



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

**ENHANCING AN EMERGENT ADULT WITH PARENTAL NEGLECT'S CAREER
ADAPTABILITY AND RESILIENCE THROUGH LIFE-DESIGN COUNSELLING**

by

Chantel Le Grange

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

(Educational Psychology)

Department of Educational Psychology

Faculty of Education

University of Pretoria

Supervisor

Prof J.G. (Kobus) Maree

PRETORIA

September, 2021

*This mini-dissertation is dedicated to my sisters - Lesley and Yolande.
Together we overcame adversity and broke the cycle of abuse and
neglect. Our resilience is still evident in the many challenges we face
today. I am so proud of you. With all my love.*

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Chantel Le Grange, hereby declare that the mini-dissertation, “**Enhancing an emergent adults with parental neglect’s career adaptability and resilience through life-design counselling**”, which I hereby submit for the degree MEd Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution. I further declare that all the resources that were consulted are included in the reference list.

Chantel Le Grange

Date

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

CLEARANCE NUMBER: **EDU036/19**

DEGREE AND PROJECT

MEd

Enhancing an emergent adult with parental neglect's career adaptability and resilience through life-design counselling

INVESTIGATOR

Ms Chantel Le Grange

DEPARTMENT

Educational Psychology

APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY

23 January 2020

DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

19 August 2021

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE: Prof Funke Omidire

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'F. Omidire', written over a horizontal line.

CC

Ms Thandi Mngomezulu
Prof. J. G. Maree

This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and

DECLARATION FROM THE LANGUAGE EDITOR



Editing Declaration

Lené Kraft
Postal Address: PO Box 2313 Lichtenburg 2740
Telephone: 072 782 8990
Fax: 086 626 1773
E-mail: lene@englishproofreader.co.za
Website: www.englishproofreader.co.za

To whom it may concern

10 September 2021

I hereby declare that I am a professional editor and have edited and proofread the following dissertation:

ENHANCING AN EMERGENT ADULT WITH PARENTAL NEGLECT'S CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND RESILIENCE
THROUGH LIFE-DESIGN COUNSELLING

by

Chantel Le Grange
(18255834)

As a professional editor with an English major obtained from the University of Pretoria in 2003, I am also a Full Member of the Professional Editors' Guild and a member of SATI (membership number 1002503).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lené Kraft".

Mrs Lené Kraft

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I give glory to God for opening doors that I never thought possible and for giving me the strength to persevere and make the best of the opportunities given to me.

And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge of the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2–5).

I would like to express sincere gratitude to the following people:

- ❖ Prof. J.G. Maree for your patience and motivation.
- ❖ The participant for sharing your story with me. I wish you the best in all your future endeavours.
- ❖ My life partner, Roberto, for your enduring belief in me, your consistent support and unconditional love. You are my rock. With you, I believe all things are possible.
- ❖ My children – Chandré and Jayden – for your understanding and love. You make everything worth it.
- ❖ My friends Adri and Emsie, for your motivation, help and support whenever I needed it. You mean the world to me.
- ❖ Mrs Jenny Steyn for your time, patience and willingness to help.
- ❖ Mrs Isabel Claassen for your efficient and professional service in the early stages of my research.
- ❖ Mrs Lené Kraft for your excellent service in taking care of my language editing.
- ❖ Mrs Mardeleen Muller for your excellent service in taking care of my technical editing.

ABSTRACT

Much has been written about child abuse in general, particularly about physical and sexual abuse; however, scant research is available on the chronic emotional neglect of children (Stoltenborgh et al., 2014). The sparsity of reported cases on neglect links to another review in which it was found that child maltreatment research focuses predominantly on sexual abuse. The same study found that the prevalence of child maltreatment across the world is largely similar (Stoltenborgh et al., 2014).

In this study, I would like to apply life-design counselling to explore the effects of parental neglect – in the form of emotional neglect – on the career adaptability and resilience of a young adult who is ready to start a career. According to the Children’s Act (38 of 2005) (Republic of South Africa, 2006, p. 24), neglect “in relation to a child means a failure in the exercise of parental responsibilities to provide for the child’s basic physical, intellectual, emotional or social needs”.

In my study, this definition applies to parents who purposefully or ignorantly overlook the signs that their child needs comfort or attention. Consistent emotional neglect may have long-term effects on children and may lead to high-risk behaviour, lack of empathy and emotional intelligence, poor relationships, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, personality disorders, attachment problems, inability to regulate emotions, and adolescents running away from home due to their needs not being met (De Bruin, 2016).

This study aims to investigate the influence of an intervention based on life-design principles on a young adult who had experienced parental neglect and reached the stage of entering the workplace. The research is based on an intrinsic, descriptive, exploratory case study involving a single individual. The design is qualitative in nature, both in terms of the selection of the participant and the methods used for gathering and analysing data, as career intervention based on life-design principles is constructed around the stories of individuals as perceived in their personal contexts.

Key concepts: career adaptability, emerging adult, life-design, long-term effects, parental neglect, resilience

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	i
ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	ii
DECLARATION FROM THE LANGUAGE EDITOR.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR UNDERTAKING THE STUDY	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	3
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	3
1.3.1 Exploratory questions	4
1.4 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS	4
1.4.1 Background:	4
1.5 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION.....	5
1.5.1 Emerging Adult.....	5
1.5.2 Career adaptability	5
1.5.3 Life-design-based intervention.....	5
1.5.4 Parental neglect.....	6
1.5.5 Resilience	6
1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	6
1.7 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES	7

1.7.1 Epistemology	7
1.7.2 Methodological approach	8
1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	8
1.8.1 Research design.....	8
1.8.2 Selection of participant	9
1.8.3 Data generation and documentation.....	9
1.8.3.1 Qualitative assessment	9
1.8.3.2 Quantitative assessment	10
1.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.....	11
1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	11

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY	12
2.1 INTRODUCTION	12
2.2 PARENTAL NEGLECT	12
2.3 MAJOR CAREER THEORIES.....	14
2.3.1 Trait-and-Factor/Person-Environment-Fit Theories	15
2.3.2 Lifespan Developmental Theories	16
2.3.3 Cognitive Behavioural Theories.....	16
2.3.4 Psychodynamic Approaches	17
2.3.5 Relational Approaches to Career Development.....	17
2.3.6 Postmodern Approaches	18
2.3.6.1 Career Construction and Life Design	18
2.4 CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	20
2.4.1 Socio-Political Influences.....	20
2.4.2 Employability	22
2.4.3 Fourth Industrial Revolution.....	23
2.5 CAREER ADAPTABILITY.....	24
2.6 SOCIAL ECOLOGY FOR RESILIENCE THEORY	25
2.6.1 Differential Impact Theory.....	26
2.7 HOPE THEORY.....	27
2.8 EMERGING ADULTHOOD.....	27
2.8.1 How Emerging Adulthood differs from Late-Adolescence as a life stage	27
2.8.2 How Emerging Adulthood differs from Young Adulthood as a life stage.....	28
2.8.3 Emerging Adulthood and neglect.....	28
2.9 DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	29
2.10 CONCLUSION	30

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	33
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN	33
3.2 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANT	34
3.3 DATA CONSTRUCTION AND DOCUMENTATION	35
3.3.1 Qualitative Assessment	35
3.3.2 Collage	36
3.3.3 Lifeline	36
3.3.4 Portfolio	37
3.4 INFORMAL INTERVIEWS	37
3.5 JOURNAL	37
3.6 QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT	37
3.6.1 Maree Career Matrix (MCM)	37
3.6.2 Jung Personality Questionnaire (JPQ)	38
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	38
3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	39

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	41
4.1 INTRODUCTION	41
4.2 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS.....	41
4.2.1 Description of the data analysis process	41
4.2.2 Themes and sub-themes identified through the data analysis process	42
4.2.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria.....	47
4.3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANT.....	49
4.4 THE LIFE-DESIGN COUNSELLING PROCESS FOR AURORA SIMMONS ..	51
4.4.1 Session 1: Aurora’s Timeline.....	51
4.4.1.1 Introduction.....	51
4.4.2 Session 2: Reflection on Aurora’s Timeline	59
4.4.2.1 Introduction.....	59
4.4.3 Session 3.....	69
4.4.3.1 Introduction.....	69
4.4.4 Session 4: Aurora’s representations of her feelings of anxiety	77
4.4.4.1 Introduction.....	77
4.4.5 Session 5.....	89
4.4.5.1 Introduction.....	89
4.4.6 Session 6: Feedback on JPQ and reflections on collages for portfolio	92
4.4.6.1 Introduction.....	92
4.4.7 Session 7: Reflection on <i>JPQ</i> and <i>CIP</i>	97
4.4.7.1 Introduction.....	97
4.5 SUMMARY OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES.....	104
4.6 SUMMARY	106

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	107
5.1 INTRODUCTION	107
5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS.....	107
5.2.1 Chapter 1: Introduction and orientation	107
5.2.2 Chapter 2: Literature study	107
5.2.3 Chapter 3: Research design and methodology.....	107
5.2.4 Chapter 4: Results and discussion of findings.....	108
5.3 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	108
5.3.1 Secondary research questions	108
5.3.1.1 Exploratory questions.....	108
5.3.2 Primary research question.....	116
5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	117
5.5 ETHICAL ASPECTS.....	118
5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	118
5.7 PERSONAL REFLECTION.....	119
5.8 SUMMARY	120
5.9 EPILOGUE	121
REFERENCES	122
APPENDIX A: ROUGH LIFELINE	136
ANNEXURE B: PAINTING	144
ANNEXURE C: POEM	145
ANNEXURE D: COLLAGES (SUPPLEMENTS TO LIFELINE)	146
ANNEXURE E: Informed assent of participant	147
ANNEXURE F: INFORMED ASSENT FORM SOCIAL WORKER	151
ANNEXURE G: LETTER FROM EXTERNAL CODER	155
ANNEXURE H: EXTRACT FORM TRANSCRIPTS.....	156

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Summary of themes and sub-themes.....	43
Table 4.2: The three-digit coding system used to reference data.....	46
Table 4.3: Summary of inclusion and exclusion criteria for themes and sub-themes.....	47
Table 4.4: Summary of Neglect as a theme emerging from session 2	61
Table 4.5: Summary of Resilience as a theme emerging from session 2.....	63
Table 4.6: Aurora’s highest preferred career categories and preferred careers	67
Table 4.7: Summary of themes emerging from session 3	70
Table 4.8: Themes emerging from session 4.....	78
Table 4.9: Themes emerging from session 5.....	89
Table 4.10: Themes emerging from session 6	92
Table 4.11: Themes emerging from session 7 for the <i>JPQ</i>	97
Table 4.12: Themes emerging from session 7 for the <i>CIP</i>	100
Table 4.13: Summary of pre- and post-intervention themes and sub-themes.....	104

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Diagram of conceptual framework.....	30
Figure 4.1: Aurora's career matrix	68
Figure 4.2: Aurora's painting of 'Anxiety'	79

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about child abuse in general, particularly about physical and sexual abuse, but limited research is available on the chronic emotional neglect of children Stoltenborgh et al. (2014)¹.

According to a national prevalence study, namely the Optimus Study, published by the University of Cape Town in 2016, sexual violence and physical abuse affect one in three South African children before they reach the age of 18. However, the study found that only 12% of children reported neglect and 16% reported emotional abuse (Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention [CJCP], 2016). The sparsity of reported cases on neglect links to another review in which it was found that child maltreatment research focuses predominantly on sexual abuse. The same study found that the prevalence of child maltreatment across the world is largely similar (Stoltenborgh et al., 2014).

In this study, I applied life-design counselling to explore the effects of parental neglect – in the form of emotional neglect – on the career adaptability and resilience of an emerging adult who is ready to embark on a career. In my experience as an educator as well as a social auxiliary worker at a high school, I have seen many cases of children who have experienced emotional neglect from their parents. Unfortunately, these cases are rarely reported to the school. The child victims are usually identified through referrals to counsellors due to perceived non-related manifestations, such as anger, academic problems, poor hygiene, concentration problems, lack of proper school uniform and lunch, isolation, social problems or signs of depression and anxiety.

According to the Children's Act (38 of 2005) (Republic of South Africa, 2006), neglect "in relation to a child means a failure in the exercise of parental responsibilities to provide for the child's basic physical, intellectual, emotional or social needs" (p. 24).

¹ I concur with my supervisor that key, seminal sources must be acknowledged to enhance the comprehensiveness of the review but also for academic truthfulness.

According to Child Welfare Information Gateway (2013a), chronic emotional neglect is explained in United States (U.S.) law “as the deprivation of emotional nurturance and the emotional absence of a parent or caregiver” (p. 3). In my study, this definition applies to parents who purposefully or ignorantly overlook the signs that their child needs comfort or attention. Scant research is available on the effect of neglect, as defined above, especially regarding the future career options of emerging adults who are experiencing or have experienced emotional neglect. This is mainly since emotional neglect is not easily identifiable or commonly reported, and it lacks the physical evidence (such as burns or bruises) that one might find in cases of physical abuse.

Consistent emotional neglect may have long-term effects on children. Effects include high-risk behaviour, lack of empathy and emotional intelligence, poor relationships, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, personality disorders, attachment problems, inability to regulate emotions and adolescents running away from home due to their needs not being met (De Bruin, 2016). Emerging adults who lack these skills will find it difficult to enter the workplace as confident, self-regulated employees who have the necessary cognitive skills, such as reading, writing and numeracy, to cope or succeed in the current world of work. Research by the World Economic Forum suggested that over 5 million jobs will be lost by 2020 as a result of developments of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which include artificial intelligence, robotics, genetics as well as other technological changes (Bank of America Corporation, 2016). According to a working paper from the OECD (Oleksandr et al., 2018), there is evidence that children’s social and emotional skills, particularly perseverance, sociability and self-esteem, are among the most important drivers of lifetime success.

The OECD report (Oleksandr et al., 2018) suggested that emerging adults will need different skill sets to build careers and adapt to ever-changing workplace environments. If career practitioners and psychologists acknowledge that a child’s emotional well-being and skills are negatively affected by parental neglect, they can also safely assume that these emerging adults will find the work environment extremely challenging, especially regarding having a good self-esteem and being able to adapt in a turbulent environment. A study by Roca-Puig et al. (2014) suggested that employee flexibility is vital for successful organisations. They distinguished between

behaviour-flexibility and skills-flexibility. Career adaptability and flexibility can, therefore, be considered vital abilities for all emerging adults entering the workplace.

An intervention based on life-design principles is believed to have the potential to equip emerging adults entering the workplace to find meaning for themselves and gain the resilience necessary to build a future career and enhance their career adaptability. Moreover, life-design counselling could be useful to stop the cycle of abuse – in this case, emotional neglect – as research has proved such abuse to be intergenerational (Mulder et al., 2018).

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The current study aimed to investigate the influence that an intervention based on life-design principles has on an emerging adult who had experienced parental neglect and was at the stage of entering the workplace. Research shows that many people take their pain and turn it into a purpose that gives them a happier and more meaningful life (Maree, 2013). This ability depends largely on the severity of the pain or trauma, as well as on the individual's resilience. Those who do not have high resilience will benefit from a life-design intervention that focuses on the individual stories of people and takes into consideration their personal views of reality as embedded in their contexts. Research on abuse is dominated by studies based on physical and sexual abuse (Stoltenborgh et al., 2014). However, many children and adolescents are not abused physically or sexually. Instead, they experience emotional neglect, which can have adverse long-term effects on them. In my mini-dissertation, I aim to examine how the effects of parental neglect could be countered, and how career adaptability and resilience could be enhanced through an intervention based on life-design principles.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In my case study, I aim to address the following primary research question: What influence does an intervention based on life-design principles have on an emerging adult who experienced neglect and who has reached the stage of embarking on a career? Secondary questions that arose from the main question were:

1.3.1 Exploratory questions

- How does an emerging adult experiencing parental neglect experience life-design counselling facilitated through the intervention used in my study?
- How does life-design counselling influence the career adaptability of the participant?
- How does life-design counselling influence the resilience of the participant?

1.4 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

1.4.1 Background:

According to Van Esbroeck et al. (2009), the theory of life-design counselling through career construction focuses on the individual's view of reality, which is socially constructed. The client's view of reality is subjective in nature and context-dependent. Life-design-based interventions are thus founded in constructivism. The narrative approach enables clients to tell their stories and to determine what value, meaning and effect their stories have for their life and career. By reflecting on their life events, pain and trauma, clients are empowered to attach new meaning to these experiences. In this way, clients are helped to formulate adaptive responses to developmental tasks and traumas. The counsellor is not the expert on the client's life experiences, but rather a facilitator who allows the client to find new meaning and purpose through a life-design-based intervention. In my study, the participant who experienced neglect felt empowered and motivated to embark on a career journey after the intervention and should be able to adapt within an ever-changing career environment in future. The participant was able to make new meaning after constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing her life story. She used this to pursue a bigger purpose in life by turning her pain into something she could use to achieve her career and life goals. Furthermore, the participant was helped to make important career choices based on her life story and career interests and received guidance in terms of possible steps that could be taken to realise her goals. The intervention is also believed to have helped the participant to become employable.

1.5 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

1.5.1 Emerging Adult

According to Arnett (2000) and Munsey (2006), “emerging adulthood” is a more appropriate term for the life stage of young people aged 18–25 in an industrialised society than “adolescents” or “young adults”. The APA dictionary defines this term as: “a developmental stage that is neither adolescence nor young adulthood but is theoretically and empirically distinct from them both, spanning the late teens through the twenties, with a focus on ages 18 to 25” (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020). This life stage is also characterised by the search for identity, as per Erikson’s stages of development (Erikson, 1950). The young adult’s exploration of career opportunities, their search for love and their developing new worldviews are emphasised. The term “emerging adult” is used in this mini-dissertation to refer to a person between the age of 18 and 25 who has just finished Grade 12 or who is about to finish Grade 12 and is ready to enter the workforce or study at a tertiary institution.

1.5.2 Career adaptability

According to Hartung (2009), “[c]areer adaptability refers to career development tasks, role transitions and strategies for dealing with the challenge of how to work through developmental tasks and negotiate crossroads and role transitions” (p. 6). In my study, the concept of “career adaptability” is used within the context of the above definition. My working definition of career adaptability also implies that an emerging adult who experienced parental neglect must be able to adapt to the ever-changing world of work – on both a cognitive and an emotional level.

1.5.3 Life-design-based intervention

According to Savickas et al. (2009), “the life-design counselling framework implements the theories of self-constructing (Guichard, 2005) and career construction (Savickas, 2005) that describe vocational behaviour and its development” (p. 244). In my study, life-design-based intervention was regarded as a type of intervention that forms part of career counselling. By using the narrative approach, I guided the participant to self-reflect on her life and to turn her pain into purpose and hope to live a meaningful life, build resilience and be adaptable in her career. Savickas (2019) used the term “career counselling” as opposed to vocational guidance or career guidance. According to Savickas (2019), career counselling is a “career intervention that uses

psychological methods to foster self-exploration as a prelude to choosing and adjusting to an occupation” (p. 151). Career counselling used within the framework of life-design can therefore lead to a sense of agency as well as career adaptability.

1.5.4 Parental neglect

According to Berk (2013), “[u]ninvolved parenting is a form of child maltreatment known as neglect ... The detached child-rearing style combines low acceptance with little behavioural control and is characterised by the general indifference to issues of autonomy” (p. 575). According to Talley (2002, as cited in De Bruin, 2016), child neglect is “the caregiver’s inability to meet a child’s major needs” (p. 5). In this study, I use the terms “parental neglect”, “emotional neglect” and “neglect” interchangeably. All three concepts refer to parents’ omission of care, nurturing, affection, support and discipline for their emerging adult children up to the age of 21.

1.5.5 Resilience

Resilience is the ability to adjust well when faced with tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress. Examples of problems that require resilience are family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors (American Psychological Association [APA], 2011). In my study, I use the term “resilience” to refer to the ability to “bounce back” from difficult experiences related to or resulting from parental neglect.

1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study is situated within the paradigm of life design. According to Savickas et al. (2009), this conceptual framework concentrates on “contextual possibilities, dynamic processes, nonlinear progression, multiple perspectives, and personal patterns” (p. 1). The traditional approaches to career counselling, which include psychometric testing such as intelligence tests and personality tests, are not regarded as obsolete in life design, but as insufficient for facilitating career counselling in the 21st century. Technological advancements have been the most significant reason for changes in the world of work in recent years. This will continue as such in the years to come, owing to the rapid development of artificial intelligence. The traditional approach of career has had to change to meet the demands of the turbulent world of work, driven by the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Using a qualitative approach in addition to the quantitative approach is thus more suitable for individuals in a postmodern world. A qualitative approach emphasises the importance of the individual's view of reality, lived experiences, emotional well-being and the ability to adapt to the work environment. Career adaptability is a key principle in life design in a postmodern world. Maree (2016a) argued that career counsellors should help their clients to become more adaptable in the world of work, as this will help them to become more employable and strengthen their career resilience. It is pertinent for individuals in a postmodern world to adjust to different contexts and roles within the working environment to remain employable.

1.7 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

I used a constructivist paradigm based on the narrative approach, as well as a QUAL + quan methodology (uppercase denotes preference given to paradigm) in my study.

1.7.1 Epistemology

According to Hartung (2010), constructionism refers to reality as the product of relationships, while constructivism refers to reality as the product of interpretation by the individual. Constructivism alludes to a more personal experience of reality and implies that the client has a vital role to play in the construction of meaning and purpose. Narratives are used to provide context and insight for clients and therefore serve a reflective purpose. The process of deconstructing and reconstructing clients' narratives is designed according to different stages within the counselling process but is by no means rigid or prescriptive (Di Fabio & Maree, 2013a). A client's narratability is enhanced and they are empowered to "make" meaning, instead of merely attempting to "find" meaning (Maree, 2010, p. 362).

Constructivists believe that all knowledge is subjective. This implies that knowledge cannot be generalised, which poses a challenge for the generalisability of qualitative studies embedded in constructivism. In my study, I used a single individual as a case study subject in an attempt to improve her career adaptability and resilience. My findings, therefore, need not be generalised. Since the narrative approach is flexible and non-directive, the client in a single-participant case study may well deviate from planned sessions. Counsellors following this approach, therefore, need to be

confident in their skills, and they need to be flexible while keeping their focus on the end goal.

1.7.2 Methodological approach

I utilised a QUAL + quan approach for data gathering and data analysis. My study was predominantly qualitative, with a small quantitative element. The study consisted of seven interview sessions and was based on the narrative approach. This approach ensured the collection of rich, in-depth data as part of a holistic approach. Challenges that arose with my predominantly qualitative approach included identifying pertinent themes from the client's life story (Ungar et al., 2017) as well as time constraints for both me and the participant. I used an external coder to enhance interrater validity of my qualitative data; although I scheduled sessions, I also planned alternative dates for missed sessions.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.8.1 Research design

The study was conducted using an intrinsic, descriptive, exploratory case study involving a single individual. The design was qualitative, both in terms of the selection of the participant and the methods used for gathering and analysing data, as career intervention based on life-design principles is constructed around the stories of individuals as perceived in their contexts.

According to Yin (2003), "a descriptive case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context" (p. 5). Some of the advantages of a descriptive case study are that it allows data to be analysed both inductively and deductively as the story emerges. This design presents a holistic outcome as it considers the individual's story in context and in its entirety. Furthermore, it allowed me, as the researcher, to understand the meanings that the individual holds, and enabled me to reflect on my own perspectives, meanings and biases. The whole process of a descriptive case study is reflexive for both the participant and the researcher (Creswell, 2014).

1.8.2 Selection of participant

As stated earlier, the study was qualitative with a small quantitative section. The research consisted of mainly in-depth interviews that required a one-on-one setting. I purposively sampled a willing individual between the age of 18 and 19 years. The participant had to be an emerging adult who had experienced parental neglect and who was ready to embark on a career. The gender of the participant as a variable was not considered key to this study. In my attempt to find a suitable participant, I drew from the network I had established through my experience as a youth mentor, teacher and social auxiliary worker in the area of Benoni, Gauteng.

I used purposive sampling as my case study required a very specific set of criteria to be met (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Purposefully selecting participants ensures that the researcher is able to collect data that best help to answer the research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The one-on-one setting allowed for an intimate environment that helped the participant to feel safe and comfortable to share her life story. This would otherwise have been too difficult in a group setting. The delicate nature of my in-depth study made it challenging to find a willing participant. This difficulty was overcome by the participant's eagerness to embark on a career, which far outweighed her reluctance to participate in counselling.

1.8.3 Data generation and documentation

The qualitative assessments were done through a series of seven interviews that were each approximately an hour long. All the interviews were recorded using a voice recorder and all observations were written down in the form of field notes in a research journal. The different measures used are described below.

1.8.3.1 Qualitative assessment

The first qualitative assessment instrument that I used was the *Career Interest Profile* (CIP) (Maree, 2017). According to Maree (2013), "the CIP provides career counsellors with a strategy to help clients not only choose 'appropriate' careers but, more importantly, advance their unfinished stories, construct life trajectories, construct themselves and use their careers to design and live successful lives" (p. 71). The CIP is entirely qualitative. It is user-friendly and follows a logical flow from straight-forward questions to more complex questions (Maree, 2013).

Other qualitative assessments that were used included making collages, drawing a lifeline, the *Maree Career Matrix (MCM)* (Maree, 2017), informal interviews and keeping a reflective journal.

1.8.3.2 Quantitative assessment

This study comprised a small quantitative element. The data obtained from the qualitative measures were triangulated with the data from the quantitative measures to strengthen the validity of the case study (Yin, 2013). The following measures were used.

i. Maree Career Matrix (MCM) (Maree, 2017)

The purpose of the *Maree Career Matrix (MCM)* is to assist the career journey of the individual by assessing and charting career interests and skills confidence. The test takes 25–30 minutes to complete and is based on South African norms (Maree, 2016b). The matrix comprises four quadrants that reflect the individual's attraction to 19 job categories by asking them to rate their interest and skill levels in 152 different occupations, which are then plotted on the *MCM*. The quadrants are categorised as 1) go for it; 2) bottom of the pile; 3) use it, don't lose it; and 4) up-skill yourself (Maree & Taylor, 2016).

ii. Jung Personality Questionnaire (JPQ)

The *Jung Personality Questionnaire (JPQ)* (Du Toit, 1983) is a questionnaire based on the personality theory of Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung. The questionnaire is typically used for, among other functions, vocational guidance in conjunction with intelligence tests and aptitude tests. The *JPQ* (Du Toit, 1983) measures personality based on Jung's typology, and distinguishes the following four dimensions which could be applied to making vocational choices: Extraversion/Introversion, Thought/Feeling, Sensation/Intuition and Judgement/Perception. Individuals generally display all these traits but usually have a dominant preference for either one of the extremes in each dimension. The *Jung Personality Questionnaire* was used to promote the participant's understanding of and insight into challenges relating to establishing, maintaining and promoting her interpersonal relationships.

1.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to Mouton (2017, p. 108), analysing qualitative data involves looking for themes or patterns to identify, analyse and report the data. I used the qualitative method known as Thematic Data Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For further details on the data analysis and interpretation, please see Chapter 3.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations for a single-case study design for this research involved confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Regarding the latter, the participant was old enough to give her own informed consent. The study was voluntary, which means that the participant was allowed to withdraw from the research at any time. Confidentiality was explained to the participant in detail and a confidentiality contract was signed by both parties. I informed the participant that the findings of this study would be used in my final mini-dissertation, but she would also be guaranteed anonymity. Furthermore, there were no cost implications for the participant. The study was designed to add value to the participant's life in terms of choosing a career, building her career resilience and ensuring career adaptability.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to the Optimus Study (CJCP, 2016, p. 38), neglect is “the result of an intentional lack of access to physical and emotional resources”. This means that, despite having the ability to do so, a parent or caregiver deliberately fails to provide basic and necessary care to a child. Children can also be deemed being in a neglectful situation when there is a lack of regular engagement with them or when the parents fail to provide emotional support – even though they may meet their child’s physical needs.

Ward et al. (2015) cited poverty as a primary contributor to parents’ being unable to provide adequate care for their children. In their opinion, poverty is one of the main reasons why parents are unable to provide adequate care for their children, as it “can significantly undermine parenting, decrease the life chances of children, and thereby transmit poverty from one generation to the next” (Ward et al., 2015, p. 69). Although the effects of poverty on parental neglect do not constitute the focus of this study, the issue is significant in that it implies that when emerging adults have better chances of employability, the cycle of poverty could be broken and, with it (to a certain extent), child neglect.

2.2 PARENTAL NEGLECT

In spite of insufficient research on parental neglect, Stoltenborgh et al. (2014) equated the long-term consequences of neglect to various factors. These are physical abuse, including potential substance abuse, diminished economic well-being, sexual promiscuity, susceptibility to posttraumatic stress disorder, a non-standard attachment style, a greater potential of becoming dependent on the social services, and a greater probability of adopting violent behaviour. In a rather dated 30-year-old study, Patterson et al. (1990) referred to the cognitive effects of abuse and the impact of neglect on self-esteem and relationships. Their study provided valuable insight into a developmental perspective on anti-social behaviour. In particular, they mentioned aspects such as a lack of basic training at home, as well as social rejection and school

failure, which can be directly linked to parental neglect. According to Childline South Africa (2019), neglect ranks third on the list of reported cases for 2018–2019, with a prevalence of 10%. The Optimus Study, however, found that young people prefer not to report instances of abuse – whether sexual, physical or emotional – nor neglect (CJCP, 2016). This implies that the prevalence rate of child neglect or maltreatment is probably much higher than the current statistics show.

The key findings of the 2020 Quarterly Employment Survey (Statistics South Africa, 2020) indicate that employment decreased by 3 000 from 10 234 000 in December 2019 to 10 231 000 in March 2020. According to Statistics South Africa (2020), there were 20,4 million unemployed young people aged 15–34 in 2019. Emerging adults who have suffered parental neglect are at a higher risk of becoming part of this statistic (Venter & Maree, 2020). According to Metzler et al. (2017), children with adverse childhood experiences (both physical and emotional) have a higher probability of not completing high school, not finding employment and living below the poverty line. A study done on the association between child maltreatment and South African adults' wages showed that, “on average, any experience of physical or emotional abuse during childhood is associated with a later 12% loss of young adults' wages” (Zheng et al., 2018, p. 1). Another study by Science Daily (2017) found a link between unemployment and neglect as well as other forms of abuse. It is necessary to find solutions to guide adolescents in such a way that they can develop the required career resilience and skills to enhance their employability. De Bruin (2016) referred to these skills as “soft skills” and agreed with Daskal (2017), who argued that, besides general literacy, numeracy and social skills that are needed to become employable, emerging adults should also acquire soft skills that have an important impact on their employability. These skills are problem-solving skills; resourcefulness and self-motivation; coping with stress; teamwork; ability to learn and adapt; esteeming and negotiating. Villiers (2020) was of the opinion that the term “soft skills” should not be used by practitioners anymore as it makes interpersonal skills sound less important, whereas they should be considered the most important as they are needed in all fields of work. Mohan et al. (2018) suggested that neither the terms “soft skills” nor “hard skills” should be used. Instead, he suggested the term “power skills” as communication and teamwork, and critical thinking as skills that have been attained, developed and maintained through hard work.

De Bruin (2016) also opined that the education system is lacking when it comes to aspects of employability. However, one should not forget that the individual has an equally important role in determining their employability. Many of the interpersonal skills mentioned above are debilitated by parental neglect. It is, therefore, crucial to implement a style of career counselling within the school environment that will aid emerging adults to deal with their pain, to develop career resilience and career adaptability and to build a successful and meaningful future for themselves.

According to Maree (2013), 20th-century approaches to career counselling are outdated and they no longer adequately serve the needs of 21st-century people. Maree encouraged career counsellors to draw on life-design intervention for career construction. Individuals are helped to create a new way of life filled with purpose and meaning that can help them to build resilience, become gainfully employed and be adaptable in an ever-changing world of work. Conventional psychometric testing predominantly focuses on only measurable skills, such as literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, personality traits and aptitude (Maree, 2013). Although tests are a valuable part of career counselling, they cannot replace the importance of eliciting, constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing the individual's life story within its respective contexts. Emerging adults who have experienced parental neglect throughout their lives and are ready to enter the workforce need more than just objective test scores to guide them. Arnett (2000) stated that emerging adulthood is characterised by an important factor, namely that this specific period of life "offers the most opportunity for identity explorations in the areas of love, work, and worldviews" (p. 473). I believe that life-design career counselling has the potential to make individuals feel more in control of their lives, break the cycle of poverty and minimise the long-term effects of parental neglect.

2.3 MAJOR CAREER THEORIES

According to Schreuder and Coetzee (2016), the traditional career models that were used by career practitioners focused on a linear process in choosing a career of which the end goal was fixed and the planning and management process was deductive. The traditional career requires of individuals to possess external knowledge about the job/career as well as their interests and personality types (Brown, 1996, Bordin, 1990, Holland, 1973, Krumboltz, 1979, Parsons, 1909, Super, 1957, as cited

in Schreuder and Coetzee, 2016). These theories are not seen as redundant in the 21st century but do seem to lack the subjective reality, feelings and meanings that individuals hold. The aforementioned psychological constructs cannot be empirically tested and require a more qualitative approach. The traditional career models are very useful in measuring career interests, personality, aptitude, career competency and career maturity, especially for individuals who are entering a career/job for the first time.

The test-and-implement career models focus on a range of career possibilities and directions within those possibilities. These models hold that individuals can create opportunities for themselves to learn from others who are already in a particular job/career by interviewing them, through job-shadowing or by trying out different jobs without committing for the long-term. This approach is especially helpful for young adults who want to further their studies but are unsure of the direction they should take.

2.3.1 Trait-and-Factor/Person-Environment-Fit Theories

The field of psychology during the early 20th century was characterised by the utilisation of the scientific method. As a natural result of this, career guidance focused on assessing and matching individual traits, namely aptitudes, interests, achievements, values and personality, with the requirements and conditions of specific occupations (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2016). This movement is known as the *first wave (psychology of occupations)* of career development (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2016). In addition, these career models assume that most individuals have reached a certain point of “maturation” in terms of their physical and mental development, which means that career journeys were fixed on the idea that a person’s thoughts, feelings and personality will remain more or less stagnant. Thus, the idea of the “emerging adult” as an individual who is able to change as a result of introspection and processes of meaning-making was not considered. The focus was on the objectivity, reliability and validity of the scientific method.

The focus on objective measurements in career guidance was, nevertheless, ground-breaking work and is not to be underestimated as part of career counselling in the 21st century. Maree (2020) and Di Fabio and Maree (2013b) stated that there is ample evidence to prove that objective tests together with subjective qualitative approaches are needed to provide a 21st-century approach to career counselling.

Major career theories include Parson's (1909) trait-and-factor theory, Holland's (1973) theory of personality and occupational types, Dawis and Lofquist's (1964) theory of person-environment correspondence and Jung's (1971) theory of personality types.

2.3.2 Lifespan Developmental Theories

These theories represent the *second wave (psychology of careers)*, according to Schreuder and Coetzee (2016). In contrast to the focus on individual traits to match specific occupations, these theories emphasised the growth and development on the individual over the lifespan. As a result, the idea of the "self" developed into a concept that is able to evolve over time. These models are based on developmental stages and tasks.

According to Smart and Peterson (1997),² Super's career development theory focuses on five developmental stages. These are growth (birth to age 12–14 years), exploration (14–25 years), establishment (early adulthood, 25–45 years), maintenance (middle adulthood, 45–65 years) and decline (old age, 65+). For the purpose of this study, the exploration phase is of particular interest as this is generally considered the stage in which adolescents and young adults try their hand at different jobs. Some adolescents might help out at their parents' businesses or jobs on a part-time basis and young adults might apply for a job or consider a career path, based on external influences such as their parents. Although this theory had taken into consideration the evolving nature of the individual across the lifespan, it was still largely focused on external influences and not on personal meaning and purpose. However, Super's (1957) career development theory has made significant contributions to contemporary theories.

2.3.3 Cognitive Behavioural Theories

According to Peila-Shuster (2017), career development is a lifelong process that is shaped through the developmental years. Children learn from their parents, their role models and their environments. Cognitive behavioural theories are based on the principle of social learning theory. Career decision-making theory by Krumboltz et al. (1976) emphasises certain decision-making determinants. These are: learning

² Although outdated, this article is significant in explaining Super's career developmental theory.

experiences, genetic factors, environmental factors and abilities. When these abilities interact, they result in certain decision outcomes (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2016).

An interesting study done by Peila-Shuster (2017) investigated how early career development, which includes the entire system, can assist children in building meaningful lives and careers. This notion links closely to career counselling using life-design (Maree, 2013) by turning life stories into meaningful futures. Other theories that fall under the cognitive behavioural umbrella for career guidance are Mitchell, Levin and Krumboltz's happenstance approach theory and Hackett and Betz's theory of self-efficacy.

2.3.4 Psychodynamic Approaches

Psychodynamic approaches are based on psychoanalytic practices, trait-and-factor-theory as well as person-centred approaches. According to Bordin's theory of personality development, humans have intrinsic drives that determine their lifestyles and work lives. These drives typically consist of curiosity, power, precision, expressiveness, concern with right and wrong, and nurturance (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2016). The value of psychodynamic approaches is not to be underestimated due to the focus on early childhood experiences and relational factors, which play a significant role in postmodern approaches to career counselling.

2.3.5 Relational Approaches to Career Development

Duffy and Raque-Bogdan's (2010) study on the motivation to serve others as an indicator of future career development suggested that the inclination to regard the needs of others is a positive trait and "in particular may allow for greater levels of optimism about one's future work life" (p. 261).

More recent studies on the use of relational approaches to career counselling, with special emphasis on resilience and resources, highlights the importance of positive relationships to deal with the turmoil, anxiety and uncertainty in the world of work (Kenny et al., 2017). Similarly, one might argue that negative relations with others might have the opposite effect. However, the value of relations remains vital by focusing on rebuilding relationships, finding other positive resources within the environment and reflecting on one's internal resources. This idea links closely with the

postmodern approach of life-design counselling within a constructivist paradigm, which I explicate next.

The career models explained thus far have all influenced the development of the postmodern approaches explained next. However, the aforementioned models are all quantitative in nature and lack the subjectivity required for career counselling in the 21st century (in addition to objectivity). Quantitative measures are by no means considered obsolete by postmodern approaches (Maree, 2020). In fact, they could be considered complementary. The Fourth Industrial Revolution does, however, require individuals to have a specific set of emotional, social and cognitive skills to help them cope with the unpredictability of the world of work. Due to the environmental influences on individuals, their unique and dynamic personality traits, and their past experiences, individuals need a career counselling approach that will help them understand themselves and guide them to find hope, meaning and purpose for their envisioned futures.

2.3.6 Postmodern Approaches

2.3.6.1 Career Construction and Life Design

According to Maree (2013), 20th-century approaches to career counselling are outdated and no longer adequately serve the needs of people seeking career counselling in the 21st century. Traditional approaches are based on assumptions that are no longer applicable today, such as the notion of secure jobs in which individuals start at an organisation and build their way up the hierarchy through promotions (Savickas et al., 2009). This is not the case in the midst of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where the world of work is unpredictable.

A compounding factor is the dynamic nature of individuals' personalities as well as environmental influences on them. Maree (2020) encourages career counsellors to draw on life-design intervention for constructing careers, as it focuses on rebuilding one's story of pain; that is, "active mastering of passive suffering" (p. 25). From the perspective of this paradigm, clients are helped to create a novel perspective on life, fuelled by purpose and meaning, that can help them to build resilience, become gainfully employed and be adaptable in an ever-changing world of work. Conventional psychometric testing focuses predominantly on measurable skills in terms of literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, personality traits and aptitude (Maree, 2013). Although

tests are a valuable part of career counselling, they fail to uncover and promote the eliciting, constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing of individuals' life stories within its respective contexts. Emerging adults who have suffered parental neglect throughout their lives and are ready to enter the workforce need more than mere objective test scores to guide them. They also need to learn how to deal with their pain to live a meaningful and hope-filled, purposeful life and become not only contributing members of society, but also self-regulating individuals. Due to the long-term effects of neglect, emerging adults may find it more difficult to make appropriate choices in terms of selecting friends and avoiding risky behaviour, such as substance abuse. They may also experience difficulty in choosing a career journey, as they have been left without a support system throughout most of their lives. They generally have low self-esteem, attachment issues as well as problems with starting and maintaining healthy relationships, as they find it difficult to trust others (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013b).

Emerging adults who suffered neglect as children should benefit from career counselling that includes life design, as it is reflective in nature and focuses on finding meaning for oneself. Life-design career counselling has the potential to make emerging adults feel more in control of their lives, break the cycle of poverty, as well as minimise the long-term effects of parental neglect. Savickas et al. (2009) regarded life design as a collaborative process in which the client and the practitioner consider experiences in a client's life within context, which includes environmental influences (Ungar, 2011). Guichard (2016) stated that life-design counselling methods also help individuals cope with dramatic changes due to the unpredictability of the working environment, which ultimately leads to career adaptability. Part of this process entails revisiting experiences and feelings of the past in order to make sense of what they might mean for an individual's future (Maree, 2016a). The narrative becomes a powerful method used to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct an individual's life story as part of a life-design intervention. Maree and Che (2018) also stated that the goals of career adaptability and narratability within life design can be used to address the need for decent work.

Life design is a flexible and dynamic process that allows the facilitator to work with clients to make sense of the past and find hope for the future. Due to the growing

importance of gaining employability skills as opposed to being employed (Sarfraz et al., 2018), career adaptability in ever-changing environments as well as the ability to build career resilience is at the core of this approach. It allows individuals to address their current concerns and fears regarding their future, as well as help build confidence by finding meaning and purpose from their lived experiences (Maree, 2017).

2.4 CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.4.1 Socio-Political Influences

South Africa is not unique in its history of racism and social segregation. However, the idea of apartheid was first made legal in terms of the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (55 of 1949), and then further enforced by the Population Registration Act (30 of 1950).

The Bantu Education Act (47 of 1953) was probably the most significant of all the apartheid laws regarding careers in South Africa. This Act ensured that non-whites received a lower standard of education, which was limited to skills related to physical labour as opposed to the education for whites, which included subjects such as mathematics and science. A quote by the Prime Minister at the time (1958–1966), Verwoerd, states:

“It is the policy of my department that education should have its roots entirely in the Native areas and in the Native environment and Native community. There, Bantu education must be able to give itself complete expression and there it will have to perform its real service. The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his own community, however, all doors are open ...” (South African History Online [SAHO], 2016)

The addition of the University Education Act (45 of 1959) ensured that so-called non-white people could not attend white universities (mainly the universities of Cape Town and Witwatersrand). Dividing universities according to race, this Act saw the start of separate “tribal colleges” for black university students. The Coloured Person's Education Act (47 of 1963) put control of “coloured” education under the Department of Coloured Affairs and the Indian Education Act (61 of 1965) was passed to separate

and control Indian education, which was placed under the Department of Indian Affairs (SAHO, 2016). The Bantu Education Act was retracted in 1979 and replaced by the Education and Training Act (90 of 1979) (Government Gazette, 1979). “Non-white” South Africans were thus for 26 years prohibited by law to receive proper education.

In 2003, under the new democratic government run by the African National Congress (ANC), broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE) was put into place to ensure equality in the workplace for black South Africans. The ANC government came into power after the first democratic elections in 1994. The ANC put this legislative framework of B-BBEE in place to compensate for the injustices of the past. According to Statistics South Africa (2019), 46% of black people are unemployed versus 9.8% of white people. In an effort to eliminate discrimination against black people in the job market, especially in higher ranking positions through B-BBEE, white people are also finding it difficult to find work while black people are still paid less than white people and still have a higher unemployment rate than white people (Gradín, 2018).

When considering all the above, it is clear that South Africa is in dire need of intervention in terms of aiding the youth of South Africa who are about to enter the workforce. Given the partisan and blatant oppressive history of South Africa, there is, without a doubt, a crucial need for reform. Not only socio-political but also economic reform is needed and should be beneficial to all South Africans. Career practitioners are in a position to help the youth make sense of the past. In so doing, the youth can be empowered to find both meaning and purpose for the future. The South African Career Development Association (SACDA, n.d.) is a professional body that aims to regulate the professional development of career development practitioners in South Africa. According to their public mandate, SACDA has various goals (South Africa. Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2015). These include to grow and develop career practitioners’ professional status; to establish and maintain minimum standards for career development delivery; and to promote the role of life orientation teachers, career information officers, career advisors and career counsellors. Furthermore, SACDA (n.d.) aims to improve the continued professional development of life orientation teachers, career information officers, career advisors and career counsellors; develop competency requirements for career development

practitioners; assist the development and education of members as professionals; and respond to government policy initiatives. The experience of dignity is of utmost importance in job satisfaction and purpose in life and career practitioners should therefore strive to enhance dignity in policy-making, training and career counselling (Tiwari & Sharma, 2019).

2.4.2 Employability

Clarke (2017, p. 794) stated that employability increases the probability of career adaptability across labour markets. By developing employability skills, a person can improve their chances of finding employment that fits specific personality traits and that provides opportunity for further skills development to enhance future job prospects. This will ultimately enhance job satisfaction and career success. Employability thus differs from being employed. Guilbert et al. (2016) defined employability as:

“... the possibility to access a suitable job or to remain employed, resulting from dynamic and evolving interactions between governmental and educational policies, organisational strategy, individual characteristics, and the social, economical, cultural and technological context.” (p. 85)

Savickas (2011) stated that employment differs from employability in that the former implies a fixed contract as per traditional careers whereas the latter is focused on having general skills of finding a job and keeping that job while being adaptable to changing work environments. Employability can therefore rather be described as the individual's ability to utilise skills such as communication, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, problem-solving and affective skills to perform diverse duties (Savickas, 2011). Emotional neglect has been linked to challenges with affective skills needed for employability, specifically with regard to emotional regulation, which involves emotional awareness and understanding of emotions (Berzenski, 2018). Emerging adults who survived parental neglect have most probably not had appropriate emotional models, which affected their ability to understand and display emotional intelligence. Savickas's (2011) reference to affective skills as an important factor of employability might thus have implications for emerging adults in the workplace who suffered parental neglect.

2.4.3 Fourth Industrial Revolution

Silva and Di Serio (2016) referred to the Fourth Industrial Revolution as characterised by mass production; they also referred to a fifth and sixth wave of revolution which is characterised by information and communication technology and networks. It is not surprising that people, especially from the Global South, might be fearful that their jobs will be taken over by robots and other forms of automation and computation. However, Soto (2020) opined that emerging economies do not necessarily have the funding to invest in technological advances and that it will take some time for Global South countries to reach such a stage in economic development. Also, he stated that emerging economies have an abundance of low-cost labour, which will slow down the adoptions of new technologies.

Although there seems to be a danger of manual labour jobs being taken over by automation, there is also an upside. According to Soto (2020, p. 50), the technological age has some benefits, as seen by the emergence and growth of the “platform” economy, which is a digitised way to connect individuals with job opportunities that fit their skills and traits. Also, the “platform” economy makes online work more accessible to more people and enables individuals to cross geographical boundaries and therefore create the opportunity for more income. It is important to note that South Africa has its own unique set of challenges that arose from the socio-political history, particularly the policies on education (World Economic Forum, 2017).

I agree with Maree (2020) that there should be a more positive outlook on the future of careers within the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The COVID-19 pandemic has indeed proved how creative and innovative people can be, as seen by the many private advertisements for goods and services flooding social media platforms during the lockdown period. Although Global South countries might still have challenges in terms of affordable access to the internet, the pandemic taught us that we are able to have innovative ideas and use technology to our advantage to create incomes and to develop skills to promote our adaptability and employability. Taking the above into consideration, it is vital that career practitioners keep up to date with the latest technological and economic developments and, most importantly, to contextualise career counselling (Maree, 2020).

2.5 CAREER ADAPTABILITY

Career adaptability within the career construction paradigm is defined by Savickas (1997) 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” (p. 254).

In terms of life design, adaptability 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 them develop their capabilities to anticipate changes and their own future in changing contexts” (Savickas et al., 2009, p. 245).

The definition by Savickas et al. (2009) is still applicable in the 21st century as we are experiencing change in the world of work at an incredible speed. According to Savickas and Porfeli (2012), career construction theory regards adaptability as crucial psychosocial resources necessary for adapting in the workplace. They differentiated between individuals who are adaptive (willing) and those who are adaptable (able) to utilise the skills necessary to survive in changing work environments. Savickas and Porfeli (2012) further distinguished four dimensions of career adaptability, namely career concern, career control, career curiosity and career confidence. A study on the predictive role of within-person variability in personality also confirmed that career adaptability correlates positively with traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness (Storme et al., 2020). The study also found that conscientiousness and openness have the strongest correlation with career adaptability.

Career construction theory (Savickas, 2015) views adaptations to changing environments as nurtured by five key types of behaviours, namely “orientation, exploration, establishment, management, and disengagement” (p. 5). Savickas (2015) opined that individuals are able to utilise these behaviours every time change occurs and that they are able to build confidence in these adaptive behaviours every time they

go through a transition.

2.6 SOCIAL ECOLOGY FOR RESILIENCE THEORY

Ungar's (2011) theory of social ecology for resilience emphasises prior environmental influences on children's abilities to overcome adversity. In this study, the social ecology for resilience theory is used to explore and enhance career resilience. This ecological approach focuses on the context first as well as children's personal traits and is based on the premise that facilitative environments are able to nurture positive growth. The study and research underpinning social ecology for resilience is based on four principles, namely decentrality, complexity, typicality and cultural relativity. Below is a brief explanation of each principle.

❖ Decentrality

Decentring the child involves a shift in focus from the child's internal resources and traits to the availability and ability of the environment to support the child's innate abilities. Therefore, a child may have strong innate abilities to survive adversity, but if the environment does not allow these abilities to flourish, it may not result in high resilience or positive growth (Ungar, 2011). The process of enhancing resilience is thus a combination of nature and nurture working together in harmony.

❖ Complexity

As children grow, their personalities are influenced by their social interactions, personal experiences and environmental changes. The complex nature of these interactions makes it difficult to determine cause and effect as well as resilience outcomes, but Ungar (2011) is of the opinion that environment wields the strongest influence.

❖ Atypicality

The principle of atypicality contests the idea that resilience is linked to dichotomous choices such as right or wrong (Ungar, 2011). Children's experiences are unique in terms of their personal traits, context and environment, which implies that there are numerous correct responses to a specific situation. We cannot assume, for example, that a child from an impoverished community who skips school is lazy. The

child might be skipping school to provide food for the family as there is no one else at home capable of doing this. Such an example shows survival skills and resilience amid adversity. In South Africa there are many child-headed households as well as grandparent-headed households. Such households are dependent on the children to take care of basic needs, such as food and caring for the young as well as handling everyday household tasks.

❖ Cultural Relativity

All the principles above also need to be considered along with cultural relativity. According to Ungar (2011), resilience cannot be studied or understood without taking minority cultures into consideration. The way in which people choose to group themselves together influences the way in which they perceive, react and explain resilience. Ungar (2011) further stated that: "... positive development is much more likely to result when social and physical conditions surrounding an individual at risk make the resources they need useable" (p. 10).

2.6.1 Differential Impact Theory

Theron and Ungar (2018) reiterated that the risk of emphasising mostly internal factors "such as biological sensitivity to environmental influences" (p. 3) is that children's continued vulnerability and/or resilience to child abuse and neglect could be attributed to their levels of sensitivity, rather than to malleable external sources. Differential impact theory (DIT) (Ungar, 2018) is an approach to resilience that shifts the focus from the individual and suggests that changes within individuals are a result of changes that occur within the environment. This theory is based on the socio-ecological perspective and equips social workers to design unique interventions for children who suffered maltreatment. Therefore, DIT posits that, to build resilience, the most effective interventions should be designed to focus on the specific needs of the children who are suffering from neglect and/or abuse within their given contexts and not on broad-based schemes that attempt to change approaches toward child abuse (Ungar, 2013).

2.7 HOPE THEORY

Career adaptability has also been linked to hope theory. According to Snyder (2002), hope is defined as: “the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways” (p. 249). This definition suggests that in order to be adaptable in the world of work, individuals need to have clear goals for their future and utilise their skills to reach their goals. Goals can thus be envisioned through hope and hope, in turn, has the potential to build career adaptability. A study by Santilli et al. (2016) found that hope and optimism facilitated “the relationship between career adaptability and life satisfaction” (p. 106). Snyder (2002) also explained that hope involves three components, namely goals, pathways and agency. Akos and Kurz (2015) further elaborated by explaining how pathways and agency lead to goal directedness. Individuals who have hope therefore believe that there are many different pathways to achieving goals, as well as a belief in their abilities to achieve these goals using their set pathways.

2.8 EMERGING ADULTHOOD

Arnett (2000) described emerging adulthood as a “new conception of development for the period from the late teens through the twenties, with a focus on ages 18–25” (p. 469) within industrialised societies. Emerging adulthood is thus a phase that can be considered as neither adolescence nor young adulthood. It is a phase characterised by a search for identification, exploration and life roles. Arnett (2000) further stated that emerging adulthood is characterised by three distinct areas, namely demographics, subjective perceptions and identity explorations.

2.8.1 How Emerging Adulthood differs from Late-Adolescence as a life stage

According to Erikson’s psychosocial stages of development, life stages can be grouped into stages according to age. Each stage (age group) is characterised by an important task that must be achieved in order for successful completion of a specific life stage. Erikson posited that adolescence ranges from the ages of 12 to 18. This life stage typically includes the task of “identity versus role confusion” and thus involves establishing the roles that the adolescent will occupy as an adult (Erikson, 1963). These roles include self-identity, career identity and gender identity. Adolescents’ demographics are also typically similar up until the age of 18.

According to Arnett (2000), we cannot define the age group from 19 to early 20s

as late-adolescence due to the unpredictability of their demographics. These individuals go out into the world to study further, find a job, travel or cohabit with an intimate partner. Arnett further stated that turning 18 years old coincides with certain legalities as well, such as being able to vote and, in South Africa, being allowed to have a driver's licence and consume alcohol and cigarettes.

2.8.2 How Emerging Adulthood differs from Young Adulthood as a life stage

Erikson (1963) identified the life stage between the ages of 19 and 35 as young adulthood. This life stage is characterised by the search for "intimacy versus isolation". Historically, this stage involved finding a life partner, establishing a set career path and having a family of one's own. It was not uncommon for girls to get married directly after high school and for their husbands to be the main source of income. Today, universities are receiving more applications from young people (male and female) who are choosing to further their studies. According to Statistics South Africa (2018b), the norm age for civil marriages for spouses-1 (first marriage) increased from 35 years in 2017 to 36 years in 2018, and the median age for spouses-2 (second marriage) increased from 33 years in 2017 to 34 years in 2018. Statistically, it is thus clear that young people are choosing to delay long-term commitments to a partner. This implies that they are indeed taking the time to find themselves and to decide what they want in life. Arnett (2000) also stated that referring to this life stage as "young adulthood" implies that adulthood has already been reached. Results of earlier research by Arnett (1998) showed that reaching adult-status was a very subjective matter and that it is not specifically linked to age, parenthood or a career. Certain demographic details were also proven to have an influence on subjective ideas on adulthood. For instance, individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds who had to work in order to survive felt more like adults than those from higher socio-economic backgrounds.

2.8.3 Emerging Adulthood and neglect

Research on risk factors predicting mental well-being in emerging adulthood can be summarised according to three areas, namely childhood risks, current contextual risks and dispositional risks (Newcomb-Anjo et al., 2016). The aforementioned study was aimed at determining the factors that promote as well as threaten the well-being of emerging adults, especially those individuals entering university. The study found that financial problems had a significant effect on the well-

being of emerging adults. Another risk factor for well-being was the experience of abuse, especially verbal and emotional abuse. However, the study also found that emerging adults who were considered low risk for mental health problems were still susceptible to depression. Social support was confirmed to have positive effects on the mental well-being of emerging adults. According to Leiter (2007, as cited in Newcomb-Anjo et al., 2016), childhood maltreatment has a lasting impact on emerging adults' later grade averages. Clarke (2017) also mentioned that childhood maltreatment threatens emerging adults' "perceived academic competence" (p. 868).

2.9 DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Individuals who seek career counselling (Savickas, 2019) all have their own unique contextual factors, a presenting problem and their current strengths and resources. The intervention used in this study is situated within the life-design paradigm. A life-design-based intervention is based on self-construction theory (Guichard, 2009) and career construction theory (Savickas, 2015) and applies the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of individuals' life stories. Life stories are filled with themes and patterns which can be used to make meaning of adversity by turning pain into hope (Maree, 2013). Individuals are influenced by their social context; these influences must therefore be considered in the process of meaning-making. Risk factors as well as protective factors are included in the influencing factors. Ungar's (2011) social ecology of resilience states that individuals' environments have a stronger impact on resilience than innate traits have. Identifying resources within the environment can therefore help foster resilience. Snyder's (2002) hope theory is based on using new thought pathways and a focus on agency to achieve future goals (imagined future). Jointly, these three theories have the potential to enhance agency, career adaptability and career resilience in individuals who have survived adversity, specifically parental neglect. The desired outcomes are making meaning, having purpose, enhancing career adaptability and career resilience, happiness (life satisfaction), employability, improved self-concept and a focus on innate strengths. This has been depicted in the conceptual framework in Figure 2.1 on the next page.

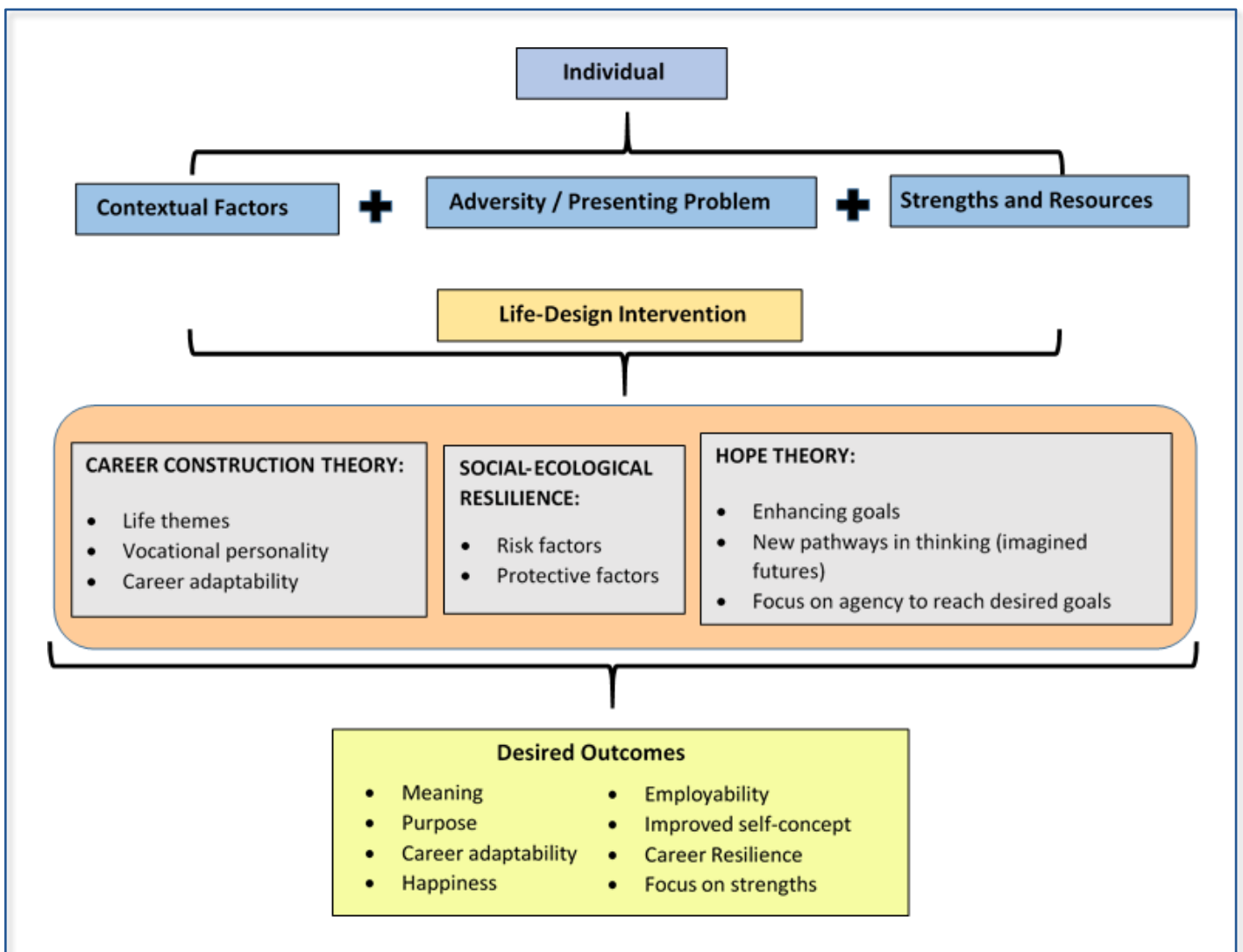


Figure 2.1: Diagram of conceptual framework. Based on the work of Savickas (2015), Snyder (2002) and Ungar (2011).

2.10 CONCLUSION

Although there is research available on the long-term effects of abuse, little research is available on the long-term consequences of parental neglect, especially in terms of career adaptability and career resilience. Research does, however, confirm that parental neglect affects self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, emotional intelligence, problem-solving, communication skills and adaptability. Current research states that skills associate with emotional intelligence should not be referred to as “soft skills” anymore as these skills are core to surviving the world of work in the 21st century. Due to the long-term effects of neglect, emotional intelligence skills or “hard skills” are important factors to consider within an intervention aimed at building career adaptability and career resilience. A distinction between being employed and

employability was made. Considering the skills needed to navigate a career through the Fourth Industrial Revolution is an important factor in employability.

According to Statistics South Africa (2020), the effects of maltreatment have been linked to a 12% decline in young adults' wages. According to the above research, there were 20,4 million unemployed young people between the ages of 15 and 34 in 2019. South Africa therefore has a very high unemployment rate, which, combined with the number of cases reported for child abuse and neglect and the consequences thereof, paints a bleak portrait for the future of South African youth. South Africa's unique socio-political history also plays a role in the ongoing racial disparity and power struggles within the country. However, career practitioners are in a unique position to guide emerging adults through the use of life design (Savickas, 2010) to construct successful and satisfying careers. This is done by using the emerging adults' narratives to find patterns that highlight their strengths, abilities, interests and resources in order to help them build career resilience and to become career adaptable in an unpredictable and ever-changing work environment. A brief review of career theories and models has laid the foundation for a discussion on the emergence of life design as a new paradigm. Individuals entering the world of work within the 21st century need a more subjective approach to facilitate career counselling, which includes their life stories. These stories refer not only to the influence they had on shaping them to be the person they are today, but also to how it can still influence their futures by making meaning of their experiences. The impact of life stories on emerging adults who survived parental neglect is of particular interest in the current study.

The study involved a research participant between the ages of 18–19 years and, therefore, this specific life stage was discussed. The term “emerging adults” has been found to be a more appropriate term for the life stage of ages 19–25 years. Emerging adulthood is described as a stage in which young people are finding their identities, namely establishing a sense of self as well as gender identity, exploring career options and exploring different life roles. Research has found that the feeling of “adulthood” is very subjective and therefore the term “young adult” is not a sufficient term as many individuals of this age group do not consider themselves adults yet.

In Chapter 3, the research design and methodology of the study will be discussed in detail. This includes the selection of the participant, the instruments and

qualitative methods used as well as data collection and data analysis methods used. Ethical considerations are also addressed at the end of Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was conducted using a single, descriptive, exploratory case study with one individual. This particular design was suited for answering the intended research question. The design was mainly of a qualitative nature, encompassing not only the selection of the participant, but also the methods used for gathering and analysing data. A small part of the design consisted of two quantitative assessments to substantiate the qualitative findings further. Career intervention based on life-design principles is constructed around the stories of individuals as perceived in their personal contexts. The research is thus based on a narrative approach as embedded within the social-constructionism paradigm.

According to Yin (2003), “a descriptive case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context” (p. 5). An advantage of a descriptive case study is that it allows data to be analysed both inductively and deductively as the story emerges. This design presents a holistic outcome as it considers the individual’s story in context and in its entirety. This in turn allows the researcher to understand the meanings that the individual holds, and enables the researcher to reflect on their own perspectives, meanings and biases. The whole process of a descriptive case study is reflexive in nature for both the participant and the researcher (Creswell, 2014).

Since I have had a similar personal experience in terms of parental neglect, I anticipated transferences as a potential challenge. I had to be cognisant of this possibility and made use of the reflective nature of case study design to investigate my own biases. Time constraints presented a further challenge as the participant was busy with her Grade 12 year and was thus under academic pressure. An additional challenge presented itself through the COVID-19 related regulations due to the laws regarding social distancing, curfews and gatherings, which made the construction of data very difficult. As a result, data construction was delayed. Permission by the research supervisor was given to have online interviews. We were, however, able to conduct only two interviews, due to data and time restrictions at the children’s home

as well as confidentiality issues in terms of a private room that was not always available for such sessions.

The research design in itself was also time-consuming due to the fact that a case study of this nature requires deeper insight into the individual concerned. Qualitative studies based on the narrative approach are naturally more time-consuming, as interviews need to be scheduled according to the availability of both the researcher and the participant. It also needs to be noted that the selected participant was an individual who survived parental neglect. Sharing personal experiences during the interviews were at times, as anticipated, painful and difficult for her. It was imperative for the researcher to be patient, to trust the process and to apply the necessary counselling techniques, including empathy, attentive listening, confidentiality, openness, warmth and compassion, to create a safe environment for the participant.

3.2 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANT

The study was mostly qualitative in nature and consisted of in-depth interviews that required a one-on-one setting. The researcher purposively sampled one individual between the ages of 18 and 19 years. The participant had to be a young adult who has survived parental neglect and who would like to embark on a career. The gender of the participant as a variable was not considered key to this study. The researcher depended on the network she had established through her experience and employment as a youth mentor, teacher and social auxiliary worker in the area of Benoni, in the Gauteng province, in her attempt to find a suitable participant.

Due to the very specific set of criteria needed for this study, purposive sampling was the most appropriate method, which afforded an in-depth study into the participant's subjective world. The one-on-one setting allowed for an intimate environment that facilitated the therapeutic relationship in terms of providing a safe space in which she could share life stories that may have been too difficult to share in a group setting. The qualitative questionnaires used in the interviews enabled the participant to answer open-ended questions and therefore provided rich detail for data gathering and analysis. The aim of this study was not to generalise the findings; therefore, a single individual was sufficient to answer the primary research question and to provide data to answer the three secondary research questions. An advantage

in terms of consent is that, even though the participant was an individual who survived parental neglect, being 18 years old, she was legally able to give her own consent for the research. However, the researcher also gained consent from the relevant social worker assigned to the participant at the children's home.

The delicate nature of an in-depth qualitative research study such as this posed concerns regarding hesitance in trusting the researcher and a reluctance in sharing her personal stories. This initial concern was, however, not a problem as the participant was very willing to embark on a career and this willingness outweighed her reluctance to participate in counselling. As previously discussed, it was necessary to establish an environment conducive to life-design principles to enable an effective intervention. The participant was not required to travel anywhere as the researcher arranged all the interviews at the church opposite the children's home. The church is often used by the children's home and it created a safe, familiar and private space for the interview. A pseudonym, Aurora, is used for the participant in order to protect her identity.

3.3 DATA CONSTRUCTION AND DOCUMENTATION

The assessments used for this case study were done over a series of seven interviews; each interview was approximately 60 to 90 minutes long. All the interviews were recorded using a voice recorder and then transcribed. A brief extract from the transcriptions is added as an addendum to this mini-dissertation. Each of the assessment tools used is described in more detail below.

3.3.1 Qualitative Assessment

The *Career Interest Profile (CIP)* (Maree, 2013) is entirely qualitative in nature. According to Maree (2013), "the *CIP* provides career counsellors with a strategy to help clients not only choose 'appropriate' careers but, more importantly, advance their unfinished stories, construct life trajectories, construct themselves and use their careers to design and live successful lives" (p. 71). The *CIP* is user-friendly and follows a logical flow from straight-forward questions to more complex questions (Maree, 2013). The questionnaire is organised in such a way that qualitative consistency has been proven.

An advantage of the *CIP* is the measure's ability to provide in-depth insight into the client's reality. The questionnaire is also inclusive in nature and allows career

counsellors to assist people from marginalised sectors of society. It is therefore applicable in a multi-cultural environment such as South Africa. According to Di Fabio and Maree (2013b), one advantage is that the *CIP* includes a variety of methods to assess career interest. The *CIP* consists of four parts. Part 1 includes biographical details, family influences and working information. Part 2 consists of career preferences/dislikes. Part 3 comprises questions related to career choice. Part 4 is the individual's career story narratives (Di Fabio & Maree, 2013b). Together, these parts aid individuals to (a) identify central life themes, (b) express career interests, issues and concerns, and (c) seek advice to convert concerns into hopeful themes to promote their career-life stories (Maree & Che, 2018). This assessment instrument does not require any specific training and can be used by a variety of professions, such as teachers, counsellors, career practitioners, industrial psychologists and educational psychologists. Other qualitative assessments that were used during the interviews include the following.

3.3.2 Collage

A collage is a creative way of visually representing a story by making use of various images, pictures and photographs from a variety of sources such as magazines, newspapers or the internet (Gerstenblatt, 2013). Using a collage allows clients to express their life stories in a creative and relaxing manner. The participant was asked to create a Pinterest board with images that she liked, which she shared with me electronically. She did not have access to a printer, so I printed her collection of pictures.

3.3.3 Lifeline

According to Maree and Che (2018), the lifeline reveals milestone experiences in the participant's life and also includes a family constellation to identify strengths within the participant's family of origin. The participant was asked to construct her lifeline by thinking back to the major events and experiences in her life. She was asked to write down as much as she could remember about each experience during the week after our first interview. We discussed her entire lifeline during our second interview and the discussion prompted more details from memory. This was done on rough drafts to use later as part of her life portfolio.

3.3.4 Portfolio

The participant created a rough draft of her lifeline, wrote a poem and drew pictures as part of her reflections. She liked the idea of a portfolio, so we decided to combine the idea of a collage and the lifeline into a book which she slowly constructed during the following weeks. Using a portfolio is a qualitative method that allows for free expression and creativity while reflecting on a narrative.

3.4 INFORMAL INTERVIEWS

Informal interviews were used to build rapport and set the client at ease within the career construction process (Maree & Che, 2018). The informal interviews served as a rich source of subjective data which could not have been collected sufficiently in any other way.

3.5 JOURNAL

The participant kept a reflective journal throughout the intervention study. The reflections helped both the researcher and the participant to get an overview of the process and also kept the process flexible. Although the researcher had an intervention plan, it was critical to follow the internal process of the participant in order for her to gain the best value from the experience.

3.6 QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

3.6.1 *Maree Career Matrix (MCM)*

This study included a small quantitative part to help the client gain objective insight in terms of her career interests and personality. The data from the measures used, namely the *CIP* (Maree, 2013), the portfolio and the informal interviews, were triangulated with the data from the quantitative measures in order to strengthen the validity of the case study (Yin, 2013). The purpose of the *MCM* (Maree, 2017) is to assist the career journey of the individual by assessing and charting career interests and skills confidence. The test takes 25–30 minutes to complete and is based on South African norms (Maree, 2016b). The matrix comprises four quadrants, which reflect the individual's attraction to 19 job categories by asking them to rate their interest and skill levels in 152 different occupations, which are then plotted on the *MCM*. The quadrants are categorised as 1) go for it; 2) bottom of the pile; 3) use it, don't lose it; and 4) up-

skill yourself (Maree & Taylor, 2016).

3.6.2 Jung Personality Questionnaire (JPQ)

The *JPQ* (Du Toit, 1983) is a questionnaire that measures people's thinking styles and the way they deal with information. It assesses a person's preferences along four dimensions, namely Extraversion/Introversion (E-I), Sensing/Intuition (S-N), Thinking-/Feeling (T-F) and Judging/Perception (J-P). From knowing these preferences, it is possible to anticipate how a person may act in a variety of different situations, including how they may approach many aspects of their life. The *JPQ* was not intended to be used at the outset of the intervention. During the interview sessions, the participant voiced a need to understand her personality better as she felt that she needed help with interpersonal relationships. As this study is dynamic by nature, the *JPQ* was therefore used for this purpose only, and not as an assessment tool to help with vocational guidance.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to Mouton (2017), analysing qualitative data involves looking for themes or patterns. To identify, analyse and report the data, the researcher used the qualitative data analysis method known as thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data analysis is based on an inductive process which allows the researcher to identify themes from the data without preconceived ideas of possible themes. In the current research, the researcher made use of a computer software program called ATLAS.ti 9 (Scales, 2013). The following steps were applied:

Step 1: Upload all the transcripts and other relevant documentation into Atlas.ti 9.

Step 2: Renumber and rename all documents in a sequential order.

Step 3: Read through each line of the uploaded content and create many initial codes. This is done by highlighting a piece of text and assigning a code to it. The highlighted text becomes a quotation linked to a specific code/s.

Step 4: Create code groups as an overarching category for codes measuring a similar

construct.

Step 5: Create networks to visually represent the code groups and codes.

Step 6: Merge all similar codes within a code group in order to reduce the number of codes to avoid data cluttering. The code groups become the themes, and the codes become the sub-themes.

The process of analysis and coding was done through the use of ATLAS.ti 9 (Scales, 2013), which is a computer software program designed specifically for qualitative data analysis. Defining the themes and naming them accordingly are crucial steps before writing up a report (Maree, 2018).

The use of diagrams helped to visualise the data in terms of the identified categories (Maree, 2007). This was also done using ATLAS.ti 9. The next step was to interpret the data; that is, to look at the coded data in an analytical way and not merely as a summary of the participant's narrative (Maree, 2007). According to De Vos (2002), this process refers to "conceptualising the storyline" (p. 350). The researcher thus makes sense of the data on a deeper level, and this enables the researcher and the participant to reconstruct the life story and to make new meaning.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations for the single-case study design included confidentiality, informed consent and anonymity (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The participant was old enough to give her own consent. However, as the participant was living in a children's home at the time, consent was also obtained from the social worker appointed at the home. Confidentiality was explained to the participant in detail and included the limitations of the confidentiality clause. Limitations include the reporting of any form of current abuse as well as the suspicion of any harm or threat to the participant or someone to whom the participant might refer. The study was voluntary, and the participant was informed that she could withdraw from the research at any time. The participant was informed of the findings of this study and that the data would be used in my final mini-dissertation, but she was also guaranteed anonymity. There were no cost implications for the participant. The study was designed to add value to the selected participant's life in terms of choosing a career, building career resilience and ensuring career adaptability.

With regard to sharing the information with other professionals, the participant was informed about and agreed to the disclosure of confidential information to my supervisor as well as the report thereof in this mini-dissertation. Furthermore, the participant was informed of my role as a student-psychologist and the boundaries of my scope of profession were discussed in terms of how and where interviews should be conducted as well as the recording of confidential information for record-keeping. My role to secure and maintain the security of the data was also discussed and the electronic recordings that were used were password-protected.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section, the methods used for analysing the data will be discussed. To create a clear picture of the themes and patterns that emerged, a thorough discussion on the participant's background is given, followed by an explanation of the life-design-based intervention process as experienced by the participant. Each of the seven sessions is discussed in detail with reference to the transcriptions as per Appendix A.

In this chapter, I focus on objectively assessing and relating the outcomes of my study to current literature (critiquing the outcomes), using the following four-fold lens:

- 1) Do previous findings concur with the findings of my study?
- 2) Which of the findings do not concur with previous findings?
- 3) Are there findings in my study that have never been reported before?
- 4) Did specific trends emerge from the findings of my study?

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

As discussed in Chapter 3, the researcher used a Qual+ quan mixed method for data analysis. The Atlas.ti 9 computer software program was used to refine the thematic analysis of the data (Given, 2008). The data consisted of all the transcribed interviews, the participant's lifeline, portfolio of collages, a painting and a poem written by her.

4.2.1 Description of the data analysis process

According to Maree (2007), qualitative data analysis is generally based on an interpretative philosophy. Analysing content in this manner allows the researcher to understand how participants make meaning of their experiences. Researchers agree that there are numerous ways in which qualitative research can be conducted or to analyse and report qualitative data. Analysing qualitative data is an eclectic activity – there is no one “right” way and data can be analysed in more than one way. Most qualitative researchers wish to avoid standardising the process because a hallmark of qualitative research is the creative involvement of the researcher (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2001). Punch (2009) concurred by stating that the richness and complexity of qualitative research imply that there are different ways of analysing social life and, therefore, multiple perspectives and practices in the analysis of qualitative data. The author explained how the different techniques that can be used in analysing qualitative data have the potential to highlight different aspects of it. Although the researcher had some ideas of the relevant themes, based on literature, most of the themes emerged naturally from the transcribed interviews, the *CIP* and reflections. The researcher thus relied mostly on an inductive process for interpretation as opposed to a stricter, deductive process. According to Mouton (2017), a strength of this approach is that it aids in the reconstruction of the past and thus focuses on process and change.

The research data furthermore relates to narrative analysis of the participant's life story and subjective experiences. The process of narrative analysis allowed the researcher to identify patterns and themes throughout the transcribed content through the use of thematic data analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2016). The content was first carefully scrutinised in order to allocate codes to specific quotations within the transcriptions. The codes were named and allocated based on recurring patterns within the content. These codes were then further investigated, and some codes were merged together in order to alleviate the use of too many codes. All the code names within the content became the sub-themes of the narrative. To align the sub-themes to relevant literature, they were assigned to a main theme (code group). In addition to current literature, the themes also emerged as a result of retroductive reasoning (Mouton, 2017). By looking at the patterns and frequencies of data throughout the process, it was possible for the researcher to make inferences that would serve as explanations for certain phenomena.

The research consisted of a small quantitative element in terms of the questionnaires used to assess career options (*MCM*) and personality traits (*JPQ*). The questionnaires were marked and scored by the researcher according to standard procedures and were used to complement the qualitative data in terms of exploring possible career trajectories for the participant, Aurora.

4.2.2 Themes and sub-themes identified through the data analysis process

The researcher was able to identify themes and sub-themes by using inductive reasoning through a narrative analysis of the content. According to Terre Blanche

(2012), this process consists of finding the “organising principles that naturally underlie the material” (p. 323). Although the researcher did not have ready-made themes at the outset of the research, she was guided by the primary research question during the process of analysis. Many of the initial codes were merged in the final stages of coding into sub-themes to avoid data clutter. It is also important to note that some themes do overlap.

Table 4.1 below summarises the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the inductive, narrative analysis of the data. The merged codes merely serve as guidelines for the essence of the sub-themes. This chapter will refer to only themes and sub-themes.

Table 4.1: Summary of themes and sub-themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
<p>Neglect Definition: According to Talley (2002, as cited in De Bruin, 2016), child neglect is “the caregiver’s inability to meet a child’s major needs” (p. 5). In this study, I use the terms “parental neglect”, “emotional neglect” and “neglect” interchangeably. All three concepts refer to parents’ omission of care, nurturing, affection, support and discipline for their emerging adult children up to the age of 21.</p>	<p>Effects of parental neglect Definition: Aside from the immediate physical injuries which children can experience through maltreatment, a child’s reactions to abuse or neglect can have lifelong and even intergenerational impacts. Childhood maltreatment can be linked to later physical, psychological and behavioural consequences as well as costs to society as a whole (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019)</p>	<p>Suicide Anxiety Fear Anger Mistrust and isolation Rejection Self-doubt and low self-worth Blame and guilt Depression Powerlessness Physical health</p>
	<p>Negative external influences Definition: This sub-theme refers to external influences, such as family, friends, institutions, and observed behaviour of others that had a negative influence on Aurora’s mental health.</p>	<p>Normalising negative feelings Mental health of mother Spirituality of mother Substance abuse of mother</p>

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
	<p>Traumatic events Definition: Traumatic events are marked by a sense of horror, helplessness, serious injury or the threat of serious injury or death (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2021).</p>	Verbal and physical abuse Police and court Physical fights Physical health of mother Moving house
<p>Resilience and self-construction Definition: Resilience is the ability to adjust well when faced with tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress. Examples of problems that require resilience are family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors (APA, 2011).</p>	<p>Agency Definition: The fundamental human quality that directs and regulates the very experiences of human living. Humans, as agents, can intentionally influence their functioning and immediate circumstances (Chen, 2015).</p> <p>Adaptability Factors Definition: Adaptability is purported to be a key mental resource and refers to an individual's cognitive, behavioural and emotional regulation (or adjustment) in situations of change, novelty and uncertainty (Waldeck et al., 2021).</p>	Hope Giftedness Positive external influences Support Gratitude Insight Growth Positive themes Motivation Self-belief Growth Positive mental health of self
<p>Vocational Personality Definition: An individual's career abilities, needs, values and interests that are produced through complex interactions among cultural and personal factors (Fidan, 2019).</p>	<p>Future Aspirations Definition: A career aspiration typically refers to a long-term career goal, plan or dream that is far away in the future, instead of short-term and in the present. A career aspiration is different than a career goal. In general, aspiration is a bit fuzzier and longer-term than a more defined, specific career goal (Links International, 2020).</p>	Areas of growth (CIP) Role models (CIP) Career choices (CIP) Life themes (CIP) Book title and chapters (CIP) Careers (MCM) Sense of purpose Career influences Personality profile (JPQ) Reflections and insight

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
Vocational Personality (continued)	Adaptability Factors Definition: Adaptability is purported to be a key mental resource and refers to an individual's cognitive, behavioural and emotional regulation (or adjustment) in situations of change, novelty and uncertainty (Waldeck et al., 2021).	Hope Giftedness Positive external influences Support Gratitude Insight Growth Positive themes Motivation Self-belief Growth Positive mental health of self

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were considered during the data analysis process to guide the coding of themes and sub-themes. Two important factors in the inclusion of criteria for the final themes and sub-themes were the participant's own reflections during our interviews as well as the frequency of criteria. Please refer to Table 4.3 in section 4.2.3 for a summary of the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The researcher used a three-digit referencing system, which is set out in the Table 4.2 below. The three-digit system consisted of the document ID, the page number and the line number/s for each quotation. An additional code in terms of a colour was assigned to each line number as it referred to a theme (please see Table 4.1 for a summary of the themes with their related colours).

Table 4.2: The three-digit coding system used to reference data

DOCUMENT ID	ASSOCIATED DATA SOURCE	DATA CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUE/ STRATEGY(IES) USED DURING SESSION	PAGE NUMBER	LINE NUMBER/S
I1	Session 1 (linked to rough lifeline)	Narrative analysis	1–66	1–623
I2	Session 2	Narrative analysis and reflection on session 1 (adding more detail to the lifeline), MCM	1–73	1–819
I3	Session 3	The participant had to go through her reflections of the previous session and identify the negative themes and patterns according to her own insight.	1–48	1–310
I4	Session 4 (linked to poem and painting)	Discussing the participant's meaning assigned to both her poem and her painting	1–57	1–458
I5	Session 5 (also discussed completed collages for portfolio.)	Reflection on participant's identification of positive themes in her lifeline	1–30	1–222
I6	Session 6 (linked to JPQ and discussion of collages for portfolio)	Feedback on JPQ and reflection on collages for portfolio, interpersonal relationships	1–49	1–413
I7	Session 7 (linked to CIP)	Final session based on the online <i>CIP</i> report and overall reflection of process	1–71	1–541
R1	Reflection	Written reflection on the lifeline process	1–4	1–63
R2	Reflections	Written reflections of each session	1–5	1–92
R3	Retrospective reflection	Written reflection of the whole life-design intervention process	1–2	1–36

Example and explanation of a three-digit code used: (I1; 2; 421–422). The first digit refers to the document ID (in this case, I1). The second digit refers to the page number (in this case, 2). The third digit refers to the relevant line numbers (in this case, 421–422). When a theme is linked to a quotation, the relevant colour code will be added, for instance (I1; 2; 421–421). (Blue, in this case, refers to the theme of Neglect).

4.2.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Table 4.3: Summary of inclusion and exclusion criteria for themes and sub-themes

THEME 1: NEGLECT		
SUB-THEME	INCLUSION	EXCLUSION
Negative external influences	Any person, place or event which influenced Aurora in a negative way by evoking negative emotions and/or actions from her.	Does not include any external influences and/or experiences which did not evoke negative emotions or actions from Aurora. In some instances, negative influences, like her mother, had a positive effect on her. Such experiences were not included.
Example "... my mom was on heavy painkillers, heavy doses of opiates, chemo, sleeping pills. She was on some (inaudible) for her nervous pain and on top of that she would drink quite heavily. And then she would get drunk or out of it and then she would come and scream at me about something that I did ..." (I1; 11; 110)		
Effects of parental neglect	These include all mental and/or physical health problems that could possibly have resulted from her experience of parental neglect as grounded in literature on the topic and as a result of her own perceptions and feelings.	All mental and/or physical health problems that could not be related to the effects of parental neglect, and all experiences not reported by Aurora as being a possible result of parental neglect.
Example: "Then in, during June exams that year, I had my second overdose when my Mom and I were still fighting (inaudible) still freaking me out" (I2; 41; 475).		
Traumatic events	All the specific, personal experiences of events that can be vividly recalled which are linked to negative thoughts and feelings.	All the specific, personal experiences of events which are not linked to negative thoughts and feelings.
Example: "And then you have to go and they ... slaughter chickens on you and then they slaughter goats on your back and you have to drink it. Yeah, and mine was bad. Mine did not want to die, I won't blame it. It kicked me, I had bruises all over my back ... and they didn't cut, and I was the second one to go because I was younger and the knife was blunt and it struggled and they didn't cut it properly ..." (I1; 41; 437).		

THEME 2: RESILIENCE AND SELF-CONSTRUCTION		
SUB-THEME	INCLUSION	EXCLUSION
Agency	All statements explicitly made by Aurora that refer to a sense of agency, mastery and responsibility for her own life. All inferences based on the narrative analysis that refer to her sense of agency and mastery.	All statements and inferences that do not relate to a sense of agency, mastery or responsibility for her own life.
Example: Um, because at the end of the day it's you. You've got to support yourself, not even on a financial very basic means and all, but on a higher ... your self-actualisation your emotional support, your sense of your security" (ID3; 15; 102).		
Adaptability factors	All statements explicitly made by Aurora that refer to her ability to be flexible and adapt her behaviour or thoughts to changing circumstances.	All inferences based on the narrative analysis that do not refer to her ability to be flexible and adapt her behaviour or thoughts to changing circumstances.
Example: "Yeah, like that's the thing. It's very balanced and even in the bad there were certain good aspects because my Thwasa was a very bad and difficult and tiring experience but it taught me a lot of resilience. It taught me just work ... because obviously for me in my life I've never really had to be in a situation where it's just physical work day in and day out, day in and day out. It taught me that if you need to do it you've got to do it and how to do it" (17; 42; 332).		
THEME 3: VOCATIONAL PERSONALITY		
SUB-THEME	INCLUSION	EXCLUSION
Future aspirations	All statements and inferences to Aurora's envisioned future. This includes all the influences she had that might have impacted her current career choices and hopes for the future.	All statements and inferences that do not contribute to Aurora's envisioned future.
Examples: "Yeah, that's why I chose it because I want to be able to move, to do things, to be impulsive safely because I know I have that nature. So my idea is to create something, because if you think about, like, economists are, it's a skill that is lacking globally, right, in most labour markets ... A, B, it's international, it's something that translated internationally" (I2; 61; 709).		
Adaptability factors	All quotations relating to her ability to be adaptable within a changing workplace or institution for further education.	All quotations that do not relate to her ability to be adaptable within a changing workplace or institution for further education.
Example: "Yeah, no, I think especially with the lockdown like that's one thing it has taught me is just adjust. You've got to keep moving ..." (17; 28; 217).		

4.3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANT

'Aurora Simmons' (**pseudonym**) turned 18 during the course of our interviews. She is a white female and was residing at a children's home in Kempton Park, Gauteng. She was busy with her matric year at the time. Aurora wanted guidance in terms of her future options as well as an intervention to help her make sense of her traumatic childhood experiences, which had led to feelings of abandonment, low self-esteem, guilt, mistrust and mental health problems. Throughout her life, Aurora had experienced parental neglect, which led to further feelings of abandonment, rejection and mistrust. In one of her recollections, she said: "For the first set of the Grade 10 June exams, I had this really bad. I was so depressed and I really needed to speak to someone and my mom would not talk to me, she could not talk to me. She locked me out of her room. I sat there crying. She told me **** off, you pathetic piece of ****" (I1; 17; 161) (Effects of parental neglect).³

Aurora's relationship with her mother was extremely volatile and the situation was worsened by her mother's illness (Ehlers-Danlos hypermobility syndrome) and alcohol abuse. "So then that night my mom starts drinking and gets in a fight with me, dragging up about how I this and that, how I ruined this child's life. I'm a manipulative little ****. I was so raw and so broken" (I1; 23; 231) (Effects of parental neglect). Due to her parents' divorce when she was still a baby, Aurora hardly ever saw her father. Although they made contact as she grew older, he mostly resided in another country due to the nature of his work. She and her grandmother have always been very close. She said: "And I ran away to my grandmother and we were quite happy the two of us living" (I2; 49; 571) (Adaptability factors). Aurora's grandmother and mother did not have a great relationship, but her grandmother nevertheless never gave up on supporting Aurora.

Aurora and her mother moved around a lot. Aurora had already been struggling with a low self-esteem, and moving schools so often made it harder for her to make friends and to trust her peers to become her friends. Her panic attacks and depression also made it difficult for her to attend school: "I was no longer able to go to school cause I'd just like get out of the car, panic attack, drive home, you know? No point ...

³ Readers are advised that the relevant theme or subtheme to which a specific highlight colour relates is always stated directly after every verbatim quote to make it easy for readers to connect highlight colours with specific, related themes or subthemes.

so I kind of just left. I just got up and left cause I couldn't. The whole situation was just too much for me at the time" (17; 53; 388) (Effects of parental neglect).

Aurora tried to commit suicide three times and was admitted to two different mental hospitals during the same time. Aurora's mother forced her to undergo *Thwasa*-training (the process of becoming a traditional healer), at which time she was forced to live in Soweto. "I went like no, [she said] you are leaving and if you won't get in, I'll pick you up and put you there. So it was like well, nobody cares, so I guess I'm going. So I got in the car. We went and sat there for the consolation and she decided that I had the calling. So my mom was like now you're going to go and you're going to spend four months in Soweto and you're going to Thwasa. I had no idea what this meant" (11; 33; 348) (Traumatic event). During her time in the mental hospitals as well as in Soweto, she missed a lot of school and had no support from her family.

After Aurora had left Soweto to go and live with her grandmother, she was arrested for getting into a physical fight with her mother, who had reported her to the police. "Then on the 26th of the 8th of 2019, I had a bad fight with my mom ... it was and it got physical and for the first time in years and my mom called the police and then I was in court and then I was in, I said jail, but it was Walter Sisulu Secure Care for ten days" (12; 50; 583) (Traumatic event). After her arrest, the court found it in her best interest to be placed in a children's home. This was the start of a blank slate for Aurora where she could spend time reflecting on herself and to focus on her school career. "It is so much better. It's like, I'm so much happier living here [the children's home] than when I was with my mother. I'm so like, I don't feel this constant anxiety, this constant hard, like I used to feel like an empty shell of a human being. Obviously I have my ups and down, I'm a teenager living in a house full of 13 girls, but it's so much more normal. I felt I was living in a Tarkovsky novel or something. It was so intense, all the emotions and pain and drama ..." (11; 56; 572) (Adaptability factors).

4.4 THE LIFE-DESIGN COUNSELLING PROCESS FOR AURORA SIMMONS

4.4.1 Session 1: Aurora's Timeline

4.4.1.1 Introduction

During our first session, Aurora and I discussed her timeline in detail. The session proved to be very valuable as it triggered some buried memories and feelings. It is important to note that Aurora was asked to create collages based on her line lifeline in her own time in order to build a portfolio at the end of all the sessions. Below is a summary of Aurora's narrative of her timeline as she remembers it.

i. Aurora's Timeline Narrative

a. Early Years

Aurora's parents decided to divorce when her mother was three months pregnant with her. Her biological father was very ill with malaria and did not want a child. He wanted her mother to abort the pregnancy. "He was living in Nigeria and he just couldn't take it and he was losing his mind. At around about the time my mom fell pregnant, he also fell ill with malaria and stuff" (I1; 3; 19). Both her parents were living in Nigeria at the time as her father was often travelling for work. He is a resident representative of an international NGO and had obtained a master's degree. Her mother decided not to abort; their divorce was quick and was finalised one month before Aurora's birth. Aurora refers to this as "the shotgun divorce". Her mother then moved back to South Africa, where her grandmother started playing a big role in Aurora's life, despite her mother and her grandmother's inconsistent relationship. Aurora stated: "So she [her grandmother] drove 45 minutes there, come take care of me, then my mom would go to work and come back quite late, and she would drive 45 minutes back" (I1; 4; 35). Aurora's relationship with her grandmother became one of her protective resources in the years to come.

Aurora's mother had obtained a master's degree and worked as a lecturer in economics. Consequently, she was always very busy with her work and had very little time for Aurora as a young child. According to Aurora, her mother did not have an easy childhood: "So yeah, and then my mom comes from a very fractured family. Like her father was very physically abusive because he was like, he was 14 years old when

World War II broke out and he's Polish and in Poland; his father had recently been murdered when it happened" (I1; 4; 35). Aurora's aunt committed suicide as a young adult; as a result, her grandmother fell into depression. "Um, so it was a lot. My grandmother was like almost catatonically depressed for six months after she [aunt Lynne] committed suicide" (I1; 6; 55).

Aurora met her biological father for the first time when she was one year old. At the time, he asked her mother to get remarried. She declined the proposal. Aurora does not hold that against her mother. In fact, she showed insight into her mother's decision when she said: "Yeah, she was protecting herself and me, and I'm not mad at my mom for saying this at all; I completely understand it" (I2; 12; 147). When she was four years old, Aurora and her mother moved to Mpumalanga, where she was far from her grandmother, with whom she had a good relationship. At the age of five, they moved again; this time it was to a farm in Hazyview, which Aurora really enjoyed. Due to the nature of her mother's work at the time, which was classified, her brake lines were cut and she had a car accident. Her mother was also under tremendous stress at the time as people were also following them around.

When Aurora was six years old, she and her mother moved to Pretoria. At her new school, Aurora was bullied and was very unhappy. Aurora stated: "And then, here in 2008 in the fourth term, we moved to Pretoria and I started at Woodlands. I was in the fourth term of Grade R; it was only really in Grade 1 that I got bullied for the first time ..." (I2; 15; 189). They had some contact with her grandmother at the time. She reported that her mother had less stress in Pretoria. They moved to Parkview in Johannesburg when she was eight years old in 2010. During the December holiday of the same year, Aurora went to Uganda with her aunt and her grandmother. Aurora recalls that her aunt and grandmother fought a lot about her mother and they used to gossip about her mother when they thought she was sleeping. Although she enjoyed her holiday, she was upset about the gossiping and told her mother about it over the phone. Her aunt consequently became distant towards her.

At the beginning of 2011, Aurora's aunt fell ill with malaria. Aurora started at a new school in January 2011, where she remembers being bullied by a teacher and not being able to get along with most of the children there. She recalled: "And the teacher bullied me, Miss Allsworth, I remember, oh my gosh, we didn't get along at all. She

was so mean to me. It got really bad to the point where the principal got involved. There were the teachers and the principal said to her to be nice or we're going to have a disciplinary like problem here" (I2; 18; 209). Aurora did, however, meet her two best friends that year. She said: "And then I met my two best friends, Anna and Angela" (I2; 19; 219). In September 2011, Aurora fell ill with double pneumonia and whooping cough. Her mother was smoking a lot and she remembered blaming her for falling ill: "So here, I fell ill with double lung pneumonia ... and whooping cough. It was bad and my mom smoked a lot at the time so that made me very angry with her, cause, blaming her, and then, my mom and, but it was not that bad because even though it was difficult and like I coughed so hard there was a gap in my brain and I had to go for like MRI every year after that" (I2; 21; 239–245). She also missed a lot of school because of this and the teacher who, according to Aurora, was bullying her got very upset with her because she had achieved high marks in spite of her absence from school. She recollected that "the main aspects that I remember is that when I got to Grade 3, I was the only sort of clever girl in the class. The rest were boys, the highest marks, except for me were all boys and she was always nice to them but never to me; that's one thing I remember. It was very strange because ... I was a sickly child; I was sick a lot. Like later, I'll talk about my whooping cough and pneumonia and stuff and she was always on me about it. And she always said I finished my work too quickly and strange, strange things, not things that you normally would, you know?" (I2; 18; 211–215).

In 2012, Aurora's mother was appointed as Executive Director of Economic Development. Although her mother was earning a very good salary, she was under a lot of stress. Her mother started drinking a lot and seemed to be angry most of the time. She also fell ill. Aurora recalled that "she was making a lot of money, but she was very stressed and she started drinking more. She was angry a lot more. She was getting sick and she basically was never at home. She would leave at 6 o'clock in the morning, come home at 10 o'clock at night" (I2; 23; 266). It was around this time that Aurora started seeing her mother's "ugly" side. During the course of that year, their fights, as well as the bullying at school, became worse. This was the first time she started feeling "lost". "I remember feeling quite lost and also the reason I remember it was my birthday is because I remember this birthday, tenth birthday, just feeling lost" (I2; 23; 274).

This continued in 2013 as her mother was on high doses of chemo and was also still drinking a lot of alcohol. Their fights became physical; the emotional abuse became worse and Aurora's mother became very anxious, absent and slack. "Okay, so here my mom started on heavy doses of chemo, like heavy, and she was on a lot other drugs and she was drinking and naturally our fighting just got worse" (I2; 28; 324). In May 2013, Aurora's friend organised a surprise birthday party for her, which made her feel loved. Her mother was very ill at the time. In June 2013, Aurora met a friend at school who she thought was a good influence and things started getting a little better at school. Unfortunately, she referred to this friend as a "manipulative narcissist" later on: "Sarah was a good influence on me ... and then as we got closer, she got very manipulative and she was like a total narcissist if I think about it" (I2; 31; 350).

b. Suicide Attempts

Aurora refers to 2014 as the best school year for her, socially, as she and her friends did many things together. During the same year, her mother was also medically boarded. In April 2015, the group of friends split up after a fight. Two months later, Aurora's suicidal thoughts started. She mentioned that she started feeling like things were getting worse between her and her mother. She recalled: "When my mom got really sick, I was acting out a lot and her relationship just got so toxic. It was bad because my mom was on heavy painkillers, heavy doses of opiates, chemo, sleeping pills ... she was on like some (inaudible) for her nervous pain and on top of that she would drink quite heavily. And then she would get drunk or out of it and then she would come and scream at me about something that I did ..." (I1; 11; 110). At the time her mother started lecturing at the university. They were fighting and it turned into physical fight between. Aurora took 1200 mg of morphine and was in a coma for three days. It was thought that she may have suffered brain damage. Aurora remembers the event, but she is also grateful today that her attempt did not leave her with any brain damage. She recalled: "1200 mg of morphine and I was in a coma for three days. They thought I was going to have bad brain damage; they thought I would come out as a vegetable. I didn't, thank God" (I2; 33; 384). This experience made her realise that there was a lack of sympathy and love for people who try to commit suicide.

In January 2016, Aurora was admitted to Akeso, a psychiatric hospital. The relationship between her and her mother was still very bad, but she realised that she was not alone. “Then a couple of days after that, a couple of days in the hospital, I started my four-week programme at Akeso. It was so bad between my mom and I; I started to understand that I wasn’t sort of alone in depression” (I2; 34; 386). She had a supportive friend who stood by her side throughout the process and from whom she acquired some helpful coping skills. In February 2016, Aurora started at a new school. She quickly made a friend, which felt like a positive start. “And then February of that year I started Sacred Heart and I became friends with [name of friend withheld] and things started to be going positively, you know, the high school, the new start, new friends” (I2; 35; 404). However, by May 2016, Aurora still felt suicidal and mentioned that she “started to feel like I sort of had a place at Sacred Heart, but I was still quite suicidal” (I2; 35; 412). She had also undergone maxillofacial surgery and her friend was there to support her once again, as her mother was very ill. Aurora had gotten some kittens at the time, which made her very happy. There was, however, non-stop fighting between her and her mother; Aurora’s friend witnessed everything.

At the start of Grade 9 in 2017, Aurora was still not feeling great about herself. She enjoyed debating as a school activity, but her group of friends at school was falling apart. Aurora experienced her first panic attack in August 2017 after a big fight over WhatsApp and she started feeling that she was losing control. In September 2017, Aurora moved schools again. It seemed as if things were going to be better. Her mother’s health was still up and down.

Aurora attempted a second suicide in June 2018: “Then ... during June exams that year, I had my second overdose when my mom and I were still fighting (inaudible) ... still freaking me out” (I2; 41; 475). She said that her mother had locked her out and that she had been very depressed and “not even feeling like a human being”. Two months later, their house burnt down and Aurora’s mom blamed her for it. She tried to get her mother out of the house but was unsuccessful; however, she was able to get help. “I didn’t even feel like a human being, the house burnt down, my mom blamed me” (I2; 42; 495). In November 2018, Aurora attempted her third suicide by taking prescription medicine. This event got her admitted to Tara. Aurora recalled: “And that’s when I took my third overdose, they’re linked, but anyway ... and then I ended up in

Tara” (I2; 43; 497–499). At the time, Tara did not have an adolescent programme, so she basically stayed there to wait for the programme to start while she occasionally received some schoolwork. Although she encountered some problems at Tara, she started to feel better as she realised that being away from her mother was good for her mental health. She stated: “Things between my mom and I got a little better with the space and then on the first of the next year, I started the adolescent programme” (I2; 43; 499).

The adolescent programme started only in January 2019, during which she was taught DBT (dialectical behaviour therapy) skills and listening skills. DBT is often used to treat mood disorders and suicidal ideation, and for change in behavioural patterns such as self-harm and substance abuse. This therapy emphasises the psychosocial aspects of treatment. During her time at Tara, Aurora became the “go-to” person if someone needed help, especially with regard to conflict between the other patients. Unfortunately, this caused some problems for her in February 2019, as she started to get blamed for problems within the ward. In March 2019, Aurora was asked to leave Tara. In the meantime, her mom had moved in with Justin (pseudonym) and hardly ever visited Aurora in Tara. “So the guy who was, you call it a *Thwasa*. So the guy [Justin] was *Thwasaing*, white and he was a friend of my mother” (I1; 32; 334).

c. *Ukuthwasa*

Initially, things seemed to go better when Aurora returned home. It was during this time that her mother forced her to begin her *Ukuthwasa* journey (process of becoming a traditional healer). “So, I didn’t want to go. I was scared and I had recently come out of Tara and then on the day it happened, the day I was supposed to go, I sat there, I was like I don’t feel comfortable. I don’t know this woman; I don’t know this place. I don’t know this culture, I don’t know if I believe in any of this, like, no, I’m not comfortable with this” (I1; 33; 346). At the time, Aurora’s mother was getting into alternative forms of healing, which is where she met Justin. One of the healers that consulted with her mother told her that Aurora has the calling to become a traditional healer and that she should partake in the *Ukuthwasa* process. Not everyone who undergoes the process becomes a sangoma, but is then rather referred to as *Amathwasa* (“*Ukuthwasa – Umsamo Institute*”, 2021). Some people become *Amathwasa* due to ancestral issues and they are then required to perform certain

rituals. Such people are usually going through some kind of difficulty in life. Aurora did not seem to have a choice in the matter as her mother was adamant that she would go stay in Soweto for three months to partake in this initiation process. Justin was also doing Ukuthwasa at the time and the two of them became friends. He was a lot older than she was, and he seemed to be a protective barrier between Aurora and her mother. She was very scared, being the only white adolescent girl taking part at the time. The Ukuthwasa kept her extremely busy; this took her mind off her suicidal thoughts. She was required to work from 5:00 in the morning until 2:00 the next morning for the Gogo (qualified traditional healer). Her tasks included taking care of the Gogo, cleaning, looking for herbs and other ingredients to make "*muthi*" (traditional medicine) and learning the ways of a traditional healer. She reported that she was very happy if they received an opportunity to go to bed at midnight. "You always have to be on the floor, you have to sleep on the floor, all that stuff. So, you wake up early, you're working the whole day, you go out on *muthi* digs, you have to crush and chop the *muthi*, you have to clean the place, you have to do this, you have to do the that. You are constantly busy. So you're waking up at 4:30, sleeping like at 2:00, you know?" (11; 35; 368).

Aurora never saw her mother during this time. The final ceremony took place in May 2019 and it was a traumatic experience for Aurora. She had to perform dance rituals for an entire day while also drinking water until she vomited. She had to walk around with a naked upper body in front of everyone. Aurora was also required to slaughter a goat. A few people were taking part in the ceremony simultaneously, although not all of them had completed their three-month stay. Consequently, the blade of the knife quickly became blunt and when it was her turn to cut the goat's throat, the knife did not work properly the first time. She had to try a few times before the goat died. She had to drink some of the goat's blood and smear it over her body. She spoke of how she remembers this traumatic experience: "And then you have to go and they, um, so they, um, slaughter chickens on you and then they slaughter goats on your back and you have to drink it. Yeah, and mine was bad; mine did not want to die, I won't blame it. It kicked me, I had bruises all over my back ... they didn't cut. I was the second one to go because I was younger and the knife was blunt and it struggled and they didn't cut it properly. So I had to like dig my hand in and I had to watch it first and then go and do it and then after that you have to drink this *muthi* and

then just throw up, throw up, throw up and drink and throw up, throw up, throw up and drink, throw up, throw up, throw up and until you fill up a hole. You just keep going and going and going and then you go back and you have to drink two litres of water, throw up ... drink two litres of water, throw up ... drink another two litres of water, throw up until about you've reached ten litres, until you're vomiting literally just water..." (I1; 41; 437).

Justin left Soweto after the ceremony, but she still had a few weeks to go before she could leave. She did not want to stay in Soweto as it was far from her grandmother, whom she missed. Aurora decided to run away to go live with her grandmother. Her mother moved in with Catherine (aunt/friend) in mid-June 2019. In July 2019, Aurora's mother decided to move in with Aurora and her grandmother. This arrangement put a lot of strain on everyone in the house, especially between Aurora and her mother. The tension accumulated until a physical fight broke out between Aurora and her mother in August 2020. Her mother called the police when Aurora slammed a door, which broke her mother's nose. Aurora was arrested and spent 10 days in jail (Walter Sisulu Secure Care Centre) awaiting court procedures. "So ... I decided not to press charges against my mom because she was looking for a job and I wouldn't do that to her. My mom obviously didn't have the same; after that I went and they took me to Walter Sisulu Secure Care in Soweto for about 10 days while the case went on and then eventually ..." (I1; 48; 507). Although Aurora had the opportunity to open a police case against her mother, she decided against it as her mother was looking for work at the time.

d. A New Beginning

In September 2019, the court placed Aurora in John Wesley Children's Home. Things started getting better at the home and she started putting in all her energy in completing her Grade 11 year. Despite her missing long periods of school before, Aurora managed to perform above expectations and started 2020 in Grade 12, where her results became only better. In November 2011, she felt like all her hard work was paying off and that she was feeling better without her mother in her life. "It is so much better. It's like, I'm so much happier living here than when I was with my mother. I don't feel this constant anxiety, this constant hard ... I used to feel like an empty shell of a human being, you know, and obviously I have my ups and downs, I'm a teenager living

in a house full of 13 girls, but it's so much more normal" (11; 56; 572).

ii. Conclusion for session 1

Aurora reported that completing her timeline was quite a difficult task. Throughout the years, she has had to tell her story many times. She was admitted to two different mental hospitals and had to testify in court, which eventually led to her placement in a children's home. This time, the process was a little different as it required her to reflect intensely on every lived experience she could remember, as opposed to a general overview of certain incidents. The process awakened a few buried memories and, with that, accompanying feelings of rejection, sadness and possible anger. Aurora mentioned that the more she wrote down, the more she remembered.

The process was necessary for her to realise how far she had come in terms of overcoming adversities and personal growth. Looking back at her timeline, Aurora was reminded of the trauma and neglect she had experienced while growing up. This was a difficult task for her as she started a new life at the children's home and was focused on completing her Grade 12 year. She had thus chosen to not focus on her past, and to work on completing her school career successfully. It was therefore quite a daunting task for her to force herself to reflect on the past and recall the events of her life.

4.4.2 Session 2: Reflection on Aurora's Timeline

4.4.2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this session was to reflect on the process of creating the timeline and gaining insight into recurring themes and patterns throughout Aurora's life. Aurora was asked to create a portfolio from her initial timeline; this session also served as preparation for that process.

i. Insight gained through reflection of session 1

Aurora found the process of compiling her timeline very valuable. She reported that it was very different from merely retelling her story to the social workers, the police, the court and the mental healthcare practitioners in Akeso and Tara. The process of revisiting important events in her life helped her to remember more detail about specific events and also to reconnect with the thoughts and feelings she experienced at that time. Aurora stated: "You realise the bad space you were in. It's not just a memory of

a memory” (I2; 4; 53). Aurora further refers to how, around the time she attempted her first suicide, it was so dark for her and that she now realises how much of her time was consumed by negative thoughts and feelings (I2; 1; 17). The process also helped her remember “a lot more detail” (I2; 5; 59).

Another significant reflection was that Aurora thought her mother would have been happier if she had received appropriate help many years ago. She realises that her mother had a lot of potential and that she needed guidance. This is insight that she might not have had at the time of her first suicide attempt. Aurora has a clear idea of her envisioned career and feels determined to achieve her goal of studying a BCom PPE (Politics, Philosophy and Economics) degree at the University of Cape Town. Although her mother has advised her to go into a different career direction, Aurora is certain of what she wants to do. Her mother started off by studying law. She later changed her mind and became an economist. Aurora does not want to change her mind later like her mother did. She wants to pursue her own personal choice. Aurora stated confidently: “This is what I want to do; this is what I see myself doing” (I2; 24; 729) (Agency).

ii. Emerging themes and patterns

The second interview entailed an in-depth reflection of Aurora’s lifeline. By reflecting on the process of constructing her lifeline, Aurora was able to add more detail to some of her memories. The neglect she had experienced throughout her life was vividly explained through her use of descriptive words and metaphors, for instance: “And then it all kind of just, yeah, I remember thinking ashes to ashes, dust to dust” (I2; 33; 372) (Effects of parental neglect).

Despite the emotional side effects of neglect that Aurora experienced, her resilience and adaptability was also a prominent theme. In the sections that follow, the themes of neglect and resilience will be discussed.

a. Neglect

Table 4.4: Summary of Neglect as a theme emerging from session 2

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
Neglect	Effects of parental neglect	Suicide Anxiety Fear Anger Mistrust and isolation Rejection Self-doubt and low self-worth Blame and guilt Depression Powerlessness Physical health
	Negative external influences	Normalising negative feelings Mental health of mother Spirituality of mother Substance abuse of mother
	Traumatic events	Verbal and physical abuse Police and court Physical fights Physical health of mother Moving house

Kisely et al. (2018) found that all forms of child maltreatment, but more specifically neglect and emotional abuse, have long-term mental health risks for young adults. My research confirms that Aurora’s lifeline reflects many mental health problems, which can be related to the emotional abuse and neglect she experienced as a child. She attempted suicide three times and was admitted to two different mental hospitals as a teenager. “And then I became very depressed. I had my first major depression when I was about 12 years old. When I was about 13 years old, I had my first suicide attempt. I took a lot of morphine” (I1; 12; 114–118). “After that, I went to Akeso, a psychiatric clinic, the one in Parktown. And then I had a lot of trouble at school cause I suffered from a lot of depression and general anxiety. Then I started having panic attacks” (I1; 13; 120–121) (Effects of parental neglect).

Kisely et al. (2018) further concluded that lifetime depression was strongly linked to emotional abuse and neglect. “Then I ended up in Helen Joseph. After that they took me to Tara. And at the time, Tara didn’t have its adolescence programme running. So I was there for containment; this was November. I was there for

containment until ... At the end of Grade 10 ..." (I1; 24; 238–239) (Effects of parental neglect). Aurora stated that her negative feelings and suicidal thoughts started consuming her. She said: "And it was awful, and it was something that preoccupied my mind so much, like it was just death all the time to a truly disturbing extent and I didn't even realise it at that time. I just thought it was the way I was and it was who I was meant to be. I was on so many psychiatric meds that it was this combination of not wanting to be, just giving in to and just watching myself have these reactions that weren't actually mine, they were the meds ..." (I2; 2; 19) (Effects of parental neglect).

Emotional neglect has been found to be a very strong predictor of poor mental health in adolescence (Khan et al., 2015). "So then when she came back with the police, I had taken the overdose. I went to her room and I opened her little cupboard and then I took the pills. And it was like bad. They pumped my stomach, but it didn't work. My lungs still collapsed. I was like in a coma like for three days" (I1; 12; 118) (Effects of parental neglect). In session 2, Aurora added: "So now my mom and I had a very bad fight. I broke my mom's nose when I slammed the door ... in her face and then this is when I took my first overdose. That 1200 mg of morphine and I was in a coma for three days. They thought I was going to have bad brain damage, they thought I would come out as a vegetable. I didn't, thank God" (I2; 33–34; 384) (Traumatic event). "So then that night my mom starts drinking and gets in a fight with me, dragging up about how I this and that, how I ruined this child's life. I'm a manipulative little ****. I was so raw and so broken. I took another overdose" (I1; 23–24; 231) (Negative external influence). Not long after her second overdose, Aurora attempted suicide again: "And then, um, I had my second OD. I didn't even feel like a human being. The house burnt down; my mom blamed me. Mom was living with the Harveds and I lived with my friend Cameron. After that, our friendship deteriorated and then here ... just before this happened, actually, this is the incident that I should put here actually ... there was that boy in class that came at me with scissors and everything. That's when I took my third overdose, they're linked, but anyway ..." (I2; 43–44; 495–497) (Traumatic event).

The same study found that emotional abuse in females during sensitive exposure times is also linked to a greater negative response to social rejection. Aurora referred to rejection from her peers a few times as well as her lack of trust in people,

which made it difficult for her to make friends. “So, I was there and I was having just like, I was having trouble at school with friends. I was having trouble at home with my mom and I was just losing my mind” (I1; 13; 125) (Effects of parental neglect). With regard to her response to social rejection, she stated: “I get ... and this big fight happens with my friends and I ... it was like a bad fight and then my panic attacks” (I1; 13–14; 134) (Negative external influence). “I just had this just really bad fight with my friends. After that, I just couldn’t bring myself to go to school cause I would normally take the school bus. I just couldn’t leave the house and my mom would take me in the car and we’d go later and I’d crawl up into a ball and start crying. I couldn’t do it and maybe in those three weeks, I went to school like four times, you know?” (I1; 15; 140) (Effects of parental neglect). The current case study thus agrees with the findings of Khan et al. (2015).

b. Resilience

Table 4.5: Summary of Resilience as a theme emerging from session 2

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
Resilience and Self-Construction	Agency	
	Adaptability Factors	Hope Giftedness Positive external influences Support Gratitude Insight Growth Positive themes Motivation Self-belief Growth Positive mental health of self

In addition to traumatic experiences due to parental neglect, Aurora was also exposed to other traumatic events. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines a traumatic event as (Mandelli et al., 2015):

“an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.”

Below is a discussion on each of the major traumatic events Aurora experienced. It is important to understand the details of these events in order to showcase the adaptability, agency and resilience that Aurora managed to exhibit throughout her life.

➤ ***Moving house***

Aurora has had to move several times during her lifetime. Every time they moved to a new house in a new area, she had to learn to adapt in terms of attending a new school, making new friends and, also, at times being separated from her grandmother. “And then, um, this is when we moved to Mpumalanga somewhere in 2006. We moved to the farm in Hazyview. I was much happier on the farm ... my mom was happier there, but she was more stressed; she was in a very bad car accident” (I2; 13; 161–163) (Traumatic events). “By the time we moved back to Jo’burg they [mother and grandmother] had pretty much had no relationship. My gran came over for lunch a couple of times. We tried to see her every Sunday, but my mom lost her mind and started screaming about how she argh (inaudible). So, then that stopped for a while. And then basically throughout my mom’s illness, my grandmother wanted to help but my mother wouldn’t allow her. If that makes sense.” (I1; 11; 108) (Effects of parental neglect). So then we started having contact with my granny again (Adaptability factor). Then we moved to Parkview in Jo’burg...” (I2; 16; 193). “And then here in 2008 in the fourth term, we moved to Pretoria and I started at Woodlands. I was in the fourth term of Grade R; it was only really in Grade 1 that I got bullied for the first time” (I2; 16; 189) (Traumatic event).

➤ ***The house burning down***

Another traumatic incident that Aurora recalled when she was in Grade 10 was the time their house burnt down. She remembers that this happened shortly after her second suicide attempt: “I was in the kitchen baking and then I tried to go back to my room. There was like this wall of smoke so I couldn’t go to my mom, I couldn’t” (I1; 19; 193). “So, then I ran to my mom and there was a door cause the house had been modified and the garage had been built on so ... room and I was knocking on it and knocking on it and she wouldn’t wake up, she wouldn’t wake up. I tried to break the window but there was like a ... I couldn’t open the door to get to her. So I couldn’t get in; I was screaming and screaming and screaming ... and eventually someone, cause

there was a police station down the road, came and pulled her out of the fire. But I couldn't get to her" (I1; 20; 185–191) (Traumatic event). Aurora was evidently traumatised by their house catching on fire, but even more by her inability to get to her mother. As she stated in one of her quotes, Aurora's mother blamed her for the fire as the investigation concluded that it was Aurora's electrical blanket that had caused the fire. This made Aurora feel a tremendous amount of guilt on top of the traumatising event. "That was after ... a couple of months after that. That happened, things went crazy ... my mom would get angry with me, angry with me. She blamed me for the whole thing. She, and like all these, and I felt guilty about it. I did. At the time, I did blame myself for it ..." (I1; 21; 203) (Effects of parental neglect).

➤ ***The final ceremony***

In session 2 we reflected on a particularly traumatic event on Aurora's lifeline that had been discussed in session 1. During the second half of her training, Aurora was allowed to go home for a few days a week. It became more bearable to go home as Jason became a protective factor for her. She mentioned that she did not feel depressed and did not experience any panic attacks. Despite the harsh conditions of her *Thwasa* training, Aurora grew as a person and gained some insight into her own mental health difficulties. "And, yeah, you know I didn't have any panic attacks. My depression was much better ... I was always busy, so I didn't have time to be in my head, you know, which is something which I've learnt from that. It wasn't a completely negative experience. I'm going to say that. I learnt a lot of things, how to keep yourself occupied, how to get things done" (I1; 38; 396–398) (Adaptability factor). The final ceremony was very traumatic for her; she decided to run away and go live with her grandmother. "And then you have to go and they, um, slaughter chickens on you and then they slaughter goats on your back and you have to drink [the blood]. Yeah, and mine was bad, mine, did not want to die. I won't blame it. It kicked me, I had bruises all over my back, um, and they didn't cut. I was the second one to go because I was younger and the knife was blunt and it struggled and they didn't cut it properly. So I had to dig my hand in and I had to watch it first and then go and do it. After that you have to drink this muthi and then just throw up, throw up, throw up and drink and throw up, throw up, throw up and drink, throw up, throw up, throw up and until you fill up a hole. You just keep going and going and going and then you go back and you have to drink two litres of water, throw up, drink two litres of water, throw up, drink another two

litres of water, throw up until about you've reached ten litres, until you're vomiting literally just water" (I1; 42–43; 437). "You dance until your body is sore and you're cold and everything, it hurts and then all you can taste in the back of your throat is goat blood" (I1: 43; 454) (Traumatic event).

"So about three weeks into my five weeks left, I essentially ran away. I told my mom I didn't want to go back. I had this whole fight with her on the way back ... We were driving, we were stuck in the traffic, there was a long fight. She said 'no, you have to go, you have to go'. So I went back and then that weekend, instead of going to my mom, I said I was going to go to my gran ... Cause she was having car problems. I just never came back. So I went and I stayed with my gran for a bit and we were getting along well. Things were fine between us. And I stayed with her for about a month and a half" (I1; 44; 462) (Agency). Although Aurora was only in Grade 10 and under the control of her mother, she showed sure signs of agency and determination when she made the choice to run away.

➤ **Walter Sisulu Secure care**

Aurora's mother joined her and her grandmother less than two months later and a big, physical fight broke out. The fight ended in Aurora being taken into custody and held in the Walter Sisulu Secure Care as her mother opened a criminal case against her. The conflict between Aurora and her mother had become physical. Aurora slammed the door in her mother's face and broke her nose. Aurora was held at Walter Sisulu Secure Care for ten days while the court case was being finalised. Aurora was once again uprooted, separated from her grandmother and moved to a new place. "And it was not nice there at all because a lot of people don't know this, but when you go anywhere in the prison system, you have to strip completely ... and then you have to squat five times completely naked and then you get up and all the other girls would make mean jokes while you were doing it ... and it was difficult" (I2; 52–53; 609–615) (Traumatic event).

In an informal conversation, Aurora mentioned that the court case felt like there was no hope left for an escape to a better life. The contrary ended up being true as Aurora was then, for the first time, put into the care of social workers. The investigation ended with Aurora being placed in a children's home – just in time to do her Grade 11 year, after having missed ten months of school. "Yeah. Uhm, and then on the third of

September I was placed in [children’s home]. Things got better. I was much happier; I am much happier. On the 14th of November of last year, after studying my butt off because I hadn’t been at school the whole year” (I2; 54; 623) (Adaptability factor). “I missed a whole year of school ... So, maths I managed to get up to, I’m still struggling to get physics up, but I spoke to my teacher today, said it is just a matter of practice with physics ... But my marks are fine. I’m getting high B’s, it will probably be an A by the time I write my finals for maths. Physics, my teacher said that as long as I study the way I’ve been, I can get a B. My English is an A, Geography A, History A” (I2; 55; 639–645) (Agency).

iii. Maree Career Matrix (MCM)

The *MCM* (Maree, 2017) was administered to assess and chart Aurora’s career interests and her confidence level to achieve success in these fields of interest. The *MCM* was also utilised to identify possible fields of study and associated careers before further examination (job analysis) to help meet her career needs.

Aurora’s *MCM* profile uncovered her highest preferred career categories and most preferred careers.

Table 4.6: Aurora’s highest preferred career categories and preferred careers (Maree, 2017)

CODE	CAREER CATEGORY	SPECIFIC CAREER
E	Word artistry	Writer, journalist, poet, translator, news reporter
R	Executive and management practice	Diplomat, judge, chairman of a board, corporate executive, company director, project manager
J	Social, community services and teaching	Social worker, teacher, public relations officer, lecturer

- ❖ *Word artistry:* Aurora specifically indicated the following careers within this career field as interests: writer, journalist, poet, translator and news reporter.
- ❖ *Executive and management practice:* Aurora identified the following careers within this field: diplomat, judge, chairman of a board, corporate executive, company director and projects manager.

- ❖ *Social, community services and teaching:* Aurora specified the following careers within this field as part of her interests: social worker, teacher, public relations officer and lecturer.

Aurora had already thought about her future career path a lot. She had a clear idea of what she would like to study, but initially thought that she would like to take a gap year first. She mentioned that she has family in Spain and that she would like to make contact with them and go work in Spain for a year. Figure 4.1 is an image from the final graph of Aurora's *MCM* profile:

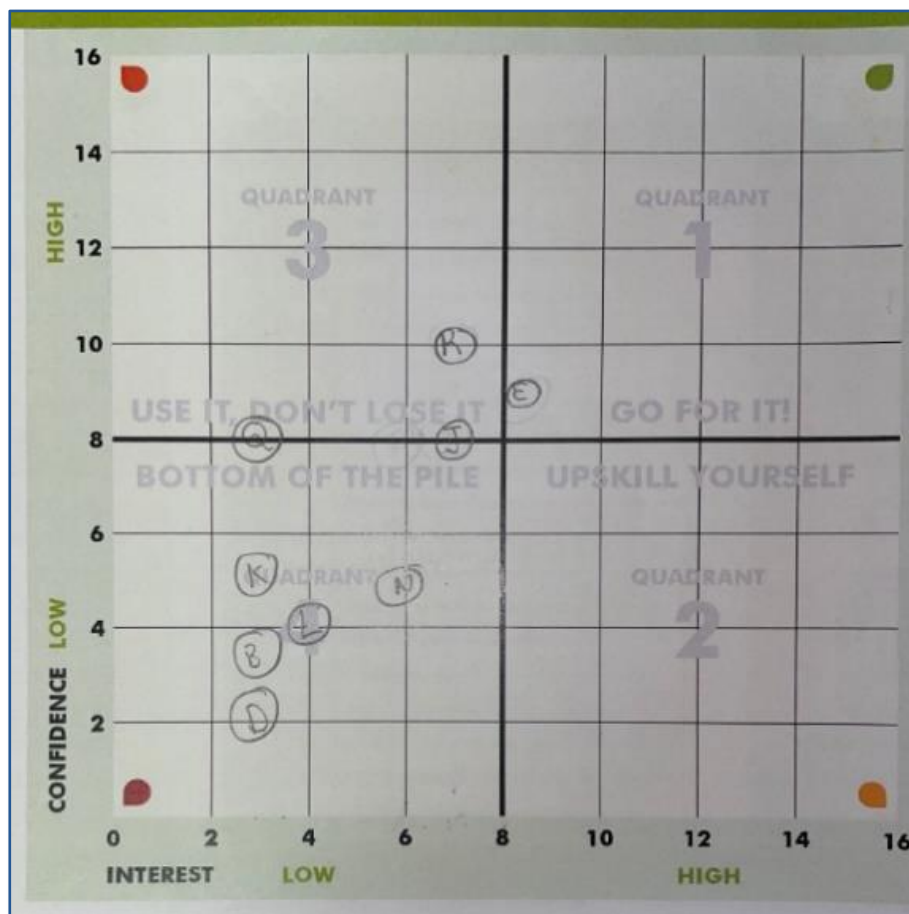


Figure 4.1: Aurora's career matrix

The *MCM* outcomes confirmed Aurora's feelings of where her strengths lie as well as her thoughts and ideas for possible further studies. She admits that her mother wanted her to become a writer, but she is certain she wants to study in the field of economics. She acknowledges her talent and love for writing, but she feels less convinced about a successful and prosperous career as a writer. Both her mother and her father have had an influence on her current career choice, and she has always

held their careers in high regard. These careers were further triangulated with those yielded by administration of the *CIP* in session 7.

iv. Conclusion for session 2

According to Ungar's (2011) social ecology of resilience, an individual's resilience is best measured by considering the social and physical ecologies surrounding the risk factors in adverse circumstances and not only a person's neurological, genetic and personality traits. Social factors act as protective barriers to risk factors. Although the researcher agrees with Ungar's notion, it is clear from the traumatic events discussed below that Aurora, for a very long time, had very little positive social influence that could act as protective factors. Her two close friends whom she met in primary school must have had a positive influence on her self-esteem. However, they did not keep contact for long and Aurora was left mostly to fend for herself.

According to Miller-Graff et al. (2016), Ungar's social ecology of resilience suggests that social support may have a positive influence on social competence. It was only after she was placed at the children's home that she really started to receive external support in terms of the other girls at the home and her social worker. Aurora's social worker also managed to make contact with her father; he agreed to pay for her studies after she had finished school. Over and above her personal resilience, these two social factors might just have been the stepping stones she needed to make her future hopes and plans realistic and attainable. Aurora never doubted her own cognitive abilities and she has had a sense of her future career for a long time. The current study shows evidence of Aurora's developing social competence since her placement at the children's home. The researcher agrees with Miller-Graff et al. (2016) that social support has a positive influence on social competence.

4.4.3 Session 3

4.4.3.1 Introduction

At the end of session 2, Aurora was asked to reflect on the themes and patterns in her life that she personally could identify by working through her lifeline. The whole of session 3 was spent discussing her theme of "abandonment and rejection". Despite this emotionally loaded theme, she was able to realise how much she has grown and learnt throughout her life. She gained a lot of insight through reflecting on her life.

Table 4.7: Summary of themes emerging from session 3

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
<p>Neglect</p>	<p>Effects of parental neglect</p>	<p>Suicide Anxiety Fear Anger Mistrust and isolation Rejection Self-doubt and low self-worth Blame and guilt Depression Powerlessness Physical health</p>
	<p>Negative external influences</p>	<p>Normalising negative feelings Mental health of mother Spirituality of mother Substance abuse of mother</p>
	<p>Traumatic events</p>	<p>Verbal and physical abuse Police and court Physical fights Physical health of mother Moving house</p>
<p>Resilience and self-construction</p>	<p>Agency</p>	
	<p>Adaptability Factors</p>	<p>Hope Giftedness Positive external influences Support Gratitude Insight Growth Positive themes Motivation Self-belief Growth Positive mental health of self</p>
<p>Vocational Personality</p>	<p>Future Aspirations</p>	<p>Areas of growth (CIP) Role models (CIP) Career choices (CIP) Life themes (CIP) Book title and chapters (CIP) Careers (MCM) Sense of purpose Career influences Personality profile (JPQ) Reflections and insight</p>

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
	Adaptability Factors	Hope Giftedness Positive external influences Support Gratitude Insight Growth Positive themes Motivation Self-belief Growth Positive mental health of self

i. Aurora’s theme of abandonment and rejection

Aurora was given an activity in which she had to label the main themes and patterns in her life based on her recollections on her lifeline. At the time of this activity, she was living with two of her friends during the 2020 Level 5 lockdown period and the session was conducted virtually. “Okay, cool. So the first one I did and it’s mainly because I’ve had to deal with it in life in general was the rejection and the abandonment and stuff ...” (I3; 4–5; 38) (Effects of parental neglect). Aurora has learnt that her whole experience of neglect by both her mother and her father has increased her feelings of abandonment when she is rejected: “So I, you know, my whole experience increased and exaggerated feelings of abandonment when I’m rejected ...” (I3; 5; 40) (Effects of parental neglect). She mentioned that, although she and her mother have had a volatile relationship, they did at least have a relationship at one stage. On the other hand, she and her father have never really had a relationship. The given activity helped her to reflect on this and the feelings it aroused within her: “... and then, I just put that down there, and then I just said from, I’m just sort of like take a moment, take a step back, look at like the old feelings, if that makes sense” (I3; 5; 40) (Adaptability factors). A valuable insight that Aurora gained from reflecting on her theme of abandonment and rejection was that, looking back, it was reasonable for her to feel what she was feeling. She said: “This objection of the feeling or this exaggeration or whatever comes from my own trauma, programming or whatever ...” (I3; 5; 46). “And, um, just step back and separate them before making a decision” (I3; 6; 48) (Adaptability factors). Aurora’s ability to become self-aware of what the triggers are to her feelings of rejection is valuable in terms of her adaptability and resilience. When she was asked about where and how this insight occurred, she reflected on her time in Tara (a psychiatric hospital).

At the time she was admitted to Tara, they did not have an adolescent programme. Her teachers were supposed to send her schoolwork for her to complete, but this unfortunately happened only intermittently. She was told to attend some group sessions with patients who were suffering from eating disorders. She stayed there for a period of three months, while she was waiting for her programme to start. In the meantime, she started to become a means of support for some of the other patients at the clinic. This, unfortunately, became a problem and the nurses complained about Aurora a lot. She mentioned that they accused her of shouting and screaming at them, which she said she never did. “For me. It was when I was back in Tara, it felt really bad because it was difficult ... I was there and they were supposed to be helping me. There, but they thought I was the problem and that, you know, I was creating problems and I was too difficult for them and so they decided to kick me out (Effects of parental neglect). My mom didn’t know how to take care of me. And it’s not like I had any other parental support system” (I3; 6-7; 50) (Negative external influence). Aurora’s time at Tara was another experience that added to her feelings and theme of rejection. She recalled: “I just always remember feeling so alone, everyone, all the nurses you know, like they were like passive aggressive ... I remember feeling so alone and abandoned ... like everything that is supposed to help me (inaudible) whatever just crumbled around me and I couldn’t handle that” (I3; 7; 52) (Negative external influence). When the nurses accused her of shouting and screaming at them, Aurora started to doubt herself: “It never happened and, you know, it gets to the point like, is this happening, is my memory okay, you know? What’s actually going on?” (I3; 8; 64) (Negative external influence). Aurora is a talented writer; she explained her feelings by saying: “Everything that is supposed to be isn’t, even the things you know that are (audible) and it just makes you feel like an illusion” (I3; 9; 68) (Negative external influence). In spite of all these feelings, Aurora was able to gain another perspective to make sense of her experience with the nurses at Tara. Her ability to reflect on situations to make sense of them speaks to her adaptability and resilience. “It was unfair on myself to expect anything more from her right, and then also on another level, you know, like people are people, and people, you know, we’ve all done stupid things (inaudible) and I’m just more than trying to understand that I feel it left me personally affected by it, if that makes sense?” (I3; 10; 72) (Adaptability factors). Aurora compared her understanding of the situation to parents who always try and act in the best interest of

their children, although they do not always know what is the best for their children, but rather what is the best for them.

Aurora had a similar realisation about her mother when she reflected on her lifeline. “The realisation is that with my mom, it wasn’t that she wasn’t trying to be selfish but at the end of the day (inaudible) ... she was acting out of what made her feel safe and ... she did that in a very toxic way. It wasn’t because she was spiteful or angry or any of those things, even though some of those actions did come from that place ... a lot of it just came from like not being able to deal with her own emotions and not being able to work through it and act from this place of panic and fear and ... acting out” (I3; 11; 78) (Adaptability factors). She further added: “it’s not personal, it’s just someone going through their own stuff” (I3; 12; 12) (Adaptability factors). During the discussion, I asked about Aurora’s inherent resilience and her ability to makes sense of challenging, and sometimes volatile, situations. She reflected back on how she used to feel and stated: “For the longest time, I was like a (inaudible) person. I was just always so self-pitying and suffering and I felt so dejected by the world and empty and hollow as a human being. I felt so awful, like I needed things so much. I hated feeling so alone and empty all the time” (I3; 12; 82) (Effects of parental neglect). Aurora’s experience in Soweto with her *Thwasa* was very traumatic for her but it also helped her gain valuable insight into herself: “I came to the option, I must just figure out how to get, you know, and it’s like you know it’s one of those situations of ‘how sh** was this’? It’s a quote from JK Rowling. The rock bottom is a solid foundation which I ... to build my life and then it’s true. Once you have seen the ugliest side of yourself, then it’s so much easier to understand why other people shouldn’t ...” (I3; 13; 84) (Adaptability factors). “Because if you are awful and mean and sad and lonely and you took it out on other people, it had nothing to do with them” (I3; 13; 88) (Adaptability factors).

ii. Aurora’s theme of trust

Another theme that Aurora identified and linked to her feelings of abandonment and rejection was trust. “For me, it’s just more about ... people are very complex and at the end of the day you can’t trust them; it’s not even like a negative outlook on the world or anything. It’s just ... very few people even in professions like nursing or whatever ... you’re out there and you’re looking out for you and you’re

looking after your immediate family, those are your priorities for most people ...” (I3; 9; 70) (Effects of parental neglect). She also mentioned: “I don’t easily make close relationships” (I3; 24; 174) (Effects of parental neglect). When she moved into the children’s home, trust was also a factor, but Aurora managed to set mental boundaries for herself. These boundaries seem to be a result of her insight gained through her personal growth and speak to her sense of agency. “I think definitely trust comes in now; it’s not a lack of trust to a certain degree, it’s more knowing that you don’t actually need to trust everyone with everything ...” (I3; 26; 188) (Adaptability factors). According to Gaucher et al. (2012), disclosing personal experiences to others does not depend only on how people feel about themselves, but also on how they feel about other people. This notion seems to reflect exactly how Aurora perceives trust. Aurora further said that “not everyone actually deserves your trust ...” (I3; 27; 196) (Adaptability factors). Aurora spoke about how important it is to have “quality” friendships and not only “quantity” (I3; 28; 198). She did not isolate herself from the other girls in the children’s home and at school; instead, she said certain friendships “give you motivation, but it doesn’t have to be deep ...” (I3; 29; 206) (Adaptability factors).

iii. Agency

According to Bandura (2006, p. 165), agency “involves not only the deliberative ability to make choices and action plans, but also the ability to construct appropriate courses of action and to motivate and regulate their execution”. Agency was identified as a theme which, although it was not identified and labelled by Aurora herself, emerged strongly during session 3. The sub-theme of agency is linked to the theme of Resilience, as shown in Table 4.4. Aurora was asked how she keeps herself in a positive state of mind and what she thinks her reasons are for being so resilient. Her answer was: “I try to keep myself in a positive space by letting myself have bad days because I found that when you just keeping digging a hole that you’re going to fall into, it’s going to get deeper and deeper. Sometimes you need to fall and feel like **** and cry a bit and eat too much chocolate and watch sad movies and then you move on with your day. You need to feel the emotions without acting on the basis of them” (I3; 30–31; 210) (Adaptability factors). Aurora has taught herself that, by allowing herself to feel emotions, she is better able to cope: “Feeling emotions and not trying to always be happy and positive and in a good space is what keeps you in a generally positive space” (I3; 31; 212) (Agency). Referring to her future plans to get

accepted into the University of Cape Town, Aurora also stated in session 2: “This is what I want to do; this is what I see myself doing ...” (I2; 63; 729) (Agency). A study conducted by Adler (2012) found that growth in the narrative theme of agency paved the way for improvement in mental health. This implies that individuals who start living their lives according to their own will and purpose will see improvements in their mental health. In many ways, Aurora’s narrative and her reflections on it contributed to her sense of agency, which inspired her future aspirations. The finding that Aurora’s lifeline narrative contributed to her personal growth, insight and adaptability supports Adler’s (2012) conclusions that a narrative identity has a significant relationship with psychological well-being.

v. Conclusion for session 3

According to Aurora, the process of constructing her lifeline was quite a difficult task.

Combing through the details to look for themes and patterns brought back some uncomfortable memories for her, but it also gave her a clearer picture of what she has been able to live through. “I realised that I was ... much happier and in a better place than I was before and I knew sort of what I was doing. I knew that on some level I had to be grateful for what I had been through because that was what it taught me to do. I didn’t really see it in the way I do now, if that makes sense? Like the image is fuller, better quality” (I3; 33–34; 228) (Adaptability factors). Initially, Aurora was asked to write down all the significant and memorable events on a timeline in order to construct a detailed picture of her lifeline. This initial activity evolved into a construction and reconstruction of her narrative (Savickas, 2015). During the first three sessions, Aurora was asked to reflect on the feelings, themes and patterns throughout her life. She was able to view her narrative differently through all the insight she had gained and could therefore reconstruct her narrative to a certain degree (Savickas, 2015). The finding that Aurora was able to make meaning and assign purpose through the construction and reconstruction of her narrative reveals that the current life-design-related intervention had promoted Aurora’s self-understanding.

Aurora’s construction of her lifeline and her subsequent reflections also provide a glimpse into the process of her self-construction. According to McAdams (2013), the psychological self evolves and is constructed over the lifespan. The first layer of this process of construction happens during childhood and is influenced by social roles and

performance traits. The child, according to McAdams (2013), can thus be seen a “social actor”. “That’s where it was for a while. So that’s sort of the family background. For me ... I was an average child, hit all the milestones. I was very intense. I had a lot of temper tantrums ... aggressive child, but I sort of grew out of it, you know, as children do. I went to a children’s psychologist and then I grew out of it. I never really grew out of those patterns with my mom ... My mom also had a lot of anger issues. When I was little, she would get super angry and then she would go into the garage and scream and scream and scream sometimes for like 30 minutes straight.” (I1; 9; 85–87) (Negative external influences). As children grow older, they start setting their own personal goals and act according to their own value system. Towards the end of childhood, they can be described as “motivated agents”. The ongoing cycle of parental neglect unfortunately motivated Aurora to try and take matters into her own hands: “So when my mom got really sick, I was acting out a lot and her relationship just got so toxic. It was bad because my mom was on heavy painkillers, heavy doses of opiates, chemo, sleeping pills ... she was on like some (inaudible) for her nervous pain and on top of that she would drink quite heavily. She would get drunk or out of it and then she would come and scream at me about something that I did ... sometimes 3 years ago and then I’d scream at her ... and we’d scream and scream the whole night and then I became very depressed. I had my first major depression when I was about 12 years old ... (Negative external influence) When I was about 13 years old, I had my first suicide attempt. I took a lot of morphine.” (Effects of parental neglect) (I1; 11–12; 110–116). The third layer of the process of constructing the psychological self happens during adolescence and emerging adulthood. Individuals then start constructing the “story of me, to provide adult life with broad purpose and a dynamic sense of temporal continuity” (McAdams, 2013, p. 272). This third layer is referred to as the “autobiographical author”. “You’re responsible for your own mental health. You are responsible for you own sense of self-esteem and self-worth and you can’t put it onto other people when you feel like it’s too heavy.” (I3; 15; 106) (Agency). Aurora’s construction of her psychological self is evident throughout her lifeline and can be linked to her current vocational personality. She referred to her future plans quite often during session 3. She has managed to grow into an emerging adult with clear goals and a vision for her future. Aurora mentioned that both her parents’ vocations have influenced her current career choice to some extent. Her mother did, however, try to convince her to rather become a writer. “We even had an argument about it when I

saw her recently. I want to do ... BCOM PPE – Politics, Philosophy Economics – because it feels comfortable for me. I like the fact that it's a multi-disciplinary degree and I want to do my master's in international political economy; it's a good bridge, right? She says no; she wants me to write. She wants me to be a writer because I am skilled and she doesn't want me to lose my talent; she did this and that in her life and I must learn from her mistakes. I'm at this point where I'm like 'mom, you're always talking that. I'm sure you know the quote from Freud'. The grace of (inaudible) child is to live the life of the parent and I'm like 'you're always quoting that and it feels really hypercritical', right?" (I3; 58–59; 686–690) (Agency).

Aurora's love for reading and her talent for writing are evident throughout all the sessions. She often refers to quotes from her favourite authors and she enjoys using metaphors. Although she is aware of her writing ability, she is determined to start on a career journey of her own choosing. "Yeah, that's why I chose it because I want to be able to move, to do things, to be impulsive safely because I know I have that nature. So, my idea is to create something, because if you think about who economists are ... it's a skill that is lacking globally, in most labour markets; A, B it's international, it's something that translated internationally" (I3; 61; 709). "This is what I want to do; this is what I see myself doing ..." (I3; 63; 729) (Agency). Aurora is stepping into her role as "autobiographical author" of her own life. She further stated in session 2 that: "I want to be my own person; just start afresh ... clean slate. Not have this weight ... of my family's problems and trauma and as well as her good things" (I2; 66; 755–759) (Adaptability factors). These statements become more relevant in the following sessions when Aurora's career choices were discussed in more detail.

4.4.4 Session 4: Aurora's representations of her feelings of anxiety

4.4.4.1 Introduction

After discussing Aurora's themes of abandonment and rejection in session 3, I asked her to try and visually represent the feelings she experienced associated with her themes. Aurora managed to represent the feelings of anxiety and emptiness in a painting (Figure 4.1) as well as in a poem. The activity required Aurora to emerge herself into her past and to explore the negative feelings she had experienced. It was a difficult activity for her to do: "Um, because okay, I'm feeling like the things we need to discuss are hard and I am a little bit scared because I did a painting that you asked

to do and then I did a piece of writing as well” (I4; 2; 22). “Uhm, the idea of having to go back and being, like, ‘this is what happened, that’s what happened’ is a little bit scary especially in terms of ... about (inaudible). For me, it’s been a thing of ... it feels like it isn’t just with my mom, but also with my dad. It’s with all the friendships I’ve had and it feels like a theme has repeated itself ... (I4; 21; 190) (Effects of parental neglect). Her feelings of anxiety and emptiness fall under the theme of neglect, which was merged with the sub-theme of Effects of parental neglect. Aurora had been suffering from anxiety since she was a young girl; later she started having panic attacks, which became debilitating for her. “And then I had a lot of trouble at school cause I suffered from depression and general anxiety and then I started having panic attacks” (I1; 13; 121). “I was about 23 kilograms overweight. I was just, I was having panic attacks at the point of passing out” (I1; 114; 125) (Effects of parental neglect).

Table 4.8: Themes emerging from session 4

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
Neglect	Effects of parental neglect	Suicide Anxiety Fear Anger Mistrust and isolation Rejection Self-doubt and low self-worth Blame and guilt Depression Powerlessness Physical health
	Negative external influences	Normalising negative feelings Mental health of mother Spirituality of mother Substance abuse of mother
	Traumatic events	Verbal and physical abuse Police and court Physical fights Physical health of mother Moving house

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
Resilience	Agency	
	Adaptability factors	Hope Giftedness Positive external influences Support Gratitude Insight Growth Positive themes Motivation Self-belief Growth Positive mental health of self

i. Painting

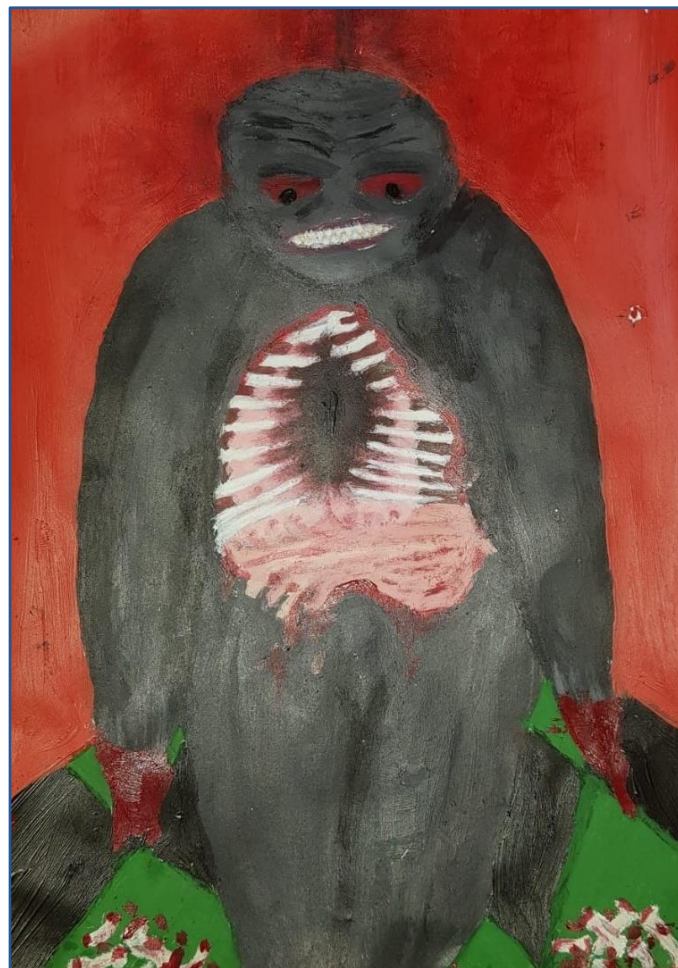


Figure 4.2: Aurora’s painting of “Anxiety”

A meta-analysis study on five forms of maltreatment indicated that, although there is scant research on the topic, neglect was significantly associated with

depressive disorders (Gardner et al., 2019). Aurora mentioned that she realised she was depressed from the age of 12; thereafter, she suffered from anxiety and panic attacks. Aurora's experience regarding her mental health is consistent with the finding by Gardner et al. (2019). Aurora was able to capture the intensity of the feelings she experienced growing up as a child. "Yeah, so for me that main thing was like what does it, like physically, like showing that feeling, like what does it really feel like, you know when you are in a space where you feel so abandoned and lost" (I4; 4–5; 61). "And for me you feel like you've been hollowed out to an extent from where it, sort of started, and you know broken and bloody and then you feel like ... on the one side a bit of a creature ... that nobody really ... like the grey mass, hollow grey mass. I guess that is how I would put it cause, like you know, you feel you can almost feel it. Your heartbeat quickens, everything like sucks in, your breath gets shortened, it's like there isn't a lot in your chest. Like it's been hollowed out; you can almost feel the physical pain in your heart, you know? And um, you can, you feel ugly and discarded and unwanted and like everything's totally in a (inaudible)" (I4; 5; 65–67) (Effects of parental neglect). The painting depicts the physical feeling of her chest feeling hollowed out in a very graphical way. The figure's ribs are lying on the floor and the hands are cut off and bloody. The eyes are red and the teeth are sharp, making it look like a "creature". Aurora's painting depicts the emptiness, fear and anxiety she experienced throughout her life. In addition, she remembers doubting herself and wondering whether her feelings are her own fault. "There is part of you that says 'that's kind of like you did it to yourself, right?' You always feel like 'oh, maybe it's my fault'. That kind of thing; you feel powerless" (I4; 6; 73) (Negative external influences). Aurora said that although she had come to terms with her life, she realised that her feelings were still real: "I mean it's not, it's not the kind of thing ... feelings don't just disappear, history doesn't go away, you know? ... It's still something that happened, it's still something that is really real. Just because you've come to terms with it doesn't mean it goes away" (I4; 6; 75) (Effects of parental neglect). She mentioned that she doesn't often experience anxiety as intensely as she used to: "I mean, not really. Not like I had, going to court and everything; some moments like that where my mom ... after my last panel meeting, my mom just flipped out and she was so mean and nasty and just (inaudible) the whole time and I couldn't handle it" (I4; 7; 81) (Effects of parental neglect). "I would go through like days and days and weeks and weeks feeling like this before, you know ... empty and hollow and ugly. Not ugly in a physical way ... kind of

like, I don't even know how to describe it, like dirty in a way" (I4; 7; 83–84) (Effects of parental neglect). A study by Levin and Liu (2021) found that children with a history of childhood adversity were at a higher risk of developing depression and anxiety when exposed to life stressors. It is evident from Aurora's recollections that she did indeed experience various life stressors which contributed to her mental health difficulties. My research supports the link between the experience of childhood adversity and poor mental health when exposed to life stressors.

There was a stage in her life where her feelings seemed normal to her: "When I think about it, when I was 15 or 16 years old, argh, it was just, I remember the intensity of that feeling where you feel it so much ... it feels more normal than having a good time" (I4; 8; 86) (Negative external influences). Creating the painting also helped Aurora to see her situation from another perspective. "Um, doing the painting taught me of gratitude ... kind of like a realisation of 'I'm not in this space anymore'" (I4; 8; 90) (Adaptability factors). Although she mentioned that she was scared to discuss her feelings in the beginning of the session, she realised that she was able to emerge herself into the activity and experience the process of facing her emotions, but that she was also able to complete the activity and to move forward: "It formed an impression, yes, but ... before, it would have been something I wouldn't be able to stop thinking about and I would have been ... consumed my day and the next day even ... like to the point ... like did I do it right? I've probably done something wrong, you know?" (I4; 9; 94–98) (Adaptability factors). Aurora had gained insight into her own personal growth, which also speaks to her adaptability and resilience. As a motivated agent, Aurora was able to reflect back on her experiences, identify major themes and patterns, and realise her own strength and sense of agency. "Having a support system for the first time, like a proper support system, has also made me realise how much my support actually relies on myself. When you never have something there, everyone else has it, it's so much easier to externalise a lot of the blame ... and a lot of responsibility be like, oh no, you know ... I'm acting out and it's easy to justify it ... But to sort of be in a space where I do have support and say 'okay' ... you also learn and realise just how much you support yourself at the same time" (I4; 12; 114) (Adaptability factors). The additional support that she had been receiving from the children's home and from her grandmother has become a protective barrier, something she never had before she was placed at the home. "And I feel that if I do go through tough times, a

lot of the times if I would go and speak to my mom about it and then we'd have a fight about it later and she would make that part of it, like ... now with my grandmother; I feel like I have someone, so I can go and talk to about this ..." (I4; 13; 132–134).

Although Aurora kept in contact with her two best friends, she realised that she struggles to make new friends and that this is an area of growth for her: "For me, it would be a skill that I would like ... learning to trust new people and coming to a place where I know how much to open up at first about myself and that kind of stuff because I do feel a lot of the time like I don't really let anyone know about myself. I don't know my personal history" (I4; 18; 170).

ii. Poem: "Under Nothing"

Aurora's poem was inspired by her reflection on the themes and patterns she identified in her lifeline. She broke the poem up line by line to explain the meaning behind it to me. Specific lines from the poem have been indicated by using braces, for example { }, within the highlighted quotations.

The poem can be found in Appendix 1. The first line of her poem reads: "a displaced wholeness" (I4; 22; 198). She explains that it refers to a feeling of being "displaced" or "kicked out": "{like a displaced wholeness} um, so for me that kind of idea is like when you feel, you feel displaced, you feel out of place because you feel kicked out, right? But it's contradictory because it's this intensity of feeling and you feel hollow but it's also like this awful thing fills you. So, you are sort of out of place but you're whole and you are, you know, like you are this full being but it's not where it's supposed to be ..." (I4; 22; 198). She associates the next four lines to "the collision of Orpheus", which refers to the theory of how the moon was formed. "Um, you've watched the collision of Orpheus? It gives the {dissolution under the weight of nothingness, you crack, they crack, you'll crack, nothing wrecks more than nothing}. So that's more about the different factors, you know, going to Tara, having to go to Soweto, having different therapists and my mom's opinion and people's opinion, you know, how everyone had this sort of opinion about me and about what I should be doing and how they all were like trying to fix me ..." (I4; 22–23; 200–202) (Traumatic events). The aforementioned lines give an indication of the sense of powerlessness that she was feeling with her mother as well as with the institutions and people who she felt were supposed to help her.

In her poem, Aurora used the imagery of birds flying away to refer to people who were supposed to help her and who, like birds that fly away in the winter, merely leave when things get too difficult to handle. It also reflects insight into how she perceives these people and their actions. “Um, and then {it’s pregnant silence and a hollow sound as the birds fly past and in the end, they all fly south for the winter alone we bear the northern chill}. It’s like, in general, when I speak about the birds, it’s more about the sort of the people who are around and who are supposed to be helping and are supposed to be about you ... Um, and they sort of just don’t; they just ... when it gets cold, when it gets difficult, they just fly south. Sorry, just give me a second. Um, and you know a pregnant silence, a hollow sound is about like how often in these situations people will say things and say things and say things; it’s more what they don’t say that has meaning or that really reveals how they feel, you know?” (I4; 23–24; 206–208) (Effects of parental neglect). She reflected back on how she felt when she was in Tara: “I remember the warden when I was at Tara; she was like I’m the problem in the room and then everyone there would be like these long silences in-between ... the nurses talking and psychiatrists and psychologists and everything and I just remember feeling how heavy they were” (I4; 24; 210) (Negative external influences). The feelings were so intense for Aurora that she states in the next few lines: “{starvation empties us, bones weakened, heart broken} or is it bones broken heart weakened? {In the dizzying flurry of the snow storm I cannot tell}. So you have all these intense feelings and you can tell it hurts but you don’t really know what’s hurting, where it hurts ... or why it’s hurting. While all of this is happening because it’s just so overwhelming and intense and you can’t separate A from B from C from D. It almost just blurs together into this icky feeling inside you.” (I4; 25–26; 212–214) (Effects of parental neglect). Aurora had suffered from depression for a long time and never really understood the intensity of the feelings she was experiencing nor did she have any guidance on how to deal with it. In the next two lines, she portrays this: “And then it’s {the Northern Guides never warned us of the coming winter as she angrily...} So that’s more like about how people tell you, no one ever really tells you what depression is like. No one ever tells you that’s um, you know what that hollow empty feeling is like. How to get through it, how to survive it, how to make your way out of it” (I4; 25; 216). “And you sort of feel like you ... like there’s something missing, like someone should have told you because you just don’t know what to do ...” (I4; 26; 222) (Effects of parental neglect). During the discussion, I mentioned that the term

“depression” might also be used too loosely in everyday life and that some individuals might not understand the true meaning behind a diagnosis of depression. Aurora agreed and explained: “[yeah], there’s no weight to it; there’s no understanding. I mean to a certain degree there are degrees of depression. There are some people whom I know who are depressed and there are other people who are a lot more depressed ...” (I4; 27; 230) (Negative external influences). Her poem continues as she explains the next few lines. “Some of these people don’t have enough of an understanding of it, you know? Then it says {as she angrily flicked her blue-black tail over the already desolate land}. So that’s just sort of about how you know things are really **** and then it gets worse. And it’s angry and violent in the way that it happens and then {calling all the empty creatures, feast on those left behind, if only we had known the sweet whispering of the wind, raised cannibals from the dead, brought the first ice of the new year}. It’s more about how you know [sigh] ... it almost feels like you’re being fed on by everyone’s emotions and everyone’s egos. And that you are sort of a ploy between it all. And you can often feel like there are all these empty things in the world. There are all these empty feelings. There are all these hollow spaces and they all just come and feast on you to fill themselves and then you sort of start to become that in a way, and you start to become one of the hollow spaces. Then those left behind are quite literally those ones left behind” (I4; 27; 232) (Effects of parental neglect). The explanation above and the repetition of words give a very detailed description of the emptiness Aurora experienced while she felt depressed and abandoned.

Aurora had explained before how she felt rejected and misunderstood by the very people who were supposed to support her. In the next few lines, Aurora conveys her feeling of mistrust in people. “And then {brought the first ice of the new year, surely we would have resolve to move? In this wish I know resolutions are substitutions for actions and so my words once again ring empty like the black frosty night}. So that’s more about the new year and resolutions; part of that it’s constantly about saying, ‘okay, this is the year for me, this is the year, I’m going to do that, things are going to change.’ Then resolutions are just substitutions for actions, seeing myself and also seeing the people around me say they’re going to change over and over again...” (I4; 28; 242–244). “Empty promises, not just to me, like empty promises I made to myself. Empty promises other people made to me and empty promises other people made to themselves as well” (I4; 29; 248). “Then and so {once again my words ring empty like

the black frosty night} and that's just you know, how the empty feeling of being alone in the cold and lost in the dark. And so {together we sat alone accompanied by our varied miseries that we used to stuff our hollow chests}. So that's sort of about like you can be in a group of people and you still feel alone one and also in my relationship with my mom. We would be together but were so, so alone all the time and we were both so miserable" (I4; 29–30; 250–252) (Effects of parental neglect). Aurora explains that the misery she was feeling was the same thing that kept her going, as if feeling that way was the reason she existed, although it was a very toxic way to live.

"Um, and then it says {the berries brought by the frost had a poisonous kiss deadly to human lips. A few in our camp dared to try only to slink back under the cover of night.}" (I4; 31; 260). Aurora explains how "stupid" she thinks the decisions were that she had made while feeling so depressed. This is an example of her ability to reflect and reconstruct her story (Savickas, 2015). Looking back at her situation now, Aurora is able to see how her depression influenced her thoughts and behaviour in a very negative way. "So, a lot of the things, the stupid decisions that you make in that depressed state you know, sort of the fruits of your depression of that abandonment of that emptiness are awful, awful things ..." (I4; 29; 260) (Adaptability factors). "{Forced to return them from whence they [thoughts] came through sapling flame to vicious fire and then once again the night was quiet}. It's sort of two things about, you know, those things happen, you have those awful thoughts, you do those awful things coming out of that space. And then you have to push them back, push them back, push then back ..." (I4; 31; 262) (Effects of parental neglect). Aurora furthermore explains that thinking about awful thoughts kept her occupied – it made her feel less lonely: "And then {once again the night was quiet, silence ringing out in our hollow cores}. So, you know also like that constant stimulation, almost this feeling of I always have to be entertained, I always have to be doing something even if it is just thinking awful thoughts because to just simply be alone with myself is so painful ..." (I4; 31–33; 266). "And then onto {in answer to prayers we slowly became the hollow men, the stuffed men of ill repute and little fame}. So that's also like a bit of allegory to one of my favourite poems by one of my favourite poets and it's called the Hollow Men. In the first line, we are the hollow men, the stuffed men and it's kind of about how people become empty and they have sort of these false ... how they live in a world of such little depth and they want to avoid it on some level because it's easier..." (I4; 32; 274)

(Effects of parental neglect). The lines above are a reflection of Aurora's mistrust in people due to her experience of abandonment. It also showed insight into the way she perceived and understood people from her perspective. "And then {of ill repute and little fame although most know our name}. It's kind of like nobody really knows about your individual circumstance but it's something that we all share" (14; 33; 278) (Adaptability factors). Another insight that Aurora gained through her life experiences is that feelings of being completely lonely and isolated in a person's circumstances seems to be a universal phenomenon.

The last verse of Aurora's poem starts with: "{when the sweet song birds abandoned the chilling south they were shocked to find our misshapen forms still lying in the springtime dew.} So you know people are ... you know things are looking better, or you know they come back or they reappear in your life or they pretend or whatever. They essentially just reappear in your life and they were still shocked to find this shape and form lying in the spring time dew. Even when I say outside circumstances change and maybe you want to do better inside, that's sort of shocking to a lot of people so ..." (14 ;33-34; 284) (Effects of parental neglect). Aurora uses the imagery of birds again to illustrate how people moved into and out of her life, but that they never really understood the intensity of what she was feeling. "{and then their songs arrested and the muttering began each sphere with its own complaint, almost quaint.} It's almost like, once again, it's like theses mutters, these whispers about how you are the problem because now your circumstances have changed so the thing that they decided was the problem has changed so you're supposed to be doing better. Then it's just a repetition of the first stanza because it's kind of like a cycle. It all happens again, you know?" (14; 34; 286) (Effects of parental neglect). It seems that this is especially true for Aurora as she mentions the "cycle" of this theme in her life. Despite all their moving around and having to adapt to new environments, her inner world still felt empty and hollow.

iii. Conclusion

Both Aurora's painting and her poem provided valuable insight into the feelings of anxiety and abandonment that she had experienced growing up. Aurora was able to illustrate her feelings through her creativity and talent. An underlying feeling that can be observed through her reflections of session 3 is that Aurora felt she was a problem

that needed fixing. When asked about this, Aurora responded: “Yeah, the whole lot of the time, especially because it started when my mom got sick and everyone had their idea of ‘she must go to boarding school; she must do this; she must do that’. It got a bit annoying to just be the problem in the room. And the thing is, it wasn’t. It always felt like there weren’t a lot of people who were genuinely just going to be like ‘How do you feel? What do you need?’ It was more like what 2c can I put in to make me feel like I’ve done something about this situation?” (I4; 34–35; 288–29). “And going to Tara and seeing the psychologist a lot ... seeing psychiatrists especially when having formal sessions with my mom ... you start to feel like you sit with all these people and they talk about your problems and they talk about you like you are responsible for the ... like you don’t have a say in it. It isn’t your experience ... Especially in Tara, it felt like everyone was acting like I didn’t know how I felt. It was incredibly annoying ... We’ve taken care of you for so long, so we know what’s best for you. This is our professional opinion. No one was like, you know, ‘What’s going on with you?’ It was and it sort of felt like I was just more not like a human; you start to feel more like a problem” (I4; 36–37; 300–306) (Negative external influences). This again speaks to Aurora’s sense of powerlessness and her feelings of being empty and hollow. The people who were put in charge of helping her had let her down: “They’re asking you, ‘What is your suffering? What are your feelings? What do ...’ What can I say? It’s not that it’s coming from such a selfish ... just feels so hollow and empty” (I4; 37; 312) (Negative external influences). She felt especially powerless when it came to her mother. Aurora knew that her mother was very successful and she refers to her as a “formidable person”. “And the worst part is you always know at the end of the day that that person will be patting themselves on the back, being selfless like ... no, you did **** all. You just ... stoked your ego ... and then you moved on with your day like it doesn’t mean anything. You weren’t altruistic at all ... you didn’t help me ... So, I felt like there was a lot of that throughout my childhood, especially because my mom had always been, she still is, sort of quite a formidable person. If you fight with her, she can destroy you. If she wants something done, it’ll get done” (I4; 37–38; 321–322) (Negative external influences). In this last statement, Aurora’s anger is evident. She was angry with her mother and she was angry with the staff at Tara. During this stage of her life, Aurora did not feel that she had a voice. She was at the mercy of her mother and other institutions who all tried to “fix” her. When asked whether she felt that she now had her voice back, Aurora answered: “[Yeah], no I definitely do. When I was at Tara, my mom had the first

meeting with the social worker there and instantly when I walked into this meeting, the psychiatrist came to me before the programme had officially started. He was like ‘your mother is meeting with the social worker; I think we should join in’. I was like ‘okay’. My mom just sat there and just **** on me and **** on me and **** on me ... And they took notes and they were so completely absorbed in everything she was saying ... that they didn’t even register my reactions. They didn’t ... you know ... The difference between that and then sitting in the panel meeting or even sitting in the court room with my mom or [Aunty Maxie] and [Aunty Paula] and having them like the whole time checking in on me ... making sure I’m fine ... telling her you can’t say that about your child, we’re not going to let you, you know, all that ... or even, okay, that is in the past now, we need to focus on the future, just to warn my mother that this is not what this conversation is about. Even though they were not in any way confrontational or anything meant a lot to me because it was like, okay, they actually care about how I feel in this situation, you know?” (14; 39–40; 332–347) (Adaptability factors). The social workers who took over Aurora’s case when she was kept at Walter Sisulu Secure Care were the first people to take an interest in her personal well-being and contributed to her developing sense of agency. Reflecting back, Aurora stated that she did not feel angry with the people at Tara anymore: “I don’t even blame them for it; I’m not angry with them for it but I just became so disillusioned with the institution ... especially cases like that, it sort of made me feel that the institutions that are supposed to support you outside of the family, outside of the family setting ... they themselves are so broken ...” (14; 45; 384–388) (Adaptability factors). Although looking back at her experience in Tara was quite a painful and frustrating experience, Aurora gained valuable insight through her reflections, which has contributed to her resilience and to her developing psychological self. The following quotation is an example of how Aurora’s psychological self had been developing into that of autobiographical author (McAdams, 2013): “And realising the fallibility of humanity is very different from accepting it and for the longest time I’ve realised it but I just couldn’t accept it” (14; 47; 408) (Agency).

4.4.5 Session 5

4.4.5.1 Introduction

Aurora was asked to reflect on the previous session and to try and shift her focus from the negative themes in her life by identifying positive themes or outcomes linked to her narrative.

Table 4.9: Themes emerging from session 5

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
Resilience and Self-Construction	Agency	
	Adaptability Factors	Hope Giftedness Positive external influences Support Gratitude Insight Growth Positive themes Motivation Self-belief Growth Positive mental health of self
Neglect	Effects of parental neglect	Suicide Anxiety Fear Anger Mistrust and isolation Rejection Self-doubt and low self-worth Blame and guilt Depression Powerlessness Physical health

i. Aurora’s positive themes from her narrative

Aurora identified two of her “coping mechanisms” as positive themes. It is important to keep in mind that this activity was done during the Level 5 COVID-19 lockdown period in 2020. It is thus understandable that her focus at the time was on her ability to cope. Aurora was allowed to stay with a friend for a few weeks during the lockdown. They had another friend who also joined them. While she was there, she had access to the internet, which enabled her to carry on with online schooling. This was important as she did not have this access at the children’s home. She spoke with great respect of her friend’s parents, especially the father. Although the three friends

enjoyed each other's company, it was hard at times as they were not allowed to go anywhere due to lockdown regulations. All three girls had to focus on their schoolwork while the parents also had to work from home. Coping with the situation was thus very important for everyone in the house. Aurora found that sticking to a routine, baking and cleaning helped her to cope. This again speaks to her ability to adapt to new circumstances. "Some of them are weird, like I think one of the things that has become, or two things that have become my stress coping mechanisms have mainly been baking, which is a productive stress coping mechanism, generally speaking. And then ... cleaning, which is relatively new but I feel like it's a better stress coping mechanism than a lot of what I had before, which would basically be eat and sleep" (15; 4; 43) (Adaptability factors).

This seemed to be an important growth factor for Aurora as she reflected on how she used to cope with stress: "And I know if I hadn't learnt what I needed to learn then I wouldn't be able to do that. I would sort of be freaking out ... feeling like it's the end of the world ... I would have like almost no motivation and I wouldn't be getting anything done, I'd be sitting around watching TV. So that's definitely a positive thing for me" (15; 6; 59–63) (Adaptability factors).

ii. Recurring theme of rejection

The Level 5 lockdown period stirred up some old feelings for Aurora. The COVID-19 pandemic was still a new concept and people were fearful of the unknown. The daily news on television, radio and social media was flooded with stories of loss. Although session 5 was meant to be a reflection on positive themes only, the isolation and fear brought about by the pandemic made Aurora reflect on her own family and the lack of family cohesion. "But, for me, one thing that I have not really struggled with but has been on my mind quite a bit is like with all of this happening, I have a lot of family members that I don't have any contact with and I just worry a bit" (15; 9; 75). I feel weird to have all of this going on and not be able to ... check on them" (15; 9; 77–81) (Effects of parental neglect).

She mentioned that she would like to make contact with some of her family members. She also mentioned her half-brother for the first time: "Even though I would like to have contact with him [her brother], it's very clear that it's not, whether it's not valuable to him or he just doesn't want it to interfere with his relationship with our dad

... because their relationship was quite complicated from what I heard” (I5; 13; 115) (Effects of parental neglect). Although there was a part of her that wanted to reach out to her family, she was worried about possible negative responses from them: “No, I don’t think that I would lose anything, but there’s a part of me that feels resistant mainly because ... if I reach out to them, or, if it’s a negative response ...” (I5; 18; 157) (Effects of parental neglect). Aurora’s fear of reaching out to her family may be contributed to the long-term effects of neglect. She is fearful of “a negative response” which might lead to more rejection and anxiety. According to Erozkan (2016), individuals who experienced abuse, including emotional abuse and emotional neglect, were more likely to report insecure forms of attachment. These include fearful, preoccupied and dismissive attachment styles. Although attachment style was not the focus of this study, Aurora’s fear of a possible negative response relates to a fearful attachment style. De Bruin (2016) also mentioned poor attachment style as a negative effect of neglect. My research therefore supports the link between emotional neglect and insecure attachment styles. In another study which investigated the processes involved in mental health problems specifically with regard to rejection sensitivity, it was found that the internalisation of rejection experiences in childhood may be the basis for rejection sensitivity in adults (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2016). These results may explain why Aurora would assume a possible negative response from her family, even though there is no substantial evidence that they will have a negative response to her. My research furthermore supports the notion that Aurora’s rejection sensitivity is a long-term negative effect of rejection experiences in childhood.

iii. Resilience

It is evident throughout Aurora’s lifeline that she has been able to adapt in a number of volatile situations. Her mental health was negatively affected by her adversity for the longest time. However, she managed to bounce back from all three her suicide attempts, as well as the traumatic experiences discussed earlier in Chapter 4. Furthermore, she was able to go back to school and finish her Grade 11 year, even though she had missed ten months of school prior to that. Not only did she successfully navigate through both her Grade 11 and Grade 12 years, she also managed to achieve and maintain good grades and got accepted to the university of her choice. Aurora has managed to gain valuable insight through her reflections. Despite the negative long-terms effects of neglect, such as mistrust, anxiety, fear of rejection and depression (De

Bruin, 2016), she has managed to develop her emotional intelligence to a degree that she has sympathy and understanding for the perpetrators of neglect in her life.

iv. Conclusion

Although the goal for session 5 was for Aurora to identify positive themes or outcomes in her life, it is understandable, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, that she was preoccupied by concerns for her family. According to Savickas (2015), the counselling relationship for a life-design intervention is an egalitarian one. It is important to acknowledge that clients remain the experts of their life stories and that counsellors are the experts of the life-designing processes. It was thus important for the researcher to respect and acknowledge the client’s process during this session and to not force her own goal onto the client.

4.4.6 Session 6:⁴ Feedback on JPQ and reflections on collages for portfolio

4.4.6.1 Introduction

Session 6 had three goals, namely administering the *JPQ*, reflecting on Aurora’s ability to form and maintain interpersonal relationships and to reflect on the progress of her collages for her portfolio. The feedback and discussion on the *JPQ* were done only in session 7.

Table 4.10: Themes emerging from session 6

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
Neglect	Effects of parental neglect	Suicide Anxiety Fear Anger Mistrust and Isolation Rejection Self-doubt and low self-worth Blame and guilt Depression Powerlessness Physical health
	Negative external influences	Normalising negative feelings Mental health of mother Spirituality of mother Substance abuse of mother

⁴ An additional session was conducted after session 5 to administer *Career Interest Profile (CIP)* and to provide Aurora with materials to start working on her collages for her portfolio. The outcomes of this administrative session are discussed in session 7 (see pp. 98–100).

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
	Traumatic events	Verbal and physical abuse Police and court Physical fights Physical health of mother Moving house
Resilience and Self-Construction	Agency	
	Adaptability Factors	Hope Giftedness Positive external influences Support Gratitude Insight Growth Positive themes Motivation Self-belief Growth Positive mental health of self
Vocational Personality	Future Aspirations	Areas of growth (<i>CIP</i>) Role models (<i>CIP</i>) Career choices (<i>CIP</i>) Life themes (<i>CIP</i>) Book title and chapters (<i>CIP</i>) Careers (<i>MCM</i>) Sense of purpose Career Influences Personality profile (<i>JPQ</i>) Reflections and insight
	Adaptability Factors	Hope Giftedness Positive external influences Support Gratitude Insight Growth Positive themes Motivation Self-belief Growth Positive mental health of self

i. Interpersonal relationships

Aurora mentioned on multiple occasions that she does not make friends easily. Since the *JPQ* is a measure of personality type, the session was used to talk about the way she forms and maintains interpersonal relationships. The researcher asked her what she thought the reasons were for this. Aurora replied: “Sometimes, it’s a confidence thing but also in general. I’m not a people person; I don’t really like people

... much. I prefer my own company ... generally speaking. There are only a very few people where I don't feel drained ... when I'm around them. So part of it, that part of it is a trust thing ...” (I6; 1–2;10–16) (Effects of parental neglect). She also mentioned that when her friends were talking about boys and going out on dates, the intensity of their feelings did not make sense to her (I6; 2; 20). The *JPQ* measures the traits of introversion and extraversion. Her feeling of being “drained” by people can be linked to a characteristic of introversion. She also added that she is able to: “act extraverted but that I'm sort of anti-social” (I6; 3; 26) (Vocational personality). She furthermore referred to her future “work” as a place where she would be able to function around people as it would be more professional types of relationships, compared to choosing to go out and being around people socially. “It's also one of those situations where in a work space I know I would be able to deal with that but in my personal life, I would spend a lot of time alone” (I6; 5; 46) (Vocational personality).

It was important to explore Aurora's ideas about how she forms friendships, as she was busy applying for university admission. If accepted, Aurora would be away from the children's home, her grandmother and her two best friends. Her inclination to distrust people could have a negative effect on her experience as a varsity student. Her ability to adapt would be a protective factor, but her lack of trust could be considered a risk factor in terms of forming meaningful interpersonal relationships. “The general not trusting people does play a role because I feel like ... I don't know. I have generally an idea in life most of the time people ... maybe not in that situation with that (inaudible), but people aren't what they present themselves to be ... a lot of the time ... so I think general mistrust would play a role” (I6; 8; 68–70) (Effects of parental neglect). Aurora was asked whether she thought she would be able to open herself up to opportunities to connect with new people. She was asked to think of personal characteristics that she could use to help her. She mentioned that she has a “silly humour” and that she likes making use of “bad puns” and silly jokes. “When I was young, I watched those old Monty Python films and stuff. I really like that sort of thing. I make bad puns with my friends all the time you ... I do have a sort of silly humour” (I6; 13; 90) (Adaptability factors). This could act as a protective factor for her as her sense of humour can help her to start making new connections. The discussion, as an intervention, was aimed at identifying ways in which she could make new friends and therefore work through her fear of rejection and fear of being hurt. She mentioned that

she had a friend who opened up to her about his life and that they had a good relationship. She realised, however, that she had never told him anything about her own life. She kept herself emotionally safe by not allowing him to get too close or getting involved in her life details (I6; 10–11; 76–78). Aurora said that she would try to meet new people but that it might be difficult as the university is a lot bigger than her high school. She already felt people were “anonymous” at her school due to the size of the school. “If that makes sense? So, it’s harder to make connections and talk to people and to get to know people” (I6; 14; 100) (Effects of parental neglect). The researcher tried to prompt Aurora into thinking of possible ways in which she could make new connections with other students: “... but I’d probably try to get, you know, involved ... in like community work that kind of stuff ... to make friends, meet people, interests. I know that in the beginning of the year, especially for the first years, they have a whole lot of mixers and stuff” (I6; 14; 100–104) (Adaptability factors).

A self-esteem card game (the Self-Esteem Card Game) is a solution-focused counselling tool that was used toward the end of the session (WholeHearted School Counseling, 2017). The game was designed to explore the self and to build self-esteem by means of questions and scenarios that had to be solved. The game was played to end the session on a positive note by creating awareness of Aurora’s own strengths as well as her resources. One of the questions was: Who are the adults that have your back? Aurora responded by saying: “My gran has my back ... and the aunties in the house; even though there’s a lot of girls and stuff, if stuff really gets to it, then they will be there for me. I’d say you to some extent. If I need advice or I’m in a situation, I feel like if I reached out to you, you’d definitely help. Um ... my best friend’s parents. They’re the sort of people who will, like, if they know someone who’s in trouble then they’re going to help them” (I6; 28; 243) (Adaptability factors). The people she mentioned were all protective resources in her life and added to her resilience as an emerging adult. One rather difficult question she had to answer was: What is something you wish to tell your family? “I don’t know. The only thing I would want to tell my mom would probably be ... well, actually, I would probably include her as well. Just my experience over the last couple of years without feeling like they were judging me or anything, you know? Just being able to tell them what’s happened because I think my mom doesn’t see my side of the story at all and my family doesn’t know, you know? So including my aunt, my mother’s sister, I haven’t really seen her and I don’t

know, I've always felt like whatever sins my mom does get carried over to me in her eyes. So, it would just to be able to explain what life was like the last couple of years" (I6; 30; 255) (Adaptability factors). Her response speaks to her sense of agency that she has developed over the years as well as to her personal growth. Her response does not include themes of anger or resentment, but rather to a need to give her family a healthy perspective on her life.

ii. Planning for the future

The social worker overseeing Aurora's case managed to contact her father to discuss Aurora's plans for applying to university. Aurora needed some documents to be signed, which offered the opportunity for her to discuss the matter with her father. He was willing to be added as the person responsible for the account. "And then I emailed my dad and I ... [when I was] filling in an application, because I told him about the rush with the ID documents and stuff this weekend and I was just 'I want to know if you feel comfortable if I fill your information in for the guardian and fee payer details'. He was like ... 'No, I'd be totally comfortable with that', all that kind of stuff. 'What sort of information do you need?' Then I sent him the list and then he sent them to me and then ... yeah" (I6; 19–20; 158–160) (Vocational personality). Aurora's father had also made arrangements with her to pay money into her grandmother's account when she left the children's home to go live with her before university started. Aurora was thus receiving financial support from her father at a crucial transition in her life.

iii. Conclusion

Interpersonal relationships are an important part of being human and the ability to form and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships are important for the world of work. The long-term consequences of childhood neglect have proved to evoke a range of emotions affecting interpersonal relationships. According to Leary (2015), rejection may lead to jealousy, hurt feelings, loneliness, guilt and sadness. It is evident throughout Aurora's lifeline that she did indeed experience all these emotions. My research therefore confirms Leary's findings that many negative emotions are a result of neglect, especially when they feel, as in Aurora's case, that others do not sufficiently value their relationship. In an article about how childhood emotional neglect affects your adult work life, it was found that neglect may have positive and negative consequences (Webb, 2017). Advantages of experiencing childhood emotional

neglect as an adult in the workplace include working hard and expecting little in return, self-containment, and being a responsible and reliable employee. Negative outcomes of childhood emotional neglect in the workplace for Aurora could include inaccurate self-appraisal, difficulty asking for things and weak communication skills (PsychCentral, 2017). Healthy interpersonal relationships require good communication skills, especially in the volatile world of work. Aurora was not encouraged to negotiate difficult situations with her mother and their constant moving made it difficult for her to build relationships with her peers. Aurora might thus find it difficult to solve problem situations that require good interpersonal skills. My research agrees that Aurora’s experience of childhood neglect may have both advantages and disadvantages for her in her workplace. However, the researcher also agrees with Ungar (2016) that protective factors in Aurora’s environment may lead to increased resilience in all spheres of her life.

4.4.7 Session 7: Reflection on *JPQ* and *CIP*

4.4.7.1 Introduction

The final session was focused on providing feedback on the results of the *JPQ* and the *CIP*. After the session, Aurora was also asked to provide an overall reflection of her experience of the research process.

Table 4.11: Themes emerging from session 7 for the *JPQ*

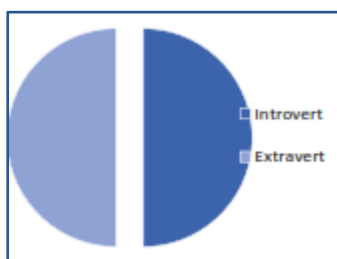
THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
Vocational Personality	Future Aspirations	Areas of growth (<i>CIP</i>) Role models (<i>CIP</i>) Career choices (<i>CIP</i>) Life themes (<i>CIP</i>) Book title and chapters (<i>CIP</i>) Careers (<i>MCM</i>) Sense of purpose Career Influences Personality profile (<i>JPQ</i>) Reflections and insight

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
	Adaptability Factors	Hope Giftedness Positive external influences Support Gratitude Insight Growth Positive themes Motivation Self-belief Growth Positive mental health of self

i. Feedback on Jung Personality Questionnaire (JPQ)

a. Introversion/Extraversion (I/E)

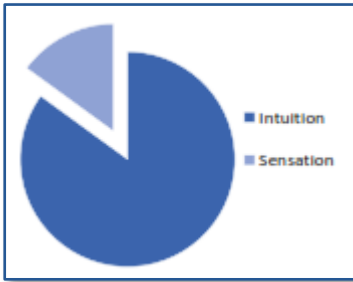
The two traits of Introversion/Extraversion refer to our preferences of where to focus our attention and from where we get our energy. Every person has both an extraverted and an introverted side, with one usually being more dominant than the other (Du Toit, 1983).



The two traits of introversion and extraversion weighted equally for Aurora. Aurora agrees that she is able to be social but that she also enjoys time by herself. She mentioned that this might sometimes be difficult for people to understand: “I think definitely especially when it comes to introversion or extraversion the split down the middle sometimes can make it difficult for people to understand. Most people lean one way or the other, like you said, so a lot of the time if I don’t feel like going out they’ll be like ‘Oh no, but you had so much fun last time ... you really enjoyed it’ and that kind of stuff. I’m like ‘not today’, you know?” (17; 8; 54–56) (Vocational personality).

b. Intuition/Sensation (N/S)

The perception functions of Intuition/Sensation refer to the way we take in information. We all use both sensing and intuition in our lives, but to different degrees of effectiveness and with different levels of comfort (Du Toit, 1983).



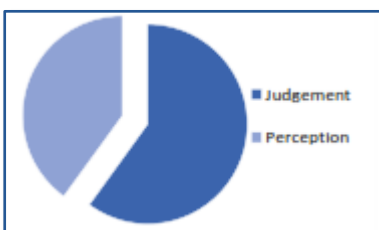
Aurora measured higher for Intuition. Those with a preference for Intuition pay less attention to detail and evidence and are more concerned to absorb the general pattern and to read between the lines. They enjoy dealing with the hypothetical and are less concerned about the precise realities of the immediate situation (Jung, 1971).

Aurora's response to her result was: "Yeah ... appearances can be very deceptive. That's the main thing. When it comes to sensory functions, obviously it's important. If you can see someone's emotional, you can adjust your tone. On another level, it's also obviously just one layer ... of a person and if you can understand that person, you can understand their patterns, then there's not really much point in if you can see this person's faking it or if you can see on the opposite end where someone looks alright but you know that they're struggling ..." (I7; 9–10; 66–68) (Vocational personality).

c. *Feeling/Thinking (F/T)*

The judgement functions of Feeling/Thinking refer to the way we evaluate information or make judgements. Aurora measured higher on Thinking, which means that she prefers applying objective and logical criteria to make decisions (Du Toit, 1983). Aurora remembers doing a similar test in her Grade 9 year and mentioned that she tested higher on Feeling: "Did one of these ... tests, slightly different but it was a young personality test for in Grade 9 before we chose subjects. Then my feeling was a lot ... and it's one of those things over time ... I've had to learn how to do it because if at the end of the day you just make decisions purely based on thinking, you start to become psychopathic" (I7; 10; 74–78) (Vocational personality).

d. *Judgement/Perception (J/P)*



The functions of Judgement and Perception help us to understand how we deal with the outer world. Aurora measured slightly higher in the function of Judgement. People who prefer this mental process for receiving information about the world like to plan and organise, as they order and regulate events (Du Toit, 1983). Judging does not mean "judgemental". Aurora thus has a slight preference for order, organisation and thinking sequentially. She also prefers to have things planned and settled.

Aurora’s final profile was I/E; T; N; J. According to the *JPQ* Assessment Manual, this profile typically correlates well with many gifted people. They are quick, ingenious and resourceful. They like to tackle problems and are intelligent and friendly (Du Toit, 1983). Aurora’s first choice of career is that of an international trade economist, which fits her personality profile as measured by the *JPQ*.

Table 4.12: Themes emerging from session 7 for the CIP

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
Neglect	Effects of parental neglect	Suicide Anxiety Fear Anger Mistrust and isolation Rejection Self-doubt and low self-worth Blame and guilt Depression Powerlessness Physical health
Resilience and Self-Construction	Agency	
	Adaptability Factors	Hope Giftedness Positive external influences Support Gratitude Insight Growth Positive themes Motivation Self-belief Growth Positive mental health of self
Vocational Personality	Future Aspirations	Areas of growth (<i>CIP</i>) Role models (<i>CIP</i>) Career choices (<i>CIP</i>) Life themes (<i>CIP</i>) Book title and chapters (<i>CIP</i>) Careers (<i>MCM</i>) Sense of purpose Career influences Personality profile (<i>JPQ</i>) Reflections and insight

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	MERGED CODES
	Adaptability Factors	Hope Giftedness Positive external influences Support Gratitude Insight Growth Positive themes Motivation Self-belief Growth Positive mental health of self

ii. Feedback on *Career Interest Profile (CIP)*

The *CIP* (Maree, 2017) was administered to obtain qualitative data relating to Aurora’s life story. The *CIP* aids in identifying important life themes and patterns. The *CIP* furthermore provided Aurora the opportunity to discuss her career interests and to relate them to her life story. This section will focus on the most pertinent themes emerging from the *CIP*.

a) Strengths and areas of development

The *CIP* was administered after the construction and reconstruction of Aurora’s lifeline. The timing of the administration of the *CIP* may thus have contributed to Aurora’s insight into her strengths and areas of growth. Aurora identified her seven strengths as resilience, to think quickly on her feet, persuasion, creative problem-solving, good with words, oration, and organisation (17; 17; 139–137) (Adaptability factors). These strengths correlate with her personality profile as measured by the *JPQ*. Her seven areas of growth were identified as maintaining balance in her lifestyle; letting go of anger and resentment; trusting others; building, maintaining and improving family relationships; tendency to catastrophise; procrastination; and becoming sloppy and lazy when she is in a bad space (Effects of parental neglect). With regard to anger and resentment, Aurora said: “The anger and resentment I mean like (sigh) ... I don’t know, I think on some level part of me feels like I don’t know how to express it. Part of me feels like this anger when certain situations will flare it up will always come up but my ability to deal with that flare up in the moment is getting better. In terms of the long term, I don’t really know; like I said, it’s too of a short period of time” (17; 18–19; 148)

(Effects of parental neglect). These areas of development could be related to the long-term negative effects of neglect (De Bruin, 2016).

b) Role Models

Aurora's role models reflect themes of strength, challenges, principles and determination. Her diverse choice of role models also reflects her love for reading and writing, poetry and the field of economics. Her role models include Stephen Hawking, Angela Merkel, Hermione (from Harry Potter), Amartya Sen and Jo (from Little Women) (I7; 37; 303) (Agency). One common theme that all her role models have is a great sense of agency. They furthermore have all overcome obstacles in their lives and careers. One of her significant role models at the time of this session was her friend's father. She stayed with them during the Level 5 lockdown period in 2020. "His daughter suffers from really bad anxiety and she has, um, episodes and psychosomatic seizures and stuff that are really, really bad. His other daughter is really struggling with depression; his wife also struggles with depression. He has a daughter who has anger issues and everything and he still has a really demanding job but he's always there to pick up ... He's always, you know, for me. I think that's what's really important because even sometimes where he struggles to communicate how he may feel about his situation he always shows up at the end of the day and it's always like 'okay, we'll find a way'. For me, that is a very remarkable trait especially under pressure" (I7; 40; 310–312) (Adaptability factors). At this point in her life, her friend's father was a positive external influence and someone she looked up to – for always helping out his family, no matter how difficult the circumstances.

c) Successes and non-successes ("failures")

Aurora identified her three successes as: overcoming her depression and suicidality; escaping the toxic relationship she had with her mother; and learning to adapt to new environments (I7; 50; 375) (Adaptability factors). Her three non-successes were her recurring suicide attempts; how she ended a close friendship when she left her first high school; and the way she ended her Grade 7 year (I7; 51; 383) (Effects of parental neglect). Although she identified these events as failures, Aurora did not regret any of them: "No, definitely no regrets" (I7; 52; 386) (Adaptability factors).

d) Career categories

The *CIP* consists of 19 career categories. Of these, Aurora had to identify her five most preferred career categories. She furthermore had to write down her most preferred careers and least preferred careers. In this section, the focus was on her most preferred choices. Her top five choices for most preferred careers were international trade economist, diplomat, economic advisor, developmental economist and environmental economist (17; 63; 471) (Vocational personality). Aurora mentioned that the *CIP* helped to clarify her doubts about her own abilities. “Um, I think the main thing that’s been confirmed is that I would always worry that I was choosing something that may burn me out, if that makes sense? That I was being overly ambitious in terms of my ability. But going through and talking about it and then just the personality test as well have shown me ... I can do it and this doesn’t need to be a big ... obviously balance is always important, yeah” (17; 16–17; 130) (Adaptability factors). According to Di Fabio and Maree (2013b), the *CIP* has been proven to increase self-efficacy in career decision-making as well as more precise life- and work-related goals. My research confirms that the *CIP* does indeed lead to more confident career decision-making.

iii. Conclusion

Aurora sent an electronic copy of her reflection for session 7. In conclusion, the researcher would like to share her words: “In this session we talked about the results the *CIP* and personality test. It was interesting or affirming to see how closely they correlated with how I have come to understand myself through this process. They made me more confident in my suitability for my chosen career.” Table 4.1 displays and summarises the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the intervention, based on a comparison of the findings after the analysis of pre-intervention and post-intervention data. The information presented is based on summaries of the most prevalent descriptions received from the participant and also relevance to the themes. The findings demonstrate meaningful progress during the course of the intervention in terms of, for instance, growth with regard to resilience, adaptability and early career development facets.

4.5 SUMMARY OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Table 4.13 presents a summary of the themes, sub-themes and sub-sub-themes based on the discussion above.

Table 4.13:⁵ Summary of pre- and post-intervention themes and sub-themes

THEME 1: NEGLECT	
Pre-Intervention Themes	Post-Intervention Themes
Pre-Intervention Status	Theme
Aurora had some sense of belonging at the children’s home but still experienced intense feelings of neglect as she constructed her lifeline.	A renewed perspective upon reflection of her narrative and a sense of acceptance and gratitude of her experiences.
Sub-Theme: Effects of Parental Neglect	
Poor mental health, emotional isolation from peers, anxiety.	Improved mental health, less anxious and opening up to friends.
Sub-Theme: Negative External Influences	
Her mother, as well as the institutions she had to endure, contributed to her poor mental health, which included suicide attempts, depression, mistrust and anxiety.	Aurora’s placement at the children’s home removed her from these external influences; thus, her mental health improved. The life-design intervention further assisted her in making sense of those experiences and to gain insight and personal growth.
Sub-Theme: Traumatic Events	
Exposure to several traumatic events caused feelings of anxiety, guilt, self-blame and regret.	Less intense feelings of anxiety and an understanding that she does not have to feel guilty or blame herself for certain events.

⁵ Pre-intervention status and information were obtained through data gleaned during the first three sessions especially (during which baseline information was obtained). Throughout the seven interview sessions and during the administration of the *CIP* as well as in her written reflections, Aurora repeatedly reflected on her emotions and actions and lived experiences before the intervention in addition to how she had experienced and had made progress during the intervention. Information about the participant obtained was thus conceptualised through coding to obtain an operational idea of the pre-themes and sub-themes, especially those relating to constructs of resilience and career adaptability. The information about pre-themes and sub-themes was consequently summarised and juxtaposed with post-themes and post-subthemes as per Table 4.13 (above).

THEME 2: RESILIENCE AND SELF-CONSTRUCTION	
Pre-Intervention Themes	Post-Intervention Themes
Pre-Intervention Status	Theme
An innate resilience despite adequate social support until she was placed at the children's home. An intense realisation of all the risk factors in her life even after placement.	A realisation of her innate resilience and what she was able to endure. A realisation of her risk factors and protective factors and resources.
Sub-Theme: Agency	
Aurora seemed to have an innate sense of agency before the intervention; however, it was clouded with her own self-doubt.	A stronger belief in her own agency and confidence in her ability to steer her life in the direction she chooses.
Sub-Theme: Adaptability Factors	
Aurora has always been willing to adapt despite adverse conditions, but the lack of parental support caused emotional strain, which made adapting more difficult for her. She was not always aware of her own strength.	Renewed insight into her own ability to adapt as well as better coping skills, which enhances her adaptability.
THEME 3: VOCATIONAL PERSONALITY	
Pre-Intervention Themes	Post-Intervention Themes
Pre-Intervention Status	Theme
A confident idea of the career she would like to embark on but low confidence in her ability to pursue her choice.	A confirmation of her career choice and confidence in her ability to pursue her choice. Despite no confirmation of from where the finances would be sponsored, she started applying at universities.
Sub-Theme: Future Aspirations	
Aurora was initially considering a gap year in Spain to experience the world and to determine whether her career choice is what she really wants.	She felt confident enough in her career choice to start enrolling in universities and was accepted at the university of her choice.
Sub-Theme: Adaptability Factors	
Some of the effects of parental neglect included low self-esteem, poor interpersonal relationships, rejection sensitivity and mistrust. These factors have a negative influence on adaptability, especially in the workplace.	Aurora had more confidence in her interpersonal relationships, which afforded her the opportunity to trust others. She has gained insight, which led to higher emotional intelligence. She managed to finish matric with good grades, despite missing ten months of school. The above factors all contribute positively to her career adaptability.

4.6 SUMMARY

Chapter 4 focused on presenting the findings and interpretations of my research study. Each session was discussed in detail to present the emerging themes and was then compared to existing literature. The themes and sub-themes emerging from each session were identified through the use of Aurora's life narrative, the *MCM*, the *JPQ* and *CIP*, as well as from her own creative representations. As stated in the beginning of this chapter, I attempted to objectively relate my research outcomes to previous literature through the following four-fold lens:

- (1) Do my findings concur with previous findings?
- (2) Which of my findings do not agree with previous findings?
- (3) Which of my findings have never been reported before?
- (4) Which specific trends emerged from my findings?

It should be stated, though, that despite my extensive attempts and the competent assistance of the Faculty of Education's academic information specialist associated with the Department of Educational Psychology, I struggled a great deal to find a sufficient number of studies that relate to the idiosyncratic situation in which my participant found herself. This was the case mainly because very few studies have addressed the research questions that I raised in my research. The main findings of my study as well as the primary research question, together with the three secondary, exploratory research questions, as presented in Chapter 1, are reviewed in Chapter 5 in accordance with the findings that have emerged from my study. Recommendations for further study and the limitations of the current research are also outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 concludes my research investigation. A brief summary of each chapter is provided, and the findings of the study as they relate to the primary and secondary research questions are discussed. Furthermore, possible limitations are identified and recommendations are made for further study.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

5.2.1 Chapter 1: Introduction and orientation

The first chapter provided an overview of the study, followed by a discussion on parental neglect. The rationale and purpose of the study were explained, whereafter the primary and secondary research questions were given. Important concepts were clarified, and the conceptual framework on which the study was based was presented. The paradigmatic perspective was discussed next, followed by the methodological approach. The chapter ended by discussing the ethical considerations related to the study.

5.2.2 Chapter 2: Literature study

Chapter 2 provided an in-depth review of the literature pertaining to the purpose and rationale of my study. A discussion on career theories followed, ending with the focus on career construction and life design. Current research on career development in South Africa was discussed next, as well as the social ecological resilience theory. Hope theory also formed part of the contextual framework, as was thus briefly discussed next. The concept of emerging adulthood was followed by a discussion on the conceptual framework.

5.2.3 Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

The research design and methodology were discussed in Chapter 3, with focus on the research design, selection of the participant, data construction and

documentation, followed by data analysis and interpretations. The chapter ended with a brief overview of the relevant ethical considerations.

5.2.4 Chapter 4: Results and discussion of findings

The results of the study and a discussion of the findings were discussed in Chapter 4. This was done by first looking at the data analysis methods, which included the emerging themes, sub-themes and sub-sub-themes. Each of the seven sessions was discussed in detail and related to current literature.

5.3 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In my study, the primary research question was: *“What influence does an intervention based on life-design principles have on an emerging adult who experienced neglect and who has reached the stage of embarking on a career?”*

The study focused on the enhancement of resilience and career adaptability of an emerging adult who experienced parental neglect. The research was based on a constructivist/interpretive paradigm by using both qualitative and, to a lesser degree, quantitative data to answer the question. Postmodern techniques in the form of creative expression were also used. Three secondary research questions were outlined in Chapter 1. These questions will be discussed next in light of the data obtained through my research, whereafter a discussion on the primary research question is given (see above).

5.3.1 Secondary research questions

5.3.1.1 Exploratory questions

- a) *How does an emerging adult experiencing parental neglect experience life design counselling facilitated through the intervention used in my study?*

The answer to this question is best described in the participant’s own words as she wrote them in her retrospective reflection: “I experienced meaningful personal growth through this process as it helped me to gain a new and more nuanced perspective of myself and the trauma I have experienced. Through this process I was forced to reflect on experiences which I would otherwise repress and try to simply ‘move on’ from. The resilience and strength I had to develop in order to get through this experience were reinforced and I came to appreciate them for the first time. This

also led me to realise that these painful experiences had forged admirable qualities in me, which will help me in my adult life going forward” (R3; 1; 5–12). Her answer is evidenced in her reflections on the reconstruction of her lifeline, her *CIP* results and the emerging patterns of resilience and self-construction throughout her narrative. Aurora experienced the life-design intervention as both emotional and enriching. She mentioned that working through her life story with the aid of a lifeline was harder than just merely talking about it, as she had done so many times before in the psychiatric hospitals and with the social workers. She stated that: “I found the way in which I had to reflect on some of my best and worst feelings enriching. I like that I had to look at my life as a whole and through the process my perspective on it has changed. I find myself more able to accept and face the uglier parts as part of me and my life’s story. I noticed this change in perspective from when I first made my rough lifeline to the collage/portfolio process (R1; 3; 52–57). Using her own creativity to represent her feelings through both her poem and painting was a valuable experience for Aurora and led to her sharing personal information with a friend, which was out of her comfort zone. “Both the writing and painting were very cathartic and after completing the activity, I felt a sense of release. I even worked up the courage to show the poem to my best friend [name withheld], which is something I would normally never do” (R2; 2; 35–38). A few of our sessions were conducted during 2020 amid hard lockdown regulations due to COVID 19. The pandemic opened up the need for Aurora to reach out to her paternal family. Although she was initially scared, she did reach out to them later on: “We began with some positive stuff to lighten the process up a bit. Our last two sessions were quite heavy. We spent most of the time talking about reaching out to my paternal family. It scares me, but I’m more confident now. I can’t let myself back down (as I have often done before). The important thing is – NO EXPECTATIONS!!!!!! *Editor’s Note – I did back out 😞 but a few months later, my dad got in contact with me*” (R2; 3; 47–52). Aurora was able to gain insight and personal growth throughout the process. The *CIP* results were also affirming to her. “It was interesting or affirming to see how closely they correlated with how I have come to understand myself through this process. They made me more confident in my suitability for my chosen career” (R2; 4; 68–67).

It is evident from Aurora’s reflections that an emerging adult experiencing parental neglect found the process of a life-design intervention enriching and valuable.

A life story filled with sadness, depression, trauma and rejection was constructed, re-constructed and co-constructed into a story of hope and optimism for the future.

b) How does life-design counselling influence the career adaptability of the participant?

As stated in section 1.5.2., Hartung (2009) relates career adaptability to “career development tasks, role transitions and strategies for dealing with the challenge of how to work through developmental tasks and negotiate crossroads and role transitions” (p. 6). My working definition of career adaptability implies that an emerging adult who experienced parental neglect must be able to adapt to the ever-changing world of work (cognitively as well as emotionally). I took my cue from Guichard (2016), who stated that life-design counselling enhances the career adaptability of individuals that are obliged to deal with dramatic changes and adversity in their career-lives. As recommended by Maree (2016a), as part of this process, I helped the participant to revisit painful experiences and feelings from the past to help her make sense of what had happened and how these experiences might enhance her career adaptability. In essence, I helped her to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct Aurora’s life story as part of a life-design intervention.

Aurora’s experience of parental neglect had a negative influence on her mental health, self-esteem, confidence and interpersonal relationships, to name but a few. As mentioned in section 1.1, there is evidence that children’s social and emotional skills, particularly perseverance, sociability and self-esteem, are among the most important drivers of lifetime success (“Skills for Social Progress: The Power of Social and Emotional Skills | en | OECD”, 2015). An innovative approach to career counselling was needed to, firstly, explore the negative emotional effects of parental neglect that Aurora experienced, and, secondly, to use her life story to create meaning and purpose for her future. A purely quantitative approach would not have provided the rich and subjective data collected from her narrative.

Career construction theory regards adaptability as crucial psychosocial resources necessary for adapting in the workplace (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Savickas and Porfeli (2012) furthermore distinguish four dimensions of career adaptability, namely career concern, career control, career curiosity and career confidence. Each of these dimensions will be explained below as they apply to Aurora.

❖ Career Concern

According to Maree (2019), career concern refers to individuals' involvement in shaping their future careers. Aurora has always had an idea of the direction she would like to study in for her future career. She worked hard to obtain good grades for university exemption. This implies that Aurora had hope for a better future, despite her uncertainties about her abilities and lack of financial support to pursue her aspirations. The intervention proved to enhance Aurora's career confidence in such a way that she was able to make a decision to start studying after her Grade 12 year, instead of doing a gap year, and gave her the motivation to start applying at universities. She also reached out to her father, who agreed to pay for her studies. She did all her own research and, with the help of her social worker, obtained the necessary documentation required for university application. This behaviour is evidence of her involvement in her future career and thus shows a positive shift in terms of her career adaptability.

❖ Career Control

Career control refers to people's responsibility in taking control over their careers, current or future (Maree, 2012). Aurora's theme of Agency is evidence of her sense of responsibility in terms of both her mental health and her future career. "You can't wiggle your way out of making, of taking responsibility for your own happiness (I3; 16; 114). You're responsible for your own mental health. You are responsible for you own sense of self-esteem and self-worth and you can't put it onto other people when you feel like it's too heavy" (I3; 15; 106). She also stated: "You've got to support yourself not even like on a financial, very basic means and all, but on a higher, you know, your self-actualisation your emotional support, your sense of your security" (I3; 15; 102). These statements reflect the autobiographicity on her psychological self (McAdams, 2013). Aurora displayed both determination and self-efficacy in her thinking and behaviour. Although she always had a sense of agency, the life-design intervention was an enhancing factor. Aurora clearly demonstrated a sense of career control as she was standing on the brink of writing her own story and taking full responsibility for it.

❖ Career Curiosity

Aurora was excited about the *JPQ*, *MCM* and *CIP*. As mentioned previously, she already had a good idea of what she would like to do as a career, but she was lacking confidence. Aurora's curiosity about her career was reported in her reflection after the administration of the *CIP* in: "We did a career/interest type test. I actually really enjoyed the activity, especially the chapters of your life part. It was long, but it was worth it. Its assessment of my passion, interests and skills was well balanced (in my uneducated opinion). I am eager to find out what the results are" (R2; 3; 55–59). Her curiosity in economics is further evidenced in the choice of her role models specified in her *CIP*, specifically Amartia Sen, one of the first economists to win a Nobel prize. Her number one choice of career is an international trade economist. Her curiosity is further evidenced by the following statement: "I think my main goal would be to sort of re-evaluate a lot of trade relationships and rather than look at processed goods in development and underdeveloping economies; I feel like a lot of issues coming. You look at things like resources (inaudible), debt relief to countries ... if you think about it and you don't take history into account, it makes sense they should be doing really well. They've got the resources required for the industries that are doing well at the moment, right? ... You have to buy the processed goods and that way... all sorts of developing countries ... economics ... and rewrite these relationships where (inaudible) countries just keep talking" (I7; 65–66; 4–96) (Future aspirations). Aurora's words reflect an enhanced sense of career curiosity in regard to her chosen career as well as a renewed excitement about the test results confirming her choice.

❖ Career Confidence

Aurora's bolstered sense of confidence, after the life-design intervention, is evident in the following statements: "In this session, we talked about the results of the *CIP* and personality tests. It was interesting/affirming to see how closely they correlated with how I have come to understand myself through this process. They made me more confident in my suitability for my chosen career" (R2; 4; 68–70). "The tests I took (*MCM*, *CIP* and the *JPQ*) reaffirmed the career choice I had already made. They also allowed me to see that partly due to the qualities I had gained from my traumatic experiences, I could do almost anything I wanted to do. This was a great confidence boost and it assured me that I am going in the right direction as I move into my adult life" (R3; 2; 24–26).

According to Maree (2019), career confidence relates to individuals' ability to solve problems relating to their careers. Aurora has not embarked on her career yet, but her narratives provide evidence of a bolstered sense of ability and increased determination to pursue her career. Furthermore, she has shown remarkable insight and personal growth, which could positively contribute to her ability to problem solve in her future career: "Yeah I think definitely my sense of perspective has changed a lot especially being in the house, meeting all the girls, hearing what everyone's gone through, not in terms of 'oh my gosh, hers was so much worse than mine' but just sort of the path of it, if that makes sense ... helps you put things into perspective and also to see a lot of people who have been rejected have those same issues and watching them play out it's almost like ..." (17; 23–24; 180–186) (Adaptability factors).

Career adaptability has also been linked to hope theory. According to Snyder (2002, p. 249), hope is defined as "the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways". It is evident from the four career adaptability dimensions discussed above that Aurora has set clear goals for herself and has developed a stronger sense of agency. She has taken the necessary steps to secure her future plans in order to achieve her envisioned goals. Aurora evidently has hope for her future and is determined to create her own success and happiness.

c) How does life-design counselling influence the resilience of the participant?

Ungar's (2011) theory of social ecology for resilience is focused on four principles, namely: decentrality, complexity, atypicality and cultural relativity. The influence of this life-design intervention on Aurora's resilience will be explained briefly in terms of each principle as evidence of the enhancement of her resilience.

❖ **Decentrality**

According to Ungar (2011), a supportive environment is necessary for a child's innate resilience to flourish. The principle of decentrality requires a shift from a person's innate abilities to that of environmental resources. Although Aurora had experienced many negative effects of parental neglect, and even attempted to commit suicide three times, she proved that she was able to "bounce back" throughout various trying times in her life. Up until the point when she was placed in the children's home,

Aurora had to rely on herself to survive. The children's home provided an environmental change that proved to be a protective factor for her. She had been living in the children's home for approximately eight months at the time when the life-design intervention was introduced to her.

The intervention served as yet another environmental resource and provided Aurora with the opportunity to reflect on her life story, which made her realise how far she had come. The collaborative approach allowed her to be the author of her future narrative. Aurora stated in her retrospective reflection: "Through this process, I experienced a great deal of personal growth and found new internal and external resources. I found the collaborative approach refreshingly supportive and the lifeline exercise a productive way to reflect on the most formative experiences in my life" (R3; 1; 2–5). The life-design intervention thus managed to create a shift from Aurora's internal resilience to a realisation of the availability of environmental resources that helped her to gain insight, to grow emotionally and to flourish.

❖ **Complexity**

The social ecological theory of resilience is based on the premise that environmental influences are strong predictors and enhancers of resilience. Ungar (2011) stated that children's personalities are influenced by their social interactions, personal experiences and environmental changes. Aurora had experienced many environmental changes, which forced her to learn adaptability and resilience, as well as many traumatic personal experiences. Together, these factors contributed to her poor mental health and overall perception of life and people. However, her placement into the children's home and her involvement in this life-design intervention were a positive environmental change which allowed her to gain a different, more positive sense of self. "I went over my lifeline and fixed a few errors in chronology, then I added all the lessons I learnt from each event. It was a fulfilling exercise and less stressful than the original one. It reaffirmed my gratitude for every one of those experiences – the good, the bad and the ugly. Each one of them has made me who I am today and, for the first time in many years, I think I like that person" (R2; 2; 22–27). This study confirms the positive effects of environmental changes in the enhancement of resilience.

❖ **Atypicality**

The principle of atypicality refers to the personal contexts and experiences of individuals. Ungar (2011) states that in terms of individual contexts, one cannot decide that a child's actions are either right or wrong. The actions should be seen in the wider context of the child's circumstances. Aurora was often judged by her peers for not attending school or for displaying aggressive behaviour. Aurora herself mentioned that it is hard for her to look back at her life now, the space she was in, and the decisions she made: "I can't even really imagine being so preoccupied by death and dying and just wanting to cease and ... looking back on that I feel, it feels like an alien version of me almost" (I3; 5; 65). Her following reflection is evidence of her understanding of the atypicality of her experiences and the insight she has gained, which enables the fostering of her resilience: "I like the lifeline exercise, because I had to send my mind back and chronologically recap all the most formative experiences in my life – the good and the bad. This allowed me to have an almost objective perspective on my life and feel proud of myself for making it through so many difficult experiences. I felt affirmed and I realised that even though I didn't always cope with situations in the best way, I did the best I could at the time and I shouldn't resent myself for the toxic ways in which I reacted to situations" (R3; 1; 12–18).

❖ Cultural Relativity

Aurora's cultural context was, according to the data, challenged only when she was forced to take part in the *Thwasa*. She was removed from her white, middleclass environment and taken to a black, rural setting with beliefs, traditions and rituals that she did not know or understand: "So, I didn't want to go. I was scared and I had recently come out of Tara. On the day it happened, the day I was supposed to go, I sat there, I was like I don't feel comfortable. I don't know this woman. I don't know this place. I don't know this culture. I don't know if I believe in any of this ... I'm not comfortable with this" (I1; 33; 346) (Traumatic events). The experience was very traumatic for her and she eventually ran away to live with her grandmother. Even though Aurora grew up in an environment where resources were available, they were not "useable" (Ungar, 2011, p. 10). Her mother often withheld her from her grandmother, and her schools were not aware of her situation. It was only after she had been put into the secure care facility that the social workers got involved. They made themselves available to her and placed her in the children's home. At this point, her resources were available and accessible. She furthermore shared the home with other girls from different cultural

backgrounds. Due to her *Thwasa* training, she was able to understand and relate to her housemates. The lack of accessibility to her resources growing up, her traumatic experiences with the *Thwasa*, her stay at the children's home and the life-design intervention all contributed to both her adaptability and resilience.

5.3.2 Primary research question

In my case study, I aimed to address the primary research question: “*What influence does an intervention based on life-design principles have on an emerging adult who experienced neglect and who has reached the stage of embarking on a career?*”

Life-design counselling is based on the principle that clients' stories are used to describe their uniqueness, as opposed to relying only on subjective test scores to determine career trajectories (Savickas, 2015). The collaborative process is used to discover meaning and purpose through the construction, deconstruction, reconstruction and co-construction of the client's narrative. In this study, a life-design intervention was used to help Aurora turn her pain, caused by parental neglect, into hope (Maree, 2013) and to enhance her career adaptability and resilience. Aurora, as an emerging adult, was purposely selected as the participant for this study as she survived parental neglect and was on the verge of making important life and career decisions.

As indicated above, the life-design intervention proved to enhance Aurora's resilience and career adaptability. The process of exploring her life story for themes and patterns helped Aurora to gain new insight and perspective into the meaning of her experiences. Her innate resilience was strengthened through reflections of her narrative. She realised how much she had endured. The process enabled her to shift her thoughts to focus on her strengths and abilities that had carried her through her adversities, which in turn enhanced her adaptability: “This process supported me through this year and fortified me for the many more challenges to come” (R3; 2; 35–36). The exploration of her personality traits, career interests and life themes confirmed her career choice and enhanced her self-confidence. The freedom to express herself creatively through the use of collages, her painting and her poem allowed her to fully engage in her past experiences and to reach a point where she felt less anxious, more understood and grateful for the experiences that shaped her life. “Thus, I gained a

greater appreciation for how each experience has built me into the person I have become and a gratitude for each experience for that reason. The tests I took reaffirmed the career choice I had already made. They also allowed me to see that partly due to the qualities I had gained from my traumatic experiences, I could do almost anything I wanted to do. This was a great confidence boost and it assured me that I am going in the right direction as I move into my adult life” (R3; 2; 22–26). The life-design intervention has afforded Aurora the opportunity to enter a new chapter in her life from a position of strength, an improved self-concept and enhanced resilience, as opposed to a position clouded with the negative emotional long-term effects of parental neglect.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research was based on a single-case study. Findings from this case study are not intended for generalisation and are subjective in nature. According to Queiros et al. (2017), it is generally harder to determine causality with the use of case studies. Reaching conclusions, especially in a single-case study, is therefore more difficult compared to purely quantitative research designs. The subjectivity of the data collected may lead to the questioning of the validity of the data. Another possible limitation for this study could be an impeded objective understanding of the participant’s psychological reality by the researcher (Ratner, 2002). For this reason, an external coder was used to verify the emerging themes of the qualitative data. Furthermore, analysing qualitative data is very time-consuming and difficult to analyse due to the overlapping of themes.

The participant was recommended by a social worker who formed part of a larger network of social workers who had been given the selection criteria. The participant was then interviewed for suitability. This kind of purposive selection of the participant may lead to concerns of bias. The following contextual factors could also be acknowledged as possible limitations:

- The children’s home where Aurora resided had strict schedules, which made organising the sessions difficult at times.
- Aurora did not have access to data at the children’s home, which made personal communication difficult, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown periods.
- Aurora was busy catching up her Grade 11 year when the research started and was busy with her Grade 12 year towards the end of the study. The researcher

had to be cognisant of and sensitive towards the academic pressure that Aurora was experiencing.

5.5 ETHICAL ASPECTS⁶

Due to the sensitive and personal nature of Aurora's life story, every precaution was taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. All identities were protected by the use of pseudonyms and the sharing of data with the research supervisor was discussed and agreed upon with the participant before the start of the research. After discussion, the participant also agreed to the sharing of data in terms of this mini-dissertation. The participant gave written informed assent herself with the knowledge of her social worker. The social worker was also asked to give written permission for Aurora's participation in the research study. Both the participant and the social worker were informed of the voluntary nature of the study and the right to withdraw at any time.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study as well as the review of the relevant literature:

- More research is needed in terms of the effects of parental neglect, in the form of emotional neglect, as it relates to the career decision processes of emerging adults.
- Education and training for educators is needed to assist them in identifying learners experiencing emotional neglect as well training in effective interventions for the school context to support such learners.
- Life-design interventions with the goal of career counselling should be implemented in both high schools and vocational schools to assist learners in making subject choices.
- The narrative approach of life-design counselling would be beneficial to senior learners as part of the life orientation curriculum.
- Longitudinal studies to track the long-term effects of a life-design intervention over the course of a person's career would be beneficial.

⁶ See section 1.10, where this matter is discussed in detail.

5.7 PERSONAL REFLECTION

At the outset of this journey, I was excited, full of energy and determined. I soon realised that I had underestimated the magnitude of the task. As a working mother with two children, I found that setting the required time aside to work on my research was more difficult than I had anticipated. I had been extremely fortunate to have the support of my family and friends, who helped out wherever they could, and never gave up on me. Without the diligence, integrity and work ethic of my supervisor, it would have been more difficult to complete this journey.

Thinking back now, I remember how proud I was when I had completed Chapter 1 but how incredibly hard it was to complete Chapter 2. I realised that it was hard for me to spend hours on end researching articles and reading books without getting despondent. I was also surprised at the scarcity of research related to my topic. I gained a newfound respect for the processes underlying research studies. When COVID-19 hit our country, I thought I would have plenty of time to work on my research. Unfortunately, it was really difficult to stay in contact with my participant during that time. Moreover, I realised that I thrive on structure and being busy, and that staying at home would never be an option for me. I was very relieved when I could finally resume my research. I was, however, also very grateful for the time I could spend with my children.

As a survivor of parental neglect, this topic touches me deeply. I have had to be mindful of my own experiences to prevent transference while adhering to the principles of acceptance, autonomy and empathy. I have the utmost regard for my participant and the honest manner in which she participated in the process. Through her eyes, I became more mindful of what I had gone through and a part of me was happy that my experiences enabled me to truly identify with Aurora's story. It also made me intensely aware of the boundaries I had to set during the sessions to avoid transference and to avoid assumptions about Aurora's reality.

The study, although hampered by the restrictions of COVID-19, was a meaningful and fulfilling experience for me. I looked forward to every session and walked away each time with new insight and respect for my participant. Overall, this study renewed my hope in the future of our youth as well as in the field of psychology. It gave me the opportunity to realise that my own life experiences had attributed

meaning and purpose to my chosen career and that I am currently pursuing my dreams, despite my adversity growing up. I am very grateful for the opportunity to have worked with Aurora and to learn from her resilience. Writing this last section of my mini-dissertation feels wonderful; it is affirming of my own abilities, which I had often doubted throughout this process.

5.8 SUMMARY

This study aimed to examine how the effects of parental neglect could be counteracted, and how career adaptability and resilience could be enhanced through an intervention based on life-design principles. There is ample research available on the different types of maltreatment that contribute to childhood adversity. However, not much research is available on the long-term effects of parent neglect, namely emotional neglect from parents, on the career choices of emerging adults. Although schools have become a safe haven for many children, neglect often goes unnoticed by educators due to a lack of physical evidence, such as in the case of physical abuse and physical neglect. Educators are furthermore overwhelmed with the pace of the curriculum, extra-murals, remedial lessons and administration. However, there seems to be an increasing need for educators to become aware of the signs and symptoms of emotional neglect in order to intervene timeously.

The life-design intervention proved to be a valuable experience for Aurora, as indicated in the last two chapters. Although she already exhibited a reasonable well-developed sense of adaptability and resilience, Aurora was not always able to cope with her adversity due to the added effects of parental neglect and lack of social support as a child. This all seemed to change when she was placed at the children's home. The change in her social environment became a protective factor and resource for Aurora. After having resided in the children's home for eight months, Aurora was asked to voluntarily participate in my research study with the permission of her social worker. The intervention allowed Aurora to gain new perspectives on her life experiences, which enabled meaning-making and enhanced her innate resilience and adaptability. She experienced a renewed sense of confidence and hope for her future. Aurora proved that with the necessary support structures, a person can be helped to overcome major challenges and convert pain, disappointment, sadness and hurt into meaning, inspiration and hope (Maree, 2013, 2020).

Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way. Victor Frankl

5.9 EPILOGUE

Since the submission of my study, Aurora has started studying a multi-disciplinary degree in economics at her university of choice. She reported that she has made new friends and she is working on her interpersonal skills. She is determined to reach her goals and to settle into a life that she has chosen for herself.

REFERENCES

- Adler, J. (2012). Living into the story: Agency and coherence in a longitudinal study of narrative identity development and mental health over the course of psychotherapy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(2), 367-389. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025289>
- Akos, P., & Kurz, M. (2015). Applying hope theory to support middle school transitions. *Middle School Journal*, 47(1), 13-18.
- American Psychological Association (APA). (2011). *The road to resilience*. <https://uncw.edu/studentaffairs/committees/pdc/documents/the%20road%20to%20resilience.pdf>
- American Psychological Association (APA). (2020). *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. <https://dictionary.apa.org/emerging-adulthood>
- Arnett, J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469-480.
- Arnett, J. J. (1998). Learning to stand alone: The contemporary American transition to adulthood in cultural and historical context. *Human Development*, 41(5-6), 295-315. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000022591>
- Bandura, A. (2006). Toward a psychology of human agency. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1(2), 164-180. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2006.00011.x>
- Bank of America Corporation. (2016). The Fourth Industrial Revolution. *CIO Reports: The Weekly Office*. <https://olui2.fs.ml.com/Publish/Content/application/pdf/GWMOL/GWIMCIOWeeklyLetterPBIG2216.pdf>
- Benioff, M. (2017, January 18). 4 ways to close the inequality gap in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. *World Economic Forum*.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/4-ways-to-close-the-inequality-gap-in-the-fourth-industrial-revolution/>

Berk, L. E. (2013). *Child development*. Pearson Education.

Berzenski, S. R. (2018). Distinct emotion regulation skills explain psychopathology and problems in social relationships following childhood emotional abuse and neglect. *Development and Psychopathology*, 31(2), 483-496.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2021). *Coping with a traumatic event*.

<https://www.cdc.gov/masstrauma/factsheets/public/coping.pdf>

Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP). (2016). *Research bulletin: The Optimus study on child abuse, violence, and neglect in South Africa*. University of Cape Town.

Chen, C. P. (2015). Career human agency theory. In: K. Maree, & A. D. Fabio (Eds.), *Exploring new horizons in career counselling*. Sense
https://www.childlinesa.org.za/wp-content/uploads/childline_AGM_2016.pdf

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2013a). *Chronic child neglect*. [Bulletin for professionals.] https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/chronic_neglect.pdf

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2013b). *Factsheet: Long term consequences of child abuse and neglect*.

https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/sp_longterm_consequences.cfm

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2019). *Definitions of child abuse and neglect*.
https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/long_term_consequences

Childline South Africa. (2019). *Annual report*.

<https://www.childlinesa.org.za/about/agm-reports/>

- Clarke, M. (2017). Building employability through graduate development programmes: A case study in an Australian public sector organisation. *Personnel Review*, 46(4), 792-808.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2016). Thematic analysis. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12(3), 297-298.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research designs: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage.
- Creswell, J., & Creswell, J. (2018). *Research design* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Daskal, L. (2017). *The leadership gap: What gets between you and your greatness*. Portfolio.
- De Bruin, M. (2016). *Social workers' understanding of the nature of child neglect* (Unpublished master's dissertation). University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
<https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/53397>
- De Vos, A. S. (2002). *Research at grassroots: For the social sciences and human service professions*. Van Schaik.
- Di Fabio, A., & Maree, J. G. (2013a). *Psychology of career counselling: New challenges for a new era*. Nova Science Publishers.
- Di Fabio, A., & Maree, J. G. (2013b). Career counselling: The usefulness of the career interest profile. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 23, 41-49.
- Du Toit, L. B. H. (1983). *Manual for the Jung Personality Questionnaire*. Human Sciences Research Council.
- Duffy, R., & Raque-Bogdan, T. (2010). The motivation to serve others: Exploring relations to career development. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 18(3), 250-265. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072710364791>
- Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society*. Norton.

- Erozkan, A. (2016). The link between types of attachment and childhood trauma. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4(5), 1071-1079. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2016.040517>
- Fidan, T. (Ed.). (2019). *Vocational identity and career construction in education*. Information Science Reference | IGI Global.
- Gardner, M., Thomas, H., & Erskine, H. (2019). The association between five forms of child maltreatment and depressive and anxiety disorders: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 96, 104082. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104082>
- Gaucher, D., Wood, J., Stinson, D., Forest, A., Holmes, J., & Logel, C. (2012). Perceived regard explains self-esteem differences in expressivity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 38(9), 1144-1156. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167212445790>
- Gerstenblatt, P. (2013). Collage portraits as a method of analysis in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 12(1), 294-309. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691301200114>
- Given, L. (2008). *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Sage.
- Gradín, C. (2018). Occupational segregation by race in South Africa after apartheid. *Review of Development Economics*, 23, 553-576.
- Guichard, J. (2005). Life-long self-construction. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 5(2), 111-124. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-005-8789-y>
- Guichard, J. (2009). Self-constructing. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75(3), 251-258. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2009.03.004>
- Guichard, J. (2016). Reflexivity in life design interventions: Comments on life and career design dialogues. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 97, 78-83.

- Guilbert, L., Bernaud J., Gouvernet, B., & Rossier, J. (2016). Employability: Review and research prospects. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 16, 69-89.
- Hartung, P. (2009). *Why work: The story of values in vocational psychology*. Invited address to the Ninth Biennial Meeting of the Society for Vocational Psychology, a section of the Society of Counselling Psychology (Division 17) of the American Psychological Association, University of Missouri, St. Louis, June 29-30, 2009.
- Hartung, P. (2010). Practice and research in career counseling and development–2009. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 59(2), 98-142. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2010.tb00057.x>
- Holland, J. L. (1973). *Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments* (3rd ed.). Psychological Assessment Resources.
- Jung, C. G. (1971). *Psychological types: The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 6). [Originally published in German in 1921, translated.] Routledge.
- Kenny, M. E., Bluestein, D. L., & Meerkins, T. M. (2017). Integrating relational perspectives in career counselling practice. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 66, 135-148.
- Khan, A., McCormack, H., Bolger, E., McGreenery, C., Vitaliano, G., Polcari, A., & Teicher, M. (2015). Childhood maltreatment, depression, and suicidal ideation: Critical importance of parental and peer emotional abuse during developmental sensitive periods in males and females. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 6, 1-30. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2015.00042>
- Kisely, S., Abajobir, A., Mills, R., Strathearn, L., Clavarino, A., & Najman, J. (2018). Child maltreatment and mental health problems in adulthood: Birth cohort study. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 213(6), 698-703. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.2018.207>

- Krumboltz, J. D., Mitchell, A. M., & Jones, G. B. (1976). A social learning theory of career selection. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 6, 71-81.
- Leary, M. (2015). Emotional responses to interpersonal rejection. *Emotions*, 17(4), 435-441. <https://doi.org/10.31887/dcns.2015.17.4/mleary>
- Levin, R., & Liu, R. (2021). Life stress, early maltreatment, and prospective associations with depression and anxiety in preadolescent children: A six-year, multi-wave study. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 278, 276-279. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2020.09.072>
- Links International. (2020). *Interview questions: How to answer "What are your career aspirations?"* <https://linksinternational.com/en-sg/research-page>
- Mandelli, L., Petrelli, C., & Serretti, A. (2015). The role of specific early trauma in adult depression: A meta-analysis of published literature. Childhood trauma and adult depression. *European Psychiatry*, 30(6), 665-680. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eurpsy.2015.04.007>
- Maree, K. (2007). *First steps in research*. Van Schaik.
- Maree, J. G. (2010). Brief overview of the advancement of postmodern approaches to career counselling. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 20(3), 361-368.
- Maree, J. G. (2012). *Career Adapt-abilities Scale – South African form: Psychometric properties and construct validity*. <http://hdl.handle.net/2263/18513>
- Maree, J. G. (2013). *Counselling for career construction: Connecting life themes to construct life portraits. Turning pain into hope*. Sense.
- Maree, J. G. (2016a). *Career construction counselling with a mid-career black man*. <http://hdl.handle.net/2263/52132>
- Maree, J. G. (2016b). *Maree Career Matrix (MCM)*. JvR Psychometrics.
- Maree, J. G. (2017). *Career interest profile (CIP) version 6*. JvR Psychometrics.

- Maree, J. G. (2019). Career construction counselling aimed at enhancing the narratability and career resilience of a young girl with a poor sense of self-worth. *Early Child Development and Care*, 190(16), 2646-2662. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2019.1622536>
- Maree, J. G. (2020). *Innovating counselling for self- and career construction: Connecting conscious knowledge with subconscious insight*. Springer.
- Maree, J. G., & Che, J. (2018). The effect of life-design counselling on the self-efficacy of a learner from an environment challenged by disadvantages. *Early Child Development and Care*, 190(6), 822-838. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2018.1495629>
- Maree, J. G., & Taylor, N. (2016). *Development of the Maree Career Matrix: A new interest inventory*. <http://hdl.handle.net/2263/58307>
- Maree, K. (2018). *Psychology of career adaptability, employability and resilience*. Springer.
- McAdams, D. P. (2013). The psychological self as actor, agent, and author. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 8(3), 272-295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691612464657>
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2001). *Research in education: A conceptual introduction* (5th ed.). Addison-Wesley Longman.
- Metzler, M., Merrick, M., Klevens, J., Ports, K., & Ford, D. (2017). Adverse childhood experiences and life opportunities: Shifting the narrative. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 72, 141-149.
- Miller-Graff, L. E., Howell, K. H., Martinez-Torteya, C., & Grein, K. (2016). Direct and indirect effects of maltreatment and social support on children's social competence across reporters. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 48(5), 741-753. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-016-0698-4>
- Mohan, M., Sarfraz, I., Hewege, C., & Rajendran, D. (2018). An exploration of global employability skills: a systematic research review. *International*

Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion, 9(1), 63.
<https://doi.org/10.1504/ijwoe.2018.10012435>

Mouton, J. (2017). *How to succeed in your master's and doctoral studies: A South African guide and resource book*. Van Schaik.

Mulder, R. M., Kuiper, K. C., Van der Put, C. E., Stams, G. J. M., & Assink, M. (2018). Risk factors for child neglect: A meta-analytic review. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 77, 198-210.

Munsey, C. (2006). Emerging adults: The in-between age. *Monitor Staff*, 37(7), 68.

Newcomb-Anjo, S., Barker, E., & Howard, A. (2016). A person-centered analysis of risk factors that compromise wellbeing in emerging adulthood. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 46(4), 867-883. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-016-0603-2>

Oleksandr S. Chernyshenko|Miloš Kankaraš|Fritz Drasgow. (2018, April 27). *OECD iLibrary | Social and emotional skills for student success and well-being: Conceptual framework for the OECD study on social and emotional skills*. Digital Object Identifier System. <https://doi.org/10.1787/db1d8e59-en>

OECD. (2015). *Skills for social progress: The power of social and emotional skills*. OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264226159-en>

Patterson, G. R., DeBarshe, B., & Ramsy, E. (1990). A developmental perspective on antisocial behaviour. *American Psychologist*, 44, 329-335.

Peila-Shuster, J. (2017). Fostering hope and career adaptability in children's career development. *Early Child Development and Care*, 188(4), 452-462.

Punch, K. F. (2009). *Introduction to research methods in education*. Sage.

Queiros, A., Faria, D., & Almeida, F. (2017). Strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods. *European Journal of Educational Studies*, 3(9), 369-387. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v0i0.1017>

- Ratner, C. (2002). Subjectivity and objectivity in qualitative methodology. *Forum: Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 3(3).
<https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-3.3.829>
- Republic of South Africa. (2006). *Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005*. Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.
- Roca-Puig, V., Beltrán-Martín, I., Segarra-Ciprés, M., Escrig Tena, A. B., & Bou-Llusar, J. C. (2014). Human capital and firm performance: A contingent analysis. *Investigação e Intervenção Em Recursos Humanos*, 2.
<https://doi.org/10.26537/iirh.v0i2.1940>
- Santilli, S., Marcionetti, J., Rochat, S., Rossier, J., & Nota, L. (2016). Career adaptability, hope, optimism, and life satisfaction in Italian and Swiss adolescents. *Journal of Career Development*, 44(1), 62-76.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845316633793>
- Sarfraz, I., Rajendran, D., Hewege, C., & Mohan, D. (2018). An exploration of global employability skills: A systematic research review. *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 9(1), 63.
- Savickas, M. (1997). Career adaptability: An integrative construct for life-span, life space theory. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 45(3), 247-259.
- Savickas, M. (2010). Re-viewing scientific models of career as social constructions. *Revista Portuguesa De Pedagogia*, 33-43.
https://doi.org/10.14195/1647-8614_30anos_3
- Savickas, M. L. (2011). *Career counselling*. American Psychological Association.
- Savickas, M. L. (2015). *Life design counseling manual*.
<http://www.vocopher.com/LifeDesign/LifeDesign.pdf>
- Savickas, M. L. (2019). *Career counselling* (2nd ed). American Psychological Association.

- Savickas, M. L., & Porfeli, E. J. (2012). Career Adapt-abilities Scale: Construction, reliability, and measurement equivalence across 13 countries. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 80, 661-673.
- Savickas, M. L., Nota, L., Rossier, J., Dauwalder, J., Duarte, M. E., Guichard, J., Soresi, S., Van Esbroeck, R., & Van Vianen, A. E. (2009). Life designing: A paradigm for career construction in the 21st century. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75(3), 239-250.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2009.04.004>
- Scales, B. (2013). Qualitative analysis of student assignments: A practical look at ATLAS.ti. *Reference Services Review*, 41(1), 134-147.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/00907321311300956>
- Schreuder, A. M. G., & Coetzee, M. (2016). *Careers: An organisational perspective*. Juta.
- Science Daily. (2017). *Unemployment triggers increase in child neglect, according to new research*.
www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/11/171103085315.htm
- Silva, G., & Di Serio, L. (2016). The sixth wave of innovation: Are we ready? *RAI Revista de Administração e Inovação [Journal of Management and Innovation]*, 13(2), 128-134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rai.2016.03.005>
- Smart, R., & Peterson, C. (1997). Super's career stages and the decision to change careers. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 51, 358-374.
- Snyder, C. (2002). TARGET ARTICLE. Hope theory: Rainbows in the mind. *Psychological Inquiry*, 13(4), 249-275.
- Soto, D. A. (2020). Technology and the future of work in emerging economies: What is different. *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 236. <https://ideas.repec.org/p/oec/elsaab/236-en.html>

- South Africa. Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). (2015). *Competency framework for career development practitioners in South Africa*. Government Gazette, 18 August 2015. DHET.
- South African Career Development Association (SACDA). (n.d.). *Public mandate*. <https://www.sacda.org.za/about/public-mandate/>
- South African History Online (SAHO). (2016). *Hendrik Verwoerd: 10 quotes by Hendrik Verwoerd*. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/hendrik-verwoerd-10-quotes-hendrik-verwoerd-politics-web-20-september-2016>
- Statistics South Africa. (2018a). *Key findings: P0277: Quarterly employment statistics (QES)*. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0277/P0277September2018.pdf>
- Statistics South Africa. (2018b). *Key findings: P0307 – Marriages and divorces*. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0307/P03072018.pdf>
- Statistics South Africa. (2019). *Statistical release: P0277: Quarterly employment statistics (QES)*. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0277/P0277September2019.pdf>
- Statistics South Africa. (2020). *Quarterly employment statistics*. http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=P0277
- Stoltenborgh, M., Bakersman-Kranenburg, M. J., Alink, L. R., & Van Ijzendoorn, M. H. (2014). The prevalence of child maltreatment across the globe: Review of a series of meta-analysis. *Child Abuse Review: Physical Abuse*, 24, 37-50.
- Storme, M., Celik, P., & Myszkowski, N. (2020). A forgotten antecedent of career adaptability: A study on the predictive role of within-person variability in personality. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 160, 109936.
- Super, D. E. (1957). *The psychology of careers*. Harper and Row.
- Terre Blanche, M., Durrheim, K., & Painter, D. (2006). *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (2nd ed.). Juta and Company

- Theron, L., & Ungar, M. (2018). Limiting the impacts of child abuse and neglect by understanding which supports matter most: A differential impact approach. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 78, 1-3.
- Tiwari, A. I., & Sharma, R. R. (2019). Dignity at the workplace: Evolution of the construct and development of workplace dignity scale. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02581>
- Umsamo Institute. (2021). *Ukuthwasa*. <https://umsamo.org.za/ukuthwasa/>
- Ungar, M. (2011). The social ecology of resilience: Addressing contextual and cultural ambiguity of a nascent construct. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 81(1), 1-17.
- Ungar, M. (2013). Resilience after maltreatment: The importance of social services as facilitators of positive adaptation. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 37(2-3), 110-115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2012.08.004>
- Ungar, M. (2016). Which counts more: Differential impact of the environment or differential susceptibility of the individual? *The British Journal of Social Work*, 47(5), 1279-1289. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcw109>
- Ungar, M. (2018). The differential impact of social services on young people's resilience. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 78, 4-12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.09.024>
- Ungar, M., Hadfield, K., & Ikeda, J. (2017). Adolescents' experiences of therapeutic relationships at high and low levels of risk and resilience. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 32(3), 277-292.
- Van Esbroeck, R., Palladino, S., Trusty, J., & Gore, P. (2009). Introduction to the special issue: An international partnership in vocational psychology and career guidance practice. *International Journal for Vocational Guidance*, 9, 69-74.

- Venter, C. B. S., & Maree, J. G. (2020). *Life-design counselling for survivors of family violence in resource-constrained areas*.
<http://hdl.handle.net/2263/71662>
- Villiers, A. (2020, January 2). Why we should stop using “soft” skills. *National Career Development Association*.
https://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/news_article/278124/_PARENT/C_C_layout_details/false
- Waldeck, D., Pancani, L., Holliman, A., Karekla, M., & Tyndall, I. (2021). Adaptability and psychological flexibility: Overlapping constructs? *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science*, 19, 72-78.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcbs.2021.01.002>
- Ward, C., Makusha, T., & Bray, R. (2015). Parenting, poverty and young people in South Africa: What are the connections? In A. de Lannoy, S. Swartz, L. Lake, & C. Smith (Eds.), *South African child gauge* (pp. 69-74). Children’s Institute, University of Cape Town.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283703410_Parenting_poverty_and_young_people_in_South_Africa-What_are_the_connections
- Webb, J. (2017). *How childhood emotional neglect affects your adult work life*.
<https://drjonicewebb.com/how-childhood-emotional-neglect-affects-your-adult-work-life/>
- WholeHearted School Counseling. (2017). *Teachers pay teachers*.
<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Wholehearted-School-Counseling>
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Applications of case study research* (2nd ed). Sage.
- Yin, R. K. (2013). Validity and generalization in future case study evaluation. *Sage Journals*, 19(3), 321-332.
- Zheng, X., Fang, X., Fry, D., Ganz, G., Casey, T., Hsiao, C., & Ward, C. (2018). Association of Child Maltreatment with South African Adults’ Wages:

Evidence from the Cape area panel study. *Health Economics Review*, 8(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13561-018-0206-6>

Zimmer-Gembeck, M., Nesdale, D., Webb, H., Khatibi, M., & Downey, G. (2016).
A longitudinal rejection sensitivity model of depression and aggression:
Unique roles of anxiety, anger, blame, withdrawal and retribution. *Journal
of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 44(7), 1291-1307.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-016-0127-y>

APPENDIX A: ROUGH LIFELINE

— My Life Line (Rough)

11/09/2001 - 8 months BD

My mom is living in Nigeria, just found out she's pregnant w/ me. Watching the news, ~~waited~~ decided to wait a bit to tell my dad.

11/2001 - 6 months BD

Dad is ill w/ malaria / nervous breakdown. Tells mom to abort or divorce. Mom says divorce, moves back to SA

4/2002 - 1 month BD

Parents divorced finalized. Aka: 'The Shotgun Divorce'

23/05/2002

My Birth. Mom had preeclampsia - cesarrian -

05/2003 - 1 yr AD

Saw dad for the first time. First and only 'accident' Dad asked mom to get remarried, mom said no.
Taught me how to cope w/ from shock

05/2005 - 3 yrs AD

22/05/2005 - 3 yrs AD

3rd B-day, met my dad's GF for the first time. She was ugly and stupid. Remember thinking mom was perfect in comparison as she served us lunch, walking through the bubbles. *Taught me how to recover from shock*

2006 (after both bdays; 4th year) - 4 yrs AD

Moved to Mpumalanga. Mom in car accident (attempt on her life) Mom v. stressed, angry like a lion. Never saw Cranag. I see mes w/ aunt; Alop.

Taught me how to adapt to changes

2007 - 8yrs AD

Move to the farm in Hazyview. Much happier. Mom more stressed. ~~As~~ She was in a car accident (Brake lines cut) ppl following us. Taught me to watch out for hidden danger; showed me my love for nature

2008 (1st term) - 8yrs AD

Move back to PTA, start at Woodlands.

2008-2010 - 6-8yrs AD

In Woodlands. Bullied for 1st time. Remember wanting the school to burn down over the holidays. Mom less stressed. Some contact w/ granny again. Taught me that not every one has your best interests at heart, started to understand ppl have their own problems expressed in different ways

12/2010 8yrs AD

- Move to Parkview (JHB)

- Holiday w/ Lynn to Cuan in Uganda. They fought about, gossiped abt. mom when they thought I was asleep. ~~Learned~~ ~~how~~ ~~to~~ my mom has her own complicated family history

2/1/2011 (Early Jan) (By 13 Jan)

- Told mom about fighting over phone. Lynn distant. ~~Go to~~ Still had nice holiday. Go home. Lynn apologise to malarika. I learned that adults can be petty to children

18/1/2011 - 9yrs AD

Start at P.U.J. Teacher bullied me; Abworth. Met my 2 bffs - Anna Hodge, Angela Chimako. Didn't get along w/ most of the kids. Scabbed Daiyaan w/ pencil; laughed at him for thinking he had food poisoning. Taught me that authority figures can be petty, childish + how to complain

09/2011

Fell ill w/ double lung pneumonia & whooping cough. Remember blaming smoker mom. Mom & bt. came e. day. Had to take time off school.

Kids gave me sh*t. Taught me that people won't understand you, and generally don't try unless it benefits them. ~~the~~ ^{or shouldn't} expect understanding

~~10/2012~~ - 10yrs AD

Mom ~~was~~ starts working at COJ, as Executive Director of Economic Development. Making alot more money. V. stressful job -> starts drinking more, starts getting angrier, starts getting sick showed me my mom's ugly side

23/05/2012

Mom was really sick now, it would get worse but I didn't know that yet! Our fighting was bad, bullying at school was bad. & the first time I felt lost, remember this realization on this day clearly ^{the} Made me resilient; eventually learnt to be calm under pressure

04/2013

Mom is on heavy doses of alcohol and a cocktail of other drugs and drinks. Our fighting was bad. Starting to get physical. Emotional abuse was ~~bad~~ bad... (Jason No. 1)..... I was very anxious, absentminded, ~~not~~ lacking. Showed me what stress can do to your mind, body & soul, why you need to take care of yourself (importance of self-love)

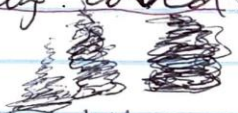
06/2013

Became friends with Dina & Thudke. (Dina was a good influence & now, manipulative narcissist later) Things started to get a little better at school, but I still hated it showed me how to opt out of & recover from a toxic relationship

D

23/05/2013

Emma threw a surprise party for me, was very sick I remember being genuinely surprised and feeling loved.



pacific east islander christ stones



showed me the value of random acts of kindness

22/01/14 best

Start of school year socially, turned "social"! We did a ton of cool stuff together (Ella's lab)

13/04/2015

Mom medically boarded at home were more fights

I threw a 4 day party for Dina. Fighting incident. The whole friend group (squad) dissolved after that, dates to dates, date to date. Showed me the extremity of life, like the seasons, up then down without warning

06/2015

Mom is really sick, started beating. We are still fighting. My suicidal thoughts started, I started to see the darkest parts of myself.

30/12/2015

Mom and I had really bad fight, mom broke nose. 1st overdose. 1200mg of morphine. 3 day coma. Thought I would have been dead, demerol showed me that my body wouldn't let me die, visit my time

+ also showed me to the lack of sympathy ppl have for those who attempt suicide



06/01/2016

I started my 6 weeks at Aberer. Things were still bad between my mom ~~and~~ and I. I started to understand I wasn't alone in my black-hole. Anna & I started getting closer. Learned some DBT skills

↳ showed me a healthy kind of love

08/02/2016

I started at SHC, became friends w/ Alex. Things seemed +.

23/05/2015

My mom scraped on the up, still very sick. I felt like a bad a "place-ish". Still suicidal (from 13th 16yrs I just wanted to DIE) taught me that happiness comes from the inside, everything can be going well and you just want to B.T.E.

12/2016

Maxilo-facial surgery ↳ painful & traumatic. I got the butterflies. Argela was really there for me, made me feel loved. Caring cause we were for X-pas. Non-stop fighting with my mom. It was awful. Argela saw everything

↳ Real friendly did care about that stuff.

12/01/2017

Start of gr. 9, I wasn't feeling great about myself. Rebutig was going well at school. friend crumb falling apart. How quickly things can turn bad, the intensity of stress I can cause myself - ~~low~~ physical affects

08/2017

Big fight over Whatsapp. Panic attacks started. I was losing control. I was so stressed and tired I wasn't living in this reality. It taught me how dark I could make my world if I let go of my "will to power" / "reiner deire"

09/2017

I left SHC, started at Padford. Things ~~started~~ belt like they would get better and they did for a time. Mom's health was up and down. Blamed me the hospitality of fellow outcasts and kindness of

06/2018 Strivers (Cypselin / Swiss)

2nd OD, on psycle week. Mom looked me out. I was very depressed. I didn't ever feel like a human being. Made me realize how out of touch my mom was with me (she didn't know until 3 days later when I told her)

08/2018

The house burnt ~~down~~ down, mom blamed me. Mom w/ hermits, I lived with Tom. After that our friendship deteriorated. The impermanence of material

11/2018 \rightarrow scissor incident ^{possessions, nothing is set in stone, taught me to be more adaptable}

I took ~~and~~ 3rd OD. Ended when Tom things better now and I got a little better with the space. Blamed me that space from my mom was healthy

07/2019

Started Adolescent programme. DBT skills $\frac{1}{3}$ low to ^{listen}

05/2019

Things start going sideways, I am slowly being blamed for all the problems in the world. The volatility of professional and the need to be secure in one's self.

03/2019

I left / kicked out of Lina. Mom moved in with Jensen #2. Things were better. Started

intwaso

twasa

taught me endurance, how to handle
pain, lack of sleep, regular ritualizing
twasa, I was super scared. Jesus not
I bailed. I never saw now. Stopped feeling suicidal
I am the link btwn a relationship w/ mom & feeling suicidal
25/05/2019

I did the burial ceremony - Jesus left. Showed me
that my mom was too deluded to properly look after me.

mid/06/2019

Mom is living w/ Catherine. I hate being in
Seweta. Ran away to granny. We were happy
showed me I could have a healthy relationship
25/07/2019 w/ granny

Mom moved in with us. Things started
to go sideways. We were bickering, granny stressed
Reinforced my earlier realization that my relationship
w/ mom was bad for me

26/08/2019

Bad fight w/ mom (physical), mom called
police -> court; 10 days in jail. Walter Sisulu
Secure Care center. Taught me more endurance, how
"the system" works

27/09/2019

Moved in SW. Things got a bit better.
I am much happier. Showed me I could
and would be responsible for my own
happiness

11/11/2019

I passed out, all my hard work paid off.
I am getting my noya back. Showed me I
could do anything I put my mind to.

Li

St

ANNEXURE B: PAINTING



ANNEXURE C: POEM

Under Nothing

A displaced wholeness
You watch the collision of spheres, to their dissolution
Under the weight of the nothingness
You crack, they crack, we all crack
Nothing wrecks more than nothing

A pregnant silence and hollow sound, as the birds fly past
In the end they all fly south for the winter
Alone we bear the northern chill
Starvation empties us, bones weakened, heart broken
Or is it bones broken, heart weakened? In the dizzying flurry of the snow storm I cannot tell

The northern guides never warned of the coming of winter
As she angrily flicked her blue-black tale over the already desolate land
Calling all the empty creatures to feast on those left behind
If only we had known the sweet whispering of the wind, raised cannibals from the dead and
Brought the first ice of the new year
Surely we would have resolved to move? In this wish I know
Resolutions are the substitutions for actions
And so my words once again ring empty, like that black frosty night

And so together, we sat alone
Accompanied by our varied miseries that we used to stuff our hollow chests,
Fill our empty stomachs. For the berries brought by the frost, had a poisonous kiss.
Deadly to human lips.
A few in our camp dared to try. Only to slink back under the cover of night...
Forced to return them from whence they came. Through sappling flame to vicious fire
And then once again, the night was quiet.

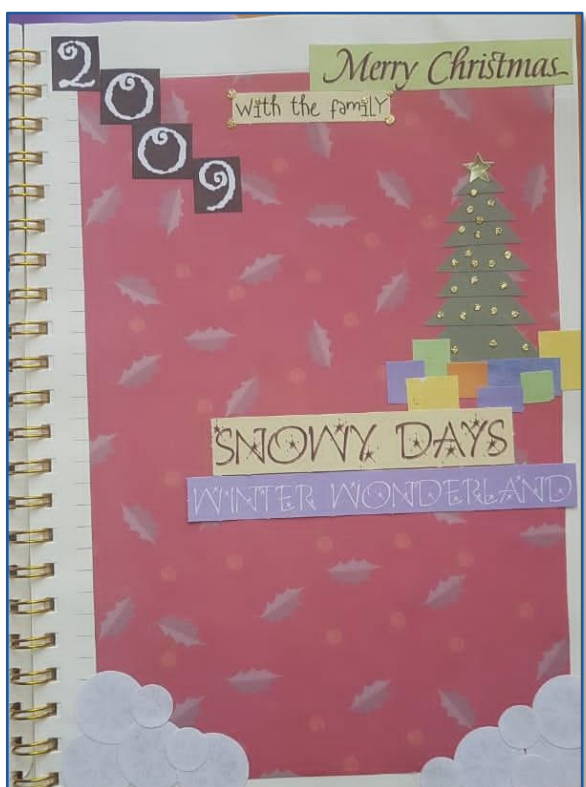
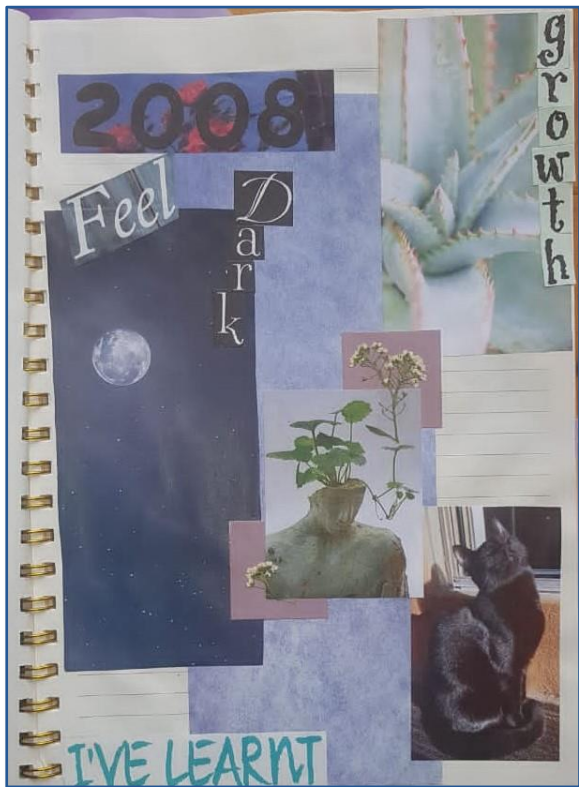
The silence ringing in our hollowed cores
We prayed to the night gods for more

In answer to prayers we slowly became
the hollow men,
the stuffed men of ill repute and little fame (although most know our name)

When the sweet songbirds abandoned the chilling South
They were shocked to find our misshapen forms still lying in the springtime dew
Their songs arrested and the muttering began
Each sphere with her own complaint, almost quaint
The mangled audience sat:
A displaced wholeness
Watching the collision of spheres, to their dissolution
Under the weight of the nothingness
You crack, they crack, we all crack
Nothing wrecks more than nothing

-Aurora

ANNEXURE D: COLLAGES (SUPPLEMENTS TO LIFELINE)



ANNXURE E: Informed assent of participant



Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION AND INFORMED ASSENT

Dear _____

You are friendly requested to grant permission to Miss Chantel Le Grange, who will be conducting a research intervention with you as the selected participant, under the supervision of Prof. J.G. (Kobus) Maree from the University of Pretoria.

In order for the research to be conducted, you will be requested to partake in interviews and complete questionnaires as part of the data collection instruments. Observations will be done during the questionnaires and all data will be recorded in a research journal. All interviews will be voice recorded and transcribed. The interviews will be scheduled, at your earliest convenience, after the school day. You are required to provide written consent that will include your full name and initials, signature and date to verify that you understand and agree to the conditions.

We will provide you with the necessary information to assist you to understand the study and explain what would be expected. Please feel free to ask the researcher to clarify anything that is not clear to you.

You have the right to query concerns regarding the study at any time. Immediately report any new problems during the study, to the researcher. Contact details of the researcher are provided. Please feel free to make contact at any given time.

Furthermore, although your identity will at all times remain confidential, the results of the research study will be presented in a dissertation publication. Importantly, your name will be divulged.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the form below. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely

Miss Chantel Le Grange
(Researcher)

email: chantellg15@gmail.com

Prof. J.G. (Kobus) Maree
(Supervisor)

email: kobus.maree@up.ac.za



Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

INFORMED ASSENT

Title of research project: Enhancing an emergent adult with parental neglect's career adaptability and resilience through life-design counselling

I, _____, ID _____, hereby agree to participate in the above-mentioned research. I understand that my contribution will be treated as confidential and anonymous, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time, if I wish to do so.

I have read the Project Information Statement explaining the purpose of the research project and understand that:

- Participation is voluntary.
- The interviews will be scheduled, at my earliest convenience, after the school day.
- I may decide to withdraw my consent at any time without penalty.
- All information obtained will be treated in strictest confidence.
- My name will not be used and will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.
- A report of the findings will be made available to myself.

- I may seek further information on the project at any given time or stage from Miss Chantel Le Grange.

I freely and voluntarily give my consent for the interviewing of myself as part of the research project.

Signed at _____ on _____ 2019.

Participant

Researcher

ANNEXURE F: INFORMED ASSENT FORM SOCIAL WORKER



Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION AND INFORMED ASSENT SOCIAL WORKER

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at [name withheld] children's home

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Chantel Le Grange, and I am a MEd Educational Psychology student at the University of Pretoria. The research I wish to conduct for my Masters dissertation explores **ENHANCING AN EMERGENT ADULT WITH PARENTAL NEGLECT'S CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND RESILIENCE THROUGH LIFE-DESIGN**. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Prof. J.G. Maree at the University of Pretoria. Prof. Maree can be contacted by e-mail at kobus.maree@up.ac.za.

I hereby request your permission to conduct a study with a matric learner (18 years or older) at the earliest convenient time, after school hours on your premises in a designated room that is suitable for private interviews. This investigation will be guided by a strict code of ethics and all data collected will be treated within the strictest confidence and neither the children's home nor the participant will be identifiable in any reports that are written.

Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The role of the participant is voluntary and he/she may decide to withdraw at any time without penalty.

The objective of the study is to apply life design counselling to explore the effects of parental neglect on the career adaptability and resilience of a young adult who is ready to start a career. In addition, I would like to enhance the employability, career adaptability and career resilience of the selected individual through life design-based

intervention. Many adolescents who experience parental neglect go unnoticed by society and this is partly due to the scarcity of research and underreporting of parental neglect cases as well as the lack of physical evidence such as in the cases of physical neglect and abuse. The effects of emotional neglect may include problems with regards to trust, emotional intelligence, and self-regulation, motivation, building relationships, expressing empathy and managing stress. These factors are crucial in the world of work today. Technological advancements have made it easier for companies to replace people and machines are taking over the jobs traditionally done by people. Young adults thus need a different type of skills set in order to become employable and to be adaptable in an ever-changing work environment.

I believe that my participant will experience life design-based counselling as positive and uplifting.

There are no anticipated risks in this study. Feedback procedures will entail face-to-face meetings with the participant.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me by e-mail at chantellg15@gmail.com. My supervisor can be contacted by e-mail at kobus.maree@up.ac.za.

I look forward to speaking with you and wish to thank you in advance for your kind assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form which follows.

Yours sincerely

Ms Chantel Le Grange
(Researcher)

Email: chantellg15@gmail.com

Prof. J.G. (Kobus) Maree
(Supervisor)

Email: kobus.maree@up.ac.za

**INFORMED ASSENT
SOCIAL WORKER**

Title of the study: **ENHANCING AN EMERGENT ADULT WITH PARENTAL NEGLECT'S CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND RESILIENCE THROUGH LIFE-DESIGN**

I, _____ the undersigned, as the social worker at _____ (name of children's home) hereby grant/do not grant permission to Ms Chantel Le Grange to conduct Life-Design research intervention at the aforementioned children's home; at the earliest convenient time, after school hours.

I have read the Project Information Statement explaining the purpose of the research project and understand that:

- The role of the participant is voluntary.
- The participant may decide to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- The interviews will be scheduled, at my earliest convenience, after the school day.
- All information obtained will be treated in strictest confidence.
- The participant's name will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.
- The children's home will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.

- Participant may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
- A report of the findings will be made available to the participant and to the social worker upon request and with the permission of the participant.
- I may seek further information on the project from Ms Chantel Le Grange at any given time or stage.

I freely and voluntarily give my consent for the interviewing of a selected participant at our premises.

Signed at _____ on _____ 2019.

Participant

Researcher

ANNEXURE G: LETTER FROM EXTERNAL CODER

16 August, 2021

EXTERNAL CODER'S CONFIRMATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

To whom it may concern

Hereby, I, the undersigned, confirm that I have acted as Ms. Le Grange's external coder. I have reviewed and verified her data analysis and concur with her findings. I believe that the themes and subthemes identified in her study have been reported accurately.

Yours sincerely



Miss Samantha-Ella Ruiters

ANNEXURE H: EXTRACT FORM TRANSCRIPTS

Session 1

81 she's frail, but she's good. She doesn't need to constantly be taken care of and then that leads so a lot of fighting between them and then old stuff gets brought up of how you should have gone to the Police sooner, about the abuse.

82 CL - Mmm

83 DM - and just, yeah.

84 CL - Yes, all that hurt keeps popping up.

85 DM - That's where it was for a while. Okay. So that's sort of the family background and then for me, um, I was an average child, hit all the milestones. I was mmm very intense, I had a lot of temper tantrums, aggressive child, but I sort of grew out of it you know, as children do. I went to a Child Psychologist and then I grew out of it. I never really grew out of those patterns with my Mom...

86 CL - Okay

87 DM - because my Mom also had a lot of anger issues. She, when I was little, like I would remember she would get super angry and then she would go into the garage and scream and scream and scream sometimes for like 30 minutes straight.

88 CL - Shew

89 DM - Yeah

90 CL - Like a tantrum, ja



216 CL – Ja, not things... you wouldn't think is was a
problem for someone else, ja, so...

217 DM – No

218 CL – Wow, okay

219 DM – And then I met my two best friends, Anna and
Angela and um, and I remember I had like my first
sort of an anger outburst at school. I stabbed this
one guy in the leg with a pencil and then I laughed at
him because he said that he had lead poisoning. I
was like you don't have real lead in that pencil.
(Giggle).

220 CL – (Giggle) So what happened, what happened,
what did he do to you to react like that?

221 CM – I don't even remember, but he annoyed me the
whole time, all he, all through primary school he
annoyed me until he left. I was so happy when he
left. But he, um, he was one of these poor little rich
kids. Like his family, he never saw his parents, but
they had so much money.

222 CL – Mmm

223 DM – Like it was scary.

224 CL – Mmm

225 DM – And um, he was just always mean and nasty to
me in any way possible. Like in Grade 4 I, I
remember, we had a project and I did, I can't even
remember what the project was, but I know it had

