts of ethical deliberation and choice. Such goods may include ideals of self-realization, social justice, equality of respect, or care for certain others ... Such goods also inevitably shape the stories she tells when she projects her future or construes her past or present. In short, these goods are at the heart of life narrative, necessary constituent of it.*

The above observation by Parker (in Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte, Guichard, Soresi, Van Esbroeck & van Vianen, 2009:241) reflects the heartbeat of this study. The number of children being abandoned<sup>1</sup> in South Africa is rising steeply. According to a report by Hurd (2008), increased food prices and the rising cost of living are causing parents to abandon their children in order to survive. In Johannesburg, South Africa, state child welfare agencies are dealing with at least seven newly abandoned children a day (Hurd, 2008). With the already existing challenges, such as a lack of job opportunities, affirmative action and the cost of training in the current South African labour market, one cannot help but wonder about the expectations of these children in terms of future careers. One even wonders whether hope for a future career is part of abandoned adolescents' immediate framework. It would be unreasonable to expect an abandoned child to be guided towards making a career decision using career counselling methods that were developed in a modern era for use with individuals who had grown up in traditional, nuclear families. Most abandoned adolescents are taken in by their extended family or grow up in children's homes, if not on the streets. One can expect these circumstances to negatively impact the abandoned adolescent's outlook and hope for the future. There is thus a need to develop a new approach to career facilitation, which takes into account the individual's subjective experience of his/her context.

Against this background, I will, in Chapter 1, give a short layout of the study that includes the following: a preliminary literature review, the motivation for the study, the goal of the research,

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the section "Concept clarification" for a discussion of the term.

the problem statement, a conceptual framework, clarification of relevant concepts, expected outcomes, anticipated problems, my paradigmatic perspective and research design, data collection and data analysis techniques, the research site, my role as researcher and ethical considerations that go along with it, as well as limitations of the study. A layout of the chapters is also included.

### **1.1.1 Preliminary literature review**

Interest in a postmodern<sup>2</sup> approach to career facilitation is growing internationally. Postmodernism emphasises a multitude of perspectives, contextual influences, social constructions of reality, and the importance of the significance individuals attach to their experiences (Thorngren & Feit, 2001). It is, essentially, a worldview that recognises subjective experience and values the influence of the context in which the individual finds him/herself.

The meaning of work in the twenty-first century is no longer a distinct concept. As a result of globalisation and changes in society, the workplace, the work content, and technology, people's perception of work and the meaning they attach to it have changed (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Consequently, the postmodern approach to career facilitation provides a theoretical backdrop against which each individual's experience of work and career can be explored.

A postmodern approach is applied mainly in the artistic and social sciences as a paradigmatic perspective for research (Jansen, 2004). However, local literature on the subject is limited, particularly with regard to the South African context. The focus of this study is therefore on the value of life design counselling in the South African context, specifically with regard to abandoned children.

In the following section, the traditional approach and the postmodern approach to career facilitation are discussed in order to illustrate the importance of the process of life design counselling in the South African context.

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<sup>2</sup> In this study the term "postmodern" is used interchangeably with "alternative" and "qualitative".

#### **1.1.1.1 The traditional approach to career facilitation**

The traditional approach to career facilitation tended to prefer an objectivist or positivist perspective (Maree & Beck, 2004) and was primarily based on a trait-and-factor approach with the underlying assumption being that an individual's sense of self and the environment in which he/she lives remain relatively static over a long period of time (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). The career planning problem is thus one where clients have to choose a method that fits their personal traits to a particular career that they will practise for the rest of their life. The career decision is thus viewed as a once-off event where the person chooses a career for the rest of his/her future. In an attempt to achieve this objective perspective, the career counsellor would make use of various psychometric tests, worksheets and computer programs to match the character traits of the individual to a specific career (Maree & Beck, 2004).

Some of the drawbacks of the traditional approach to career facilitation in the South African context are that the vast majority of psychometric tests currently being used in South Africa are of American and European origin, and were designed for and standardised on white samples only, which means that they cannot be implemented effectively in a multicultural population. In addition, the career counsellor mostly assumes the role of the expert in terms of his/her client, and consequently the client often avoids the responsibility of making his/her own decisions about a future career because psychometric test results take priority. The client thus acts on the recommendations of the career counsellor (Maree, Bester, Lubbe & Beck, 2001), which can lead to passivity and inhibited personal growth and a lack of responsibility in the individual.

#### **1.1.1.2 The postmodern approach to career facilitation**

Sampson (2009) argues that postmodernism does not replace the traditional approach to career facilitation entirely. Although there are populations with whom the traditional approach can be used effectively, there is an increasing need to appreciate each individual in his/her own context. People in the post-industrial society are no longer provided with well-defined identities; instead they are left to continually reinvent themselves and their work life as needs, interests and life experiences change (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). There is thus a shift away from the primary use of standardised psychometric instruments towards understanding the social and historical factors that impact on individuals' career challenges (Maree, Ebersöhn & Vermaak, 2008). The purpose of assessment thus changes from seeking absolute, quantifiable truths and

labels to seeking contextual meaning and qualitative understanding that are perceived as useful by the client (Watson & Kuit, 2007). Career decisions are not viewed as a single event, but rather as a process of adaptation to changing circumstances in the individual and the environment.

The role of the facilitator also differs in postmodern career facilitation. No longer the expert, facilitators become co-authors as they assist clients in writing their career as stories and help them identify themes and stressful moments in the storylines (Maree *et al.*, 2008). Watson and Kuit (2007) describe this process as co-constructing preferred career stories for clients through dialogue.

### **1.1.1.3 The individual's context in career facilitation**

The postmodern approach to career facilitation is sensitive to the contextual factors influencing the meaning-making process for individuals (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2002). According to Chope and Consoli (2007), all individuals possess a unique culture, lifestyle and context which have a continuous influence on the way they perceive the world of work. Careers can then be understood as representations of individuals' subjective interactions with various contextual influences (Chen, 2007). Those factors that the individual regards as important in his/her culture will therefore have an influence on what he/she will believe to be significant in the process of life design.

The postmodern approach views the world as objectively unknowable (Campbell & Ungar, 2004), but that it is subject to various possible interpretations. Making meaning of one's experience of the world is the result of socially constructed discourses in which people participate. Social discourses are the words and their meanings that individuals create with others through conversations and social interaction. These provide a mode for individuals to describe and share their personal experiences (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). According to Campbell and Ungar (2004) individuals' identity and life purpose, including their interpretation of the meaning of their experiences, depend on the social discourses in which they participate. The above discussion implies that the individual's unique interpretation of his/her experiences is also influenced by his/her social context.

#### **1.1.1.4 Constructivism<sup>3</sup> in postmodern career facilitation**

Career facilitation has become an interpretive discipline (Savickas, 1993; Guichard & Dauwalder, 2010). This implies that individuals have different perspectives of the world they live in. The preceding discussion on the context in which an individual finds him/herself forms part of social constructivist theory with its focus on the subjectivity of reality construction by the individual in a specific context (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006). Constructivism refers to the broader perspective which opposes objectivism or positivism (Young & Collin, 2004). According to this approach, the individual is seen as an active agent in his/her learning and development processes. Knowledge is actively and continuously constructed and reconstructed through interaction with others and the environment (Donald *et al.*, 2006). Brott (2001) summarises the assumptions underlying the constructivist career development model as follows: (a) people cannot be separated from their environment, (b) there are no absolutes, (c) human behaviour can only be understood in the context in which it occurs, and (d) individuals define themselves and their environments. In the postmodern era, society is turning from internal feelings and external facts to an interactional perspective (Savickas, 1993). Accordingly, with the change from an industrial era to a post-industrial era, a shift occurred in the field of career facilitation, moving from objectivity to subjectivity and eventually to perspectivity.

From this discussion it becomes clear that the individual does not construct his/her reality in isolation, but rather as part of an interactive system. I will now elaborate on the influence of the system on the individual within the context of career facilitation.

#### **1.1.1.5 The influence of the system on the individual**

Systems theory views different levels and groups of people as an interactive system in which the functioning of the whole depends on the interaction between the parts (Donald *et al.*, 2006). The individual, also seen as a system with complex and interrelated subsystems, interacts with other systems and subsystems in a process characterised by disorganisation, adaptation and reorganisation. Knowledge of the self and the environment is a result of this ongoing interaction (Patton, McMahon & Watson, 2006). Within the constructivist framework the person is viewed as an open system, constantly interacting with the environment while internally constructing

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<sup>3</sup> The generic term “constructivism” is used to refer to both constructivism and social constructionism. (Please see the “Literature review” for a discussion of these two terms).

meaning about it (Patton, 2007). Constructivism thus plays a direct role in the system and is also dependent on the interaction between systems for social dialogue in order to construct meaning, and vice versa.

The process of writing life stories incorporates all the elements of self, including work and life outside of work, as well as different life roles, such as family member, worker, student and community member (Clark, Severy & Sawyer, 2004). The dynamic interaction of the individual and all other systems is thus recognised and integrated into the process of career facilitation. Furthermore, postmodernism acknowledges individual beliefs about the world and values that are closely tied to cultural socialisation and lifestyle (Clark *et al.*, 2004), which integrate the subjective meaning that the individual holds of experiences in his/her life world with the system (Pollard, 2008). The postmodern approach to career facilitation addresses multicultural issues that are not addressed in traditional approaches, because the focus is on themes emerging from stories that are selected by the individual and included in his/her narrative (Clark *et al.*, 2004). The postmodern approach therefore incorporates both constructivism and systems theory into the process of career facilitation. The subjective meanings attached to experiences and events have an influence on life design as a result of continuous changes that happen through social construction in both the individual and the system (Pollard, 2008), and the process of life design has an influence on the construction of meaning and the system.

#### **1.1.1.6 Life design counselling**

From the above discussion on systems theory it can be concluded that the person is viewed as a system with various subsystems. A person's career is one of the parts that make up the whole, along with other dimensions like values, interests, roles, religion, and so forth. Research suggests that individuals design their life paths as a whole with their vocational plans forming part of the holistic self (Vanhalakka-Ruoho, 2010). A major consequence of the interconnectedness of the life domains is that we can no longer speak of career development or vocational guidance as if it happens in a vacuum; instead we have to talk about life trajectories in which people design their own lives, including their careers (Savickas *et al.*, 2009).

Career counselling in the twenty-first century is no longer a singular process that is focused on making a career choice, but instead is a series of interventions for dealing with psychological issues that accompany the client's career concerns (Brott, 2001). Because the individual

evolves and transforms from birth to death, he/she has to continually reinvent him/herself by designing a work life that is satisfying to the individual, and which can be redesigned as the individual or the environment evolves (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). Life design is thus a lifelong self-construction process that aims to promote skills and competences in overall life planning (Vanhalakka-Ruoho, 2010). Savickas and his colleagues (2009) identify these skills as adaptability, narratability, activity and intentionality. Adaptability addresses change, while narratability addresses continuity. Activity, on the other hand, deals with actual activities during which the person learns which abilities and interests he/she prefer to exercise, while intentionality deals with the meaning the person gives to his/her actions (Savickas *et al.*, 2009).

During life design counselling the client and counsellor create their own subsystem in which the social construction of meaning takes place. Career counselling thus becomes the co-construction of meaning (Savickas, 1993). The career counsellor, with his/her own subjective experiences, values, context and beliefs, becomes a co-constructor of new meanings and understandings of the client's life and work by adding to the client's vocabulary of life descriptions (Blustein, Palladino Schultheiss & Flum, 2004; Campbell & Ungar, 2004). The counsellor helps the client to critically analyse the current discourse that frames his/her life and assists the client in choosing which discourses to use and which to discard. The subjective meaning attached to experiences is discussed and reconstructed during the interaction between counsellor and client to expand the perspective of the client (Blustein *et al.*, 2004). Perspectivity is thus achieved from the interaction between the role players and their subjective experiences and meaning. I will now focus on the motivation for my study.

## **1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

Since the commencement of my studies in Educational Psychology and also during my internship at a high school, I have found myself on various occasions playing the role of facilitator in conversations regarding careers and planning for the future. I have found that most adolescents I work with still prefer career guidance to follow the traditional approach rather than the postmodern approach to career facilitation. This could be as a result of their familiarity with the objective methods of the traditional, trait-factor approach and perhaps because this is the only method they know for making a career decision. The trait-factor approach seems to be successful with adolescents from economically stable, traditional families where financial, social and emotional support is available to enable the adolescent to accept the results of the

assessment and follow the advice of the expert without further consideration. The reason for this could be because the psychometric media used have been standardised for this specific population.

During this time of practical training I had the privilege of meeting an adolescent boy who had been abandoned by his parents. He consulted me for career guidance and, in the course of our conversation, I found that he had a negative attitude toward the traditional approach. As a result, he questioned its validity by raising questions such as: “How will the results of these tests help me anyway? I don’t have money to study”. This led me to think about the applicability of the traditional approach to career facilitation with abandoned adolescents. Consequently, I set out to find information relevant to career facilitation with abandoned adolescents and came to the conclusion that relatively little research has been done in this field, specifically in South Africa.

I consider life design counselling as one feasible approach for career facilitation with abandoned adolescents. Life design allows for the interpretation of each individual’s unique experience of his/her life by constructing meaning for events in their lives through the language they use to describe their experiences (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). In this study, I would like to investigate the possibility and limits of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent. A better understanding of the possibilities and limits of this process would expand the existing theoretical knowledge of career psychology in the field of Educational Psychology and also better equip career counsellors in providing effective services for abandoned adolescents and in the process uncover the potential that is so often hidden inside these children.

### **1.3 AIM OF THE RESEARCH**

The primary aim of my study is to investigate the possibility and limits of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent. The way in which I am going to attempt to facilitate life design counselling is through co-constructive conversations<sup>4</sup> with an abandoned adolescent.

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<sup>4</sup> The term “co-constructive conversations” is used in this study to represent the dynamic process in which the researcher and the participant actively create meaning through dialogue.

## 1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

### 1.4.1 The research problem

In light of the above discussion and the goal of my study I formulated the following primary research question:

**What is the possibility and limits of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent?**

In order to gather more information regarding the primary research question I formulated the following secondary research questions:

- What possible influence do abandoned adolescents' experiences have on their approach to and participation in the life design process?
- What possible influence do abandoned adolescents' experiences have on their career decisions?
- In what possible ways can the life design process influence adolescents' current contexts?
- What is the possible contribution of my research to theory building and practice in the field of career guidance, specifically in South Africa?

In the following section I state the assumptions that I made before and during this research.

## 1.5 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

I make the following general assumptions within the context of the proposed study:

- Life design counselling is potentially appropriate for facilitating career counselling to abandoned adolescents.
- Abandoned adolescents' unique cultural context and subjective experience of their circumstances do not allow for valid implementation of modern, psychometric evaluation in terms of career facilitation.

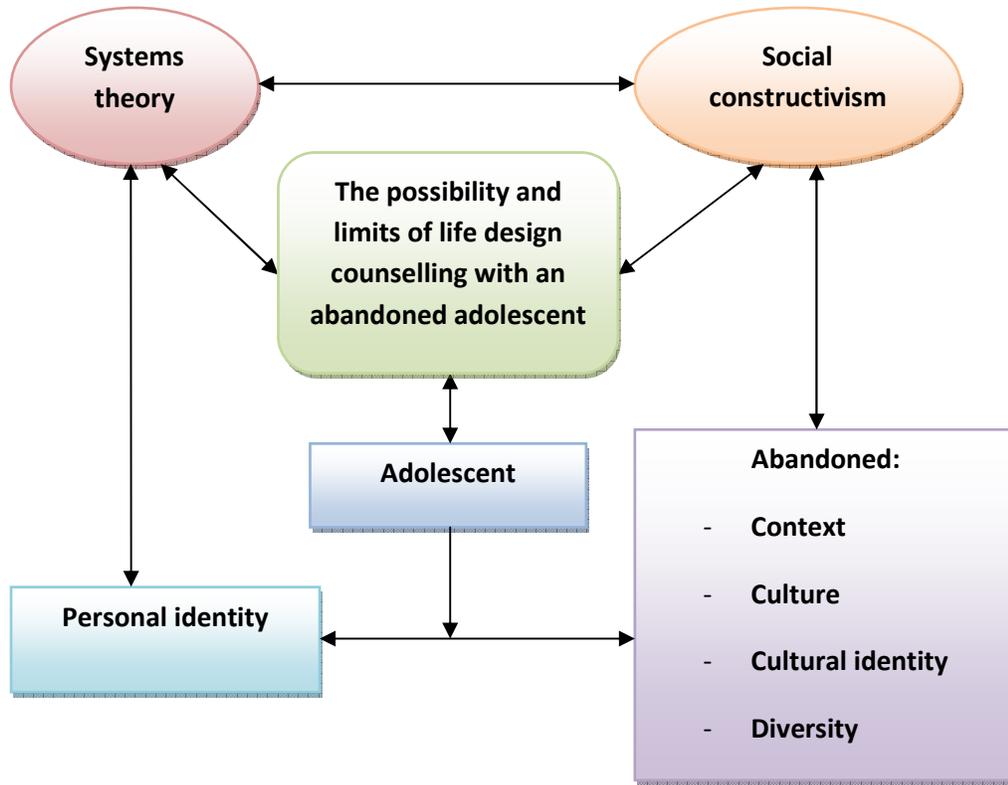
- An abandoned adolescent who undergoes the process of life design counselling will be able to construct a future narrative and will be able to develop the necessary skills for life-long career design.
- Career counsellors will be better equipped to provide effective career counselling services for abandoned adolescents if they use life design counselling as career facilitation approach.

## 1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1.1 provides a graphic representation of the way in which the relevant concepts in the study are related. From this representation it becomes clear that the value of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent will be investigated against the backdrop of systems theory and social constructivism. Systems theory will be used to focus on the experience of the participant in his/her unique context. The study will specifically focus on the context of abandoned adolescents and their experience of this context. Furthermore, systems theory will be used to investigate the influence of life design counselling on the contextual experience of the participant. The way in which the participant constructs meaning through interactions with other individuals and his/her environment will be investigated through the lens of social constructivism in order to gain a better understanding of the subjectivity and diversity of the participant's experiences. The relationship between the relevant concepts is briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

The personal identity of the adolescent plays an integral role in his/her subjective experience; consequently this identity influences the adolescent's approach, participation and experience of the life design counselling process. Systems theory suggests a continuous interaction between the individual and his/her context, which implies that the individual's subjective experience of the life design counselling process will have an influence on the system as a whole. Therefore, the influence of the individual's personal identity on the system and *vice versa* is taken into account.

The term "abandoned", for the purposes of this study, includes the concepts "context", "culture", "cultural identity" and "diversity". The aim of including these terms in the overarching concept of "abandoned" is to promote a more extensive understanding of the context in which the participant finds him/herself, as well as to emphasise the diversity of individuals' experience in similar contexts.



**Figure 1.1 Preliminary conceptual framework**

Since these concepts are complex and multidimensional in nature, I will discuss the different concepts individually to define the specific meaning for this study in the section that follow.

## 1.7 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

### 1.7.1 Abandoned

The concept of “abandoned” is multidimensional and the subjective meaning attached to the term is unique for different individuals. To “abandon” means to leave somebody or something behind for others to look after, especially somebody or something meant to be a personal responsibility (Encarta dictionary, 2010), without intending to return. Abandonment refers to the voluntary relinquishing of control over children by their natal parent or guardian, whether by leaving them somewhere, selling them, or legally consigning authority to some other person or institution (Brink, 2000). Kgoale (2007) indicates that abandoning can include child abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The South African Children’s Act 38 (2005:12) defines

“abandoned” in relation to a child as meaning a child who has obviously been deserted by the parent, guardian or caregiver; or who has, for no apparent reason, had no contact with the parent, guardian, or caregiver for a period of at least three months. The term “abandoned” includes the concepts of “context”, “culture”, “cultural identity” and “diversity”. Although these terms overlap and influence one another, they will be discussed separately in the following section in order to add to a better understanding of the complexity of the term “abandoned” with regards to this study.

### **1.7.1.1 Context**

Encarta dictionary (2010) defines context as the circumstances or events that form the environment within which something exists or takes place. An individual’s context is an ever-changing, ongoing interplay of forces. In life design counselling the focus in terms of context is on the relationship between the individual and his/her environment and the interaction that occurs within this system with its subsystems (Zunker, 1998). Thus, all the different subsystems that form an individual’s environment, including the individual’s biology, identity and culture, as well as the economic, social, political and relationship structures (Green, 2006) in which he/she finds him/herself, are seen as dynamic, interacting systems that influence one another continuously and that shape the individual’s construction of his/her life design.

### **1.7.1.2 Culture**

Culture, according to Louw (2004), can be described as all the shared, learned knowledge that people in a society hold. Culture guides the way people live, what they generally believe and value, how they communicate, and the nature of their habits, customs and tastes. Culture prescribes rituals, art forms, entertainment and customs of daily living.

### **1.7.1.3 Cultural identity**

Identity embraces a complex combination of social and self-representations, including personal, public, individual and group or cultural identities (Thom & Coetzee, 2004). Personal identity comprises the individual’s intra-psycho sense of continuity over time and situation, while public identity includes the individual’s own and other’s perceptions of various positions in society and social roles. Individual identity, on the other hand, represents the individual’s own and others’

perceptions of personal characteristics that distinguish individuals from one another. What one has in common with others engenders a cultural identity and creates a feeling of sameness and belonging to certain groups.

In this study, the term “abandoned” refers to adolescents who have been abandoned by their parents. Indirectly it also refers to the transmission of beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour through interaction with others in a specific context, as well as the influence of the individual’s cultural context on this process.

#### **1.7.1.4 Diversity**

Diversity can be described as the variety that exists between a group of individuals with regards to physical, spiritual and social characteristics (Encarta dictionary, 2010). Korth (2008) define diversity as primarily referring to differences across individuals and groups. By including diversity in the concept of “abandoned” a step is taken towards ensuring that the stereotyping of this group does not take place. The process of stereotyping rejects the unique characteristics of an individual and attributes more general features by allowing the view that all abandoned adolescents are the same (Smit, 2004). This therefore implies that, even as an individual identifies with a cultural group, he/she still has a unique interpretation of that group according to his/her construction of meaning in the context in which he/she lives. Diversity thus refers to the complexity of each individual in terms of his/her characteristics and context, and the subjective meaning they attach to experiences.

#### **1.7.2 Adolescent**

Ackerman (2006) sees adolescence as the developmental stage between childhood and adulthood. The age at which adolescence begins varies between 11 and 13 years of age, while the end of adolescence occurs between the ages of 17 and 21. This variation results from individual and cultural differences.

Because the chronological age of adolescence is determined by society, it is better to view adolescence as a process rather than a time period (Ackerman, 2006). During this developmental process individuals develop certain attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns that are necessary for effective participation in society. Furthermore, it is a process of finding

answers to questions such as: Who am I? and Who/what do I want to become? Adolescence is thus a process of exploration and decision making in terms of one's future, interpersonal relationships, religion, politics, moral values and so forth. In this process the individual moves from relative dependence towards relative independence and autonomy (Ackerman, 2006). Adolescence is also viewed as the most critical developmental stage for identity formation (Kroger, 2003).

For the purposes of this study, the concept of “adolescent” is defined as an individual between the ages of 12 and 21 years. During this time, the individual's personal identity plays an integral role in his/her experience of adolescence. Because personal identity is a complex concept that differs for each individual it is discussed in a separate section that follows.

### **1.7.3 Personal identity**

Personal identity is defined by Thom and Coetzee (2004:183) as one's *intra-psychic sense of continuity over time and diverse situations*. The interrelatedness of the individuals' context and their personal identity development is a complex and dynamic process that has only recently come to the foreground in research (Kroger, 2003). According to Kroger (2003), it is difficult to determine the direction of effects that results from the interaction between the individual's identity and the environment. However, one thing is clear – identity development and the socio-cultural context in which it occurs cannot be separated from one another (Thom & Coetzee, 2004). Erikson (in Thom & Coetzee, 2004) notes that individuals, although unique, are largely the product of their culture, and that identity development is affected by changes occurring within the socio-cultural context, as well as in the individual who is in the process of the adolescent developmental stage. Therefore, personal identity is a social construct that cannot be separated from the influence of the individual's context during the process of life design counselling. Against this background I will now discuss the expected outcomes of the study.

## **1.8 EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY**

The goal of this research is to investigate the possibility and limits of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent. Because the individual is in constant interaction with the bigger system within which he/she functions, the bigger system is indirectly influenced by any changes in the individual. By investigating this reciprocal influence the researcher can identify

possibilities and limits of the life design counselling process that can possibly lead to the advantage of both the individual and the greater community.

## **1.9 ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS**

The first set of challenges that I anticipate is logistic in nature. Qualitative research can be unpredictable and the possibility exists that the selected participant will not be able to be involved in the research for the full duration thereof. He/she can withdraw due to reasons such as moving away or a full schedule that can eliminate extra time to participate in the research. This possibility will imply that I will have to repeat the data-collection process with another participant. Secondly, life design counselling and the current experience of the South African context by abandoned adolescents are both relatively new areas that have not been researched together. The suitability of life design counselling as a possible intervention technique with an abandoned adolescent in the current South African context can thus only be determined through the course of the study.

In the following section I will discuss the paradigmatic perspective that guides this study.

## **1.10 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE**

A paradigm is a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality, which gives rise to a particular worldview (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). These assumptions are related to the views researchers hold concerning the nature of reality, the relationship of the researcher to that which he/she is studying, the role of values in a study, and the process of research itself (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). I work from an interpretive/constructivist paradigm. This paradigm is discussed briefly in the following section.

### **1.10.1 Interpretive/constructivist paradigm<sup>5</sup>**

Researchers working in an interpretive/constructivist paradigm acknowledge that people's subjective experiences are valid, multiple and socially constructed (ontology). Researchers believe that they can understand the experiences of others in interaction with themselves (the researchers) and by listening to them (epistemology); and that qualitative research techniques

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<sup>5</sup> Please refer to Chapter 3 for a more extensive discussion of the paradigmatic perspective.

are best suited for conducting their investigations (methodology) (Adams, Collair, Oswald & Perold, 2004).

The paradigm the researcher uses shapes and gives direction to the methods and strategies with which the research process will be approached. The research methodology and the strategies used in this study will be discussed in the section that follows.

## **1.11 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design can be described as a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The study is qualitative, descriptive and exploratory in nature and the research design for the study is a case study. The characteristics of the research design will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

### **1.11.1 Characteristics of the research design**

#### **1.11.1.1 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research focuses on describing and understanding participants in their natural context (Nieuwenhuis, 2007) instead of explaining phenomena by means of statistical analysis. Data are thus collected and presented by means of words and pictures rather than numbers (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The aim is therefore to gain a better understanding of people and their constructions of their world and their experiences by investigating participants in their natural setting. Qualitative researchers make use of an inductive process, meaning that they build toward theory during the process of research instead of trying to prove a theory or hypothesis (Merriam, 2002; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). A qualitative approach will provide insight into the everyday lives of abandoned adolescents and their life design process. It will also provide a holistic view of the interaction between all the subsystems that are at play in constructing a career.

### **1.11.1.2 Descriptive research**

Descriptive research presents a picture of the specific details of a situation, a social setting or a relationship (Neuman, 2000). In the study I aim to accurately describe qualities, behaviours, attitudes and experiences of the research participant in his/her own unique contexts without manipulating independent variables. By doing this a better understanding of an abandoned adolescent's holistic experience of the process of life design counselling will be reached (Creswell, 2007).

### **1.11.1.3 Exploratory research**

Exploratory research is conducted to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or individual that is relatively unknown (Fouché, 2002). The research aims to encourage further exploration of the phenomenon and to stimulate future refinement and adaptation of the concept (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009).

The case study is a specific qualitative research design which will be discussed in the following section in order to elucidate the characteristics of the case study and also to motivate the use of this design in the proposed study.

### **1.11.2 Case study research**

Case study research can be described as an in-depth investigation and description of a single phenomenon over a specific time (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). The case can be selected according to specific characteristics<sup>6</sup> that are present in individuals or phenomena (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009). An abandoned adolescent, male or female, will serve as the case for the purposes of this study. Abandoned adolescents who reveal a need for life design counselling will therefore be approached to possibly take part in the study.

Let me now turn my focus to the way in which this study will be executed by discussing the proposed research methodology.

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<sup>6</sup> Please refer to Chapter 3 for a description of the specific selection criteria that participants have to comply with.

## **1.12 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

My research involves a single case study where the value of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent will be investigated. The participating adolescent will be selected on the basis of specific characteristics that he/she must possess.

The life design process<sup>7</sup>, as described by Savickas and his colleagues (2009), will be integrated with the life design process as suggested by Campbell and Ungar (2004) to serve as the framework for this case study. The process relies on the co-construction of meaning with regards to the participant's life design through the use of social dialogue<sup>8</sup> between the participant and the researcher and is unique for each individual.

The data-collection techniques for this study will be discussed in the section that follows.

## **1.13 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

Data collection and data analysis tend to be viewed as an ongoing, cyclical process during qualitative research, making it almost impossible to distinguish them as separate stages of research. This implies that, during the research process, data collection, processing, analysis and reporting are intertwined activities (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The use of multiple techniques provides the researcher with opportunities to verify the data. (See Chapter 3 for a comprehensive discussion of the data-collection techniques used in this study).

## **1.14 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Qualitative data analysis is a non-linear process that involves organising, analysing, interpreting and describing the mass of collected data (De Vos, 2002; Creswell, 2003). Prominent themes are uncovered from the data by means of inductive analysis. This will enhance the rich and deep description of the data that is required for this study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). I will follow Creswell's (2008) case study approach to data analysis in this particular study. (See Chapter 3 for a comprehensive discussion of the data analysis and interpretation for this study.)

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<sup>7</sup> Please refer to Chapter 3 for an in-depth description of the life design process.

<sup>8</sup> Please refer to "Preliminary literature review" for a description of the term "social dialogue".

### **1.15 QUALITY CRITERIA**

Quality assurance strategies will be implemented in order to enhance the dependability and credibility of this study. The quality assurance criteria that will be used in this study will be discussed Chapter 3.

### **1.16 RESEARCH SITE**

The research will be conducted at the Jacaranda Children's Home in Pretoria since this site will be easily reached by the participant. The Jacaranda Children's Home also has the necessary facilities to enhance the data collection process.

### **1.17 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER**

The subjectivity of the researcher plays an important role in qualitative research. He/she is viewed as an instrument in the process of research (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000). I will thus have an interactive role in the research and will be involved in all aspects of the study. (See Chapter 3 for a full discussion of the researcher's role during this study.)

### **1.18 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical considerations are extremely important when conducting research. I undertake to uphold the ethical guidelines as set out in Chapter 3.

### **1.19 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This research will only focus on one case study which limits the generalisability of the results to other abandoned adolescents. One case study does not represent the whole abandoned adolescent population of South Africa. Furthermore, the nature of case study research involves subjectivity on the part of the researcher. This means that the results are described from a selective, personal and subjective point of view, making it impossible to verify the results or to compare them with other individuals. To prove the findings of this study it would be necessary to repeat the process with other participants. Please refer to Chapter 5 for a discussion of additional limitations that will possibly be identified during the study.

## 1.20 LAYOUT OF THE CHAPTERS

### **Chapter 1: Introductory orientation**

Chapter 1 provides an introductory background and orientation to the study, motivation, aim of the research, problem statement, working assumptions, conceptual framework, clarification of concepts, expected outcomes, anticipated problems, paradigmatic perspective, research design, data-collection techniques, data analysis and interpretation, research site, my role in the research, ethical considerations, limitations of the study and layout of the chapters.

### **Chapter 2: Literature study**

In Chapter 2 I provide a literature study on the possible impact of life design counselling on an abandoned adolescent. I will focus on existing and relevant literature that is related to life design counselling, the identity development of adolescents, the experience of culture as subjective, as well as the role of language in the construction of meaning.

### **Chapter 3: Research methodology**

The research process will be discussed in detail in this chapter. Included are the underlying paradigm and the research design and methodology used in this study. I will also discuss my role as researcher, the quality criteria for this study, ethical considerations, as well as challenges identified during the study.

### **Chapter 4: Research results**

Chapter 4 will provide a description and analysis of the results of the study.

### **Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations**

In this chapter I will summarise the results of the study and provide conclusions. I will also discuss the limitations of the study and make recommendations with regards to practice and future research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE STUDY**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter I explore the main themes of my study. I begin by discussing the relevance of life design counselling in a postmodern society followed by a brief overview of existing models for life design counselling. I then explore the goals of life design counselling and the factors that influence the process. After this a discussion of the theoretical approaches that relate to the context and the social construction of meaning follow. Next I discuss the relationship between social constructionism and life design counselling after which I will focus on the cultural context as a subjective experience. I then give an overview of the role of language in the construction of meaning and focus on the identity development of South African adolescents and lastly turn my attention to abandoned adolescents in the current South African context. I conclude the chapter by briefly summarising the main themes.

#### **2.2 LIFE DESIGN COUNSELLING: AN APPROACH FOR THE POSTMODERN ERA**

Changes in society and the workplace in the 21st century, as well as advances in technology contribute to changing perceptions of work, values, goals and the meanings people attach to these. The diversity and challenges that individuals are confronted with in the postmodern world, as well as the recognition of the complexity of human life, lead to a need for overall life design (Campbell & Ungar, 2004).

According to Savickas (2000) the traditional, linear career path from school to the workplace to retirement is disappearing. Instead, there is an opportunity to design a work life which is satisfying to the individual, and which can be redesigned as needs, interests and life experiences change (Peavy in Campbell & Ungar, 2004). To Savickas (2000) this means that individuals must manage their own careers by maintaining their employability. Employability refers to a person's value in terms of future employment opportunities, which is determined by the accumulation of knowledge, skills, experience and reputation that can be invested in new employment opportunities as they arise (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). To accomplish this, Savickas (2000) suggests that individuals draw meaning from the role of work in their lives

instead of merely looking at how they fit into the occupational structure. Career planning is therefore being replaced by career management and life design.

The above implies that career management is more holistic than mere career planning. Zunker (1998) emphasises the importance of not considering the individual's career in isolation, but rather to incorporate it into life planning as a part of broader concerns about how to live a life in the postmodern world. Career thus has to be managed along with all the other different domains in a person's life (Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Guichard (2005) notes that the current societal issue underlying personal and career development can be summed up in the following question: How can individuals be helped to direct their own lives within their own human societal context?

Hence, life design counselling is a life-long, holistic, contextual and preventive approach to career facilitation. During life design counselling the counsellor and client co-construct the client's life story or narrative, then deconstruct the client's story by offering other points of view and challenging the influence of the client's context on the story. Lastly, the counsellor and client construct a future narrative in order to develop action plans for overcoming barriers (Savickas *et al.*, 2009; Brott, 2005). Limited studies and discussions on the methods and application of life design are available in the literature. Two of the available models that are relevant will be discussed in the following section.

### **2.2.1 Existing models for life design counselling**

Various authors have described models for life design counselling (Campbell & Ungar, 2004; Savickas *et al.*, 2009; Zunker, 1998) but the following two were selected for this study because they are relatively recent and represent a step-by-step plan for life design counselling.

Campbell and Ungar (2004) propose a narrative model for life design counselling which they developed in private practice. In this model the client is encouraged to work through seven aspects in order to develop, through co-construction, a preferred future in the form of a story. Because each individual is unique, the design work is sequenced according to what is most salient to the client at that moment. The seven aspects of life design, as suggested by Campbell and Ungar (2004), facilitate clients to (a) know what they want, (b) know what they have, (c) know what they hear, (d) know what constrains them, (e) map their preferred story, (f) grow into their story, and (g) grow out of their story. In this way clients' attention is focused on the

developing storyline of their lives (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). Although this approach illustrates a theoretically applicable model (Pollard, 2008), the designers of this model do not elaborate on the individual's experience of life design counselling or the implications of this process for the client's life.

Savickas and his colleagues (2009) suggest a six-step model for life design counselling. The sequence of the steps is not set, but is established as the process unfolds according to the experience of each client, making it a unique process for each individual. In other words, the client indicates where to start in the counselling process. The first step is to define the problem and identify what the client hopes to achieve. During the second step the client and counsellor explore his/her current system of subjective identity forms<sup>9</sup>. The third step aims to open perspectives by narrating the client's story and reviewing this story. The revised story results in a new story. Following the story revision, the fourth step is to place the problem in this new story. This is achieved by putting the problem in the new perspective. Step five is to specify some activities for the client to put into practice in order to actualise the identity the client constructed in step 4, while the last step consists of follow-up, both short term and long term.

Very little research has been done on the above models, however, and Savickas and his colleagues (2009) suggest case-study research to elaborate on the individual effects that the process has on clients and also to explore the influence of contextual variables that might have an influence on life design counselling. I will now turn my attention to goals of life design counselling.

### **2.2.2 Goals of life design counselling**

Life design counselling interventions aim, according to Savickas and his colleagues (2009), to increase the client's adaptability, narratability and activity. Adaptability deals with change, while narratability deals with continuity. Together these two outcomes provide individuals with the flexibility and dependability of selves that enables them to engage in meaningful activities and thrive in knowledge societies. Activity, on the other hand, deals with actual activities during

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<sup>9</sup> A subjective identity form is the way a given individual sees him/herself and others in a particular context as well as relates to others and the objects in this context (Savickas et al., 2009). Please refer to 2.3.3 Self-construction theory.

which the person learns which abilities and interests he/she would prefer to exercise (Savickas *et al.*, 2009). I will now briefly discuss each of these three goals separately.

#### 2.2.2.1 Adaptability

Savickas (1997: 254) defined career adaptability as *the readiness to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes in work and working conditions*. The individual thus has to manage his/her life to adapt to the world of work. Life design counselling therefore aims to help individuals articulate and enact a career story that supports adaptive and flexible responses to developmental tasks, vocational traumas, and occupational transitions. It helps the individual to develop his/her capabilities to anticipate changes in his/her own future in a changing context (Savickas *et al.*, 2009).

By focusing on adaptability the counsellor's attention is turned to developing readiness to cope with change in clients of all ages and across all life roles (Campbell & Ungar, 2004; Savickas, 1997). Adaptability involves playful attitudes, self- and environmental exploration and informed decision making. Life design counselling therefore aims to help individuals to continually look ahead to anticipate choices and transitions, explore possibilities and choose directions that improve fit and develop the self (Savickas, 1997).

#### 2.2.2.2 Narratability

Life design counselling uses a dialogue between the client and counsellor to assist the client to construct and narrate a story that portrays his/her career and life with coherence and continuity. The story should enable the client to better understand his/her life themes, vocational personality and adaptability resources (Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Guichard (2005) notes that part of this process is the construction of subjective identity forms<sup>10</sup> and their underlying frames. The role of the counsellor should be to help the client formulate the identity in his/her own words and to map out his/her system of subjective identity forms. Life design counselling assists the individual to identify all of his/her subjective identity forms or life roles and then reflect on how these forms or roles may become central in his/her life while the rest may be peripheral

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<sup>10</sup> Please refer to 2.3.3 Self-construction theory.

(Savickas *et al.*, 2009). The outcome of this process is therefore better self-knowledge and self-awareness.

### 2.2.2.3 Activity

Actual activities in the different domains of life are critical in the process of designing and building one's own life. By engaging in diverse activities the individual comes to learn which abilities and interests he/she prefer to exercise (Savickas *et al.*, 2009). The goal of life design counselling is therefore to assist the client to engage in activities that he/she perceives to relate to his/her future in order to re-interpret life themes and reconstruct his/her life story.

I will now discuss important factors that could influence the process of life design counselling.

### **2.2.3 Factors that influence the process of life design counselling**

Greene (2006) identified factors that may impact career development and life design. Among these factors are the potential, abilities and emotional age of the individual, early career interest and decision making, personality traits and characteristics. Other factors are an emphasis on traditional academic domains and conventional training routes, expectations of others, as well as belonging to a specific population such as the individual's socioeconomic status, race, gender and sexual orientation. Additional dimensions that play an important role in life design counselling include the individual's view on success, the individual's motivation for work, needs for intrinsic satisfaction, roles that the individual fulfils in his/her life as well as in important relationships, continuous development and contextual changes (Zunker, 1998).

Psychological well-being takes on a central role in the individual's general experience of life satisfaction and happiness (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Ryff (in Strauser, Lustig & Çiftçi, 2008) developed the construct psychological well-being and described it as the by-product of a life that is well-lived that develops from a striving for perfection and the realization of one's true potential. The six key points that provides the foundation for Ryff's model of psychological well-being are self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006; Strauser *et al.*, 2008). Strauser and his colleagues (2008) found that individuals with an increased level of psychological well-being also report more effective skills and behaviours related to the process

of career development. Their research further suggests that individuals experience lower levels of anxiety regarding the future when they have a definitive goal and direction for their lives, have set clear outcomes for their lives and are convinced that their lives are meaningful. Thus, there is a positive relationship between an individual's psychological well-being and life design.

From the above discussion on life design counselling it becomes clear that the life design process is influenced by factors that are both internal and external to the individual. Life design counselling therefore becomes an ongoing process of accommodating the individual's needs and circumstances in a specific context (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006; Zunker, 1998). The following section focuses on the theoretical frameworks underlying life design counselling.

## **2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS UNDERLYING LIFE DESIGN COUNSELLING**

### **2.3.1 Introduction to the theoretical frameworks underlying life design counselling**

Life design counselling integrates the theories of career construction and self-construction and is based on the epistemology of social constructionism, recognising that an individual's knowledge and identity are the product of social interaction and that meaning is co-constructed through discourse or conversation (Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Career construction theory asserts that individuals construct their careers by imposing meaning on their vocational behaviour and occupational experiences (Savickas, 2005). Self-construction theory, on the other hand, states that individuals construct themselves in relation to a specific, dynamic context (Guichard & Lenz, 2005). Life design counselling also incorporates the challenges and needs that an individual experiences in his/her unique environment and therefore takes into account the individual's context with all its interconnected systems (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). The theories underlying life design counselling thus include self-construction theory, career construction theory, social constructionism and ecosystemic theory.

### **2.3.2 Career construction theory**

Savickas (2005) summarises career construction theory as the way in which the individual's career world is made through the process of personal constructivism and social constructionism. According to this theory, individuals construct subjective representations of reality that have specific meaning for them and which differs from the representations of other individuals.

Furthermore, the theory views careers from a contextualist perspective, one that sees the individual in a specific environment that has a continuous influence on his/her development. The individual thus constructs his/her career development in what Watson and Stead (2006) refer to as a multilayered macro and micro context of systems that include his/her physical environment, culture, race and ethnicity, his/her family and neighbourhood, schools and historical era he/she is living in. This implies that individual career development is more a result of ongoing adaptation to the individual's changing context, than of a maturation of prescribed career behaviours and internal constructs (Watson & Stead, 2006).

Hartung (2007) describes career construction as a deliberate merging of, and simultaneous attention to personality dispositions, developmental processes and individual life narratives. In so doing career construction considers the traits a person possesses, how the individual adapts over the life course to transitions and changes of personal or environmental origin, as well as the reasons why individuals behave and move in a specific direction. This model therefore approaches career construction in a holistic perspective, taking into account vocational choice, adjustment and development as a fluid process of matching and creating meaning that matters to the individual and his/her social context.

Career construction theory focuses on four cornerstones, namely, life structure, career adaptability strategies, personality style and life themes stories (Hartung, 2007). According to Savickas (in Pollard, 2008), personality styles are viewed as processes with possibilities, rather than realities that predict the future. Furthermore, the concept "life themes" is used to interweave the conceptualizations of career personality style and career adaptability in a comprehensive theory of career behaviour and counselling. A brief overview of the cornerstone concepts of career construction theory follows.

#### 2.3.2.1 Life structure

Super (in Hartung, 2007) recognised that people's lives are made up of a constellation of roles that are played out in various cultural domains or "theatres". Advancing this idea, career construction theory sees social roles as one cornerstone for understanding vocational behaviour and its meaning to the individual (Hartung, 2007). Career choice and development are therefore viewed as situated within a web of social roles that individuals enact and attach a unique meaning to. Career construction theory focuses on the relative importance that individuals

ascribe to roles such as family, play and leisure, school, work, community and other domains. Thus, the focus is not only on the career role the individual fulfils, but also on cultural values, the changing nature of work, growing diversity in society, a global economy and marketplace, as well as other barriers that influence individuals directly or indirectly (Hartung, 2007).

### 2.3.2.2 Career adaptability

In today's context of fluid societies and flexible organisations the individual has to be more active in constructing his/her own career. Guichard and Dauwalder (2010) note that this implies that individuals have to commit to an ongoing reflexive process that allows them to see themselves in some possible work roles that they relate to themselves. To describe this career construction process, Savickas (in Guichard & Dauwalder, 2010) proposes the psychosocial construct of career adaptability that appears more adequate in our current context than career maturity (as devised by Super in a modern context). Savickas (2005: 51) defines career adaptability as *an individual's readiness and resources for coping with current and future vocational developmental tasks, occupational transitions, and personal traumas*. Career adaptability thus plays an important role in the process of career construction and focuses on the self-regulation and self-expression of one's personality within the social environment by means of attitudes, competencies and behaviours that individuals use to fit themselves to work that suits them. This enables individuals to effectively implement their self-concepts in occupational roles, thus creating their work lives and building their careers (Savickas, 2005).

Career construction theory incorporates and advances Super's developmental career stages (growth, exploration, establishment, management and disengagement) and advances the view that the individual cycles through this process as transitions arise (Hartung, 2007). The different career stages are presented in Table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1: Stages of career development**

Stages	Characteristics and developmental tasks
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial stage: 4-13 years of age.</li> <li>• Concentrates on forming a realistic self-concept.</li> <li>• The self-concept reflects a mental representation of personal strengths, limitations, interests, values, abilities, personality and talents.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual acquires a future orientation.</li> <li>• Individual envisions him/herself in a variety of roles and understands the relative importance of these roles.</li> </ul>
Exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial stage: 14-24 years of age.</li> <li>• Focus on gathering information about the self and occupations.</li> <li>• Individual must learn about opportunities in the world of work, initially implement his/her self-concept and explore occupations broadly.</li> <li>• Vocational maturity develops by exploring work roles and becoming knowledgeable about career decision-making principles in the occupational world.</li> </ul>
Establishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial stage: 25-44 years of age.</li> <li>• Centres on implementing the self-concept in an occupational role to effect cohesion between one's inner and outer worlds that adds meaning to life.</li> <li>• Individual must stabilise and secure a place in the work world, project a positive attitude and productive work habits, and refine his/her self-concept.</li> </ul>
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial stage: 45-65 years of age.</li> <li>• Concentrates on holding on to what has been gained, updating knowledge and skills and innovating to keep work fresh.</li> <li>• Individual must decide if he/she wants to do his/her present work or whether he/she wants to move through exploration and establishment again.</li> <li>• Individual should adapt to changes in the self and his/her occupation.</li> </ul>
Disengagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial stage: 65 years and older.</li> <li>• Focus on the goal of leaving the work role and to devote increased time to roles in other theatres.</li> <li>• Productivity levels begin to decelerate, work activities decrease, issues of retirement surface.</li> <li>• Individual must deal with retirement living tasks.</li> </ul>

Adapted from Hartung, 2007.

Hartung (2007) asserts that each stage with its developmental tasks entail a primary adaptive goal. Completing all tasks associated with each stage builds a foundation for success and future adaptability. The career development stages can be seen as a maxicycle (in which the individual moves through all the career development stages at least once in a lifetime) and minicycles (in which the individual repeatedly moves through the developmental stages as changes in his/her personal life or the environment occurs, requiring further exploration and re-establishment) (Savickas, 2005).

Career adaptability entails certain attitudes, beliefs and competencies – the career construction ABCs – that influence the strategies used to solve problems and the behaviours employed to align one’s vocational self-concept with work roles over the life course (Hartung, 2007; Savickas, 2005). Savickas (2005) groups these career construction ABCs into four dimensions of adaptability, namely concern, control, curiosity and confidence. According to these dimensions one can conceptualize adaptive individuals as (a) becoming concerned about their future as a worker, (b) increasing personal control over their vocational future, (c) displaying curiosity by exploring possible selves and future scenarios, and (d) strengthening the confidence to pursue their aspirations (Savickas, 2005).

### 2.3.2.3 Personality style

While career construction theory considers and incorporates personality development and the utility of person-environment psychology with its emphasis on matching persons to positions, the personality style component of career construction theory attends to individual differences in values, abilities, needs and interests (Hartung, 2007; Savickas, 2005). Savickas (2005) notes that career construction theory concentrates on subjective, private and idiographic perspective on personality characteristics or traits, rather than the objective, public and nomothetic typologies. Career construction theory therefore views traits as dynamic, fluid and subjectively experienced possibilities for adaptation to the social world and individuals can retain or discontinue using particular adaptive coping strategies depending on their situational demands (Hartung, 2007). Personality style is thus, according to Savickas (2005), a representation of socially constructed groups of attitudes and abilities that are influenced by the time, place and culture that supports it.

### 2.3.2.4 Life themes

A life theme is defined by Csikszentmihalyi and Beattie (in Savickas, 2005: 59) as *a problem or a set of problems which the person wishes to solve above everything else and the means a person finds to achieve a solution* and thus focuses on motivation for career related behaviour. Hartung (2007) explains that while personality style indicates what a person has achieved and career adaptability strategies reflect on how he/she has achieved it, the life themes component of career construction theory deals with why people move in the particular vocational direction that they do. Savickas (2005) believes that occupational choice is the implementation of a self-

concept and that work is seen as a manifestation of selfhood, while vocational development is viewed as a continuous process of improving the match between the self and the situation. By narrating stories about their career, individuals reveal the themes they use to make meaningful choices and adjust to work roles.

Each of the separate career stories told by the individual is unified by integrative themes that organise the discrete experiences of work life into a plot. By intentionally organizing and binding together these discrete experiences, a unifying life theme will emerge that outlines lived experiences with a meaningful coherence and long-term continuity (Savickas, 2005). Therefore, the focus is not only on complexities and contradiction in the client's story, but rather on the glue that holds the facts together in a meaningful way. As Guichard and Dauwalder (2010: 3) asserts: *The life theme is what matters in the life story. It consists of what is at stake in the person's life.* Therefore, life themes are significant to the individual as they indicate what gives the individual's life purpose, meaning, direction and coherence.

The self-construction model has a more general objective than career construction (Guichard & Dauwalder, 2010) and will be discussed in the following section.

### **2.3.3 Self-construction theory**

In the self-construction model, Guichard (2005) and Guichard (2009) postulated various universal human characteristics and phenomena that are suitable to given societal contexts. As in Career construction theory, Self-construction theory refers to an epistemology of social constructivism which sees individuals not as passive objects of external forces, but as proactive agents whose prime activity is self-organisation in order to maintain order and continuity in their experience (Mahoney in Guichard & Dauwalder, 2010). Guichard and Lenz (2005) stress the importance of the individual's context by noting that individuals construct themselves in a specific way, in relation to specific modes of relating to themselves that exist at a given moment in a given society. As plural beings in a postmodern society individuals connect their different current life domains and order them according to various prospects (Guichard & Dauwalder, 2010). The big theoretical question for Guichard (in Duarte, 2009), is therefore to help individuals find their unique response to the questions related to what path their life should take. Guichard (2005: 114) states the general issue of career development as follows: *How can individuals be helped to 'guide' their own lives in their own human societal context?*

The self-construction theory combines three different approaches or fundamental propositions: sociological, cognitive, and dynamic (Guichard, 2009). These three propositions will be briefly discussed under separate headings in the following sections.

#### 2.3.3.1 Sociological proposition

The sociological proposition can be stated as follows: *Individuals construct themselves and relate to themselves in a given society* (Guichard, 2005: 115). Individuals are born into a certain society and therefore act, interact and discuss matters within a social and linguistic context which were already organised in a certain way when they were born (Guichard, 2009). Each society is characterized by an identity offer of various social categories, such as gender, age, religion, occupation, leisure activities, *etc.* and each individual can recognize him/herself and others as belonging to one or more of these categories (Guichard & Lenz, 2005).

This identity offer is not static, but evolves because of interactions between individuals and between communities (Guichard, 2005). Through the mediation of their actions and interactions or language games, as Guichard (2009) calls it, individuals contribute to the evolution of their social contexts and new categories appear as a result. According to Dubar (in Guichard, 2005), two main processes are involved in self-construction in relation to this identity offer: relational transaction and biographical transaction. Relational transaction implies interactions and dialogues with others. It leads to an appropriation of a certain identity, or identity form, by individuals in which they recognize and construct themselves. Biographical transaction constitutes an articulation of past, present, possible and future selves and cannot be separated from relational transaction (Guichard, 2005).

An identity form can be defined as a *given way to see oneself and others in a certain context* (Guichard, 2009: 253) or as a form in which individuals construct themselves and define themselves in relation to their current interactions, their past history and their future plans (Guichard, 2005). Foucault (in Guichard, 2005) stresses that individuals construct themselves in different identity forms depending on the context and interactions in which they are engaged. For example, in a high-school context, an individual may consider him/herself as a (or in the identity form of a) “high-school learner” and interacts and communicates as such. The same individual perceives another person as a (or in the identity form of a) “teacher” and interacts and communicates with him/her in an appropriate way (Guichard, 2009). The same individual may

perceive his/her peers as “other high-school learners” and therefore interact and communicate in a way that is different to that of the “teacher”. Thus, it is in certain social contexts that individuals construct themselves in various determined identity forms and, as Guichard (2005) notes, turn themselves into certain kinds of subjects.

#### 2.3.3.2 Cognitive proposition

Guichard (2005: 117) states the cognitive proposition as follows: *Individuals organise their conduct, construct themselves and perceive others, via cognitive structures built during prior activities, interactions and interlocutions.* Guichard (2005) regards cognitive identity frames as the most appropriate structure to describe the double phenomenon of perceiving others and of self-constructing in various identity forms. Cognitive identity frames are mental structures of attributes that have default values. For example, in the cognitive frame “room”, the default value for the attribute “wall” is four. Thus, if an individual comes across the word “room” he/she immediately visualises a four-wall room. Nevertheless, he/she can immediately visualise a round or triangular room if need be. Therefore, the value for the attribute “wall” changes (Guichard, 2005; Guichard, 2009; Guichard & Lenz, 2005). The default values of identity frames attributes are mainly social stereotypes (Guichard, 2005). For example, in western cultures, when someone thinks of the occupation “nurse”, he/she will very likely think of a female nurse. These frames create in people’s minds a system of cognitive identity frames. The system of identity frames constitutes an individual’s internalized representations of the identity offer of the society in which he/she interacts (Guichard & Lenz, 2005) and is thus the cognitive basis of the representation of oneself and of others, as well as of self-construction in some identity forms. Guichard (2009) notes that identity frames are inferred cognitive structures which individuals are not immediately aware of, but that individuals are fully aware of the identity forms they perceive in relation to these cognitive structures.

Among these identity forms are some that are of particular importance with regards to self-construction. Guichard (2005) identifies these as subjective identity forms. Identity forms and subjective identity forms differ from one another in that the former constitute a view of another individual according to the structure of the frames, while subjective identity forms are forms in which an individual sees and constructs him/herself. Self-construction in a particular subjective identity form therefore leads to giving some particular default values to the attributes of the underlying frame. Guichard (2009: 253) and Guichard and Lenz (2005: 118) note that the

individual “identizes” him/herself. In other words, he/she gives specific values to the attributes of the underlying cognitive frame and enacts the social role as he/she construed it in his/her mind, with his/her own style and strategies. The individual’s identity is therefore seen as multiple and can be described as a changing system of subjective identity forms.

At any given moment some subjective identity forms hold a more central place than others in the organisation of the system of identity forms of a given individual, according to the context in which he/she interacts and communicates (Guichard, 2009; Guichard & Dauwalder, 2010). The individual’s subjectivity, or identity, thus seems to be constituted by the evolving system of subjective identity forms. Some forms refer to different current experiences of the person, while other identity forms refer to either the past or the future. Guichard (2009) notes that some past subjective identity forms may remain important in the current life of an individual and may even be so important that they form the thread of continuity that Savickas referred to as the life theme. Other subjective identity forms are anticipated ones which lead the individual to imagine his/her expected future (Guichard & Dauwalder, 2010). Two psychological processes intervene in the individual’s self-construction of a system of subjective identity forms. These are discussed in the following section.

### 2.3.3.3 Dynamic proposition

The third proposition, stated as the dynamism of the self-construction process (Guichard, 2005) originates in a tension between two fundamental types of individual reflexivity. The first form of reflexivity, “I-me” reflexivity, refers to identification processes where the individual views and constructs him/herself in the image of others who he/she would like to imitate. The individual can therefore imagine him/herself as a footballer or a ballerina through identification links to others. This form of reflexivity is based on the pre-linguistic processes of self-anticipation, in which (what will become) the “I” appears as a complete whole, informs the present and structures it according to an anticipated unity (Guichard, 2005; Guichard, 2009).

While the first process of reflexivity is dual (it is a relation to oneself via an expected self), the second process of reflexivity is triple. It involves a dialogue with the self in which the individual occupies three possible positions of any thought: the “I” who adopts a certain position, the “you” who responds, and the “he/she” whose third-person point of view is discussed by the “I-you” (Guichard & Dauwalder, 2010). This “I-you-he/she” reflexivity originates, according to Guichard

(2009), in interactions with others and in language games in which the child relates to someone who nurtures him/her during a psychological symbiosis. This reflexivity accounts for self-conscience as an ongoing process of self-interpretation throughout a dialog during which the individual moves from one position to another, allowing for re-interpretation from different perspectives (Guichard, 2005; Guichard, 2009).

Social constructionism as a theoretical framework for this study is discussed in the next section.

### **2.3.4 Social constructionism**

Constructivism and social constructionism are often undifferentiated under the generic term “constructivism”. Young and Collin (2004), however, have elucidated the distinction between the two. According to these authors, constructivism focuses on the way in which the individual engages cognitively in the construction of knowledge, while social constructionism emphasises that the social and psychological world are given meaning through social processes and interaction. The social aspect of interaction in relationships is thus dominant in social constructionism (Blustein *et al.*, 2004; Bujolt, 2004). Stead (2004) notes that social constructionism does not accept one truth, but proposes that there are many truths and multiple realities which are constructed in interaction with others.

Burr (in Cohen, Duberley & Mallon, 2004) outlined four key assumptions underpinning social constructionism. These include:

- a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge;
- historical and cultural specificity;
- knowledge is sustained by social processes;
- knowledge and social action go together.

Social constructionism thus encapsulates the way in which meaning is created, negotiated and transformed through social interaction.

The process of life design counselling focuses on the social meaning that is created through interpersonal relationships within a specific context. The context is made up of various systems and subsystems that influence one another on a continuous basis. To shed some light on this I

will now briefly discuss the ecosystemic theory in order to elaborate on the theoretical underpinnings of life design counselling.

### 2.3.5 Ecosystemic theory

The ecosystemic theory of Bronfenbrenner is a multidimensional model of human development and has evolved out of a blend of ecological and systems theories (Swart & Pettipher, 2005). This theory's main concern is to show how individual people and groups at different levels of the social context are linked in dynamic, interdependent, interacting relationships (Donald *et al.*, 2006). According to this theory there are four interactive dimensions that play a central role in the social context (Swart & Pettipher, 2005; Thomas, 2005):

- Person factors (behavioural tendencies that either encourage or discourage certain kinds of reactions from others)
- Process factors (patterns of interaction that occur in the system)
- Contexts (family, school, classroom and local community)
- Time (changes over time due to maturation in the individual as well as changes in the environment)

Bronfenbrenner also developed a model, besides the above four dimensions, that explains the direct and indirect environmental influences on the individual within a specific context (Donald *et al.*, 2006). According to this model the context or environment can be conceived of as a set of embedded, interrelated structures or systems that are in dynamic interaction with one another. Change in any part of a system therefore has a direct or indirect influence on other parts of the system and *vice versa* (Thomas, 2005). These systems/subsystems of the environment include the following (Swart & Pettipher, 2005):

- Microsystem (activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced between individuals and the systems in which they actively participate, such as family, school or peer groups).
- Mesosystem (relationships that develop and exist between the microsystems, for example the family, school and peer group interact with one another).
- Exosystem (environments in which the individual is not directly involved as an active participant, but which may influence or be influenced by what happens in settings and relationships that directly impacts the individual, like the media or the education system).

- Macrosystem (attitudes, beliefs, values and ideologies inherent in the systems of a particular society and culture, for example democracy or social justice).
- Chronosystem (developmental time-frames which cross through the interactions between all the systems and their influences on the individual's development and *vice versa*).

Since there is a reciprocal relationship between systems and subsystems, the unique context in which an individual finds him/herself has a direct influence on the meaning that is created during social interaction. The relationship between social constructionism and life design counselling will be considered in the following section.

## **2.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM AND LIFE DESIGN COUNSELLING**

Brott (2005) holds that from a constructivist point of view, individuals construct their own personal meanings that are reflected in past and present experiences in a variety of life roles. This personal meaning is uncovered and explored in the construction of a life story. According to Gibson (2004), individuals can live their lives and careers as a story without noticing the themes, preoccupations, and aspirations that are driving the story forward and thereby narrates who they are and who they will become. It is therefore the career counsellor's task, by means of the co-constructive process, to uncover themes and alternative stories and elevate them so that they are more pivotal in shaping individuals' lives (McMahon, 2007). Guichard and Dauwalder (2010) note that even the stories the individual constructs about his/her career or his/life life course during a counselling intervention are outcomes of the interaction between the individual and the counsellor. The facilitator therefore becomes an active participant in the co-construction process of creating meaning in the form of a life story. Thus, there is a clear relationship between the construction of meaning and life design counselling (Chope & Consoli, 2007).

The co-construction of a life story can be differentiated into three phases (Chope & Consoli, 2007). These phases are not always sequential. During the construction phase the client reveals relevant information to the facilitator or counsellor. In the de-construction phase the assumptions, perceptions and aspirations that influence the individual's life in a meaningful way are identified and explored, while the re-construction phase deals with the construction of a new story that is more satisfying and meaningful to the individual. The focus of this co-constructive

process is mainly on the personal awareness of the client in terms of his/her past, the origin of his/her convictions, his/her current functioning, the exploration of his/her life roles, as well as the influence of all these on the construction of meaning in the future (Brott, 2005).

From a social constructionist perspective the process of life design counselling focuses on the social meaning that is created through relationships and, according to this perspective, career is viewed as being constituted by the individual in interaction with others (Cohen *et al.*, 2004; Gergen, 2001). Blustein and his colleagues (2004) note that relationships are rooted in a cultural, socioeconomic and socio-political context; therefore the meaning individuals attach to their experiences and interactions can never be separated from the context in which their construction occurs. Hence, the context in which the individual finds him/herself has an influence on his/her subjective experience. This is discussed in the following section.

## **2.5 CULTURAL CONTEXT AS A SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE**

Social custom and interpersonal relationships have, according to Stead (2004) cultural implications. Cultural context is therefore relevant when working from a social constructionist perspective with its focus on relationships and interactions between individuals. Stead (2004) argues that relationships construct cultures and cultures construct relationships.

Matsumoto (in Zunker, 1998:422) defines culture as *the set of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next*. This definition goes beyond the general assumption that culture is defined in terms of race, ethnicity and language (Stead, 2004) to include variables such as social roles and values (Hartung, 2002). According to Chope and Consoli (2007) cultural context is equated with an individual's social environment.

Individuals' sense of self is the result of their participation with others in conversations or discourses (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). Discourse refers to the meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories and statements that come together in a particular version of events or persons and provide a way of interpreting and giving meaning to the world and the people in it (Blustein *et al.*, 2004). The discourse people participate in is thus influenced by what the individual's culture deems to be important. It can thus be argued that the individual's

subjective experience of his/her life design process is influenced by his/her cultural context. Campbell and Ungar (2004a) illustrate this with the following case example:

*Shagufta, an 18-year-old woman whose family emigrated from Egypt 6 years earlier, sought counselling during her 1<sup>st</sup> year in a Bachelors of Business Administration program. She wanted to switch to nursing against her father's wishes. A businessman, her father viewed nursing as a "dirty" job that was beneath his daughter. Culturally, it was not permissible for Shagufta to directly challenge her father's decision.*

From the above example of an Egyptian woman it is clear how an individual's cultural context can influence his/her career decisions and life design. My search for literature on the context of abandoned adolescents came up with very few results. There could be various reasons for this including the diverse circumstances under which children become abandoned, the diverse definitions of the term "abandoned" or "abandonment", as well as the paucity of research in the South African context owing to the lack of available funding. According to Kgole (2007), abandoned children often find themselves in circumstances of poverty, family disruption and, in the current South African context, often affected by HIV&AIDS. Abandoned children are sometimes isolated from their peers and are at greater risk of being vulnerable. Kgole (2007) also notes that abandoned children are often taken in by another member of their family, or live in children's homes, foster homes or adoptive homes, and the less fortunate ones live on the streets. These circumstances imply an unconventional developmental pathway and life plan for abandoned adolescents.

From a social constructionist perspective it would be impossible to infer a general contextual background for all abandoned adolescents since each individual is viewed as a unique being with his/her own subjective interpretations of his/her environment and circumstances. Because interaction with the environment takes place through conversations the role of language in the construction of meaning is discussed next.

## **2.6 THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING**

In the above discussion on the influence of cultural context on life design it was noted that language is an important aspect of a person's culture. Language is, according to Peavy (in Bujold, 2004: 475), a key instrument in the construction of meaning, and constructionism,

underpinning the narrative approach, forms the basis of all the *acts of meaning, stories, narratives, metaphors, constructs and all the many ways in which meaningful human performance is achieved*. Writing one's story is a way in which personal aspects are constructed. From the constructionist perspective the stories told can be seen as the individual's interpretation of the meaning and sense of his/her life. Language is therefore not only a means of communicating a message, but also plays a central role in the creation of meaning and the reflection of social realities. The dominant discourse in a context is communicated between individuals during interaction and participation in conversation, and conversation relies on the use of language<sup>11</sup> to communicate. Accordingly, because language is an aspect of culture, the language used in the construction of meaning plays an important role in life design counselling.

Individuals accept the everyday language they have available to them in their interactions with others as an accurate description of reality (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). This can constrain the individual in that it only allows knowledge of the self and the world in so far as the individual's vocabulary for describing experiences will allow. Dewey and Bentley (in Patton, 2007:127) articulate the fundamental relationship between language and individuals' perception of reality by stating that "to name is to know". This represents the intertwining of language and our knowledge and understanding of phenomena. During the co-construction process the client and the counsellor share meanings that are developed in a shared context by using a shared language (Patton, 2007). Counsellors can add to the client's lexicon of life descriptions during life design counselling (Campbell & Ungar, 2004) by introducing new language to describe experiences.

Language is a source of identity for people of all cultures (Chope & Consoli, 2007), and is used to describe a person's life story in the form of a narrative during the life design counselling process. Narratives are ways of organising events into wholes with beginnings, middles and ends (Bujold, 2004). In this way, what individuals perceive as a solid self or identity comes to be understood as a story told about themselves that is constructed through conversations with others and limited by the choice of words available in their language (Campbell & Ungar, 2007).

Because the individual's own identity forms a subsystem in the wider network of interacting systems, it is important to investigate the identity development of adolescents. This is discussed in the following section.

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<sup>11</sup> The term "language" is used to refer to verbal language for the purposes of this study.

## 2.7 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN ADOLESCENTS

Identity development can be considered as a complex, life-long process that starts with the differentiation between the self and other individuals during early life as a baby, and concludes with the integration of the self with humanity in old age (Erikson in Garbarino, 1985). Identity development offers continuity between the individual's past, present and future and provides a framework for the organisation and integration of behaviour in diverse areas of a person's life. An inner self of identity can, in addition, promote direction, goals and meaning in a person's life (Craig & Baucum, 2001; Kroger, 2003).

Adolescence represents the stage of development between childhood and adulthood but, according to Ackerman (2006), defining the exact onset and conclusion of this phase is problematic since different approaches make use of different criteria. Physically, adolescence starts at the onset of puberty, around age twelve or thirteen (Ackerman, 2006). Cognitively, adolescence starts with the development of the formal operational skills needed to think in abstract-logical terms (Wenar & Kerig, 2005). Different cultural contexts also have different views on when adolescence begins and when it ends. Whatever the approach, it is important to view adolescence as a process during which attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns are developed for effective participation in society (Ackerman, 2006).

Although identity development takes place over eight stages, as Erikson proposed, adolescence is considered to be the most critical stage in the process (Wenar & Kerig, 2005). The stages preceding adolescence include basic trust *versus* basic mistrust; autonomy *versus* shame and doubt; initiative *versus* guilt; and industry *versus* inferiority (Thomas, 2005). Erikson (in Wenar & Kerig, 2005) proposes that in adolescence the youth confronts a crisis of identity *versus* identity confusion. Identity is viewed as the interplay between the individual's biology, psychology, and social recognition and response within a historical context (Kroger, 2003). Adolescence is thus the most critical stage for identity development.

During the process of identity development the adolescent should be free to experiment with various possible adult roles in order to find one that seems to provide a unique fit. Erikson (in Kroger, 2003) refers to this as psycho-social moratorium. Individuals who have successfully navigated the process of identity development have explored their options and developed a coherent sense of identity and are more socially mature and motivated to achieve than their

peers. They also have a strong sense of their own individuality and recognise that they are acceptable to their society (Thomas, 2005). This successful outcome of identity development is called identity achievement (Wenar & Kerig, 2005).

The negative outcomes associated with inadequate identity development include identity diffusion, a negative identity and identity foreclosure (Ackerman, 2006). These negative outcomes can interfere with identity development and psycho-social functioning, which has implications for the system as a whole. Identity diffusion occurs in situations where individuals are unable to form a clear psycho-social self-definition. Adolescents who experience identity diffusion tend not to be concerned about their future, and do not become involved in processes of exploration, decision making and planning regarding their own future careers, values, relationships and so on. The formation of a negative identity occurs when the identity of the individual deviates from societal expectations, often resulting in identification with antisocial groups. Identity foreclosure implies that commitments were made without any deliberate exploration. This outcome is often the result of identifying with the views or expectations of significant others (Ackerman, 2006).

The identity development of the adolescent continuously influences the system in which the individual finds him/herself and, as noted above, the cultural context or environment has an influence on the adolescent's identity development. Thom and Coetzee (2004) illustrated this interaction in their study, which found that adolescents who possess a strong cultural identity usually develop a strong sense of individual identity. The personal identity of the adolescent thus influences the system and *vice versa*. The next section will focus on the experience of abandoned adolescents in the South African context.

## **2.8 THE EXPERIENCE OF ABANDONED ADOLESCENTS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

The number of children being abandoned in South Africa is rising at an alarming rate. In 2010 the acting Gauteng coordinator of Child Welfare SA was quoted by Molatlwana (2010) as saying that between 2000 and 2300 cases of child abandonment and neglect have been recorded over the last three years. This amounts to an increase of between 8% and 10% year on year. Parker (2009) reported that the number of people who have applied to adopt children and to offer themselves as foster parents are declining while the cases of child abandonment and neglect

have increased. The Door of Hope ministry (in Parker, 2009) in Johannesburg also noted that the number of abandoned and neglected children they accept has increased from four a month in 2004 to twelve a month in 2010. Even with the above statistics available, it would appear as though the exact number of abandoned children in South Africa can not be established as Brink (2000) notes that institutions, such as hospitals, did not record data regarding the amount of abandoned children they cared for annually. According to Mngadi (in Parker, 2009) the reasons for the increase in the number of children being abandoned in South Africa are also unclear.

Among some of the reasons for child abandonment in South Africa is the poor economic state in which many people find themselves as high unemployment rates and family disruption lead to circumstances in which parents cannot provide for their children's financial needs (Brink, 2000; Kgole, 2007). Msibi (in Hurd, 2008) notes that the rising food prices and living expenses are often responsible for mothers abandoning their children. Whetten and her colleagues (Whetten, Osterman, Whetten, Pence, O'Donnell, Messer, Thielman & POFO Research Team, 2009) found that biological parents are often forced to leave their children to seek employment elsewhere. Other parents abandon their children because they are mentally or physically unable to care for them (Beiser, 1996; Whetten, *et al.*, 2009). Gerlach (2010) notes that young parents often feel overwhelmed and abandon their children or give them up for adoption. Other cases involve adolescents being abandoned after falling pregnant themselves (Girvin, 2004). Kgole (2007) and Balcom (1998) found family disruption and divorce to play a central role in children being abandoned by one or both parents. Another major factor in the abandonment of children in South Africa is the HIV/AIDS pandemic as AIDS related illnesses and deaths lead to a large amount of children in South Africa being abandoned (Kgole, 2007). All the above circumstances leave abandoned children, and specifically abandoned adolescents, vulnerable to a variety of problems.

Brink (2000) found that children who were abandoned in hospitals are exposed to the risk of hospital acquired infections, which could be detrimental to their health. UNICEF South Africa (2008) reports that one in 15 children die from diseases that could have been prevented, with HIV-related illnesses accounting for a large proportion of child deaths. In addition, significant pressures are created for the health sector through the care of abandoned children. These include financial costs and strain on health professionals (Brink, 2000), as well as extended family members, foster parents and charity organisations. One such charity (in Hurd, 2008) runs feeding centres for abandoned and orphaned children, but recently the charity's free school

lunch service in the townships around Port Elizabeth in South Africa were cut from four to two days a week due to rising costs. This has a negative impact on the abandoned child's education, as reports (Hurd, 2008) show that abandoned children are staying home instead of attending school because they do not have food or transport to and from school.

Apart from the health risks, financial concerns and educational problems mentioned above, abandoned adolescents are often vulnerable to social and emotional problems. Gerlach (2010) notes that some previously-abandoned teens often seek love, acceptance and security through promiscuity or frantic trial primary relationships, gang memberships, drama or fantasizing about reunions with their parents. An adolescent who has been abandoned may become withdrawn, angry and restless. Often he/she may fear that he/she will be abandoned again, develop feelings of guilt and often questions the intentions of loved ones in his/her life (Lyons, 2010). Els (2006) writes that rejection through abandonment has a direct impact on how the individual sees him/herself and that this often leads an abandoned adolescent being blind to his/her own potential for creating a better future for him/herself.

It is important to reiterate what I argued before in that the social constructionist perspective does not allow one to infer a general contextual background for all abandoned adolescents since each individual is viewed as a unique being with his/her own subjective interpretations of his/her environment and circumstances.

## 2.9 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

Given the above discussion of the literature I will now provide a summary of the theoretical framework that will underlie the interpretation of my data. Following this summary I will present a conceptual framework that serves as the lens through which I view my research.

**Table 2.2: Schematic representation of the literature**

Section	Summary
Life design counselling: An approach for the postmodern era	The diversity and challenges that individuals are confronted with in the postmodern world, as well as the recognition of the complexity of human life, lead to a need for overall life design. The traditional, linear career path is disappearing. Instead, an opportunity to design a work life which is satisfying to the individual, and which can be

	<p>redesigned as needs, interests and life experiences change is arising. Career planning is therefore being replaced by career management (Savickas, 2000) and life design.</p>
Existing models for life design counselling	<p>Two existing models for life design counselling were discussed. The first model (Campbell &amp; Ungar, 2004) facilitates the individual to move through seven aspects of life design to (a) know what he/she wants, (b) know what he/she has, (c) know what he/she hears, (d) know what constrains him/her, (e) map his/her preferred story, (f) grow into his/her story, and (g) grow out of his/her story.</p> <p>The second model comprises of six, non-sequential steps to guide the individual to (1) define the problem and identify what he/she hopes to achieve, (2) explore his/her current system of subjective identity forms, (3) open perspectives by narrating his/her story and reviewing this story, (4) place the problem in a new story, (5) specify activities to actualise his/her constructed identity, and (6) follow-up on progress (Savickas <i>et al.</i>, 2009).</p>
Goals of life design counselling	<p>Life design counselling interventions aim to increase the client's adaptability, narratability and activity (Savickas <i>et al.</i>, 2009). Adaptability is the readiness to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes in work and working conditions (Savickas, 1997). Narratability is achieved by using dialogue to construct and narrate a story that portrays the individual's career and life with coherence and continuity. Part of this process is the construction of subjective identity forms and their underlying frames (Guichard, 2005). Through engaging in activities that the individual perceives to relate to his/her future the individual comes to learn which abilities and interests he/she prefer to exercise (Savickas <i>et al.</i>, 2009).</p>
Factors that influence the process of life design counselling	<p>Various, unique factors play a role in the process of life design counselling. According to Greene (2006) these factors include the potential, abilities and emotional age of the individual, early career interest and decision making, personality traits and characteristics, an emphasis on traditional academic domains and conventional training routes, expectations of others, as well as belonging to a specific population (e.g. socioeconomic status, race, gender, sexual orientation). Zunker (1998) adds the individual's view on success, motivation for work, needs for intrinsic satisfaction, roles the individual fulfils in life as well as in important relationships, continuous development, and contextual changes as factors that influence life design counselling, while Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) emphasise the role of psychological well-being in the process of life design counselling.</p>

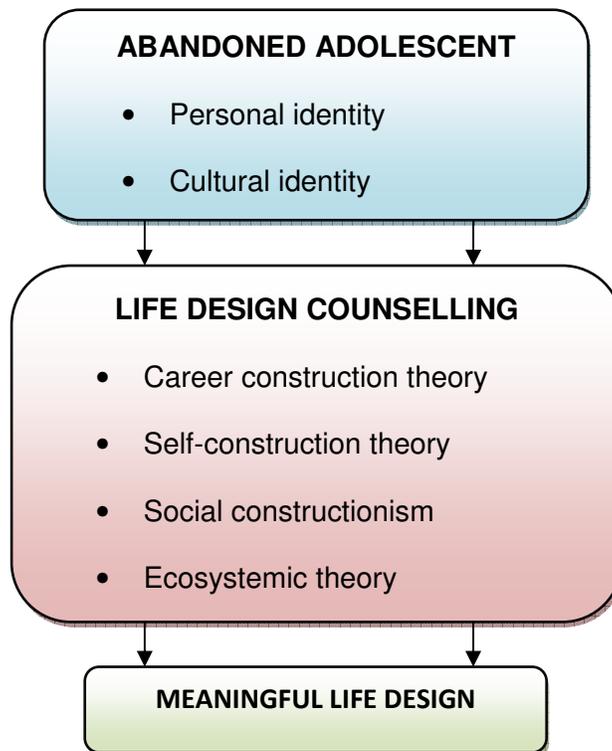
Theoretical frameworks	Four theoretical frameworks that recognise that an individual's knowledge and identity are the product of social interaction and that meaning is co-constructed through discourse or conversation is discussed here. They include career construction theory, self-construction theory, social constructionism and the ecosystemic theory.
Career construction theory	This theory views the individual's career as a central part of his/her life and emphasises the creation of meaning in a unique context. Careers are viewed from a contextualist perspective that sees the individual in a specific environment that has a continuous influence on his/her development. Career construction is holistic, taking into account vocational choice, adjustment and development as a fluid process of matching and creating meaning that matters to the individual and his/her social context. The theory focuses on four cornerstones, namely, life structure, career adaptability strategies, personality style and life themes stories.
Self-construction theory	Self-construction theory sees individuals as proactive agents whose prime activity is self-organisation in order to maintain order and continuity in their experience. Individuals construct themselves in a specific way, in relation to specific modes of relating to themselves that exist at a given moment in a given society. The self-construction theory combines three fundamental propositions: sociological, cognitive and dynamic.
Social constructionism	Social constructionism emphasises that the social and psychological world are given meaning through social processes and interaction in a specific context. The meaning the individual assigns to experiences is thus unique and inseparable from the context in which the construction thereof takes place.
Ecosystemic theory	According to this theory individual people and groups at different levels of the social context are linked in dynamic, interdependent, interacting relationships. The context or environment can be conceived of as a set of embedded, interrelated structures or systems that are in dynamic interaction with one another. Change in any part of a system has an influence on other parts of the system. These subsystems are the microsystems, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem.
The relationship between social constructionism and life design counselling	Individuals construct their own personal meanings that are reflected in past and present experiences in a variety of life roles. This personal meaning is uncovered and explored in the construction of a life story. During life design counselling the client constructs a life story through a co-constructive process to reveal relevant information and meaning. In the de-construction phase the assumptions, perceptions and aspirations that influence the individual's life in a meaningful way are identified and explored,

	while the re-construction phase deals with the construction of a new story that is more satisfying and meaningful to the individual.
Cultural context as a subjective experience	Individuals' sense of self is the result of their participation with others in conversations or discourses. The discourse people participate in is influenced by what the individual's culture deems to be important. Therefore, individual's subjective experiences of his/her life design process are influenced by his/her cultural context.
The role of language in the construction of meaning	Language is a key instrument in the construction of meaning. It is not only a means of communicating a message, but also plays a central role in the creation of meaning and the reflection of social realities. The dominant discourse in a context is communicated between individuals during interaction and participation in conversation through the use of language. Language is a source of identity for people of all cultures and is used to describe a person's life story in the form of a narrative during the life design counselling process.
Identity development of South African adolescents	Identity development is a complex, life-long process that offers continuity between the individual's past, present and future and provides a framework for the organisation and integration of behaviour in diverse areas of a person's life. Adolescence is viewed as the pivotal stage for identity development. In adolescence the youth confronts a crisis of identity versus identity confusion. Successful outcome of identity development is called identity achievement, while negative outcomes associated with inadequate identity development include identity diffusion, a negative identity and identity foreclosure.
The experience of abandoned adolescents in the South African context	The number of children being abandoned in South Africa is rising at an alarming rate. Various organisations report an incline in the amount of abandoned children they care for, while exact numbers on the amount of abandoned children in South Africa is not currently available. Reasons for child abandonment in South Africa include the poor economic state, high levels of unemployment, employment far from home, family disruption and divorce, mental and physical disability, teenage pregnancy and health reasons, including HIV/AIDS and AIDS related illnesses. Abandoned children and adolescents are often left vulnerable to a number of circumstances, including: health risks, financial concerns, educational problems social problems and emotional problems. Each individual has a unique experience of his/her circumstances and therefore one can not infer a generalized experience for abandoned adolescents in the South African context.

Compiled by the author of this mini-dissertation

Figure 2.1 presents a schematic representation of the possibility and limits of the life design counselling process with an abandoned adolescent. The theories that underlie life design counselling in the current study include career construction theory, self-construction theory, social constructionism and ecosystemic theory. These theories imply that there is a dynamic interaction between the individual and the context in which he/she finds him/herself. A change in one part of the system will therefore influence the rest of the system directly or indirectly and *vice versa*. Additionally, the context plays a central role in the experiences of the individual as well as the meaning he/she assigns to it.

The participant, with his/her own unique personal and cultural identity, is involved in a co-constructive process that allows him/her to design a meaningful life, change experiences and circumstances, and re-design them. The participant's personal and cultural identity plays a central role in the life design counselling process as it influences the meaning that is created during the construction of his/her unique life design. This meaningful life design then has an influence on the development of the participant's personal and cultural identity in a dynamic way.



**Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework**

## 2.10 SUMMARY

In this chapter I gave an overview of life design counselling, its goals and factors influencing its process. I also explored the theoretical underpinnings of this approach. The life design counselling model of Campbell and Ungar (2004) combined with the approach of Savickas and his colleagues (2009) were identified as a suitable theoretical framework for collecting and analysing data in this study. The individual will thus identify during a co-constructive process (a) what he/she wants, (b) what he/she has, (c) what he/she hears, (d) what constrains him/her, (e) map his/her preferred story, (f) grow into his/her story, and (g) grow out of his/her story.

I also discussed the importance of cultural context and highlighted the subjective experience of the individual. The role of language in the construction of meaning was explored. The identity development of South African adolescents and the experience of abandoned adolescents in the South African context were discussed.

When reviewing this chapter from a more critical point of view, one might say that it succeeded in its main objective: to provide an overview of the literature and theoretical underpinnings of life design counselling. I realise, though, that some might argue that this review falls short to some degree in explaining in detail some of the theoretical concepts, especially in the section for Self-construction theory. Some readers might be left confused regarding the exact meaning of concepts such as “identity offer”, “identity form”, “cognitive identity frames” and so on. This may very well be due to the complicated nature of the existing literature the author of this chapter consulted. Furthermore, the reader might also be left wanting a more detailed description of a South African abandoned adolescent’s experience of his/her circumstances, but, as was stated before, due to the uniqueness of each individual, this was not possible. In the next chapter I will explain the research process, research design and methodology that will be used in this study.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss in more detail the research process that will be followed in this study. I begin by describing the paradigmatic perspective of the study after which I will give attention to the research methodology and research strategies. A description of the quality assurance criteria will follow, as well as an elaboration of my role as researcher and important ethical considerations guiding the study. I conclude with a summary of the current chapter.

#### 3.2 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

Guba and Lincoln (in Adams *et al.*, 2004) categorise the basic assumptions that define paradigms into the following three concepts:

- ontology (the nature of reality and what there is to be known about it)
- epistemology (the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the researcher and the participants)
- methodology (the process implemented by the researcher to obtain knowledge and understanding)

Two additional terms are used in this proposed study to define the nature (epistemology) of cultural knowledge. The term “emic” is used to signify an approach to understanding from within a cultural system. It provides insight into indigenous phenomena in their own terms (Kelly, 1999). Knowledge that is emic in nature enhances empathic understanding with regards to a specific culture and plays an important role in qualitative studies. Emic understanding follows an inductive process, allowing the data to speak for itself (Lett, 2010; Kelly, 1999). The term “etic” refers to an outsider perspective and specifically makes use of theory in understanding phenomena (Kelly, 1999). That which is important to the researcher therefore takes centre stage. Etic constructs are exact, logical, holistic, measurable and independent of the observer and promotes cross-cultural comparison. Both emic and etic knowledge adds to the comprehensive understanding of a specific culture and is independent from the method of data collection used (Lett, 2010). In the proposed study I will make use of these two terms to distinguish between the nature of the knowledge that will be collected, since I am aware of my

own subjective experiences of my own culture and the impact this might have on the research process.

The proposed study will work from an interpretive/constructivist paradigm. This paradigm is discussed briefly in the following section.

### **3.2.1 Interpretive/constructivist paradigm**

An interpretive/constructivist paradigm will be used to shape the ontology, epistemology and methodology of the proposed study. According to Adams and his colleagues (2004), researchers working in this paradigm acknowledge that people's subjective experiences are valid, multiple and socially constructed (ontology). Researchers believe that they can understand the experiences of others in interaction with themselves (the researchers) and by listening to them (epistemology); and that qualitative research techniques are best suited for conducting their investigations (methodology). Qualitative research methods (methodology) are considered to be the most suitable way to answer research questions that relate to this paradigm (Adams *et al.*, 2004).

Even though the concepts "interpretive" and "constructivist" are related and complementary to one another, the meaning and focus differ. To illustrate the distinction and similarity between these two concepts I will briefly discuss them separately.

#### **3.2.1.1 Interpretive paradigm**

The interpretive paradigm is, according to Nieuwenhuis (2007), based on the assumption that access to reality is only gained through social constructions such as language (spoken or symbolic), consciousness and shared meanings. Human life, according to the interpretive paradigm, can only be understood from within and can not be observed from some external reality. Reality can thus be understood and interpreted, but can not be predicted and controlled. In this paradigm the focus is on subjective experiences of individuals, the construction of a social world through shared meaning, as well as the interaction and relationships between individuals. Since reality is socially constructed, the unique characteristics of the context plays an important role in understanding subjective meanings (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

The nature of the proposed study is interpretive because I will aim to understand a phenomenon through exploring the meanings that individuals attribute to it in a specific context (Adams *et al.*, 2004). It is important to be conscious of my own subjective experiences and meanings that I bring to the research process, as well as the influence that this might have on the interpretation of the results (Creswell, 2007).

### 3.2.1.2 Constructivist paradigm

Donald and his colleagues (2006) define constructivism as an approach that sees knowledge as actively constructed by individuals, groups and/or communities. Individuals are viewed as active agents who create meaning in their life worlds through social interaction in a specific context (Maree, 2004). Constructed knowledge or meaning, therefore, is closely related to the social, historical and cultural context in which the meaning is constructed (Donald *et al.*, 2006).

The meaning that is created through social interaction is multiple and diverse. Creswell (2007) notes that the researcher is compelled by the diversity of subjective meanings to focus on the complexity of views, instead of presenting meanings in categories (Adams *et al.*, 2004). Nieuwenhuis (2007) argues that this approach aims to offer a perspective of a situation in order to provide insight into the way in which a particular individual or group of people make sense of their situation or the phenomenon under study. The emphasis of the research process is on the interaction between individuals as well as on the different contexts in which interaction takes place. In this way a more comprehensive understanding of the historical and cultural impact on the interaction can be accomplished.

The paradigm the researcher uses shapes and gives direction to the methods and strategies with which the research process will be approached. The research methodology and the strategies to be used in the proposed study will be discussed in the section that follows.

## 3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Nieuwenhuis (2007) describes the research design as a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done. Fouché (2002) refers to the research design as encompassing all the decisions the researcher makes when planning a

study. The choice of research design is therefore based on the researcher's assumptions, research skills and research practices, and influences the way in which data is collected.

The proposed study is qualitative, descriptive and exploratory in nature and the research design for the study is a case study. The characteristics of the research design will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

### **3.3.1 Characteristics of the research design**

#### **3.3.1.1 Qualitative research**

The paradigmatic perspective taken in this study includes the interpretive and the constructivist paradigms. Qualitative research is, according to Adams and his colleagues (2004), the preferred method of inquiry for researchers working in this paradigm. Merriam (2002) observes that the key to understanding qualitative research lies in the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals through the interpretation of their interaction with their world and that qualitative researchers are interested in understanding what those interpretations are at a particular point in time and in a particular context. Learning how individuals experience and interact with their social world and the meaning it has for them coincides with the interpretive/constructivist paradigm.

Qualitative research focuses on describing and understanding participants in their natural context (Nieuwenhuis, 2007) instead of explaining phenomena by means of statistical analysis. Data is thus collected and presented by means of words and pictures rather than numbers (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The aim is therefore to gain a better understanding of people and their constructions of their world and their experiences by investigating participants in their natural setting. Qualitative researchers make use of an inductive process, meaning that they build toward theory during the process of research instead of trying to prove a theory or hypothesis (Merriam, 2002; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). A qualitative approach will provide insight into the everyday lives of abandoned adolescents and their life design process. It will also provide a holistic view of the interaction between all the subsystems that are at play in constructing a career.

### 3.3.1.2 Descriptive research

Descriptive research presents a picture in the form of a narrative description of the specific details of a situation, a social setting or a relationship (Neuman, 2000; Durrheim, 1999). In this study I aim to accurately describe qualities, behaviours, attitudes and experiences of the research participant in his/her own unique contexts without manipulating independent variables. By doing this I intend to gain a comprehensive understanding of an abandoned adolescent's holistic experience of the process of life design counselling in the South African context. Descriptive research is suited to this study since a relatively unknown research area will be investigated (Creswell, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2009).

### 3.3.1.3 Exploratory research

Exploratory research is conducted to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or individual that is fairly unknown (Fouché, 2002). Because relatively little research has been done regarding life design counselling – specifically with abandoned adolescents in the South African context – there is very little literature available on the subject. Besides my aim to provide a rich description of the possibility and limits of life design counselling with and abandoned adolescent, I also want to encourage further exploration into the adaptation and adjustment of life design counselling for application in the South African context (Neuman, 2000).

The case study is a specific qualitative research design which will be discussed in the following section in order to elucidate the characteristics of the case study and also to motivate the use of this design in the proposed study.

## **3.3.2 Case study research**

The typical characteristics of case study research can be described from an interpretive perspective as a striving for a comprehensive understanding of how participants relate to and interact with each other in a specific context and how they make meaning of the phenomenon under study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Merriam (2002) reiterates that it is the unit of analysis, in this case an abandoned adolescent, and not the topic of investigation (life design counselling) that characterises the case study. The case study therefore seeks to understand and interpret the world (Cohen *et al.*, 2000) as it is viewed from the participant's perspective.

The value of the data collected during case study research lies, according to Cohen and colleagues (2000: 184) in the *strength in reality* that is typified by the data. The data is, however, difficult to organise due to its unique characteristics and complexity that is synonymous with context bound experiences. Case study research allows for generalisations to similar situations, but still has to be interpreted with caution in the specific context where the phenomenon appears. Furthermore, case studies are not easily verified due to its unique nature and can be viewed as selective, biased, personal and subjective. Therefore, case studies are often prone to problems of observer bias, despite attempts made to address reflexivity (Cohen *et al.*, 2000).

These characteristics of case study research design are congruent with the approach of the current study, as discussed in both the “Paradigmatic perspective” and “Characteristics of the research design”. The case study design will thus contribute to the implementation of appropriate data collection techniques and data analysis in this investigation.

Three main types of case studies can be distinguished (Creswell, 2008; Stake, 2005):

- **Intrinsic case study:** The researcher is primarily interested in understanding a specific individual or situation by describing, in detail, the particulars of an individual case in order to shed some light on what is going on. The purpose is not to understand a broad social issue, but merely to describe the case being studied.
- **Instrumental case study:** This case study focuses on a social issue and selects a case in order to illustrate the issue, to better understand it and to make possible generalisations with regard to a specific phenomenon in order to elaborate on a theory.
- **Collective case study:** Multiple cases are selected in order to illustrate a specific social issue, to compare cases and concepts and to generalise the findings in order to extend and validate theories.

In this proposed study an intrinsic case study will be implemented. A case is selected in order to gain insight into the possibility and limits of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent. Although generalisation of the results are not excluded, the researcher is cautioned by Stake (2005) not to focus on generalisation as this can lead attention away from important aspects that can promote a comprehensive understanding of the case. Following the above discussion I will focus in my case study on the collection of information that relates to the said phenomenon in order to contribute to the existing literature. Generalisations will therefore be kept to a minimum. Let me now turn my focus to the research site.

### **3.4 RESEARCH SITE**

The research will be conducted at the Jacaranda Children's Home in Pretoria since this site will be easily reached by the participant. The Jacaranda Children's Home also has the necessary facilities to enhance the data collection process.

### **3.5 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER**

The role the researcher adopts during the research should empower him/her to enter into a collaborative partnership with the participant in order to collect and analyse data, with the main aim of creating understanding (Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2007). Furthermore, the researcher needs to be a sensitive observer and to record phenomena as faithfully as possible while at the same time raising additional questions, following hunches and moving deeper into analysis of the phenomena (McMillan & Schumacher, in Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2007). The researcher is therefore continuously involved in all aspects of the study and has the responsibility to act in an ethically correct manner and to uphold the credibility of the study at all times. The way in which I am going to conduct my role as researcher can be summarised as follows (Flick, 2009; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009):

- I will respect the ethical code for research throughout the study (see page: 68).
- I will inform the participant and his/her parents/guardians about what will be expected of them during the research.
- I will obtain informed consent from the participant and his/her parent/guardians after the nature of the study has been explained to them.
- I will explain my role during the investigation to the participant and all other relevant role players.
- I will ensure that the physical location/room where the study will be conducted is in a satisfactory condition.
- I will facilitate informal and directed conversations with the participant.
- I will create a warm, empathic atmosphere during interaction.
- I will discuss the course of the research with the participant.
- I will store data in a safe place and analyse and interpret it responsibly.

- I will discuss the interpretation of data with the participant on an ongoing basis so as to ensure that misunderstandings are cleared up and the credibility of the study enhanced.
- I will give feedback to the participant and his/her parents/guardian.
- I will report the data in an ethical and correct manner.

Let me now turn my focus to the way in which data will be collected in the proposed study.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

Data collection and data analysis tend to be viewed as an ongoing, cyclical process during qualitative research, making it almost impossible to distinguish them as separate processes. This implies that, during the research process, data collection, processing, analysis and reporting are intertwined activities (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The steps are discussed separately to simplify the data collection process.

#### **3.6.1 Selection of the participant**

According to Strydom and Delport (2002), sampling, or the selection of participants, occurs subsequent to establishing the circumstances of the study. The researcher thus has a good idea of what the specific characteristics of the participants must be. It can therefore be inferred that qualitative research uses non-probability or purposive sampling to select participants (Strydom & Delport, 2002; Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

In this study the participant will be selected on the basis of the characteristics he/she possesses. It is important for the proposed study that the participant has a need for life design counselling since this will enhance the participant's involvement in the process through the personal advantage inherent in participation. Adolescents who have requested career guidance from psychologists, teachers or other relevant role players will be approached for possible participation in the study. One participant who complies with the specific, idiosyncratic selection criteria will be selected for the study. Additional prerequisites for the study include that the participant be abandoned by his/her parents or one parent and be between 12 and 21 years of age, thus an adolescent.

After the participant has been selected and the necessary permission obtained from the relevant role players, the researcher will implement specific qualitative techniques to better understand the value of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent. Techniques that will be applied during the investigation will be discussed in the following section.

### 3.6.2 The life design counselling process

The life design counselling model, as described by Savickas and his colleagues (2009), will be integrated with the life design process as suggested by Campbell and Ungar (2004) to serve as the framework for this case study. According to this approach (Savickas *et al.*, 2009) the adolescent is involved in a process comprising six general, non-linear steps or episodes (Campbell & Ungar, 2004), each dealing with an aspect of the life design. The sequence of the steps differs from individual to individual and it is important to begin at the step where the participant finds him/herself to be. The process relies on the co-construction of meaning with regards to the participant’s life design through the use of social dialogue between the participant and the researcher. The aspects that are involved in the life design process (Campbell & Ungar, 2004; Savickas *et al.*, 2009) and through which the participant will work during the proposed study are as follows:

**Table 3.1: Framework for life design counselling**

<b>Aspects of life/work</b>	<b>The process I will follow in facilitating life design counselling with the participant</b>
<p><b>Know what you want:</b> Define the problem and identify what the client hopes to achieve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-construct with the participant stories about needs, values, life purpose, interests and passions.</li> <li>• Investigate with the participant experiences in the environment that allow him/her to live out his/her preferred future.</li> <li>• Investigate with the participant the meaning of “preferred future”.</li> <li>• Facilitate the participant to set goals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Know what you have:</b> Explore the current system of subjective identity forms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify with the participant internal and external sources that will aid in goal attainment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Know what you hear:</b> Open perspectives by narrating and reviewing the story</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify with the participant internal and external voices that support his/her preferred future.</li> <li>• Identify with the participant internal and external</li> </ul>

	voices that he/she would want to amplify or turn down.
<b>Know what constrains you:</b> Place the problem into the new story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify with the participant the stories that constrain him/her from his/her preferred future.</li> <li>• Re-author with the participant new stories and new old stories that are more expansive.</li> </ul>
<b>Map your preferred story:</b> Specify activities that try on and actualise the chosen identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop with the participant a map that takes him/her from the present to his/her preferred future.</li> </ul>
<b>Grow into and out of your story:</b> Follow up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow the participant to act out one story at a time by means of role play.</li> <li>• Work with the participant and assume that the preferred story will evolve over time.</li> <li>• Explore with the participant new opportunities in the environment.</li> <li>• With the participant, anticipate and plan for major life transitions in the future.</li> </ul>

Adapted from Campell and Ungar, 2004; Savickas *et al.*, 2009.

### 3.6.3 Qualitative techniques

Qualitative data collection techniques (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Cohen *et al.*, 2000; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006) that will be used in the study include the following:

**Table 3.2: Qualitative data collection techniques and mode of documentation**

Data collection technique	Description	Format of data
Observation	The participant will be observed while interacting with the researcher. Patterns of behaviour in a specific context can be identified in order to understand better the assumptions, values and beliefs of the participant (Cohen <i>et al.</i> , 2000).	Field notes
Co-constructive conversations <sup>12</sup>	The researcher will use co-constructive conversation to gather data.	Audio recordings and <i>verbatim</i> transcripts
Audio recordings	All interactions between the researcher and the participant will	Audio recordings and <i>verbatim</i> transcripts

<sup>12</sup> Please refer to Chapter 1: 1.3 Aim of the research.

	be recorded using an audio recorder. These will be transcribed <i>verbatim</i> .	
Field notes	The researcher will make field notes of all interactions between herself and the participant to note her observations.	Journal
Researcher's journal	The researcher will note all her ideas, thoughts and experiences regarding the research process, as well as her reflections on her own abilities as researcher in a journal	Journal
Participant's journal	The participant will be asked to reflect in a journal after each session on thoughts, feelings and experiences regarding the process.	Journal

Adapted from Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000.

Postmodern techniques that will be implemented during the study are discussed separately in the following section.

### 3.6.4 Postmodern techniques

The use of postmodern techniques promotes the self exploration of the participant and facilitates the involvement of the individual in the process of life design counselling. Techniques that can be used to achieve the above include the following:

#### 3.6.4.1 Collage

A collage is a pictorial storytelling for which the participant uses any combination of pictures, materials, photographs, written words, slogans, cards and symbols to depict a representation of topics such as “This is me”, “This is not me”, “This is important to me”, “This is what I like”, “This is what I don’t like”, or “This is what I am good at”. The process of identification, analysis, interpretation, judgment and evaluation of characteristics, interests or values through the search for items to represent the self facilitates self-knowledge through personal confrontation with previously unconsidered information about the self (Fritz & Beekman, 2007). The collage becomes a concrete representation of the participant’s life that is discussed during the counselling process to facilitate life designing (Maree, 2008).

### 3.6.4.2 Family constellation

This exercise involves a description of every member of the participant's family of origin and a portrait of how they are related. The participant is asked to describe his/her role in the family, as well as to make a graphic representation of the family and to identify core values and strengths (Cochran, 1997; Maree, 2008).

### 3.6.4.3 Life line

A life line allows the researcher and participant a chance to engage, reveal and unpack the themes and patterns from which the participant's life story have been written and to use them as the foundation for the preferred future life story (Fritz & Beekman, 2007). The participant is asked to recall the milestone experiences of his/her life and record them chronologically by placing a dot on a sheet of paper to the extent that it is positive or lower on the sheet to the extent that it is negative (Cochran, 1997).

### 3.6.4.4 The career story interview

The career story interview gathers data in the form of self-defining stories from the participant about life structure (role importance), career adaptability strategies (concern, control, curiosity and confidence), life themes (motivations and strivings) and personality style (Hartung, 2007). The core questions as well as the underlying meaning of each are represented in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: The career story interview – questions and their underlying meaning**

	<b>Question</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>1</b>	Who did you admire when you were growing up? Who would you like to pattern you life after? List three heroes/role models. a) What do you admire about each of these role models? b) How are you like each of these persons? c) How are you different from them?	Represents ego ideals, a central life goal and provide solutions to a central life problem. Concentrate on what is admired rather than who is admired.
<b>2</b>	What magazines do you read? What do you like about them? What TV shows do you enjoy? Why? Tell me about your favourite movie/book.	Indicate preferred environment that fit individual's style. Books reveal a major character who faces the same

		problem as the individual and shows that character dealt with the problem.
3	What do you like to do with your free time? What are your hobbies? What do you enjoy about these hobbies?	Deals with self-expression and reveals manifest interests.
4	Do you have a favourite saying or motto? Tell me a saying you remember hearing.	Titles the life story.
5	What were your favourite subjects in school? Why? What subjects did you hate? Why?	Indicate preferred work environments.
6	What are your earliest recollections? I am interested in hearing three stories about things you recall happening to you when you were three to six years old.	Reveal a core problem the individual faces.

Adapted from Hartung, 2007.

#### 3.6.4.5 Asset map

Assets are described by Eloff (2006) as the skills, talents, gifts, resources, capacities and strengths that are shared with individuals, families, school, institutions, associations, the community and organisations. An asset map is used as a graphic representation of identified assets, intrinsic and extrinsic to the individual.

#### 3.6.4.6 Stories of success and failure experiences

The participant is asked to make a list of successful experiences and to discuss each one in the form of a short story. The product of this exercise is a set of assets and strengths that the participant had implemented successfully in the past and could use again in the future. In addition, this technique also provides opportunity to identify recurring values and to clarify what constitutes success for the participant (Cochran, 1997; Maree, 2008). The technique is repeated with experiences that the participant view as failures.

#### 3.6.4.7 Life chapters

Cochran (1997) believes that by completing chapters of a life leading up to the present prepares a person for completing chapters for the rest of his/her life. The participant is asked to write his/her life story and to give each chapter a descriptive title. The life story is analysed

(deconstructed) for meaningful themes and patterns. During the reconstruction phase a preferred future story that is meaningful to the participant is created.

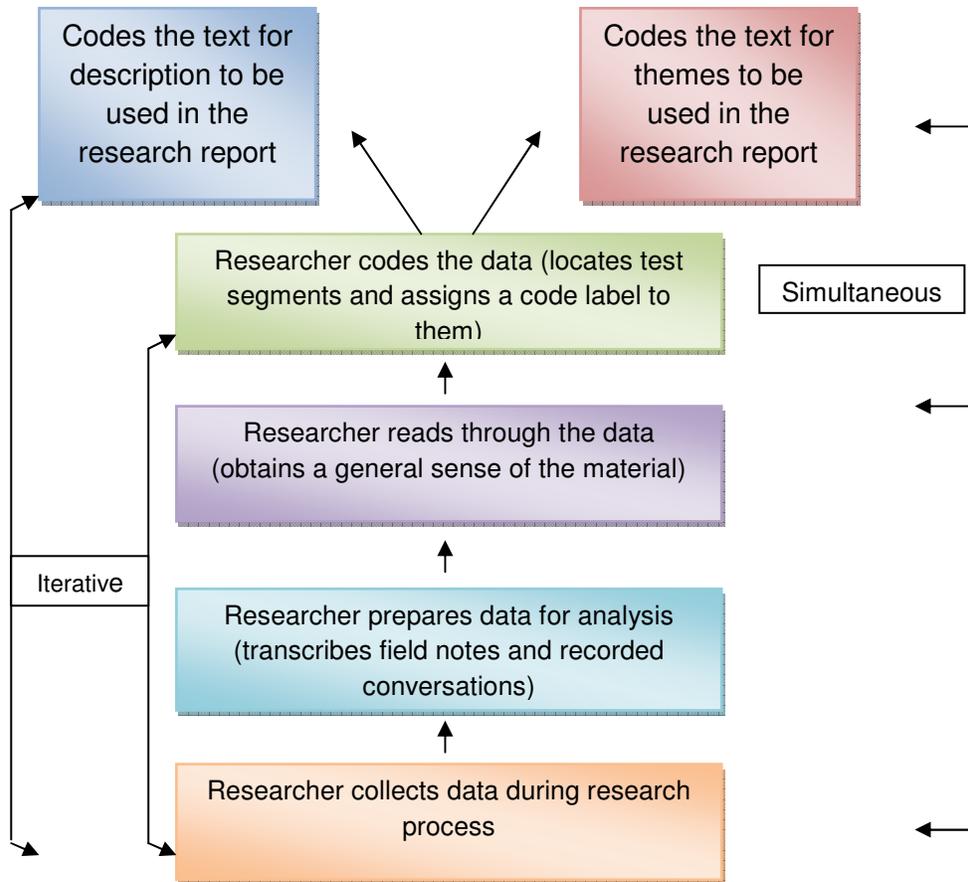
Although the process of data collection and data analysis is intertwined in qualitative research, the goal of data analysis is to bring structure and meaning to the collected raw data (De Vos, 2002). Data analysis is discussed in the following section as a systematic process, even though it occurs concurrently with data collection.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

Qualitative data analysis is a non-linear process that involves organising, analysing, interpreting and describing the mass of collected data, and already occurs during the data collection process (De Vos, 2002; Creswell, 2003). Creswell (2008) describes the features of qualitative data analysis as follows:

- It is inductive in form, going from the particular or the detailed data to the general codes and themes. This allows the researcher to produce broad themes and categories from various databases.
- It involves a simultaneous process of analysing while also collecting data.
- The phases of data analysis are iterative. The researcher cycles back and forth between collection and analysis.
- It involves reading the data several times and conducting an analysis each time, developing a deeper understanding for the information.
- There is no single, accepted approach to data analysis.
- The researcher brings his/her own perception to the data analysis process, making it an interpretive process.

I am going to use Creswell's (2008) approach to data analysis to organise and interpret the information in a meaningful way. The phases included in the data analysis process (Creswell, 2008) include: organising the data and preparing it for analysis; reading through the data and making notes; analysing the data; identifying and describing themes and subthemes and describing and representing the themes. The following figure represents the ongoing process of data analysis throughout the research (Creswell, 2008: 244):



**Figure 3.1 The data analysis process**

To ensure the accurate collection and analysis of the data, one has to comply with specific quality assurance criteria. These criteria are discussed in the following section.

### 3.8 QUALITY ASSURANCE CRITERIA

Lincoln and Guba (in Schwandt, 2007) developed four criteria for judging the quality and trustworthiness of qualitative research. Each of these will be briefly discussed in the following section.

#### 3.8.1 Transferability

Transferability deals with the issue of generalisation from case-to-case (Schwandt, 2007). As I have noted previously the objective of this study is to develop a deeper understanding of the

value of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent by investigating the participant in his/her unique context. The aim is thus not to generalise but rather to obtain meaningful information that can have a positive effect on further research in this area.

### **3.8.2 Confirmability**

Confirmability is concerned with whether or not someone else could confirm the findings of the study. This criterion is based on objectivity, but because qualitative research is subjective in nature the confirmability lies in the data. The question of confirmability thus becomes: Do the data help confirm the general findings and lead to the implications? (De Vos, 2002; Schwandt, 2007).

### **3.8.3 Credibility**

Credibility addresses the issue of the researcher providing assurances that the fit between his/her reconstruction and representation of the participant's view fits with the participant's interpretation of his/her experiences. Put in another way, credibility is the degree to which the interpretation of data has the same meanings for the participant and the researcher so that they both agree on the description or composition of events and especially on the meanings of the events (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009). In this study credibility will be enhanced by making use of triangulation and crystallisation in order to verify the data.

#### **3.8.3.1 Triangulation**

Triangulation is a strategy implemented by researchers to enhance the validity and reliability of the research, as well as to evaluate the findings of a study. It involves combining various methods of data collection from a variety of sources (Golafshani, 2003; Stake, 2005). Cohen and his colleagues (2000) describe six forms of triangulation as follows:

- Time triangulation (stability of data over time and/or the similarity of data gathered at the same time)
- Space triangulation (collection of data in various situations)
- Combined levels of triangulation (e.g. individual, group, organization, societal)
- Theoretical triangulation (drawing on alternative theories)
- Investigator triangulation (more than one observer is active in the process)

- Methodological triangulation (using the same method on different occasions or different methods on the same participant)

According to De Vos (2002) the credibility of the data is enhanced by implementing multiple forms of triangulation during data collection and data analysis. In the proposed study I will make use of methodological and investigator triangulation. I will thus implement various techniques (observation, co-constructive conversations, postmodern techniques, field notes and journals) to collect and verify the data. Data collected from these sources will be coded separately by an external coder and repeating themes will then be identified. I will also discuss all the results throughout the process of data collection and analysis with my supervisor.

#### 3.8.3.2 Crystallisation

Crystallisation refers to the practice of “validating” results by using multiple methods of data collection and analysis (Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2007). Nieuwenhuis (2007) explains that because the constructivist perspective views the world as reality that is changing and maintains that there are multiple realities depending on the person who interprets it, qualitative researchers have their own interpretation of the data. By making use of various methods of data collection and analysis the researcher finds emerging patterns that represent a crystallised reality and thereby adds to the quality of the study. Triangulation and crystallisation will therefore be used in the proposed study to enhance a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study in a way that is credible and dependable.

#### **3.8.4 Dependability**

Dependability or trustworthiness (Nieuwenhuis, 2007), the third criterion, requires the researcher to take responsibility for ensuring that the process followed during the study is logical, traceable and documented (Schwandt, 2007).

#### **3.8.5 Strategies to enhance credibility and dependability**

Credibility and dependability, as discussed above, are, according to Nieuwenhuis (2007), comparable to the conventional criteria of inquiry, that is, internal and external validity, reliability and neutrality. Lincoln and Guba (in Nieuwenhuis, 2007) are of the opinion that by

demonstrating credibility one also establishes dependability since there can be no credibility without dependability.

The following strategies, as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2009), will be used to enhance the credibility and thus the dependability of the proposed study:

**Table 3.4: Strategies to increase credibility and dependability**

Strategy	Description of my planned activities
Prolonged fieldwork	Data will be collected over a period of seven sessions. The lengthy data collection period provides opportunities for interim data analysis and triangulation.
Multi-method strategies	I will make provision for triangulation in both data collection and data analysis by making use of different methods.
<i>Verbatim</i> accounts of participant's responses	Interaction sessions will be recorded <i>verbatim</i> and transcribed.
Low-inference descriptors	I will ensure that descriptions from field notes and interviews are precise and detailed and in the language used by the participant so as to avoid misinterpretation.
Multiple researchers	I will discuss the descriptive data that will be collected with my supervisor on a continuous basis.
Mechanically recorded data	I will make use of a digital tape recorder to ensure accurate and complete records.
Participant researcher	I will write down my own reflections on my perceptions and assumptions about the process so as to ensure that my subjectivity will not flaw my understanding of the participant's responses.
Member checking	I will check the accuracy of my data in an informal manner during data collection.
Participant review	I will be sure to clarify any unclear information with the participant before the data are interpreted. After interpretation I will ask the participant to review the results.
Discrepant data	I will point out to the participant any discrepancies in the data that go against the pattern that emerges during the data collection process.

Adapted from McMillan and Schumacher, 2009.

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical considerations are extremely important when conducting research. I undertake to uphold the ethical guidelines as set out in the following paragraphs.

#### **3.9.1 Informed consent**

The participant must give his/her written permission in full knowledge of the purpose of the research and the consequences of taking part in the research (Piper & Simons, 2005). To obtain informed consent I will provide all the information required on the goal of the research, procedures that will be followed, possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which the participant might be exposed, as well as my personal details and credibility as a researcher to the participant and his/her guardian if he/she is not of legal age to consent (Strydom, 2002). The participant will also be informed that he/she has the right to withdraw from the study at any point that he/she feels that he/she does not want to continue anymore and that there will be no consequences to him/her if he/she does withdraw.

#### **3.9.2 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity**

The right to privacy and anonymity will be upheld during my research. This implies that the participant's identity will be protected and that his/her personal privacy will not be violated by means of hidden cameras or tape recorders (Strydom, 2002). Throughout the study the participant's identity will be kept confidential and his/her real name will not be shared in any part of my research. A pseudonym will be used in the report and any publication thereof. All the data will also be kept confidential and will be stored in a safe place (Piper & Simons, 2005). Confidentiality is the principle that implies that the researcher will in no way reveal information that will allow others to connect the participant to the research, or reveal information that the participant does not want published (Cohen *et al.*, 2000; Piper & Simons, 2005). Piper and Simons (2005) call the procedure of protecting privacy and confidentiality "anonymization". As noted above, I will ensure the anonymity of my participant and will also ensure that no information will be revealed that can lead someone to identify him/her. Furthermore, I will provide the participant with the opportunity to read the research report before it goes public so that he/she can comment on any part that he/she feels might bridge confidentiality (Piper & Simons, 2005). This will also ensure that my interpretation of the data is correct.

### **3.9.3 Protection from harm**

Protection from harm indicates that I will protect my participants from physical, emotional or any other kind of harm (Strydom, 2002). I will only focus on the research questions during the study and not delve into other aspects of the participant's life. I do not at present foresee any harm that may occur but if emotional harm does occur I will immediately refer the participant to an educational psychologist or social worker in his/her area for counselling.

### **3.10 SUMMARY**

In this chapter I discussed the research process that will be followed in the proposed study. I began with the interpretive/constructivist paradigm from which I will approach the research. I then described the research design. The process of data collection and data analysis was discussed and I then focused on the quality assurance criteria that apply to this study. I concluded with the ethical considerations that guides this research. In Chapter 4 I will discuss the results of the study.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH RESULTS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3 I presented the empirical basis of my study by describing the paradigmatic perspective, research design, research methodology, as well as my approach to data analysis and interpretation. That chapter concludes with a discussion of the quality assurance criteria and ethical guidelines that I considered during this study.

In this chapter I first report on the results of my study by presenting the themes that emerged during the thematic analysis of the raw data. The discussion of themes and subthemes is enhanced and enriched by direct quotations, vignettes and visual images. In most cases, I present the unedited versions of the participant's actual words. I begin by providing a short summary of the data analysis methods used during this study, followed by a presentation of the participant's background information. I then analyse and discuss the meaningful main and subthemes that were identified during each session. I conclude with a brief summary of this chapter.

#### 4.2 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

The data analysis methods<sup>13</sup> that were implemented during this study are summarised in the following table:

**Table 4.1: Method of data analysis: Practical implementation of Creswell's (2008) approach**

Steps	Description
<b>Step 1</b>	I prepared the data for analysis by organising the raw data and transcribing the audio recordings.
<b>Step 2</b>	I read through all the data several times and made notes in order to get familiar with the information and to get an overview of the contents.
<b>Step 3</b>	I did a detailed analysis of the data by selecting units for analysis and sorting them into meaningful categories. I made use of an external coder <sup>14</sup> (see Appendix C) to

<sup>13</sup> Please refer to Chapter 3: Data analysis for a detailed discussion.

	verify the categories.
<b>Step 4</b>	I organised the information into main and subthemes and identified the themes that occurred most often, as well as those I considered to be most important (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The subthemes identified during each session were categorised into meaningful units based on qualitative characteristics of the subthemes. This was done in order to group the subthemes into meaningful main themes. The external coder controlled and verified the identified categories, main themes and subthemes.
<b>Step 5</b>	I discussed the course of each session in chronological order and described the meaningful main and subthemes that were identified during each session. The external coder verified this process.
<b>Step 6</b>	I interpreted the data and gave meaning to it.

In order to enhance the credibility and dependability of my study, I followed the guidelines provided by McMillan and Schumacher (2009) during my data collection and data analysis (please refer to table 3.4 in Chapter 3 for these guidelines).

Next I discuss relevant background information of the participant.

#### 4.3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANT<sup>15</sup>

The participant (hereafter called Genevieve<sup>16</sup>) is an 18-year old, black girl. Her home language is Afrikaans. She also speaks fluent English, as well as “*most African languages except for Venda*”. Genevieve was abandoned by her mother at the age of 1 year and 3 months and her grandmother took her in. Her “*mother could not take care of*” her so her “*grandmother said ok, she can come live with me and I’ll take care of her until [her mother] can get a job. And that just never happened*”. Her grandmother is a “*domestic worker*” for a white, Afrikaans-speaking family and lives on their property. Her grandfather, who also lives with them, is a “*freelance painter and construction builder*”. Genevieve lived with her grandmother until the age of fifteen at which time she was removed to a place of safety and later moved to a children’s home in Pretoria.

Genevieve is currently in grade 12 and soon has to make a decision about her future and career options. She reports to be a loyal pupil and performs on average to high average level in her

<sup>14</sup> Me. Z. Pollard acted as the external coder. She is a qualified Educational Psychologist with extensive experience in qualitative data analysis.

<sup>15</sup> Certain relevant information is not discussed here since it appears as themes during the contact sessions.

<sup>16</sup> Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participant.

academics. Her subjects include the compulsory languages Afrikaans and English, as well as Life Orientation and Mathematical Literacy. Her elective subjects are Biology, Business studies and Hospitality studies.

She expresses a need for career guidance in order to make her decision by stating “*I have these and these and these options*” but she is not certain of which of her options to pursue. She therefore desires career guidance to facilitate her in the process of “*making the right choice*”. Genevieve has considered various careers and expressed an interest in law, social work, psychology, forensic investigation, hospitality and business. Although she was interested in psychology and social work, she expressed her apprehension about these career options by stating that she might get “*too emotionally attached*” and won’t be able to separate herself from her work. She finds business attractive because “*there’s business and you leave it at work. You don’t go home with all that*”.

Genevieve met the selection criteria for my study and was identified as a potential participant in this research. I discussed the scope of my study with Genevieve after which she agreed to take part in the research project. Genevieve trusts life design counselling to be able to help her in her prospective career choices and she thinks “*this process is a much better way of finding out who you’re going to be because history does repeat itself sometimes and history does make better people*”.

The life design counselling process, as experienced by Genevieve, will be discussed in the following section.

#### **4.4 CATEGORISATION AND SUMMARY OF THE IDENTIFIED THEMES**

Various postmodern techniques (see Chapter 3) were implemented during the study in order to facilitate Genevieve’s self-exploration and involvement in her life design counselling process. The following main and subthemes, as summarised in Table 4.2, were identified during the sessions and were categorised into meaningful units. The themes were verified by an external coder (see Appendix C). Please refer to Appendix D for a detailed presentation of the main and subthemes, including indicators and exclusion criteria for each theme.

**Table 4.2: Summary of the main and subthemes**

<b>THEME 1: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS</b>		
Definition	This relates to inherent character traits of the individual that are not likely to change over time.	
Subtheme 1.1	Autonomy/Independence	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6
Subtheme 1.2	Resilience/Perseverance	Sessions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 1.3	Structured/organized	Sessions 1, 4
<b>THEME 2: PERSONAL VALUES</b>		
Definition	This relates to principles or standards that the individual regards as important to leading a meaningful life.	
Subtheme 2.1	Discipline/Obey the rules <sup>17</sup>	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 2.2	Intimate personal relationships/Family <sup>18,19</sup>	Sessions 1, 3, 4, 5
Subtheme 2.3	Mutual respect	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 5
Subtheme 2.4	Religion	Sessions 1, 2, 4, 6
Subtheme 2.5	Sexual morality	Sessions 1, 3
Subtheme 2.6	Work ethic	Sessions 1, 3, 4
<b>THEME 3: INTRAPERSONAL SKILLS</b>		
Definition	This relates to skills that can change and/or develop over time.	
Subtheme 3.1	Amazed at own abilities	Sessions 3, 4, 6
Subtheme 3.2	Fights for others' rights <sup>20</sup>	Sessions 2, 4, 5
Subtheme 3.3	Financially responsible	Sessions 1, 4
Subtheme 3.4	Good judge of character	Sessions 2, 5, 6
Subtheme 3.5	Openness to new experiences <sup>21</sup>	Sessions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 3.6	Racial/cultural awareness	Sessions 1, 3, 5, 6
Subtheme 3.7	Self-insight	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 3.8	Self-knowledge/Self-awareness	Sessions 1, 3, 5, 6
<b>THEME 4: PAINFUL PAST</b>		
Definition	This relates to the individual's experience of his/her past as physically or emotionally distressing.	
Subtheme 4.1	Change	Sessions 1, 2, 6
Subtheme 4.2	Disappointment/Let down	Sessions 1, 3, 6
Subtheme 4.3	Experience of loss	Sessions 2, 6

<sup>17</sup> "Discipline/Obey the rules" refers to the belief that one needs discipline, boundaries, rules and regulations in one's life.

<sup>18</sup> The reader will note that only those subthemes that were considered to possibly have ambiguous meanings were defined in the form of a footnote.

<sup>19</sup> "Intimate personal relationships/Family" refers to the individual assigning high value to having meaningful personal relationships with others and with one's family members, as opposed to superficial relationships.

<sup>20</sup> "Fights for others' rights" refers to the participant's tendency to defend other people's rights, stand up for other people, as well as protect other people who she sees as being oppressed or treated unfairly.

<sup>21</sup> "Openness to new experiences" refers to the participant's willingness to try new activities and/or mindsets, as well as her curiosity and openness to new information.

Subtheme 4.4	Feelings of rejection	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 6
Subtheme 4.5	Inadequate domestic circumstances	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 6
Subtheme 4.6	Helplessness in terms of circumstances <sup>22</sup>	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
Subtheme 4.7	Unhealthy interpersonal relationships	Sessions 1, 2, 3
<b>THEME 5: INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS</b>		
Definition	This relates to the motivation or driving force underlying the individual's relationships with others.	
Subtheme 5.1	Need for unconditional acceptance <sup>23</sup>	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 5.2	Need for control/to be in charge	Sessions 1, 4, 5
Subtheme 5.3	Need for guidance/support	Sessions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 5.4	Need to be heard/acknowledged	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 5
Subtheme 5.5	Need to be nurtured/cherished <sup>24</sup>	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 5.6	Need to belong <sup>25</sup>	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
Subtheme 5.7	Difficult to trust in relationships	Sessions 1, 2, 4, 5
<b>THEME 6: PERSONAL MOTIVATORS</b>		
Definition	This relates to the individual's internal processes which serve to activate, guide and maintain his/her behaviour.	
Subtheme 6.1	Employability <sup>26</sup>	Sessions 2, 4
Subtheme 6.2	Longing to be carefree/happy	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
Subtheme 6.3	Need for security/stability <sup>27</sup>	Sessions 1, 2, 4, 6
Subtheme 6.4	Need for stimulation/challenges	Session 4
Subtheme 6.5	Need to nurture/cherish <sup>28</sup>	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 6.6	Self-actualisation	Sessions 2, 4, 6
Subtheme 6.7	Systemic/environmental influences <sup>29</sup>	Sessions 2, 5, 6
<b>THEME 7: DECISION-MAKING STYLE</b>		
Definition	This relates to the manner in which the individual goes about making decisions.	
Subtheme 7.1	Rational decision making	Sessions 1, 4, 5
<b>THEME 8: FUTURE ORIENTATION</b>		
Definition	This relates to the individual's expectations and the degree to which he/she is	

<sup>22</sup> "Helplessness in term of circumstances" refers to feelings of loss of control, being unfairly accused or blamed, powerlessness or the inability to change her circumstances and feelings of being misused or taken advantage of.

<sup>23</sup> "Need for unconditional acceptance" refers to a need to be accepted by others and includes feelings of fear of abandonment or rejections.

<sup>24</sup> "Need to be nurtured/cherished" includes the need to be brought up, helped to develop and grow, and to be provided with nourishment (nurture), as well as to be cared about and loved (cherish).

<sup>25</sup> "Need to belong" includes a need to feel like part of a group, feelings of isolation and loneliness, as well as feeling like an outsider.

<sup>26</sup> "Employability" refers to a person's value in terms of future employment opportunities, which is determined by the accumulation of knowledge, skills, experience and reputation that can be invested in new employment opportunities as they arise.

<sup>27</sup> "Need for security/stability" includes the need for physical security and financial security.

<sup>28</sup> "Need to nurture/cherish" refers to a need to take care of others, protect others from harm, as well as a need to feel needed by others.

<sup>29</sup> "Systemic/environmental influences" refers to the interaction between subsystems that has an influence on the participant and is also influenced by the participant as a subsystem.

	thoughtful about his/her future.	
Subtheme 8.1	Ongoing journey/process of self-development <sup>30</sup>	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 8.2	Setting goals	Session 6
<b>THEME 9: COPING STRATEGIES</b>		
Definition	This relates to the manner in which the individual responds to a problem or threatening situation.	
Subtheme 9.1	Adaptability	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 9.2	Adequate regulation and expression of emotions	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4
Subtheme 9.3	Anger/Hurt	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 6
Subtheme 9.4	Anxiety	Sessions 1, 3, 5, 6
Subtheme 9.5	Creativity	Sessions 1, 4, 5
Subtheme 9.6	Denial/Escaping/Avoiding behaviour	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Subtheme 9.7	Inadequate emotional regulation <sup>31</sup>	Sessions 1, 3, 4, 6
Subtheme 9.8	Negative body-image	Sessions 1, 3
Subtheme 9.9	Self-assertive behaviour	Sessions 2, 3, 5, 6

#### 4.5 DISCUSSION OF THE LIFE DESIGN COUNSELLING PROCESS

Each session will now be discussed in chronological order. The participant's direct quotations are presented in bold (to ensure easy reading) and is shaded in the colour representing the particular subtheme it relates to. An example of the verbatim transcript from one of the sessions is available in Appendix E. The complete transcript is not provided in this dissertation in order to protect the confidentiality of the participant. The complete transcript is available on compact disc on request.

During the discussion of each session I refer to related literature in order to execute a literature control for this study. Each session is presented in as much detail as possible in order to comprehensively reflect the participant's life design process. From the researcher's point of view, this was not an easy case to report on, since the participant spoke extremely fast and relayed a lot of details in a very short period of time. This could be due to the participant's need to be understood and she made use of the time available to her to communicate as much information as possible. I accommodated this need in my attempt to provide the best possible therapy to my client. I now turn my attention to the life design counselling sessions.

<sup>30</sup> "Ongoing journey/process of self-development" refers to an ongoing process of self-discovery and development that the participant is currently busy with and that will continue into the future. This subtheme includes hope and optimism about the future.

<sup>31</sup> "Inadequate emotional regulation" includes inadequate expression of emotions as part of this subtheme.

#### 4.5.1 Session 1: Collage

##### 4.5.1.1 General comments

Genevieve had an open and trusting attitude from this first session. She participated in the activity with great enthusiasm and continuously engaged in conversation with me while she was working on making her collage. She led the points of discussion and was very open to elaborate on topics when I asked her to do so. She talked fast and conveyed a lot of information in a short span of time.

##### 4.5.1.2 Course of the session and themes identified

During this session Genevieve was given the opportunity to make a visual representation of her personal characteristics and preferences in the form of a collage<sup>32</sup>. Genevieve started the session by demonstrating her inquisitive mind by asking questions and saying **“I don’t know a lot about art but I want to learn”**. Later in the session she indicated openness to new experiences: **“I like trying everything at least once and do what I liked again. If you asked me to do something new and weird and wacky I’d do it”**. Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) note that people high on openness to experience are inclined to be curious, imaginative, empathetic, creative, original, artistic, psychologically minded, aesthetically responsive and flexible. Genevieve expressed her emotions in an adequate manner during this session, stating: **“I also get angry. I’m not a very angry person but I get angry sometimes”**. She revealed that she is in the process of self-discovery when she said: **“I can’t really explain to you what makes me angry. I’m not there yet”**. It did, however, become evident later in the session that she does sometimes find it difficult to regulate her emotions adequately: **“I gained an anger problem ... or I think it’s an anger problem because I was never an angry person and now I get angry like this”**.

Genevieve then described a recent experience: **“I met this ... black girl and we became friends. And I looked at her funny and I’m like I want a black family. You know, I want my mom and my dad and a big brother or a little brother ... And then ... I felt happy that at least somebody else has what I don’t have”**. A need to belong was emphasised when she stated: **“I expected to be part of the family”** Genevieve focused the conversation around the

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<sup>32</sup> See Appendix F for Genevieve’s collage.

theme of family for a large part of this session: “in a black family you always have to work. You have to help with the dishes, you have to help clean. You get to know your parents better. You get to know what they do better” and “See ... black families are ... they’re very ... uhm ... in black families the family bond is much stronger”.

When asked about her own interpersonal relationships she noted that her mother “got a job, but she could never take care” of her and said: “I feel like my mother abandoned me”. She described her relationship with her grandmother as “not a very trusting relationship. I couldn’t tell her everything. I couldn’t tell her today this and that happened. It was always my fault. Everything was always my fault”. She added: “I was molested when I was five by someone my grandmother worked with and she didn’t believe me when I actually told her”.

She remembered the way her grandmother “was with the little things she did and the way she took care of [her] when [she] was sick and stuff”, as well as feeling like she was being controlled: “Basically I couldn’t go to church, I couldn’t play sports, I couldn’t stay after school for activities, I couldn’t sing anymore because she’s forced me to go to a high school that I didn’t want to, which made me feel like she’s controlling my career because I wanted to go to that high school because they had specific things” and rejected: “when something good happened she wasn’t there. She wasn’t there to support me ... She wasn’t there for a lot of things ... She never tried to get involved in my life”. Genevieve described how her choices and the things that were important to her were rejected: “And all my friends were bad influences. All of them. Every single one...she wouldn’t meet my boyfriend’s parents ... she didn’t even give me a reason”.

According to Genevieve the situation escalated: “my grandmother is getting abusive ... She threatened to kill me multiple times. And she beats me. She can’t speak calmly either ... she can’t sit down and speak to me. She always screams and stuff. She screams, shouts, scolds ... I would like her to be able to sit down and speak to me and see my point of the story because I always saw her point of the story ... It just felt like she didn’t want me anymore. She didn’t want me ... And I’m like, ok if you don’t want me then I’ll leave ... Then I went to a place of safety near my old school and then I went to ... then I came to the children’s home”. She described her feelings as “hurt”.

Genevieve revealed a sense of autonomy by doing her **“own projects and homework without any help”**. She added: **“nobody had to ask me. Nobody had to tell me. I studied alone in my room. I was very independent from a young age”**. She also **“got a job and worked”** and **“bought [her] stuff”**. About this she said: **“I liked it because I took care of myself. I even got myself a belly ring”**. She also learned financial responsibility and **“saved”** her money and **“even planned ahead for events and stuff”**. Genevieve believes **“you have to work for everything you want”** and if you **“failed miserably”** you have to keep **“trying”**. She conveyed a sense of sexual morality, saying about sexual relations outside of marriage, that **“they think it’s fine to do these things and I don’t think it’s fine. I just don’t agree with it”**. She appreciates a **“rules-set environment where you have consequences”**. It is important to Genevieve that people practise mutual respect: **“I don’t leave my stuff lying around in your space so don’t do that to me”**. She dedicates herself to **“reading the Bible”**, saying **“I think I abandoned God a few years ago ... so I’m trying to rebuild that and I’m trying to find guidance throughout the Bible”**.

Genevieve noted that she is **“a very structured person”**, who likes things **“structured and organized and sorted”**. During a group assignment she would take charge: **“this is what we have to do, this is what we’ve done, these are the goals we’ve reached and this is what I want you and you and you to do. Report back to me on that”**. She noted that she wants **“to be the boss”** and **“control everything”**, stating: **“it’s because I never had full control over my own life so I want to have full control over something”**. She showed insight into her need for structure: **“My room was a tornado when I was younger. My room was this small. Because I only had this little trunk that I could put my clothes in and I could put my shoes under my bed but I didn’t have an actual closet with shelves and drawers”**. Genevieve likes to consider the **“pro’s and cons”** and asking questions such as **“how, what, when, why, where, what would be the problem?”** when making decisions. She said she likes to **“consider everything”**.

Genevieve revealed a negative body-image, seeing herself as **“short”** with **“a round little face”** and **“baby fat”**. She wants to **“look presentable”** and be in relationships with people who **“won’t abandon”** her and **“who wants to be with you through thick and thin”** and **“wouldn’t judge”**. She had felt misused before, explaining: **“it feels like they used me to brag...they never treated me like part of the family unless they had something to gain from it ... But they never took me on holiday with them”**. Genevieve denied her emotions: **“It doesn’t**

**matter anymore ... it just doesn't matter**". She also avoided the subject by changing the topic of conversation. Genevieve sometimes gets **"these anxiety attacks"**. Genevieve felt as if she was not being heard: **"she wasn't listening to me. She would maybe hear what I was saying but she never considered it"** and expressed a need to be acknowledged: **"I want to be heard the first time. [I] just want attention from this one person at this time for this specific reason"**.

Genevieve stated: **"I am adaptable. I adapt to anything. Literally anything"** and **"Johnny Depp is my favourite actor because he's so versatile. He can turn himself into anything"**. It is important to Genevieve to **"feel safe"** and have stability: **"I want a steady job. Not something I can fall in and out of. I want to be sure of what I'm going to get. But I like the glamour. I like glamour and glitz ... like old things and old dresses. The flowing and wideness as you twirl around"**. Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) note that individuals who regard security and stability as a career anchor need both job and material security and prefer to be paid in steady, predictable increments. These authors argue that due to the shift in the workplace of the postmodern era, security and stability has shifted from the organisation to the individual. It has become a matter of employability instead of employment (a guaranteed job).

Genevieve revealed **"creativity"** by drawing **"tattoos and dresses"**. She said she **"always wanted a baby"** and **"always took care of M's young daughter"**. She revealed self-knowledge: **"I love salad, except for carrot salad. And I don't eat beans ... I don't like them. I like fruits. I like bran ... I monitor my body. Ever since I started doing Biology I monitor my body"**.

#### Participant's reflection for session 1

In her reflection Genevieve expressed her concern over being accepted by wondering if she's being **"psycho-analysed"** and if she **"sounds self-righteous"**. She revealed that she wishes for a family: **"When I think of how involved I am with other people's parents, I think of how much I want a stable, loving family of my own. A father so I can be daddy's little girl and a mom I can tell things to"**. She also avoided her feelings by stating: **"Sometimes I wonder what people's true feelings are towards me but then I tell myself I don't care"**.

The following subthemes were identified during this session:

- Adaptability
- Adequate regulation and expression of emotions
- Anger/Hurt
- Anxiety
- Autonomy/Independence
- Change
- Creativity
- Denial/Escaping/Avoiding behaviour
- Difficult to trust in relationships
- Disappointment/Let down
- Discipline/Obey the rules
- Feelings of rejection
- Financially responsible
- Helplessness in terms of circumstances
- Inadequate domestic circumstances
- Inadequate emotional regulation
- Intimate personal relationships/Family
- Longing to be carefree/happy
- Mutual respect
- Need for control/to be in charge
- Need for guidance/support
- Need for security/stability
- Need for unconditional acceptance
- Need to be heard/acknowledged
- Need to be nurtured/cherished
- Need to belong
- Need to nurture/cherish
- Negative body-image
- Ongoing journey/process of self-development
- Openness to new experiences
- Racial/cultural awareness
- Rational decision making
- Religion
- Resilience/Perseverance
- Self-insight
- Self-knowledge/Self-awareness
- Sexual morality
- Structured/organized
- Unhealthy interpersonal relationships
- Work ethic

## 4.5.2 Session 2: Family constellation

### 4.5.2.1 General comments

Genevieve communicated calmly and comfortably during this session. She did, however, seem notably frustrated and tense when she had to reflect on her family situation. She noted at the beginning of the activity that she doesn't know her biological family but when it was explained

that she can consider whoever she sees as her family she relaxed and got to work on the activity with new zeal.

#### 4.5.2.2 Course of the session and themes identified

During this session Genevieve was given the opportunity to make a schematic representation of her family<sup>33</sup> which was used to facilitate conversation. Genevieve's exposure to inadequate domestic circumstances and unhealthy interpersonal relationships were evident from the outset of this session. She started by telling me about her **"uncle who was an alcoholic"** and that she **"had a thing with his best friend and he is a bad influence"** because he **"smokes weed and he's never at home"**. She expressed a sense of loneliness by saying: **"I don't know my family"** and a need to belong to a family: **"This family is so huge I could go anywhere and find somebody. Like literally, I could go to Mpumalanga and find somebody"**. She acknowledged that **"the people you hang out with influence you"** and that you **"start acting like they do"**. She added that **"you adapt to your environment in certain ways"**.

Caring for and nurturing a family is important to Genevieve **"if you can take care of them"** and **"... if you can send them to a proper school and you can feed them properly and you know they have a safe place to sleep and you can pay the bills at the end of the month then it's fine ... without having anyone needing to work to help you"**. Genevieve revealed that, in her opinion, someone who is successful is someone who **"makes a lot of money"**. She described what she sees as a good caregiver: **"They're strict but nice. Like, I like somebody I can talk to without feeling guilty. Somebody who I can ask advice from without thinking she's going to think this or that or she's going to tell my mom or whatever"** and **"she's a very practical advice giver"** and **"the wellbeing of her children matters to her"**.

Genevieve mentioned her loss when her aunt and **"favourite uncle"** were **"divorced"**: **"I still see them sometimes but I want to speak to him ... Because in all of this drama he was my support system. Because he was there for me and he understood my side of the whole situation and he told me to ... you know ... he's the one who said when you move out, this is not going to matter ... He used to give me advice and I could tell him everything ... he was there for me"**.

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<sup>33</sup> See Appendix G for Genevieve's Family constellation.

Genevieve avoided her feelings by saying: **“just let it lie ... just let it go”**. Individuals attempt, according to Carr (2006), to protect themselves psychologically or physically by avoidance focused behaviour. This is a functional coping strategy when the individual temporarily disengages from the problem or temporarily engages in distracting activities or relationships. This coping strategy can, however, become dysfunctional when the individual practices on the long term. Genevieve demonstrated a longing to be a **“happy-go-lucky”** and to feel **“free”**. She explained: **“It’s like chilling in the day in an open field with the trees and the flowers and I’m a little flower and the wind is blowing us all ... it’s all fun and it’s all being bored together and being on Facebook together and Farmville’ing together and water polo together and partying together”**. She sees herself **“as a good judge of character because when somebody is a bad person [she’ll] see right through them”** and demonstrated actualising as an authentic self by commenting: **“Either be yourself or be nothing. If you can’t be yourself ... the person who God made you ... he put you on this planet this way. If you want to be a better person then go be a better person, but if you can’t be honest with yourself then don’t ... just don’t ... I’ve always just been me”**. Self-actualisation is a process of inner-directedness through which the individual express his/her intrinsic nature. It involves the tendency to enrich oneself by psychological growth and by seeing meaning in being (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Genevieve seems to be on a journey **“through [her] present into [her] future”**.

Genevieve disclosed that she advocates for others: **“Because I’m not alone. I’m not the only dark child in my house or our house. So, it’s not that I’m standing up for me. I can handle it. I don’t care. She could go to hell for all I care, really. But what about the other people who don’t know how to speak for themselves?”** She added that she **“hate[s] it when people are being repressed”** and that she would carry the **“suffering for everybody else”**. She also stands up for herself and is **“not the kind of person who would keep quiet about something that irritates”** her and **“would be the first one to speak”**. Genevieve demonstrated good emotional regulation and control stating: **“I get this emotion and I’m like I will kill this person. I will be able to kill this person without any remorse and without having my conscience shouting and screaming and scolding at me. But I do have the willpower not to”**. Her protective nature was revealed when she stated: **“I don’t think anybody will ever touch my kids ... physically hurt my kids, I don’t care in which jail you are I will kill you”**. She also stands up for women’s rights and proclaimed that women are **“not playthings”**.

Genevieve reflected her adaptability by saying: **“when I’m here I speak like they do and when I’m in Centurion I act and speak like they do. I think all of this is a part of me now ... it all depends on the situation”**. Later in the session she demonstrated this ability to adapt by stating: **“I just am. It’s like if I were a paragraph, something in a paragraph, not like the story, just the paragraph ... we always have those activities where you have to fill in the correct word. The sentence would say like G be. And then you have to say am, is or are. I would be the be, because I can am and I can is and I can are”**. This notion supports Maree’s (2010) statement that individuals are considered adaptable when they act in an appropriate manner in a specific situation.

She stated that the **“rules”** she has set for herself includes that she has **“to speak to God everyday”**. She reflected the importance of respect: **“when it comes to my body and how I treat people and people treat me ... You can’t disrespect me, no matter who you are”**. Furthermore, **“if you’re a person who demands respect and give none in return then ... screw you basically”**. Genevieve stated that she likes **“to help people and be there for people”** and would **“like to be someone anybody can count on”**. She likes to make her **“friend laugh if she’s too serious”** or **“kiss her when she gets hurt”**. She doesn’t want anything in return, **“but friendship or love”**. Her need for acceptance was acted out by **“trying to please everybody”**. She sees herself as **“a person who likes depending on people but not too much”**. Genevieve revealed that it takes her a while to build trust but **“if you can get on the inside somehow, then we can talk”**.

Genevieve shared that when she came to the children’s home she **“kind of felt like an add-on, like a plus one in the beginning because it was all uncomfortable and it was new meeting the family and getting to know everybody”**. But, she said, they treat her **“like one of them now”**. This need to belong is reiterated when she claimed that **“even when you’re alone you’re still part of the group”**. She revealed feelings of rejection when she stated she sometimes is **“just not a factor”**.

Her sense of employability is revealed in the following statement: **“Then I would get a better job because I would have more qualifications. I’d be qualified more diversely. I’d be able to do marketing management. I’d be able to work in the HR and PR departments. And I could top that off with my business degree and then just shoot straight away to CEO, to the top”**. To remain employable the individual has to be committed to an ongoing development

of skills and abilities to such an extent that he/she is able to offer what is required in the future (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Genevieve seems to grasp this because she realises the importance of qualifications. Genevieve demonstrated good insight into the process of life design counselling: **“You’re making me analyse. Because you’re making me ... I talk about myself here and then I see the truth or I see myself from your point of view or from some warped sense of ... it’s like a worm hole. I’m just looking at myself from another angle. So there I am. I can’t see me but I can see me”**.

### Participant’s reflection for session 2

In her reflection Genevieve expressed her need for **“respect”** and wrote that **“people in powerful positions have more say in [her] life”**. She stated that she is tired of being **“disrespected”** and **“mistreated”**. Her need to belong to an **“immediate family”** was stated again and her need to be accepted unconditionally was revealed: **“people I can be myself with, even if I do change my accent or speak more explicitly”**. She is trying to be true to the **“essence”** of her **“being”**.

The following subthemes were identified during this session:

- **Adaptability**
- **Adequate regulation and expression of emotions**
- **Anger/Hurt**
- **Autonomy/Independence**
- **Change**
- **Denial/Escaping/Avoiding behaviour**
- **Difficult to trust in relationships**
- **Discipline/Obey the rules**
- **Employability**
- **Experience of loss**
- **Feelings of rejection**
- **Fights for others’ rights**
- **Good judge of character**
- **Helplessness in terms of circumstances**
- **Inadequate domestic circumstances**
- **Longing to be carefree/happy**
- **Mutual respect**
- **Need for guidance/support**
- **Need for security/stability**
- **Need for unconditional acceptance**
- **Need to be heard/acknowledged**
- **Need to be nurtured/cherished**
- **Need to belong**
- **Need to nurture/cherish**
- **Ongoing journey/process of self-development**
- **Religion**

- Self-actualisation
- Self-assertive behaviour
- Self-insight
- Systemic/environmental influences
- Unhealthy interpersonal relationships

### 4.5.3 Session 3: Life line

#### 4.5.3.1 General comments

Genevieve was in an excited mood today and eager for the session. She approached the activity with fervour and started conversations while she was busy working. Overall, this session was filled with new information and insight that resulted from the participant's reflection on her life so far.

#### 4.5.3.2 Course of the session and themes identified

During this session the participant was given the opportunity to visually represent<sup>34</sup> the course of her life as a chronological sequence with positive and negative milestones. This was used to facilitate conversation. From the outset of this session Genevieve's longing to be part of a group, like **"the jocks and the smokers and the whatever's in their little areas"**. She sees herself as **"an observer"** who likes **"to observe what they're doing"**. She often notices that **"they don't treat their environment with respect."** She told me about her group of friends: **"we had a real sense of friendship and not just ... we were more family ... there was more of an acceptance. Nobody tried to rub off on each other. Nobody tried to influence you to be this or to be that. And we could chill together without feeling pressure because we didn't judge each other ... And everybody would sit under the tree and we started to talk to each other and started sharing food ... You never felt out even if you were sticking out a bit"**. This need to belong to a group and to be accepted by others can be explained according to Maslow's theory. Maslow (in Oberst & Stewart, 2003) asserted that people need to feel that they are part of a group that is larger and more powerful than themselves. Mackay (2007) also referred to this need as the social need and argues that individuals will fill this need only once they feel secure enough to find love and affection. Mackay (2007) notes that this need is primarily about being with other people with whom one shares similar ideas and values.

<sup>34</sup> See Appendix H for Genevieve's Life line.

She then revealed her ability to “take care” of herself “ever since they stopped helping [her] with homework”. Genevieve believes in following “the rules” and revealed that she finds it difficult to “control [her] moods”. She demonstrated her resilience by saying: “if something is too big for you to climb over you try to take it down, right? If you can’t climb the wall you bust through it” and then confessed that her “wall” is her “body image”: “I have a funny image of myself. Like, today I look fat in this area and then I look fat in that area”. She showed insight when wondering: “maybe that’s how I experience it”.

Genevieve’s experience of being misused became evident in her feeling like she had “been mistreated and not appreciated all [her] life”. She feels as though she was treated “like [she’s] nothing ... It was just a thing to them. It was like giving away a R5” and felt rejected by those she regarded as family: “they were a big part of my life so I expected them to ask me to come with. I wanted them to accept me and they didn’t ... You want me to bring you coffee all the time, you want me to make you tea and you want me to get the milk. And then if I don’t want to do this or I have something else to do and I don’t want to do this immediately ... like, I’d say ok, I can’t do this right now. I’ll come back and do it because I must go do something real quick. Then I’m not appreciative”. Genevieve revealed that she longs for personal relationships that “meant a lot” and that material things were not important, “It was more about being there than the things”. She tends “to forget or put away things that upset me” or denies her feelings: “I don’t feel anything”. She did show insight into positive ways to regulate her emotions: “I write about it, burn it, throw it away” and “I used to walk all the time when I was upset I would walk and walk until I was fine”. She showed amazement at herself: “I can’t believe I was so young and I could walk”. Genevieve revealed that she is “curious” but has strong morals: “you only have sex with your husband ... in this whole marriage set-up”

Genevieve shared that she was molested as a child and felt like her calls for help were not being heard: “I just feel like on that day when I called him my husband, why didn’t something just click? Why didn’t my grandmother think what the heck is going on? Maybe I should enquire and ask. Maybe just check up ... do something”. She showed insight: “I think that’s where my obsession with being heard came from ... That’s when I started talking a lot”. She was able to express her feelings: “I’m getting angry. I’m getting frustrated” and also revealed feeling let down: “my grandmother was there the first time it happened. She was drunk and asleep”.

Genevieve felt carefree in primary school where the “**school was very colourful and had this playground that had this colourful snake and the hop scotch blocks and everything**” and remembered a teacher who was “**a bit eccentric and just fun**”. She developed academic skills: “**she taught me how to spell and how to write and to read**”. In grade 3 she started having “**serious nightmares**” where “**all these things are warnings ... And then I have to make it out the other side...I always did but I don’t know why**”. She demonstrated courage and self-assertive behaviour: “**I’ve learned from horror movies not to scream and run away but to defend yourself. ‘Cause if you scream and run away you get killed anyway so rather try to defend yourself than just give up**”. She avoids her feelings, stating that she “**just [doesn’t] care**”. In grade 4 Genevieve discovered that she “**can do good in school**” and “**would worry about**” her work. In grade 6 she met her “**first real black friend. And she was a coloured!**” Once when she was ill, she discovered that her “**body could do amazing things**” to recover.

In grade 9 Genevieve spoke to her school psychologist and “**started talking about [her] feelings for the first time**”. Before that she “**would usually just say what [she] thought you need, like nothing’s wrong**” but now: “**I find that it’s easier to express my feelings. Even though it could end up in a fight I still go like, what you’re doing there is wrong**”. In the same year Genevieve met a girl who “**was a bad influence**” and she “**also started having those little anxiety attacks**”. It was also in grade 9 that Genevieve “**started running away**” from home. She explained that it felt like she “**was forced to do [that] by something**”. She revealed inadequate emotional regulation and expression: “**Around that time I also wanted to beat my grandma with a dustbin and I also started cutting myself**”. She added: “**The bible teaches us to respect others and to respect your elders. The bible teaches you to honour your parents and never lift a finger towards them. And then I was being pushed so much that I felt like I had to just break free. That’s when I started hurting myself**”. Her domestic circumstances were filled with incidents where her grandmother “**got physical**” and Genevieve felt like her “**life was being threatened**”. At that point in her life Genevieve decided “**if they want to send [her] away so bad then [she’d] just leave all by [herself]**”. She explained it as follows: “**it’s like that movie Enough. There’s a point in life where you can’t take any more. You can take this much and not any more. So you just stop, freeze frame everything, delete, move on to a new route. New folder. New document**”. Genevieve said that she “**learned how to stand up for**” herself.

### Participant's reflection for session 3

Genevieve wrote in her reflection for this session: **"I'm finally starting to unravel how my past has affected me"**. She is thus actualising career construction theory in her life design as she attempts to navigate transitions and transcend the weakness of the past and present (Maree, 2010). She revealed resilience when noting: **"what I was going through was going to make me stronger"**. She tried to escape her circumstances by attempting **"to get away as much as"** she could, in order to be **"at home less"**. She revealed that she is still on her journey to discovery: **"I still wonder why I hurt myself and what brought on the anxiety attack"**. She showed insight: **"I had to look for physical love and attention from men to fill the void my grandmother's lack of support left"**. She added that she **"committed emotional suicide in grade 9"**.

The following subthemes were identified during this session:

- Adaptability
- Adequate regulation and expression of emotions
- Amazed at own abilities
- Anger/Hurt
- Anxiety
- Autonomy/Independence
- Denial/Escaping/Avoiding behaviour
- Disappointment/Let down
- Discipline/Obey the rules
- Feelings of rejection
- Helplessness in terms of circumstances
- Inadequate domestic circumstances
- Inadequate emotional regulation
- Intimate personal relationships/Family
- Longing to be carefree/happy
- Mutual respect
- Need for unconditional acceptance
- Need to be heard/acknowledged
- Need to be nurtured/cherished
- Need to belong
- Need to nurture/cherish
- Negative body-image
- Ongoing journey/process of self-development
- Openness to new experiences
- Racial/cultural awareness
- Religion
- Resilience/Perseverance
- Self-assertive behaviour
- Self-insight
- Self-knowledge/Self-awareness
- Sexual morality
- Unhealthy interpersonal relationships
- Work ethic

#### 4.5.4 Session 4: Career style interview

##### 4.5.4.1 General comments

Genevieve and I spent about fifteen minutes of this session discussing her reflection from the previous session. She showed insight into her past and how it is affecting her present and future. Genevieve was eager to answer all the questions in today's interview. She always answered sincerely and it appeared as though she was in all honesty searching herself for the information.

##### 4.5.4.2 Course of the session and themes identified

During this session it was attempted to facilitate the construction of meaning with regards to life structure (role importance), career adaptability strategies (concern, control, curiosity and confidence), life themes (motivations and strivings) and personality style. Before starting the career style interview, we reflected on Genevieve's journal entry. She revealed insight into not being able to **"go back and change"** her past: **"So, it's like you did it. Get over it because you can't let it hold you back"**. It was clear that Genevieve wants a deeper level of understanding: **"everyone's trying to take care of me but they don't know what I want"**. She demonstrated self-actualisation: **"I became who I wanted to be, I guess...God made me a certain person and He wants me to reach certain goals in my life"**. She noted that she doesn't **"immediately overreact"** but that **"things build up"** and then she will **"lose [her] temper"**. She reflects by **"looking at [herself]"** and makes decisions by weighing up the **"risks"** and **"variables"**, and then **"considers this and that and that and then make a choice on that"**. Rules are very important to her as she once read in the Bible: **"follow the rules"**. She strives to be a positive **"influence"** and to one day be **"a good role-model to [her] children, to other people who look up to [her]"**. She would like for people to come to her **"and ask for advice and to be able to come for help at any time"**. She longs for **"personal relationships"** and realized that she **"had to start tapping back into [her] emotions, like being able to cry and laugh and be happy"**. She is still in the process of this: **"I still can't cry. Because I can't cry at all. No matter what happens ... I just shut down. My brain shuts down. My heart shuts down ... I think I'm not yet in touch with everything. I'm still working on that ... I think I'm protecting myself or something"**. She called this process a journey **"to rediscovering what's inside"** and is **"hopeful to rediscover everything"**. She revealed her

passion for nurturing others as follows: **“I want to influence somebody to hopefully be a good person. But I don’t want children outside of a failsafe ... no not a failsafe, there’s no such thing as a failsafe ... a stable marriage. I want to teach them right and wrong ... And I also like taking care of people ... a lot”**. She believes that **“if you want something done you have to do it yourself ... If you want to buy something you have to save for it and buy it yourself. And you have to work for the money to buy it”**.

Genevieve revealed her ambition as not wanting **“to go into a career that’s just a dead-end job”**. She wants to **“upgrade the whole time”** and later on **“own a business”**. Her motivation for this is as follows: **“I don’t want my kids to be in need of anything”**. It is important to her to make her own decisions: **“Because I don’t want to feel trapped by somebody telling me they will give me a bursary but I can only go and study at this institute or that institute”**. Genevieve desires to **“stop people from hurting other people”** but does not see herself in a **“social worker”** role as she would **“get too emotionally attached and personally involved with that person ... by the time that person is eighteen and they have to leave I’d be like no, please stay”**. This points to possible concerns regarding abandonment. Gamble and Roberts (2005) found that adolescent who report their caregivers to be critical and who make demeaning comments had heightened concerns about potential abandonment in interpersonal relationships. Anderson (2011) notes that if an individual has been rejected by someone in the past, that individual may fear that others will do the same to him/her in the future.

Genevieve tries to escape her emotions by staying **“cluttered and busy”**. She noted: **“When there’s nothing to focus on, when there’s nothing to divert my attention there’s nothing stopping me from crashing”**. Genevieve possesses facets of employability: **“to become qualified so that I can do the whole job ... all in one”** and **“I don’t want to just be the pencil or just be the pen. I want to be the whole spacecase”**.

She revealed the personal characteristics she regards as important as: **“fun yet organized”**, **“self-sufficient”**, **“loving and accepting”**, **“set the boundaries”**, **“somebody I can trust”**, **“independent”** and **“Christian”**. She noted that she gets **“bored easily, so every day has to be a new challenge”**. She does not want to do **“monotonous”** tasks but also would not want a caereer that is **“too unstable”**. She enjoys **“finding out what [she doesn’t] know”** and **“learning new things”**. Genevieve indicated that she likes things that are **“out of the ordinary”** and tries to **“think outside the box”** to be able to let her **“creativity”** blossom. Even though

Genevieve appears to be an independent person, she still needs someone to **“walk this path with”** her and said that she is **“reliant”** on others for their guidance. She is **“not required by law to go to school anymore but wants a better future for [herself]”**. Her resilience was reflected: **“I’m trying something new so let’s just keep working at it. I’ll get there someday”** and **“I had this little pink bike and I had them take off the little wheels so I’d ride on the grass and if I fall I’d just try again. And then one day I’m like I can do it, let’s try the next one”**.

According to Genevieve she is good at **“adapting”** and can **“turn into whatever is required...I want to be the cell phone. If your MP3 breaks, you listen to me. If the landline breaks or the power is down, you call on me. If you can’t talk, you text. You put on a new application; you delete anything you don’t want that’s unnecessary. It’s fully customizable”**. This image reflects Genevieve’s readiness to cope with change (Campbell & Ungar, 2004).

#### Participant’s reflection for session 4

Genevieve’s reflection for this session revealed she wants **“to achieve great things”** in her career and **“go all the way to the top because I’m driven to success”**. Her rational decision making strategy was reflected in the following: **“I want to do research on job opportunities so that I know in which field I’ll have a better chance in being successful”**.

The following subthemes were identified during this session:

- **Adaptability**
- **Adequate regulation and expression of emotions**
- **Amazed at own abilities**
- **Autonomy/Independence**
- **Creativity**
- **Denial/Escaping/Avoiding behaviour**
- **Difficult to trust in relationships**
- **Discipline/Obey the rules**
- **Employability**
- **Fights for others’ rights**
- **Financially responsible**
- **Inadequate emotional regulation**
- **Intimate personal relationships/Family**
- **Need for control/to be in charge**
- **Need for guidance/support**
- **Need for security/stability**
- **Need for stimulation/challenges**
- **Need for unconditional acceptance**
- **Need to be nurtured/cherished**
- **Need to nurture/cherish**

- Ongoing journey/process of self-development
- Openness to new experiences
- Rational decision making
- Religion
- Resilience/Perseverance
- Self-actualisation
- Self-insight
- Structured/organized
- Work ethic

#### 4.5.5 Session 5: Asset map

##### 4.5.5.1 General comments

Genevieve seemed tired today when we met for our session. She commented: **“My mind’s asleep today but I’ll try”**. She was low on energy at the beginning of the session, but seemed to become more energised as the session progressed. She approached the activity of making an asset map with enthusiasm at first, but during and after she was busy with the activity, she commented that it was difficult to think of other people and how they influence her. Her mood seemed to drop closer to the end of the session and she commented that this task was more difficult than the ones we’ve completed before.

##### 4.5.5.2 Course of the session and themes identified

During this session it was attempted to construct meaning with regards to the intrinsic and extrinsic assets<sup>35</sup> Genevieve possesses. We started by identifying assets that are intrinsic to Genevieve.

Genevieve identified the following assets that she possesses in herself: **“dedication”**, **“perseverance”**, **“interest”**, **“curiosity”**, **“creativity”**, **“analytical thinking”**, **“observing”**, **“respect”**, **“responsibility”** and **“good judge of character”**. Genevieve revealed her curiosity by asking questions, such as: **“What happens when you’re brain-dead?”** while she was busy with the activity. She highlighted the importance of protecting others by noting that she possesses **“defensive leadership skills”**. She sees herself as **“dominant ... even over any male counterpart”**. Genevieve explained her self-assertiveness as: **“I see a person who is submissive as very weak. They role over and play dead for anything. If somebody scolds**

<sup>35</sup> See Appendix I for Genevieve’s asset map.

them or shouts at them they can't stand up for themselves or they don't know how to handle the situation. Then it's better to have a bit of dominance instead of that walk-all-over-me attitude". According to Tolor, Kelly and Stebbins (1976), assertiveness is the expression of personal rights and feelings, both positive and negative, in a socially appropriate manner and the ability to stand up for oneself and express one's rights without denying the rights of others. Islamova (2010) notes that self-assertion involves an individual's search for and realisation of his/her own special path in the world, his/her values and purpose in life. Genevieve exhibited good self-knowledge when admitting she's "not very persuasive". Her need to control spilled over to herself when she said that she doesn't "like to shout" but otherwise "nobody can hear".

Genevieve identified her friends and family as a "support network" and source of "guidance". She also added (see Appendix G) that they are "loving", "caring", "helpful", "influential", "comforting", "disciplinarians", "fun", "role models" and provide "protection" and "inspiration". Genevieve noted that she was "struggling with this" and added: "I just don't know what it is yet. Maybe I haven't experienced it. Because I don't necessarily have one culture or one tradition". This activity proved to be somewhat difficult for Genevieve to complete: "I feel selfish now. Because I know all my assets but I don't see what my friends and family do for me ... It was easy to think about myself and it came to me quickly", but she found it difficult to express her feeling about her family: "They aren't just there for me. They're there for a reason. They do this and that. They influence my life in this way". She added: "I don't think about home, food, clothes, whatever [when I think about family]. I think about what they meant to my life". She expressed feeling mistreated when she said "use and abuse rhyme" and projected feeling "trapped". Genevieve demonstrated her creativity by coming up with a "personal chef business" idea called: "The restaurant at home".

She relayed her plans for the future to me and indicated adaptability: "If I don't get a bursary I will try and get a student loan or I can go to the army because they help you study and the police also helps you study. And if I don't, then I'm going to have to go to college if I can't get a bursary for University. If I go to college I could work up the experience and work up the money to study through UNISA if I have to or go back to University". She displayed some anxiety over her future: "I don't want it to come too fast". According to Genevieve she is a good judge of character: "If I see a person and I speak to a person

something tells me that person's fine or that person's not so **have your guard up**" She also showed insight into the influence of the greater system: "**I don't just have to consider myself and what I can do but I have to consider what everyone else is doing as well ... Because I know if all the water flows toward business then I'm going to have to choose another path. So I know I have to consider the rest of the world and what the world is busy with. That's why I said the Wall street and the stock exchanges and things like that that affects our lives, I guess**".

#### Participant's reflection for session 5

Genevieve reflected on her experience of the life design counselling process so far: "**When I'm in a safe environment I just feel so free. I'm stressed the whole day then I come back home and when I get to the sessions I really relax. I just breathe**". She also elaborated on the importance of personal relationships: "**not mentioning food and shelter does not make me ungrateful for these things. I just think that there are more important things to receive**". Her need for acceptance was revealed when she wrote: "**I don't want the people to think I'm weird**". Her self-insight was evident in the following comments: "**I know what I want and where I'm headed career wise. I also know how to get there but when it comes to my purpose in life, I'm still lost ... there must be some purpose to my being here.**"

The following subthemes were identified during this session:

- **Adaptability**
- **Anxiety**
- **Autonomy/Independence**
- **Creativity**
- **Difficult to trust in relationships**
- **Discipline/Obey the rules**
- **Fights for others' rights**
- **Good judge of character**
- **Helplessness in terms of circumstances**
- **Intimate personal relationships/Family**
- **Longing to be carefree/happy**
- **Mutual respect**
- **Need for control/to be in charge**
- **Need for guidance/support**
- **Need for unconditional acceptance**
- **Need to be heard/acknowledged**
- **Need to be nurtured/cherished**
- **Need to belong**
- **Need to nurture/cherish**
- **Ongoing journey/process of self-development**
- **Openness to new experiences**
- **Racial/cultural awareness**
- **Rational decision making**

- Resilience/Perseverance
- Self-assertive behaviour
- Self-insight
- Self-knowledge/Self-awareness
- Systemic/environmental influence

#### 4.5.6 Session 6: Life chapters

##### 4.5.6.1 General comments

Genevieve was friendly and enthusiastic during this session. She approached the task with eagerness and said that she has **“always wanted to”** write her life story. This was the first session where Genevieve started to set goals for herself. This indicates progression through the stages of life design counselling as set out in Chapter 3: The life design counselling process.

##### 4.5.6.2 Course of the session and themes identified

During this session it was attempted to confirm themes and patterns that were identified during the previous sessions and to identify new themes. Before starting with this session’s activity Genevieve and I read through her reflection for the previous session. Her resilience became evident in her inner conversation: **“You have the willpower to finish this. You have stamina to finish this. Now finish it. I literally talk to myself and I go: why am I not doing this? I know I can do this. Just do it”**. She showed self-insight when she noticed: **“I don’t always do the things that I said I do ... So it’s like, do I really do everything that I say I do or would I just like to do these things? Because I don’t jog. I would like to”**. She took the next step in setting long term goals: **“So goal number one doesn’t necessarily have to be implemented today or tomorrow”**. Genevieve then verbalised two personal goals: **“make this conscious decision to set this goal that we will see each other maybe every other weekend or I will come and visit her every now and then”** and **“This year I’m going to try and go more crazy”**. Kotzé (2002) notes that goal-setting is a powerful mechanism because the individual assigns specific focuses to his/her energies and is enabled to sort out what is important and what is irrelevant in his/her life.

Genevieve revealed her ability to be flexible in her time-management: **“Monday maybe archery runs late and I can’t jog. It already runs into my next thing I have lined up. So it’s like ok, let’s try to jog tomorrow”**. Her need for security was reflected when she noted: **“I want to be**

in a position where I can take care of myself and my family before I actually start having a family". "A lot of money" will provide security. Her cultural awareness was revealed: "I am supposed to be Tswana. My grandmother is Ndebele. My mother's father is Tswana so you take your father's tradition. My grandpa is Sepedi and he tells me how to speak Sepedi". She commented that her language skills are her "strong point", and "it's because I read. And I can express myself on a piece of paper. I love my essays". Her need to belong was reflected when she said she feels like "the girl who doesn't want to move out of the house right now because I only now got into the house".

Genevieve made use of denial when she claimed "it wasn't me, I didn't see myself". She pleaded for guidance: "the only thing God had said to me is follow the rules. Maybe he wants me to also work in a children's home or be a psychologist or be a patriot of some kind or some medical something. I don't know what he wants me to be. It's like hello, help?". She desires to actualise her authentic self: "sometimes it ends up that your career is your purpose in life".

While she was busy with her task she would engage me in conversation. Genevieve revealed that she would like to be there to support her family one day: "I don't want to be miss CEO the whole day. I want to be CEO slash mom when I get home and take the kids to their matches and wherever they need to go". She told me about her puppy that she "raised": "I put him in a towel and put him in a pram and pushed him around. I was five or six ... So, he was part of the family ... And he was a good judge of character and he'd bark at somebody he didn't like". She also had a pet bird: "The bird was racist because they never took care of it. I took care of Rot and the other dogs and I fed the bird. I fed it Pronutro and gave it water and I spoke to it and I spent time with it". Her curiosity was revealed: "I was also never interested in National Geographic or Discovery until grade ten or nine. I was like wow, this is actually interesting. Before then I just liked Cartoon Network and then I started watching other things and it's like, wow, they're talking about pharaohs. I want to know about that. Or like gosh, I can't believe what happened in World War II. It's like my mind opened up".

She revealed her feelings about her relationship with her grandmother: "She's angry at me so she doesn't want to see me. I'm upset because she doesn't want to see me. And she's upset because I didn't call her for her birthday but I didn't have a phone. She could have

called me on my birthday but she didn't. She made an obvious decision not to call me". Her inadequate domestic circumstances were described again: "He's an alcoholic. He comes home drunk all the time. Every day. Even on a Sunday". Genevieve expressed some anxiety over the end of the year when she has to leave the children's home: "When I moved out of every place I moved out of I didn't cry ... I expect when I have to say goodbye to my archery instructor it's going to hurt. I see myself crying ... I love the people I left behind ... My heart gets some kind of cramp when I think about leaving them behind. It's like I don't want to go. I guess it could be my way of protecting myself."

Once she finished with her life chapters, Genevieve entitled her life story: "The book of Eve" because "Eve is the mother of everybody else. If there was no Eve there was no Genevieve. So Eve is mother of all. Caretaker of all. She was appointed right alongside Adam". The theme of resilience was emphasised when she said about hardship and problems: "it only makes us better people ... If there wasn't something bad there wouldn't be something good in it. If there wasn't poverty there wouldn't be people with a purpose to try and relieve that".

She divided her story into "The Old and The New Testaments". She explained as follows: "I think when I moved here I left everything there behind. Including all the good things and all my friends but I still left things behind". This indicated her experience of loss. She continued: "that was a different me. I've changed. Even I didn't think I could change this much but I did and it's like I didn't even recognize myself in December". Genevieve showed self-insight: "I understand why I did what I did and I understand how" and continued to explain her reason for the two chapters: "I can't believe my ... I don't know what to call it ... my audacity or something like that. I'm not the same at all. And that is why I had the old chapter or the Old Testament and now I'm busy with the New Testament". She revealed good self-knowledge: "I can't flirt unless I need to. I can still tell a white lie but I can't tell a big lie. I'm not attracted to people anymore. I see everything unknown as a threat. If it's in an environment like school I invite everything in but when I'm walking on the street and a guy goes baby I go what? Where in the Old Testament I would have flirted back".

The first chapter of her story, called "The young and the sinless" indicates a longing to be carefree and happy: "That's our little sinless days where everything was innocent. I could just be. I was a child. I could skip rope and jump around and jump into the pool and stuff

without real consequences”. This chapter also told of her “mothering instinct” and “need to be needed”. Chapter two testified of her attempt to become more independent from her home circumstances by escaping the situation: “When I went to primary school I kind of distanced myself from them. I threw myself into my social life ... the little social life that I had like my friends and going out and not being at home. I didn’t want to be at home ... I started reading and visiting my friends a lot. I would read myself to sleep ... And I read very interesting books. And Nancy Drew. That’s where all that started. My curiosity”.

She explained that her third chapter, “All grown up” is “from grade eight upwards when I started going to church and then I stopped going to church. I got forced to. Wasn’t my fault”. The theme of escaping was still current in this chapter: “I only knew that I was trying to run away all the time”. Genevieve came to new self-insight during our conversation about a dream she had: “Now I know why I was riding in a stranger’s car”.

Then the “New Testament” started with chapter 4: “New world order”. Genevieve explained: “I think I’m just getting rid of the old me, the weak me, the one who couldn’t stand up for herself, the one who always said ok, fine, just roll over me. I was changing myself ... I should have called it Evolution because I’m still trying to evolve”. This indicated the process or journey to development and self-discovery that Genevieve is on. Her racial and cultural awareness, as well as a need to belong were evident from this chapter: “If you had to put me in a race group, not only according to my skin and my body but according to my whole being, you’d have to put me in as a coloured”. She also started exploring new things: “so I decided to be like ok, let’s go to that place and check it out”, but would retreat back to safety by escaping: “Then I’m like no, this is not working. It’s way too dangerous. Let’s just go back into my shell. I’ll come out when it’s safe to”. Her adaptability was evident when she described her next chapter as “finding of the balance. So the title would be New balance”.

#### Participant’s reflection for session 6

Genevieve reflected on today’s session and revealed self-insight: “This whole process has helped me ... it has helped me because if somebody asks me what I like now I can actually answer them. In the past it was like I don’t know. You’ll just have to stick with me and find out. Now I can go I don’t like it if you do that ... And I’m still scared that I’m going

to be a bad mother even though I have all these beautiful motherly figures in my life ... I wanted to go and reflect back on my life and see why I did things I did or whether it really impacted my life in such a way that I don't look like a little church girl with long skirts and ankle boots. I want to see whether the change that was going to be made, had I not been influenced by those things, was going to be good or bad". Spain and Bedard (in Bujold, 2004) point out that when counsellors help individuals to see their vocational future as a continuation of their life story, they help them put to use their potential in order to become the creators of their own identity, instead of feeling determined by external influences.

The following subthemes were identified during this session:

- Adaptability
- Amazed at own abilities
- Anger/Hurt
- Anxiety
- Autonomy/Independence
- Change
- Denial/Escaping/Avoiding behaviour
- Disappointment/Let down
- Discipline/Obey the rules
- Experience of loss
- Feelings of rejection
- Good judge of character
- Helplessness in terms of circumstances
- Inadequate domestic circumstances
- Inadequate emotional regulation
- Longing to be carefree/happy
- Need for guidance/support
- Need for security/stability
- Need for unconditional acceptance
- Need to be nurtured/cherished
- Need to belong
- Need to nurture/cherish
- Ongoing journey/process of self-development
- Openness to new experiences
- Racial/cultural awareness
- Religion
- Resilience/Perseverance
- Self-actualisation
- Self-assertive behaviour
- Self-insight
- Self-knowledge/Self-awareness
- Setting goals
- Systemic/environmental influence



## 4.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter I reported the result of the case study that was investigated. Genevieve's background information was provided, as well as a summary of the main and subthemes that were identified. A detailed discussion of each session was presented and some aspects were compared to existing literature. The summary of my study, findings and recommendations will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5 I provide a short overview of the first four chapters of this study. After this the general research question is stated again and conclusions relating to this are made. Limitations of this study are discussed, after which I will refer to the ethical aspects that were adhered to during my study. I end the chapter with recommendations regarding training, practise and future research.

#### 5.2 FINDINGS ON WHICH THE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE BASED

In order to motivate the conclusions and recommendations of my study I briefly summarise the course of my research in the following section.

##### 5.2.1 Chapter 1: Introductory orientation

In order to provide a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon being studied, namely “**The possibility and limits of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent**”, I provided in Chapter 1 a preliminary literature review and explained the motivation for my study. I described the aim of the research and formulated the primary research question as follows: **What is the possibility and limits of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent?** I described my working assumptions. A preliminary conceptual framework illustrated how the relevant concepts in the study are related. I then defined these concepts and stated the expected outcomes and anticipated problems for this study.

In an attempt to explain the research process I briefly discussed my paradigmatic perspective and the selected research design. Data collection and data analysis techniques that were used were summarised and the research site was described. Following this I described my role as the researcher, as well as ethical considerations that go along with it. I concluded the chapter by highlighting the limitations of my study.

### **5.2.2 Chapter 2: Literature study**

In Chapter 2 I explored the main themes of my study. I began by discussing the relevance of life design counselling in a postmodern society, followed by a brief overview of existing models for life design counselling. I then explored the goals of life design counselling and the factors that influence the process. After this I discussed the theoretical approaches that relate to the context, as well as the social construction of meaning. I discussed the relationship between social constructionism and life design counselling after which I focused on the cultural context as a subjective experience. I then provided an overview of the role of language in the construction of meaning and then focused on the identity development of South African adolescents. I lastly turned my attention to abandoned adolescents in the current South African context and concluded the chapter with a brief summary of the main themes.

### **5.2.3 Chapter 3: Research methodology**

The interpretive/constructivist paradigm, as well as the qualitative, descriptive and exploratory research design that was implemented during this study, were discussed in Chapter 3. The specific research methodology and strategies used in this study were described, after which I discussed the research site and my role during the research. The life design counselling process, as well as specific data collection techniques and the modes of documentation that I implemented, were discussed in detail. After this I indicated by means of a comprehensive discussion on the data analysis techniques that I used during this study, how I aimed to enhance the credibility and dependability of my research. I lastly described the ethical considerations that guided this research.

### **5.2.4 Chapter 4: Discussion of the results of the case study**

In order to illustrate the relevance of a life design counselling process, I provided an overview of the case study in Chapter 4. I began by providing a short summary of the data analysis methods used during this study, followed by a presentation of the participant's background information. I then analysed and categorized the meaningful main and subthemes that were identified during each session after which I described each session in chronological order, comparing some aspects to previous research.

It appears that the participant's involvement and participation in the co-constructive life design counselling process was enhanced by the implementation of specific postmodern techniques. In addition, a qualitative analysis of the life design counselling process contributed to forming an accurate image of the participant's experience in her context. The following main themes were compiled from the meaningful subthemes: personal characteristics, personal values, intrapersonal skills, painful past, interpersonal relationship dynamics, personal motivators, decision-making styles, future orientation and coping strategies.

### 5.3 ANSWERING THE GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTION

The qualitative, descriptive and exploratory nature of this study contributed to the acquisition of a rich, in-depth description of the phenomenon investigated, namely "**The possibility and limits of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent**". In order to view the conclusions of this study from an appropriate perspective, I am necessitated to emphasise the value of this study as an attempt to develop a **comprehensive understanding** of the phenomenon. From this perspective the following conclusion with regard to the general research question can be made:

- The description of the relevant case study shows that it seems as though life design counselling is an appropriate perspective from which to approach career counselling with a black, multilingual abandoned adolescent female.
- In addition, it appears as though the postmodern techniques implemented in this study, promoted the participant's involvement and participation in this study. The participant's increased self-insight with regards to her personal experience is revealed by her remark: *"I talk about myself here and then I see the truth or I see myself from your point of view or from some warped sense of...it's like a worm hole. I'm just looking at myself from another angle"*.
- The value of a life design counselling process is further highlighted in the participant's "changed" experience with regard to certain aspects of her situation, as well as through some manifestations of pro-active behaviour towards the challenges that she is currently experiencing.

Life design counselling is viewed by some researchers (Campbell & Ungar, 2004; Savickas *et al.*, 2009) as an effective strategy to promote the design of an individual's life so that it can change according to the requirements of the individual's unique challenges and experiences.

This view is reflected to a large extent in this case study and the potential of the life design counselling process was highlighted. However, it is not proved in this dissertation that life design counselling is the “only” or “best” method to be implemented during counselling processes. To determine the effectiveness and flexibility of a life design counselling process, it will be necessary to repeat this study with a larger population and other cultural groups.

During this study, I worked from the assumption that a co-constructive life design counselling process can address in a meaningful way the challenges currently experienced by an abandoned adolescent. The unique nature of the individual’s context, the interdependent relationship between the individual and the system in which she finds herself, the subjective meaning attached to experiences, as well as the challenges that a black, multilingual abandoned adolescent female faces in the current South African context have again emerged in my study. I do not suggest, by any means, that life design counselling is the only solution to the barriers that this individual might face. Rather, I hope that this study made a modest contribution to a greater awareness of an abandoned adolescent’s current experiences, as well as the challenges that she is confronted with in terms of training and employment opportunities.

#### **5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study’s limitations are set out as follows:

- The extent of the study is limited since only one case study was investigated in this research.
- The possibility to generalise the findings and results are limited since one can not regard one case study as representative of the whole population of abandoned adolescents in South Africa.
- Even though specific quality assurance criteria were followed in order to enhance the credibility and dependability of my research, one must still regard my own subjective interpretation as limiting, since other researchers might interpret the findings in a different manner.

#### **5.5 ETHICAL ASPECTS**

Various ethical measures were implemented in this study in order to protect the participant. I made my identity and relevant background information known to the participant. The participant

was aware of the fact that she could withdraw from the research at any point. I got informed consent from the participant and her identity was protected throughout the process by not using her real name or any other identifiable information in this thesis or in the raw data. Besides this, I subjected myself to the ethical code of the *Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)*.

I continually gave feedback to the participant and in this way ensured that the information I was gathering, was accurate. Appropriate research methods were implemented and I confirmed that all interpretations of the results were related to the data that was gathered. An external coder verified the main and subthemes of my study in order to enhance the credibility and dependability of my findings. In addition to this, I continually aimed to uphold high methodological standards and accuracy. I also reported the research findings in an accurate and responsible manner.

## 5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations can be made with regards to training, practise and future research.

The importance of designing a life that is experienced as satisfying by the individual and that can be redesigned as needs, interests and life experiences change, is emphasised by various researchers (Campbell & Ungar, 2004; Duarte, 2010; Guichard & Dauwalder, 2010; Savickas, 1993; Savickas *et al.*, 2009). These authors regard life design counselling as central to any therapeutic process. From the current study it became obvious that a variety of challenges experienced by the individual (whether it be emotional, cognitive, systemic or career related) can likely be handled through life design counselling. **Training** in the theory and practise (implementation) of life design counselling can potentially be included in the training of psychologists in order to enable them to incorporate this strategy during therapeutic interventions.

Life design counselling can potentially be implemented in practise to identify underlying factors that play a possible role in personal development, emotional regulation, cognitive regulation, as well as career choice and career development. These factors can then be reconstructed in the form of a preferred story that includes life goals and/or a career choice. In this way, various facets of an individual's life are potentially integrated in a meaningful way and the individual is

provided with an opportunity to better understand his/her perception of his/her context, as well as the meanings attached to experiences.

Since the life design counselling process is not based on assessment or the use of standardised media, it can be implemented in **practise** in addition to, or in place of traditional, standardised tests that are only appropriate for use in specific populations. In addition, contextual and emotional factors, as well as personal meaning which are not always considered during traditional career assessments, are integrated in the life design counselling process.

Although life design counselling was an individual process in this case, the potential for implementation in groups is not excluded. Especially in a country like South Africa, where time and financial resources are considered restricted, life design counselling can be implemented to deal, among other things, with career uncertainty in adolescents. Because the effectiveness of the aforementioned is not confirmed within the South African context, the following possibilities for **further research** are suggested:

- A comparative study where more than one case is investigated.
- The possibilities and limits of life design counselling in groups.
- The possibilities and limits of life design counselling with clients from across the diversity spectrum.
- The long term impact of life design counselling with abandoned adolescents.

## 5.7 IN CONCLUSION

The possibility and limits of life design counselling with an abandoned adolescent was investigated in this research project and the findings were critically evaluated on the basis of the case study described in this dissertation. From the case study it seems that life design counselling had a potentially positive impact on a black abandoned adolescent female. Even though Genevieve's circumstances and history were not changed by the life design counselling process, she did reveal a "changed" experience in terms of some aspects in her situation. Co-constructive conversations did thus not necessarily solve her problems, but Genevieve did become aware of the meanings she assigns, the motivation for her behaviour and her view of herself. The potential value that is contained in co-constructive conversations is, in my opinion, summarized in the following lyrics by Natasha Bedingfield (2004):



*“No one else can feel it for you, only you can let it in*

*No one else can speak the words on your lips*

*Drench yourself in words unspoken*

*Live your life with arms wide open*

*Today is where your book begins*

*The rest is still unwritten ...”*

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **PERMISSION TO USE THE FACILITIES AT THE JACARANDA CHILDREN'S HOME**



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## **APPENDIX B**

### **LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT**



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## **APPENDIX C**

### **LETTER FROM THE EXTERNAL CODER**



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## **APPENDIX D**

### **SUMMARY OF THE MAIN AND SUBTHEMES IDENTIFIED DURING THE CASE STUDY (INCLUDING INDICATORS AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA FOR EACH THEME)**

<b>THEME 1: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS</b>	
Definition	This relates to inherent character traits of the individual that are not likely to change over time.
Subtheme 1.1 <b>Autonomy/Independence</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “without any help”, “took care of myself”, were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to being dependent on others were not considered part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6
Subtheme 1.2 <b>Resilience/Perseverance</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “I kept trying” or to “just try again, as well as where the participant referred to overcoming hardships were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to giving up were not considered part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 1.3 <b>Structured/organized</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “neat”, “organized” and “structured” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to an unstructured, disorganized approach to tasks were not considered part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 4
<b>THEME 2: PERSONAL VALUES</b>	
Definition	This relates to principles or standards that the individual regards as important to leading a meaningful life.
Subtheme 2.1 <b>Discipline/Obey the rules</b> <sup>36 37</sup>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “rules”, “discipline”, “boundaries”, and “consequences” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to being undisciplined, not following rules and actions without consequences were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 2.2 <b>Intimate personal relationships/Family</b> <sup>38</sup>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “personal relationship”, “personally involved” and “emotionally attached” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.

<sup>36</sup> Only certain subthemes that were considered to possibly have ambiguous meanings were defined in the form of a footnote.

<sup>37</sup> “Discipline/Obey the rules” refers to the belief that one needs discipline, boundaries, rules and regulations in one’s life.

<sup>38</sup> “Intimate personal relationships/Family” refers to the individual assigning high value to having meaningful personal relationships with others and with one’s family members, as opposed to superficial relationships.

Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to impersonal interpersonal relationships were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 3, 4, 5
<b>Subtheme 2.3 Mutual respect</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “respect” and “you can’t disrespect” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant refers to accepting disrespect between people were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 5
<b>Subtheme 2.4 Religion</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “Christian”, “reading the Bible” and “speak to God” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant refers to religion as not being a personal value were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 4, 6
<b>Subtheme 2.5 Sexual morality</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases indicating a sexually moral attitude, such as not “sleeping around”, as well as referring to sexual morality were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant refers to sexual morality not being a personal value were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 3
<b>Subtheme 2.6 Work ethic</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “have to work for everything you want” and “I can’t do anything half” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant refers to a good work ethic as not being a personal value were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 3, 4
<b>THEME 3: INTRAPERSONAL SKILLS</b>	
Definition	This relates to skills that can change and/or develop over time.
<b>Subtheme 3.1 Amazed at own abilities</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “wow, this is a new ambition” and “I can’t believe ...” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not being amazed at her own abilities were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 3, 4, 6
<b>Subtheme 3.2 Fights for others’ rights<sup>39</sup></b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “I’m standing up for”, “suffering for everybody else”, “I’m protecting” and “stop

<sup>39</sup> “Fights for others’ rights” refers to the participant’s tendency to defend other people’s rights, stand up for other people, as well as protect other people who she sees as being oppressed or treated unfairly.

	people from hurting other people” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not defending other people’s rights or standing up for others were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 2, 4, 5
<b>Subtheme 3.3 Financially responsible</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “I saved for this” and “planned ahead”, as well as where she referred to money were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to financial irresponsibility were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 4
<b>Subtheme 3.4 Good judge of character</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “I’m a very good judge of character” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to herself as not being a good judge of character were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 2, 5, 6
<b>Subtheme 3.5 Openness to new experiences<sup>40</sup></b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “that was a new experience”, “I’ve never experienced that”, “I like trying everything at least once”, as well as “curious” and “I want to learn” were considered to be descriptive of this theme. Other indicators include instances where the participant asked questions such as “What does it mean?”
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to a limiting attitude towards new experiences were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6
<b>Subtheme 3.6 Racial/cultural awareness</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “black” people, “coloured”, “culture”, “tradition” and “race” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant indicated unawareness of racial and cultural characteristics were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 3, 5, 6
<b>Subtheme 3.7 Self-insight</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases that indicate a deep perception and understanding of herself and her situation, as well as a better or new understanding of herself, such as “I think it’s because...”, “that’s where I got the thing for...”, “that’s why...”, “that’s how I experience it” and “I’ve never thought about that...” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to limited self-insight into herself and her situation were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
<b>Subtheme 3.8 Self-knowledge/Self-awareness</b>	

<sup>40</sup> “Openness to new experiences” refers to the participant’s willingness to try new activities and/or mindsets, as well as her curiosity and openness to new information.

Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases indicating knowing herself, knowing what she likes, and knowing what she doesn't like, such as "I like", "I have", "I can", "I can't", "I am" and "I'm not" were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant indicated that she does not know herself or her preferences were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 3, 5, 6
<b>THEME 4: PAINFUL PAST</b>	
Definition	This relates to the individual's experience of his/her past as physically or emotionally distressing.
<b>Subtheme 4.1 Change</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant referred to her circumstances or herself that changed, using phrases such as "I went to", "it was new", "I moved" and "I've changed" were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to things staying the same were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 6
<b>Subtheme 4.2 Disappointment/Let down</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant referred to being let down or disappointed by important people in her life by using phrases such as "just never happened" and "she wouldn't try" were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not being disappointed by important people in her life were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 3, 6
<b>Subtheme 4.3 Experience of loss</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as "died", "didn't see him again", "lose important people or things" and "I left everything there behind" were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not losing anything or anyone were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 2, 6
<b>Subtheme 4.4 Feelings of rejection</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as "never take care of me", "being replaced", "abandoned", "didn't want me", "never took me", "like I'm nothing" and where the participant referred to feeling rejected were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to feelings of acceptance were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 6
<b>Subtheme 4.5 Inadequate domestic circumstances</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as "abusive", "hit me" or "beat me", "alcoholic", "screams" and "threatened" were considered to be descriptive of this theme.

Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to adequate domestic circumstances were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 6
Subtheme 4.6 Helplessness in terms of circumstances <sup>41</sup>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “wasn’t allowed to”, “I couldn’t”, “didn’t believe me”, “my fault”, “used”, “mistreated”, “forced to”, “trapped” and “didn’t listen to me” as well as where the participant referred to feelings of helplessness in terms of her circumstances were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not feeling helpless were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
Subtheme 4.7 Unhealthy interpersonal relationships	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “bad influence” and “in an abusive relationship” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to healthy interpersonal relationships were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3
<b>THEME 5: INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS</b>	
Definition	This relates to the motivation or driving force underlying the individual’s relationships with others.
Subtheme 5.1 Need for unconditional acceptance <sup>42</sup>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “accepting/acceptance”, “won’t abandon me”, “be like other people”, “through thick and thin”, “judge” and “felt out”, as well as where the participant referred to a need for acceptance and feelings of fear of abandonment or rejection were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not wanting to be unconditionally accepted were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 5.2 Need for control/to be in charge	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “control”, “be the boss”, “dominant”, as well as where the participant referred to a need to be in charge of her own life, her behaviour and her decisions were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not wanting to be in control were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 4, 5
Subtheme 5.3 Need for guidance/support	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as

<sup>41</sup> “Helplessness in term of circumstances” refers to feelings of loss of control, being unfairly accused or blamed, powerlessness or the inability to change her circumstances and feelings of being misused or taken advantage of.

<sup>42</sup> “Need for unconditional acceptance” refers to a need to be accepted by others and includes feelings of fear of abandonment or rejections.

	“advice”, “support”, “guidance”, “leader”, “help me” and “reliant” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not needing guidance and support from others were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6
<b>Subtheme 5.4 Need to be heard/acknowledged</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “see my point”, “listen”, “heard”, “talking” and “pay attention” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not needing her voice heard or to be acknowledges by others were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 5
<b>Subtheme 5.5 Need to be nurtured/cherished<sup>43</sup></b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “knew me”, “matter”, “love”, “care”, as well as where the participant refers to being nurtured and cherished were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not having a need to be nurtured or cherished were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
<b>Subtheme 5.6 Need to belong<sup>44</sup></b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “part of the family/group”, “I’m not alone”, “us”, “like an add-on”, as well as where the participant refers to belonging to a family or group, or feeling isolated and like an outsider were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not having a need to belong were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
<b>Subtheme 5.7 Difficult to trust in relationships</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “can’t tell her everything” and other instances where the participant indicated difficulty to trust were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to trusting easily in a relationship were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 4, 5
<b>THEME 6: PERSONAL MOTIVATORS</b>	
Definition	This relates to the individual’s internal processes which serve to activate, guide and maintain his/her behaviour.
<b>Subtheme 6.1 Employability<sup>45</sup></b>	

<sup>43</sup> “Need to be nurtured/cherished” includes the need to be brought up, helped to develop and grow, and to be provided with nourishment (nurture), as well as to be cared about and loved (cherish).

<sup>44</sup> “Need to belong” includes a need to feel like part of a group, feelings of isolation and loneliness, as well as feeling like an outsider.

Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “qualifications”, “diversely qualified”, “all in one” and “all-rounder” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to employability as not being an important aspect were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 2, 4
<b>Subtheme 6.2 Longing to be carefree/happy</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “glamour”, “partying”, “twirl around”, “fun”, “innocent” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not longing to be carefree and happy were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
<b>Subtheme 6.3 Need for security/stability<sup>46</sup></b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “feel safe”, “steady job”, “lot of money” and “stable” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not having a need for security and stability were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 4, 6
<b>Subtheme 6.4 Need for stimulation/challenges</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “bored”, “monotonous”, “challenge” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not having a need for stimulation and challenge were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Session 4
<b>Subtheme 6.5 Need to nurture/cherish<sup>47</sup></b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “take care”, “mother instinct”, “raised him” and “need to be needed” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not wanting to nurture and cherish others were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
<b>Subtheme 6.6 Self-actualisation</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “be yourself”, “I’m just me”, “best...I can be” and “purpose in life” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant did not refer to self-actualisation as a personal

<sup>45</sup> “Employability” refers to a person’s value in terms of future employment opportunities, which is determined by the accumulation of knowledge, skills, experience and reputation that can be invested in new employment opportunities as they arise.

<sup>46</sup> “Need for security/stability” includes the need for physical security and financial security.

<sup>47</sup> “Need to nurture/cherish” refers to a need to take care of others, protect others from harm, as well as a need to feel needed by others.

	motivator were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 2, 4, 6
Subtheme 6.7 <b>Systemic/environmental influences</b> <sup>48</sup>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant referred to external influences by using phrases such as “influence”, “affects” and “creates a reaction” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant did not refer to systemic or environmental influences were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 2, 5, 6
<b>THEME 7: DECISION-MAKING STYLE</b>	
Definition	This relates to the manner in which the individual goes about making decisions.
Subtheme 7.1 <b>Rational decision making</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “pro’s and cons”, “logical sense of thinking”, “risks”, “variables”, “options” and “research” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to irrational decision making were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 4, 5
<b>THEME 8: FUTURE ORIENTATION</b>	
Definition	This relates to the individual’s expectations and the degree to which he/she is thoughtful about his/her future.
Subtheme 8.1 <b>Ongoing journey/process of self-development</b> <sup>49</sup>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “not there yet”, “still figuring that out”, “so far”, “journey”, “future” and “hopeful” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant refers to having reached her destination were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 8.2 <b>Setting goals</b>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “next year”, “goal” and “going to try” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant did not refer to setting goals were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Session 6
<b>THEME 9: COPING STRATEGIES</b>	
Definition	This relates to the manner in which the individual responds to a problem or threatening situation.
Subtheme 9.1 <b>Adaptability</b>	

<sup>48</sup> “Systemic/environmental influences” refers to the interaction between subsystems that has an influence on the participant and is also influenced by the participant as a subsystem.

<sup>49</sup> “Ongoing journey/process of self-development” refers to an ongoing process of self-discovery and development that the participant is currently busy with and that will continue into the future. This subtheme includes hope and optimism about the future.

Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant referred to adjusting and adapting to a situation by using phrases such as “adaptable”, “adapt”, “turn into whatever” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to herself as not being adaptable were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Subtheme 9.2 Adequate regulation and expression of emotions	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant referred to experiencing emotions suited to the situation, as well as expressing those emotions in an adequate manner by using phrases such as “express my feelings” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not regulate and express her emotions in an adequate manner were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4
Subtheme 9.3 Anger/Hurt	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “hurt” and “angry” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not feeling angry and hurt were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 6
Subtheme 9.4 Anxiety	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “bad dreams”, “nervous”, “warnings” and “anxiety attacks”, as well as where the participant referred to experiencing feelings of anxiety were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant did not refer to feelings of anxiety were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 3, 5, 6
Subtheme 9.5 Creativity	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant referred to being creative or coming up with new ideas by using phrases such as “I’m creative”, “out of the ordinary” and “think outside the box” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not being creative were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 4, 5
Subtheme 9.6 Denial/Escaping/Avoiding behaviour	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “it wasn’t me”, “it doesn’t matter”, “running away”, “I’ll leave”, “let it lie”, as well as where the participant referred to denial, escaping or avoiding behaviour were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant did not refer to denial, escaping or avoidance behaviour were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6

Subtheme 9.7 Inadequate emotional regulation <sup>50</sup>	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant referred to experiencing emotions that are not suited to the situation, as well as expressing those emotions in an inadequate manner by using phrases such as “anger problem”, can’t “control our moods”, “temper”, “cutting myself”, “hurting myself”, “shut down” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to adequate emotional regulation and expression were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 3, 4, 6
Subtheme 9.8 Negative body-image	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “fat”, “weight” were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to a positive body-image were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 1, 3
Subtheme 9.9 Self-assertive behaviour	
Indicators	All the instances in the data where the participant used phrases such as “speak up”, “stand up for myself” and not having a “walk-all-over-me attitude”, as well as where the participant referred to self-assertiveness were considered to be descriptive of this theme.
Exclusions	Instances where the participant referred to not being self-assertive were not considered to be part of this theme.
Source of data	Sessions 2, 3, 5, 6

<sup>50</sup> “Inadequate emotional regulation” includes inadequate expression of emotions as part of this subtheme.



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## **APPENDIX E**

### **EXAMPLE OF THE VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT FROM ONE OF THE RESEARCH SESSIONS**

R: Researcher  
G: Genevieve  
X: Long silence

### Extract from Session 6: Life chapters

R	Tell me about your grandfather? Did he also live with your grandmother?
G	Yes and he's still alive now even though he drinks. He's an alcoholic. He comes home drunk all the time. Every day. Even on a Sunday. He's a freelance painter and construction builder. So, it's not like he has work all the time. Why does he drink that much?
R	So, it was you and your grandmother and grandfather in the house when you grew up.
G	Uhhm.
	X
G	When I moved out of every place I moved out of I didn't cry. I don't know why. I truly don't but I expect when I have to say goodbye to my archery instructor it's going to hurt. I can feel...or I see myself crying. That whole weekend is going to be a bummer. And I know it's going to be a weekend.
R	Do you think you are more personally involved here than at the other places you stayed?
G	No I don't think that. I love the people I left behind. I think it's all coming back to me now. I can start feeling again. I feel myself literally get upset. My heart gets some kind of cramp when I think about leaving them behind. Back then it wasn't this big on an issue for me leaving them behind but these people now. It's like I don't want to go. I guess it could have been my way of protecting myself.
R	Your way of surviving.
G	I don't know. I've never had an emotional breakdown so I don't know if I'm capable of having one. So, was it really surviving or what was it?
R	You're the only one who knows.
	X
G	Ok, I'm done.
R	Your whole life story up to now?
G	Yes.
R	You said the title of your book is The Book of Eve. Tell me about that?
G	I wanted to make it The Book of S because that's my previous name according to the Bible. But then I'm like wasn't she just an accessory? She was just Abraham's accessory.
R	Why do you say that?
G	She was the mother to his children and she was a very beautiful woman even though the original scripture says she was different. But in the Bible they say she mothered his children. She left Egypt with him. And that's it.
R	Isn't the whole Christian population descendant of Abraham? So if she wasn't there...
G	I wouldn't like to be the mother of everybody. But Eve is the mother of everybody else. If there was no Eve there was no S. So Eve is mother of all. Caretaker of all. She was appointed right alongside Adam, unfortunately. Adam was the prototype and then God got it right with Eve. If Eve wasn't there, there would be no sin and then there would be no sense to the world because everything would be right and everything would be perfect. We would be like a little galaxy. God doesn't need to regulate the galaxies. He created them to regulate themselves. So, I think he has fun up there and goes oh my gosh, I can't believe Hitler did that! Did I really create that man?

R	Do I understand you right that you're saying we need problems and controversy and we need hardships?
G	Yes because it only makes us better people. Evil can exist without good. Everybody can be evil and we could just continue being evil. But good can't exist without evil. If there wasn't something bad there wouldn't be something good in it. If there wasn't poverty there wouldn't be people with a purpose to try and relieve that. So that is why it's The Book of Eve.
R	And then The Old Testament. Do you have a New Testament as well?
G	Yes. The New Testament is much shorter.
R	So explain your Old and The New Testaments to me?
G	The Old Testament is because...I think when I moved here I left everything there behind. Including all the good things and all my friends but I still left things behind. And that was a different me. I've changed. Even I didn't think I could change this much but I did and it's like I didn't even recognize myself in December. I understand why I did what I did and I understand how. I can't believe my...I don't know what to call it...my audacity or something like that. I'm not the same at all. And that is why I had the old chapter or the Old Testament and now I'm busy with the New Testament. And I still have all those elements within me. Like...I can't flirt unless I need to, unless I feel that the situation absolutely calls for it. I can't...I can still tell a white lie but I can't tell a big lie. I'm not attracted to people anymore. I see everything unknown as a threat. If it's in an environment like school I invite everything in but when I'm walking on the street and a guy goes baby I go what? You did not just say that. I will slap you. Where in the Old Testament I would have flirted back.
R	So let's get to your chapters. Chapter one. The young and the sinless.
G	That's our little sinless days where everything was innocent. I didn't do stupid things like lie. Not even when I was young I didn't tell white lies. So, it was like ah cutie, you know. It was just a time where I didn't have to do these things. I could just be. I was a child. I could skip rope and jump around and jump into the pool and stuff without real consequences. I was still learning.
R	Just earlier you told me you never played with dolls and those things.
G	But I played with the dog.
R	And you babied the dog and you babied the bird.
G	So I'm like how come? Maybe it's my mothering instinct. Why not project it upon a synthetic human being? Why project it upon a dog?
R	You tell me?
G	I think a synthetic human being doesn't actually need you. You need it because you want to think that it needs you. But a dog actually needed me.
R	So you liked to be needed. Is that something you still need?
G	Yes. My dog was afraid of lightning so I would tell it to come sleep with me and he would sleep next to me and be uncomfortable, go to my feet and be uncomfortable and then climb under my bed and sleep there.
R	Would you also say that one of your needs is to take care of something and other people?
G	Yes. I apparently need to be needed.
R	So if you think about, as you called it earlier, your purpose in life?
G	Don't tell me I'm going to become like a pre-school teacher or something like that.
R	I did not say anything. You came up with that yourself.
G	That's the picture that's in my head right now. It's like no.
R	Would that be so bad?
G	Yes it would. I would become irritated. I think I can only pay attention to one thing at a time. One big thing at a time.
R	Ok. Would you agree that what I get from this chapter here is that you have a need to feel

	needed and to take care of people or things.
G	Absolutely.
R	Chapter two says Independence days. Talk to me about that one?
G	When I went to primary school I kind of distanced myself from them. I threw myself into my social life...the little social life that I had. Like my friends and going out and not being at home. I didn't want to be at home.
R	You distanced yourself from your grandmother?
G	Yes. I went to primary school which is what everybody does. I got interested in reading by the age of nine so even in grade three I was a little reader already. I started reading and visiting my friends a lot. I would read myself to sleep. I would literally fall asleep with the book next to me or on top of me.
R	What did you like to read?
G	I read Goosebumps and I read...I read romances but practical romances like Hannah Hoekom. I mostly read random stories. Oh, I read stuff like Born Confused which was an interesting book that my friend borrowed me. And I read very interesting books. And Nancy Drew. That's where all that started. My curiosity.
R	So you started to distance yourself from your grandmother.
G	Then chapter three. This is from grade eight upwards when I started going to church and then I stopped going to church. I got forced to. Wasn't my fault. I got in touch with the spiritual world...the spiritual realm. Not necessarily religious and forth. It was more darker. I don't want to say evil but darker. These spirits or whatever it was that were communicating with me, weren't necessarily intended on doing good.
R	Can you give me an example of something that happened?
G	Like the reoccurring dreams of being in a war and all the monsters and things I've dreamt of. I dreamt of such weird things and I never came up with these things myself. I never dreamt unless I dreamt of something bad like that. I dreamed I would go for a ride in the car with somebody and then I would actually go for a ride with somebody and that person was a stranger. Why am I in a stranger's car?
R	If you have to interpret that dream now?
G	I was still in a stranger's car. I only knew that I was trying to run away all the time. I would say I was going to the mall when I was going away and then I'd end up coming back because some force in me went go back home you stupid idiot.
R	How do you think that dream is relevant to you today?
G	I still ride in strangers cars? Yes. That's what happened in the beginning because everybody was a stranger to me and I'd just randomly be in their car for some odd reason. We were going to church or going to pick up something.
R	Always being on your way to something?
G	Yes. Thank you.
R	Is that how you see yourself now as well?
G	Wow. Thank you. 'Cause I'm still on my way to somewhere.
R	And it's a stranger.
G	So I don't really know. Oh my word. Life is so weird.
R	Does that make sense to you?
G	Yes. Now I know why I was riding in a stranger's car.
R	Or why you remembered that specific one. Shall we move on?
G	I dated a girl for some odd reason. Reason probably being that I felt at that stage that I couldn't trust men so I thought maybe I'd trust a woman more with my feelings or she would be more trustworthy.
R	And that was part of the All grown up stage?
G	Yes. Where I wasn't grown up at all. I thought I was but I wasn't. You know that is where



	you make that transition from primary school to high school and that is where experiencing life begins.
R	And then the New Testament started. New world order.
G	I don't know why I named it New world order but I know where I got that from. The Illuminati always talk about the new world order where their purpose is to annihilate everything that is weak and what would bring weakness to the world. They would like to pick our genes for us because that would make us super strong. They would try to create super human beings and such. So, I think I'm just getting rid of the old me, the weak me, the one who couldn't stand up for herself, the one who always said ok, fine, just roll over me. Have fun. 'Cause you know I'm going to get you back someday.
R	I like this chapter name now that you've explained it. New world order.
G	I was changing myself.
R	Making yourself stronger.
G	Yes. I should have called it Evolution because I'm still trying to evolve. Or I should have called number three evolution because that's where I started to change.
R	So, in chapter four you said you started getting emotionally attached.
G	And I started archery. That helped me focus. Met black people.
R	I get the idea that you...
G	Have this obsession with meeting black people?
R	Yes. If you want to put it that way.
G	I wouldn't be fully black as I should be. I want to be the crazy black girl.
R	Do you feel like you don't fit into a specific group if you had to belong to a specific race or ethnicity?
G	If you had to put me in a race group, not only according to my skin and my body but according to my whole being, you'd have to put me in as a coloured. They would call me a coconut...white on the inside and black on the outside. But it's not just that it's like I don't act like a white person all the time and I don't act like a black person when I want to. It's the way I'm raised. It's the best of both worlds I guess. I get to be a black person, which I want to be, but I also get to be civilized.
R	Why do make that comparison...black and civilized?
G	Everybody in the Western world wants to be civilized. They don't drink coffee they drink tea. And they eat crumpets and not biscuits and they want to do this and not that and they want to speak in a certain manner because the rest of the people aren't civilized. They're so hypocritical. So...if I had to have a date with Prince Henry I'd be able to manage that date. But if I had to go to a get-down groove party I'd be the crazy chick.
R	You'll fit into both worlds.
G	Exactly.
R	Then...you said you started taking risks.
G	Oh gosh. I didn't want to be so monotonous so I decided to be like ok, let's go to that place and check it out. I know it was dangerous but let's still just do it. I started actually talking to guys...strangers. ...Then I'm like no, this is not working. It's way too dangerous. Let's just go back into my shell. I'll come out when it's safe to.
R	Have you found that balance?
G	No not yet. I'm still too safe. This year I'm going to try and go more crazy. Just do random things like I had this photo shoot with an old ugly dress but I pimped it.
R	You would like to be more spontaneous. Is that what you're saying?
G	Yes. Like when I went to D and slide down a super tube on all fours. It was awesome.



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## **APPENDIX F**

### **COLLAGE**



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## **APPENDIX G**

### **FAMILY CONSTELLATION**



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## **APPENDIX H**

### **LIFE LINE**



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## **APPENDIX I**

### **ASSET MAP**



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## **APPENDIX J**

### **ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**